

MUSIC IN THE SYSTEM OF CLASSICAL MALE GYMNASIUM EDUCATION DURING THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

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The article examines the role of music education as a component of the educational environment of classical male gymnasiums in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, based on materials from the male gymnasiums of the Kyiv Educational District. **The purpose** of the study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the institutional foundations of music education, the organisation of music instruction, the development of student orchestras, and the educational, cultural, and upbringing functions of musical practices. **Methods.** The study is based on a combination of general scientific and special historical methods. The historical-systemic approach made it possible to examine music education as an integral component of the classical gymnasium educational system. The historical-comparative method was employed to identify the distinctive features of music instruction in individual male gymnasiums of the Kyiv Educational District. The historical-genetic method enabled the author to trace the evolution of music education and the activities of student orchestras throughout the period under study. The source base comprises legislative and regulatory documents issued by the Ministry of Public Education, as well as the annual reports of the Trustee of the Kyiv Educational District covering the period from 1889 to 1916. **Results.** The study demonstrates that, despite its optional status within the curriculum, music occupied an important place in the system of classical male gymnasium education. It identifies the principal features of the regulatory framework governing music instruction, the organisation of student orchestras, staffing arrangements, and financial support for music education. The research traces the gradual spread of orchestral performance in the male gymnasiums of the Kyiv Educational District and the expansion of student musical ensembles during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is shown that musical practices extended beyond classroom instruction to include literary and musical evenings, concerts, ceremonial academic events, charity performances, and the participation of student ensembles in the cultural life of urban communities. The analysis of concert repertoires reveals the combination of artistic, aesthetic, cultural, educational, and pedagogical functions of music, as well as its contribution to shaping the educational environment of the classical gymnasium. **Conclusions.** The study proves that music constituted an important component of the classical male gymnasium as a socio-cultural institution. It integrated curricular, extracurricular, and cultural activities, promoted aesthetic education, fostered performance skills, encouraged collaborative practices, and broadened students' cultural horizons. The proposed approach positions music education as a productive analytical lens for exploring the educational environment of male gymnasiums in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, thereby contributing to a broader understanding of the organisation and functioning of the secondary education system in Dnieper Ukraine.

Keywords: history of education, Kyiv Educational District, male gymnasiums, late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Dnieper Ukraine, gymnasium education, everyday life, educational process, student orchestras, cultural development.

МУЗИКА В СИСТЕМІ КЛАСИЧНОЇ ГІМНАЗІЙНОЇ ОСВІТИ НАПРИКІНЦІ XIX – НА ПОЧАТКУ XX СТ.

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У статті досліджено музичну освіту як складову освітнього середовища класичних чоловічих гімназій наприкінці XIX – на початку XX ст. на матеріалах чоловічих гімназій Київського навчального округу. **Мета** статті полягає у комплексному аналізі

інституційних засад музичної освіти, організації музичного навчання, розвитку учнівських оркестрів та визначенні освітніх, культурних і виховних функцій музичних практик. **Методи.** Історико-системний підхід дав змогу розглянути музичну освіту як складову цілісної системи класичної гімназійної освіти. Історико-порівняльний метод використано для виявлення особливостей організації музичного навчання в окремих чоловічих гімназіях Київського навчального округу. Історико-генетичний метод дозволив простежити еволюцію музичної освіти та діяльності учнівських оркестрів упродовж досліджуваного періоду. Джерельну основу роботи становлять нормативно-правові акти Міністерства народної освіти, а також щорічні звіти попечителя Київського навчального округу за 1889–1916 рр. **Результати.** Встановлено, що, незважаючи на факультативний статус музики в навчальних планах, вона посідала важливе місце в системі класичної чоловічої гімназійної освіти. З’ясовано особливості нормативного регулювання музичного навчання, організації учнівських оркестрів, кадрового забезпечення та фінансування музичних занять. Простежено поступове поширення оркестрового музикування в чоловічих гімназіях Київського навчального округу та розширення мережі музичних колективів наприкінці XIX – на початку XX ст. Показано, що музичні практики охоплювали не лише навчальні заняття, а й літературно-музичні вечори, концерти, урочисті академічні акти, благодійні заходи та участь учнівських колективів у культурному житті міст. Аналіз концертного репертуару дозволив виявити поєднання художньо-естетичних, культурно-просвітницьких і виховних функцій музики, а також її роль у формуванні освітнього середовища класичної гімназії. **Висновки.** Доведено, що музика була важливим елементом функціонування класичної чоловічої гімназії як соціокультурного інституту. Вона забезпечувала інтеграцію навчальної, позакласної та культурно-просвітницької діяльності, сприяла естетичному вихованню, розвитку виконавських навичок, формуванню культури колективної взаємодії та розширенню культурного кругозору учнів. Запропонований підхід дозволяє розглядати музичну освіту як один із інструментів дослідження освітнього середовища чоловічих гімназій кінця XIX – початку XX ст., що розширює сучасні уявлення про функціонування системи середньої освіти в Наддніпрянській Україні.

