

# FRANTIŠEK SEDLÁK'S LEGACY TO CZECH AND SLOVAK MUSIC PEDAGOGY AND MUSIC PSYCHOLOGY

Hana Váňová

## Abstract

The study analyses the role of František Sedlák (1916–2002) in the process of forming didactics of music education and music psychology as independent disciplines and teaching subjects at pedagogical faculties in former Czechoslovakia. It traces the significant moments in his life that formed the basis of Sedlák's theoretical insight and valuable practical experience. Sedlák's conception of the didactics of music education and music psychology is analyzed in detail, and the interconnection of music psychological and pedagogical approaches is emphasized.

## Keywords

František Sedlák; music pedagogy; didactics of music education; music psychology; interdisciplinarity; conceptual work; teacher training; music education practice; Czech music culture.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the death of František Sedlák, an important Czech music teacher and psychologist, choirmaster and violinist.<sup>1</sup> His life path as a teacher at all types of schools and an active musician led to a career as a university teacher, researcher and publicist. He is known to the professional public mainly from the time he founded and headed the Department of Music Education at the Pedagogical Institute in Brandýs nad Labem (1960–1964) and later at the Faculty of Education of Charles University in Prague (1970–1982), worked as the managing editor of the journal *Estetická výchova* [Aesthetic Education] (1972–1991), solved and coordinated numerous scientific tasks and worked in many scientific committees. The results of his lifelong work have been published in a wide range of professional articles, scientific studies, scripts, monographs and key university textbooks in the field of didactics of music education and music psychology.<sup>2</sup>

If we are to evaluate František Sedlák's contribution to science and the teaching profession, it is useful to trace the roots of his theoretical insight and practical experience, reinforced by his ability to systematize and generalize. As a recent graduate of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Doc. PhDr. František Sedlák, CSc., was born on 27 July 1916 in Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou and died on 17 June 2002 in Brandýs nad Labem.

<sup>2</sup> There is still no detailed bibliography about František Sedlák in the Czech professional literature. The most biographical and bibliographic information can be found in Petra Dolejšová's diploma thesis (2011), in *Český hudební slovník osob a institucí* [Czech Musical Dictionary of Persons and Institutions], online; [https://www.ceskyhudebnislovník.cz/slovník/index.php?option=com\\_mdictionary&task=record.record\\_detail&id=7346](https://www.ceskyhudebnislovník.cz/slovník/index.php?option=com_mdictionary&task=record.record_detail&id=7346) and in smaller articles and studies (see attached selected bibliography at the end of this study).



František Sedlák (1916–2002). Photo archives.

Teachers' Institute in Znojmo, he extended his musical education by privately studying violin and music theory at the music school in Moravské Budějovice with the violin virtuoso Váša Holub (1937-1941), and after moving to Bohemia he continued his musical self-education at the music school in Mladá Boleslav. In 1944 he passed the state examination in violin at the Prague Conservatory and two years later in choral singing. He performed publicly as a violinist (solo and orchestral playing), played the viola part in string quartets (Česká Lípa, Brandýs nad Labem), directed many student female and mixed choirs (Česká Lípa, Liberec, Brandýs nad Labem). The wide range of this rich musical experience was later reflected in many of the musical psychological and didactic conclusions of his publications, as well as his experience of teaching in many types of schools (from primary to university and from general to music). Sedlák continuously supplemented his education in this respect as well: he passed the examination for teaching competence in general schools (1937) and the examination for competence to teach Czech, music education and civics in secondary schools (1949). He graduated from the University of Pedagogy in Prague with a degree in

music education—playing instruments (1958) and obtained a teaching qualification for the 9th–11th consecutive years of eleven-year secondary schools. After accepting a position as an assistant professor at the Department of Music Education of the Pedagogical Institute in Brandýs nad Labem in 1959, František Sedlák continued to acquire professional knowledge. In 1964 he defended his habilitation thesis *Naučíme zpívat všechny děti?* [Shall we teach all the children to sing?]<sup>3</sup> and in 1965 he was appointed associate professor in the field of music education methodology.<sup>4</sup> In 1968 he received his PhDr. degree and in 1972, after defending his candidate's dissertation, which was later published under the title *Hudební vývoj dítěte* [Musical development of the child],<sup>5</sup> he received the title CSc.<sup>6</sup>

Under Sedlák's leadership of the Department of Music Education, its members were intensively involved in scientific research activities over the years and profiled themselves in their areas of expertise.<sup>7</sup> Sedlák was a leading researcher and coordinator of many research tasks of the Ministry of Education (for example the departmental research plans entitled *Vliv estetické výchovy na utváření osobnosti žáka základní školy* [The influence of aesthetic education on the formation of the personality of the primary school student], *Inovace a modernizace obsahu a forem výuky hudební výchovy* [Innovation and modernization of the content and forms of teaching music education] and more. From the outputs of these scientific research tasks, the scientific proceedings of the Department of Music Education No. 2 to 7 were published in 1972–1990,<sup>8</sup> which are still used as basic study materials in the field. Sedlák is the author of extensive introductory studies in each of them.<sup>9</sup>

During his tenure at the Faculty of Education of Charles University, František Sedlák was a member of the scientific council, vice-dean, chairman of the rigorosum committee, chairman of the committee for the defence of candidate theses, member of habilitation committees, opponent of candidate and habilitation theses. He was a supervisor of a large number of scientific aspirants from the Czech and Slovak Republics, many of whom continued or are continuing their scientific and conceptual work as university associate professors and professors (Milan Holas, Miloš Kodejška, Eva Langsteinová, Jiří Skopal and many others) and continue his legacy.

<sup>3</sup> The work was awarded a special prize of the Czechoslovak Society for Music Education in the category of theory and methodology of music education. It was published two years later (Praha: SHV, 1966. 136 pages).

<sup>4</sup> In the sixties of the twentieth century, the habilitation procedure in the Czechoslovak Republic was not conditional on obtaining scientific degrees.

<sup>5</sup> Praha: Supraphon, 1974. 200 pages.

