Latvian pedagogical experience in the promotion and development of preschooler's vocal range and singing ability

ANNA LIDUMA
Dr. paed., Associate Professor
Riga Teacher Training and Educational Management Academy
Latvia

Grobinas street 12, Flat 3
Riga, LV – 1004
Latvia
Phone: +37167603157
Mob. +37129807233
aliduma@hotmail.com

KEY WORDS

child's voice range, singing ability, purposeful activity.

ABSTRACT

Practice shows that child's musical development largely disagrees with theoretically outlined succession.
***Aim of Study**: To actualize the pedagogical experience, as a unity of theory and practice, in promotion of preschoolers' voice range and singing ability development in Latvia.*
***Materials and method:** Theoretical: analysis of psychological, pedagogical and methodical sources. Empirical research methods: interviews, pedagogical observation, discussions.*
***Results:** By analysing theoretical sources, the author identifies the succession of development of child's musicality components - voice range and singing ability. By the empirical study the author analyses the impact of purposeful pedagogical work on development of child's voice range and singing ability.*
***Conclusions:** As child's voice range and singing quality develops gradually, the task of a preschool teacher of music is to respect each child's individual faculties and promote child's willingness to sing along with adults, and later on also individually.*

INTRODUCTION

Based on the wholeness approach to the development of children's musicality, musicality is defined as an integrated (united) personality feature consisting of emotional perception and responsiveness, musical hearing, sense of rhythm, vocal range and quality of singing, musical memory and musical thinking. Musicality is analysed by differentiating individual musical abilities and determining their interconnections. Thus, the structure of musicality is formed (Liduma 2004, p. 139) (See Figure I).

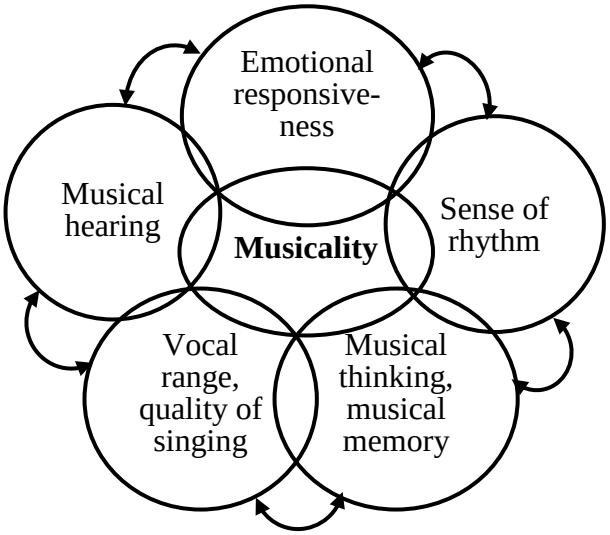


Figure 1. Interrelations of structural components of musicality in children of pre-school age.

The main feature of musicality is musical emotional experience. The core of musicality is emotional responsiveness (Liduma 2004) (See Figure II).

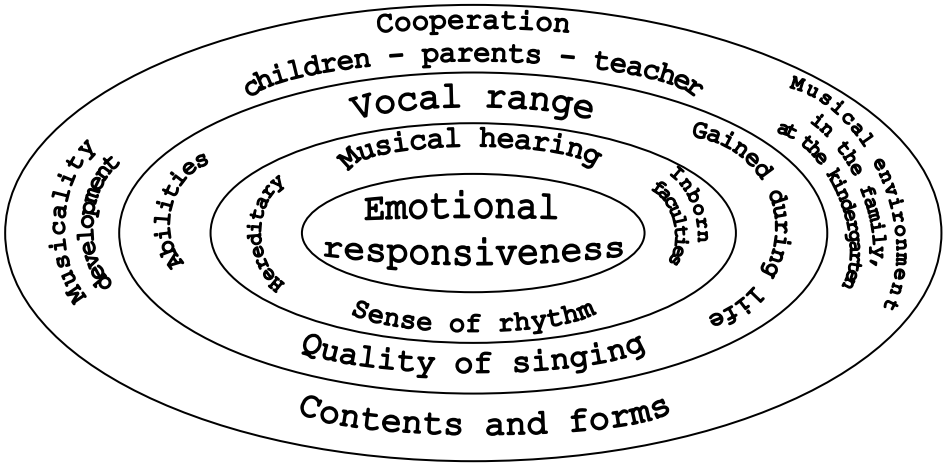


Figure II. Factors forming a child's emotional responsiveness.

A child's development starts with their emotional perception of the external world. Emotional responsiveness is the ability to respond/react with one's voice, showing one's interest and active attitude, and it is developed through purposeful activity. The development of emotional responsiveness as the basic component of musicality is achieved by three kinds of activities: listening to music, singing, and making movements according to the music. All of which is influenced by being in an appropriate musical environment from birth (Liduma 2004, p. 65).

When working with children, it is important to remember that all musicality components are interlinked and develop simultaneously (See Figure I). Perception is a complex psycho-physiological cognition process, which results from a direct exposure of the body's sensory organs – analysers – to the environment. The notion 'musical hearing' is used to denote an individual's ability to perceive music to the full. As a result of practical work, one can foster such abilities as perception, understanding, and memory in a child, and also, later on, the abilities to reproduce and creatively makeover musical information (Ioffe 1991, p. 7).

