

MUSICAL FOR CHILDREN

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Abstract: Musicals refer to musical and theatrical works which are amusing in nature and special in their integration of dance, singing and acting into a unique whole. Musicals are similar in their characteristics to operas, operettas and burlesques. They are performed all over the world and have been performed in the most famous places such as Broadway and the West End. Most often, amateur school groups present musicals in churches, schools and other performance spaces. Starting from this fact, the goal of this paper is to explore the possibility of using musicals in working with children of early and preschool age. The methodological instrumentation (analysis and description) will show how children prepare musicals in their educational institutions (including making costumes, set design, writing the text, choosing music and practising dance movements). The research will particularly focus on the stage realisation of puppet musicals in kindergartens, because puppets are most suitable for performing simple short stories, for example fables with animals as the protagonists and fairy tales in which heroes defeat evil. Children's attention is held by the dramatic content stimulated by the fantastic events. Moreover, it will be shown that such texts are easier to adapt. It is important to point out that the beauty and amusing character of the performance relate primarily to the songs of a musical. The songs connect the acting and dancing parts of the musical and complete and deepen the plot. It can be concluded that the participation of children in the creative process, in this context in the performance of musicals in preschool institutions, is possible and according to new educational paradigms, it is necessary because of the multiple benefits for children's development.

Keywords: acting, dance, singing, integration, musical and theatrical form

1. Introduction

A musical is a musical-theatrical type of entertainment with spoken parts and dramatic, musical, and dance acts. It appeared at the turn of the 20th century in America, although it has its roots in antiquity. It first began to develop in Broadway theaters, from where it spread further to Europe, and is considered an American descendant of the European operetta.

Children's participation in musical performances helps children develop their identity, teaches them responsibility, fosters cultural awareness, and helps them socialize with their peers. Improvisation and interpretive dance in a musical can often help children overcome certain obstacles, like shyness. Acting helps such children to be creative in their environment, more relaxed, and open-minded, giving them a sense of security and strengthening their self-confidence.

The aim of this paper is to present the musical as a genre and to introduce the possibility of applying musicals in working with children of school and preschool age in educational institutions (from making costumes and scenography, writing the text, and choosing music for practicing dance moves and singing). The puppet as a medium is best suited for depicting simple shorter stories: fables, due to animals that are the protagonists, and fairy tales, in which the main protagonists are heroes. Children's attention is certainly maintained by the dramatic content, which is emphasized by miraculous events. Methodological instruments (analysis and description) of the paper will present the genre fertility of musicals for children and their (continuous) performance in Croatia.

2. Features and Development of Musical

A musical is a stage genre that combines acting, music, song, and dance (Karlin, 2005), and it is precisely the harmonious connection of these elements that makes it special. It is based on three key components: libretto, music, and songs.

The libretto contributes to the quality of the work itself, and therefore attention should be paid to the choice of theme and its dramaturgical elaboration (Mihaljinec, 1996). It includes dialogues and dramaturgical structure, and must be clearly designed in order to be able to build on the music. Due to the importance of the text, authors often hire special songwriters to write songs or adapt existing literary templates. A good libretto not only carries the plot, but also determines the tone, dynamics, and emotional flow of the entire work (Catalano, 2019). The music in the musical has the role of an emotional and communicative link with the audience. It is written in the form of

musical numbers and can be solo or choir. These musical numbers can also be performed as independent melodies outside of musicals, so some melodies have become compositions with evergreen motifs (Mihaljinec, 1996). The most common vocal techniques are legit, which derives from the classical singing tradition, and belt, a louder and more spoken style that is characteristic of more modern musicals (Bourne et al., 2010). Songs should be naturally incorporated into the plot (sometimes they are decorative in nature), since they arise from the situational and emotional needs of the characters. Poor integration can create the impression of artifice or can interrupt the plot, which is why great attention is paid to the dramaturgical logic of the transition from speech to song. The lyrics in the songs are actually the text that a character would say in a play, but in a musical he/she sings it. We could say that solo songs are actually the same as monologues in a dramatic text, and duets and group songs are the same as dialogues (“Mjuzikl”). In a musical, dance is located between choreography and text because its main task is to expand the expression of verbal language, so a successful collaboration between the choreographer, some of whom have also become directors (George-Graves, 2015), and the writer of the performance is important. There are seven main roles of dance in the musical: the unspoken aspects of the libretto, the exploration of the characters in the psychological sense, the narrative device, the metaphor, the transitional means, the basis for character development, and the dance part within the story (Everett and Laird, 2008). The complete integration of dance and action was first achieved in the musical *West Side Story* (1957), in which the director-choreographer Jerome Robbins combined acting, song, and dance into an inseparable whole. The role of the dancers was crucial, because their movement and dynamics expressed conflicts, belonging to a group, and emotional states. Furthermore, Hollywood musicals had to fascinate with dance, singing and acting, because these were the points that the musical could not and did not want to give up (Paulus, 2005:119).

