

## DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING OF A QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY FOR THE EVALUATION OF ARTISTIC AUDIO WORKS FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

The subject of evaluating artistic radio works for the youngest is a significant challenge. Firstly, because it addresses the most fundamental questions about the needs of children and the meaningfulness of creating artistic radio works specifically for this population—essentially, the question of purpose. The second challenge is the selection of criteria for evaluation, and the subsequent challenge is to design an appropriate methodology for assessing the effects of audio works on infants and toddlers.

We approached these challenges on multiple levels simultaneously. Interdisciplinary teams of experts in psychology, neuroscience, music education, and didactics, as well as artists, were formed. They collaboratively developed artistic works and tested them in various listening contexts.

The central evaluation group consisted of three experts: a developmental psychologist and psychotherapist, an expert in the psychology of music and educational psychology, and an expert in music education and didactics. This group established the basic evaluation methodology based on consultations with a media psychologist and the editor of children's and youth programs at RTV Slovenia, who has extensive experience in systematically monitoring the responses of the youngest to media content. Before planning developmentally appropriate evaluation approaches for radio works for the youngest, we thoroughly examined foreign literature in this field and examples of best practices.

It is essential to emphasize that this field is poorly researched even internationally. Throughout the entire project, we continuously refined and modified the methodology based on experiences at each action step of the project. Evaluation criteria and recommendations for creating radio works for the youngest were sharpened throughout the project, as diverse effects and potentials of this type of art were revealed.

**Research Objectives:** The goal of the action research was the same as that of the project: creating sound art for infants, toddlers, and vulnerable groups. The objectives included a theoretical overview of sensitizing children and adults through musical and sound art, and the importance of auditory sensory perception for the experience, development, and emotional regulation of the youngest. Additionally, they focused on researching sensitization through radio artistic works, developing an evaluation methodology, implementing the evaluation of artistic events, using evaluation results in the planning and creation of artistic events in the steps of action research, and presenting research results.

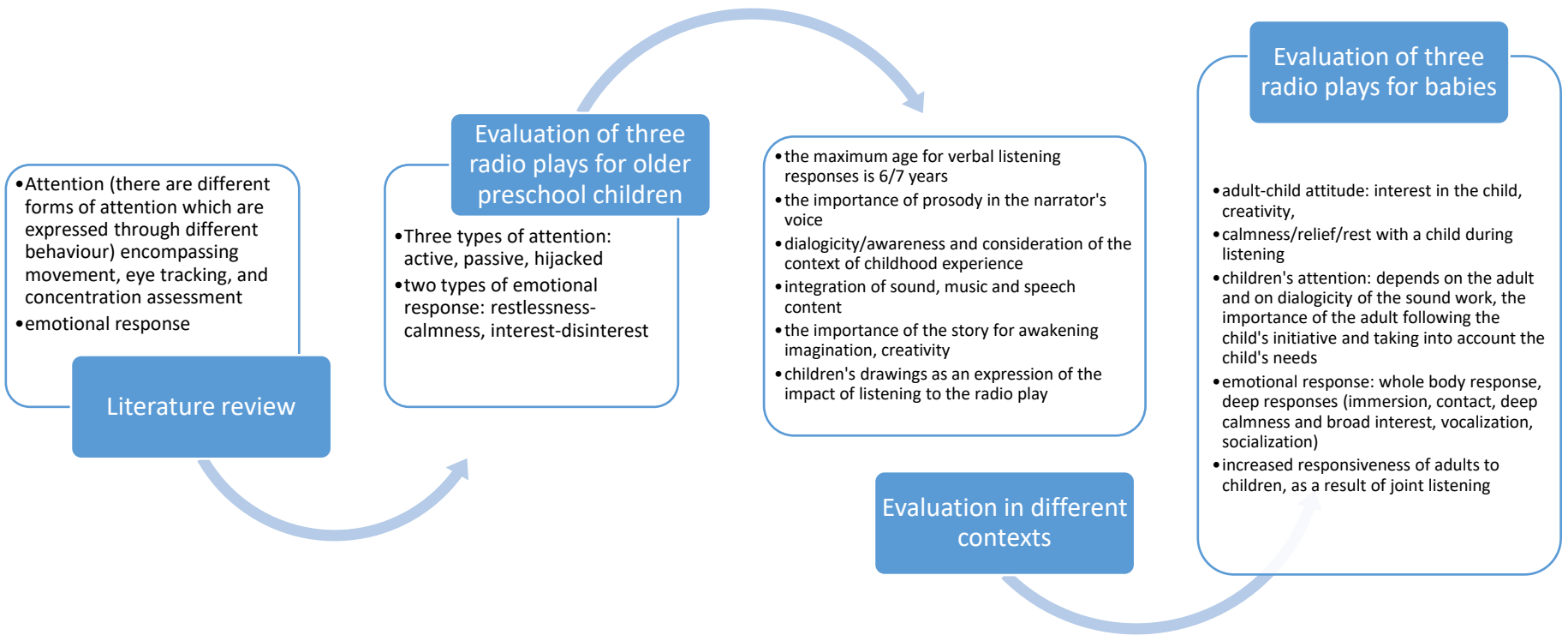
To achieve these goals, we first sought theoretical foundations to understand the importance of sound and music, as well as methodology to determine the effects of sound and music on the development and experience of the youngest. Because the creation field for children under 3 years old is still very new and unexplored, with few existing works, there are also no established criteria for in-depth evaluation of these works and their contribution or impact on development and experience. Through the project, we aimed to shape a methodology for the evaluation and contribute new insights into the field of creating sound art for the youngest. We were particularly interested in the role of sound in a child's experience, and which characteristics of sound and music art have the greatest impact in this context.

