

EUROPEAN MUSICAL DIDACTIC TRADITIONS – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN ROMANIA AND ITALY

MARIA ALICE BĂLAN¹, VERONICA LAURA DEMENESCU²

SUMMARY. This article delves into the evolution and diversity of musical didactic traditions across Europe, with a special focus on Romania and Italy, underscoring how technological, social, and cultural changes have shaped music education over centuries. It presents a thorough analysis, comparing teaching methods, the impact of composers and pedagogues, and the role of technology in music education. The study highlights the unique pedagogical approaches of Romania and Italy, influenced by their rich musical histories and cultural contexts. Romania's music education, characterized by a blend of folk and classical traditions, emphasizes auditory learning and improvisation, but also by training exceptional instrumental techniques. Italy, known for its classical music heritage, combines technical rigor with interpretive freedom. The comparison reveals both similarities, such as a shared tradition in classical music and a balanced approach to tradition and innovation, and differences, like the diversity of repertoire and the adoption of technology in teaching. The article concludes with the importance of these traditions in shaping future generations of musicians and suggests future research directions for a deeper understanding of musical didactic traditions in Europe.

Keywords: musical didactic traditions, comparative analysis, Romania, Italy

Introduction

In the context of European cultural diversity, musical didactic traditions assert themselves as fundamental elements in the evolution of musical art. They transcend technical and repertoire aspects, representing a continuum of musical education with significant cultural and historical depth.

¹ "Aurel Vlaicu" University, Faculty of Humanities, Music Specialization, Str. Elena Drăgoi nr. 2, 310130 Arad, Romania / Conservatorio di Musica "Santa Cecilia", Via dei Greci, 18, 00187 Roma RM, Italy.

² "Aurel Vlaicu" University, Faculty of Humanities, Music Specialization, Str. Elena Drăgoi nr. 2, 310130 Arad, Romania.



The concept of “teaching tradition” in the context of music goes beyond the simplistic understanding of teaching methods, incorporating complex dimensions of knowledge passed down from one generation to another.³ This approach proposes an in-depth analysis and illustration of the complexity of European musical didactic traditions, focusing carefully on a comparison between Romania and Italy. The intention is to highlight the connections and disparities between the two countries, contextualizing them in light of the cultural and historical influences that have shaped the evolution of music education.

The purpose of this article is to investigate and illustrate the European musical didactic traditions, bringing into discussion not only the historical aspects but also the significant contributions of Romania and Italy to this cultural imprint. Through this approach, the work proposes a comprehensive and analytical analysis, based on academic principles, of the musical didactic traditions in Europe, suggesting possible trajectories for their further development in a musical landscape in continuous transformation.

1. The evolution of didactic methods in the history of music in Europe

Music education in Europe has evolved significantly over the centuries, reflecting the social, cultural, and technological changes of various periods. To understand this evolution, it is essential to analyze the transformations of didactic methods, influenced by great composers and pedagogues who left their mark on the training of musicians.⁴

- Changes in teaching methods

In early times, music education in Europe was often centered on learning by doing and direct observation. Over time, teaching methods have evolved to include theoretical study and systematic approaches to music theory. During the Baroque period, for example, methods of interpretation and improvisation were outlined, emphasizing the importance of personal expression in music.⁵

³ Búdi, Katinka Boruzsné, Mihály Duffek, and Alice Hausmann Kóródy. 2014. “The ferryman of music culture. Music teacher training concepts and facts from three Eastern countries of the EU.” *Comparative Research on Teacher Education*. pp. 51-54

⁴ Ibidem pp. 51-70 and Chystiakova, Iryna. “Structural and Content Characteristics of Future Musical Art Teachers’ Professional Training in the European Union: A Comparative Analysis.” *Theory and Methodology of Innovative Education Development in the National, European and Global Contexts*. 2022. pp.50-53

⁵ Ibidem pp. 54-55

- *The impact of great composers*

Composers played a crucial role in didactic evolution, bringing about significant changes in musical understanding and practice. Johann Sebastian Bach, for example, was not only a great composer, but also an outstanding pedagogue, helping to develop improvisation techniques and refine the musical skills of his students.⁶

- *Pedagogy in the classical and romantic periods*

In the classical period, didactic methods shifted towards a more systematic approach to instrumental technique, and pedagogues such as Carl Czerny developed specific exercises and techniques for improving students. In Romanticism, pedagogues such as Franz Liszt placed an increased emphasis on expressiveness and interpretation, profoundly influencing the way musicians approach works.⁷

- *Incorporating technology into music education*

A significant change has come with the introduction of technology in music education. In the 20th century, audio and video recordings became valuable tools for the study of musical performances and techniques. Today, digital technologies and online platforms provide access to varied educational resources and facilitate collaboration between musicians around the world.