<sup>6</sup> Degree CSc. (Latin *candidatus scientiarum*) was awarded in the Czechoslovak Republic until 1998, when the new law on universities came into effect and replaced the CSc. degree with the internationally recognized academic degree Ph.D.

<sup>7</sup> For example Jaroslav Herden (listening to music), Jiří Kolář (development of intonation skills), Jiří Laburda (harmony), Alena Tichá (voice education), Hana Váňová (children's musical creativity), Miloš Kodejška (preschool music education) and many others.

<sup>8</sup> Praha: Charles University, 1972–1990.

<sup>9</sup> Sedlák, František. Strukturální složky hudebního vývoje člověka [Structural components of human musical development]. In: *Collection of Scientific Studies of the Department of Music Education 2*. Praha: Charles University, 1972, pp. 33–64. Metodologická východiska zkoumání hudebního vývoje člověka [Methodological starting points for the investigation of human musical development]. In: *Collection of Scientific Studies of the Department of Music Education 3*, Praha: Charles University 1976, pp. 9–82. Některé psychologické aspekty hudebního vnímání [Some psychological aspects of musical perception]. In: *Collection of Scientific Studies of the Department of Music Education 4*, Praha: Charles University, 1980, pp. 9–48. Tvořivé prvky v hudebním vnímání [Creative elements in musical perception]. In: *Collection of Scientific Studies of the Department of Music Education 5*, Praha: Charles University, 1985, pp. 11–26. K psychologii hudebních dovedností [To the psychology of musical skills]. In *Collection of Scientific Studies of the Department of Music Education 6*, Praha: Charles University, 1987, pp. 11–38. K psychologii emocí a citů spjatých s hudbou [On the psychology of emotions and feelings connected with music]. In: *Collection of Scientific Studies of the Department of Music Education 7*, Praha: Charles University, 1990, pp. 11–27.

Aside of his rich scientific, publishing, teaching and management activities at his workplace, Sedlák was also intensively involved in socially beneficial work. In 1966–67, he was chairman of the Ministry of Education's commission for the preparation of a new concept of music education in primary nine-year schools and reviewed proposals drawn up by the Pedagogical Research Institute in Prague. In 1966 he invited Vladimír Poš, Božena Viskupová and other music teachers to Brandýs nad Labem to experimentally test the effectiveness of the Orff method and its Czech adaptation by Ilja Hurník and Petr Eben with children from the local primary school. The results of the three-year experiment aroused the interest of domestic and foreign teachers and influenced the new concept of music education that was being formed<sup>10</sup>. Sedlák was one of the founding members and a member of the presidium of the Czechoslovak Society for Music Education, which was newly established in Prague on 29 September 1967. He was delegated several times to conferences of the International Society for Music Education (Dijon, Moscow, Warsaw). Later he was also a member of the committee of the Czech Music Society in Prague, a member of the editorial team of the *Comenium musicum* edition at Supraphon, a reviewer of scientific assignments from other departments and publications by other authors, chairman of the Subject Commission for Music Education at the Ministry of Education and a member of the Commission of Experts. In June 1972, he accepted the position of managing editor of the journal *Estetická výchova* [Aesthetic Education], to which he had already contributed frequent articles. He remained in this position until 1990, when the journal, published by the State Pedagogical Publishing House, was suspended for financial reasons. Under his editorship, this monthly journal became a well-informed journal, in which, in addition to theoretical and conceptual studies, there was no lack of stimulating experiences from the music education practice.<sup>11</sup>

Sedlák focused his pedagogical, scientific and publishing activities on two key areas for teachers – **didactics of music education** and **music psychology**. During his lifetime, Sedlák published more than 120 scientific studies, articles and reviews in many periodicals like *Estetická výchova* [Aesthetic Education],<sup>12</sup> *Předškolská výchova* [Preschool Education], *Opus musicum*, *Komenský*, *Slovenská hudba* [Slovak Music], *Hudební rozhledy* [Music Review], *Hudební věda* [Musicology], *Učitelské noviny* [Teachers' Newspaper], *Rodina a škola* [Family and School], *Múzy v škole* [Muses in School], *Hudební nástroje* [Musical Instruments] and so on. He already addressed didactic topics in publications from between 1975 and 1977.<sup>13</sup> For the subject of didactics of music education he conceived and published with a team of authors (Jiří Kolář, Jarmila Vrchotová-Pátová, Vladimír Koula) in 1979 the national university textbook *Didaktika hudební výchovy na druhém stupni základní školy* [Didactics of music education at the second level of primary school].<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> The conclusions of the experiment are published in Sedlák's monograph *Hudební vývoj dítěte* [The musical development of the child] (Praha: Supraphon, 1974), on pages 173–177.

<sup>11</sup> Váňová, Hana. Historie, současné potřeby a poslání časopisu *Hudební výchova* pro hudebně pedagogickou teorii a praxi [History, current needs and mission of the journal Music Education for Music Pedagogical Theory and Practice]. In: *Collection of contributions from Visegrád music seminars in Prague in 2008*. Praha: UK – PF, 2009, pp. 86–88.

<sup>12</sup> Over the years, the magazine was renamed *Hudební výchova* [Music Education] three times. It is now published under this name.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. Lýsek, František and Sedlák, František, et al. *Metodika hudební výchovy v 1.–5. ročníku ZDŠ* [Methodology of music education in the 1st–5th year of primary school]. Praha: SPN, 1975. 199 pp.

Sedlák, František et al., *Nové cesty hudební výchovy na základní škole* [New ways of music education in primary school]. Praha: SPN, 1977. 284 pp.

<sup>14</sup> Praha: SPN, 1979. 352 pp.

