Lithuanian Conservatoire in the Boston, USA, and the Contribution of its Founder M. Petrauskas to the Musical Pedagogy of Exodus

The ideas of the conservatoire founded by Mikas Petrauskas in the USA have not been explored enough yet. The examination of the social-cultural parameters of the personality, the qualification of the peculiarities of both the conservatoire education and its social communal connections as well as their dynamics and influence on the development of the folk culture under the conditions of the exodus have not been satisfactory as well.

Problem. The history of the development of the world tells us that the development and progress of the nation may be heavily influenced by the activity of clever people. The survival of the nation depends largely on its concern about its younger generation, especially about the part of it in the emigration. Lithuanian youth who lived in the czarist Russian until 1918 had not got their own social, cultural, political, and geographical space; they did not know where to live and to what orient their complicated national patriotism. The artist understood that it was a man of education who realized his own ideals and objectives more successfully in pluralistic democracy. He sacrificed the most mature period of his life, that of 1907–1930, for his countrymen living in the emigration. Mikas Petrauskas’ conservatoire became the centre of Lithuanian culture and art in the USA.

Introduction and text

It is little known about the science of the exodus pedagogy and Lithuanian education in the emigration. One or two publications in print of the latter period do not yet make up for it. It does not provide possibilities for the integration of the studies of the pedagogical scholars who worked in the emigration as well as of the activity of Lithuanian educational institutions to an integral system of the history of the Lithuanian school and pedagogical thought¹. One of the first professional Lithuanian singers was Mikas Petrauskas, who graduated from conserva-
toire of St. Petersburg (Russia). He arrived to the USA in 1907 and sang as a soloist or a member of various vocal ensembles, worked as a private teacher of singing. His concert programmes consisted not only of Lithuanian folk songs but also of world famous classical compositions. M. Petrauskas often gave his concerts to people of different nationalities but his favourite audience was Lithuanians 2. Mikas Petrauskas named the music school which was founded in Chicago and moved to Boston in 1915 as the Lithuanian conservatoire of music. All of a sudden it became a sample of respect, dignity, tolerance, and equal opportunities. Having arrived to the USA, Lithuanian youth worked about 12–14 hours at foundries, factories, mines, and butcheries; afterwards they took classes at M. Petrauskas. The rules of the conservatoire and discipline were based on honest behaviour and became a starting point for a preparation of the students for the future cultural work. M. Petrauskas’ style of teaching encourages discussions and questions. The director of the conservatoire was against the desire of some students to cram the material as such a method of learning was restraining and did not develop thinking and thoughts 3.

National culture, in its interior and exterior form, is a factor unifying the community and helping to keep unchanged the national identity in the course of dangerous processes of globalisation and levelling of a variety of cultures and nations, which took place at the beginning of the 20th century. M. Petrauskas’ political directions of artistic training were not stable or monotonous; on the contrary, they were forming affected by the fatal changes of combinations of transformation, hybridization, confusion and obscurity that were typical to the beginning of the 20th century. Because of these phenomena and reasons many lost their mother-country and others became refugees or emigrants. The majority of them was Lithuanian people; until 1918, they did not have social, cultural, political and geographical space and did not know where to live and to orientate their complicated patriotism. Living in the monarchical Russia, the artist understood that it was a man of education who realised his own ideals and objectives more successfully in pluralistic democracy.

The purpose of this article is to reveal Mikas Petrauskas’ attitude towards the process of the cultural socialisation of youth, in which it is the human nature that is very important and the improvement of his social life when educational activity is correctly chosen.

