

# POPULARIZATION OF MUSIC EDUCATION ON THE EXAMPLE OF MUSICAL AND THEATRICAL PROJECT *DIRTY DANCING*

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**Abstract:** The paper deals with reflections on the reasons to the decreased interest of students in formal music education, and opportunities to improve music education system in terms of its popularization. Learning period students spend in order to musically develop and educate themselves should not be a burden, but enjoyment, and flexibility of curriculum in music schools should deliver it. One way of enriching music education could be by including students in various projects, which can be achieved through cooperation with artists outside the home institution, whether amateurs or professionals, but also to connect with similar arts, if the project requires it. In addition to the learning process, it is important to think of the other, no less important, educational component, that would encourage students to think further and, if they continue with education, how to become a performer on stage, and thus have the opportunity to travel, to collaborate with other artists and make new friends. As an example of a successful cooperation on the international level we are presenting a musical and theatrical project *Dirty Dancing*, which got together a large number of amateur and professional artists, whose teamwork led to the successful live performance and project realization.

**Key words:** musical education; musical and theatrical project; international culture collaboration; motivation; musical

## Introduction

Any student can acquire music education within a general-education school through the study course of Music Culture, which is compulsory throughout the primary education. Such programs are aimed at introducing students with music culture. However, if a child shows interest, has the aptitude and passes a check of music abilities, he or she is acceptable to gain the formal music education in special, specialized educational institutions – schools of music. “A separate system is necessary due to the complexity of particular musical skills, such as singing by notes and playing” (Svalina, 2015, 86). Yet, such a system requires, from both the students and their parents, a serious, responsible approach and self-sacrifice, which due to curriculum demands and difficulties in reconciling schedules often results in the student’s loss of interest. Elementary schools of music focus on individual classes, where students acquire competence in playing

an instrument. Group music-making where students, besides the professional ones acquire others competences too, is also included, though only in higher grades, when students have already lost the interest and motivation for music education. Joining amateur vocal and/or instrumental ensembles, as informal forms of music education, is one of high-quality prospects for developing music competences, as well as spurring students' motivation. Cooperation between formal and informal institutions would open the avenue for creating favourable setting, enriching and modernizing school curriculum, and encouraging students to enjoy in music-making. Besides, it would build a platform for networking of different arts, performers of different artistic profiles and ages, and interdisciplinary approach to education.

Since the primary aim of the paper is to point out to deficiencies in formal music education, we provide an overview of its structures in the Republic of Croatia, and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>1</sup> Although the topic, namely the presentation of our project – which ensues at the end of the paper, does not include students of elementary music education whose structure we have presented, it was important to single out and point to the burden and loss of motivation in students that such curricula imply, and which consequently results in exclusion from further system of music education.

We also point out to the advantages of informal music education through prospects offered by participation in a musical and theatrical project. The presentation of this interdisciplinary international project reveals the specifics of the cooperation between professional and amateur artists of different ages, and the prominent advantage of team work.

### **Structure of formal elementary music education in the Republic of Croatia and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Republic of Croatia, and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina have similar systems of music education at all levels. Elementary music education lasts for six years, and in the Republic of Croatia students typically enrol in parallel to the third grade of general-education school, while in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina they enrol in parallel to the fourth grade. Students attend group classes (solfeggio / solfeggio with music theory) and the individual ones (instrument<sup>2</sup>) throughout the elementary music education. In higher grades,

<sup>1</sup> Since the presented project Dirty Dancing gathered performers from the Republic of Croatia, and from Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the paper presents the structures of elementary music education in these regions.

<sup>2</sup> According to FBiH curriculum the main course – instrument includes Violin, Violoncello, Piano, Accordion, Guitar, Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, and Percussions.

depending on curriculum, students also attend group classes in Music Theory, and in Group Music-making (choir, orchestra, chamber ensembles) and some other core or elective courses (Nastavni planovi i programi predškolskog i osnovnog obrazovanja za glazbene i plesne škole, 2006; Nastavni plan i program osnovne muzičke škole i osnovne baletske škole, 2007).