Ключові слова: історія освіти, Київський навчальний округ, чоловічі гімназії, XIX – початок XX ст., Наддніпрянська Україна, гімназійна освіта, повсякденне життя, освітньо-виховний процес, учнівські оркестри, культурний розвиток.

1. Introduction

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the classical gymnasium was one of the principal types of secondary educational institutions in Dnieper Ukraine, providing not only a comprehensive general education but also fostering the holistic development of students. Its educational model was based on the integration of intellectual, moral, and aesthetic education, reflecting contemporary European pedagogical concepts of the harmonious development of young people. Consequently, the educational process extended beyond the teaching of compulsory subjects to encompass a wide range of extracurricular activities aimed at cultivating cultural interests, artistic taste, creative abilities, and social skills.

Within this educational framework, music occupied a particularly important place, performing functions that extended far beyond those of an ordinary school subject. It constituted an integral component of the educational process, serving as a means of aesthetic development, organisation of students' leisure, and the formation of the institutional culture of the gymnasium. Learning to play musical instruments, participating in choirs and student orchestras, literary and musical evenings, ceremonial events, charity concerts, and public celebrations contributed to the development of discipline, responsibility, teamwork, and public performance skills. At the same time, musical practices became an essential element of gymnasium cultural life, integrating educational institutions into the social and cultural space of urban communities while strengthening their interaction with local society.

Despite the secondary status of music within the official curriculum, the administrations of many gymnasiums devoted considerable attention to its development by investing in musical instruments, maintaining student orchestras, remunerating music teachers, and inviting professional musicians to participate in the

educational process. This demonstrates that music was regarded not merely as an optional supplement to formal education but as an important component in shaping educated, cultured, and socially active individuals. Consequently, examining the place of music within the system of classical gymnasium education provides a deeper understanding not only of the organisation of the educational process but also of the mechanisms through which the educational environment of male gymnasiums in Dnieper Ukraine functioned during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The history of gymnasium education and music education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has attracted increasing scholarly attention over recent decades. Educational practices of the early twentieth century, particularly during the First World War, have been examined by Yu. Kramar (Kramar, 2026). In the works of L. Bobyk (Protsiv), especially those devoted to music education (Bobyk, 2024), the primary focus is placed on music schools, conservatories, and other specialised artistic institutions, whereas the functioning of music within the system of general secondary education receives only limited attention.

Another strand of historiography addresses music education in various types of secondary educational institutions. O. Semilet (Semilet, 2014) investigated the development of music education in private educational institutions of Taurida Province, focusing primarily on girls' gymnasiums and private schools. Consequently, the functioning of music in state male gymnasiums lay beyond the scope of her research. The study most closely related to the present topic is that of I. Kalinin (Kalinin, 2025), which examines music instruction in the male gymnasiums of Kyiv during the modern period. The author analyses the organisation of music instruction, the activities of music teachers, and selected aspects of student musical ensembles. However, the study is confined to Kyiv gymnasiums

and does not encompass the broader educational space of the Kyiv Educational District, which included dozens of male gymnasiums characterised by diverse approaches to organising music education.

Thus, although modern scholarship has made significant progress in exploring the history of music education, the place of music within the system of classical gymnasium education remains insufficiently investigated. In particular, the organisation of music instruction in male gymnasiums, the activities of student orchestras, the staffing and material support of music education, and the role of musical practices in both the educational process and the everyday life of educational institutions have received little scholarly attention. This research gap determines both the relevance and the scholarly novelty of the present study, which is based on materials from the male gymnasiums of the Kyiv Educational District.