2. The diversity of musical didactic traditions in Europe

Europe, through its cultural complexity and diversity, is home to a variety of musical teaching traditions that reflect unique identities and distinct histories.⁸ Highlighting these differences and analyzing the influences of cultural and historical context provides a rich perspective on how music education has developed in different regions.

- *Differences in pedagogical approaches*

Each European country has developed its own distinct teaching methods and pedagogical approaches. For example, Eastern European music schools often have a strong tradition of training exceptional instrumental techniques⁹, while Western European schools place greater emphasis on interpretation and expressiveness.¹⁰

⁶ Ibidem pp. 56-58 and Búdi et al. 2014. pp. 55-58

⁷ Demenescu Veronica Laura. 2022a. 250 de exerciții de teoria muzicii: Nivel 1. (250 music theory exercises: Level 1) Ed. Eurostampa, Timișoara.

⁸ Augias Corrado. Music education in Italy. Pirelli – Rivista d'Informazione e di Tecnica, n.d.

⁹ Búdi et al. 2014. pp. 60-61

¹⁰ Iățesen, Loredana Viorica. "Traditional and Innovative Methods in Approaching Music Styles. Pedagogical Implications." Review of Artistic Education 11+12. 2016. 88-90.

- *The impact of local music genres*

Didactic traditions are deeply influenced by the musical genres specific to the respective region.¹¹ For example, in countries with a rich heritage in classical music, teaching methods often focus on developing skills in this area, while in regions with a strong tradition in folk or folk music, the focus may be on improvisation and personalized performance.

- *The effect of history and political change*

The historical context of each country played a significant role in defining didactic traditions.¹² Political changes, such as wars or regime changes, had a profound impact on the way music education was conducted and supported. For example, the post-World War II period brought significant changes in approaches to music education, with an increased emphasis on accessibility and diversity.¹³

- *The influence of new technologies*

In the contemporary context, new technologies have brought radical changes in musical didactic traditions.¹⁴ The use of digital tools and online platforms has opened new horizons for access to information and collaboration on an international level, thus influencing the way musicians are trained and interact with music.

3. Case study – Comparison of musical didactic traditions in Romania and Italy

3.1 Musical didactic traditions in Romania

Romania, with a deep and diverse musical history, represents a fertile territory for the study of musical didactic traditions.¹⁵ In this section, we aim to highlight the particularities of Romanian musical education, emphasizing the notable contributions of specific personalities and methodologies.

¹¹ Búdi et al. 2014, pp.62-63;

¹² Ibidem p.65.

¹³ Iașeșen 2016, 90-92.

¹⁴ Ibidem pp.93-95.

¹⁵ Demenescu Veronica Laura. 2014. Specificul creației muzicale în Banat în prima jumătate a secolului XX (The specificity of musical creation in Banat in the first half of the 20th century). Ed. Eurostampa – Ed. Astra Museum Sibiu.

- *The characteristics of Romanian musical didactic traditions*

Music education in Romania has always been supported by a diversity of musical genres, from popular and folk music to classical and contemporary music. Traditional methods often emphasized auditory learning, encouraging self-expression and improvisation.¹⁶

- *Outstanding Romanian personalities and their contributions*

A remarkable example is the composer and pedagogue Paul Constantinescu, who dedicated his life to music education in Romania. He introduced elements of modern music and composition into his education, thus influencing both future composers and performers.

Likewise, the methods of the pedagogue and composer Dinu Lipatti had a significant impact on the technical and interpretative training of Romanian pianists. His emphasis on clarity of interpretation and sensitivity of musical expression remains a notable influence in music education in the country.¹⁷

- *Contemporary innovations and developments*

In the contemporary context, music education in Romania has evolved to include new technologies and pedagogical methods.¹⁸ Teachers such as Dan Dediu, known for his contributions in composition and pedagogy, have brought new perspectives and innovative approaches to the music learning process.

- *Conservatories and music schools in Romania*

Conservatories and music schools have played an essential role throughout history in the transmission of musical didactic traditions. Institutions such as the “George Enescu” Conservatory of Music in Bucharest and regional schools have contributed to the training of numerous talented musicians and to the preservation of the Romanian musical heritage. Currently, Romania has a very well-structured and complex network of musical institutions and schools, from preschool to university level.