2.1 The historical development of the musical

The musical developed in the United States under the strong influence of the European operetta. *The Black Crook* (1866) stands out as a precursor, the first major stage spectacle that combined music, dance, and drama. A turning point in the historical development of the musical is *The Show Boat* (1927), as it was the first musical in which musical and stage numbers were not just entertaining inserts, but an integrated part of the plot (Jagušić, 2014). With this, the musical begins to take on a contemporary form. Furthermore, The Golden Age of

Musicals (1940–1960) brings the genre's pinnacles to Broadway. During this period, many cult works were created, such as: *Oklahoma!* – the first modern book musical with a fully integrated story and music, *West Side Story* – a powerful choreographic and musical work about the clash of teenage gangs and numerous classic titles that shaped the standard of musicals (Catalano, 2019).

In Europe, the peak of popularity came in the 1970s and 1980s, when new stage technologies, more ambitious productions, and more serious topics were introduced. The authors experiment with a combination of operetta, rock, and drama theater (Lovričević et al., 2020).

3. Types of Musicals

There are several types of musicals: book musical, jukebox musical, backstage musical, concept musical, rock musical, mega-musical, and film musical. A story-based or *book musical* is a type of musical whose plot is based on a particular story that takes place backstage. It emerged in the 20th century and is one of the most frequently performed types of musicals on Broadway and the West End. This type of musical aims to tell a coherent story through the interaction of song and spoken dialog. It consists of the typical book parts: the introduction, the plot development, and the conclusion, thus enabling foregrounding of the characters (McMillin, 2006). Some of the most famous musicals based on stories are: *West Side Story* (1957), *Show Boat* (1927), and *My Fair Lady* (1956). *Jukebox musical*, a type of musical whose trend of performing is based on old pop melodies, emerged in the 1960s, and consists of three types. The first tells stories about dead rock stars, a band or a singer. The best-known examples are *Elvis* (1977) and *Jersey Boys* (2005). The second type of jukebox musical includes works that have a fictional story within an existing story. The third type shows a new plot and connects it with the songs of an artist or band. The most famous example of such a musical is *Mamma Mia!* (1999), which was performed for years mostly on Broadway and the West End, while in 2008 it was also shown as a film (Everett and Laird, 2008). *Backstage musical* emerged in Paris in the 1930s. It is a form of a musical consisting of several entertainment sections that include various sketches in addition to dance and music. It is special because it gives the audience a subtle insight into what is happening between the actors, the scene, and the stage, i.e., how their performance was created. The most famous backstage musicals are *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) and *Cabaret* (1966). *Concept musical* is based on a central or key event and allows the audience to focus on several characters or connected plots at the

same time. The main goal of the concept musical is to illustrate different concepts of the main idea (Kenrick, 2017), and some of the examples include *Hair* (1968) and *Cats* (1981). *Rock musical* is considered to be any type of musical that has turned to popular music, whether it be rock music or not. The mentioned musical *Hair* (1968) is also a rock musical because it uses popular music that is very appealing to the audience, and its performance reformed the system of traditional American musicals. It should be mentioned that the rock musical raised awareness of presenting social problems on the stage, and therefore its performance was considered controversial. In addition to *Hair* (1968), there is a famous rock musical *Aida* (1998). *Mega-musical* developed in the 1980s as a type of musical almost entirely sung, with very few spoken parts. Great importance is attached to the song and emotions. The musical *Phantom of the Opera* (1986) is a backstage musical, and is also one of the best examples of a mega-musical that was performed on Broadway and the West End over a period of twenty years (Kenrick, 2017).

Immediately after the emergence of the film, a film musical was developed in which one of the main elements was music, aiming to revive images of silent films and accompany various situations (Paulus, 2005). Moreover, with the advent of sound and music in movies, people began to go to cinema much more often. The first cinema film had as many as six different songs and was quite similar to the musical in terms of performance, so it was also a milestone for the musical as a genre to move to the screen and thus become a unique form that we now call a film musical. In the beginning, the film musical was shot as a copy of a theater musical, and there were smaller problems with dance and plot that were not fully adapted because the film cannot literally convey the elements of the theatrical performance. Spectators were most interested in dancing, singing, and acting, so actors in film musicals had to represent all three elements to make the performance as good as possible. Some of the most popular film musicals are *Singing in the Rain* (1952), *Chicago* (2002), and *Mamma Mia!* (2008).

