

ICEEPSY 2023
14th International Conference on Education & Educational Psychology

**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIST EDUCATION IN CZECH AND
CROATIAN MUSIC SCHOOLS: A COMPARISON**

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Abstract

This paper compares the professional organist education systems at Czech and Croatian music schools. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to obtain data for comparison. This questionnaire was sent to all organ teachers in the Czech Republic and Croatia. The main areas of inquiry were the time allocated to teaching, teachers' educational attainment, where teaching occurred, types of instruments, compulsory subjects correlated with the main area of study or knowledge, and the use of organ pieces in teaching. The responses were analysed to generate comparisons. It was found that, with the exception of a few differences, both professional educational processes are similar. Given the many musicians who emigrated from Bohemia to today's Croatia in earlier times, it could be assumed that Croatian organ teachers would have comprehensive data about Czech organ culture. There is scarce data on Croatian organ culture in Czech professional publications which is why this research aims to draw attention to the issue and the integration of local organ culture into the Czech music educational system.

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Keywords: Professional organ education, vocational education, Czech Republic, Croatia

1. Introduction

Although both countries are in different parts of Europe, their musical culture is very much connected. The work of Croatian Benedictine monks in Prague's Emmaus Monastery since the 14th century is among the oldest musical connections between the countries. In the course of the following centuries - and especially after 1800 - many musicians migrated to the former Yugoslavia due to a large number of Czech graduates of conservatories and organ schools. The Balkan countries offered them many opportunities for musical employment as teachers, organists, performing artists and more (Kylic, 2007). The most important Croatian composers who have Czech roots or have studied at Czech music schools include Vatroslav Lisinkí, Ivan Zajc, Franjo Pokorný and others. In addition, there are more than 400 Czech musicians who worked in Croatia - Jan Vlašimský, Fran Lhotka, Václav Hummel, Jan Křtitel Vaňhal and others (Herout & Koblása, 2023).

1.1. Comparison of Czech and Croatian organ music education systems

Both countries have a unique elementary music education system (ZUŠ, GŠ) starting with early education. Elementary music education is provided in schools sponsored by the Ministry of Education, just like other elementary or secondary schools. The teachers are therefore paid by the state, while parents only pay a fee for the operation of the school. This is a big advantage over other countries that do not have this system. Virtually any student who is interested in music and meets certain musical criteria can access this education. It also provides long-term preparation for conservatories and music academies for very gifted and talented students. If students want to learn a musical instrument in other countries, as well as outside Europe, parents must look for private music education, which is several times more expensive than this system supported by the state.

The curriculum of both school systems includes education of pupils aged 5-7 in so-called preparatory music education. This education is provided in group lessons once a week (45 min).

In the Czech Republic, ZUŠ pupils can study in two cycles - a 1st seven-year cycle, and a 2nd four-year cycle. One-to-one lessons are provided once a week, and the director may increase the time allocated to very talented pupils to two lessons a week (THE EDUCATION ACT AS EFFECTIVE FROM THE 1ST February 2022, 2022). In Croatia, GŠ schools provide six years of education - the 1st and 3rd grades have 30-minute lessons twice week, and the 4th-6th grades have 45-minute lessons twice a week (CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM OF PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR MUSIC AND DANCE SCHOOLS, 2017). It should be noted that there are nine years of compulsory schooling in the Czech Republic, compared to only eight years in Croatia.

Czech conservatories provide 45-minute one-to-one lessons twice a week, or a 90-minute lesson once a week. After six years of study, students graduate with an absolutorium and receive an associate degree, enabling them to teach to obtain their teaching qualification at a ZUŠ. In contrast, in Croatia education continues at a GŠ, which has the same curriculum as the conservatory. The difference is in the student's application after he completes his previous education. A student can study at any secondary school and study an instrument at a GŠ as a hobby, or he can study his major at a GŠ, which requires him to

continue his studies at a Music Academy. Graduates of Croatian conservatories do not receive a degree and are not even qualified for teaching or professional performance (Očić & Koblása, 2022).

