

Original research paper

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Renáta KočíšováUniversity of Prešov
Prešov**AN OUTLINE OF A TEACHING
AID FOR SLOVAK MUSIC PEDAGOGY**

Key words: *music education, didactic interpretation of the opera, teaching aid, Eugen Suchoň, Krútňava (Katrena)*

Socio-cultural character of our opera audience

The past three decades have brought about rapid changes in the needs of society. The aging and decline of the population, which is regularly recorded by demographic studies, has an impact on education as well as cultural institutions. The results of a marketing and demographic study of opera audiences in Europe (*European Opera Audience Mapping – survey results processed by Martin Cikánek, Jednota hudebního publika (Unity of Music Audience) 2012*)¹ show that visitors to opera performances are mainly members of the middle-aged and elderly generation (older than 45 years of age). The study also pointed to the risk factor of low attendance at operas by the population aged 35 and under, which, for the future, means a threat to the existence of opera audiences as such. One of the outcomes stated by Bernard Focroulle (in the above study) is the finding that, should a person not visit an opera performance by the age of 35, the probability they would visit one by the end of their life is markedly reduced. It is necessary that both the pedagogical community and cultural institutions take a stand regarding the results.

Involvement of theatrical institutions in acquiring young audience

The fact that, in the past decades, the relationship towards cultural values was not solely formed by schools is positive. Active help is found on the part of theatre houses – which is also mentioned by the 2011 scholarly study *Mapping Report 2011*

¹ Available online: www.jednotahd.cz/dotaznik/studie/1.1_JHDMarketing.Evropske%20operni%20publikum.pdf [accessed on: 27/09/2014].

on *Opera and Dance Education in Europe*² (carried out by The RESEO Team, Katherine Heid, Isabel Joly, Chine Venturi). Twelve European countries took part in the above survey³. The V4 countries did not take part in the study (or were not approached). One might assume that such educational activities commonly take place in the theatres of Visegrad-area countries but are not systemically carried out. The above study showed rather positive results regarding so-called “education departments” being established in opera houses, which, within their operation, repertoire and permanent or temporary employees (mediators) work with various groups in the area of opera and dancing art education. Those who work with groups are active artists as well as experienced dramaturges, set designers, and directors. The estimated average age and education of the target group with whom the education department of the given cultural institution communicates can be seen in Figure 1. The activities of cultural institutions most commonly involve pre-school, primary and secondary school children within the hours of education (22-28%), i.e. similar groups to those that primary and secondary schools work with. The target group of adults reached 4-9% with the exception of families with children (children probably aged 15 and under).

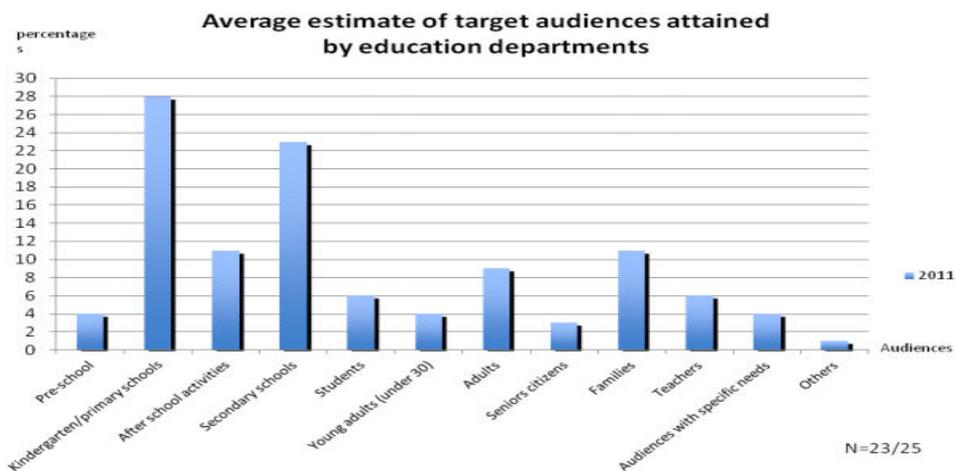


Fig. 1. Estimated average age and education of target audiences with whom education departments of the cultural institutions cooperate

Education departments of the approached theatres work with target groups indirectly by means of websites, programme booklets and leaflets, social networks, blogs, media, or off-stage meets, such as open days, etc. (the percentages can be seen in Figure 2). The activities of such education departments with target groups can be divided between (1) indirect communication (by means of off-stage activities) and (2) direct communication (by means of on-stage theatre activities).

² Cf. reseo.org/sites/default/files/research/documents/Mapping2011FINAL.pdf [accessed on: 23/09/2014].