The time that students spend in Music School classes is their free time. This time is a scope and the vitality, contents, and forms of that time are what make it applicable and interpolated in students' lives (Mlinarević, Miliša and Proroković, 2007). With respect to music school curricula, it should be noted that students typically attend classes in their free time, i.e. in periods that differ from classes in the general-education school. It frequently implies a great effort and self-sacrifice, both by students and their entire families. First grade schedule is not an extensive one, but due to difficulties in harmonizing schedules it frequently happens students have to come to classes even four times a week. An overview of courses and corresponding hours, as per music education curricula in the Republic of Croatia<sup>3</sup> and in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina are presented in Table 1.

Courses Grade 1	Number of hours per week		Courses Grade 1	Number of hours per week
	Curriculum			Curriculum
	Republic of Croatia			Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
	Elementary school of music	Elementary school of functional music pedagogy		Elementary school of music
Solfeggio	2 x 45'	2 x 60'	Solfeggio with music theory	2 x 45'
Instrument	2 x 45'	2 x 30'	Main study course – instrument	2 x 45'
TOTAL HOURS PER WEEK	4 x 45'	4 x 45'	TOTAL HOURS PER WEEK	4 x 45'

Table 1. Courses and corresponding hours in curricula for the first grade of elementary music education

<sup>3</sup> In the Republic of Croatia, schools of music can choose one of the two curricula – Curriculum for elementary school of music, or Curriculum for elementary school of functional music pedagogy.

There are more hours in higher grades, and thus students of the final, sixth grade attend classes in Solfeggio / Solfeggio with music theory, Instrument<sup>4</sup>, Group music-making<sup>5</sup>, Music theory (in some curricula as compulsory, and in others as an elective course), and Music art (only B curriculum of Functional music pedagogy). Besides, some students also attend Piano classes as an elective or optional course to qualify for taking the admission exam for the secondary music education. Students of elementary music schools in FBiH may be engaged in classes or other forms of educational work for seven hours a week at most. If we add the time students need to spend every day practicing at home to develop their music competences, we get a excessive number of hours (over 10 hours a week) that students should devote to attending and keeping up with the curriculum of music school, which is not compulsory education. Table 2 presents an overview and comparison of courses and corresponding hours for curricula in the Republic of Croatia, and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for students of sixth grade of music education.

Courses Grade 6	Number of hours per week			Courses Grade 6	Number of hours per week
	Curriculum Republic of Croatia				Curriculum
	Elementary school of music	Elementary school of music pedagogy			Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
			A		B
Solfeggio	2 x 45'	2 x 60'	2 x 60'	Solfeggio with music theory	2 x 45'
Instrument	2 x 45'	2 x 45'	1 x 45'	Main course – instrument	2 x 45'
Group music-making (choir, orchestra and chamber ensembles)	2 x 45'	2 x 45'	2 x 45'	Group music-making (choir, orchestra and chamber ensembles)	2 x 45'
Music theory	1 x 45' (I)	2 x 45'	2 x 45'	/	/
Piano	1 x 45' (I)	1 x 30' (F)	–	/	/
Music art	–	–	1 x 45'	/	/
TOTAL HOURS PER WEEK	6 x 45' or 8 x 45'	8 <sup>30</sup> x 45' or 9 x 45'	8 <sup>30</sup> x 45' or 9 x 45'	TOTAL HOURS PER WEEK	6x45'

Table 2. Courses and corresponding hours in curricula for the sixth grade of elementary music education

Legend: I = elective course; F=optional course

<sup>4</sup> According to the curriculum in FBiH, classes in string and wind instruments include a class with accompaniment per week.

<sup>5</sup> Curriculum for schools in FBiH provide for two hours a week per section for leading chamber ensembles, orchestras, and choirs.

Nowadays, students' interests greatly differ from interests students have had in past not too distant. The number of extracurricular activities offered to them is increasing, and music schools – with their demanding curricula, are increasingly not the first choice. We are witnessing to a growing number of drop outs from the music education system, which certainly begs the question as to how to proceed and what to do so as to keep students' interest. In what way could students be motivated to spend a high-quality free time by attending music education?

### **Motivation as the primary driver in music education**

Activity in educational system pertains to learning through which students acquire various competences. There are only few students who learn from pure curiosity and desire to participate in various activities, particularly those that are not compulsory. Such an internal or intrinsic motivation<sup>6</sup> “is the response to students' internal needs such as curiosity, need for knowledge, feeling of competence, growth, and development (Vizek Vidović et al., 2014, 265). As a contrast, most students need extrinsic motivation, such as a good result, commendation, reward, etcetera (Vizek Vidović et al., 2014).