4. Development of Musical in the Republic of Croatia

In the 17th century, musical theatre began to develop in Croatia, very soon after the appearance of opera in Italy. Namely, the Dubrovnik authors took over and translated their librettos. Thus, the first Croatian opera *Ljubav i zloba* by Vatroslav Lisinski was written in 1843. This was a precursor to the development of musicals in Croatia. Another composer who was also responsible for the development of the opera was Ivan Zajc, who composed about 50 operas and operettas from 1870

to 1889 (Muzička enciklopedija, 1974). In the 20th century, operetta began to be performed on the scene, taking on a dominant role within musical theatre. Among the most famous composers of operettas was Ivo Tijardović with his works *Mala Floramye* (1926) and *Spli'ski akvarel* (1928). After the operetta, the 1960s saw the flourishing of musicals as an independent genre in Croatia. This can be linked to the development of the Zagreb City Theatre "Komedijski", whose director and actor Vlado Štefančić encouraged the creation of musicals composed by excellent musicians such as Đelo Jusić, Alfi Kabiljo, Karlo Metikoš, Stipica Kalogjera, Pero Gotovac, and Arsen Dedić as well as writers such as Pajo Kanižaj, Luko Paljetak, Nino Škrabe, Vladimir Krstulović, and others. Vlado Štefančić directed some of the most famous Croatian musicals *Jalta, Jalta* (1971), *Dundo Maroje* (1972), *Car Franjo Josip u Zagrebu* (1989), and *Kralj je gol* (1994) (Jagušić, 2014). Of special importance are Alfi Kabiljo and Milan Grgić, who are the authors of several musicals, but by far their most famous work is *Jalta, Jalta*, premiered in Zagreb in 1971. This is considered to be the first major Croatian musical. This work is one of the most performed and is still shown today. It can be justifiably said that Vlado Štefančić is one of the most important persons in the development of musicals in Croatia.

4.1. Musical *Jalta, Jalta*

As already mentioned, the musical *Jalta, Jalta* is the first major and high-quality Croatian musical whose libretto was written by Milan Grgić, it was directed by Vlado Štefančić, and composed by Alfi Kabiljo. It is considered one of the most performed works and has been shown for 46 years. The premiere of this musical took place in 1971 and the piece was performed throughout the former Yugoslavia and beyond. The plot is set in the year 1945 on the island of Crimea, where a conference was held to share and create a new map of the world. Three major statesmen met at the conference: Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill, and Franklin Roosevelt accompanied by their valets: the Russian Grisha, the Englishman Stanley, and the American Larry. Since there was mistrust between the three, there were constant conflicts in the Villa Aramovski run by Nina Filipinova. There were arguments about a meadow, called a green meadow, located in Antarctica. Only the valets knew about this meadow while their bosses were in ignorance. Nina Filipinova advocated dividing the green meadow into three equal parts, but her idea had no success. In the meantime, the valets fell in love with Nina, there were physical conflicts, and the meadow remained undivided. Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill learned of the green meadow and agreed to keep it common property.

Yalta is always a current topic because this unwritten conflict between great powers reflecting on small nations and states will always exist. But no matter what, we should always rejoice, hope, and believe in world peace and good. It was this aspiration of Milan Grgić and me that reflected on the song 'Neka cijeli ovaj svijet', which has become an unofficial anthem and which is performed today at various events. I wish *Jalta* to continue to sail so splendidly in the restless seas of the world (Kabiljo, 2018).

4.2. Musical *Dundo Maroje*

The musical *Dundo Maroje* directed by the same person, Vlade Štefančić, was based on a literary piece of the same name by the Croatian author Marin Držić. It premiered in 1972. Although the year before saw the first performance of *Jalta, Jalta* that achieved incredible success, it seemed that the musical *Dundo Maroje* would not be so popular. However, the exact opposite happened, as it had over 500 performances just like *Jalta, Jalta*. The libretto for the musical *Dundo Maroje* was written by Marko Fotez, the lyrics by Stijepo Stražičić, and the music by Đelo Jusić, and this adaptation largely follows the original. The plot is based on a conflict between father and son. The father is stingy, and the son is a spoiled spender, while the main protagonist is their servant named Pomet. He solves problems, making fun of the nobility and the aristocracy, and helps three couples in the drama to eventually be together (Maro and Pera, Laura and Ugo, and Pomet and Petrunjela).

The musical *Dundo Maroje* is a welcome renewal of domestic production. It is a musical that is easy to watch, like a real comedy that, despite some stage lapses, is sweet to get immersed into (Paulus, 2008).