The study is based on B.Teplov's finding that musicality forms from birth and manifests itself in early childhood in a child's attitude to music: a liking or a dislike. It is only at the age of 4 to 5 years when a transition takes place from the lowest stage of melodic hearing, the perceptive level, where sound mood/tune components (timbre or speech hearing) are predominant, to the musical or sound pitch hearing level (reproductive or musical hearing level). Therefore, a child's vocal range in early years stays small for a long time. According to A. Zaporozhets (1986), phonemic hearing may only develop though language mastering, whereas practical musical activity is the only way to develop musical hearing, which is a motive for purposeful co-operation between children, teachers and parents. Formation of musical hearing notions – the ability to reproduce a melody with one's voice – is a complicated and lengthy process; they appear by the age of 5. Retardation of any one of these abilities may delay the development of the other. A singer's voice is trained using speech sound imitation exercises in a high register. When studying the theoretical sources, the author established the interplay of the inborn and the acquired in the development of musical abilities: 'the ability of analysing specific sound signals – speech and music – is inborn, genetically inheritable, evolving during the history of mankind, whereas the degree of sound demarcation, differentiation precision and singing skills are acquired during one's lifetime' (Miasiscev & Gotsdiner, 1992, pp. 22-3). It must be noted that a lifelong purposeful activity gradually shapes a person's singing ability (Liduma 2004).

Musical hearing develops alongside with and has a great impact on the fostering of a child's vocal apparatus and singing ability. Development of the vocal apparatus and singing ability is purposefully promoted by co-operation between an experienced teacher of music and children. Therefore, it is important for a preschool teacher to know and apply to their teachings theoretical knowledge that ensures the gradual development of a child's vocal range.

Aim of the Study: To actualise the pedagogical experience, as a unity of theory and practice, in the promotion of preschool children's vocal range and quality of singing development in Latvia.

Materials and methods: The study engaged both theoretical methods – analysis of psychological, pedagogical and methodical sources; and empirical research methods – interviews, pedagogical observation, discussions. The study data were interpreted.

RESULTS

Development of Child's Vocal Range

Latvian preschool musical pedagogy is based on the conclusions of music teaching methods, experts and musical researchers regarding children's vocal range and the succession of formation of children's singing ability.
J. Rozitis (1880-1952) was the only one of the Latvian musical experts to teach methods that explained the origin of the primary tone: 'An expired airflow, coming along the glottic slit and vibrating the vocal chords, creates a levelled-out calm sound, the so-called *primary tone*' and to describe its nature:

> *It is thin and shallow, without brightness or strength, without the least resemblance of what we call a human voice. It then goes through a resonant space – a number of cavities formed by both hard and soft palate, lips, tongue, teeth, nasal bones and cartilage. There the primary tone becomes a voice, the secondary tone; there it gains sonority, strength, and brightness (Rozitis 1929, p. 22).*

Therefore, in the opinion of Rozitis, the aim of sound formation is to teach how to form the primary tone correctly, and, by adding resonance to it in the resonant space and creating the secondary tone (Rozitis p. 34), engage resonators in tone formation. As early as 1929 he highlighted that a person's voice develops alongside with his/her physical development; a person develops as a whole, but there are certain circumstances that inspire pedagogues to assume a child's vocal range to be wider than it is in reality (Rozitis, 44). This conclusion is especially topical nowadays, when listening to the songs of 3-5 year-old children at the *Calis* Contest.

According to B. Vikmane, there is a link between human development and a child's vocal and melody range. A newly born baby cries out uncoordinated sounds of various pitches, however in several months the voice stabilises on one sound – primary sound pitch. First the voice gets narrower; then it expands. The sounds acquired in phylogenesis first are descending. Children's vocal range first expands downwards, then – at the age of 4 – upwards (Vikmane, 1995, p. 20), till it reaches *its natural limit*. (See Figure III)

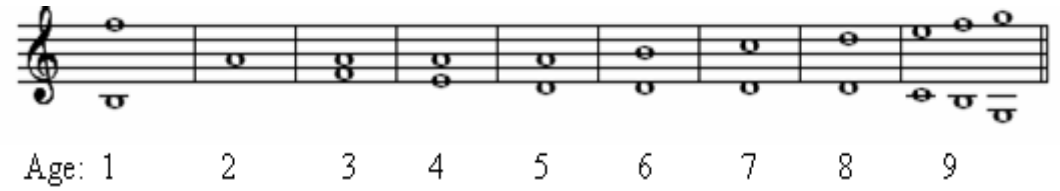


Figure III. Development of children's vocal range.

Preschoolers' voices are gentle, low and fragile; a sparing attitude is required to develop such voices. Their vocal chords are 2–2.5 times shorter than those of an adult; singing falsetto is typical for them. Children's vocal apparatus is elastic, pliable, and susceptible to musical influence; therefore, it is desirable that singing skills are acquired as early as possible, since it would help regulate much faster the interaction between the hearing notion and the voice (Vikmane p. 18).