In 1985, in collaboration with Rudolf Siebr, he published the textbook *Didaktika hudební výchovy na prvním stupni základní školy* [Didactics of music education at the first level of primary school].<sup>15</sup> For the subject of music psychology, he then wrote the seminal publications in this field – *Psychologie hudebních schopností a dovedností* [Psychology of musical abilities and skills] (1989)<sup>16</sup> and *Základy hudební psychologie* [Basics of Music Psychology] (1990).<sup>17</sup>

These works are still used in the Czech Republic and Slovakia as the main study literature in both fields. They show obvious interdisciplinary links – Sedlák's didactic concept is characterised by a distinctive psychological approach to the child, consideration of the laws of his/her musical development, respect for the structure and dynamics of musicality of children of a given age.<sup>18</sup> Thus, his didactics of music education acquire psychological dimensions and music psychology acquires didactic dimensions by applying its findings to the music education process. The unity of the psychological-didactic approach is clearly evident from the title of the last monograph *Hudební psychologie pro učitele* [Music psychology for teachers] (2013).<sup>19</sup>

In the following, let us pay attention to a concrete **analysis of Sedlák's conception of didactics of music education and then his music psychology.**

At the time when Sedlák's seminal music didactic works were written, the didactics of music education was understood as a structural part of music pedagogy.<sup>20</sup> As a science of all educational processes and phenomena related to music, music pedagogy encompasses all communication with music in and out of school. Thus, in addition to institutional influence, the family, the child's extracurricular activities, mass media, and so on, also are intertwined in the process of aesthetic cultivation. The didactics of music education is concerned only with school practice, it is usually understood as a theory of music teaching. In its structure, one can distinguish between more general and more specific levels – on the one hand, general regularities are applied in the music education process (for example teaching principles and methods, organizational forms of teaching, lesson structure, lesson planning etc.). But on the other hand, the specificity of music and its didactic interpretation in different subjects gives rise to a large number of specialized music didactics. These are divided according to the type of music education (general, specialised, professional) and the age of the child (didactics of music education in kindergarten, primary school etc.). The didactics include generalised methodological procedures (for example practicing a song by imitation or intonation, working with a listening piece etc.). However, if a ready-made instruction is given on how to teach a certain subject or develop specific musical skills, these are methodologies – in relation to methodology, didactics of music education is a more

<sup>15</sup> Praha: SPN, 1985. 312 pp.

<sup>16</sup> Praha: Supraphon, 1989. 264 pp.

<sup>17</sup> Praha: SPN, 1990. 320 pp.

<sup>18</sup> Poledňák, Ivan. *Hudební věda II. [Musicology]*. Praha: SPN, 1988, p. 448.

<sup>19</sup> Sedlák, František, Hana Váňová. *Hudební psychologie pro učitele* [Music psychology for teachers]. 2nd revised and expanded edition, first published by Karolinum. Praha: Karolinum, 2013. 408 pages. Published also as an e-book in pdf in September 2013. It is an update of the earlier publication by František Sedlák, *Basics of Music Psychology* (SPN, 1990), with the contribution of Hana Váňová.

<sup>20</sup> Together with the general theory of music pedagogy, its history, comparative and experimental music pedagogy, adult pedagogy, after-school and functional music education pedagogy, and the psychological foundations of music education. Sedlák, František, et al. *Didaktika hudební výchovy na druhém stupni základní školy* [Didactics of music education at the second level of elementary school]. Praha: SPN, 1979, p. 9.

theoretical phenomenon.<sup>21</sup> In Sedlák's conception, didactics of music education examines the aims, tasks, methods and forms of teaching, in other words – the relationship between content and method, the way of conveying the material to the pupil. It takes into account the individual peculiarities of the child, the specificity of the musical art and the interactive relationship between teacher, pupil and teaching.<sup>22</sup>

Sedlák's conception of the didactics of music education anticipated certain tendencies in the development of the sciences at the turn of the millennium. These include, in particular, **interdisciplinarity**, the use of internal contexts and interrelationships between the sciences. The current trend to overcome the tendency of disciplines to create relatively closed systems of knowledge and systems of separated professional languages ensures that existing systems are constantly confronted not only with developments in their own field, but also with the scientific knowledge of related and more distant disciplines. There is talk of interdisciplinary overlap, of multidisciplinary connections linked to the creating common language. Sedlák considered music pedagogy and, consequently, music education didactics as a frontier discipline, an open system that investigates music education phenomena in appropriate interactions and links to the knowledge of related disciplines. Within its scope, musicological disciplines such as music theory, music history, organology, and so on, are integrated, which are presented here in the form of knowledge. The didactics of music education selects and integrates this knowledge, searches for pedagogical dimensions of its acquisition and optimises this process in cooperation with other socio-musical disciplines such as music psychology, sociology and aesthetics. Several points of view can be traced in Sedlák's conception:

1. psychological (development of internal musical prerequisites, that is the structure of the pupil's musical abilities and skills, consideration of the child's developmental characteristics, internal motivation and its self-strengthening mechanisms);
2. diagnostic (determining the developmental level of musical abilities and skills and the level of musical knowledge);
3. aesthetic (searching for ways for the child to understand the means of musical speech through his/her own activity and creative activity and thus be able to perceive music as an aesthetically significant message);
4. sociological (creation of common musical experiences during collective musical activities, feeling of belonging, responsibility for performance etc.);
5. pedagogical (searching for methods and procedures that facilitate the dialogue between the subject and the musical work and at the same time shape the musicality of the individual).

Since the turn of the millennium, there has been a growing tendency in the Czech Republic to consider branch **didactics as a separate scientific discipline**.<sup>23</sup> Already in

<sup>21</sup> Váňová, Hana. Současná situace a problémy v didaktice hudební výchovy [Current situation and problems in the didactics of music education]. In: Janík, T., Mužík, V., Šimoník, O., ed. *Oborové didaktiky v pregraduálním učitelském studiu*. [Subject didactics in undergraduate teacher studies]. Brno: Masaryk University, 2004, p. 54.

<sup>22</sup> Váňová, Hana. František Sedlák didaktice hudební výchovy [František Sedlák for didactics of music education]. *Hudební výchova*, vol. 24, 2016, no. 4, pp. 10-12.

<sup>23</sup> It is necessary to distinguish between didactics as an emerging scientific discipline, the subject of which is the entire musical communication process in the field, and didactics as a teaching subject, which can approach the content of science selectively.