5. Musical for Children

5.1. *Mačak Džingiskan i Miki Trasi*

Mačak Džingiskan i Miki Trasi is a famous literary work written in 1968 by Vesna Parun, earning the author the *Grigor Vitez* award. In 1971, the work was dramatized by Zvezdana Ladika, the music was composed by Ladislav Tulač, and the musical was performed by the theater "PIK" ("Pionirsko kazalište"), while today it is performed by "Zagrebačko kazalište mladih". The musical was also performed at the opening of the 52nd International Children's Festival in Šibenik. It tells the story of two cats and their adventures on the island of Zlarin. The old farmer tried to get rid of the cats by throwing them into the sea, but they were rescued by fishermen and taken to Grandpa Roko and Grandma Pim Bako. *Mačak Džingiskan* and *Miki Trasi* were not the only

animals in Grandpa Roko's house as there were also a donkey Žan, a goat Kasi, and a lizard Rikiplan. Through depicting the animal world, Vesna Parun actually described the life of the inhabitants of Zlarin, where she lived. The musical begins with the song *Brodolomci* [The Castaways], showing that Parun placed her characters in her hometown:

*U Zlarinu na rtu Bučini
Rodila se jednog ljeta
Na pragu okrenutom pučini
Dva mačića, dva probisvijeta.*
(Parun, 1968: 7)

[In Zlarin at Cape Bučina
One summer
On the threshold facing the sea
Two kittens, two miscreants were born.]
(Parun, 1968: 7)

Another song *U novom domu* [In the new home] shows how Mačak Džingiskan and Miki Trasi look like:

*Mijau! - prodra se mače crno
-Moj nježni braco, dobar dan! (...)
A šareno mače se protegne , zijevne:
-Hej, Džingis-kane, tko si da si!
Ne hajem za ratnike drevne,
Zovem se naprosto Miki Trasi!*
(Parun, 1968: 9).

[Meow! - screams the black kitten
-My tender brother, good day! (...)
And the colorful kitten stretches, yawning:
-Hey, Genghis Khan, whoever you are!
I do not care about ancient warriors,
My name is simply Mickey Tracy!]
(Parun, 1968: 9).

Songs have a cheerful melody, the lyrics contain humorous names and rhyme, which makes the performance entertaining for children. Each character is presented with their own song accompanied by an orchestra and a children's choir. In the musical, along with professional actors, children act and sing songs. Moreover, before presenting their characters, the actors use a hand puppet, matching their costumes. The adventures of Mačak Džingiskan are accompanied by a motif of love. In

a village not far from Zlarin, there were three cats: Smiljka, Vala, and Saka. Mačak Džingiskan fell in love with Smiljka, and she fell in love with him. But even though their love was strong, Mačak Džingiskan still decided to go on a journey with a steamer to a distant world.

*U Smiljku se zaljubio
Džingiskan, crni mačak.
Ljubim te, bit ćeš moja! (...)
U bašti čekala Smiljka,
Džingiskan slavno utječe
(prevrnu lonac bosiljka)
Očarao ga, zanio
Onaj parobrod „Čačak“!
(Parun, 1968: 26)*

[He fell in love with Smiljka,
our Genghis Khan, the black cat.
I love you, you will be mine! (...)
Smiljka was waiting in the garden,
Genghis Khan escaped
(overturned the basil pot)
Captivated, enchanted by
That steamer "Čačak"!]
(Parun, 1968: 26)

Before the journey, he wanted his cat friend Miki Trasi to go with him, however, unable to make up his mind, Miki Trasi hid and Džingiskan had to go alone. Miki Trasi was sad because he did not have his friend with him, although Džingiskan often sent him letters saying where he was and what he was doing, as shown in one of the songs *Treće Džingiskanovo pismo* [Genghis Khan's Third Letter]:

*Zdravo Miki! Osjećam se odlično.
U pristaništu tovarim sanduke
Dok dizalica buči jednolično.
(Parun, 1968: 47)*

[Hey Mickey! I feel awesome.
Loading crates at the pier
While the crane is making a uniform noise.
(Parun, 1968: 47)

Due to great sadness and longing for his home and beloved Smiljka, who faithfully waited for him for ten years, Džingiskan decided to return

to Zlarin to the great joy of his grandfather Roko, grandmother Pim Bako, cat Smiljka, and his friend Miki Trasi. Thrilled by his friend's adventures, Miki Trasi also boarded a steamer and sailed away to a distant world.

*Kada se skupio cio rod!
Pred Džingiskanov crni brod,
Na kormilo pope se – tko si, da si!
I reče: - Zovem se Miki Trasi!
Pa okrene brod na sjever, na jug.
I vikne: - Zbogom! Život je dug.
(Parun, 1968: 75)*

[When the whole group gathered!
In front of Genghis Khan there's a black ship,
He gets on the helm – whomever you are!
And says: - My name is Mickey Tracy!
So he turns the boat north, south.
And he yells: - Goodbye! Life is long.]
(Parun, 1968: 75)

5.2 *Mi o vuku*¹

The recent musical for children directed by Robert Bošković and produced by *B GLAD PRODUCTION*, approaches well-known fairy tales in a completely new, educational and creative way. It puts them in a modern framework in which both children and adults are exposed to all kinds of information from advertisements and social networks. The trends of modern technologies point to one important thing that is often ignored by both adults and children, and that is – critical thinking. In this way, children learn about the value of friendship and trust and the importance of personal contact and communication in relation to communication on social networks (“*Mi o vuku – mjuzikl za djecu*”).