According to A. Legaspi de Arismendi, the Urugvay children's vocal range limits are as follows: at the age of three it is re^1 – la^1, at the age of five it reaches re^1 – do^1, but at the age of 6 the child's voice range is do^1 – re^2. Children's vocal development is promoted by the culture of the environment where the child lives (Arismendi 1989, p. 81) (See Figure IV).

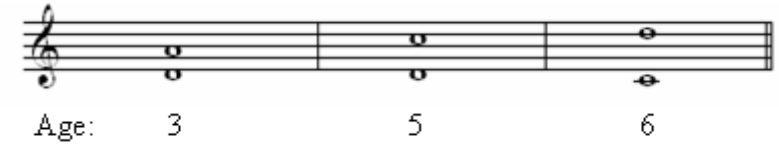


Figure IV. Children's vocal range limits in Urugvay

In musical pedagogy it is assumed that children's vocal development normally starts with the middle of the first octave and then gradually expands. Vocal development should be started with the first sound, whichever is comfortable for the child. According to J. Medins, it is usually la^1 or si^1. These are primary sounds (Medins, 15), from the Latin *primus* – primary.

Children of preschool age conform to Stage I of vocal development. Their typical features: range do^1-do^2 or re^1-re^2; the chest register is not typical for them. According to the views of analysed data of music methodologists a child's vocal range development at the age of 2-3 years could be mi^1 – la^1. (See Table I).

Age	Range
2–3 y.o.	mi^1 – la^1
3–4 y.o.	re^1 – la^1
4–5 y.o.	re^1 – si^1
5–6 y.o.	re^1 – si^1 (do^2)
6–7 y.o.	($do^{1)}$ re^1 – do^2 (re^2)

Table I. Children's vocal range development sequence

At the age of 5, children's voices become more sonorous, flexible, and motile. Singing intonations gain stability but require constant support on the part of adults, whereby coordination between voice and hearing gradually emerges. As demonstrated by Vikmane's findings, children's vocal apparatus grows and strengthens alongside with the child's overall growth; therefore, the vocal range expands gradually (Vikmane 1995, p. 18).

As shown by both theory and practice, adult voices are divided into three voice groups – low, medium and high. Each group is characterised with certain timbre, common sound volume and primary range volume. By studying children's vocal apparatus structure and vocal sounding possibilities, musical pedagogues discovered several regularities, which allowed them to divide children's voices into conditional types.

According to K. Tarasova (1988), 5-year-old preschoolers may be rated as one of the three voice ranges. Each voice type has a certain timbre, common sound pitch volume and primary range. Belonging to a certain voice type

is determined by: the child's vocal gifts, anatomical characteristics of the larynx and other organs of the vocal apparatus, as well as their individual peculiarities. The aforesaid is shown on Table II.

Table II. Children's vocal range at preschool

Voice Type	Range	Working zone (freely sounding)
High	do^1 - do^2	re^1 - la^1
Medium	si - si^1	do^1- sol^1
Low	la - sol^1 (la^1)	do^1 - fa^1 (sol^1)

Of the total vocal range, we can mark out a 'singing or working range' – the sound volume from the lower to the higher sound, where the voice sounds freely. At preschool age, it is the sound volume of the first octave mi^1 – si^1. It is a very significant fact in favour of ensuring an individual approach to the development of each child's voice.

K. Tarasova admits that the most important findings in pedagogy have not been sufficiently appreciated yet and no relevant recommendations on preschool teaching methods have been worked out. That is why all children at group lessons at kindergartens sing at the same pitch as if there is no such thing as inborn peculiarities of the vocal apparatus. For some children, the choice of song tonality is appropriate for the voice type and range and promotes improvement of the vocal apparatus, but for the other – it is inappropriate and harmful to the voice (Tarasova 1988, p. 95). It is quite possible that the difficulty of singing at inappropriate pitch forms part of the main cause of children's inability and unwillingness to sing at school.

We must admit and agree with B.Vikmane that no scientific research on children's vocal types have been or are being carried out in Latvia. There are some empirical studies though.

It must also be noted that the existing music teaching methods at preschool do not provide for children's vocal formation in view of the aforesaid 3 voice types. In the author's opinion, the directions set out in the theoretical sources regarding the three voice types should be observed when working with children of preschool age and choosing the most suitable voice formation method for each child's individual vocal gifts e.g. a cuckoo tune m.3 V–III from top downward or gradual vocal exercises from bottom upward and vice versa, with active musical thinking integrated thereof.

DESCRIPTION OF SINGING ABILITY DEVELOPMENT

Singing is one of the fundamental components that predetermine children's early and successful musical development and formation of the sound pitch hearing. The best results are achieved when the formation activity starts in the sensitive period while the child's abilities are still forming rapidly.

Musical pedagogues throughout the world consider children's singing to be a particularly important kind of musical activity, which significantly influences a person's musical hearing and general musicality development. V. Galica (1980) pointed out: 'Incorrect singing is not always indicative of the lack of musical hearing. The cause of incorrect singing could be a limited range, which maybe inconspicuous in children of 2–3 yeas old and older (fa^1-la^1)' (Galica & Inzevitova p. 82). This pedagogical observation is further supported by F.Higgins's wording: 'People

who reject music were not born with an inborn dislike for music. The dislike is acquired during one's lifetime through lack of encouragement and stimuli for musical activity (*singing - A.L.*) in the family, or their musical development was not promoted at school' (Higgins 1964, p. 6). This opinion is shared by preschool musical researchers B. Vikmane and L. Mackevica (1998) and numerous preschool musical pedagogues.