³ The number of theatre institutions: Austria: 1, Belgium: 2, Denmark: 1, France: 8, Germany: 1, Ireland: 1, Italy: 1, Netherlands: 1, Russia: 1, Spain: 2, Sweden: 2, United Kingdom: 5; a total of 26 opera houses.

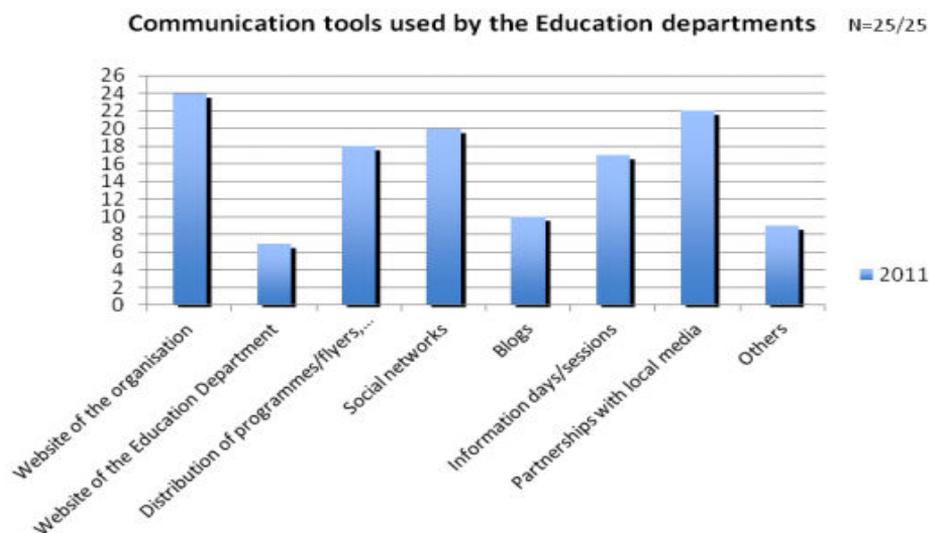


Fig. 2. Communication means used by education departments – types of activities carried out with target groups

The greatest share of work by opera houses with target groups is carried out by means of performances. It is there that the visitor obtains stimuli from real artists, can see and hear a real orchestra, experiences the atmosphere of the theatre, shows appreciation of the performances by applause, whistles or crying out “bravo!”. There are opera houses which provide the possibility to find out more detail about the performed work of art (piano abridgments and individual issues are compared and contrasted with a fine-tooth comb with the on-stage performance, e.g. Wiener Staatsoper and others). As it, however, results from the education system, direct communication between schools and theatres is rather rare, and based on the planned visits of performances suggested beforehand. These are rather limited opportunities.

Stratification of teaching aids

The gap in the visit rates of opera performances can be filled by teaching aids⁴, or new technologies at schools when working with the internet. The classification of teaching aids⁵ varies greatly, according to the function of their use. The author of the paper has completed the classification with a list of specific teaching aids for music-pedagogical practice and their interactive function:

Teaching aids for music lessons:

⁴ These are material means which improve the education process and make education activities easier for students. They were originally aimed at the demonstrative aspect of education, for more detail, cf.: Z. Obdržálek, K. Horváthová et al., *Organizácia a manažment školstva. Terminologický a výkladový slovník*, Bratislava 2004, p. 361.

⁵ Ibidem.

- auditory: CDs, cassettes, LPs;
- visual: musical instruments, dummies or models of instruments, music materials (notes, piano abridgments), drawings, or portraits and busts of composers, thematic maps, note records on the board;
- literary: publications on music, dictionaries, teaching handbooks, textbooks;
- audiovisual⁶: (a) video programmes without interference on the part of the teacher: DVD recordings of performances, films about musicians, composers, biographical pictures about personalities; (b) educational programmes with input and preparation on the part of the teacher: such as DVDs – didactic interpretation of a piece of music, interpretation on a musical instrument with commentary;
- interactive: (a) material: interactive boards (b) non-material: staging of a theme, improvisation by students and the teacher at the lesson.

Opera – its typology and possible use in teaching and educational processes

The present contribution is focused on a didactic interpretation of an opera theme, so-called *gesamtkunstwerk* – demonstrative, scenic and syncretic⁷ form. In the terminology of music pedagogy, two areas of introducing opera to children are common: (1) *children's opera*, as opera performed by children (mostly child interpreters, or combined with adults) and (2) *opera for children*, opera performed by adult interpreters, as Ivana Ašenbrenerová points out in her contribution⁸. Taking the decrease in young generation visiting theatre, or opera performances, into consideration, these two areas should be completed with another form of musical theatre: (3) *opera for an adult viewer*, which would appeal to primary and secondary school children. All three above areas should take these principles into consideration: demonstrativeness (appealing story), simplicity (appropriate extent and clear arrangement), as well as intelligibility (easily identifiable music and its attributes – such as rhythm, melody, tempo, etc.), as well as the principle of creativity, feedback realised at the end of the didactic interpretation. According to Elena Baranová⁹, “perceiving a work of art stimulates, at the level of percipients, ideas of various art styles. Interactive links within art, connected poetry, music, fine art, as well as other artistic performances, allow more efficient fulfilment of two main