2004, a national conference “Field didactics in undergraduate teacher education” was held at the Faculty of Education of Masaryk University in Brno, which outlined a number of stimulating issues in the process of forming didactics of individual disciplines, more or less valid also for music education didactics. It was stated that while in the world the constitution of disciplinary didactics is an indisputable reality, in the Czech Republic the situation is different, as disciplinary didactics have not yet fully established themselves as scientific and academic disciplines. The main protagonists of the field with a clear concept and scientific production will play a decisive role.

The ongoing discussion across disciplines is only marginally related to the music field. Sedlák’s concept of didactics of music education grew out of the requirement of a complex activity-based concept of music education, the influences of modern European music education systems, and the many modernising tendencies that penetrated the teaching of other subjects (group teaching, work in departments, differentiation of pupils, testing as a basic method of diagnosis, development of children’s creativity etc.). It can therefore be stated that at the time of its creation, this concept of music education didactics was already timeless.

Let us recapitulate the basic ideas of Sedlák’s still inspiring and valid concept of musical didactics published in both of the above-mentioned textbooks of didactics<sup>24</sup> in the form of answers to the questions that every didactics asks.

The answer to the question “WHY to teach?” are the stated aims and tasks of music teaching. Music education aims to the development of the child’s personality through active communication with the music work, and considers the main tasks to be education about music and education through music. In this process it respects the principles of modern teaching:

- humanity (every child is drawn into contact with music, regardless of the level of development of his/her musical abilities. Sedlák appeals to the teacher’s belief in the possibility of musical development for all children. He deals with the methodology of the development of musically lagging pupils stresses the necessity of the teacher’s pedagogical tact in evaluating less successful performances and in encouraging the pupil’s musical self-confidence etc.);
- comprehensiveness (all-round development of musicality is ensured by a set of diverse musical activities, the variability of which has strong motivational effects for the musical self-realisation of pupils and at the same time provides space for compensating for deficiencies in the development of the musicality of some individuals. Great emphasis is placed on the development of pupils’ musical creativity, a new problem at the time, which penetrated the new concept of music education not only on the basis of domestic traditions (Jan Ámos Komenský, František Čáda, Adolf Cmíral, Antonín Hromádka and many others), but also under the influence of modern European music education systems, especially Orff’s Schulwerk);

<sup>24</sup> Sedlák, František, et al. *Didaktika hudební výchovy na druhém stupni základní školy* [Didactics of music education at the second level of elementary school]. Prague: SPN, 1979. 352 pp., Sedlák, František, Siebr, Rudolf. *Didaktika hudební výchovy na prvním stupni základní školy*. [Didactics of music education at the first level of elementary school]. Praha: SPN, 1985. 312 pp. Both textbooks are hereafter referred to as *Didactics*.

- integrativeness (aesthetic experiences are enhanced by combining diverse aesthetic and educational activities and using knowledge from other subjects);
- holistic approach (all-round musical activity develops not only the musicality of the pupil, but also the overall development of his/her personality. This approach is particularly evident in the parts devoted to the development of children's musical creativity. Sedlák points out that musical creative activities not only develop creativity in the field of music, but in their overlap stimulate the development of the child's creative potential in general).

“WHAT to teach?” – As the content of music education, Sedlák considers not only musical material suitable for pupils, but also a set of educational methods and procedures that enable the all-round musical development of an individual and the cultivation of his personality.<sup>25</sup> The content thus defined is open to all current influences and reforms in curriculum documents, where the content of music education is linked to ‘key competences’, for example, the goals to be achieved at the end of schooling in the development of the pupil's personality. The content thus defined is open to all current influences and reforms in curriculum documents, where the content of music education is linked to “key competences”, i.e., the goals to be achieved at the end of schooling in the development of the pupil's personality.<sup>26</sup>

As far as the choice of musical material is concerned, the current era allows great freedom in the choice of songs and compositions to be learned (thanks also to the abundance of alternative Czech music education textbooks and access to the internet). In designing the principles and criteria for the selection of the material, Sedlák in his *Didactics* anticipated the requirements of the new era by emphasising the attractiveness, variety and diversity of the selection, in addition to the classical artistic, psychological, aesthetic and educational criteria. The current tendencies towards multicultural education, the intersection of various musical traditions into contemporary musical cultures, the use of popular music in the educational process, and so on create new horizons in the choice of musical material. Pupils should be given the opportunity to explore music of all genres, diverse styles and functional forms.

The situation in contemporary Czech education confirms Sedlák's proclamation of the educational effect of teaching material. The official Czech “Framework Educational Programme”<sup>27</sup> includes so-called cross-cutting themes, responding to current issues in the contemporary world (global, multicultural, media or environmental education, etc.). Music education should be understood as a formative subject, which, by its specific means, not only influences the development of the pupil's musicality, but also aims at higher non-musical goals, such as the formation of the pupil's moral qualities, character, will, intellectual abilities, aesthetic sensitivity, and so on (that is why, for example, one of the stages of practicing a song in Sedlák's *Didactics* is a conversation about its semantic message, which leads to a unobtrusive educational effect).

<sup>25</sup> Sedlák František and Rudolf Siebr. *Didactics of music education at the first stage of primary school*. Praha: SPN 1985, pp. 14-15.

<sup>26</sup> For more details see Charalambidis, A. Hudební výchova a Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání [Music Education and the Framework Curriculum for Primary Education]. *Hudební výchova*, Vol. 14, 2006, No. 2, pp. 25-26.

<sup>27</sup> The “framework educational programs” represent the main curricular documents in contemporary Czech education. They are approved and issued by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for each field of education. They define a generally binding framework for individual stages of education (goals, forms, length and mandatory content of education) and are the basis for the creation of school educational programs, according to which teaching is then carried out at individual schools.