The Hungarian musical pedagogue K. Forrai highlights the unique role of singing in a child's balanced development and writes that 'in the process of singing emotional activity is always accompanied with child's mental activity. Emotional activity develops child's intellectual abilities, general capacities: attention, memory, imagination, instigates thinking processes (comparison, contraposition, etc.) (Forrai, 1983: 190-1). Of similar opinion is L. Mackevica. Important findings regarding children's musical development were presented by preschool musical pedagogues at the 25th ISME Conference in Bergen (2002), the 27th Conference in Kuala Lumpur (2006), the 28th Conference in Bologna (2008), the 16th ASME Conference in Perth (2007) and the 17th Conference in Launceston, Tasmania, (10-14 July 2009), where the author of this article took part. The aforesaid findings are confirmed by the pedagogical observation at preschool practice in Latvia (1986-2010), Malmö, Sweden (2009). It was also observed in a scientific study involving three kindergartens in the suburb of Sydney, Australia, after the ASME Conference on 22 July 2009.

We may conclude that when determining children's vocal ranges and improving their singing skills on an everyday basis, the teacher must observe in his/her work the following subjective factors: children have different hearing qualities, different singing experience (experienced, some experience, or no experience), physiological features, individual vocal characteristics; inborn voices of a definite pitch which the child is unable to change (high, medium, low); retarded coordination between perception and voice; great variations in perceptive activity.

After having conducted a study at a Russian kindergarten, K. Tarasova (1988) pointed out a link between the musical hearing development and singing ability. A child or an adult may be referred to as being in any of the following six singing stages (See Table III).

Stage	**Development level**	**Hearing level**
1.	No intoning - the child cannot sing at all or can just pronounce the lyrics, which sometimes totally disagree with the rhythmic structure of the song	Timbre or speech hearing level
2.	Intoning appears as one or two sound pitches, which are used for all the melody	
3.	Intoning reflects the melody direction, its curve	Emotional or perceptive level of melodic hearing
4.	Intoning along the direction of the melody, separate correct phrases appear	
5.	Intoning is precise when supported by an accompaniment: vocal or instrumental	Musical or reproductive hearing level
6.	Intoning is fully precise, without accompaniment	

Table III. Description of singing stages

B. Vikmane equates the first and second singing stages to the timbre or speech hearing level. Stages 3 and 4 are a transition phase from timbre hearing to musical hearing. This phase conforms to the emotional or perceptive level of melodic hearing, and only singing stages 5 and 6 conform to the musical (*hearing notion - A.L.*) or reproductive hearing level (Vikmane 1995, p. 19). I can agree to this only in part since, taking into account the psychologist L. Vigotsky's findings regarding the actual (child is supported by an adult) and further (a child's independent activity) children's development zone, we can conclude that only unaccompanied singing corresponds to the hearing notion or musical hearing level since the child sings independently at this stage, without any support. It is indicative of a well-established inner hearing and coordination between hearing and voice.

B. Vikmane states that singing aloud is an external orientating activity, which results in an interiorised hearing perceptive activity. Vocal exercises promote the transfer from outer, externalised activities to inner, interiorised activities. It terms of pedagogy, the researcher's conclusion is useful: 'Singing aloud helps create clear hearing notions, which gradually become denser, more automatic and simultaneous. At the simultaneous musical hearing development stage, singing aloud is no longer necessary; therefore adults may underestimate the role of singing in the early musical hearing genesis' (Vikmane 1995, p. 21). Therefore, a child's singing ability must be purposefully promoted from an early childhood.

Musical pedagogues admit that singing is the most available kind of musical activity and expression of musical abilities since the human voice is the best musical instrument. For this instrument to sound expressively, one has to master: correct breathing, sound formation, correct posture when singing, diction, articulation. For those who work with 3-year-olds will find practical use for K. Tarasova's conclusion that at the initial stage of singing preparation good results may be achieved using speech and sound imitation drills, which promote high speech intonation and sound pitch orientation.

Sound formation involves the respiratory organs: lungs, trachea, bronchi, diaphragm, and intercostals muscles. As a result of active functioning of the said organs, air starts the vocal chords vibrating and sounds are generated. Clear intoning when singing depends on correct respiration. All the organs engaged in sound generation are interconnected, and each organ's functioning influences the sound formation process (Gailis 1965, p. 23).

At the time of singing, some resonators are functioning naturally and automatically, however, many resonators may be activated by a correctly directed exhalation flow; therefore, a singer must be able to control his/her respiration. Breathing exerts pressure on the vocal chords; the singing process depends on the exhalation length. Smooth and elastic exhalation may be achieved by correct breathing. Three types of respiration are identified: thoracic; lateral; diaphragmatic (Rozitis, p. 17).

When singing it is recommended to use the diaphragmatic respiration, which is the deepest and steadiest of all since the diaphragm supports it. At the moment of inhalation, the diaphragm contracts and goes down thereby expanding the ribs on the sides. The simultaneous expanding the ribs creates a combined respiration.