¹⁶ Iașeșen 2016, 94-95; Demenescu 2022a pp.11-17; Demenescu Veronica Laura. 2022b. 100 de solfegii tonale: Nivel 1. (100 tonal solfeges: Level 1.) Ed. Eurostampa, Timisoara.

¹⁷ Tetelea, Margarita. Estetica muzicală: Curs universitar pentru studenții Facultății „Muzică și Pedagogie Muzicală”: Specialitatea „Profesor de muzică și instrument”, „Profesor de muzică și dirijor de cor”. (Musical aesthetics: University course for students of the “Music and Musical Pedagogy” Faculty: “Music and instrument teacher”, “Music teacher and choir conductor” specialty.)1997.

¹⁸ Búdi et al. 2014, pp.63-65; Demenescu, 2014, pp. 15-18.

3.2 Musical didactic traditions in Italy

Italy, home to some of the most important composers and performers in the history of music, is a vibrant cultural hub where musical didactic traditions have significantly contributed to the shaping of Italian musical genius.¹⁹

- Characteristics of Italian didactic traditions

The musical teaching traditions of Italy are steeped in a deep understanding of musical expression and technique. Italian music education is distinguished by the harmonious integration of classical and popular traditions, offering a balanced approach between technical rigor and interpretive freedom.²⁰

- Key Italian figures and notable contributions

A central name in the history of Italian music education is Ottorino Respighi, composer and conductor of the brand. Through his works, but also through his teaching activity, Respighi promoted a holistic approach to music, integrating elements of folklore and tradition in his compositions.

The methods of the pedagogue and composer Niccolò Paganini are also worth mentioning. Paganini, famous for his virtuosity on the violin, contributed to the development of advanced instrumental techniques and influenced generations of violinists with his unique approach to music.²¹

- Conservatories and music schools in Italy

Italy is home to several prestigious musical education institutions, such as the Conservatorio di Musica "Santa Cecilia" in Rome or the Conservatorio di Musica "Giuseppe Verdi" in Milan. These conservatories were the core of didactic traditions, providing a conducive environment for the cultivation of talent and the transmission of musical knowledge.²²

- Innovations in music education in Italy

In contemporaneity, Italian music education has adapted to new challenges, integrating modern technologies and innovative approaches. Teachers such as Stefano Gervasoni, known for his contributions to the field of contemporary composition, brought new perspectives and techniques to the process of music instruction.²³

¹⁹ Fontelles Rodríguez Vicent Lluís. Music Didactics - Types, History, Methodologies (models) and other notes for class. 2021; La Face, Giuseppina. "Keynote: Italian Musicologists and the Challenge of Music Pedagogy." *Musica Docta* 6. 2016, pp. 4-11.

²⁰ Ibidem pp. 13-18.

²¹ Ibidem pp. 19-20.

²² Augias, n.d.

²³ Ibidem; Fontelles 2021, pp.22-28.

3.3 Evaluation of similarities and differences between musical didactic traditions in Romania and Italy

Comparing the musical didactic traditions between Romania and Italy offers the opportunity to highlight not only the cultural diversity, but also the points of convergence and mutual influence between the two countries.²⁴

- Similarities in pedagogical approaches

Both countries share a deep tradition in classical music, and teaching methods often emphasize the development of instrumental techniques and expressive performance. In both Romania and Italy, conservatories and music schools played an essential role in training young musicians, promoting a comprehensive understanding of music.²⁵

- Mutual influences and exchange of experience

Throughout history, musicians and pedagogues from Romania and Italy had the opportunity to intersect and share knowledge. Notable examples could include collaborations between Romanian students and Italian teachers or vice versa, generating an exchange of experiences that contributed to the enrichment of the musical landscape of both countries.²⁶

- The impact of renowned composers and pedagogues

The significant contributions of composers such as George Enescu in Romania and Giuseppe Verdi in Italy, in the field of classical music, had a profound impact on teaching methods and educational approaches. Also, the influence of pedagogues such as Dinu Lipatti and Niccolò Paganini transmitted important teachings that resonated in the music education of both countries.²⁷

²⁴ Granețkaia, Lilia. "Modelul pedagogic de dezvoltare a inteligenței spirituale a elevilor prin educație muzicală." In *Educația din perspectiva conceptului Clasa Viitorului* ("The pedagogical model for the development of students' spiritual intelligence through musical education." In *Education from the perspective of the Future Class concept*), pp. 206-214. 2021.; Iașișen 2016, pp 90-93.

²⁵ La Face 2016, pp.3-9; Mara, Elena Lucia. "Curricula of Teacher for Preschool and Primary School. Comparative Study-Romania, Italy and Spain." In *INTED2014 Proceedings*, pp. 3278-3283. IATED, 2014.

