

# Music education in first half of 20th century in Albania: Its institution and contribution to urban music life

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## Abstract

The aim of this research paper is to build the historical journey of the development of music education since its origins until the middle of the 20th century. Based on archival documents and facts, historical and journalistic publications, texts and didactic musical pedagogical methods, as well as in other supplementary materials I present with facts, analysis and generalizing treatments in the historical plane, the path of the formation and development of the music education tradition as part of general education system and also outside it. The research model was historical research which underpins all other research into music education as even the most contemporary facts have already occurred. The technique for analysing archival documents in the context of music education were document identification, document evaluation, content analysis, interpretation of the findings from the archival documents and synthesize the information to form a coherent narrative or analysis of music education practices descriptive analysis of the technical character of music methods that is made to each document stored in the Central State Archive (CSA), the comparative method for the recognition and contributions given by every religious educational institution in Scutari or secular in the four cities. To accomplish this objective, the study is focused on the documents researched mainly in Central State Archive as well as other sources publication interviews). On this basis and according to the historic importance, the study is shed light on the path of development of Albanian music pedagogy and the stages which defined this development, both in the drawing up of programs as well as through the publication of musical books by Albanian or foreign authors. The article gives a unique contribution of the first phase of the establishment of the music education tradition in Albania, as an outcome of which there were some achievements of the artistic activities, which linked the general music education of the first half of 20th century. This study may be the beginning of a wider research for professional music pedagogy in Albania, may serve for the international researchers to know the development of music pedagogy in the early years of education in Albania and to compare it with the developments in the Balkans.

## Keywords

*music in 20th century in Albania, music pedagogy, music tradition in schools*

## Introduction

In the complex situations created during the period of the National Renaissance and especially after the Albanian League of Prizren, in 1878, the ideal of establishing the Albanian school and the development of national arts led to a significant increase in efforts in the fields of education and cultural and artistic activities (Frashëri, 1989).

In this context, Albanian education, including musical education within it, was nothing but a materialization of rebirth ideals in the general context of the political objectives of this marked movement of

Albania's history. Thus, in the theatre of the time these efforts gradually brought about the development of Albanian education on the basis of contemporary programs, hence also the historical starting point of music education as a teaching subject (History of Albanian People, 2002).

In the historical context, the music education system in Albania, both within the school system and outside it (cultural society, artistic and patriotic clubs, etc.), can never be separated from the process of forming the local musical tradition, as creation and interpretation (Lici, 2021:245). These two areas, which run

parallel to each other (and did not have to happen differently), were equally in function of each other. The start of the construction of a Western-oriented musical life of self-understanding brought the requirement of building a system of musical formation.

And specifically, the stages through which Albanian musical education has passed, mainly since the beginning of the 20th century, demonstrate this mutual interaction through reflection on local musical life and creativity. The few musicians who were making the first tests of creativity and performance (Father Martin Gjoka, Ahmet Gashi, Thoma Nasi, etc., later Christo Kono) were at the same time among the main protagonists of the music education system, while young people framed by artistic societies or involved in the school system became the bearers of this new tradition that was born in the Albanian society of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century (Shuteriqi, 2020). In a later development, of the most thriving period of the Albanian monarchy (the '30s), the fruits of all these two-way efforts were much more visible. The sensitive vibrancy of the country's public musical life, especially in large cities, was conditioned by the formation albeit semi-professional of dozens of young people playing instruments, including vocal and orchestral formations of various kinds.

During this period, the country's professionalism in musical life began to emerge through musicians graduated from the Western Conservative Party. The latter (Baki Kongoli<sup>1</sup>, Tonin Guraziu<sup>2</sup>, Lola Gjoka,

George Filçe Truja<sup>3</sup>, Maria Kraja<sup>4</sup>, Mihal Ciko, Tefta Tashko Koço, etc.), while at the same time involved in the music education system, gave way to the construction of a professional pedagogical thought.