Latvian musical pedagogues agree on the correct respiration rules, which they implement in their work: one must take a breath shortly, actively, and quickly; the inhalation must be light, without noise; after an inhalation one must hold one's breath for a moment; one must not inhale too much air; the inhalation must be even, smooth, frugal; one must not exhale all the air without any air left, and inhale when there is still some air reserve in the lungs.

The beginning of sound formation is called ‘an attack’ or sound start. In singing they use two types of attacks: hard and soft.

For the development of a child’s musicality it is important to promote sound generation and vocal apparatus formation in due time and in view of each child’s age characteristics. Sound mastering takes place alongside hearing perception in early childhood (1–3 years old) when a baby reacts with its voice to the adult’s musical sound; speech hearing and musical hearing develop in parallel at an early age. Early manifestations of musicality (3–5 years old) are indicative of a talent for music. Children with good musical abilities gradually develop the sound mastering quality apparent by at the age of 5–7. A child’s larynx is small, vocal chords – short and thin, volume of the lungs – not big, the thorax is elevated by its form; therefore, children tend to use the shoulder respiration. At preschool a child should acquire the basic skills of using one’s vocal apparatus, breathing, and sound formation since these are the fundamental requisites to singing. Precise sound intoning, when singing, is indicative of the well-developed hearing notions, i.e. inner hearing.

As regards the correct posture of a singer, the Latvian experts in music teaching methods and musical pedagogues differ. In the pedagogical practice of the 20th century, they tested and recommended that children may either stand or sit when singing; the body should be kept straight, the arms hanging freely by the sides. Below the author highlights the findings applicable in today’s practice.

Hands should not be kept behind one’s back since it leads to thoracic respiration, which is quite shallow and not suitable for signing. The body muscles must be relaxed (Gailis, p.72).
J. Graubins suggests that children should be sitting since it is hard for them to keep an upright position; however, it disturbs free breathing, tone flow and attention (Graubins 1935, p. 16).
J. Medins and I. Jakobsone write that keeping one’s hands behind one’s back disturbs correct respiration because of the tightened shoulders and thoracic muscles (Medins & Jakobsone, 1958, pp. 20-3).
The musical pedagogue and expert in teaching A. Eidins, who introduced the notion of relative solmization in Latvia in the 1960-70s provided a pedagogically psychophysiological substantiation of singing:

> *One must prepare oneself for singing. In terms of physiology, such a preparation means: straightening oneself up, with one’s shoulders a little backward and one’s head upward in a free and unforced manner. This correct body posture activates the whole vocal apparatus, prepares it to correct muscle functioning. In terms of psychology, the preparation means being attentive, active, trying hard to sing well. In a sitting position, the hands must be kept on the bench or on the knees, and in a standing position the hands hang freely on the sides (Eidins 1974, p. 24).*

The opinions of experts in music teaching methods also differ regarding the succession of singing ability formation.

According to A. Eidins, rather than putting up with a 7-year-old’s low-pitch singing, the task of a teacher of Form 1 is to require singing in the head register, i.e. to change the low singing type, otherwise a child’s vocal range will not be developed and the child will remain a ‘mumbler’. It must be noted that this method is still used nowadays since it is a good technique to achieving sound in the head register.

Whereas E. Vigners (who worked successfully at the Phonology Institute in the 1930s) suggested that one must adapt to a child’s voice and start with low sounds (Vigners 1936). Although this method has not been sufficiently

implemented in the Latvian school practice, his former student, professor and pianist Valda Kalnina, in an interview to this author substantiated its advisability. This method is pedagogically useful since it is in line with the opinion that a child's voice by nature may be not only high, but also medium and low.

The performed analysis of the theoretical sources allows the conclusion that each child's vocal specifics require an individual approach when promoting the development of the child's singing ability and sense of rhythm. Therefore, when one starts working with children at preschool, one must:

1. Study each child's individual vocal aptitude;
2. Commence the children's vocal development with individual work on each child's primary sound;
3. Find the most suitable teaching method in view of the child's individual gifts and individual abilities and change the voice development techniques regularly during the working process;
4. Observe voice development peculiarities in the process of formation of a child's singing ability.

To verify the applicability of the theory in practice for the development of preschool children's vocal range and singing skills, an empirical study was performed from September till March in the years 2008/2009 and 2009/2010. Seven 3–4 year-old children (five girls and two boys) and ten 5–6 year-olds took part in the study. For the empirical study purposes, the researchers used A. Liduma's (2004, p. 95) developed criteria, indicators and levels for determination of children's voice range and singing quality (interest in singing and singing ability) (See Table IV).