The object of the research was chosen to be the theoretical and practical heritage of Mikas Petrauskas where the parameters of social-cultural communication are reflected. It was these parameters of socialisation that we tried to reveal applying analytical method. Mikas Petrauskas’ life and creative activity was the object of the works written by J. Būtènas, L. Gira, R. Mikėnaitė, S. Šimkus, J. Bruveris, J. Žiūriūtė, K. Kavčkas, A. Tauragis et al. The books published in the soviet time such as J. Gaudrimas “From the History of Lithuanian Musical Culture” (T. I., 1958) and “Lithuanian National Opera” (1960), “Lithuanian Theatre 1918-1929” (1981) and “Mikas Petrauskas” (1976) reflect the social, cultural and national activity of the composer only to a certain extent. It is little known about the science of the exodus pedagogy and Lithuanian education in the emigration as it is so about Mikas Petrauskas’ pedagogical intention for maintaining Lithuanisation in the emigration. One or two publications in print of the latter period, little research of this problem in the USA (manuscript studies in The World Lithuanian Archive: R. A. Vito “Chicago’s Lithuanians: Perspectives and
Predictions”, 1982; I. Antanaitis “The Chicago Lithuanian Community School System”, 1988) do not yet make up for it. It does not provide possibilities for the integration of the studies of the pedagogical scholars who worked in the emigration as well as of the activity of Lithuanian educational institutions to an integral system of the history of the Lithuanian school and pedagogical thought. One of the first professional Lithuanian educationalists in the emigration in the USA was Mikas Petrauskas, who had been finished the singer’s education in Sank Petersburg Conservatoire. Having arrived in the USA, M. Petrauskas not only made concerts as a soloist or the participant of various ensembles but also “tried to engage as many youth as possible into the concert activity and give them the elements of singing. The extant programmes of his concerts say that this singer popularised not only the Lithuanian song but also the classical music”.

The artist encouraged Lithuanian families to participate in the national conversazioni. He was ready to acquaint his students with the common heritage of Lithuanian art and creation traditions, especially with the necessity of the realization of the freedom and independence of Lithuania. He had the conviction that giving knowledge, skills, and the point of reference of citizen’s attitudes and national values to students would help them resist the infections of Polish and American ideologies. Such initiatives of M. Petrauskas helped to develop an active and right direction of the Lithuanian community. He taught his students without dictations, preaching or thinking scorn of his students because of their little knowledge. It is possible to discern an inherent Lithuanian inherited wisdom in the pedagogical talent of M. Petrauskas, namely to value and retain ancestry’s traditions. He saluted young people who had created Lithuanian families; in the letter to writer R. Mizaras there is M. Petrauskas’ greeting: “so it seems very nice to me that you’ve already found a Lithuanian girl and musician. Perhaps because you fell in love with music when you were just beginning to make your way in life. Well, now already you two musicians, and I wish you more”. He taught the students in the conservatoire his own creation and Lithuanian folksongs that were harmonized and quadrivoice (using the violin) as well as dancing Lithuanian dances; he harmonized even 130 Lithuanian folksongs. He also used to explain in great detail the following things: the variety of the genres of Lithuanian folklore and the integration of ethnographic and decorative elements of the folk art into the scores of mass festivals. He used to take on all kinds of pedagogical, educational and concert activity. Participating in the national events and acting in the performances of M. Petrauskas, the youth could develop the skills of the mother-tongue. Besides, they learned to play some instrument. Most of them acquired the elements of the direction of folk events. M. Petrauskas created an important and mature direction of the communal programme in the emigration, the one based on cultural educational attitudes. The artist realized it early enough that there could not be any culture if there was no sociality.

M. Petrauskas taught his students the love for the native land: “and I, however, have worked all my life for the restoration of Lithuania and inspired the real culture in the souls of Lithuanian”.

Organising a national educational project at the same encouraging the interest in the native country and developing skills and values was an especially advanced and important example for the future Lithuanian society and Lithuanian community of the USA. Lithuanian folklore, having been under the oppression for so long, expressed its pain and joy, longing and hope through a
song. It was a song that a peasant went to fields together with; a girl was waiting for a boy with it; a mother was mourning her son’s death with a song. A song helped Lithuanian nation to preserve the language and culture. The purpose M. Petrauskas was trying to achieve became a real lesson showing what a person alone can do and gain fighting with the tendencies of indifference and passivity in the emigration: “It’s good that you sing. Sing a lot, sing with all your breath, then your lungs will have more oxygen and your heart will work as locomotive”. The song promoted by M. Petrauskas had not only cultural but also communal and pedagogical significance. In addition to that, it was an effective means to preserve Lithuanian word in the American environment. Therefore it is possible to draw a conclusion that the folk song rendered the national shades in the M. Petrauskas’ conservatoire and retained the Lithuanian spirit of music and nationality.