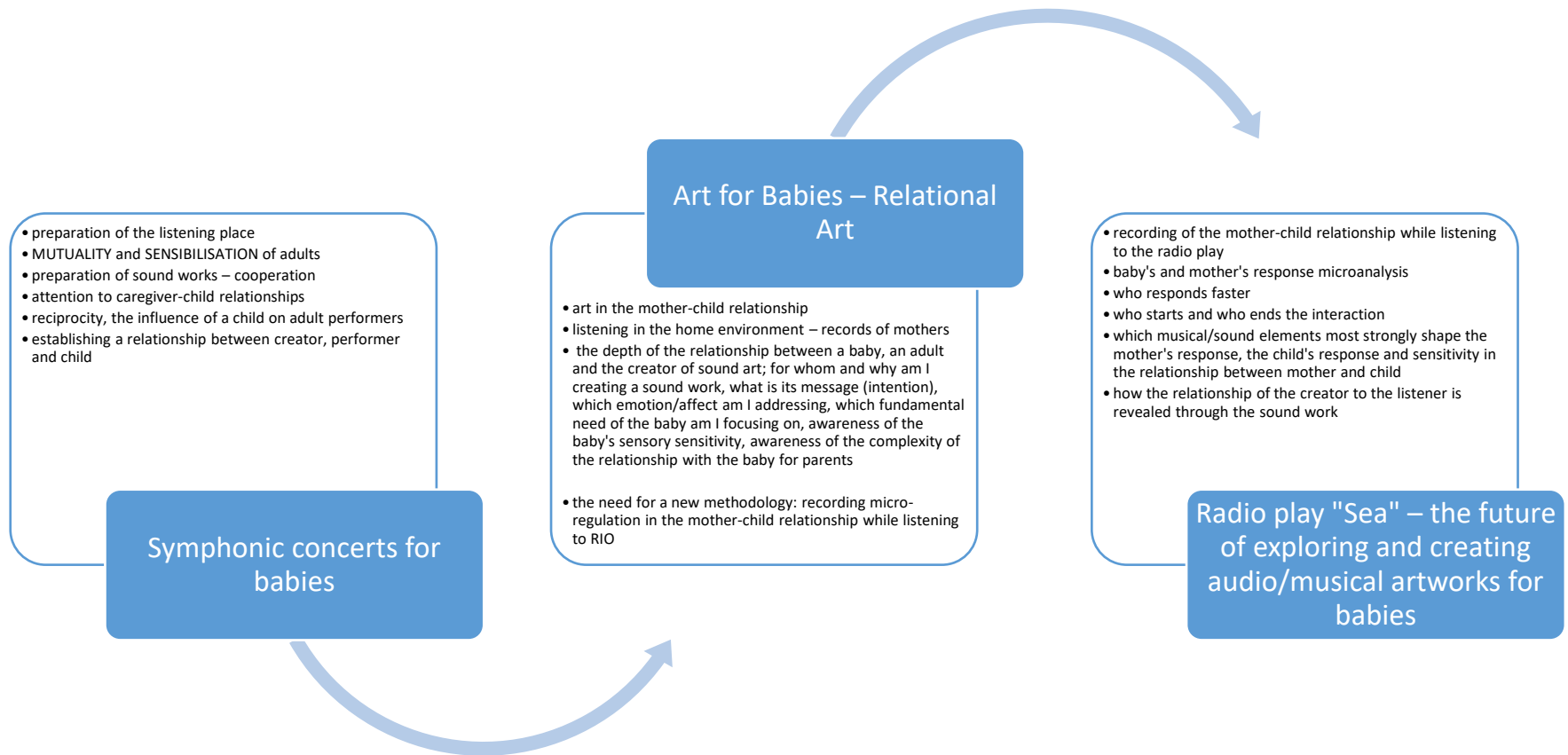
We evaluated the resulting works step by step, developing evaluation methods for each work and group for which the work was created. Through ongoing evaluation of the effects of individual sound and radio artworks on listeners (infants, toddlers, and their caregivers), we determined which elements of these works most strongly influenced the attention and interest of infants and also triggered interest and attention from adults toward the child. Simultaneously, after each step of the research, we incorporated new findings into the planning and preparation of the next cycle of events for infants, toddlers, and vulnerable groups.