Photo 1. Baki Kongoli, violinist in Normal School of Elbasan



Photo 2. Jorgjia Filce-Truja, Lola Gjoka, Tefta Tashko-Koco in the '30s

The path of building Albanian musical education of the first half of the 20th century is separated in four main directions: in the mainly secular school system, but until 1933 of Mirash Ivanaj educational reform also in church schools that operated in the Shkodra district; near the musical formations and in the artistic cultural societies, the latter including the branches of music, where basic knowledge of the theory of music and

<sup>1</sup> The first violinist in Normal School in Albania. In 1936, Baki Kongoli had just returned from Italy, where he had completed his advanced violin studies at the Conservatory of Pavia and where he had also attended several composition classes. And, as will be seen below, the years during which Kongoli worked with the normalists brought a new breath to the school, but they were equally important for the revival of the artistic activity of the city of Elbasan.

<sup>2</sup> Pianist, teacher in Institute "Mother Queen" Albania, concert master of school of singing in National Radio television Albania.

<sup>3</sup> Was an important lyric singer who contribute for music education, the first woman who built the music programs of state schools, in the same time was the first teacher for vocal pedagogy in Institute "Mother Queen" in Tirana Albania.

<sup>4</sup> Lyric Singer in Albania, with an important role for the development of vocal pedagogy in Music Schools and Academy of Arts, Tirana Albania.

solitude was given and where instruments were taught and the basics of vocal education were taken, all in function of artistic life; in the institutions of the Catholic clergy, mainly in the city of Shkodra; and in cultural institutions such as Radio-Tirana in Tirana (Lici, 2021:250).

The establishment of the school music education system, secular or religious, hypothetically can be said to have been preceded by the Saverian College in Shkodra, in 1877/1878, within the framework of the Jesuit Ordinance<sup>5</sup>. Nearly a year later, the elementary school “The Albanian lady” was opened in Korça, at the same time the first Albanian school known to date, but this is completely of secular profile.

From there come also the first documents of the music education curricula, or of the “song” subject, which implies the priority of the song teaching. During the pre-independence period (first decade of the 20th century), the process is also expanded with other schools, the Franciscan School in Shkodra, the College of Troshan - Seraphic College in Shkodra, and the religious schools of 1879 and 1882, respectively. Meanwhile, with the opening of the Elbasan Normal in 1909, a much more consistent and meaningful historical development of Musical Pedagogy in Albania can be said to have begun to be realistically outlined.

After the National Independence, Albanian schools spread throughout the country, but the history of Albanian Music Pedagogy development focuses on several major schools: alongside the Normal of Elbasan, the French Lyceum (1917) in Korça; the Illyricum Gymnasium (1921) and the State Gymnasium (1922) in Shkodra; and the “Kyrias” Institute (1922) and the “Nana Queen” Institute (1933) in Tirana.



*Një grup nxënësish (1922-23) kur Instituti Kyrias ndodhej në shlepë të Kusil.*

Photo 3. Kyrias Institute in Tirana (1922-23)

Music teaching outside the education system can also be said, hypothetically, to have started as early as 1878 with the formation of the first Music Band in Shkodra. It is supposed that next to this formation, as well as in others that arose after it in Shkodra, Korça, Elbasan, and later in other cities of the country, basic information on musical notation and instruments was given. In the period after National Independence this process of education of amateurs passionate about music focused on Cultural Societies, among the most important of which: “Rozafa” (1918), “Bogdani” (1919), “Brotherhood” (1919) and “Antonian Society” (1939) in Shkoder, and “Society of Fine Arts” in Korça (1922). Organized on the basis of various branches of art, in any case also of sport, the Societies acted simultaneously as hearths of artistic education (including musical) of amateurs, regardless of age.

In the city of Shkoder, the birthplace of the Albanian musical tradition, partly as a result of the Austro-Hungarian influence and partly due to the very active action of the Catholic clergy, played a very important role in the dissemination and development of musical education played by the Franciscan Order and the Jesuit Order. In addition to the schools set up near them, in the institutions of the Catholic clergy, music was also taught and exercised by children of different religious affiliations, including those of the Muslim faith. This experience grew significantly during the 1920s -30s,

<sup>5</sup> ibidem

when people at such institutions acquired knowledge in instruments, music theory and solitude, with dozens of young people, who would become an active part of the musical life of the time, but also of the period after the country's liberation. One of the best-known and most authoritative institutions of its kind was the Jesuit Order's Schola Cantorum (1932), which, during 1936- '38, managed to stage dramatic musical pieces, such as Dom Mikel Koliqi's melodramas.

