

Concerning the teaching of singing in Estonian-language handbooks for teachers in the context of Prussian pedagogy in 1873

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Abstract

In 1873 Woldemar Adolf Hansen (South Estonia), and Wilhelm Normann (North Estonia) published two handbooks for teachers in the Estonian language about education. The handbooks deal with the methodical and didactic principles of the subject of “teaching singing”. The research indicates that the authors of the Estonian adaptations transmitted the principles of education fairly exactly from the original German handbooks. In the Estonian handbooks there are no references to Prussian regulations and arrangements; neither can we find any checklist of obligatory songs. The authors of the Estonian handbooks have not translated the longer discourses and disquisitions, but practical advice about didactic questions are transmitted carefully. The research indicates that requirements for the knowledge of musical notation in Livonia and Estonia exceeded the requirements used at that time in Germany. In Livonia and Estonia 4-voiced singing was pursued as an ideal. German teachers focused on the acquisition of a common song repertoire, in order that children should be able to participate successfully in choral singing. The ideas, didactic concepts and methods in the handbooks are also considered essential nowadays.