⁶ Audiovisual and interactive teaching aids provide such perceptive stimuli which are better remembered. They can be found in the bottom parts of the well-known cone – teaching pyramid, as stated in: E. Dale, *Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching*, New York 1946, p. 39; also cf.: www.orangeacademy.cz/pyramida-uceni.php.

⁷ Syncretism – general, non-analytical, intuitive perception of objects and phenomena of the surrounding world. These are generalised images of reality, for more detail, cf.: www.scritub.com/limba/ceha-slovaca/VVIN-DETSKEJ-KRESBY132524917.php.

⁸ I. Ašenbrenerová, *Dětská opera nebo opera pro děti?*, [in:] *Súčasná slovenská hudobná tvorba pre deti. Determinanty-východická-perspektívy a Hudba pre deti v tvorbe skladateľov 20. storočia v stredoeurópskom priestore a jej národné špecifiká*, Banská Bystrica 2005, pp. 22-24.

⁹ E. Baranová, *Synkretizmus hudby, poézie a obrazu*, www.ped.muni.cz/wmus/studium/doktor/recepce/baranova.htm.

goals in the education process: to form the relationship towards art; and develop creativity which does not need to be aimed at artistic presentation". It was with the same intention that the teaching aid in question was outlined. It was based on the principle that syncretism is innate in children from a very early age, which can be, at the didactic level, successfully applied in various music activities. Didactic interpretation using an overview of a work of musical theatre with the teacher's commentary (in German terminology so-called *Operndidaktik*) where the basic terms are explained and, consequently, the workbook is used in a creative way, and feedback is received, can be among commonly used pedagogical techniques, which is also proven by surveys at primary schools in Slovakia. The survey on innovation of music education in comprehensive schools in Slovakia in 2005 and 2006 found that music-reception activities came third (at the first level of primary schools) and second (at the second level of primary schools) after vocal-intonation and kinaesthetic activities. In this survey, teachers also claimed they used information and communication technologies in music education especially at the second level of primary schools¹⁰.

As a model to realise the goal, videotapes, prepared within the concept of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in Austria (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur, *Opern für Kinder und Jugendliche*, No. 88975 *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* von W. A. Mozart and No. 88139 *Hänsel und Gretel* von E. Humperdinck) were used. The videotapes include older recordings of theatre performances from 1980 and 1981. The tapes were prepared by a team of experts who precisely chose the most significant musical points (parts) in a work of musical theatre. A newer stratum is found in a video recording of a commentary (2001), in which a presenter among children in a theatre, comments on, or talks through the plot of an opera. These videotapes not only serve as a teaching aid for music education but have also been found useful in other comprehensive and specialised subjects. It was not the aim of the author to prepare a "slovakised" copy of these video recordings but to enrich video-projection by presentation, available in new computer technologies and replace the presenter with a text or other activity, directly connected to the recipient.

Didactics of opera in school conditions

Audio-visual reproduction of works of musical theatre in European schools started its more considerable development as late as the second half of the 20th century as a solid part of music education, especially under the influence of reproduction technologies (video, DVD, CD-ROM) and its dissemination in schools. Although the reproduction of opera and ballet in European schools has a rather short history, it has, in the recent past, become a popular part of music education not only on the part of students and teachers but also school leaderships. Reproduction by means of DVDs makes the work available in its audiovisual form, and not only al-

¹⁰ M. Krušinská, *Tvorivosť v hudobnej výchove ako prostriedok k rastu hudobných schopností detí v základnej škole*, "Acta Humanica" 2005, vol. 1, pp. 289-298.

lows the reproduction of sound, but also picture, which, as a non-musical means supports the quality of perception. The realisation of such reproduction is less time-consuming and financially-draining than organising a group of children to take a trip to a real performance and, above all, provides space for the verbalisation of the art work¹¹. In foreign literature, the term *Operndidaktik* is used to label didactic interpretation of opera, which has, in the German school syllabi, found its significant place¹². The main goal of didactic interpretation of works of musical theatre is to mediate large wholes – opera and ballet performances in an abridged version and to also make more challenging pieces available as part of an integral conception, by selecting the most typical music points (parts) of a piece. At the same time, theoretical, historic and plot-related information is didactically interpreted in a purposeful selection, and the listeners (students) are motivated and lead to active experiencing and poly-aesthetic perception (of text, music, dance, visual art, acting, etc.). Didactics of musical theatre leads to the perception of a complex art work and, at the same time, it may record feedback from students in the role of viewers, i.e. also their creativity, inspired by seeing the work of musical theatre. In the following chapters, the author of the paper will try to apply this seemingly complex goal of “opera didactics” to Slovak musical theatre – the opera *Katrena* by Eugen Suchoň.

