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## The outline of the development of the Czech state arts education from the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic to the present

### Abstract

The paper presents a brief chronological overview of the development of the state primary art education since the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic. Gradual modifications of the primary art education are mapped depending on internal transformations and the conditions of its functioning are herein summarized. A great attention is paid to the contemporary state-administered primary art schools, especially in terms of their internal organization, their exclusive position in the system of Czech art education and specificity in the way how their key competences are conceived.

**Keywords:** primary arts education, the Czechoslovak Republic, development, organization, documents.

Even though the idea of artistic education is not anything unique across time and space, primary arts education in the Czech Republic<sup>1</sup> currently enjoys privileges that are denied to other countries: schools with up to four fields are a part of formal educational system. Although they do not provide a degree of educa-

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<sup>1</sup> A more or less same system (due to history) functions in the Slovak Republic. Hungary, for instance, attempts to come close to it. From Scandinavian countries, the Finnish system is the most similar to ours. Arts education programs are certainly operated in all European countries. However, it is the wide network of primary art schools which guarantees that besides first-rate musicians, artists and dancers, they are many “average” ones: this means, in other words, that there are numerous artists who do not practice a branch of art professionally, but they are still very good at it.

tion, they belong to the system of successive arts education. They come under the Education Act, they have authorized curriculum and they are operated in the premises designated for education. Their operation is largely subsidized by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

The purpose and the mission of primary art schools is not only the upbringing of future artists – after all, only a small percentage of graduates will start their professional music career or dancing career, for example. If they remain artistically active, they usually feel satisfied by more or less active musical (dancing, art) performances on the amateur or on the semi-professional level, the best ones become art teachers eventually. An enormous potential of primary art schools lies in the formation of educated and art-loving audiences – not only do teachers pass their knowledge to their students but student also develop relationship and sensitivity to art as such. Primary art schools therefore guarantee availability and quality of arts education and at the same time, primary art schools graduates consider art to be one of their life needs.

### The situation in arts education before 1918

Naturally, the system of arts education at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a far cry from the current system. However, besides Prague conservatories, organ schools in Brno and schools owned by some music communities, numerous private schools, dancing studios and art studios operated. Numerous church schools – as the religion of Austria-Hungary was catholicism – operated<sup>2</sup>. The organization was very inhomogeneous as well as members of teaching staff, their qualification, existential security, etc. For the operation of private schools, an obsolete regulation was in force. It stipulated that teachers did not have to be graduates of a conservatory. Only a state examination was required. This condition was, however, circumvented frequently<sup>3</sup>.

Moreover, graduates of these private institutions were considered to be on the same level as graduates of conservatories. Progressively, music schools were established in the Czech countryside which was a positive stimulus for the development of a distinctive national culture outside town centres. Schools were set up by a Czech publishing house and cultural institution “Ústřední matice školská”, singing communities and to a lesser extent by Czech town self-governments. A “pioneer” among town music schools was the Czech music school in the city of České Budějovice which was founded as early as in 1903<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Vide. F. Gause, *Počátky moderních proudů v naší hudební výchově*, Editio Supraphon, Prague 1975, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Conditions for private education were so favourable (financially as well) that in 1910, for instance, 59 private music schools, 25 singing schools and 4 special singing schools for children operated.

<sup>4</sup> Vide. V. Gregor, T. Sedlický, *Dějiny hudební výchovy v českých zemích a na Slovensku*, Supraphon, Prague 1990, pp. 75.



**Picture 1.** The profile photograph: Tambura players of Catholic Workers Unit, Hradec Králové in the year of 1903

Source: The Museum of Eastern Bohemia in Hradec Králové.

The situation of the arts education system at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>5</sup> is connected with the personality of Otakar Hostinský. He contributed to the growing interest in music pedagogy and to the establishment of music pedagogy as a scientific field, which resulted in a significant increase of aesthetics as a scientific field and a focus on the aesthetic component of the educational process. The activity of Hostinský was highly appreciated by foreign researchers and in the Czech lands it initiated the establishment of Czech “movement for arts education” which was connected to extensive publishing activities in the then press (*Pedagogické rozhledy* – Pedagogical perspectives, *Česká škola* – Czech school etc.). Otakar Hostinský also participated in the creation of the Committee for the Arts Education of Youth under whose auspices the first educational concerts took place in Prague<sup>6</sup>.