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There were about 336,000 Lithuanian emigrants in the USA in 1920. His student A. Sodeika told that “with the intention to make it common among people to go to the concerts, M. Petrauskas trained them even in very small halls, which usually were near by saloons (bars)”. “It was R. Mizara, K. Norkus and M. Petrauskas who organized the first professional concerts of American Lithuanian Marijona Rauskaitė. She was the first Lithuanian singer whose concerts were announced in the American print”.

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The result of M. Petrauskas’ sincere work with Lithuanian youth is associated with later appearance of the public of the artist amateurs, who were common workers, in every Lithuanian colony. “In the impoverished places of emigrants there were noticed the appearances of choirs, art associations, operetta troupes, even ballet; the artistic activity of our emigrants was revealed; cultural life was developing and strengthening; the skills of Lithuanian were seen clearly”. But for the influence of Mikas Petrauskas and his work, the development of choirs in Chicago, Boston, Brooklyn, and in other towns would not have happened. There were a number of soloists, conductors, and organizers of events who have finished M. Petrauskas conservatoire. M. Petrauskas’ teaching of singing was based on historic books of the vocal art. Antanas Sodeika (1890–1979) and Pranas Stankunas (Francis Stanko, 1895–1965) they was the former students of Mikas Petrauskas, gave a large number of performances in the USA. Later A. Sodeika became a teacher of anoth-
er singer, E. Mickūnaitė, O. Aušrutė, and baritone Jonas Būtėnas (1892–1968). They both became the remarkable soloist of Kaunas State Opera House but also used to perform for the audience of Lithuanians in the USA. The family is the source of love for life and a human being. It is very important what kind of values parents look after in the family. In the life of country-side peasants (especially in the soviet time), the family was the most important element of national education. Moral education in the theory of elementary education of Mikas Petrauskas primarily is associated with the love of parents, especially of mother. For him, the home of parents and education in it was the school of moral and dignity. As he got the telegram from his brother Kipras about the death of his beloved sister Juozapota Petrauskienė, he wrote as follows: “I started crying, my brother, like a baby. My tears maybe were similar to those of our mother, who cried for us while looking after us, in hardship, in misfortune (...) I stopped all my concerts I had already prepared”.

The phenomenon of mutual help and generations’ friendship was revealed in the work and activity of M. Petrauskas, which help to maintain cultural values and historical memory under the conditions of emigration. According to E. Levinas, “energetically defined and revealing spiritual dimension in the individual life itself – only in the latter an individual is accepted and even given freedom”. The conclusion can be drawn: even perhaps American Lithuanian choirs were short of art, they, however, excelled in the number of participants comparing with the one of Lithuanian choirs. The majority of participants arrived in the USA because of poverty and others because of hardship. Still others arrived hoping to avoid the service in the car’s army. Integration into other culture or remaining honest to Lithuanian nature and the archaic language were the thoughts that occurred to the Lithuanian descendants who emigrated to USA as far back as the middle of the 19th century. The majority of them spoke with an English accent; others did not know Lithuanian at all. Still others used many loanwords from English and Russian attaching Lithuanian ending or suffix.

His development of the tendencies of adult education was successful too. He looked for ways to meet the needs of adult education and learning under the conditions of emigration.

His participation in the local emigration print that was directed to the musical education of youth was active. What concerns the main principles of M. Petrauskas’ pedagogical work; it is worth mentioning the following strategies: his ability to go deep into the peculiarities of the content and style of his works as well as his development of a wider artistic horizon. The interplay of his technical work and methodical problems, and his treating the performance of an art work as a process of mental work are also noteworthy. He paid much attention to the analyses of the text and to the sensation of the totality of the work.