Theoretical points of departure for designing a teaching aid and their link to the professional training of teachers

When drafting the teaching aid – didactic interpretation of the opera *Katrena* – the thus-far unparalleled publication by Igor Vajda *Slovak opera*¹³, proved invaluable, mainly the chapter *Operas by E. Suchoň* (pp. 37-48), where the reader can find a musicologist’s standpoint on the viewed premieres of the above opera and its position in the context of the history of Slovak modernism. Igor Vajda in this publication provides a sufficient musical-dramaturgic analysis of the piece, which a teacher can apply in practice in an abridged form. For the sound presentation, the CD E. Suchoň *Krútnava* (translator’s note – the original title of *Katrena*) was used, OPUS 9356 2094-95, as well as the piano abridgement Suchoň, Eugen: *Krútnava*, opera in 6 acts, abridged by the composer, SHV, Bratislava 1976, p. 260. The piano abridgement can be found in libraries; the CD is available in schools or school libraries. In the process of writing this paper, numerous piano-only and on-stage rehearsals in the State Theatre in Košice came as great inspiration. It is crucial to realise that, in school conditions, a detailed analysis of the piece is not necessary, only the main features, or the structure of the piece, should be explained, which can be found in publications on music forms. In didactic interpretation, a deep tectonic-harmonic analysis of opera is not concerned; the teacher only provides the students with an outline; he labels

¹¹ Due to the irreplaceable ambience and artistic experience of a real-life performance, reproduced “performance” is not a full-value replacement.

¹² For more detail, cf.: W. Mastnak, *Klangszenen und Musiktheaterimprovisation im Unterricht*, [in:] *Multimediální komunikace v hudební a polyestetické výchově*, Prague 2001, pp. 30-43.

¹³ I. Vajda, *Slovak opera*, Bratislava 1988.

the main features and abstracts information. He points out individual sources of inspiration, of which there can be a few. The most familiar inspiration for Slovak opera composers are elements of music folklore, dancing, i.e. elements of national provenance, as well as foreign elements, old music techniques, and expressive means of contemporary music, etc. Within the specialised preparation, it is necessary to classify the piece in question in the development of opera and list its main features and specifics, or, possibly, to point out parallels; in the case of Slovak national opera, they concern operas which are equally important for other nations – Czech, Hungarian, Polish, German, etc. The interpretation of the theme should briefly suggest the development of Slovak opera in the context of music development in Europe. The main roles are closely connected to the plotline of the piece. The complex nature of preparation for an opera overview lies in the fact that, apart from soloists, it is also performed by collective bodies: a choir, orchestra, ballet, or extras. An opera is composed by the following people: the author of the literary basis, a librettist, the opera composer, (in foreign operas also the translator). The following people also bring their artistic ideas to the opera: conductor, director, set designer, costume designer and other professionals. In the professional preparation, a teacher should also provide space to present the author of the opera, his composing background (partially captured in the biography) as well as the sources of inspiration and, especially, his other works of musical theatre and instrumental pieces. When interpreting the piece in question, this information should, however, be treated carefully; the students should not be overloaded with encyclopaedic knowledge. More literature on Eugen Suchoň has been produced in the past decades, thanks to the tendencies of scholarly and pedagogical processes in Slovakia after the breakup of Czechoslovakia (after 2003). The first steps after the foundation of autonomous republics were marked by some kind of eccentric powers (one of such consequences of the separation is valid to date: the termination of sending publications to Czech and Slovak libraries simultaneously, which was the case within the Czechoslovak Republic). One could assume that the awareness of regional and national patterns have recently been a key topic of domestic research and conferences. The pedagogical community focused on composers of national importance, or found national tendencies and historical contexts within the territory of Slovakia. In the case of the composer Eugen Suchoň, recently, there have been dozens of scholarly works, papers and conferences. The following could be mentioned: *Eugen Suchoň v kontexte európskej hudby 20. storočia* (*Eugen Suchoň in the context of European music in the 20th century*) ed. Ľ. Chalupka¹⁴, Ľ. Chalupka, *Eugen Suchoň a 12 tónov* (*Eugen Suchoň and 12 tones*)¹⁵, Ľ. Chalupka, *Listy Ivana Ballu Eugenovi Suchoňovi* (*Letters to Eugen Suchoň from Ivan Balla*)¹⁶, D. Štilichová-Suchoňová, *Život plný hudby. Hudobný skladateľ Eugen Suchoň 1908-1993 v spomienkach* (*A life filled with music. The composer Eugen Suchoň 1908-1993 in memories*)¹⁷, *Tvorivý odkaz Eugena Suchoňa v kontexte miesta, doby, vývoja a diela vrstovníkov* (*The creative message of Eugen Suchoň in the context of the*

¹⁴ Conference almanac, Bratislava 1998, 126 p., 1st edition.