### **Arts education from the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak Republic to 1945**

The system of arts education, or of music education respectively, was more or less inherited from the previous period while suffering from a great fragmentation in terms of its organization and facing uncertainty in the economic sphere. New town self-governments, educational institution and even the state as such did not give it enough care. This was one of the reasons why the then arts education was that diverse. Art schools can be divided into private schools and public schools. Private schools still prevailed and they were managed by an individual or by the

<sup>5</sup> Vide. V. Helfert, *Základy hudební výchovy na nehudebních školách*, SPN, Prague 1956, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 60–61.

founder. Public schools were managed by the state. This means that the state was responsible for their direction and the appointment of teachers. Somewhat later, town music schools were established. In private schools, violin and piano lessons and solo singing and choir singing lessons prevailed. Playing wind instruments was taught only at town and community schools according to the needs of the founder. The level of educational process was (mainly at private schools) still very fluctuating, which has been continuously pointed out by experts. For example, V. Gregor interprets R. Kadleček's apt opinion already published in 1905:

... There is such a miserable methodology in music education that has never been before. Children attend a miserable wannabe institution. From what I have learned so far, music is taught everywhere except for private music schools. This fatal mistake was also caused by the fact that music is a liberal trade. To become a teacher you don't have to have any licence and you can "educate" without any qualifications. Frequently, one wannabe teacher teaches more doubly than another one, he ignores études and plays cheesy pub songs...<sup>7</sup>.

Conservatories – higher vocational schools – belonged, among others, to the system of Czech music schools<sup>8</sup>. Music conservatory in Prague was nationalized in 1919 and Music and drama conservatory in Brno, which was established in 1919 from a former organ school, was nationalized in 1920. In the same year a new constitutional charter was adopted<sup>9</sup>. By this charter, the state reserved the supervision over private tuition. State inspectors were responsible for the tuition, school curricula and internal organisational arrangements, however, remained inconsistent.



Picture 2. Invitation to private school events during the Second World War

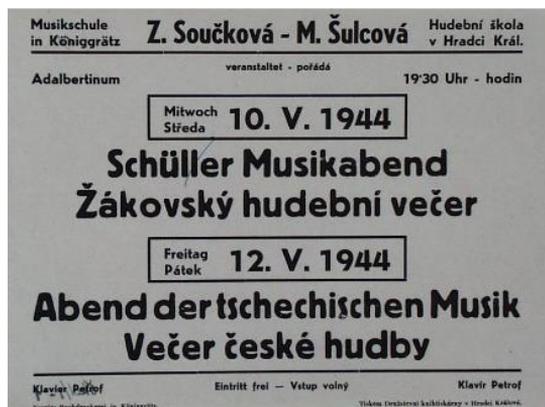
Source: The Museum of Eastern Bohemia in Hradec Králové.

<sup>7</sup> V. Gregor, T. Sedlický, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>8</sup> Until the 1970s, five conservatories were operated in the area of Czechoslovakia (Praha, Brno, Bratislava, Košice, Žilina).

<sup>9</sup> The Constitutional Charter of November 29, 1920, no. 121 Coll.Ú

Private schools still prevailed during the Second World War. Educational processes at these schools were adopted to local conditions and needs of concrete schools<sup>10</sup>. In the last year of the War, the situation became even more complicated as teachers were drafted for forced labor. This does not mean that the arts education was not kept: for example, the school inspector V.B. Aim established new art schools (town school) to which thousands of pupils could have been accepted<sup>11</sup>.



**Picture 3.** Invitation to “The Evening of Czech Music” from 1944 in German and in Czech

Source: The Museum of Eastern Bohemia in Hradec Králové.

### The situation after 1945 – post-war period, transformations during the communist regime

The enthusiasm in the society which was evoked by the liberation of Czechoslovakia and by the end of the Second World War was supported by political and scientific initiatives. At the same time, it had an impact on the transformation of the arts education system<sup>12</sup>. After 1945, the organizational, administrative and pedagogical unification<sup>13</sup> of town and community music, dance and other arts

<sup>10</sup> It is necessary to mention that the Imperial Decree of 1850 was still valid.

<sup>11</sup> Vide. V. Gregor, T. Sedlický, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>12</sup> Ludvík Kundera is one of the personalities connected to post-war music education. Ludvík Kundera was one of the representatives of state control bodies responsible for the supervision of arts education. Kundera was a member of the Examination Board at private schools, the inspector of private music schools in Moravia and Silesia land and the Chair of the Examining Board for teachers at secondary schools and educational institutions. He is the author of the motivational brochure *Jak organizovati hudební výchovu v obnoveném státě* (*How to organize music education in a restored state*). Vide. *Československý hudební slovník osob a institucí, Svazek 1*, State Music Publishing House, Prague 1963, p. 789–790.