**Research Questions:** The following research questions were formulated:

1. How to continuously evaluate and plan the creation of sound-musical works for the youngest? (Action research, first step: webinars, collaboration with experts in music education and didactics, developmental psychology, psychology of music, neuroscience)
2. Which methodology to use in the evaluation of sound-musical works for the youngest? (Action research, second step: systematic observation)
3. Which factors encourage and support engagement in listening to sound-musical works? (Evaluation results, third step: sound and musical elements and length of musical works, interaction between children-parents (educators)-performers, physical space (external noise (Sonja Jeram), spatial equipment – kindergartens, radio, Old Power Plant)

**Figure 1**





### Research Progress:

Based on the reviewed literature and in line with the nature of the project, which involved collaboration between creators and professional associates to develop new works for infants, toddlers, and vulnerable groups, we opted for qualitative research and an action research approach that allows:

- real-time adaptation to events and the development of practices that, through careful planning and evaluation, lead to the set goal: creating sound art for infants, toddlers, and vulnerable groups.

The research unfolded in four steps:

1. **Step One:** Situation analysis and formulation of theoretical guidelines for creating artistic audio works for infants, toddlers, and vulnerable groups. The development of the creation and evaluation methodology began with the formation of a series of webinars based on the situation analysis. These webinars served as a starting point for the creators of artistic audio works and as a basis for selecting the evaluation methodology for researchers.
2. **Step Two:** Development and selection of the evaluation methodology and evaluation of radio works for pre-schoolers and vulnerable groups.
3. **Step Three:** Development of the evaluation methodology and evaluation of audio works for infants and vulnerable groups.
4. **Step Four:** Formulation of guidelines for creators and the creation of a set of protocols and methods for evaluating works for infants, toddlers, and vulnerable groups.

### **First Step of the Research: the formation of theoretical and practical backgrounds for the evaluation**

The initial step of our research involved reviewing the current state of research and practices in this field and examining relevant scientific literature. In the first action step of the research, our goal was to empower future creators of sound-musical works with content from the field of developmental psychology (cognitive and socio-emotional development of infants and toddlers), psychology of music (perception, cognition of sound and music in infants and toddlers, musical preferences of infants and toddlers, development of musical abilities in infants and toddlers), and music didactics (how to create optimal conditions for listening to sound-musical material, how to approach listening didactically, and which elements stimulate a child to attentive listening and participation).