¹⁵ In: "Slovenská hudba. Revue for Music Culture" 1998, vol. 1-2, pp. 5-35.

¹⁶ A contribution on the cognition of unknown chapters in the development of Slovak music after 1945, "Slovenská hudba. Revue for Music Culture" 1999, vol. 2-3, pp. 386-401.

¹⁷ Bratislava 2005, 255 p.

place, era, development and works of his contemporaries), ed. Ľ. Chalupka¹⁸, M. Blahynka, *Dopad doktrínárskej estetiky na opernú tvorbu Eugena Suchoňa (The impact of doctrinal aesthetic on operatic pieces by Eugen Suchoň)*¹⁹, Miloslav Kabeláč (1908-1979) – Eugen Suchoň (1908-1993)²⁰, *Slovenská hudba 20. storočia v pohľadoch a kontextoch (Slovak music in the 20th century in views and contexts)*, ed. Ľ. Chalupka²¹ and many others.

Practical issues and music drama bases necessary for designing a teaching aid

A lesson in which the opera is to be presented has a limited length – 45 minutes. A verbal introduction, which should include basic data about the work and the composer, or, possibly, the necessary terminology²² is followed by a practical part: reproduced overview of the performance – in this case, there is an effort to combine

¹⁸ International musicological conference almanac, Bratislava 2009, 462 p.

¹⁹ In: „Hudobný život“ 2009, vol. 1-2, pp. 8-9.

²⁰ International musicological conference almanac on the 100th anniversary of the births of composers, Prague 2010, 191 p.

²¹ Bratislava 2011, 168 p., 1st edition.

²² **National music** – includes works of domestic schools of composing – Czech, German, Hungarian, Polish, Russian, Slovak, etc. It cannot be strictly defined; rather, one can determine certain attributes, motifs, or ideas which the composer chose in order to achieve accordance with the social situation of the nation striving for political-social and cultural integrity. Important music resources of national music are found in folklore and prosodic features of the national language, which the composer transforms into music. National music was composed in the 19th century; it was a product of Romanticism; in younger nations (among which is also the Slovak nation), it was composed in the 20th century. **Slovak music modernism** – the works of the Slovak generation of composers in the period of E. Suchoň and J. Cikker, as well as A. Moyzes, L. Holoubek and other composers of the 1930s. The works of these composers were, compared to previous developments in music, avant-garde in many ways, regarding music thought and the use of new style-generating means. Artistically, it dealt with the heritage of folk music and showed the ability to mediate the European development into its own works. The term Slovak music modernism, used to label the generation of the 1920s and 1930s, was coined by Ladislav Burlas as an analogy to Slovak modernism in literature and fine arts. Each of these composers contributed to the national heritage in his own way. A. Moyzes, the oldest of them all, with his symphonism, E. Suchoň with his thinker's and balladic expression, J. Cikker with his directness and emotionality, etc. Works of musical theatre by pupils of Slovak composers are somehow naturally included in the context of these developments, and not only followed the domestic, or European, tradition, but mainly fulfilled the attributes of musical “modernity” in the 20th century. **Slovak opera** – operatic works by contemporary Slovak composers and their predecessors. Its history is rather young and started its independent development when Czechoslovakia came into existence in 1918 (Wieland, the Smith; Detvan; Katrena; Resurrection and others). In the case of opera, it concerns the fulfilment of a number of conditions: original Slovak libretto, elements inspired by national music originating in folk, church or secular tradition, a theme may or may not originate in Slovak history. By “Slovak opera” one could understand a specific work by a Slovak composer or works of Slovak musical theatre as a genre; in a broader sense also its lifetime – the ways of its presentation. **The Košice State Theatre** is a successor of professional theatrical companies, active in the town's and region's history virtually since the Middle Ages. The Košice State Theatre, as a contemporary legal subject, was founded in 1945 as the second three-ensemble professional theatre (after the Slovak National Theatre) with a dramatic, operatic and ballet ensemble.

theory and practice into one greater whole and provide a projection of a Slovak opera (its overview) in one whole. The direct watching of the opera does not require any further commentary; however, in the music lessons to come, reflective phases follow – a motivation dialogue between the teacher and the students and, consequently, work with workbooks and the evaluation of the outcomes. Here, space is provided for a subjective approach of each student, his own evaluation, as well as his own creative work and imagination based on the viewed composition. In the textbook, the student is motivated to his own creative conclusions and solutions.