The source base of the study primarily consists of the *Annual Reports of the Trustee of the Kyiv Educational District* covering the period from 1889 to 1916, which provide systematic information on the organisation of the educational process, the activities of student orchestras, staffing, financial support for music education, and the material resources of male gymnasiums. Equally important are the legislative and regulatory documents issued by the Ministry of Public Education, particularly the *Statute of Gymnasiums and Progymnasiums* (1871) and the *Collection of Regulations and Directives for Male Gymnasiums and Progymnasiums of the Ministry of Public Education*, which make it possible to reconstruct the regulatory framework governing music education. The incorporation of recent scholarly literature has enabled the comparison of documentary evidence with existing academic interpretations and has helped to determine the place of the present research within contemporary historiography.

The methodological framework of the study combines the historical-systemic, historical-comparative, and historical-genetic methods. Their application makes it possible to examine music education as an element of the broader system of classical gymnasium education, compare its organisation across individual educational institutions, and trace the development of student musical ensembles. The article proceeds from an analysis of the institutional framework of music education to an examination of its practical forms within the everyday life of male gymnasiums.

The purpose of this article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the place and role of music in the system of classical gymnasium education during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, based on materials from the male gymnasiums of the Kyiv Educational District. The study examines the organisation of music instruction, the activities of student orchestras, the staffing and material support of music education, and the functions performed by musical practices within the educational process.

2. Institutional Framework of Music Education

The operation of male gymnasiums in the Russian Empire, including those within the Kyiv Educational District, was regulated by the *Statute of Gymnasiums and Progymnasiums of the Ministry of Public Education* (1871) (Ustav, 1871), which established the organisational principles governing gymnasium education, defined the content of instruction, and outlined the principal directions of educational work. The educational process was further specified by the curricula and syllabi approved in 1872, which regulated the range of school subjects, their content, and their distribution across grades in accordance with the age and educational needs of students (*Sbornik postanovlenii*, 1912: 487-489). The curriculum distinguished between compulsory and optional subjects. The compulsory curriculum included Religious Instruction, the Russian and Church Slavonic languages, Russian literature, logic, Latin and Greek, mathematics, geography, physics, history, German and French, penmanship, astronomy, introductory philosophy, and military drill. Optional subjects comprised drawing, music, dancing, English, hygiene, and manual training (Ustav, 1871: 45-46). Despite its optional status, music gradually acquired a significant place within the system of classical gymnasium education, as evidenced both by official regulations and by the educational practices of the male gymnasiums of the Kyiv Educational District.

Following the designation of music as an optional subject, official regulations did not prescribe detailed procedures for its instruction, allowing individual gymnasium administrations considerable autonomy in organising music education according to their staffing capacities and material resources. Despite its optional status, the annual reports of the Trustee of the Kyiv Educational District demonstrate that music instruction received considerable attention in male gymnasiums. School administrations and teaching staff repeatedly emphasised that "...music is of great importance for the development of aesthetic taste" (Kalinin, 2025: 105). Accordingly, music was regarded not merely as a means of artistic development but as an integral component of the gymnasium educational system, intended to cultivate disciplined, cultured, and civically minded young people. This approach shaped the commitment of gymnasium administrations to expanding music instruction and creating the institutional conditions necessary for its effective implementation.

The organisation of music instruction in male gymnasiums reflected both students' academic workload and the material resources available to individual institutions. Initially, music was taught primarily in preparatory classes and in the first two grades. Participation declined considerably in the upper grades, largely because students had limited free time after completing compulsory lessons. Moreover, the afternoon hours allocated to music classes were not always

conducive to regular practice. Another persistent challenge was the lack of specially equipped rehearsal rooms in most gymnasiums, with music lessons often taking place in school corridors during breaks (*Otchet popechitel'ia*, 1891: 30-31). Despite these difficulties, gymnasium administrations sought to ensure the continuity of music instruction, recognising it as an important component of the educational process.

Student orchestras constituted one of the key institutional components of music education in male gymnasiums. Their development can be traced through the annual reports of the Trustee of the Kyiv Educational District, which document the gradual spread of musical ensembles throughout the district's educational institutions. By 1892, student orchestras had already been established in the Hlukhiv, Zlatopil, Kyiv Second, Kyiv-Pechersk, Lubny, Pryluky, and Chernihiv gymnasiums (*Otchet popechitel'ia*, 1893: 32-33). By 1894, orchestras had also been organised in the Kyiv First and Novhorod-Siverskyi gymnasiums (*Otchet popechitel'ia*, 1895: 42-43), while in 1896 they appeared in the First and Second Zhytomyr Gymnasiums, the Kamianets-Podilskyi Gymnasium, and the Ostroh Gymnasium (*Otchet popechitel'ia*, 1897: 74-76). Among these institutions, the Kyiv gymnasiums stood out for their superior musical provision, both in terms of the quantity and diversity of instruments available and the professional qualifications of their music teachers.