During the first half of the 20th century, the only state institution of cultural profile, which undertook important initiatives in the field of musical education, was Radio-Tirana, near which a "school" of music was also established, preparing singers and instrumentalists led by renowned professional musicians of the time.

### **Research Purpose**

Set against this situation, the purpose of this article is to determine and recognize the consequences of Albanian music pedagogy and follow the development of choral, instrumental and vocal pedagogy in general schools in Albania. This article tends to show the evidence of national Albanian music. Its main purpose is to highlight the growing of tradition of music pedagogy within a society which was isolated for centuries. I also reconsider the music education of four main cities in Albania from which musicians were formed who were educated in Western European Universities. Therefore, this research is not only a music pedagogy history but also an Art Music history of Albanians in the first half of the 20th century. Focus will be on the development of music education in Institutions of education and the contribution of music educators in the artistic life of Albania.

### **Methods and Materials**

Various methodologies are applied for analyzing the distinctions in teaching objectives, teaching methods, and teaching contents in Albanian Schools, including historical research, documentary research, video presentations, and visual analysis, are applied in this article.

### **Historical Research**

Historical research method "attempts to systematically recapture the complex nuances, the people, meanings, events, and even ideas of the past that have influenced and shaped the present." (Berg & Lure, 2012, p.305) Specifically, the evolution of music education in Albania, first course of music education, choral vocal and instrumental education, teaching in instrument is described by historical research, offering academic support for later analysis.

Documentary analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents (Bowen, 2009). The development of music education in Albania in the first half of the 20th century is studied by documentary analysis in this article. The document issued by the Albanian National Archive, Albanian Ministry of Education and the research materials on National Library and personal Archives of Artists. In the research, for music education in the historical context some documents were examined in order to reveal the findings related to the research problem, video presentation were oral documents for the past music education in Albania and photos from archive were analyzed from the visual part because the photographs produced the development of music education in the first half of the 20th century in some schools that did not have written documents.

### **Results**

In its entirety, the content of music education in Albania, especially in the school framework (but also in other forms of extracurricular exercise), from its beginnings outlined two main lines: the Western orientation; and the national orientation. Both lines determined the apparent trend of building an essentially secular music education system. The exception in this case is Shkodra, where the Catholic clergy, in addition to the great influence on the local population (Shkodra and surroundings), also took on important missions of the cultural and artistic plan. Realistically, this did not happen in a city like Korca, the epicenter of Southeast

Albania, with a homogeneous population of Christian faith, partly because the Orthodox Church did not take over this mission, but also because of the early efforts in the field of Albanian literacy and education, which did not have inspirations of a religious but merely national character. More or less the same factors also determined the pure secularism of the teaching content (including the subject music) in the Elbasan Normal.

Music, as a discipline of universal knowledge of the artistic profile, as a school subject but also as an artistic practice, was generally exercised on the basis of known traditional European tradition. This found expression from knowledge programming (solitude, music theory, instruments, singing, etc.) to teaching methods, textbooks and the repertoire used. In the first two decades of the century, in a documented or hypothetical way (e.g. in the case of "Albanian Lady", from which no content documentation of the song subject has arrived) both in the school system and outside the school system, musical formation proves to be based on several basic content components: notation teaching and practical musical exercise (singing, playing on the instrument). This line of universal knowledge developed significantly from one decade to the next, especially through the process of consolidation of the education system in general. In this view, the Normal of Elbasan played a very significant role as a first secondary school and based on Western models.

As for the second line, it developed and grew along with the goal of building a national artistic (including musical) tradition. In the general artistic and cultural context, this was the time when Albanian music was building its western-oriented tradition, but also with the goal of achieving a national physiognomy. Music, as a form of art, even in the case of application within the traditional didactic system, in contrast to scientific disciplines, could respond, as it did, directly to the realization of this goal. The outline path of this national line of Albanian Musical

Pedagogy emerges from the first steps of its construction. Hypothetically, but self-understood, it can be concluded that in the years 1880-1890, when the instrumentalists of the Band of Palok Kurti played tunes adapted to traditional Albanian songs, they were compulsorily exercised to adapt, as far as possible, the specific interpretation of a completely different repertoire in terms of tradition, musical language, artistic expression, from the characteristic pieces borrowed from the traditional foreign repertoire.