This musical with two playful actors (Manuela Svorcan & Bojan Jambrošić) brings a handful of memorable moments, a comedy that sheds new light on well-known stories and, therefore, encourages creativity in children, but also tolerance and a sense of justice (“*MI O VUKU, mjuzikl za djecu*”).

6. Puppet musical

Puppetry is a synthesis of art that combines artistic, musical, dramatic, dance, and literary expression, and

¹ The English equivalent of the phrase “speak of the devil”.

therefore offers countless possibilities of creative expression for both children and adults (Županić Benić, 2009: 8).

Puppetry as a performing art uses the puppet as the main means of expression. The puppet mediates the process of teaching and learning, improves interpersonal relationships, and brings a good mood. A stage puppet is a valuable and powerful tool and aids in working with children, as it is based on a strong emotional connection. The puppet triggers the imagination and the child's mental and emotional world, and enables the child to express their rich and complex experience of the world in words (Pokrivka, 1985). Representing certain emotional states of the puppet's character contributes to understanding the character's emotions and enhances the development of their own higher emotions (Ivon, 2010). A puppet can also be a constructive mediator in resolving conflict situations, which allows children to find a solution suitable for everyone, thus also promoting their prosocial behavior. A puppet can be an intermediary in communication among children or between a child and an adult. Majaron (2004) believes that discovering how to communicate is one of the most important steps in a child's progress. Communication skills and the quality of social interactions can be improved by using toys as characters in improvised songs-stories (Birnbaum, 2013).

The puppet musical has a very positive impact on children, because the puppet itself affects the spontaneous development of the child and the creation of a positive self-image (Pokrivka, 1985). Moreover, the puppet enhances social skills, develops emotions, creativity, and perception of different life situations that children experience in an amusing way, thanks precisely to the puppet. In addition to puppets, which represent characters, a very important segment that also has an impact on children is music that is functionally included in the plot. When puppets sing and dance, they actually express themselves through music. Songs in a puppet musical can be sung by puppeteers behind the props or can be reproduced using an audio device. Songs that are mainly used in puppet musicals are simple in text, they are easy to remember and do not last too long, so they attract children's attention, often resulting in singalongs with performers. Furthermore, music in puppet musicals lifts the mood of children, and dancing with puppets accompanied by music stimulates children to movement and physical activity (Starc et al., 2004). When the scene is not static, children become more relaxed.

The puppet allows children to experience different life functions before living them. With a puppet, children can

enter new situations with a sense of preparedness because they tried them with the help of the puppet before they have actually happened (Ivon, 2005: 8).

Examples of puppet musicals

6.1 Puppet Musical – *Složna obitelj* [Harmonious Family]

The leading theatre in Croatia in terms of the number of performances of puppet musicals is “Produkcija Z”. This is supported by the fact that Croatia Records has released soundtracks of Produkcija Z’s musicals *Prometna priča*, *Lijepo putovanje Lijepom našom*, *Dobro se dobrim vraća*, *Pravi prijatelj* and others. Composer Ivo Lesić is the most frequent author of music, story and production in musicals. He was also in the play *Složna obitelj*, while Luči Vidanović was in charge of the set design and puppets. The musical was filmed in Split and was shown in kindergartens and schools. In this musical, children are presented with family as the origin of love, care, kindness, and togetherness (“SLOŽNA OBITELJ”). Also, the play talks about basic eating and hygiene habits (“Dječji vrtić Ploče”). However, with the appearance of the wizard Zlik, the harmonious family falls into temptations, but in the end, harmony overcomes all adversity. The story of mom, dad, Kresa and Tihana is presented through 15 songs characterized by tenderness and charm, including the final one, *Obitelj meni je sve*² which is the main point of the story (“SLOŽNA OBITELJ”).

6.2. Puppet musical *Koje je godišnje doba najljepše* [Which Season Is the Most Beautiful]

This is a very educational musical. Duško Mucalo is the author of the story, the lyrics of the songs, and the music, while the *Suncokret* studio is responsible for the production. The protagonists are representatives of the seasons: Snowman, Bunny, Dolphin and Autumn Tree, who argue with each other trying to prove that their season is the most beautiful and emphasizing the best characteristics of that season. The musical consists of a series of songs related to a certain season, and the music also plays an illustrative role. Songs are written in a simple style, verses rhyme, and can be easily remembered by children. Each character is accompanied by a different voice, so children follow the change of seasons. Winter, spring, and summer are presented with hand puppets, while the character of the Autumn Tree is played by an actor with autumn decorations (yellow leaves). This musical combines the use of hand puppets with the performance of actors without puppets. The

² Family is everything to me.

puppets dance to the sound. The change of seasons is among the most common topics implemented in kindergarten through various activities. The final song of the musical covers all seasons with their characteristics and answers the question from the title, saying that each season is beautiful and interesting in its own way.