Parents, educators, teachers, music educators, psychotherapists, and various other professionals interested in the topic joined the webinars along with the artistic creators for the youngest. The response to the webinars was significant and resonant. Below is a detailed description of the content of each webinar.

The content of the webinars was selected based on the expressed needs of creators and artists involved in the B-AIR project, who were creating new sound-musical content for the youngest. Eight webinars took place in March and April 2021, addressing various aspects

of creating for infants and toddlers in an interdisciplinary manner. Each thematic block began with a theoretical framework related to the overarching topic, followed by interviews with experts in specific areas who illuminated practical aspects of the content.

1. **"Sound, Music, and the Brain"**: Dr. Anka Slana, a cognitive scientist, introduced the basics of sound perception, addressing questions about defining sound, the production and processing of sound stimuli in the ear and brain, and the richer perception of music at higher volume.
2. **"Positive Effects of Sound and Music"**: Prof. Dr. Zvezdan Pirtošek, head of the Department of Neurology at the University Medical Center in Ljubljana, and Albinca Pesek, a music pedagogue and sound therapist, discussed practical aspects of the positive effects of sound and music in educational and health contexts.
3. **"Developmental Guidelines in Creating Artistic Encounters with Art for Children"**: Dr. Katarina Habe, a music psychologist, presented the main characteristics of cognitive and socio-emotional development in the preschool period, emphasizing the importance of considering these characteristics when creating content for the youngest.
4. **"Connecting Theory with Practice"**: A conversation with media psychologist MSc. Martina Peštaj and the artistic director of the Ljubljana Puppet Theatre, exploring various media and theatrical content for the youngest.
5. **"Listening and Responding to Sound and Music in Early Childhood"**: Dr. Katarina Zadnik discussed music pedagogical content, emphasizing that auditory perception is a physiological process that is a prerequisite for listening and a skill that needs to be learned.
6. **"Practical Aspects of Listening for 3-4-Year-Olds"**: Dr. Katarina Zadnik discussed practical aspects of listening with music educators Sara Smrekar and Alenka Podboj, focusing on the development of hearing and listening in the earliest childhood from the perspectives of Slovenian kindergartens and the internationally recognized educational concept of Edgar Willems.
7. **"Music Education Program for Infants and Toddlers"**: Ana Čorić, a Croatian music educator, discussed a music education program for infants and toddlers in a conversation with Vida Monestar from the Music Together organization.
8. **"Cognitive-Emotional Listening to Music in School"**: Ana Čorić hosted Dr. Valnea Žauhar and Dr. Sabina Vidulin to discuss their book on cognitive-emotional listening to music in schools, highlighting the importance of a cognitive-emotional approach for increasing attention, motivation, listening habits, and acceptance of artistic music.

The webinars comprehensively addressed the developmental and didactic aspects of auditory perception and cognition in the earliest stages of children's lives. The webinars were conducted in English, and the participants were diverse, including educators, teachers, doctors, parents, psychologists, inclusive educators, and artists. The feedback from participants was extremely positive, and the content served as guidelines for B-AIR artists on how to approach the creation of suitable sound-musical content for infants and toddlers.

In this review, two fundamental areas of evaluating artistic works through children's responses have emerged:

- The area of attention
- The area of emotional response

From a methodological perspective in researching the experiences of such young children, the repertoire is not very extensive and primarily relies on:

- Observation
- Monitoring changes in behaviour
- Observations of adults caring for these children

For preschool children, additional methods for monitoring their experiences include:

- Drawing
- Behavioural expressions such as movement, vocalization, imitation of behaviour
- Play
- Limited speech (some existing studies have also been conducted through conversations with children, revealing to what extent and at what age children can articulate their experiences mentally).

### **The second step of the research: Observation of the responses of older preschool children to radio fairy tales**

Based on the state-of-the-art review, we found that the fundamental criteria for evaluating the impact of artistic works on a child's experience are monitoring the child's attention and their emotional-behavioural response. This is because preschool children typically experience things holistically, unconsciously process stimuli, and express behaviour rather than consciously processing and verbally articulating experiences. Nevertheless, we were interested in what children could say or which words they would use to describe their listening experience, how attentive they would be to the content, and which part of the content would mentally engage them the most.

