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Milena Petrović, *The importance of vowels in music education*, London: International Music Education Research Centre, 2017

The importance of vowels in music education was published by the International Music Education Research Centre (iMerc), Department of Culture, Communication and Media, and the Institute of Education, University College of London, in July 2017. This book is the result of several years of postdoctoral interdisciplinary research at the Institute of Education in London. The book reviewers were world celebrated music pedagogy scholars, Graham Welch, Chair of Music Education at the UCL Institute of Education, University College London, and Evangelos Himonides, Reader in Technology, Education and Music at the UCL Institute of Education.

The interest in vowels is the logical continuance of the author's first book *The role of accents in Serbian Lied* (Uloga akcenta u srpskoj solo pesmi) published in 2014 by Službeni glasnik, Belgrade. The accent is an indispensable metro-rhyth-

mic agent; it transposes speech into a meaningful music context, with vowels transmitting the accents. The accents are the basic tool for understanding sound and meaning in speech and singing, while the vowels contribute to perceivable communication and supreme music interpretation. They are the constructive elements in solmisation syllables used when reading music by singing with tonal understanding, in short: their placement in a functional context.

The book has 139 pages of text with a short but coherently written Preface at the beginning and a summary at the end. The book has six basic chapters. The first chapter "Acoustic features of vowels" deals with the psychological aspects of voice and vowels, as well as formats responsible for production and interactional vocal differentiation. One should mention that the author compares the change in acoustic structure of the vowels depending on the context with the different experience of one and the same tone within chords in harmonic progression. Namely, one and the same tone can be experienced as higher or lower depending on its position, due to existing in chords with changing harmonic functions. This is an especially significant question for music pedagogy, particularly while teaching the perception of tone sequences within tonality. The author notices a similar situation with students perceiving one and the same tone 'changing', in pitch or duration due to an alteration in dynamics.

The second chapter "The origins of vowels and phonosemantics" presents the origin of speech and vowels, and the liability that speech originally expressed

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music characteristics. An intriguing discussion refers to the field of phonosemantics, where the word carries the meaning of an object, which presents itself in accordance with its image. For example, the author notices the link between the openness and shape of the mouth when pronouncing a word which describes an object and its size, or the link between high frequency speech and small objects. If a vowel “I” is used to impersonate a high or small object, it is within reason that “I” appears within the solmisation syllables “mi” and “ti”. Both have a tendency to resolution in the tones above.

The third chapter, “Genetic origins of vowels”, explores the connection between genetics and linguistics, as well as the influence of geographic factors on human psychophysical characteristics in their speech and music. Particularly interesting is the specific intonation and articulation construct in people who have a particular blood type and the link between genetic markers and music-linguistic characteristics. In accordance with the genetic origin of vowels, it is notable to highlight the fact that within nations with five vowel-languages a pentatonic music scale is manifest.

In the fourth chapter “Vowel systems and musical scales and intervals” the author compares the vowel system with music scales of different world cultures. She reveals universal elements in the vowel systems but also a tonal centre as a universal aspect in music scale systems. Although the tonal center may be uncertain, particularity in some traditional folklore songs, the relationship between vowels in speech and intervals in music are predictable, because the small-

est language unit is a vowel and the smallest music unit is an interval. The author produces a short recapitulation of four accents in the Serbian language and its musical transposition in the form of an interval. She indicates the similarity in the perception of consonant and dissonant intervals in humans and animals based on format and fundamental voice frequency and harmonics frequency. Milena Petrović also presents a so far unknown interpretation of the eleventh century hymn *Ut queant laxis* composed by Guido d’Arezzo. Namely, it is well known that every verse in the hymn starts with words, the initial syllable of which matches the corresponding solmisation syllable in singing. However, each tone which is sung with the specific vowel evokes a particular emotion depending on the pitch, i.e. its frequency. The emotional meaning of the vowel and tone pitch Guido highlighted in *Micrologus* in chapter 14, which corresponds to his treatment of the words sounding rather than meaning. From the music pedagogy view it is significant to underline how important Guido’s symmetry is for music memory. A special feature of this book is reflected in reasoning about the importance of tone pitch frequency – solmisation syllables – which has been modified through the centuries. Human and animal emotional and social factors, together with absolute pitch, depend on frequency.

The fifth chapter “Vowels and absolute pitch” discusses the possible origin of absolute pitch. The author observes it as a primordial spoken specification, as the ability to verbally name tone pitches without a point of reference.

The final sixth chapter “Vowels and emotions” discuss the ability of both speech and music to express emotional meaning. The author mentions possibilities of vowels to deliver sound i.e. emotion, and consonants delivering meaning i.e. intellect. At this point in *The importance of vowels in music education* the ideas conveyed in the previous book on the accents and this one on the vowels, merge. Namely, the accents hold more variety in vowels than in consonants. Vowels reveal local differences, the expression of emotions, the social stature and economic state of the speaker. Music activates emotions because, while perceiving and performing, the endocrinology, immune and neurology system are engaged. The author notices that singing strengthens the immune system and escalates endorphin, which reduces stress and tenseness. This fact is especially important and has to be emphasized, because unfortunately singing together in the form of choir activities in schools and both professional and amateur choirs is being reduced, leading to almost extinguishing choir singing as a mandatory subject in elementary schools.

The importance of vowels in music education by Milena Petrović opens numerous questions about the relationship between music and language through studying the origins, nature, usage and the role of vowels. Music pedagogy is a science which exists by virtue of its interdisciplinarity, enabling the author to freely shed light on vowels from different angles: acoustics, linguistics (phonetics and semantics), genetics, linguistics, music theory, cognitive musicology and psychology as well as music pedagogy.

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18th International conference: Music and image in cultural, social and political discourse, Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury (UK), 9–12 July 2018

There are few international music/musical institutions, organizations, or associations that may boast of a tradition or reputation comparable to that of RIDIM (Répertoire International d'Iconographie Musicale). An important legacy of the association for promoting, supporting, and managing various projects concerning the relationship of visual culture and music, dance, and dramatic arts includes its scholarly conferences, which were initially organized at the Research Center for Music Iconography in New York (1973–1980) and then in cities across the world (Paris, Hamburg, Salvador (Bahia, Brazil), Rome, Istanbul, Columbus (Ohio, USA), Saint Petersburg, and Athens). Last year's meeting took place in Canterbury (Kent, England, UK), a small university town in southeast England, in the county of Kent. Under the metaphorical patronage of that town's

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