“HOW to teach?” – The centre of gravity of both *Didactics* lies in the chapters concerning the organisation of musical educational work. By this we do not mean only, for example, the planning of the curriculum (in relation to the course of the school year, the time of year, the number of lessons, the initial level of musicality of the pupils, inter-subject relations, links with extra-curricular and extra-curricular musical activities etc.), the teacher’s own preparation, the construction of the lesson, and so on, but especially the knowledge of specific teaching methods in music education. *Didactics* thus equips future teachers with knowledge and skills that we nowadays call managerial. The basic managerial skills of the teacher include project (planning) skills, related to the preparation of the lesson and the setting of the teaching goal, motivational skills, organizational and implementation skills, diagnostic skills and, last but not least, self-reflection and self-correction skills, which lead to feedback on the effectiveness of music education. *Didactics* reflects on all these skills, except perhaps self-reflection and self-correction. This is legitimate, since textbooks can only provide the basic stage of development of these important dispositions for teachers, for example the cognitive stage. Only the teacher’s own music education practice will provide the practical and reflective stage.

With regard to motivational and activation processes, Sedlák analyses various methods of complex music education. Some of his innovative achievements are still underestimated in current practice. For example, in the methodological procedure for the development of pupils’ intonation skills, which he developed together with Jiří Kolář,<sup>28</sup> the authors have combined progressive elements of Czech and foreign intonation methods into a unified system. They also pointed out the reciprocal connection of intonation, auditory analysis and the development of children’s creative skills in given tonal spaces, thus becoming the successors of the promoters of the so-called creative intonation (Konrád Pospíšil, Antonín Hromádka or Oldřich Dolanský).

The question “WHO to teach?” specifies the focus of *Didactics* on younger and older school ages. The teacher must not only know how to teach, know the algorithms of methodological procedures, but also take into account whom he/she is teaching, which internal structures of the child’s personality are developed in musical activities and at what stage of musical development the pupil is. As already mentioned above, F. Sedlák’s didactic concept is characterised by a distinctive psychological approach to the child of a given age. The instruction on musical aptitudes, abilities and skills and on other musical psychological categories<sup>29</sup> are supplemented by an overview of the usual diagnostics of these internal assumptions. Sedlák gives examples of sub-skills that can be used to not only diagnose but also develop musical abilities. He also discusses the causes of unsatisfactory musical development in children and the possibilities of differentiating pupils (working with musically and singingly lagging pupils, with pupils who are musically gifted etc.).

The reflection on “WHEN to teach?” concerns the question about when the child is open to musical and educational influences, when music and activities related to it bring forward positive emotions and attitudes towards music, a desire for self-realization, for knowledge, and so on. These desirable states are related to issues of motivation – whether primary, aroused by the child’s inner needs or by the music itself, or secondary, induced

---

<sup>28</sup> Jiří Kolář (1932), prominent Czech choirmaster, university professor, former editor-in-chief of the journal *Music Education* and author of professional publications and studies.

<sup>29</sup> The musical psychological parts of both *Didactics* anticipated the already mentioned later works of musical psychology.

by the teacher. According to Sedlák, motivation forms an independent initial stage in the methodical procedure of practicing a song, presenting a musical composition, and so on, but it must be continuously maintained in the ongoing activity by means of various activating elements and interesting tasks for the child. The psychologicalisation of the didactic process is also reflected in the consistency and sequence of the learning process. There is often a hierarchy between the individual algorithms, and it is not recommended to change their order (e.g. the instrumental accompaniment is added until the song is well mastered, the practice of the second voice is realized only after mastering the unison, the development of intonation skills is organised according to the difficulty of the intonation concepts to be acquired, the development of rhythmic sensitivity is based on the biological rhythms of even meter, etc.). The choice of the curriculum should therefore clearly respect the laws of the child's musical development and his current readiness to accept the curriculum.

"WHERE to teach?" – Although the basic organizational unit of music teaching is considered to be the school lesson, the *Didactics* also provide information on out-of-class and out-of-school music education, on other organizational forms such as various types of music clubs, music discussions, educational concerts, and so on.

"WHO is teaching?" is a frequently discussed question, especially in connection with the lack of training for teaching music education of many primary school music teachers. Both *Didactics* include a chapter on the personality of the music teacher and pursue the preparation of the future teacher in the faculties of education as an open process, complemented by opportunities for further education and the development of musical and pedagogical creativity. Sedlák's concept of a teacher's personality profile corresponds in many aspects with Schulman's later classification of professional knowledge, cited since the 1990s across disciplines.<sup>30</sup> This includes an overview of the field, principles and strategies of teaching, curriculum and related knowledge of goals, objectives, key values in education, and so on. Also important are a disciplinary didactic knowledge (understanding of the content of education and ways of interpreting it to children) and a knowledge of the developmental and individual characteristics of pupils and their links to the socio-cultural environment. The music teacher should also possess all these competences, which are part of the knowledge about music and the laws of the teaching process. However, this knowledge sphere must correspond to the skill category, which enables the teacher himself to communicate with the music and transmit its contents to the pupils. This is what essentially distinguishes didactics of music education as a scientific discipline from didactics as a teaching subject and, consequently, from music education practice itself. It is not enough to talk about the teaching of music education, to describe verbally how one might rehearse a song or develop a musical skill, but one must combine this theoretical knowledge with the required musical activity. That is why Sedlák, throughout his long tenure as head of the Department of Music Education, paid attention to the comprehensive musical readiness of his students and pursued pedagogical dimensions in addition to artistic ones in the development of their musical skills. He promoted the necessity of the cooperation between didacticians and teachers of practical music disciplines and the usefulness of the so-called didactic interpretation of the learning material. Most teachers at a beginner's level adopt elements of their own teachers' working practices in their practice, teaching in the

---

<sup>30</sup> Schulman, L. S. Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 57, 1987, pp. 1-22.

way they themselves were taught. When it comes to beginners in instrumental, singing, intonation and other skills, it is obvious that the most useful way of developing these skills is through the elementary practices used in school practice. This tendency was also featured prominently in some of the scripts written by members of the Prague Department of Music Education, which serve as a student's skills training manual.<sup>31</sup>