The key goal in the second research step was to check the consistency of children's responses to radio fairy tales through (1) verbal responses from children (interviews with children), based on their (2) behavioural responses monitored with observational protocols, and based on their (3) artistic expression (drawing children's drawings).

We formulated:

- Observational protocols for researchers/observers

- Interview questions for conversations with children
- Semi-structured interviews for conversations with the preschool teacher
- Instructions for creating an anecdotal record of observation for observers
- For the purpose of data triangulation, the listening sessions were recorded, and external observers also completed observation protocols

In the first period of the project, three new radio fairy tales were created for preschool children ("Fearless Fairytale" (Peter Svetina), "She Once Lived, She Still Lives" (Nataša Konc Lorenzutti), and "Pixie's First Superheroic Case" (Gaja Kos)). Each of them had a specific structure of basic elements (sound, speech, music) and also relationships between these elements (one element in the foreground, others in the background; equal intertwining of elements; and transitioning from one to another, layering of sound levels, and different complexity of the sound landscape).

The goal of the second evaluation step was to find out how preschool children perceive radio content, radio fairy tales, and how they are invited to engage with art through them. We were interested in which sound-musical elements are crucial for arousing the interest, emotional response, and attention of preschool children. We wanted to determine which artistic elements of radio material allow children to have an aesthetic experience, enter into deeper artistic experiences of reality, and through that, develop a sense of security, sensitivity, and inner responsiveness.

In the evaluation part, 54 five-year-old children from three different kindergartens in Ljubljana were included. The fairy tales were played for the children twice over a two-week period. During the listening sessions, appropriately trained observers were present in each group, forming an anecdotal record of observation. After listening, the children drew the fairy tale and had an interview with the observer. The results were obtained through data triangulation; based on children's drawings, interviews with children, and anecdotal records of observers. A qualitative thematic content analysis of interview content, analysis of children's drawings, and analysis of children's behaviour observation were conducted.

We explored the child's attention through their overall posture during listening. We used the question: how much and/or which parts attract the child's attention, for how long, and in what way (what type of attention).

When exploring the emotional experience of children listening, we were interested in the impact of the work on the emotional response of children or how the artistic experience affects the child, what emotions it evokes, and how deep/intense the child's response is.

Through this step of observation and research, another crucial and perhaps the most important area of research has emerged, which we were not previously attentive to:



The influence of radio works on the relationship between the child and their significant adult and the significance of the relationship between the child and the adult for the overall listening experience.

In Table 1, we present the obtained results:

**Table 1**

*Illustration of a triangulation analysis of radio fairy tales in terms of sound/music, children's speech and behavioural reporting, and drawings*

FAIRY TALE	Content analysis of answers	Drawing analysis	Listening behaviour	Musical structure of the fairy tale	Connection of all data sources
FEARLESS FAIRYTALE (Peter Svetina)	Clearly recognized characters, clear details, the sound clearly attracts attention, the only story completely recalled by a child, the only one where children add characters not present in the fairy tale	Greatest variety between drawings, vivid colours, joy	Attentive listening, children sit , immersion in the story, interest, they repeat the sounds, get involved even with small movements in the rhythm	Single male narrator that changes tone and style depending on the content, music/sound equally intertwined with speech	Clear line of attention and understanding of content, good tracking of voice and sounds at the same time, sound helps to understand and follow the story, the child takes the story as a whole, emotionally interesting, the most attractive in terms of attention
SHE ONCE LIVED, SHE STILL LIVES (Nataša Konc Lorenzutti)	Fewest mentions of persons, strong attention to music, songs, many details, many small pieces of content recalled but not the whole story , most generic answers	Drawing most limited in colours and characters, without a clear plot	Quiet listening, the children lie on their backs, sometimes they turn to their stomachs, they listen, they try to follow and understand (they are immersed, they occasionally indicate the rhythm with their feet)	A story in rhymes, each role is spoken by a different person including children, narrator explains the story. Sound elements are a constant basis for the action, major and minor scale melody, the sound of a flute	Sound and music take the leading role before speech, speech attracts attention only when it is really expressive and not backed by music, dialogues are stronger than just reading rhymes, the child takes the general flow of the narrative and some