Criteria	Indicators	Levels	
Child's vocal range	Vocal range quality	Well-developed	3
		Partly developed	2
		Undeveloped	1
Singing quality	Interest in singing	Interested in singing	3
		Partly interested in singing	2
		Not interested in singing	1
	Singing ability	Able of singing a melody	3
		Partly able of singing a melody	2
		Cannot sing a melody	1

Table IV. Criteria, Indicators and Levels for Determination of Voice Volume

Having analysed the results of the pedagogical observation, the author concludes that there were no 3-year-old children who met such norms as the theory provided for the age of 3 to 4. When working at lessons together with their parents in the first half of the 2008/2009 studies, the children had their parents' support, so all the seven respondents reported an increased interest in singing. The singing ability was partial since the vocal range and the singing quality were interrelated. In the second year of studies, all the seven children at the age of 4 showed a positive attitude to singing, i.e. the children were willing to sing and cooperate with the teacher. Having mastered the necessary social skills, they wished to do without the parents. During the 2009/2010 studies, five children developed a vocal range (volume) that conformed to the age requirement, one boy was still a 'mumbler'. One girl developed a vocal range of do^1 to re^2. Talks with the parents revealed that the children had a positive attitude to

singing lessons, which manifested itself in their willingness to sing both all together and solo. That willingness was also positively influenced by the Latvian singing contest for singing families, which was organised on the Latvian Television in the autumn of 2009.

For the ten children in the 5-year-old group (four boys and six girls) it was established that in the beginning of the 2008/2009 studies two children had a voice range conforming to their age, two girls were 'non-singers'. Six children had a partial range. Of those one girl had a high voice, and five children had low voices. One girl and one boy had both communication difficulties and inadequate level of attention for their age. Because of the unstable attention, which is typical for 5-year-olds, it was necessary to change the kinds of activities often. By the end of the 2008/2009 studies, eight singers had a developed vocal range, but both 'mumblers' had the range of re^1 - la^1 conforming to that of 4-year-old children. It must be noted that both girls preferred dancing: one girl went in for scenic dancing, the other danced in a folk dance group. Their parents also supported the priority of dancing. Eight children of the group took and still take additional lessons in an educational singing circle, where, under the management of this author they have been improving their singing skills 4 lessons per week (one lesson lasted 30 minutes) in addition to the 2 lessons of the obligatory 2-year preschool program meant for preparation for primary school. When comparing the children's vocal range in the first and in the second year of the experiment, the author concluded that the results were achieved by purposeful and regular work both at preschool and in the educational circle. In the 2009/2010 studies all children were proactive, showing an interest in singing; 2 children still had a partial vocal range, but 8 children had a vocal range conforming to their age – re^1 – do^2. The parents' support in the promotion of the children's singing ability was very valuable, but especially delightful was the fact that four boys of those, who took part in the experiment, showed an adequate vocal range (for their age), an interest in singing and singing ability.

The quality of singing ability and vocal range is influenced by upbringing, speech and musical experience in a concrete social environment of musical culture. The study has confirmed that musicality development is influenced by inborn qualities, social and individual development factors. Singing skills and voice range are acquired on one's lifetime.

It must be noted than Latvians are the Nation of singers because they cultivated singing together from ancient times. Singing quality is one of the features of Latvians. It is known that Latvians used to sing about their everyday life, natural phenomena and seasons in their folksongs composed by the people was a whole: one was the leader and others – assistants. People used to sing songs in the evenings doing housework, while working in the field and on all holidays whenever Latvians get together. Folksongs are called so because they were made up by all the people and transferred from one generation to another by word of mouth. (Liduma 2002, p. 5).

Latvian singing skills have been cultivated in families by means of appropriate folksongs. Due to rich contents and diverse range (See examples of 4 songs), folksongs can suit children of any age group and proficiency level. They can be used both: for personality development and social attitude formation purposes. Liduma 2002, p. 1).

Having verified the theoretical conclusions in practice working as a musical pedagogue with preschool children, the author shares A. Spona's (2006) viewpoint that a child's well-balanced musical development requires a rich musical content, which, according to psychologist V. Petrushin (1997), is ensured by a variety of musical genres. Classical music content, for the most part, promotes psychological (intellectual, emotional, and volitional) development, whereas popular or light music encourages a child's socialisation or integration in society, and folksongs impact on the formation of personal identity and sense of belonging to one's people and one's country.

Therefore, it is important to promote each child's singing ability development and vocal expansion in accordance with his/her age and individual gifts and capabilities.

The unity of theory and practice in promotion of preschool children's musicality development in Latvia is also taken care of by the Preschool Musical Education Association (founded in September 2009), where the author of the present article is a Member of the Board (See Regulations http:// www.pmia.lv)

The study has revealed the importance of children's own attitude to the working process and the product of activity. In a pedagogical aspect, a child's activity product is enriched knowledge, self-experience, vocal skills and expansion of vocal range. From a psychological point of view, children's activity product is self-realisation skills and a positive experience of singing both solo and in a group.

CONCLUSIONS

Children's vocal range and singing quality (singing skills and interest in singing) are significant components of his/her musicality, which is promoted by active exercises – listening, singing, making rhythmical movements. In accordance with the child's inborn vocal gifts (high, medium, low voice), at preschool the child must acquire basic skills related to the vocal apparatus, respiration, and sound formation.