Figure 1. Performing the musical *Which season is the most beautiful?* in Medo Brundo Kindergarten

6.2. Puppet musical *Dobro se dobrim vraća* [One Good Turn Deserves Another]

This is an interactive musical for children that talks about good deeds that children should adopt from an early age. It is actually a puppet musical by "Produkcija Z", whose director, composer, and executive music producer is Ivo Lesić. The story for this musical was written by Duško Mucalo. The musical consists of eighteen songs featuring an interesting and cheerful story about good deeds. Songs are lively, use pure rhyme, and last approximately two minutes, which is great for children's attention. Each character in this story has their own song that presents them and their characteristics and needs. The plot takes place at the Adriatic Sea, which is home to a multitude of marine animal species that represent the characters of this story: Špar – Ar, Girica – Irica, Hobotnica – Obotnica, Ribice, Bakalar – Lar and Morski pas – As. The story begins when Hobotnica – Obotnica finds herself in trouble; she gets entangled in a net, and the fish, which Hobotnica – Obotnica normally eats, decide to help her. As a token of her gratitude, she promises to return the favor any time they need her help. So one day, Bakalar – Lar from the other sea comes, and Ribice are dissatisfied with his arrival, but they decide to be good and accept him anyway. His

gratitude is shown when Ribice are afraid and hiding from Morski pas – As, who is very hungry. He helps them by inviting Hobotnica – Obotnica, who promised to help them at any time, to drive out Morski pas – As. He eventually escapes, and that is how the story ends. Through this musical, children learn in an amusing way, i.e., through singing, acting, and dancing, that one good turn deserves another.

*...I u dobru i u zlu, ribe bile su k'o braća,
Zato pamti mudrost tu,
Da se dobro dobrim vraća...*

[...For better or for worse, the fish were like brothers,
So remember this wisdom,
one good turn deserves another.]

(Duško Mucalo, lyrics of the final song of the musical *One Good Turn Deserves Another*)



Figure 2. Performing the puppet musical *One Good Turn Deserves Another* – Vela Luka Elementary School

7. School Musical

Children participate in producing the school musical through various activities and regular classes. Children come up with lyrics and music, make costumes and everything else they need to create a musical. Their activities and active participation are combined in several school subjects, from the Croatian language to Informatics. The libretto can be designed in Croatian Language classes, songs in Music classes, and choreography in Physical Education classes. Making costumes and set design can be done during Art classes (Vidulin-Orbanić, 2013). Throughout the entire process of creating the school musical, teachers always help, participate, and guide children. For example, teachers of

various art subjects can assist their students in finding a space to practice and perform a musical, as well as finding an expert in technique and stage lighting. This whole event requires an approval by the school principal who then works with the media for this project. When children watch performances, they share their experiences with actors, and actors do the same. Children imagine and pretend to be someone else, thus encouraging the development of their creativity (Schonmann, 2006). We can say that the active participation of children in producing a musical is the best way to understand this form of performance. In addition, children's participation in a musical helps them learn to be responsible, boosts self-confidence, and develops emotional and cognitive abilities.

Croatian schools often perform various musicals, from original works to adaptations, often with an educational, humanitarian or environmental message. Such projects are complex endeavors that integrate various artistic fields and engage a large number of students and teachers in collaborative work.

A Croatian school musical *Na putu s Antuntunkom* [On the Road with Antuntunka] is an exceptional example of how art at school can have a wider, humanitarian effect. The performance of The Grigor Vitez Elementary School was not only a play, but also a humanitarian endeavour which collected donations for the Red Noses association, combining the creativity of students with a noble cause. The musical *U modroj uvali* [In the Blue Bay] by the small choir *Lovranske črešnjice* conveyed a strong ecological message to the audience. Through the story of the protection of the sea and the coast, the children learned about the importance of nature conservation in an interesting and interactive way. *Glazba srca mog* [Music of My Heart] is the work of Ivan Josip Skender, which was successfully staged by the students of the Varaždin Music School at the *Theater Komedijska*. *Jedan školski dan* [One School Day]: A completely original musical by the Ljubo Babić Elementary School, with original songs on topics close to every student because they show the experiences of school life. *Na putu do zvijezda* [On the Way to the Stars] is a musical by the Medvedgrad Elementary School, inspired by the popular film *Pitch Perfect*, and shows how contemporary cultural influences can be creatively transferred to the school stage. *Škola snova* [The School of Dreams] was created in cooperation with various organisations and promotes healthy lifestyle habits, sports and play, with an artistic component. The beginning of a new tradition in The Vukomerec Elementary School, showing that the most important thing for staging the musical *Vukomerečka čarolija*

[Vukomerec Magic] is the enthusiasm of teachers and students who are ready to put in the effort.