²⁶ Granețkaia, Lilia. "Modelul pedagogic de dezvoltare a inteligenței spirituale a elevilor prin educație muzicală." In *Educația din perspectiva conceptului Clasa Viitorului* ("The pedagogical model for the development of students' spiritual intelligence through musical education." In *Education from the perspective of the Future Class concept*), 2021, pp. 206-214; Iașișen 2016, pp 88-90.

²⁷ La Face, 2016, pp.1-7; Mara, 2014, pp. 3278-3280.

- *Cultural divergences and specific influences*

Cultural and historical differences have naturally brought specific elements to didactic traditions. Popular and folkloric music, distinctly present in the Romanian tradition, can influence the teaching methods and the repertoire covered compared to the stronger emphasis on classical music in Italy.²⁸

- *Parallel evolution and adaptation to change*

Both countries experienced social and cultural changes as well as technological developments that influenced music education. Adapting to these changes and incorporating modern technology into the teaching process are aspects that have marked the course of parallel didactic traditions.²⁹

- *Preservation of the specificity of musical teaching methods despite historical changes*

Even in the face of historical transformations, the musical education system in Romania managed to preserve its specificity through conservatories and music schools. These institutions have contributed to maintaining the balance between traditional and modern, facilitating access to Romanian musical heritage and preparing students for contemporary challenges. At the same time, Italy, known for its classical musical tradition, has also managed to maintain its specificity even in the face of historical changes. Innovative adaptation to new currents and technologies, such as the incorporation of elements of contemporary music and digital technology in education, has ensured the maintenance of relevance and vitality of Italian musical traditions.³⁰

4. Results and discussion

We have explored the results obtained from the analysis of musical didactic traditions in Romania and Italy, without omitting the differences and similarities that can provide valuable lessons for both countries.

The aspects in which the musical didactic traditions in Romania and Italy differ are:

- *Diversity of repertoire and style*

Musical traditions in Romania are influenced by folklore and popular music, unlike in Italy, where there is a more pronounced emphasis on classical music and opera. This diversity can make significant contributions to musical knowledge and artistic performance.

²⁸ Ibidem pp. 8-12; Ibidem pp. 3280-3281.

²⁹ Ibidem pp. 14-16; Ibidem p. 3282.

³⁰ Ibidem pp. 16-17; Ibidem p. 3283.

- Technology adoption

Italy has integrated modern technology into music education, demonstrating technological pragmatism. Lessons from this experience can be applied in the Romanian context to improve the use of technology in teaching.

Aspects in which musical didactic traditions in Romania and Italy are similar:

- Devotion to classical music

Both Romania and Italy share a strong tradition in classical music and a common veneration for composers such as Enescu and Verdi. This can serve as a solid foundation for the exchange of practices in the field of classical music performance and teaching.

- Balance between tradition and innovation

Both countries have managed to combine musical tradition with innovation, preserving cultural heritage while adapting to contemporary changes. This balanced approach can be a source of mutual inspiration.

- Mutual lessons learned

By promoting diversity in the repertoire, Italy can benefit from the Romanian emphasis on popular music, thus contributing to the diversification of the educational repertoire.

Using of technology in education, Romania can adopt the effective technology integration strategies used in Italy, improving students' access to multimedia resources and innovative educational technologies. Exchanging of pedagogical practices, teachers from both countries can benefit from a direct exchange of pedagogical practices, sharing effective methods and techniques in the specific context of each country.³¹

Possible future directions for Romania would involve strengthening collaboration between educational institutions and the music industry to provide students with a more comprehensive training, including practical skills related to industry and technology.

For Italy, possible directions for the future would involve continuing to encourage innovation in music education, exploring ways to creatively integrate emerging technologies to enhance the educational experience and support artist development.

³¹ Búdi et al. 2014, pp.59-62;

Future research and development in this field should aim at expanding comparisons at the European level, collaborating with other countries for a broader understanding of the diversity of musical traditions.

Conclusions

The diversity and specificity of musical didactic traditions in Romania and Italy were analyzed, emphasizing influences such as Romanian folklore and Italian classical music. An essential part of the discussion was devoted to the adaptation of these traditions to contemporary changes, with a special emphasis on the integration of technology in the educational process.³²

Comparing the musical traditions between the two countries, we identified significant differences, but also similarities that can contribute to a valuable exchange of mutual learning. This aspect is essential for enriching educational approaches and musical knowledge in a wider European context.³³

In the context of the present and the future, we analyzed the adaptation of didactic traditions to technological and social changes. Both Italy and Romania, even if at a low level, they have successfully adopted modern technologies, intelligently integrating them into the teaching process.³⁴ This adaptation is not only a way to stay relevant, but also an opportunity to provide students with innovative tools and resources for their musical development.