The time allocated to the main field at music academies and universities is 90 minutes per week. In the Czech Republic, the education is divided into a three-year bachelor's degree programme followed by a two-year master's degree programme. In contrast, Croatia only has a five-year master's degree programme. An interesting fact is that the Academy of Music in Zagreb only accepts two organ students per year by decision of the rector; there is no such limitation at any university in the Czech Republic (Očić & Koblása, 2022).

2. Purpose of the Study

This paper is a part of the dissertation entitled *Organ Pieces by Croatian Composers in the Context of Czech Music Education* and this paper focuses on comparing the system of professional organist education in the Czech Republic and Croatia.

There is no relevant data in Czech or Slovak literature devoted to Croatian organ culture. This issue is briefly mentioned by Klinda (2000), who, apart from extremely brief historiographical data, also mentions that original organ production pieces are quite scarce. This fact is contradicted by Perestegi (2014), who claims that Croatian composers composed over two thousand organ pieces. This contradiction needs to be investigated and

This research aims to study with the ultimate aim of promoting Croatian organ culture not only in the Czech Republic, but also in other Central European countries.

3. Research Questions

In preparation of a questionnaire aimed at teachers, it was deemed crucial to obtain as much data as possible regarding not only the expertise of the teacher, but also other elements important for a comparison of the education system for organists. This is why the following key questions were established in the research:

- What does the professional organist education system in both countries look like? How is it different?
- In what kind of spaces are lessons held, and what types of instruments (pipe, digital) are used?
- Are teachers familiar with organ pieces of the compared country and do they use them in teaching?

4. Research Methods

The semi-structured questionnaire survey was conducted during the 2022/2023 academic year, and it included all levels of professional organ teaching – elementary music education, secondary education/conservatories, and music academies/universities. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on the research questions and literature review. It was subsequently submitted to experts within the university who approved and recommended it for use. It contains a total of 17 questions and was sent to all teachers in the Czech Republic and Croatia by email. It contained a link to the research domain

in which the respondents answered online. The results were analyzed quantitatively using statistical software.

The Czech Republic has a total of 518 elementary art schools (hereinafter referred to as ZUŠ), 20 conservatories, 2 music academies and 5 universities with a pedagogical and artistic focus. 132 of these are ZUŠ, 10 conservatories, 2 academies and 1 university offer organ lessons (THE EDUCATION ACT AS EFFECTIVE FROM THE 1st February 2022, 2022). Thanks to a thoroughly prepared directory and obtained contact details for all teachers in the Czech Republic, 153 teachers were addressed, and 83 relevant answers were recorded - with 49 men/34 women. The response rate of the questionnaire was 54%. There are 104 music schools (hereinafter referred to as GŠ) and 5 academies in Croatia. Professional organ is taught as a major at 13 GŠ and 1 academy (CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM OF PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR MUSIC AND DANCE SCHOOLS, 2017). The contact directory was thoroughly prepared in the same way as that of Czech schools. 22 professors were contacted, and 9 responses were received – 5 male/4 female. The questionnaire response rate was 41%.

5. Findings

5.1. Education – questionnaire evaluation

5.1.1. Educational attainment

After the initial part of the questionnaire, when respondents were introduced to the matter and then basic data (gender, age, region), was obtained about them, it was necessary to determine their educational attainment.

The analysis found that most common educational attainment among Czech teachers (Table 1) was a master's degree (40), followed by conservatory education (18), a bachelor's degree (14), a doctorate (8) and other (3), where they listed the following education: *Concert exam A University of the Arts, University of Music, Church Music B*.

The most commonly listed qualifications of Croatia teachers (Table 2) were master (5), doctor (3) and other (1), where current education at the *Brussels Academy* was indicated.

Table 1. Education in the Czech Republic

Education	Number of respondents	Percent
Doctor	8	10 %
Master	40	48 %
Bachelor	14	17 %
Absolutory	18	22 %
Other	3	3 %

Table 2. Education in Croatia

Education	Number of respondents	Percent
Doctor	3	33 %
Master	5	56 %
Other	1	11 %

5.1.2. Teaching at an institution

The teachers were then asked about the institution where they teach. As multiple answers could be marked for this question, the school total was greater than the number of respondents.