Furthermore, The Juraj Baraković Elementary School from Ražanci performed a school musical called *Ražanačka ljubav* [Rožanac Love], as part of the celebration of the school founding day. This is the culmination of a project dedicated to nurturing the cultural heritage of the native region (“Premijera školskog mjuzikla...”)

In the context of all of the above-mentioned, a picture is attached that shows the plan of a series of activities related to the project *Školski mjuzikl* [School Musical] in the curriculum of the Ljubo Babić Elementary School, Jastrebarsko (“Projekti”).

Oblik aktivnosti	Projekt
Kurikulumsko područje	Umjetničko područje
Naziv aktivnosti	Školski mjuzikl
Obrazloženje cilja aktivnost	Iskustvenim doživljajem stvaranja kompleksne glazbeno-scenske vrste usaditi učenicima ljubav prema glazbenom i glazbeno-scenskom stvaralaštvu. Razviti kod učenika svijest o vrijednim glazbenim i glazbeno-scenskim djelima. Potaknuti učenike na buduće aktivno bavljenje glazbom.
Namjena aktivnosti	<p>OŠ GK A.7.1. Učenik poznaje određeni broj skladbi.</p> <p>OŠ GK A.7.3. Učenik na temelju slušanja prepoznaje različite glazbene vrste.</p> <p>OŠ GK B.7.1. Učenik sudjeluje u zajedničkoj izvedbi glazbe.</p> <p>OŠ GK B.7.2. Učenik pjevanjem izvodi autorske i tradicijske pjesme iz Hrvatske i svijeta.</p> <p>OŠ GK B.7.3. Učenik sviranjem i/ili pokretom izvodi umjetničku, tradicijsku, popularnu ili vlastitu glazbu. Sudjeluje u aktivnostima glazbenog stvaralaštva.</p> <p>OŠ GK A.8.3. Učenik slušno i vizualno, prepoznaje, razlikuje, opisuje i uspoređuje, glazbeno-scenske i vokalne-instrumentalne vrste.</p> <p>OŠ TZK A.6.3. Povezuje i odabire ritmičke i plesne pokrete.</p> <p>OŠ TZK C.6.2. Izvodi raznovrsne vježbe za razvoj motoričkih postignuća.</p> <p>OŠ TZK D.6.1. Izvodi vježbe za pravilno tjelesno držanje s razumijevanjem njihova utjecaja.</p> <p>OŠ TZK A.8.2. Povezuje dijelove strukture gibanja u cjelinu i primjenjuje osnovno nazivlje.</p> <p>OŠ HJ A.7.1. Učenik govori prema planu i razgovara primjenjujući vještine razgovora u skupini.</p> <p>OŠ HJ A.7.2. Učenik sluša tekst, izvodi zaključke i tumači značenje teksta.</p> <p>OŠ HJ A.7.3. Učenik čita tekst, izvodi zaključke i tumači značenje teksta.</p> <p>OŠ HJ B.7.4.</p> <p>Učenik se stvaralački izražava prema vlastitome interesu potaknut različitim iskustvima i doživljajima književnoga teksta.</p> <p>goo C.3.1. Aktivno sudjeluje u projektima lokalne zajednice.</p> <p>goo C.3.3. Promiče kvalitetu života u lokalnoj zajednici.</p> <p>osr A.3.1. Razvija sliku o sebi.</p> <p>osr A.3.2. Upravlja emocijama i ponašanjem.</p> <p>osr A.3.3. Razvija osobne potencijale.</p> <p>osr B.3.1. Obrazlaže i uvažava potrebe i osjećaje drugih.</p> <p>osr B.3.2. Razvija komunikacijske kompetencije i uvažavajuće odnose s drugima.</p> <p>osr B.3.3. Razvija strategije rješavanja sukoba.</p> <p>osr B.3.4. Suradnički uči i radi u timu.</p> <p>osr C.3.3. Aktivno sudjeluje i pridonosi školi i lokalnoj zajednici.</p> <p>pod A.3.1. Primjenjuje inovativna i kreativna rješenja.</p> <p>B.3.1.B Razlikuje i vrednuje različite načine komunikacije i ponašanja.</p> <p>uku A.3.4. Učenik kritički promišlja i vrednuje ideje uz podršku učitelja.</p> <p>uku C.3.1. Učenik može objasniti vrijednost učenja za svoj život.</p> <p>uku C.3.2. Učenik iskazuje pozitivna i visoka očekivanja i vjeruje u svoj uspjeh u učenju.</p> <p>uku D.3.2. Učenik ostvaruje dobru komunikaciju s drugima, uspješno surađuje u različitim situacijama i spreman je zatražiti i ponuditi pomoć.</p>
Nositelji aktivnost	Učenici predmetne nastave Ivana Strmečki-Vučina, učiteljica likovne kulture Ines Bohaček, učiteljica tjelesne i zdravstvene kulture Ivan Sirovica, učitelj fizike i tehničke kulture Maja Krajev, učiteljica glazbene kulture