In order to motivate students for work, teachers have to use various strategies, methods and forms of teaching. One form of classes is collaborative learning which is, among other things, implemented “to better motivate and activate students for learning” (Ivić et al., 2001 cited in Cindrić, Miljković and Strugar, 2010, 186). One of the forms of collaborative learning is team work, with team members including students, teachers, or students and teachers together (Cindrić, Miljković and Strugar, 2010). Teams can also include experts outside the institution. For this very reason, activities where expert teams participate will be richer, more dynamic, more attractive, and more diverse (Bognar and Matijević, 2005). In a good team, all the members contribute equally, feel important and useful, help each other, learn from the others with help and support, enjoy in success and jointly solve problems. The atmosphere created in such groups and activities has a stimulating effect on students. “Children learn within interaction with people: parents, grandparents, friends and teachers. The best stimulus for a human being are other people.” (Kamarivsky, 2010, 26)

The space for stimulus and motivation in schools of music is vast. The natural way of learning music through entertainment, which naturally affects motivation, is discussed by many authors (more in: Petrović, Milanković and Ačić, 2014, 206.) Authors Petrović, Milanković and Ačić (2014), believe that such way of working achieves the educational goal better, since resources are more dominant and

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<sup>6</sup> According to Vizek Vidović et al. (2014) the term “motivation” is of Latin origin and is derived from Latin verb “movere”, which means to move. In lay terms, it is related to the idea of a driver that makes us get involved in a given activity.

entertaining. A more easy-going approach to education is also backed by a flexible curricula, and possibilities for cooperation with experts outside the institution. One should not limit oneself only to the music art, but rather broaden horizons and link with other arts. Such teams and projects, that will be undertaken, will enrich the curriculum and give the opportunity for participation to a larger number of students, encourage development of competences and, most importantly, spur students' interest and motivation for further music education. The proposal of an activity and the cooperation offered in the paper is based on musical and theatrical project which gathered a great number of participants and experts, and achieved the international cultural cooperation too.

### **Musical and theatrical project *Dirty Dancing* as a means to motivate the youth for music education**

Musical and theatrical projects as a motivational means of communication are an ideal platform for joining various art forms and artists. Musical and theatrical projects assemble artists of various profiles in order to create original works. They are presented on the stage to broader audiences, and unite expression with speech, body language, acting, music, singing and other means to communicate with audience.

Application of skills acquired in primary professions of performers of various profiles within musical and theatrical projects on the example of musical<sup>7</sup> as a form, individually contributes to the development of their creativity in general, and develops their individuality, character, self-confidence, concentration, focus, and skills to their individual maximum. "As an important pedagogical and didactic means, musical contributes to the interdisciplinary and personal integration, as well as to the development of all the senses necessary for artistic creativity." (Petrović, Milanković and Ačić, 2014, 210) Further developing collaborative and organizational competences, and particularly stage (acting, musical and dancing) improvisation, is aimed at overcoming potential problems that frequently arise during public performances. These experiences and situations are easily applicable and understandable in their primary professions and, regardless whether they involve professional or amateur performers, they expand their critical thinking.

<sup>7</sup> Musical is a piece of entertaining character, a live art form originating from the age of Greek theatre where comedies and tragedies with songs were staged as early as from the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Although they were not called musicals at the time, since they were incomplete in terms of both drama and music, it could be claimed that they were the first predecessors of what is presently called a "modern musical" (Ferović, 2007, 86). Performed in large amphitheatres, these performances dealt with comic, tragic and political topics with dancing items, jugglers and anything that could entertain broad audiences. Musical that we know today originated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and initially implied a union of elements of different theatrical kinds – vaudeville, ballet, operetta, comic opera and Paris revue (Ganzl, 2001, 9-11).

