

Lesson plan

Subject: Enchanting the reality with singing. The sources of vocal folk music.

General goal:

Students get acquainted with information about folk singing.

Operational goals:

Student:

- knows how the singing is generated,
- knows terms of polyphonic singing, white singing, folk music,
- knows the examples of vocal folk music.

Lesson duration: 45 min.

Methods of work: lecture, discussion, listen of CD "Cuda-wianki!" of Werchowycy i przyjaciele z Giraltovec band, work card, appendixes 1 and 2

Lesson flow:

1. Teacher just before presentation of the lesson subject asks students what does the folk music remind them and what the most popular folk songs do they know. After a short discussion on this issue, teacher introduces the subject of the lesson which is the popular vocal folk music.
2. Teacher introduces basic terms associated with singing (App. 1 "Teacher Handbook", Lecture 1). Then teacher plays song "Bieda" ("Poverty") (CD disc) and asks students to give the characteristics for this kind of singing features. Teacher asks students to read Natalia Małeczka-Nowak's text on polyphonic singing (Appendix 2) and introduces information about singing (Attachment "Teacher Handbook", Lecture 2). Based on the information obtained, students fill the work card, tasks 1-3.
3. The teacher announces the quiz "Name the tune". Students listen to several recordings and make notes. It is suggested to select songs such as "Hava nagila", "Mi nisera", "Majeran", "Dobru noc", "Lipka" to make the recognition more difficult. For younger students, it is suggested to choose songs in Polish. Students listen to songs in full or in parts, depending on how much time did they spend on previous stages of the lesson. Students write down their answers on the work cards. For this exercise, it is suggested to choose a group work method.
4. At the end of the lesson, teacher asks students to prepare a presentation on contemporary folk music including Polish folk festivals and competitions on the subject.

Work card

1. How many voices can you hear in the song "Bieda"?

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2. What effect has been obtained in this song?

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3. Why the polyphony phenomenon is so popular in folk songs?

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4. "Name the tune" Write down the answers in the work card in the right order.

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Lecture 1

The human voice, both in the form of speech and singing, arises as a result of the interaction of the respiratory apparatus, the larynx (which is surrounded by the vocal folds) and the pharynx, mouth and nose. This highly specialised process would not have been possible without the supervision of the main centre of our vital activities, emotions and behaviours - the brain and the nervous system. This makes it possible to combine and coordinate the actions of all the mechanisms and processes necessary for a voice formation. As a result, also the voice formation function of the voice organ intertwines with its emotional function, allowing for, inter alia, expressing of inner emotional states. To create a voice, it is necessary to harmonize such processes as:

- *breathing* – the gas exchange process and the supply of airflow necessary to make the folds vibrating;
- *phonation* – sound creation process;
- *resonance* – strengthening and modifying of the created in the larynx sound in the resonance cavity (chest, mouth, pharynx, nose) and giving it individual timbre;
- *articulation* – converting the larynx tone into the sounds of the speech, what is possible thanks to the articulation organs.

The whole process starts when a need or a necessity of communication or singing occurs in the mind.. The brain cortex is then stimulated and from there through the nerve pathways impulses that mobilize specific groups of muscles to perform their assigned activities and movements are sent to specific parts of the voice organ. They are synchronized and in proper time reach the areas of the body involved in the process of creating and extracting the sound.

The passageway leading from the mouth and nose opens, the respiratory muscles that are responsible for inhalation (intercostal muscles, abdominal muscles, diaphragm) contract, the space between the vocal folds (so called glottis) opens, the chest pressure is reduced; Thanks to that the air can flow freely.

When during inhaling lungs fill up with the amount of air needed to say or sing the phrase, the breathing process reverses its course. There is a contraction of the abdominal muscles, the diaphragm and the chest causing breath out the air from the lungs up into the mouth and nose. On this road the exhaled air encounters a close-up and slightly tense vocal folds that resists the flow of air.

The air accumulates under the tight folds, and when its pressure reaches a certain critical value, the vocal folds open. The air flows through the glottis, causes the pressure drop and the vocal folds return to their original position. In this way, the vibrations of the vocal folds occur, and the repeating in the time unit cycles of alternating overturning and shortening of the vocal folds resulting in sound production.

This sound is called larynx sound and depends on the length, tension, elasticity and mass of the vocal folds, and the nature of the airflow. It is, however, weak and has no timber. Before it reaches the receiver, it must pass through the resonant cavity lying above the larynx: the pharynx, mouth or nasal cavity.

In these spaces the sound acquires the necessary sound power and the timbre specific for each individual. Thanks to the process of articulation, which takes place only with participation of tongue, lips and palate, it becomes the sound of speech, the articulated sound understood by the recipient.

Lecture 2

Singing is probably the oldest form of a human musical activity. It was probably created as an effect of prolonging some vowels in developing primitive languages. To this day people talk about the "singing features" of the languages concerned, so this theory finds many followers.

In fact, one of the grades of singing takes into account the degree of speech participation in it. Hence, one distinguishes melisma singing (with lyrics), vocal warm up (without words, the sound itself) and *mormorando*, that is closed-mouth singing (with distorted text or vocal warm up).