					detail, emotionally soothing, in terms of attention the most demanding fairy tale
PIXIE'S FIRST SUPERHEROIC CASE (Gaja Kos)	Clearly perceived persons, least detail retrieved, least attention to sound, electroacoustic musical phrase that repeats twice draws attention, least recalled content	Most vivid colours, girls draw girls, boys draw boys, most expressed joy	They sit and listen, attention is drawn to the main characters (a boy and a girl), attention is greatest at a loud sound that continues with electronic music, they respond with head movement and restlessness	Different voices for different people, also interpreted by children. The story is connected by the narrator, sound elements are the basis of the action, only a short electro-acoustic melody is prominent	Emotionally intense in terms of attention, electronic music overwhelms the child's attention, cognitively too demanding, musically very fluctuating, certain details strongly attract while the whole does not, the child does not follow the story, absorbs only parts of the story

Based on the collected results, we have reached the following important findings:

- Listening to audio content is challenging for children, and they need to be specially prepared for this activity, provided with a safe environment, and the presence of an adult to make them feel secure.
- Listening should take place in a specially prepared space at a time when children are adequately prepared and comfortable, allowing them to move freely and create their own space and way of listening. Preparation for listening and choosing the right time when children are not hungry or overly tired is also crucial.
- The sensitivity of children's perception of sound is extremely high. Sounds that are too intense and/or associated with electronic sounds from everyday surroundings can capture a child's attention to the extent that it hinders the listening experience, preventing exploration and focused, deep listening. Instead, they overshadow all other aspects of experience and lead to saturation.
- The dynamics, rhythm, and dialogical nature of a story are crucial for maintaining children's attention.
- Stories where individual elements are interwoven equally leave a stronger impression on a child's experience.
- It is essential for the audio image to follow the prosody and rhythm of the human voice.

Regarding the selection of evaluation methods:

- Children up to 4 or 5 years old are verbally reserved and find it challenging to express their experiences. Therefore, the analysis of interviews primarily relied on qualitative indicators, such as whether the child responded to questions, whether the responses were in single words or sentences, the themes contained in the sentences, specific people or characters mentioned, the use of adjectives, and how the child named the content mentioned. Attention was also paid to whether the child understood the question (e.g. a question like "Did you hear the music?" to which the child responded, "No, there was no music but I heard the guitar").
- Children's drawings are a suitable form of expression of experience for children aged 3 and older.
- The written response of adults largely reflects children's experiences and contributes significantly to the evaluation.
- From the perspective of radio plays, it was found that works most appealing to children aged 4 and older are those with a well-integrated audio-verbal structure, a clear dramaturgical design, and a rhythm in the story's progression.

Additional evaluations in the second step:

After conducting the first research of the second step in our study, we set some additional questions and found answers in additional listening sessions in different contexts.

1. Is the age upon entering school (6-7 years) the threshold at which children can describe their experiences more accurately, or is this threshold even later (7 to 8 years)? The *Fearless Fairytale*, which proved most suitable in the initial research, was listened to in the first grade of primary school as well. We were interested in how listening to the *Fearless Fairytale* would work in regard to this age group, i.e. whether it would be interesting for children aged 6 and 7 during the transition from symbolic/imagination to concrete logical development, and what would attract them to it. We also focused on the ability of children to describe their experiences. The research methodology remained the same so that we could compare the results with those obtained in kindergarten. We used protocols for observation, creating drawings after listening, and anecdotal records of observers and educators.

The main findings of the comparison between preschool and school children in listening to the *Fearless Fairytale* were differences in that first-grade children mentioned much more of the story content, described the course of events, and more distinctly responded to the humorous parts of the story (the whole class started laughing when the "tale fell on its bottom"). The concreteness of the events was in the foreground, but they did not understand the more complex message of the story, which was that when the tale comes to the hospital, the hospital turns into a fairytale world. There was also more fidgeting during listening since the children were sitting at desks and not on the floor, where they could have moved more freely.