Since the time of the creation of both *Didactics*, the current goals of music education have changed along with the social changes, and with the pedagogical reform came a change in the curriculum. Naturally, the data on modern didactic technology and some aspects of music education management have also become outdated, the range of music education textbooks and relevant methodological manuals has expanded, schools with extended music education have been established, new views on pupil assessment in music education (verbal assessment) have emerged, projects and integrative teaching methods are being experimented with, the principle of visualisation is being introduced into listening thanks to modern technology, and so on. This is a legitimate manifestation of the development of the discipline, social conditions and music education practice and it is necessary to integrate everything into the existing system of knowledge. Sedlák himself predicted the development of didactics as an independent discipline in the second half of the 20th century and stated: "In order to build the didactics of music education as a scientific field and as a discipline that completes and integrates the preparation of the future teacher, it will be necessary to further elaborate its theoretical basis, to develop a concept that would correspond to the function of music in our society and to make the necessary innovations..."<sup>32</sup>

We tried to show that Sedlák's musical didactic legacy must be understood not only in the context of the time in which it was created, but also in the context of the current needs of science and music education practice. "In practice, students and teachers are expected to have a 'perfect knowledge of the craft', subject didactics are responsible for these competencies. Didactics as a scientific field should ensure effective research of educational phenomena, generalization of research results and experiences, and creation of a structured system of scientific knowledge. František Sedlák's didactic legacy created a solid foundation for this process."<sup>33</sup>

Sedlák's conception of music didactics has long influenced the teaching of this subject at pedagogical faculties in the Czech lands and Slovakia. This also was the case with Sedlák's **music psychology**. As stated by Václav Drábek<sup>34</sup> in his text *Stručný průvodce hudební psychologíí* [A brief guide to music psychology], "František Sedlák's writings [...] created the theoretical basis for the teaching of the field at teacher training faculties and educated a number of followers [...]"<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> For example, the three-volume script *Počátky tvořivé intonace* [The beginnings of creative intonation] by Jiří Kolář, Hana Váňová, Oldřich Duzbaba (Prague 1993), in which the initial development of intonation, aural and creative skills is implemented in the dimensions of elementary procedures, which are common in teaching music education at primary school.

<sup>32</sup> Sedlák František and Rudolf Siebr. *Didactics of music education at the first stage of primary school*. Praha: SPN, 1985, p. 11.

<sup>33</sup> Váňová, Hana. Aktualizace hudebně didaktického odkazu Františka Sedláka [Updating the musical didactic legacy of František Sedlák]. In *Czech music pedagogy and adult education at the beginning of the 21st century*. National Janáčkian conference, held on 1 and 2 June 2006 in Ostrava, PF OU. Praha: Theater Institute, 2006, p. 106.

<sup>34</sup> Václav Drábek (1943–2008). Czech musicologist and university teacher, author of many professional publications and articles.

<sup>35</sup> Drábek, Václav. *Stručný průvodce hudební psychologíí* [A brief guide to music psychology]. Praha: PedF UK, 2004, p. 15.

František Sedlák personally considered his national university textbook *Základy hudební psychologie* [Basics of Music Psychology] to be the peak of his publishing activity.<sup>36</sup> This textbook was formed from previous publications (*Hudební vývoj dítěte* [Child Musical Development], *Úvod do psychologie hudby I a II* [Introduction to Music Psychology I and II],<sup>37</sup> *Psychologie hudebních schopností a dovedností* [Psychology of Musical Abilities and Skills]) and from many previous studies published in professional journals and proceedings.

Sedlák's conception of musical psychology was based on his rich musical and pedagogical experience and on sources available at the time. Because until the end of the eighties of the last century access to information from Western specialist literature was limited, Sedlák drew primarily on the available literature from the Eastern Bloc, whose suggestions he analyzed and incorporated into his conception. He welcomed, for example, the progressive tendencies of L. S. Vygotsky, who in his *Psychology of Art*<sup>38</sup> had already in the 1970s openly discussed the participation of conscious and unconscious processes in creation. Sedlák further developed these ideas and described the basic unconscious processes and states in artistic creation (intuition, inspiration, imagination, daydreaming), and the individual phases of the creative process, based on the findings of general psychology and the psychology of creation at that time. Sedlák obtained some American or British titles vicariously from Polish literature, which was more favourable to Western literature, and therefore many works were translated into Polish.<sup>39</sup> Sedlák applied many of the laws of the general theory of creation to the process of musical education, and was inspired by Lowenfeld's and Guilford's factor analysis and specified individual musical creative abilities, until then unknown in the Czech environment (fluency, flexibility, sensitivity, originality, elaboration, etc.). This concept of creative abilities was later used as the basis for an extensive research on creative thinking in children attending special interest groups (about 2500 respondents), organised by the Národní informační a poradenské středisko (NIPOS) [National Information and Advisory Centre].<sup>40</sup>

Sedlák's music psychology has a wide range of content – from the psychology of musical abilities, skills and individual musical activities to the psychology of musical experience and the characteristics of a person's musical development. What is valuable about his work is that he has precisely defined and established the understanding of individual musical psychological categories (musical aptitude, ability, skills, habits, musical activities, musicality, giftedness, talent, genius), and he also adheres to this definition in the text (in practice, confusion is mainly related to the notion of musical ability and skill). Sedlák considers musical abilities to be “psychic structures and properties of an individual that correspond to the requirements of musical activities and ensure their adequate success”.<sup>41</sup> He examines the relationship of these specific musical properties to other artistic abilities and to general intelligence and points to the so-called specific and general transfers that enable the transfer created by associations in similar areas of activity and also influence the overall development of the personality. He documents this phenomenon with experiences

---

<sup>36</sup> Sedlák, František. *Základy hudební psychologie* [Basics of music psychology]. Praha: SPN, 1990.

<sup>37</sup> Scripts published in 1986 (Praha: SPN).

<sup>38</sup> Vygotsky, L. S. *Psychologie umění* [Psychology of the arts]. Translation from Russian. Praha: 1981.

<sup>39</sup> E.g. Lowenfeld, V., Brittain, W. L. *Twórczość a rozwój umysłowy dziecka*. [Creativity and mental development of a child]. Warszawa 1977.

<sup>40</sup> A research project funded by the Ministry of Culture entitled The Importance of Selected Artistic Activities in Shaping the Personality of Children of Compulsory School Age, carried out by NIPOS and invited experts in 2003–2007.