Figure 3. The plan of a series of activities related to the *Školski mjuzikl* project of Ljubo Babić Elementary School's curriculum

8. Conclusion

Children's musicals as an interdisciplinary art form play an important role in the context of children's upbringing. The analysis of various examples of musicals in this paper, from classic literary adaptations to contemporary pedagogically oriented projects, indicates that musicals stimulate the development of numerous cognitive, emotional, and social skills in children.

Classical works, such as *Mačak Džingiskan i Miki Trasi* by Vesna Parun, effectively use animalistic motifs and the local context of Zlarin to introduce the universal themes of home (which is also present in the contemporary musical *Složna obitelj*), love, friendship and adventure. Furthermore, contemporary musicals, such as *Mi o vuku*, question current social circumstances, especially the influence of social media, encourage critical thinking in children, and emphasize the value of direct communication and strengthening trust.

Given that the puppet has a strong influence on a child's overall development, this paper will also focus on the puppet musical. Performances by Split's "Produkcija Z", such as *Složna obitelj*, *Koje je godišnje doba najljepše* and *Dobro se dobrim vraća*, show how music, interaction and a clear visual structure can be successfully used to convey concrete moral and everyday messages, from family relationships and hygiene habits to ecology and the importance of doing good deeds.

The process of creating a school musical further expands these effects because it goes beyond the performance itself and grows into an integrated pedagogical project. The involvement of students in devising the libretto, music, costumes, and scenography, along with the connection of different school subjects, encourages collaborative learning, develops a sense of responsibility, and strengthens self-confidence. Examples from Croatian school practice, often marked by humanitarian or environmental messages, confirm that a musical can have a wider social significance.

Ultimately, a children's musical, whether a professional theater production or a school project, develops a love for musical theatre creativity, entertains, and encourages emotional and social development through song, story, and playing. To be more specific, it is an irreplaceable tool for the holistic development of the child, which confirms the hypothesis of this paper.

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MJUZIKL ZA DJECU

Rad razmatra mjuzikl kao složen glazbeno-scenski oblik i analizira njegovu funkciju te potencijal u radu s djecom predškolske i školske dobi. Polazeći od kratkog povijesnog i teorijskog pregleda razvoja mjuzikla, od njegovih američkih početaka do suvremenih europskih i hrvatskih djela, posebna pažnja posvećuje se razvoju mjuzikla za djecu u hrvatskoj kulturi i njegovoj stalnoj prisutnosti u kazališnoj praksi.

Analizom odabranih primjera, kao što su, sadržajno različitih lutkarskih ističu se njihovi narativni, simbolički i pedagoški potencijali. Lutka kao medij omogućava djeci sigurnu recepciju i tumačenje emocionalno i društveno značajnih sadržaja pa forma lutkarskog mjuzikla djeci rane školske i predškolske dobi iznimno zanimljiva i prihvatljiva. Među najpoznatijim su mjuziklima za djecu prikazivanim u predškolskim ustanovama Republike Hrvatske izvedbe produkcija "Suncokret" i "Produkcije Z".

Aktivno sudjelovanje djece u stvaranju školskog mjuzikla u sklopu projekta pridonosi razvoju komunikacijskih vještina, kreativnosti i identitetske izgradnje što je izrazito važno u suvremenom odgojno-obrazovnom procesu.

Cilj je rada pokazati plodnost žanra mjuzikla i ispitati mogućnosti njegove primjene u institucionalnom odgojno-obrazovnom kontekstu. Metodološki okvir rada temelji se na kvalitativnoj analizi relevantne znanstvene i stručne literature, deskriptivnoj metodi te analizi reprezentativnih primjera iz kazališne i pedagoške prakse. Polazna hipoteza rada jest da mjuzikl za djecu, kao umjetnička forma koja integrira različite umjetnosti, ima višestruko pozitivan učinak na cjelokupan razvoj djeteta.

Ključne riječi: gluma, ples, pjevanje, integracija, glazbeno-kazališni oblik