<sup>13</sup> Vide. J. Křest'an, *Zdeněk Nejedlý – politik a vědec v osamění*, Publishing House Paseka, Prague 2012, p. 336–337.

schools took place. The year 1947 brought the first post-war curriculum for art schools<sup>14</sup>. During the post-war period, a significant development of youth folk ensembles took place and the tradition of art competitions in art after-school activities of pupils in general was established. Having been referred to as music schools and art schools before, their names were later changed to primary music schools and primary art schools. Since 1948, private schools were being transformed successively and they were nationalized in 1951<sup>15</sup>. Although the process of nationalization regulated salary and conditions of employment, unfortunately, for instance long-term teaching experience of teachers was not taken into account.

The expansion of extracurricular arts – and especially music – activities after 1949 caused that the Ministry of Education and Enlightenment believed that this unsystematic extracurricular share in the development of art skills of an eight-year primary school is sufficient. This suppression of music education at schools, starting in 1953, led to the activation of numerous fighters for music education and its defenders. The Union of Czechoslovak composers was involved primarily<sup>16</sup>. The development stabilized no sooner than in 1958. In accordance with the reform of the system of general education, music and drama schools had the same organizational system<sup>17</sup> (preparatory study programme for children aged from 7 to 8 and nine-year study programme for the youth aged from 8 to 17). In 1960, a unified system and organization of arts education in which particular degrees and types of schools follow each other was protected by the law<sup>18</sup>. Compared to other countries, this was a unique project of a school where study fields are pupils' hobbies and where students are accepted on the basis of a special examination. At the beginning of the school year 1961/1962, various names of primary music schools and primary art schools were unified into one name – people's art schools (LŠU – PAS)<sup>19</sup> with music field, dance field, fine arts field and literary and drama field. The studies are only a leisure activity, but the applicants have to pass an entrance examination<sup>20</sup>.

The organizational structure of primary art schools was protected by the directives of the Ministry of Education and Enlightenment<sup>21</sup>. The music field was

<sup>14</sup> J. Divišová, *Encyklopedie města Hradce Králové*, Svazek 1, Garamon, Hradec Králové 2011, p. 193.

<sup>15</sup> The Circular of the Ministry of Education on July 5, 1951, no. 138672/51-V/4.

<sup>16</sup> Among its spokespersons there were personalities like Josef Plavec, Bohumír Štědroň or already mentioned Ludvík Kundera.

<sup>17</sup> Vide. *Slovník české hudební kultury*, Supraphon, Prague 1997, p. 909.

<sup>18</sup> In this new system of education, primary arts education takes place at art schools, secondary arts education at schools of arts and crafts, higher vocational education at conservatories and tertiary education at tertiary art schools, such as the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague or the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava.

<sup>19</sup> Until these days, on the basis on their abbreviation “LŠU”, primary art schools are referred to as “lidušky” – as the euphemism of a Czech name for girls, “Lída – pet named Liduška”.

<sup>20</sup> V. Gregor, T. Sedlický, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>21</sup> O poslání, organizaci a činnosti lidových škol umění, no. 23 373/61 – IV/4, of May 22, 1961.

divided into the preparatory study programme for children aged from 7 to 8 years, I. study cycle (the basic seven-year study programme for children aged from 8 to 15) and II. study cycle (specialized three-year study programme for the youth and working people aged over 15 and courses for working people)<sup>22</sup>, the dance field into the preparatory study programme for children aged from 7 to 9, I. study cycle (for children aged from 9 to 15) a II. study cycle (organizationally identical to the music field)<sup>23</sup>, the fine arts field<sup>24</sup> was still organizationally identical to the dance field and the literary and drama field was divided into two-year preparatory study programme (for pupils aged over 10), I. study cycle (the basic study programme for pupils aged over 12) a II. study cycle (the three-year study programme with the specialization in literature, declamation, drama performance or puppet theatre for the youth and working people aged over 15 and courses for working people)<sup>25</sup>. Classes students attended did not depend only on their age, but also on their abilities and their level of knowledge<sup>26</sup>.



**Picture 4.** Music field: the work of the pupils' orchestra

Source: J. Harvařík, *Lidové školy umění*, SPN, Praha 1966, pp. 12.

In spite of all the positives and a relatively well-thought-out organization, the normalization had a degrading effect on primary art schools in terms of their po-

<sup>22</sup> It included piano department, string instruments, wind instruments and folk instruments department, the department of singing and the department of music theory.