The further development of music education was accompanied by increasing diversity in the composition of student ensembles. In 1901, the Kyiv Third Gymnasium established a mixed string and wind orchestra, while the Cherkasy Gymnasium organised a balalaika orchestra (*Otchet popechitel'ia*, 1902: 179-182). Instruction in balalaika performance rapidly gained popularity owing to the affordability of the instruments, the relative ease with which they could be mastered, and their widespread use in contemporary musical culture. By 1908, balalaika orchestras involved 470 students in seventeen gymnasiums (*Otchet popechitel'ia*, 1909: 60-62), while by 1910 their number had increased to 623 students in twenty-three gymnasiums (*Otchet popechitel'ia*, 1911: 85-91). From 1909 onwards, students also began studying the mandolin, and the First and Second Kyiv Gymnasiums initiated the formation of symphony orchestras (*Otchet popechitel'ia*, 1913: 114). By the end of 1916, student orchestras operated in all male gymnasiums in Kyiv as well as in many other gymnasiums throughout the Kyiv Educational District.

Adequate staffing represented another essential prerequisite for the successful functioning of student orchestras. As a rule, musical ensembles were directed by bandmasters from local military regiments, whose professional training and practical experience in conducting wind and string orchestras ensured a high standard of musical instruction. To this end,

gymnasium administrations concluded agreements with military authorities, thereby securing the regular operation of student orchestras and the professional preparation of gymnasium students (*Otchet popechitel'ia*, 1902: 179-182). This practice demonstrates that the organisation of music education extended beyond the internal structures of educational institutions and relied upon cooperation between gymnasiums and local military establishments, which provided qualified specialists.

The functioning of music education also required stable financial support. Music teachers' salaries were financed from the special funds of individual gymnasiums and generally amounted to between one and two roubles per student per month, while the institutions themselves covered the majority of the associated expenses. For example, twenty-nine students studied music at the First Zhytomyr Gymnasium, where the institution paid the music teacher an annual salary of twenty-five roubles in addition to receiving nine roubles per student. At the Second Zhytomyr Gymnasium, where fourteen students received music instruction, the institution supplemented the teacher's remuneration by ten roubles per student (*Otchet popechitel'ia*, 1894: 28-30). Such a funding model demonstrates that gymnasium administrations did not merely introduce optional music classes formally but invested substantial resources in their development by maintaining music classes, supporting student orchestras, and employing qualified instructors. These measures created the institutional foundations that enabled music to become an important component of the educational process within the system of classical male gymnasium education.

3. Musical Practices and Educational Functions

The establishment of the necessary institutional conditions for music education contributed to the gradual transformation of music into an important component of the everyday life of male gymnasiums. Its functions extended far beyond classroom instruction and encompassed diverse forms of extracurricular activity that combined educational, pedagogical, and cultural-enlightenment objectives. The programme of musical training included instrumental and vocal works, excerpts from operas, overtures, choral pieces, cantatas, songs, short musical forms, elements of music theory, and folk music (Semilet, 2014: 188). At the same time, gymnasium students rehearsed musical pieces and theatrical performances presented during school and anniversary celebrations, vocal, literary and musical evenings and morning events, literary and musical gatherings, gymnastics festivals, military parades, and various public occasions. Furthermore, music teachers regularly organised public assessment concerts at which students demonstrated the results of their training and the level of their performance skills. Such events had considerable pedagogical

significance, as they contributed to the development of concert performance skills and stage culture among gymnasium students.

Literary and musical evenings, concerts, and ceremonial academic events became some of the most widespread forms through which musical practices were implemented in male gymnasiums. They were held both within and beyond the educational institution and involved students, teachers, parents, and representatives of the local community. An analysis of the reports of the Trustee of the Kyiv Educational District indicates that musical accompaniment was an integral part of most ceremonial events, while student orchestras and choirs regularly participated in celebrations, anniversary events, charity concerts, and literary and musical evenings. These activities extended beyond the formal educational process, transforming the gymnasium into an important centre of urban cultural life and facilitating interaction between the educational institution and the local sociocultural environment.