<sup>41</sup> František Sedlák, *Základy hudební psychologie* [Basics of music psychology]. Praha: SPN, 1990, p. 35.

from Hungarian schools with extended music education, where music evidently affected the sphere of children's mental development, their character traits and ethical attitudes.<sup>42</sup> His lifelong evolving views on the classification of musical ability became the basis for the currently accepted classification of musical ability.<sup>43</sup>

Sedlák gives a theoretical characterization of the individual musical abilities and always puts them in correlation with the means of musical expression perceived and experienced by this ability (rhythmic feeling and rhythm, tonal feeling and tonality, etc.). In the American literature in particular, we find a rather opposite tendency, already begun by Carl Seashore (*The Psychology of Musical Talent*, New York, 1919), then by Max Schoen (*The Psychology of Music*, New York, 1940). It is evident even today (see, for example, one of the most important contemporary works of American music psychology literature – a collection of music psychology studies edited by Diana Deutsch (*The Psychology of Music*, San Diego 1999)).<sup>44</sup> Here the prevailing conception of music psychology is more in the sense of the psychology of music, for example the psychology of individual means of musical expression. The acoustic parameters of tone properties, melody, tonality, harmony, and so on are emphasized, the studies are full of graphs with detailed analyzes of acoustic data. The issue of musical abilities as such, with the exception of absolute hearing, which is always and everywhere given enormous attention, is secondary.

Sedlák's musical psychology is different. It is not so detailed and elaborate towards music psychology as a science based on an acoustic foundation, but it is detailed and elaborate towards music psychology as a science applied in musical practice. It has become the basis for the concept of teaching the subject in faculties of education – so it has strong **pedagogical dimensions**. For example, in connection with the analysis of individual musical abilities, Sedlák gives examples of sub-skills through which musical abilities can be developed. Thus, the student gradually gains insight into the spectrum of diverse musical tasks realized in individual musical activities. This triad of ability-skill-activity is also respected in the diagnosis of musicality. Thus, for example, the level of musical hearing can be ascertained through perception in such tasks as distinguishing the individual characteristics of tones, the pitch movement of a melody, its position in the tonal space, and so on. The level of tonal sensitivity is then usually ascertained through singing by the quality of purity of intonation, or in perception by distinguishing between a finished and unfinished melody, a false note in a melody, a major and a minor song, and so on. For many years, students of pedagogical faculties have been familiar with this methodology for diagnosing individual musical abilities, and many inspiring tests of musicality have been created, in which individual tasks are linked by motivational texts, whether with fairy-tale themes or stories from life.<sup>45</sup> The results of this creative work of the students can be used in practice not only for the diagnosis of the pupils' musicality, but the individual tasks of the musicality tests can also be used in music education classes for the development of these musical abilities.

---

<sup>42</sup> Czech music educators came to the same conclusions (see, for example, Ladislav Daniel's Olomouc experiment, which in 1966 started the tradition of schools with extended music education in the then Czechoslovakia).

<sup>43</sup> In: Sedlák, František and Hana Váňová, *Music Psychology for Teachers*. 2nd revised and updated edition, first published by Karolinum. Praha: Karolinum, 2013, p. 68.

<sup>44</sup> The work brings together studies not only by American authors from California, Texas, Pennsylvania, Washington, etc., but also by Canadian, English, Swedish, and Dutch authors, and runs to over 800 pages.

<sup>45</sup> These works serve the research and didactic needs of the students themselves and have not yet been published.

Similarly to Sedlák's conception of didactics of music education, the need for an updated music psychology arose years later. In 2013, an updated and expanded new edition of Sedlák's publication *Fundamentals of Music Psychology* was published by Karolinum under the title *Music Psychology for Teachers*.<sup>46</sup> Its co-author Hana Váňová, the daughter of František Sedlák and a teacher of the didactics of music education and music psychology subjects at the Faculty of Education of Charles University and at the same time the author of this study, tried to structure its content in more detail (for greater clarity, the text is divided into a considerable number of subsections). Into her father's original text, she incorporated new findings and results of Czech and foreign music-psychological research from 1990 to the present, added the necessary new chapters and expanded the selected bibliography for each thematic unit by other foreign works. By developing the penetration of psychological knowledge into teaching practice, the above-mentioned pedagogical dimensions were also significantly strengthened (issues of the development of musical abilities and skills, their diagnosis, school manifestations of musical activities, the stage-by-stage nature in the development of children's musical creativity, etc.).

For the international public interested in music psychology, we briefly present the basic thematic units of this updated publication:

1. Methodological foundations of music psychology – subject of research, relationship to other sciences, research methods, brief historical development of music psychology abroad and in domestic conditions.
2. Basic musical psychological categories – musical activities, aptitudes, abilities and their classification, the relationship of musical abilities to other specific abilities and to intelligence, musical skills, their formation and classification, habits, musicality and its structure (performance component, activation component, primary and secondary motivation to music, musical interests, attitudes, tastes, preferences, and social component), gift, talent, genius.
3. Psychology of musical abilities – musical hearing, rhythmic, tonal and harmonic feeling, musical memory, imagination and thinking, musical creative abilities.
4. Diagnostics of musicality – empirical research methods, principles for designing empirical tests of musicality.
5. Disorders of musicality – amusia, characteristics of children with little experience in singing.
6. Psychology of musical activities – psychology of musical perception and apperception with a detailed analysis of a musical work as a sign system, the personality of the perceiver and the active process of musical perception, the psychology of singing activities, instrumental playing, musical interpretation and the psychology of musical creative process, including manifestations of children's musical creativity.
7. Musical experience (objective character of emotional information in music, emotional, rational, ethical component of complex musical experience, modeling of emotions in music, etc.).
8. Musical development of the child – periodization and characteristics of individual stages.

---

<sup>46</sup> Music psychology for teachers. See note 11 above.