Based on the analysis of children's drawings, we can conclude that younger students, compared to kindergarten children, more effectively used the entire space on the drawing in the visual representation. All drawings included the use of various colours (more colours than in kindergarten children's drawings). The hospital is most often depicted on all the drawings, and other frequently appearing elements are the sun and the heart. The leading element in the drawings is the representation of the person

taking care of the tale when it is in the hospital bed. The drawings reflect various emotions of joy, recognizable in the smile of the main character of the story.

2. Can we judge which radio fairy tales will have an equally powerful and positive effect on preschool children based on the experience with the *Fearless Fairytale*? The play, based on the evaluation with preschool and school children, proved to be the most suitable for older preschool children. Its outstanding radio features that most attracted older preschool children to the world of listening were: the rich musical and sound texture, balanced representation of voice, music, and sound, an interesting story, duration up to 10 minutes, and the prosodic and pleasant narrator's voice. Based on these criteria, we selected three additional works from a wide range of radio fairy tales for older preschool children in the Radio Slovenia archive, along with the *Fearless Fairytale*. We also selected five radio plays published on the radio portal. In this way, we wanted to promote the idea of shared listening, i.e. children listening together with adults, and introducing listening as a special form of work with children in kindergarten. Regarding the listening framework, we prepared listening instructions, emphasizing that it is crucial to prepare children for listening, equip the listening space appropriately, ensure comfortable seating, and allow free movement of children. We also recommended that adults listen together with children and be present throughout.

The evaluation of these four pieces in kindergartens throughout Slovenia was conducted as part of the first Slovenian radio play festival for children – “Listening Together”. We sent a specific selection of radio works to kindergartens and asked them to listen to the fairy tale with children and send us their feedback, drawings, or group art projects that children would draw after listening, either with or without the kindergarten teacher. The selection of radio works we made available included fairy tales for an older group of children, as well as radio plays for the youngest. These were the works:

- *Fearless Fairytale*
- *The Bear and the Hat*
- *Dragons in the Opera*
- *Thief's Banquet*

The data from these observations largely confirmed the findings obtained in the first round of research. Each observation by educators and the analysis of children's drawings illuminated some special factor or aspect.

The most common responses of educators to the idea of listening together were as follows:

- "Children were relaxed and listened with interest during listening."
- "Listening was an interesting experience for all of us."
- "Due to the great motivation of the children, we listened to the radio play for several days."
- "Children wanted to hear another story, so we agreed to repeat everything after lunch."

The idea excited them because they had not practiced this kind of listening before. They were surprised at how different children's behaviour is when listening together and how intense the effect of such listening is. Most educators were not familiar with radio plays and would include them in their daily work in the future. They noticed that listening to radio fairy tales is a very welcome activity that calms and excites children, helps them focus on a specific atmosphere, and contributes to the rhythm and calmness of activities within

the kindergarten. In addition, they began to think more creatively about how to approach certain topics and promote activities required by the kindergarten curriculum. They also began to consider how to incorporate listening to radio fairy tales into the treatment of these topics and activities.

The response to all fairy tales for older children was positive and exciting. The stories appealed to children, who talked a lot about them, enthusiastically drew pictures, and were creative and imaginative in their creations. Most children wanted to listen to fairy tales again the next day. Ten older kindergarten groups participated in the event, one of which chose to listen to the *Fearless Fairytale* together.

"Based on the responses, it is evident that the teacher's reaction indicates that, in response to the children's engagement with listening, she herself began contemplating creatively enhancing the topic they were addressing within their curriculum by incorporating RIO as a didactic tool:

"The fairy tale excited them so much that we played it again the next day. We chose it because it was connected to the theme we were covering at that time (traffic safety and first aid). The children listened to the fairy tale with enjoyment and concentration, and they could share a lot about it."

Considering the reactions and results of these listening sessions, we can confirm the previously established criteria for creating radio plays for preschool children and the presentation of RIO in kindergartens through a national radio project that connects different kindergartens and enables teachers to officially integrate this new method into their daily routine.