An analysis of the programmes of vocal, literary and musical evenings and morning events provides grounds for identifying a high level of students' musical preparation and the gradual professionalisation of musical performance. The repertoires of student ensembles were distinguished by their generic and stylistic diversity and included demanding excerpts from operas, overtures, choral works, short musical forms, cantatas, and solo instrumental and vocal pieces. Popular compositions included state anthems, various marches, the "Waltz" from the opera *Faust*, the mazurka *Chrysanthemum*, Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann*, as well as arrangements of folk melodies (*Otchet popechitel'ia*, 1913: 114-158). The substantial volume of the repertoire points to the systematic character of musical training: in the Kamianets-Podil'skyi Gymnasium alone, students mastered approximately 130 orchestral pieces in 1899 (*Otchet popechitel'ia*, 1900: 138-141). This indicates a high level of student involvement in musical activities and the considerable amount of time devoted to musical training outside compulsory lessons.

The content of the concert repertoire also makes it possible to situate the musical practices of male gymnasiums within the broader context of the educational policy of the Russian Empire in the Ukrainian lands. The inclusion of state anthems, marches, and musical works associated with official ceremonies indicates that music served not only artistic and aesthetic functions but also representative and formative ones, contributing to students' incorporation into the symbolic space of the imperial state and to the formation of corresponding patterns of loyalty. At the same time, the regulatory documents and the analysed reports of the Kyiv Educational District do not indicate any institutional recognition of the Ukrainian musical tradition as an independent component of gymnasium music education. References to the performance of folk melodies likewise do not provide sufficient

grounds for identifying them unequivocally with the Ukrainian repertoire, since their ethnocultural affiliation was generally not specified in the documents. Thus, music education in the male gymnasiums of Dnieper Ukraine functioned within the framework of the imperial educational space, while the Ukrainian national musical tradition was not represented within it as a distinct, normatively defined component.

The growing popularity of musical activities indicates that music was becoming an important part of students' everyday lives. From the beginning of the twentieth century, the number of students wishing to learn musical instruments and participate in orchestras steadily increased. As a result, many male gymnasiums began to hold music classes three times a week, while the most committed students continued rehearsals and musical exercises even during the summer holidays (*Otchet popechitel'ia*, 1913: 127-128). At the same time, music education was not confined to the school environment. A considerable number of students further developed their performance skills at home by learning the violin, piano, or pianoforte, while some also attended music schools. These practices indicate a high level of interest in music education and demonstrate that it was perceived not merely as an optional school subject, but as an important component of students' personal and cultural development.

The analysis of musical practices in male gymnasiums demonstrates that music performed functions far broader than those implied by its formal status as an optional subject. It served as an important means of aesthetic education, the development of performance abilities, the cultivation of artistic taste, and the formation of collaborative skills. At the same time, the content of concert programmes and repertoires reflected the educational priorities of contemporary gymnasium education. Music was therefore not only part of the educational process but also an important instrument of student socialisation, integrating instruction, extracurricular activity, and cultural life within a unified educational environment.

4. Conclusions

Thus, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, music occupied a considerably more substantial place in the system of classical male gymnasium education than might be assumed from its formal status as an optional subject. The analysis of materials from the male gymnasiums of the Kyiv Educational District demonstrates that the effective functioning of music education depended on a combination of institutional factors, including regulatory provisions, the active involvement of school administrations, appropriate staffing, financial support, and the development of a suitable material base. Together, these factors made it possible to establish a stable system of musical training that showed a consistent tendency towards expansion and further development throughout the period under study.

The study has established that music performed a range of educational, cultural, and social functions. It served not only as a means of students' aesthetic development but also as an important element in shaping the educational environment of the gymnasium. Through the activities of student orchestras and participation in concerts, literary and musical evenings, and public events, musical practices connected the educational process with the cultural life of the city. They also contributed to the development of collaborative skills, discipline, public performance abilities, and a broader cultural outlook among gymnasium students.

The findings further suggest that music education should be regarded not as an isolated component of

the curriculum, but as one of the mechanisms through which the classical gymnasium functioned as an integrated sociocultural institution. The analysis of musical practices therefore provides a deeper understanding of the organisation of the educational environment, the interaction between educational institutions and local communities, and the system of educational priorities characteristic of the classical male gymnasium in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Further research may involve a comparative analysis of musical practices in male and female gymnasiums across different educational districts, as well as an examination of the impact of the First World War on the activities of student musical ensembles.

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