The musical and theatrical project *Dirty Dancing* was initiated in 2015, as a result of years-long international cultural cooperation between Brod Accordion Orchestra Bela pl. Panthy of Slavonski Brod, Republic of Croatia, and Institute of Music, Theatre and Multimedia of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The goal of the project was to unite professional and amateur artists intended at motivating them for art education and promoting arts in general, reinforcing international cultural cooperation of two neighbouring countries, and enriching cultural contents of the cities in which they operate. The project was presented at the opening ceremony of the Sixth International Accordion Festival Bela pl. Panthy in Slavonski Brod.<sup>8</sup>

According to the plan, the project involved members of Brod Accordion Orchestra Bela pl. Panthy of Slavonski Brod, and members of the Institute of Music, Theatre and Multimedia of Sarajevo as the main actors, plus other music and dance artists without whom the implementation of the project would have been impossible. Special music guests included members of the band Trio + 2 from Slavonski Brod, and the dancers - members of the dancing club Aster from Sarajevo, and sport-dancing club Astra from Slavonski Brod.



Figure 1. Poster for the musical and theatrical project *Dirty Dancing*, Slavonski Brod, 20 November 2015 (Agencija Komitet, Nuhanović, 2015a)

<sup>8</sup> International accordion festival Bela pl. Panthy has been held in Slavonski Brod since 2010. As was the case with previous joint projects of Brod Accordion Orchestra Bela pl. Panthy of Slavonski Brod, and Institute of Music, Theatre and Multimedia of Sarajevo (*Abba*, *We will rock you*, and *Grease*), the musical and theatrical project *Dirty Dancing* was presented at the concert at the opening ceremony in Theatre and Concert Hall Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić in Slavonski Brod, on November 20<sup>th</sup> 2015 (More information on the Festival is available at: Festival Bela pl. Panthy, 2015).



Elements of dance, which this musical and theatrical performance abound in, required engaging dance groups, which made the organization of the project challenging. The need for enrichment of accordion sound required the involvement of other instruments, which in turn asked for cooperation with musicians, most of whom were not musically literate or accustomed to orchestral music-making. Since one of ancillary goals was to involve amateur artists of various profiles – who live and work in all smaller communities and are thus the foundation of artistic activity there, not only professionals were invited to participate. Moreover, the cooperation between professional and amateur artists of different ages was a challenge – both for the leaders, and for the performers.

In order to ensure the successful implementation of the project, we had to organize writing of the arrangement for orchestra and the singers, rehearse the program at two locations<sup>9</sup>, ensure technical support to the hall in terms of engaging sound and light engineers, find appropriate props and the costumes for the stage, engage the support staff for carrying out all the tasks that are not visible, and to obtain financial resources so that preparations and the presentation can proceed smoothly. Furthermore, the organizational team, headed by presenters, had to have a clear conception and excelling organization abilities, as well as the trust and support of all participants, to have everything prepared at two locations over a few months and then, in only two days, merged at the stage where the project was to be presented.

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<sup>9</sup> Institute of Music, Theatre and Multimedia, in cooperation with members of dancing club Aster spent months rehearsing the vocal, acting and dancing part of the project in Sarajevo. The dancing part has also been rehearsed by members of sport-dancing club Astra in Slavonski Brod. At the same location, in Slavonski Brod, Brod Accordion Orchestra Bela pl. Panthy, and the band Trio + 2 have rehearsed instrumental accompaniment and independent instrumental musical items. Joint musical rehearsals, as well as technical ones, followed were done two days before the project presentation. In the course of four rehearsals, problems of musical and technical nature, which necessarily arise in such a complex project, have been solved.