Subsequent school documentation proves this even more clearly. At Troshan College, most of the repertoire is religious, while at Shosh School, alongside the church repertoire pieces, there are a series of school songs adapted or created by Albanian authors: "The Flower of Albania", "The Life of the Beekeeper", by Father Martin Gjoka; "Students in the Square", "Dance" by Lec Kurti; "O moj Shqipni", "Who's Who"; "Antonian Hymn", "In You I Think", "Elbasan", small instrumental creations by Frano Ndoja, summed up under the title of "Albanian Pianoforte songs", which is part of "Like an old Albanian", "Sea song", "My Albania"<sup>6</sup> (CSA,1920:1-8). Indeed, these small creations are more like imitations of traditional models of their kind, displaying little or no elements of folklore or Albanian civic folk music. But the Albanian texts and their content, referring to the homeland, the landscape and the daily life of Albanian society, respond precisely to the nationalization mission.

Secular schools have significantly deepened this trend by introducing into the forced repertoire familiar patriotic songs, after Independence also two national anthems (alongside the official anthem "About the Shared Flag", as well as the anthem "Porsi Fleta", with author Lec Kurt and Father Gjergj Fishta), an ever greater number of Albanian folk song tunes, to reach up to the

<sup>6</sup> Schools song, [Songs used in schools] , Frano Ndoja Composer.1821. (Box 830, Folder 1.) Central State Archive, Tirana Albania.

drafting of a 35-song book by Kristo Kono<sup>7</sup>, but also the performance of folk songs or instrumental pieces built to suit folk melodies and dances.<sup>8</sup>



Photo 4. Choir of Franciscan School Scutari (1922)

### **Music in the Different School Programs**

Despite other alternative forms, Albanian Music Pedagogy marked its developments and results mostly within the school system. Within this framework, teaching programs were built, teaching experiences, didactic methods were created, selection and continuous enrichment of basic theoretical and artistic literature was made, thus including all the main components of the construction of the tradition of musical pedagogical thought in Albania. This process recognized its own stages of development, in line with the consolidation of the Albanian state itself. Music in schools entered among the compulsory vocational subjects, but over time increasingly gained the weight of an artistic discipline in function also of the musical life of the country. All the mentioned components attest to this significant development.

In the first decade of the 20th century, it seems that the music subject developed in schools focused mainly on the teaching

<sup>7</sup> Kono, from the beginning of teaching at the Gjirokastra Normal School, had started an almost special work practice for music in general education, where as a result of serious and dedicated work in the direction of singing and (violin) they started showing concerts with students for parents and the public, which for the time marked as a valuable artistic-school activity.

<sup>8</sup> Programme of education of Normal School Elbasan (Albania), publisher "Mbrothësia Kristo P. Luarasi," 1925, pp 29-30.

of song, since in the teaching programs of the time it is called "song" (Albanian Queen, Normal), or "canto" (in the case of the Franciscan School in Shkodra). After 1912, the general denomination of the subject changes to "music and song", which basically speaks of more in-depth claims of building curricula and enriching them with other formative, theoretical and practical elements.

This process begins with the founding of the Elbasan Normal in 1909, where, due to the school's pedagogical profile, the musical knowledge included in the curriculum is presented relatively expanded. In this context, Normal met not only the requirements for future teachers, but also the goals for their musical semi-professional education. In general lines, the development of the content of music subject programs in the school went through two main phases (1909-1925 and 1925-1942), the first of which was characterized by the effort of structuring the program, at the same time as building the musical, didactic and instrumental material base; while the second, which led to the realization and consolidation of the above requirements.<sup>9</sup> These developments can be said to have been reflected in all the country's main schools, in the Korça Lyceum, Scutari Gymnasium, Illyricum Lyceum and, following the implementation of the Reform undertaken by the Minister of Education, M. Ivanaj, for the nationalization of schools and the unification of their programs, also in the sensitive developments that were manifested in the field of musical pedagogical thought at the "Mother Queen" Institute in Tirana.