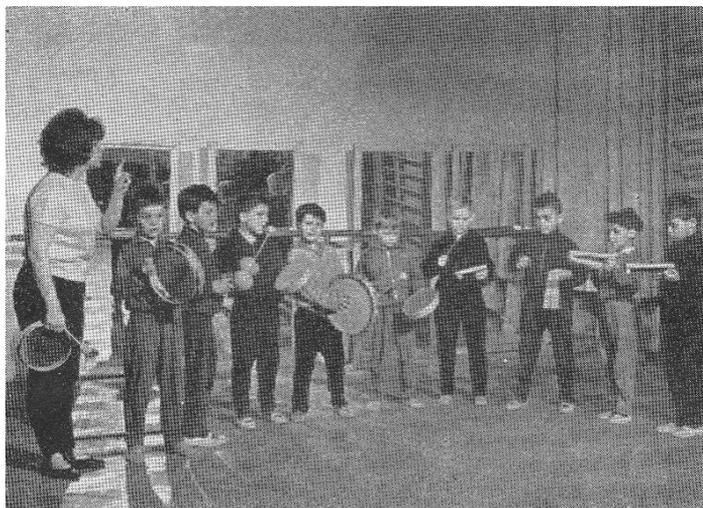
<sup>23</sup> It was divided into departments of basic, physical and musical education, musical movement rhythms department, folk dance, classical dance and dance gymnastics departments.

<sup>24</sup> In art field, it is being taught in department of drawing and painting, graphic techniques, modelling and shaping, working with materials, photography and film.

<sup>25</sup> Literary and drama field is divided into the department of verbal creativity, the department of acting and the department of puppetry.

<sup>26</sup> Vide J. Harvařík, *Lidové školy umění*, SPN, Prague 1966, p. 11–22.

sition in the system of education – by the Education Act of 1978, these schools were classified only as affiliated school institutions. They were considered to be on the same level as, for example, school canteens or youth centers. It was the amendment of the education act after the year 1989 that gave people's art schools back their former status and gave them their current name – private art schools.



**Picture 5.** Dance field: Preparatory study program

Source: J. Harvařík, *Lidové školy umění*, SPN, Praha 1966, pp. 14.



**Picture 6.** Fine arts field – II. cycle: Shaping

Source: J. Harvařík, *Lidové školy umění*, SPN, Praha 1966, pp. 16.



**Picture 7.** Literary drama field: Acting with puppets

Source: J. Harvařík, *Lidové školy umění*, SPN, Praha 1966, pp. 21.

### **Present-day primary art schools: Framework educational programme**

According to the decree<sup>27</sup>, the primary art schools establish a music field, a dance field, a fine arts field and a literary and drama field or only some of them. Schools also organize preparatory programmes, basic study programmes, programmes with the extended number of lessons and study programmes for adults. The preparatory study programme consists of two years at maximum and it is intended for children who are younger than five years old. It is also possible for younger and exceptionally gifted children to be included in this study programme on the basis of the recommendation of a pedagogical-psychological centre. The basic study programme is divided into 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, the number of years in each grade is set by the curriculum. Extended studies are devoted to the pupils who show extraordinary talent and excellent results in basic studies. Programmes for adults last for a maximum term of four years. In individual fields of study, teaching is organized in the form of individual, group or collective teaching. Only those candidates who successfully pass a talent test, or successfully complete their previous studies, will be admitted to study. The study programme is completed by passing the final exam. The final exam may take the form of a graduate concert or an art exhibition.

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<sup>27</sup> That is the Decree on Primary Art Schools of June the 14th 1991 issued by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

Since 2007<sup>28</sup> primary arts education undergoes some transformations through the introduction of new curricula: on the basis of the concept of education and the development of the educational system in the Czech Republic<sup>29</sup>, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS-MŠMT) ratified new principles of pre-school, primary, secondary, higher vocational and other education and introduced a new system of curricular documents which are formed on two levels – the state level and the school level. The document on the state level is the National Educational Programme (NEP-RVP) and framework educational programmes which define binding frameworks for particular fields of education. At the school level, we speak about school educational programmes (SEP-ŠVP), according to which pupils are educated at particular schools. For the needs of primary art schools, the Framework Educational Programme for Primary Arts Education (FEP PAE) is issued. On its basis, every school creates its SEP.

The principles of the Framework Educational Programme are based on the liberalization of the educational process, the support of the educational autonomy at schools, professional responsibilities of teachers and the introduction of new forms and methods into teaching, highlighting a pupil's direction towards the acquisition of key competencies, an equal access to arts education at primary art schools and on keeping and developing cultural traditions<sup>30</sup>.