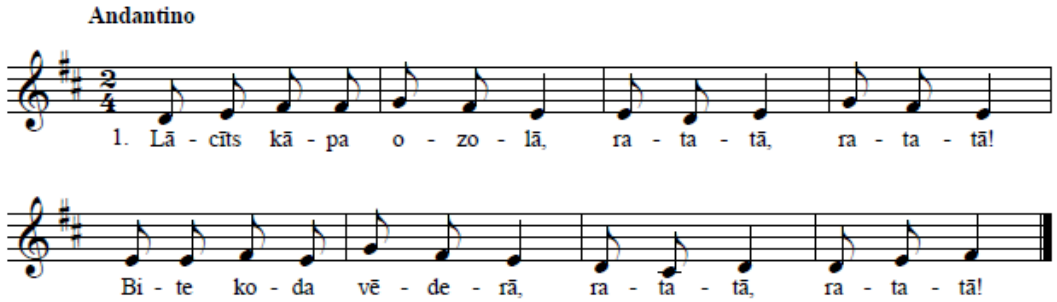
Child's musical development begins with an emotional experience of sounds and their contents, which is ensured by an opportunity of self-expression and self-realisation at purposefully organised singing lessons with well-balanced and rich musical contents.

The study has demonstrated that musical co-operation between adults and preschoolers, both in the family and at kindergarten, promotes a child's positive attitude to singing. Pedagogical experience is enriched by the unity of theory and practice.

NOTES

Samples of folk-songs for different voice range possibilities. (Translation prepared for ECME seminar July 26-30, 2010, Beijing ISME conference 2010)

Latvian folksong *Little bear climbs the oak-tree*

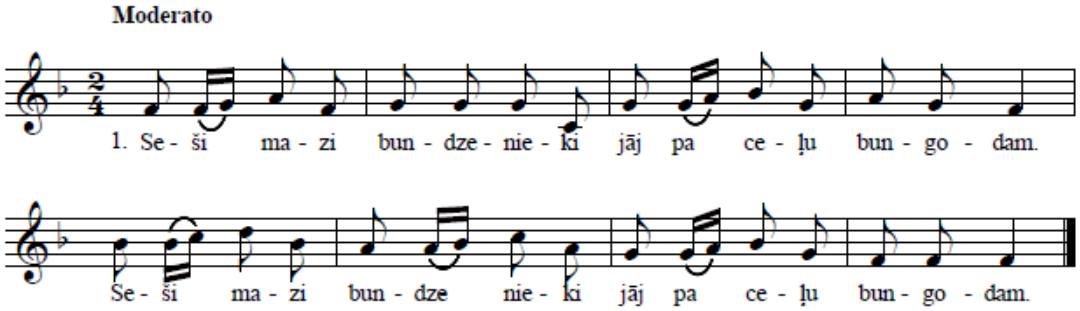


Lācīts kāpa ozolā, ratatā, ratatā,
Bite koda vēderā, ratatā, ratatā.
Vai, bitīte, nepazini, ratatā, ratatā,
Sava veca dravenieka, ratatā, ratatā.
Jo tas lācis augstu kāpj, ratatā, ratatā,
Jo tā bite sīvi dzeļ, ratatā, ratatā.
No tās bites dzēlumiņ', ratatā, ratatā,
Lācim pampa vēderiņš, ratatā, ratatā.

1. Little bear climbs the oak-tree, *ra-ta-ta, ra-ta-ta,*
A bee stings him on the tummy, *ra-ta-ta, ra-ta-ta*.
2. 'Don't you, bee, remember me, *ra-ta-ta, ra-ta-ta*,
Your old hiver', *ra-ta-ta, ra-ta-ta*,
3. And the higher climbs the bear, ra-ta-ta, ra-ta-ta,
The fiercer stings the bee, ra-ta-ta, ra-ta-ta,
4. And the bee's fierce stinging, ra-ta-ta, ra-ta-ta,
Makes the bear's tummy swell, ra-ta-ta, ra-ta-ta.

Play Description (Author: A. Liduma). The song is accompanied with sounding gestures:
1st Verse: Imitation of climbing upwards, singing the refrain '*ra-ta-ta, ra-ta-ta'*, clapping hands.
2nd Verse: Showing surprise, when singing the refrain – tapping one's legs.
3rd Verse: Imitation of climbing the tree and stinging like the bee; refrain – feet (stomping).
4th Verse: Stroking one's tummy; refrain – snapping fingers (5-8 year-olds) or clapping hands (2-5 year-olds).

Latvian folksong *Six Little Drummers*



Seši mazi bundzenieki
Jāj pa ceļu bungodam. 2x
Visiem sešiem sirmi zirgi,

1. Six little drummers
Ride the road and drum. 2x
2. All the six on piebald horses,

Visiem caunu cepurīt's	All with sable fur-caps
Visi seši sajājuši	3. All the six are riding into
Mana tēva sētiņā	My father's backyard
Visi seši lec no zirga	4. All the six get off the horses
Sniedz man zelta gredzentiņ'.	And hold out a golden ring
Ne es ņemšu, ne man vajag	5. I won't take it, I don't need it,
Tik jaunam skuķēnam.	Such a young girl like me
Pārnāks mājās, prasīs māte,	6. When I come home, mother asks me
Kur tu ņēmi, kas tev dev'?	Where I got it, and who gave it.
Man iedeva ciema puiši,	7.Country boys have given it to me
Mani mazu mīlēdam'	'Cause they love me, pretty one,
Mani mazu mīlēdami,	8.'Cause they love me, pretty one,
Sevim lielu audzēdam'.	'Cause they've grown up so big.

Play Description (Author: A. Liduma). The song is performed mincing along (rhythm of quavers), changing direction with each verse. The participants join in pairs forming a circle. The play is meant for children of 6 to 8.