Specifically, under the name "music and song", the music curriculum in Albanian schools of the time, within a thirty-year time arch, was significantly enriched, including more extensive theoretical knowledge and forms of their practical exercise. In the early decades of the twentieth century, Normal

<sup>9</sup> Programme of education of Normal School Elbasan (Albania), publisher "Mbrothësia Kristo P. Luarasi," 1925, pp 29-30.

School has been focusing significantly on the instrumental (alongside theoretical) exercise, through the introduction of mandolin learning, to reach through the '30s to the forced demand of playing on a violin-like instrument (Bevapi, 1995:12). Also, in the early '20s, the "Kyrias" Institute in Tirana included music education and piano teaching, while since 1933, the "Mother Queen" Institute has been giving importance to the acquisition of instrumental play in violin and piano, in addition to significant efforts in terms of vocal interpretation. This process was accompanied in parallel with the enrichment and expansion of theoretical and vocational musical knowledge. In the 30s, the subject of "music and song", alongside music theory and soloism, began to span lines such as knowledge of the field of harmony, music history and musical aesthetics. At this stage and with these standards, music teaching in the main Albanian schools of the pre-World War II period can be seen as a significant step towards the transition to the post-War era professional music education system.

The path of development of Albanian Musical Pedagogy of the first half of the 20th century also went through publications of various natures, mainly teaching programs and musical texts. The first official publications of the curricula, including that of music, for the Normal school and the state gymnasium date back to 1921, 1925 and 1928, reflecting changes and improvements according to the respective years. This practice of official publication by the Ministry of Education was unfortunately not followed in the following decade. In 1936, 1938 and 1939, the institution suffices with draft programs distributed across schools on postal roads (Music Programmes in Albania, 1939, p. 24).

The Albanian Musical Pedagogy System of the first half of the 20th century also indicates the first steps of drafting, publishing and using textbooks and methodical teaching books with Albanian or foreign authors, for use in the pedagogical process. The methodical musical publications of Albanian authors, as can be seen from the data to

date, appear for the first time in 1925, with the "School Songs" drafted by Hil Mosi.

Onward, the Saverian College in Shkodra, in 1933, puts into circulation the "Compendium do kangs per elementary class", which includes briefly also explanations of some basic notions of music theory.

Two years later, the Ministry of Education publishes the textbook "Learning Music" for high schools, authored by Luigj Filaj, and finally, in 1941, Anton Muci's book "Fundamentals of Music" comes on the market. Although except in the case of the text of Filaj and A. Mucit all the encountered publications are presented as initiatives undertaken by particular schools or individuals, they all express the essential interest of equipping students with basic didactic and vocational materials.

Likewise, it happened with foreign methodical materials. The provision of literature and the utilization of Western musical pedagogical methods, as one of the strategic points for the development of musical education in schools, is evidenced first in the Elbasan Normal in 1925, through the utilization of world-renowned violinistic methods, such as Alard, Ferrara, Sport, Hohman Heim, Mazas, Kretzer, Kaiser. Meanwhile, in all of the aforementioned schools, during the 1920s-30s, in Albania many of pedagogical literature of music theory were from foreign conservatories from Italy, America, Austria and Germany. The textbooks served as a guide for the recognition of the elements of musical language, song learning.

In Kyrias Institute, "New Education Music Course" was used, while in Normal and Korça Lyceum, "Solfege scolaire" was used. On the other hand, the Institute "Nana Queen" put at the service of the teaching process prestigious texts and publications, such as the "Musica e Canto Corale" of the Italian publishing house Casa Ricordi (published 1931), or the text "Theory and Practice" of the renowned contemporary author Achile Schinelli.

### **Development of Musical Education according to Local Traditions of Cities**

In 1933 educational reform led, among other things, to the unification of the educational system in all its components. Consequently, the subject of music managed to unify both in terms of the content of the curriculum and its extent within the respective cycles. However, the Albanian pedagogical music system recognized internal changes depending on two main factors: local traditions, and formation of music teachers.

In a city like Scutari, where the beginnings of building public musical life begin as early as 1878 with the creation of the first Albanian Music Band, traditions created in the field of instrumental music by secular educational institutions gave life to the outline of a more visible trend towards instrument learning. In this case it should not be forgotten that Shkodra already cultivated a true tradition of singing, but mainly through the church choirs and later the Schola Cantorum (1932), as well as this created within the institutions of the Catholic clergy (Jesuit Order) (Zadeja, 2006:16-17).