M. Petrauskas had an ability to notice and develop the best features of his students, to form their individuality with regard to their own characteristics, level of preparation, and temperament. He managed to help to realize all that with his pedagogical tactics. He learned how to understand the directions of a composer and the creative idea of an author. While running the conservatoire named after him, he paid much attention to unofficial forms of communication with his students. He became like a father and friend to those whose parents were dead or stayed in Lithuania. Communication is a field in which a personality is developing and the formation of one’s moral world and orientations of values and attitudes depends on it very much. While
communicating with others, all moral characteristics of a man are forming in their full form. These are as follows: moral consciousness and self-awareness, moral feelings and emotions, features of one’s character, habits, the stereotypes of behaviour, etc.\textsuperscript{16}

Lithuanian choirs were spreading apart across the boundaries of Lithuania. The Lithuanian print was not put under a ban there. The feature of Lithuanian choirs was the Lithuanian idea. Choirs aroused the love for their country, nature and for democratic ideas\textsuperscript{17}. M. Petrauskas cast operettas: “Consilium facultatis”, “Marry me off”, “the King of Forests”, “The First of May”, “A Child or a Girl”, etc. All the operettas were successful in America and played an important part in the aesthetic education of emigrants. M. Petrauskas’ operettas based on Lithuanian plots and folklore elements made the viewers excited, helped to experience various emotions and developed a feeling of pride with the mother-tongue and the nation. Many understood the importance of the participation of youth in the nurturance of national traditions and customs. “If the education in Lithuania was based on spiritual values and noble objectives, then there, in the USA, a child has to grow up a pragmatic person who is capable of making the practical use of every situation despite the fact that it tells on the nation and society”\textsuperscript{18}.

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survive only if there is a feeling of togetherness, community and sociality. “A miracle happened — a Lithuanian song was spreading over the widest America,” told K. Vairas-Račkauskas 19.

The students could learn from the maestro the feeling of responsibility and love for the native land. They believed and dream about the new Lithuania where they would like to settle down mostly. The artist was certain that everyone would be able to come back and contribute to the ideals of the statehood as soon as the restoration of the independence of Lithuania had been achieved. In the emigration, M. Petrauskas was successful to develop the creative thinking, intellect, the features of character such as imagination, memory, will, and emotions. He did that and encouraged the activity of his students, self-sufficiency of thought and creative process; he developed creative potential and skills of his own and others taking care of artistic expression of personality. He encouraged a positive attitude towards knowledge and learning.

Conclusions

1. The education of students under the conditions of emigration is still a topical issue, not sufficiently explored yet. Whereas in the world, progress was already made in the first side of the 20th century because of convictions that cultural centres are necessary in the emigration.

2. In the exodus pedagogy, it is the characteristics of a personality, professionalism, the system of values and attitude towards the people educated that are important.

3. The changes of musical literacy happening in the historical context of that time were inspired by rapid alterations of the communication and information technologies.

4. One of the ways to develop the creative of the conservatoire M. Petrauskas used is associated with the expansion of the base of knowledge.

5. The diplomas of the conservatoire corresponded to the level of the programmes of the colleges in the USA.

6. The education nurtured in the conservatoire as well as musical and artistic training helped the students to find their own place and entrench themselves in the social cultural relations among various generations of the Lithuanians.

7. The studies of the composer’s pedagogical heritage are still a topical issue nowadays, in the 21st century. Although it is the time when the number of emigration clusters is constantly growing, still the national and cultural centres are missing in them.

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LIETUVIŲ KONSERVATORIJA BOSTONE, JAV, IR JOS ĮKŪRĖJO M. PETRAUSKO INDĖLIS Į EGZODO MUZIKOS PEDAGOGIKĄ

S a n t r a u k a

Žmogus, atsidūręs aplinkoje, kurioje susipina daug kultūrų, nuolat kvestionuoja savo tapatybę, turi priimti įvairias jam nebūdingas elgesio ir bendravimo normas, meninio ugdymo kodus. Autorius nagrinėja JAV M. Petrausko įkurtos konservatorijos įtaką lietuvių jaunimo meninio ir muzikinio ugdymo raidai emigracijoje. Kompozitorius su konservatorijoje besimo-kančių jaunimo statomos operetės buvo svarbi lietu-


PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: suaugusiųjų mokymas, pilietiškumas, lietuviškos šeimos, emigracija, pedagogika, meninis ir muzikinis ugdymas, renginių socializacija.

KEY WORDS: teaching of adults, family, education abroad, socialization of personality, emigration, process of artistic training.


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