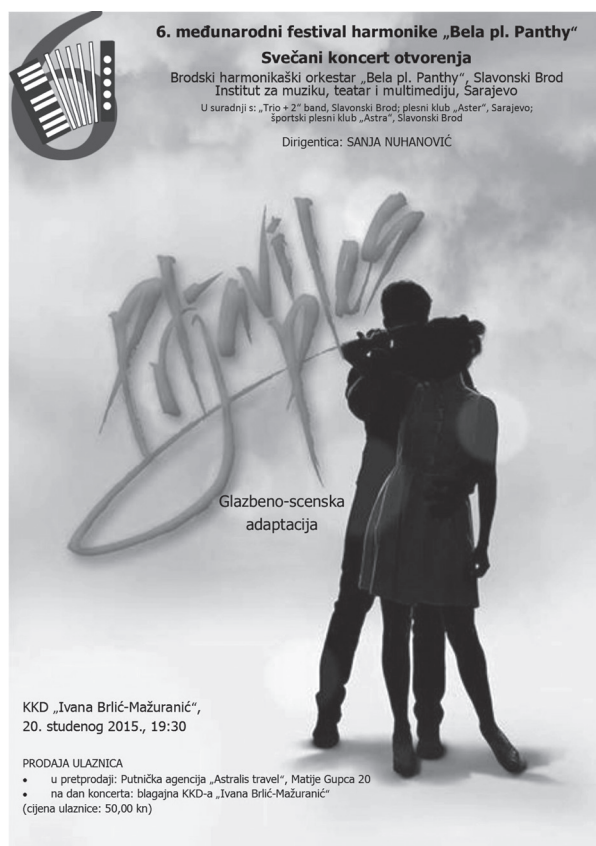


Figure 2. Concert at the opening ceremony Dirty Dancing, musical and theatrical adaptation, Slavonski Brod, 20 November 2015 (Agencija Komitet, Nuhanović, 2015b)<sup>10</sup>

A total of 53 active participants aged 15 to 65 took part in the project. There were also about 700 passive participants – audience, journalists, representatives of local administration, and representatives of institutions. The musical and theatrical adaptation engaged 25 members of Brod Accordion Orchestra Bela pl. Panthy, five members of the band Trio + 2 and the conductor, who made up the Sanja Suarez band, the presenter, and five members of Institute of Music, Theatre and Multimedia, four members of dancing club Aster from Sarajevo, and twelve members of sport-dancing club Astra from Slavonski Brod, who made up the ensemble Dirty Dancing. The creative team of Dirty Dancing was composed as follows: Alma Ferović-Fazlić (1978), musical direction; Samra Mlinar Mandić (1980) and Vedran Marčeta (1980), choreography and stage gesture; Agency

<sup>10</sup> Archives of Brod Accordion Orchestra Bela pl. Panthy.

Komitet from Sarajevo, visual identity; Dubravko Šef (1951), arrangements, and Sanja Nuhanović (1976), conductor. The following songs were performed: Be My Baby, Merengue, Johnny's Mambo, Do You Love Me, Love man, Hungry Eyes, De Todo Un Poco, In The Still Of The Night, Love Is Strange, She's Like The Wind, and The Time Of My Life.

When the project ended and the impressions settled, the performers expressed their impressions of what they have experienced, created, and eventually presented to audience. Out of a series of reviews, we single out a couple. The guiding criterion in the selection of reviews pertains to performers' differences in performing ensemble, country they come from, and professional or amateur involvement in art.

"As a participant, I was very pleased and happy that we managed to achieve the collaboration between two cities, two countries, and show that art has no borders. I've learned a lot from this project - about special arrangements, about how voices function with an accordion orchestra, about what we as individuals and the whole orchestra need in order to achieve the desired goal, and about the way to achieve collaboration of some fifty people into one whole on the stage. It was really a unique experience and we had the opportunity to experience it and enjoy in it, and I am personally delighted and grateful for such an opportunity." (Institute of Music, Theatre and Multimedia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, aged 30, university education, professional musician and amateur dancer).

"The project motivated me for further artistic education and development, and my goal is to participate and/or organize such a project in the future, because I believe that such collaboration represents a wonderful and rich facet of artistic expression and has a positive effect both on performers and on the audience." (Brod Accordion Orchestra Bela pl. Panthy, Republic of Croatia, aged 19, professional musician).

"I enjoyed every moment and the implementation of the project. Given my age, I am not fit for artistic education, but as an amateur I can always invigorate myself with new ideas and successful implementation of fantastic ideas under professional guidance. I am looking forward to future cooperation with wonderful people and experts." Brod Accordion Orchestra Bela pl. Panthy, Republic of Croatia, aged 56, amateur musician).

"It was magnificent to be a part of this great project and to approach to a musical in a totally different way. This project taught me how important the team work is, and it was through this project that I boosted my social skills, public performance and contact with audience. I was extremely pleased to work with the professionals, led by Alma and Sanja, with the entire acting and dancing team, as well as with the orchestra. The project broadened my horizons, revealed previously unknown talents and skills, and additionally increased my love for music, dance, stage, and love for audience I've shared emotions with"

(Sport-dancing club Aster, Bosnia and Herzegovina, aged 27, professional dancer).

“Great! Great organization; socializing even after the rehearsals. A priceless experience and a great time; I am glad I’ve been part of it” (Sport-dancing club Aster, aged 17, amateur dancer).