In spite of Skodra, Korça, the birthplace and development of the patriotic song, the most characteristic repertoire of the Renaissance period and directly linked to the political, social and cultural ideals of that movement, but also of the civic song of love (or serenades), demonstrated a pronounced tendency towards the song, hence also the place that the song occupied in the popular daily life and in the choral musical repertoire. This tradition can be said to be hatched with the “Albanian lady”, who, with all her short life due to the Turkish-Greek struggle, is the first Albanian school to refer to the repertoire of patriotic civic song, of a completely secular song, but also without significant influences from rural folklore, not to forget the other fact that, in the interest of this issue, there were also born the first two or three songs of the kind for children, such as “Albanian Alphabet”, “Aboriginal” and “Knowledge” (understood according to

the practice of adapting foreign melodies to Albanian texts).

When it comes to Elbasan, a city in which no spark has appeared in the past, however significant the disbursement of forms of cultivated music, the issue takes on a more specific meaning, always associated with the Normal School, with the “obligation” that the school placed on itself to give musical knowledge possibly of all directions, theoretical and practical<sup>10</sup>.

The second factor conditioned more significant trends or orientations in Elbasan and Tirana, cities whose schools acted as teachers with more specific professional preparation. One of the first music teachers at the Elbasan Normal school, Ahmet Gashi, had learned to play violin as an amateur thanks to some foreign musicians, while the other teacher, Luigj Filaj, had just finished his studies at the Vienna Conservatory. This gave him a vested interest in the important place he would play in the general musical education of Normal, the play on the instrument of mandolin and violin.

This trend deepened significantly during the ‘30s, becoming almost characterizing through the activity of two young teachers of the time, Baki Congoli and Myrteza Krasta, both violin graduates, in Italy and Austria, respectively (Ratkoceri, 2005:85). The same factor, but with an even more significant effect, determined the developments of Albanian Music Pedagogy at the “Mother Queen” Institute in Tirana. Other artists formed in the western Conservatory taught there, singers Jorgjia Truja and Maria Kraja, and pianist Lola Gjoka (Tonin Guraziu), the latter with pronounced inclinations towards the stage music show.

Therefore, in addition to the instruments, the Institute “Mother Queen” attached a special importance to vocal education at the soloistic and choral level, integrating

<sup>10</sup> Normal School of Elbasan, [Music Programmes], Normal of Elbasan, 1938. (Box 235, Folder 175.) Central State Archive, Tirana Albania.



within the general system elements with professional bases. All this found expression in the artistic activity of the school, in which, in addition to the performances of the vocal and instrumental soloistic pieces and the choral ones, it reached even the realization of some stage musical and choreographic performances.

The tradition established in the field of Musical Pedagogy in Albania in the first half of the 20th century would lose a significant part of its importance if it did not play a role in two main directions: in the musical life of the time; and in the further development of Musical Pedagogy in Albania after World War II. And indeed, she played significant roles in both of these directions.

In a general assessment, it should be stated that the music education system in Albania was born not only as an obligation of educational formation with the right knowledge, but also as a strategic starting point for building a more prosperous future in the field of music activity. In the absence of professional artistic schools, one can only understand the progress achieved in Albanian musical education during the period under review, going from the teaching of “singing” to instruments, to the setting up of vocal and orchestral formations, to the preparation of instrumental and vocal soloists and to the staging of several musical-theatrical performances. All of which gave the country’s main cities a missing, never before known, public, emancipatory, signposted musical life for further artistic and cultural developments.



Photo 5. The group of girls with different musical instruments conducted by Luigj Filaj (25th anniversary of the announcement of independence 1937)

The process of interrelation musical education- musical activity, in a still disorganized way, originated in the 1880s-‘90s in Shkodra, when the Palok Kurti Music Band played through squares, marches, songs, character music, and even some adaptation of the operatic repertoire. The early ‘20s of the 20th century transferred this phenomenon also to the city of Korca, with the concerts of the band “Vatra”, already conducted by a professional musician like Thoma Nasi. But in an even more consistent and outline form, this process began to come alive from representatives of younger generations, who had received the musical knowledge in Albanian school banks. And here it’s about the 1920s-‘30s, in which Albanian public musical life also takes shape.