The most frequent answer (Table 3) by Czech teachers was a ZUŠ (74), followed by a conservatory (10), other (8) and an academy/university (7). In the open-ended question, the teachers answered: *I no longer teach, elementary school (2), professional college, secondary school, teacher training school, gymnasium (2)*.

In Croatia (Table 4), GŠ schools (6), academies/universities (3) and other (1) were most frequently indicated, where the answer was: *I used to teach at a GŠ, now I teach privately*.

Table 3. Education in the Czech Republic

Education	Number of respondents	Percent
Academy/University	7	7 %
Conservatory	10	10 %
ZUŠ	74	75 %
Other	8	8 %

Table 4. Education in Croatia

Education	Number of respondents	Percent
Academy/University	3	30 %
GŠ	6	60 %
Other	1	10 %

5.1.3. Number of students

In the next question, the teachers answered how many students they teach. Some answered zero students - they also teach instruments or subjects other than the organ at the school.

In the Czech Republic (Table 5), teachers most often teach 1 student (20), followed by 2 (18), 0 (11), 3 (10), 5 (6), 4 (6), 6 (5), 8 (4), 25 (1), 11 (1) and 10 (1).

Croatian teachers (Table 6) most often teach 5 students (2), 3 (2), 12 (1), 10 (1), 7 (1), 1 (1) and 0 (1).

Table 5. Number of students in the Czech Republic

Number of students	Number of respondents	Percent
0	11	14 %
1	20	24 %
2	18	22 %
3	10	12 %
4	6	7 %
5	6	7 %
6	5	6 %
8	4	5 %
10	1	1 %
11	1	1 %
25	1	1 %

Table 6. Number of students in Croatia

Number of students	Number of respondents	Percent
0	1	11 %
1	1	11 %
3	2	23 %
5	2	22 %
7	1	11 %
10	1	11 %
12	1	11 %

5.1.4. Venue of education

For the following question, teachers could also select multiple answers, so the total number of answers exceeded the number of respondents.

In the Czech Republic (Table 7), education most often takes place in a school building (67), a church (27), a concert hall (5), a ceremonial hall (1) and other (4), with the following answers: *organ lessons are not taught at our ZUŠ* (2), *private lessons at home*, *cultural center*.

In Croatia (Table 8), organ lessons are most often taught in a school building (8) and in a church (1).

Table 7. Venue of education in the Czech Republic

Place of education	Number of respondents	Percent
School building	67	64 %
Church	27	26 %
Concert hall	5	5 %
Ceremonial hall	1	1 %
Other	4	4 %

Table 8. Place of education in Croatia

Place of education	Number of respondents	Percent
School building	8	89 %
Church	1	11 %

5.1.5. Type of instrument used at the school

The next question was whether the school in which the teachers teach has a digital/pipe organ or no organ at all.

Czech music schools (Table 9) most often have a digital organ (58), a pipe organ (23), or they have no organ (11).

Croatian schools (Table 10) have both digital (4) and pipe organs (4), or they do not have an organ (1).

Table 9. Instruments used at the school – Czech Republic

Instrument	Number of respondents	Percent
Digital organ	58	63 %
Pipe organ	23	25 %
No	11	12 %

Table 10. Instruments used at the school – Croatia

Instrument	Number of respondents	Percent
Digital organ	4	45 %
Pipe organ	4	44 %
No	1	11 %

The question also included a following optional question that teachers could answer if the answer to the first part was that the school has a pipe organ. Some schools have several instruments at their disposal, each of them for the interpretation of a different style of organ literature (Italian style, French, positive Baroque...). Czech schools most often have instruments from the now defunct Rieger-Kloss organ company from Krnov (14), followed by Kánský-Brachtl (2), Organa Kutná Hora (2), Václav Smolka (1), František Pavel Horák (1), Mühleisen (1), and Graf Sursee (1), and they are usually 2- or 3-manual organs. The rest of the respondents do not remember the name of the organ company, or they do not have this information. Croatian schools also mostly have 2- or 3-manual organs from local organ company Heferer (4), followed by Eisenbarth (1), portative (1), Graf Sursee (1) and Rieger (1).