“The first thing that had me delighted happened at rehearsals, when we “merged” with other dancers, singers, players and presenters. Their professionalism, decency, positive energy, and earnestness about what we do made me feel that I participated in something really great, which finally has come true. Everybody did their job in the best way they could, and the response of audience showed the success of the conceived and the presented. For me, as a dancer, Dirty Dancing is a special kind of dancing bible that I have been dreaming about since I was a girl, and this was really my dream come true, and when I obtain a heap of artists, positive people, new friends and acquaintances on top of it, the pleasure is even greater. By joining music, song, dance, and acting, both the audience and the performers could experience one of the best dancing movies with all their senses.” (Sport-dancing club Aster, aged 23, professional dancer).<sup>11</sup>

## Conclusion

This review and research paper presented the most significant considerations and achievements, along with proposals for popularization and innovation of music education. Besides, it presented the significance and function of affirmation of art as an important activity in the development of professional competences, as well as in the formation of personality and life of any young person. What

<sup>11</sup> Evaluation among members of the ensemble was conducted in 2016 with an on-line survey created exclusively for this research. The survey was open and available for ten days (October 11, 2016 - October 21, 2016). The questions in the survey were open and closed type, and the aim was to determine project implementation, success, cooperation and to imply whether participation in this project had an impact on further education of participants in the field of arts (formal or informal). Evaluation questionnaire was completed by more than a half of the participants (N = 28) and majority of them were members of Brod Accordion Orchestra Bela pl. Panthy (17 members), followed by four members of the Institute for music, theatre and multimedia and sport-dancing club Astra, and three members of the dance club Aster. Out of the total number of responders 8 (28.57%), were male participants and 20 (71.43%) female. The age of the participant ranged from 16 to 56 years. Looking at the survey it is also visible how many members are amateurs or professionally engaged in music, so 24 60.71% said they are amateurs, and 25.00% professional musicians. The rest were only active in dance. The level of education of amateur musicians and professionals varies from those who do not have any formal music education to those who have completed music studies. Among those who declared themselves as dancers only, it is also visible that (35.71%) are amateur artists while the percentage of professionals equals to that of professional musicians (25.00%). The level of education of dancers also ranges from informal dance education to dance studies.

is it that can be achieved through team work with diverse population, ages and individual experiences and through international cultural cooperation is evident through the implementation of the musical and theatrical project *Dirty Dancing*. Besides, the musical and theatrical project *Dirty Dancing* was essentially based on the idea of joining traditional and modern - in terms of art forms that seem incompatible, in order to additionally motivate participants to develop their aesthetic sense and new competences. Having in mind that the project was prepared in two cities and two countries, and in different point in time, the potential risk factor was extremely high, yet it was this factor that had a positive effect on better concentration and focus of all the participants whose creative abilities in only two days of team work were expressed to their maximum.

As it can be observed from the evaluation and based on the research conducted among the participants, in both project-participating countries the interests of participants of different ages, particularly the young ones, have not been listened to or observed so far. The analysis brought to light the assertion that it is this kind of cooperation that greatly contributed to increasing of their interest in further education and advancement, as well as for participation in such projects, which in both informal and formal environments provide adequate alternatives and modern methods of high-quality learning.

As for the public and audience who watched the project - an original work has been presented. A positive response of the audience and the profession to such unusual and extraordinary liaison between accordion and popular music incorporated into elements of musical – singing, acting and dance, accompanied with specially arranged set, costumes, video and light effects prompted for yearly presentations of new musical and theatrical adaptations of well-known musicals on the stage of theatre and concert hall Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić. This maintained the continuity in the cooperation between Brod Accordion Orchestra Bela pl. Panthy from Slavonski Brod and Institute of Music, Theatre and Multimedia from Sarajevo and, as early as in 2016, they created the new musical and theatrical project *Annie*, gathering a large number of participants from both countries. One should particularly single out children of pre-school age as participants.

For all the reasons explained above, we believe that these and similar projects would certainly enrich school curricula and provide an opportunity for a larger number of students to express their respective potentials, and would too spur students' interest and motivation for further music education. Practical experience in the implementation of the above-described project, confirms that everything presented in this paper can be applied in the teaching process, where students would not have the feeling of effort, but rather work with satisfaction, while gaining competence would be faster and more effective.

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