Katrena is based on a literary work, *Behind the Upper Mill (Za vyšným mlynom – 1926)*, perhaps Milo Urban's most well-known novella²³, who was twenty-two when he wrote it. It is a story of a murder and moral punishment and of a murderer fighting his own conscience. The literary basis became a penetrative impulse for the opera *Katrena* which, in its ground plan, is a symphonic cycle. There are no closed scenes; it is composed continuously, and runs through in one constant flow of music with aria and parlando character. The opera is filled with catharsis – be it public (Ondrej's confession) or subjective (Štelina's forgiveness). Suchoň starts with the primary capacity of human voice in music theatre to which he subjects the density of the orchestral score. The vocal priority in Suchoň's work is proved by the fact that the central music core of the opera – the murderer's cry when swayed by remorse – "It wasn't me!" – is of vocal origin. In Suchoň's opera, the choice was focused on the representative samples of musical theatre, from the musical as well as plot-related viewpoint. Although the music-related selection was paramount, the plotline could not be neglected – the changing scenes, the shifts in the plot, the variability with which the music basis was processed and new characters entering the plot were also presented. Due to the literary basis itself capturing the internal world of the characters and their fates in quite a complex way – emotional instability (Ondrej) and dissatisfaction with one's fate (Štelina), which are fairly complex emotional states of an individual – the following samples were included (while maintaining the intelligibility of the text): spoken dialogue, melodrama (text accompanied by the orchestra), parlando and aria segments accompanied by the orchestra, as well as scenic instrumental music. There was an effort to present *Katrena* not as an ethnic opera but rather a national opera, masterfully using domestic as well as European resources of inspiration. It was the intention of the paper to present the opera *Katrena*, a pillar of Slovak opera, to adolescents (students of the second level of primary schools, specifically those in the 8th and 9th grades, and students of secondary schools), not as a "miraculous opera which evokes a sense of beauty in people", but to point to the way it transforms, precisely and in detail, unspoken thoughts and feelings and dramatically enhances conflict situations. Moreover, to show how folk singing, music and dancing in the past were present in the entire life-cycle, and are presented in a stylised form and point out the elements of Suchoň's language of music. Even though students at 13 to 15 years of age have defined and, more or less finalised, their musical tastes, the teacher should appeal and offer an appropriate quality alternative in an

²³ In the Slovak state era, his inclination to nationalist ideas came to the surface, which he, to various degrees, provided as a opinion-forming journalist – the editor-in-chief of the newspaper "Gardista" (Guardian), cf.: kultura.sme.sk/c/4989762/citankovy-autor-milo-urban-veril-nacistom.html

audiovisual form not only attractive by the sound and drama, but also the picture or the plotline and, also, facilitate feedback or motivation for further musical activities.

An overview of E. Suchoň's opera *Katrena*

It was rather difficult to choose audiovisual samples from the ample, approximately 1 hour and 40 minute-long opera (recording) and “fit it” in an overview approximately 33 minutes long (providing time for commentary and the maximum length of a 45-minute teaching lesson). It was motivated by the effort to select the key plot segments and to provide the outline with a dramatic framework, which would chronologically copy the opera as a whole – in a logical sequence, while focusing on the most interesting streams of music presented by the composer and, in this way, present a young listener with Suchoň's most typical musical language and use the samples to demonstrate various ways of using voices and orchestra in formations: e.g. solo – arias and parlando, melodrama, duet, choir segments, dance character of music, etc. Since *Katrena* is musically continuous, without classicistic musical boundaries and clear symmetric forms, in spite of good dramaturgic knowledge of the opera, the selection of an appropriate segment of the composition was not always univocal but rather based on reception. What was paramount was auditory selection. This was usually followed by consulting the piano abridgment in order to make sure the selection was correct and, in a way, compact. The selection was often followed by a change in the tempo, mood, or scene and it was impossible to make it perfect. There was an effort to avoid interfering in tense, dramatic situations while, naturally, treating the work of art with the utmost respect. It was the intention for the sequences to not give a stern or abrupt impression. On several occasions, due to time reasons, the ABA' song structure could not be included in its entirety, but only its third section (A'), which fluently (continuously) moved into a different atmosphere (scene, or mood) – this was also recorded, as it was of importance. What follows is specific justification and explanation of the overview:

Track 1 – The opera starts with the first introductory scene of a forest clearing, first in an instrumental core of the opera: “It wasn't me!”, directly followed by the theme in the first clarinet with the folk motif from the song *Zabili Janička na holi* (Johnny was killed in a pasture), a melancholic motif of bachelorhood and manly strength. This is done in medias res, with no overture, which gives a static impression. Although the introductory choir had to be, sadly, omitted, it is used in the opera closing (i.e. also in the selection) and the plot commentary by the choir (the village folk) is applied elsewhere. The instrumental introduction is followed by Marka and Zuzka singing in surprise over the discovery of the dead body, which, from the musical viewpoint, is an interesting duet: a cry for help followed by the arrival of several villagers who identify Ján Štelina – a musical conversation of parlando type (Piano abridgement pp.7-17 / L'istesso tempo – Nevideli ste mŕtveho? / Have you seen the dead man?).

Track 2 – The second entry starts with a typical lamentation by the village “weeper” women, a prayer over the dead. The part where old Štelina, the father of the murdered, arrives was omitted. A dramatic moment in this sequence is the arrival

of Katrena and Štelina issues an accusation. It ends with Katrena's aria about (doomed) love and the opera's core – the cry “It wasn't me!” which is, in the course of the opera, given a different dimension (Piano abridgement pp. 25-33 / Allegro risoluto – To nie ja! / It wasn't me! – un poco allarg).

Track 3 – A rather short third entry starts with a spoken dialogue between two villagers - Hriňo and Oleň, one of whom was present at the investigation of the murder. The space in front of the house where the murder is being investigated is filled with conversations, gossip, conflict, well-meant advice and meets. This captures the highly tense atmosphere of the guilty to be convicted (Piano abridgement pp. 45-46 / dialogue – a nie mužom! / not her husband!).

Track 4 – The fourth entry takes place at the gendarmerie teeming with new facts; the investigation, however, does not bring about anything new. Here, though, Štelina and Ondrej meet face to face; Ondrej walking Katrena home. The second scene ends with an interesting melodrama by the chief constable accompanied by the orchestra (Piano abridgement pp. 63-71 / Čo to chceli?! / What was it they wanted?! – the end of the second scene).

Track 5 – This entry marks a major contrast in comparison to the previous one, as it brings fun to all the village folk – enjoying a wedding. Katrena and Ondrej are getting married at Zimoň's on All Saints' Day; it has barely been a month since the investigation. The dancing nature of the music is highlighted by the wedding guests singing. In a lively pair dance, everyone suddenly forgets about the tragedy. “Ej, však medové ústa máš/Your lips are like honey” slowly shifts to women dancing “Páslo dievča pávy/A girl shepherded peacocks”. The entry starts with the chorus of the song and the cry of a little shepherd who “found himself” in the wedding suite and ends with bar No. 16 on p. 91 with the wedding guests crying “Ya-hoo!” while the merriment is being shown. Bridal bonneting (a three-stage request known in Slavic tradition) was omitted, in spite of its magic connotation. The middle part of the third scene was also omitted, as was the conversation between close relatives, Katrena and Ondrej's dancing/chase, and Štelina's reproachful comments at the wedding (Piano abridgement pp. 78-91 / The little shepherd's Ya-hoo! / The wedding guests' Ya-hoo).

Track 6 – The fourth scene takes place a year later and is represented in the sixth entry. Suchoň brought to the stage a woman's intimacy – the mother and her baby. A lullaby that Katrena sings to her son starts with an arpeggiated harp chord and ends, once again, with a harp solo and the words “Spi, synček, spi!!/Sleep, my son, sleep!!”. Experts rate it as one of the opera's most beautiful arias. Although it is the skeleton of the entire fourth scene, it could not be included in its whole length, only the introductory part (Piano abridgement pp. 129-131 / Amabile / Spi, synček, spi! / Sleep, my son, sleep!).

Track 7 – Ondrej's most beautiful aria “Vrav, dievča, kde si krásu vzalo? / Tell me, girl, where your beauty comes from?”, is captured in this entry. It is introduced by a tutti melody in the first violins: The entry, however, does not end with his aria – Ondrej's other face is shown: a man in doubt, swayed by his own impure conscience. The entry shows what a drama the opera Katrena is. The scene shows a conflict, or a fight, between

Ondrej and Štelina. The drama culminates with Ondrej running away from home, in music expressed by a blow on the tympani and deep ostinato tones in the orchestra (Piano abridgement pp. 159-175 / *espressivo* / Grave).