1st Verse: The participants start mincing around hand in hand in a circle to the right.

2nd Verse: 'Leading reins'. Each participant keeps his hands half-bent at his chest as if holding the reins. All move in a circle to the left

3rd Verse: The pairs hold hands inside (boys – inside, girls - outside) and move in a circle to the right.

4th Verse: 'Horse harness'. A participant standing in front stretches his hands backwards keeping the palms upwards, the one standing behind takes hold of his hands, palms downwards.

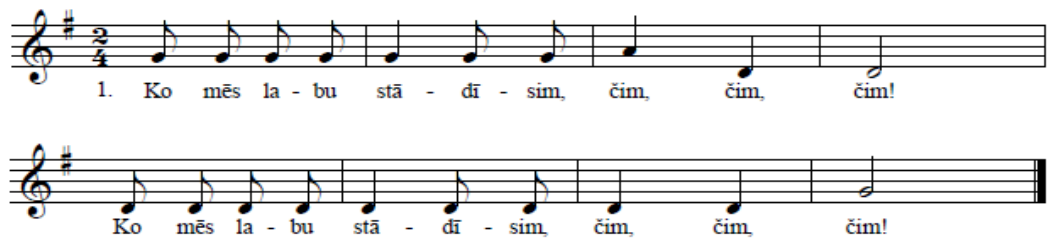
5th: Verse: 'Horse harness' in the opposite direction. The one who stood behind is now in front, the one who was in front stands behind. Moving to the right.

6th: Verse: The pairs hold hands inside and move in a circle. Like in the 3rd Verse. To the left.

7th: Verse: 'Leading reins' – like in the 2nd Verse. To the right.

8th: Verse: Holding hands in a circle. Like in the 1st Verse. To the left.

Latvian folksong *What shall we plant*



Ko mēs labu stādīsim čim, čim, čim. 2x	1. What shall we plant now – chim, chim, chim 2x
Vienu kuplu liepiņu čim, čim, čim. 2x	2. One shaggy lime-tree – chim, chim, chim 2x
Nolauza zariņu čim, čim, čim. 2x	3. When a branch is broken – chim, chim, chim 2x
Paliek tukša vietiņa čim, čim čim. 2x	4. Empty space remains – chim, chim, chim 2x

The play symbolises human life from birth to passing away. The age of the participants is unlimited.

One participant sits down on a chair in the centre. Others stand around in a circle.

1st Verse: Moving to the right.

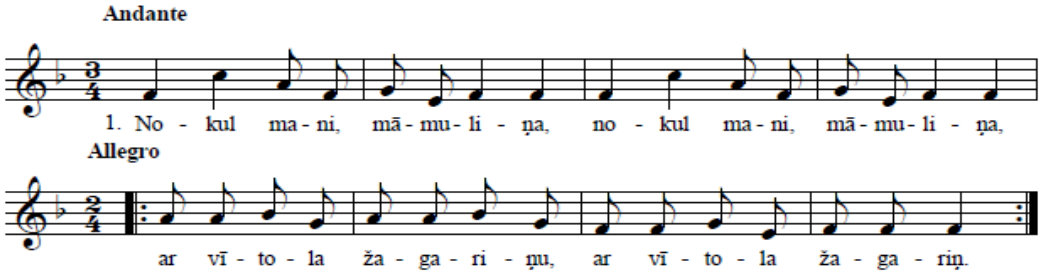
2nd Verse: Waving arms above their heads imitating a swinging tree.

3rd Verse: Squatting.

4th Verse: The participants are standing and clapping hands. The one, who was sitting down, stands up and moves around the empty space. Then another participant is chosen to sit down on the chair.

The play goes on. Changing directions is possible.

Latvian folksong *Flog me, mummy*



Nokul mani, māmuliņa 2x	1. Flog me, mummy, - 2x
Ar vītola žagariņu 2x.	With a willow twig – 2x
Lai es augu tik lokana 2x	2. So that I grow as willowy – 2x
Kā vītola žagariņis.2x	As a willow twig – 2x
Nokul mani, māmuliņa 2x	3. Flog me, mummy, - 2x
Ar rozītes žagariņu.2x	With a rose-bush twig – 2x
Lai es augu daiļa, skaista,	4. So that I grow sweet and pretty
Tā kā roze dārziņā.	Like a garden rose
Nokul mani, māmuliņa 2x	5. Flog me, mummy, - 2x
Ar ābeles žagariņu.	With an apple-tree twig
Lai es augu sārti balta 2x	6. So that I grow blushing and white – 2x
Kā ābolis ābelēi	Like an apple on an apple-tree.

Play Description

Initial position: The participants are standing in pairs.

Version 1 (for children of 6-7 and older)

Verses 1-4: The pairs are going in the dancing route direction. Slow tempo.

Verses 5-8: The partners turn to each other, and all the participants form an interweaving archway by joining right and left hands in turns. The boys go along the dancing route, the girls in the opposite direction. When the initial partners meet, the archway ends up (Fast tempo)

Version 2 (for children of 3-4 and older)

Verses 1-4: The pairs are going in the dancing route direction. Slow tempo.

Verses 5-8: The pairs turn around on right elbows, when repeating - on left elbows. (Fast tempo)

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