In Skodra, the Albanian cultural capital of the time, in addition to the regular activity of musical bands, concerts were held during this period with works by local (mainly Father Martin Gjoka) and foreign authors, as well as musical-scenic performances, such as the melodrama “Shepherds of Bethlehem” with lyrics by Father Gjergj Fishta and with music by composer father Martin Gjoka, a premiere performed under the auspices of the Sisters stigmatine. Two years later, in 1917, by students of the Franciscan School and with a large orchestra of Austrian Army Band instrumentalists, three numbers from the melodrama “Judas Macabey”<sup>12</sup> were staged,

<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Education, Music Programmes, Box 195, Folder 20, School programmes 1925, Central State Archive Albania.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Gjoka, Box 288, Folder 6, Martin Gjoka Composer, personal Found, Archive of Franciscan Scutari, Scodra (Albania).

with the same authors. This experience of stage music activity, in the city of Shkoder, was enriched from one decade to the next, to reach to the performance of three other melodrama with lyrics by Dom Ndre Zadje and music by Dom Mikel Koliqi, in the stage performances of 1936 and 1937 by Schola Cantorum. It is enough to mention these facts to understand why Shkodra became the birthplace of the first Albanian opera ("Mrika", Llazar Siliqi libretto, Prenk Jakova music, staged for the first time by Shkodra House of Culture, in 1958).

Meanwhile, public musical life in Korça, Elbasan and Tirana, as well as the content of the music education system, is almost entirely secular. In Korca, the creation of the "Society of Fine Arts" (1922), later also of the choir "Lyra" (1928), brought immediate results in the musical life of the city, mainly with performances of a selected repertoire by Bizet's operas, Verdi, Rossini, with instrumental pieces by authors such as Chopin, Sarasate, Boccherini, Schubert etc., as well as with new creations by Albanian authors such as Th. Nasi and K. Kono.

Unlike Shkodra and Korca, where the amateur music movement had managed to create a kind of tradition, the public music event in the town of Elbasan was set up and largely borne by Normal students. A first document comes from 1929, when normalists held a concert featuring works by Rossini, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Henkel. But the most important steps of Elbasan's musical life are marked after the mid-30s, during which the school had managed to form orchestral formations sufficiently prepared to cope with concert repertoires.

In 1937, teacher and violinist Baki Kongoli reorganized the school's orchestra, to arrive a year later at the holding of a concert with an ambitious programme for the time. Kongoli played as a soloist at the Violin Concerto and Orchestra of Viott (as far as we know, the first performance of a concert work by Albanian musicians), accompanied by the orchestra,

and at Mendelssohn's "Rondo capriccioso", under the pianistic accompaniment of Lola Gjoka. In another perspective, the rest of the program is of particular interest, consisting of pieces adapted for orchestral formation of Albanian folk dances and songs: "Black Brows", "Potpuri Albanian Folk Dances", "Elbasan Wedding Song Suite".



Photo 6. Musical Band in Scutari (Albania) Conducted by Palok Kurti (1878)

The tradition of adapting folk music to orchestral formations with Western instruments in Albania had started since the 1880s with the Palok Kurti Music Band. For this formation, Kurti adapted a number of popular scholarly civic songs, some of which are included in his two popular songs: "Musical entertainments of our great-grandparents". About fifty years later, this effort to build a national repertoire seemed to preoccupy even young Elbasan musicians, teachers and students of Normal. In 1938 the Normal formation held a concert at the cinema "Gloria" in Tirana, also with renowned pieces of foreign repertoire (by authors such as Pergolesi, Beethoven, Massenet, Verdi, Haydn and Schubert).

During the '30s the effects of the development of the music education system on artistic life are presented as sensitive in Tirana as well.

As the capital of the country, Tirana at this time concentrated the most qualified musical forces, but alongside them the artistic life was included as a separate voice and the daughters of the Institute "Mother Queen", with various concerts

and performances, among them the most singular: in 1936, Concert with instrumental and vocal works by renowned authors, and staging of the operetta “Princess Iris”; in 1937, Concert with instrumental and vocal works by renowned authors, and staging of the operetta “Grandmother’s Day”; in 1939, participation in the artistic Festival of “Albanian Woman”.<sup>13</sup>

The tradition formed in Albanian Musical Pedagogy of the first half of the 20th century has in many directions given way to further developments in this field, both in general and professional education. In some more general lines, the milestones set from the beginning of the century onwards remain as important today. It is about such fundamental issues as two-way education with universal knowledge and national orientation, linking the school to artistic activity, building the pedagogical repertoire on the basis of the selection of the most typical examples of classical and local tradition.