Track 8 – To choose a sequence from the fifth scene was among the hardest decisions, as the whole scene could not be included. The choice was between two alternatives; in the end, the first was selected. Ondrej comes to the place “Behind the upper mill” where John Štelina was found murdered. He is drunk, is staggering and singing a drinking-song “Křemáročka moja/My dear barmaid”. The sequence starts with the chorus and continues with a concealed confession and fear... “To nie ja!/It wasn’t me” with an echo; he falls to the ground, exhausted, his mental health at breaking point. He is determined to confess to the done deed. The choir singing a lovely melody behind the scene had to be omitted. The confession pronounced out loud (which is also heard in the final entry) was given priority due to its dramatic effect (Piano abridgement pp. 186-193 / *Allegro moderato* / *Ja už nevládzem* / I cannot go on any longer).

Track 9 – The entry brings a sequence of a party taking place after lent – it is Easter. Almost the entire village is having fun in front of the pub. The sequence starts with the third period of the song in the tenor pitch “Ej pred hostincom hudci hrajú”/Musicians are playing by the pub. The fun is, however, interrupted by a gunshot and a startled woman whose head the bullet missed by inches (Piano abridgement pp. 223-232 / *Tenors* / *Pravdu hovोरim* / I’m telling the truth).

Track 10 – The final entry starts with Ondrej’s declaration (confession) of love towards Katrena, which is actually him searching for a reason for jealousy and murder. Ondrej publically admits his deed in front of the entire village. Štelina, in spite of the injustice, gives Ondrej and Katrena’s son a little horse he had bought at the Feast of Indulgence. Ondrej leaves for prison (Piano abridgement pp. 247a *Meno mosso* / *Andante* / the opera ends).

Reflections after the reception of the opera – elaboration of particular tasks for the workbook

A strong part of the presented teaching aid on the opera *Katrena* is the workbook²⁴, which respects efforts of music pedagogy of the 1980s in the spirit of the development of creativity in several musical activities, a tendency to integrate various forms of art and search for interconnections with non-musical areas. In the target group (13-15 year old students), music taste is rather defined and their music development is almost finalised, which is why it will not be easy to motivate them to provide creative ideas in the workbook. The individual tasks (there are seven of them) require space and time; the teacher can use the workbook in several lessons of music, or in lessons of thematic education. The tasks integrate knowledge in music, literature, and folk architecture in Slovakia, history (contemporary ideology in which the librettist and composer created the piece) and fine arts; they also invite the stu-

²⁴ An obligatory condition for using the workbook is viewing a live or recorded performance of the opera *Katrena* and completing a lesson of didactic interpretation of the work.

dents to dance and search for recordings of folk music in the domestic environment. Conclusion: Outline of a teaching aid – a didactical interpretation of selected opera extracts – is ready to be put in practice – with a complete DVD as a prototype.

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Summary

AN OUTLINE OF A TEACHING AID FOR SLOVAK MUSIC PEDAGOGY

A mission of current as well as future generations of pedagogues is to search for a balance between supranational politico-economic interests and the presentation of national historic-artistic roots. Despite the many efforts by humanists, it is still true that historic memory and veneration of national values is not a strong aspect of Slovak society. Life-long education through art could bring a shift in the quality of appreciating cultural accomplishments. Artists and their most significant masterpieces are examples which attract attention abroad as well as at home. In contemporary music education, such development in the dissemination of information which uses new technologies as well as playful and undemanding methods enriches the teaching process with a range of teaching aids and applies an individual approach to each student in the class is expected. An example for opening such a dialogue between a teacher and a student which would allow entrance into the operatic “world” of national schools are the works of such significant personalities as B. Smetana, S. Moniuszko, F. Erkel, E. Suchoň and others. National awakening, relating to traditions, the choice of literary bases, music script, or the composer’s syncretism of these central-European music personalities, are a source of continuous analyses, discussion topics, and educational activities. Opera as an exclusive form for the exacting, so-called *gesamtkunstwerk*, is, in the pedagogical process, a highly demonstrative form and it is necessary to treat it didactically in such a way so that it is intelligible for younger generations, musically or otherwise gifted. The contribution presents the possibility of introducing the opera “Katrena” – a piece from the period of Slovak musical modernism - with elements of verism, Brechtian and Janáček-esque theatre – swayed by political regulations into the primary school classroom. The teaching aid – a music presentation – comprises a chronologically organised audiovisual overview of the opera. It includes a workbook by means of which teachers obtain feedback about the creativity and knowledge of their students. In this way, the audio information is transferred and intensified by other sensory information, which might bring a memory trace of higher quality. The main objective of this study is to indicate how to involve a Slovak opera – or its audiovisual recording – in teaching music at our schools. The process of involving the matter is taking place within the framework of pedagogical interpretation of a specific opera work. The efforts of the author of the study have resulted in completing a DVD containing the crucial extracts of the opera and a workbook – both representing an interlinked teaching aid for the purposes in question.

Key words: *music education, didactic interpretation of the opera, teaching aid, Eugen Suchoň, Krútňava (Katrena)*