How to briefly conclude Sedlák's contribution to Czech and Slovak music pedagogy and music psychology? We can agree with Ivan Poledňák,<sup>47</sup> who writes in the second volume of the top and extensive three-volume Czech work *Music Science*, that "František Sedlák is characterized by the unity of his musical psychological and pedagogical approach[...]."<sup>48</sup> I believe that it is precisely this interpenetration and integration of two scientific fields and, by extension, university teaching subjects, as well as the pioneering conception of their structure and classification of scientific content, that František Sedlák's pivotal legacy is to music pedagogy, music psychology and the teaching profession.

## František Sedlák's BIBLIOGRAPHY

(monographs, university textbooks and scripts arranged chronologically)

- Sedlák, František. *Naučíme zpívat všechny děti?* [Shall we teach all children to sing?]. Praha: Státní hudební vydavatelství, 1966. 136 pages.
- Sedlák, František and Viliam Fedor. *Úvod do hudební psychologie 1* [Introduction to musical psychology 1]. Praha: Institut pro učitelské vzdělávání Karlovy univerzity, 1972. 65 pages.
- Sedlák, František. *Hudební vývoj dítěte*. [Musical development of a child]. Praha: Supraphon, 1974. 200 pages.
- Sedlák, František and Viliam Fedor. *Úvod do hudební psychologie 2* [Introduction to musical psychology 2]. Prague: Central Institute for the Education of Pedagogical Workers, 1975. 67 pages.
- Lýsek, František, Sedlák, František, et al. *Metodika hudební výchovy v 1.–5. ročníku ZDŠ* [Methodology of music education in 1st–5th grade of primary school]. Praha: SPN, 1975.
- Sedlák, František et al. *Nové cesty hudební výchovy na základní škole* [New ways of music education in elementary school]. Praha: SPN, 1977. 284 pages.
- Sedlák, František et al. *Didaktika hudební výchovy na druhém stupni základní školy* [Didactics of music education at the second level of elementary school]. Praha: SPN, 1979. 352 pages.
- Sedlák, František. *Úvod do psychologie hudby I* [Introduction to the psychology of music I]. Praha: SPN, 1981. 76 pages.
- Sedlák, František and Rudolf Siebr. *Didaktika hudební výchovy na prvním stupni základní školy* [Didactics of music education at the first level of elementary school]. Praha: SPN, 1985. 312 pages.
- Sedlák, František. *Úvod do psychologie hudby II* [Introduction to the psychology of music II]. Praha: SPN, 1986. 140 pages.
- Sedlák, František. *Psychologie hudebních schopností a dovedností* [Psychology of musical abilities and skills]. Praha: Supraphon, 1989. 264 pages.
- Sedlák, František. *Základy hudební psychologie* [Basics of musical psychology]. Praha: SPN, 1990. 320 pages.
- Sedlák, František and Hana Váňová. *Hudební psychologie pro učitele* [Music psychology for teachers]. 2nd revised and supplemented edition, the first published by the Karolinum

<sup>47</sup> Ivan Poledňák (1931–2009), prominent Czech musicologist, musical esthetician and psychologist, university professor.

<sup>48</sup> Poledňák, Ivan, Lébl, Vladimír et al. *Hudební věda* [Musicology]. Praha: SPN, 1988, p. 448.

publishing house. Praha: Karolinum, 2013. 408 pages. Also released as an e-book in pdf in September 2013.

## LITERATURE ABOUT FRANTIŠEK SEDLÁK (selection)

- DOLEJŠOVÁ, PETRA. *Hudebně didaktický a psychologický odkaz Františka Sedláka* [The musical, didactic and psychological legacy of František Sedlák]. Thesis. Praha: Univerzita Karlova – Pedagogická fakulta, 2011.
- Kodejška, Miloš. František Sedlák – šlechetný člověk a hudební pedagog [František Sedlák – a generous man and a music teacher]. *Múzy v škole* (2002), no. 4: 2; 31.
- Kodejška, Miloš. Integrita osobnosti a etika práce Františka Sedláka [Personal integrity and work ethics of František Sedlák]. In: *Kontexty hudební pedagogiky I*, Praha: Univerzita Karlova (2007): 47–49.
- Kolář, Jiří. Za Františkem Sedlákem [Behind František Sedlák]. *Hudební výchova* 10 (4) (2002): 62–63.
- Langsteinová, Eva. Hudebno-didaktický odkaz Františka Sedláka a jeho aktualizácia [The musical-didactic legacy of František Sedlák and its updating]. In: *Kontexty hudební pedagogiky I*, Praha: Univerzita Karlova (2007): 20–25.
- Siebr, Rudolf. K nedožitým devadesátinám Františka Sedláka [On the occasion of the ninth birthday of František Sedlák]. *Hudební výchova* 14(3) (2006): 45–46.
- Váňová, Hana. Aktualizace hudebně didaktického odkazu Františka Sedláka [Updating the music didactical legacy of František Sedlák]. In: *Česká hudební pedagogika a výchova dospělých na počátku 21. století*. Konference Janáčkiana, 1. a 2. června 2006 v Ostravě, Pedagogická fakulta Ostravské univerzity. Praha: Divadelní ústav (2006): 95–106.
- Váňová, Hana. Aktualizace hudebně psychologického odkazu Františka Sedláka [Updating the music psychological legacy of František Sedlák]. In: *Kontexty hudební pedagogiky I*. Sborník z mezinárodní konference 6. a 7. dubna 2006, Brandýs nad Labem, Pedagogická fakulta, Praha: Univerzita Karlova (2007): 50–52.

## About the author

**Hana Váňová** works as an associate professor at the Department of Music Education, Faculty of Pedagogy, Charles University in Prague. She specializes in teaching didactics of music education, music psychology and the methodology of music pedagogical research in all types of studies. Throughout her life, she has devoted herself to the didactic and psychological problems of music education practice, especially the questions of musicality diagnosis, the development of children's musical creativity and the issue of creative intonation. She is the author and co-author of a number of scripts and university textbooks, she has published around a hundred professional studies and articles. In the years 2006–2015, she was the editor-in-chief of the peer-reviewed journal *Hudební výchova* (Music Education).

✉ hana.vanova@pedf.cuni.cz