The organizational structure of primary arts education does not change in its essence. However, the new education strategy emphasizes so-called key competencies that are based on the concept of lifelong learning programme in primary arts education. They are defined as:

[...] a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes which are important for a pupil's development in the arts and in order to find his/her use in his real and professional life. The development of these specific competences is aimed mainly at developing pupils' ability to create, perceive and interpret artwork...<sup>31</sup>.

In this case, the pupils shall have competences at that level, which is achievable for them with regard to their possibilities in the given period. Hence the purpose is not the ultimate achievement of key competencies, but a continuous direction towards them.

...Key competencies, as they are defined, are common to all artistic disciplines of primary arts education: competencies to communicate about arts (a pupil has those knowledge and skills that enable him/her to choose and use independently means of arts expression, he/she deeply understands the structure and the content of an artwork and he/she is able to recognize its quality), personality and social competencies (a pupil has working habits

<sup>28</sup> The education process itself is realized according to the Framework Educational Programme for Primary Art Schools since 2012.

<sup>29</sup> This one is protected in the law No. 561/2004 Coll.

<sup>30</sup> T. Votava, *Vývoj státního základního uměleckého školství v Hradci Králové od 2. poloviny 20. století dodnes*, (master's degree thesis), Masaryk University, Brno 2015, p. 64–65.

<sup>31</sup> Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní umělecké školství, Prague: VUP, 2010. pp. 14

which are formed by a systematic artistic activities and which form his moral qualities, volition and value orientation, he/she is engaged effectively in joint arts activities and he/she realizes his/her responsibility for a joint work), cultural competencies (he/she is sensitive to values of art and culture and he/she sees them as an important part of human existence, he/she contributes actively to creating and preserving these values and to passing them to future generations)...<sup>32</sup>.

As in other types of education, the new system in primary arts education has both advantages and disadvantages. Without any doubts, one of the most positive aspects is the growth of the autonomy of particular schools: the possibility to create their own school educational programme in familiar conditions and for their own pupils. The programme can be discussed, it can be changed in case it is necessary for the institution and, last but not least, everything which is complicated and not essential can be omitted<sup>33</sup>. There is also the threat of the lack of motivation to qualitative transformations which numerous educators did not feel prepared to. Moreover, before new curricular documents were ratified, teachers had organized lessons according to the syllabi which had been old at some points. On the other hand, every change is connected to some uncertainties and concerns about how a situation may develop. The final consequence of this situation could have led to demotivation of educators and to their stagnation. School curricula have been valid for seven years. Those schools which, fortunately, have made use of their possibilities have become a springboard for creating a significant and a unique school profile. At the same time, they offer a whole range of new ways of working with pupils and opportunities for students to become familiar with arts in its various forms.

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<sup>32</sup> Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní umělecké školství, Prague: VUP, 2010. pp. 14

<sup>33</sup> It is also necessary to mention the possibility of updating school educational plan continuously.

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## Przegląd rozwoju publicznej edukacji artystycznej od momentu ustanowienia Republiki Czechosłowackiej do czasów obecnych

### Streszczenie

Artykuł przedstawia krótki przegląd chronologiczny rozwoju podstawowej edukacji artystycznej od momentu ustanowienia Republiki Czechosłowackiej. Ukazuje jego stopniowe modyfikacje w zależności od wewnętrznych krajowych przemian i podsumowuje warunki jego funkcjonowania. Dużą uwagę poświęca się współczesnym artystycznym szkołom podstawowym podlegającym administracji państwowej, zwłaszcza z punktu widzenia ich wewnętrznej organizacji, szczególnej pozycji w systemie czeskiej edukacji artystycznej i specyfiki w zakresie koncepcji kompetencji kluczowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** edukacja podstawowa, Republika Czechosłowacka, rozwój, organizacja, dokumenty.

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## **Nástin vývoje českého státního základního uměleckého školství od založení Československé republiky po současnost**

### **Zhrnutie**

Príspevok prináša stručný chronologický prehľad vývoje základního uměleckého školství od stavu v době vzniku Československé republiky až po jeho současnou situaci. Mapuje jeho postupné modifikace v závislosti na vnitrostátních dobových proměnách a shrnuje podmínky jeho fungování. Velká pozornost je věnována současným základním uměleckým školám pod státní správou, a to především z hlediska jejich vnitřní organizace, výlučného postavení v systému českého uměleckého školství a specifik ve způsobu jejich pojetí klíčových kompetencí.

**Klíčová slova:** základní umělecké školství, Československá republika, vývoje, organizace, dokumenty.