Another approach classifies the singing in terms of techniques such as bel canto, speech level singing, white singing or belting. Bel canto is a technique that emphasizes beauty and virtuosity in the use of voice, belongs to the classical techniques and is the basis for the teaching of opera singing. Speech level singing is a more contemporary technique focused above all on finishing the phrases and close the vocal cords. Belting is a technique used in musicals, which involves stretching the chest register, resulting in a slight hoarseness effect. Folk singing based on white or open singing is a completely different technique. It uses the natural power of the human voice extracted from the diaphragm and emphasizes the clarity and acoustics of the sound, which is important for folk music, either in open spaces or in crowded and noisy rooms performed. Technically the folk voice is similar to an opera, but has less focus on timbre, and more on the sound loudness. More information:

<https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%9Apiew>

https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bia%C5%82y_%C5%9Bpiew

Folk music

Polish folk music uses both instruments and bands singing a capella.

String instruments

- violin - also acting as a solo instrument
- [Mazanki](#) of Greater Poland - small size, three strings (a1 e2 h3), mostly accompanied by bagpipes,
- [złóbcoki](#) (Podhalan Gusle) popular especially in Podhale region; They have 4 strings tuned with quartiles or quintas,
- [Basolia](#), - instrument of cello size or larger, 2,3,4 gut strings or steel twisted strings.
- Szamotuły basolia - provided with bangles (cymbals)
- [Hurdy-gurdy](#) - an instrument with one melodic and two drone strings, where the bow is replaced by a ring rubbed with rosin and moved by a crank.

Plucked instruments

The only one really folk instrument of this kind was plucked instrument called [diabelskie skrzypce](#) from [Kashubia](#), with only one string and square resonance box. [mandolins](#), [guitars](#), [zithers](#) are not of folk origin, however they are often used.

Wind instruments

Wind instruments used mainly by shepherd (literally "shepherd wind instruments"): [whistles](#), shepherd wind instruments called "bekaca" with a sheep bleat sound effect, [pipes](#), [flutes](#) made from leaves or stems and pipes hollowed in willow wood. [Shepherd trumpets](#) have large sizes and different names: "trembity" ("[trombity](#)" in Podhale region), "[bazuny](#)" in Pomerania, [Ligawy](#) in Kurpie, Mazovia and Lubelskie regions. "Shalamaye" (free-reed instruments)

Bagpipe instruments

- "koziół biały" (a wedding instrument, literally "white goat") and "koziół czarny" (used usually on the ceremony of celebrating the beginning of a marriage, literally "black goat") often met in Lubuskie region.
- "Gajdy" in Silesian Beskids
- [bagpipe](#) of Greater Poland region

- Bagpipes in Żywiec Beskids
- Bagpipes in Podhale

Bagpipes consist of:

- A leather bag,
- An air tank,
- Chanter - so called "przebierka" with seven side finger-holes,
- Dron - so called "bąk" with a long lasting sound effect,
- Blowpipe (or wooden blowstick called "duhac") supplying the bag with an air.

The training instruments of this type is a "[sierszeńki](#)" blowpipe with mono- or dual-tank system, provided with a blowstick ("duhac") and a chanter, without a dron

Percussion instruments

- a great drum (baraban) with "stalka" or a cymbal
- A little [drum with bangles around](#)
- "Dzaz" - hand-made percussion set (popular in 1950 - 1970.)
- "[burczybas](#)" - a barrel or a drum with a string attached to a membrane with a string, giving a characteristic "roaring" sound
- Different types of rattles, bells and knockers¹

As far as the folk singing is concerned, in Poland we distinguish the following types of vocal music:

1. ritual songs: formerly performed during important events in the life of the village: at weddings, harvest, etc.
2. casual songs: love, flirtatious, soldier
3. chants: accompanied by dance tunes
4. ballads: often sung by *wanderers*
5. prayer songs: sung at chapels, pilgrimages and other non-liturgical situations.²

Nowadays folk music is becoming increasingly popular, as evidenced by numerous festivals of ancient and folk music, including the most popular: Festival of Folk and Folk Singers in Kazimierz on the Vistula, Folk Mikolajki in Lublin, Old Traditions and New Tradition Festival organised by Polish Radio.

¹Źródło: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polska_muzyka_ludowa

²As above described.

Appendix 2

Music has always occupied an important place in the life of Lemkos. It was one of the most important elements of the sense of identity and of the national community. The singing accompanied them at work, while they were resting, playing, and doing day-to-day activities at the farm - it was an important element of all rites and, finally, a form of contact with God during church services. The majority of Lemkos were members of Orthodox or Greek Catholic church (Greek Catholicism in Lemkivshchyna appeared in the 17th century), so it was natural for the Lemko community to pursue polyphonic singing outside of the Orthodox Church. The beginning of polyphony in the liturgical singing of the Orthodox Church in Poland is the thirteenth century. Centres in Western Europe have significantly influenced the formation of polyphony in the Orthodox church compositions. Polyphony is a compositing technique that involves simultaneous putting in the sound several melodic lines. It has been used in music since the Middle Ages, when also the rules of counterpoint, that govern voices in polyphony were developed. The 3-voice arrangement (tenor, counter tenor and triplum) that has dominated in medieval music was replaced by the four-voice (soprano, alt, tenor, bass) in the renaissance. One of the famous creators of Orthodox choral music is Dmitri Bortnianski, Lemko-born Russian composer.

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