The importance of European musical didactic traditions lies not only in the preservation of the rich cultural heritage, but also in the significant contribution to the development of the skills and artistic sensibility of future generations of musicians.³⁵ These musical didactic traditions offer an integral training path, not only in musical technique, but also in understanding the cultural and historical context from which they come.

Suggestions for future research and development in this area include expanding comparisons at the European level, collaborating with other countries for a broader understanding of the diversity of musical traditions. It is also recommended to deeply investigate the impact of technology in education and analyze the social and cultural consequences of musical didactic traditions.

³² Fontelles 2021, pp. 27-34; Iașeșen 2016, pp. 85-90.

³³ Granețkaia 2021, pp. 206-210.

³⁴ Ibidem pp. 210-214.

³⁵ Bűdi et al. 2014, pp. 65-68.

REFERENCES

- Augias Corrado. Music education in Italy. Pirelli – Rivista d'Informazione e di Tecnica. Online Source., n.d.
https://www.rivistapirelli.org/en/selezione_antologica/istruzione-musicale-in-italia/ [Accessed on 1 February, 2024]
- Búdi, Katinka Boruzsné, Mihály Duffek, and Alice Hausmann Kóródy. "The ferrymen of music culture. Music teacher training concepts and facts from three Eastern countries of the EU." *Comparative Research on Teacher Education*. Verbum Pub. 2014. ISBN 978-80-561-0122-3: 51-70.
http://real.mtak.hu/15405/1/volume_comparative_research.pdf#page=51
- Chystiakova, Iryna. "Structural and Content Characteristics of Future Musical Art Teachers' Professional Training in the European Union: A Comparative Analysis." *Theory and Methodology of Innovative Education Development in the National, European and Global Contexts*. 2022. 50-68
<http://www.wydawnictwo.wst.pl/uploads/files/f18cef10068b202b090a675c2ce12849.pdf#page=51>
- Coca, Gabriela. *Ede Terényi – History and Analysis*. Ed. Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2010.
- Demenescu Veronica Laura. 2022a. 250 de exerciții de teoria muzicii: Nivel 1. Editura Eurostampa, Timisoara, Romania, ISBN: 9786063212819
- Demenescu Veronica Laura. 2022b. 100 de solfegii tonale: Nivel 1. Editura Eurostampa. Timisoara, Romania, ISBN: 9786063212826
- Demenescu Veronica Laura. 2014. Specificul creației muzicale în Banat în prima jumătate a secolului XX – Ed. Eurostampa – Ed. Astra Museum Sibiu CNCS B, ISBN - 978-606- 8520-90-2 http://www.eurostampa.ro/Colectia-MuzArt_Editura-Tipografie_106.html
- Fontelles Rodríguez Vicent Lluís. *Music Didactics - Types, History, Methodologies (models) and other notes for class*. 2021.
 DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.25816.93444
- Gagim, Ion. *Dimensiunea psihologică a muzicii*. USARB, 2003.
<http://dspace.usarb.md:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/2167>
- Granețkaia, Lilia. "Modelul pedagogic de dezvoltare a inteligenței spirituale a elevilor prin educație muzicală." In *Educația din perspectiva conceptului Clasa Viitorului*, pp. 206-214. 2021. https://ibn.idsi.md/vizualizare_articol/165098
- Iașeșen, Loredana Viorica. "Traditional and Innovative Methods in Approaching Music Styles. Pedagogical Implications." *Review of Artistic Education* 11+ 12. 2016. 88-98.
- La Face, Giuseppina. "Keynote: Italian Musicologists and the Challenge of Music Pedagogy." *Musica Docta* 6. 2016. 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2039-9715/6561>

- Mara, Elena Lucia. "Curricula of Teacher for Preschool and Primary School. Comparative Study-Romania, Italy and Spain." In INTED2014 Proceedings, pp. 3278-3283. IATED, 2014., Appears in INTED2014 Proceedings ISBN: 978-84-616-8412-0, ISSN: 2340-1079
- Tetelea, Margarita. "Estetica muzicală: Curs universitar pentru studenții Facultății „Muzică și Pedagogie Muzicală”: Specialitatea „Profesor de muzică și instrument” „Profesor de muzică și dirijor de cor”.1997. Online sources <http://dspace.usarb.md:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/2127> [Accessed on 25 January, 2024]