5.1.6. Compulsory subjects

During their studies, organists are not only educated in playing the instrument itself, but also in additional compulsory subjects covering historiographical facts about the development of the organ, accompanying other performers, improvisation, etc. These subjects help them gain a deeper understanding of musical interpretation, methodology and playing technique.

In the semi-closed question, Czech teachers stated (Table 11) that the study programme includes a compulsory subject (47) - after which they specified the subject - or that there is no compulsory subject (36). At schools, the most common additional subjects are Organ Seminar (14), Improvisation (6), Organ History and Literature (5), Interpretation Seminar (5), Organ Studies (4), Collective Interpretation (4), Liturgical Practice (3) and Organ Methodology (2).

It is similar in Croatia (Table 12), where there is an additional compulsory subject (5) or there is none (4). Other subjects include Organ History (2), Organology (1), Improvisation (1) and Liturgical Practice (1).

Table 11. Compulsory subjects – Czech Republic

Compulsory subjects	Number of respondents	Percent
Yes	47	57 %
No	36	43 %

Table 12. Compulsory subjects – Croatia

Compulsory subjects	Number of respondents	Percent
Yes	5	56 %
No	4	44 %

5.2. Use of the organ compositions of the compared country

The final question was meant to determine whether the teachers use organ culture in professional teaching.

5.2.1. The use of organ pieces in teaching

In the semi-closed question, Czech teachers answered (Table 13) that they are not familiar with the matter (79), only a few of them (4) have knowledge of composers. They listed the following composers in their answers: Andelko Klobučar (2), Julije Bajamonti (2), Franjo Dugan (1).

In contrast, Croatian teachers (Table 14) use Czech compositions (8); only one answer was negative. They listed the following composers: Petr Eben (8), Jan Křtitel Vaňhal (3), Antonín Dvořák (2), Bohuslav Matěj Černohorský (2), Josef Ferdinand Norbert Seger (1), Jan Zach (1), Leoš Janáček (1), Miloslav Kabeláč (1) and Josef Klička (1).

Table 13. The use of organ pieces in teaching – Czech Republic

Answer	Number of respondents	Percent
Yes	4	5 %
No	79	95 %

Table 14. The use of organ pieces in teaching – Croatia

Answer	Number of respondents	Percent
Yes	8	89 %
No	1	11 %

6. Conclusions

The research summarizes and compares the system of professional education at Czech and Croatian music schools - the biggest difference is that after graduating from a secondary music school in Croatia (conservatory), graduates cannot teach or perform professionally, and they must continue their studies at a music academy.

Another important finding is that digital organs are primarily used for teaching. This is very counterproductive given that each pipe organ is unique. In Western countries such as Germany and France, it is common for schools to use several types of pipe organs for different organ eras. Although a digital organ can imitate the sound of any organ and all pieces can be interpreted on it, the keys are very light compared to a mechanical organ. When organists only practice on a digital organ and then move on to a mechanical pipe organ, they often have a hard time playing pieces - they work differently with acoustics, keystroke and other specific aspects of playing. It is most likely for this reason that lessons are not only taught at schools on a digital instrument, but also on a pipe organ in a church, where theoretical knowledge about playing can be applied. Additional compulsory subjects used in both school systems and integrated into teaching also serve this purpose.

Due to the large number of Czech musicians who emigrated to Croatia in the past, it could be assumed that Croatians organ teachers would have greater knowledge of Czech organ culture than the other

way around. This confirmation provides further motivation to introduce Croatian organ culture into the system of professional organ education in the Czech Republic.

Data Availability Statement

Data is available upon request.

Declaration of Conflicts Interests

The author declares that they have no conflict of interest to disclose.

Funding/Ethics

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. The article was written on the basis of the Specific Research of Faculty of Education of University Hradec Králové No. 2117.

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