All these are traits that the Albanian Music Pedagogy developed and enriched after the Second World War, although often subject to ideological requirements, or lacking due to constraint from extra-pedagogical or extra-artistic factors. The word, even in the specialized music schools, especially after 1967, was excluded from the repertoire the entire vocal musical heritage with important didactic functions of the European Renaissance period, where genres such as motets, so important in the process of musical artistic formation, were assessed as totally unacceptable due to religious texts. Simultaneously, in the school repertoires took place a plethora of songs with completely politicized content, often devoid of genuine artistic values or unsuitable from the didactic point of view for the formation of musical expressions.

## Conclusion

However, in the main lines, the Albanian musical pedagogical system of the second half of the 20th century inherited from the preceding period a satisfactory and to some extent consistent systematization of program content, experience and valuable teaching methods.

In this context, the transition from the general music education system to the professional one is of even greater interest. The latter was formalized in 1946, with the opening of the artistic high school “Jordan Misja”, otherwise known as the Artistic Lyceum of Tirana, the first educational institution of artistic profile (including musical one) in the country. Especially during the early years of operation, when the Eastern school models were almost negligible, the music branch in Music School was set up almost entirely on the basis of inherited experience, on European school curricula and teaching methods, and on such literature as this. This was conditioned by two main factors: existing teaching bodies, all formed in the Conservative Party in the West and with a prior experience of teaching, and the continuity of the experience created in the general musical pedagogical system of the previous period. In this sense, the significant developments reflected by the Albanian music education system during the ‘30s served as a bridge of transition towards the stage of professional music education.

In a more concrete assessment, this role is evidenced by a series of developments, which the Albanian Musical Pedagogy recognized, especially during the 1920s - ‘30s, among which the following are singled out:

- Enriching teaching programs with more advanced elements of musical education, such as the elementary bases of harmony, the main knowledge of the field of music history, main notions of musical aesthetic thought, which in professional music schools are programmed as special study disciplines.

<sup>13</sup> Mother Queen Institute, Box 387, Foler 35, Programme of music, 1942, National State Archive, Tirana, Albania.

- Integration within the system of concrete knowledge of the field of vocal and instrumental interpretation (alongside theoretical education) in quasi-profiled lines, as determining directions underlying the professional musical pedagogical system.
- Creating group performance experience, in various choral and instrumental formations, as equally important components in the process of professional formation of musicians.
- Interrelation of teaching knowledge with artistic practice in public events, as additional elements of concert life.

The Albanian music education system of the first half of the 20th century, although of a paraprofessional stage, managed to reap notable results in this respect. Most of the musicians, who would become among the most defining figures of the development of national musical life and creativity, at least during the 1950s-'70s, were formed in schools or other existing alternative settings, in which the musical pedagogical action of the Albanian society of 1900-1945 was extended. It is about composers, instrumentalists, singers, conductors and musicians, a good part of whom were willing with the acquired knowledge to attend and graduate in the Conservatories of the countries of the East, as well as a whole army of teachers of general and professional schools, who kept on their feet and carried forward the Albanian Musical Pedagogy, which is actually entitled to take pride in artists who made name on the national and international scenes.

### **Recommendations**

Today, music education in Albania continues in tradition of music pedagogy of 20th century, it's the first Study for the development of music education in Albania and I hope that soon we have further studies of this kind. Furthermore, one can also continue researching music pedagogy the

second half of 20th century, the formal and informal music education. This study may be the beginning of a wider research for professional music pedagogy in Albania, may serve for the international researchers to know the development of music pedagogy in the early years of education in Albania and to compare it with the developments in the Balkans.

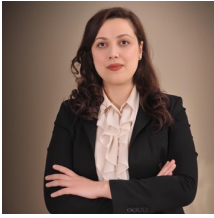
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