With this, we concluded the exploration and evaluation of radio plays for older preschool children. The results helped shape the foundation and basic guidelines for researching more advanced material: radio plays for infants and toddlers up to 3 years old.

### **The third step of the research: Sound and Radio Art for Infants and Toddlers Up to 3 Years Old**

In this investigation, we based our research on the following assumptions:

1. For infants and children up to 3 years old, the presence of an adult who is attentive to the child, provides security, and introduces them to listening is crucial.
2. The listening space is essential, emphasizing the opportunity for free movement, touch, and participation in listening.
3. The youngest children primarily focus on interaction and dialogue with adults, responding strongly to the adult's intention and adapting to it.
4. The auditory composition should be suitable for the sensitivity of the youngest children in terms of frequency spectrum, rhythm, volume, tempo, and musical structure.

These assumptions were initially tested through pilot performances of radio works for infants and their parents or caregivers. We reinforced these findings through collective listening sessions of the works in the youngest kindergarten groups (as part of the RIO Festival – Listening Together) and shared listening experiences of RIO with mothers and infants in their homes.

The highlight of the research was the comprehensive evaluation of symphonic works for infants, through which we finalized the guidelines for creating in this specific domain. Within these contexts, we conducted several evaluations of radio plays designed for the youngest group (1 to 3 years old) and symphonic works for infants, entering the third step of action research.

### **1. Live Pilot Performances of Radio Works for Groups of Infants, Toddlers, and their Parents**

Evaluations of these works were initially conducted in live settings with groups of infants and toddlers along with their parents (live performances for parents and infants were held in the presence of a musical animator):

#### At the B-AIR meeting in Cuneo, Italy

1. Live performance of the radio play "Musical Kitchen" in a library for a group of parents with infants, featuring a musical animator.
2. Live performance of the radio play "Chitter-Chatter" for a group of parents with infants.

#### At the Radio Play Festival at Cukrarna, Ljubljana

1. Live performance of the radio play "Musical Kitchen" for a group of parents with infants, featuring an animator.

#### At the Festival of Radio Plays for Infants and Toddlers – Listening Together

1. Live performance of the radio play "Chitter-Chatter" in a park near the Old Power Plant in Ljubljana.
2. Live performance of the radio play "Sea" at the Old Power Plant venue, featuring an animator and the use of puppets.

### **2. Listening to Radio Plays in Kindergartens**

A more extensive evaluation of these works took place as part of the festival of radio plays for babies and toddlers titled “Listening Together”, involving 30 kindergartens across Slovenia.

For younger groups, the only available radio plays specifically designed for infants and children up to 3 years old were:

- *Musical Kitchen*

- *Sea*
- *Chitter-Chatter*

In kindergartens, children listened to the selected works alongside their teachers. They were prepared for listening, choosing an appropriate time during the day for the radio play's content.

### **Results: Pilot evaluations of radio works for infants and parents:**

"At the meeting in Cuneo, we performed 'Musical Kitchen' (Library) and 'Chitter-Chatter' (outside in the park) live. The researcher observed the performances and gathered feedback from some parents and other adults present."

*Musical Kitchen*: *Musical Kitchen* took place in a special space within the children's section of the library. Fifteen parents with children could attend. The floor was padded, allowing parents with infants and toddlers to comfortably settle. Before the performance, the researcher addressed them, providing instructions for listening. During the listening session, a musical artist was present, communicating with the children solely through gestures and mimicking individual sounds. Children could play with spoons arranged on the floor, move around, play with parents or the animator, or simply listen.

Observations: Most children listened with interest and deep attention, while parents were reserved in interacting with their children, mainly due to the presence of unfamiliar adults (research team). After the first listening, they expressed a desire to hear the entire radio play again, without the presence of the researcher, animator, and other adults, and they became even more playful with their children.

Children played with spoons, showed interest in instruments, and felt secure in the space.

Parental responses: "Interesting experience, too short."

After the *Musical Kitchen*, parents with children went to a nearby park, where they were joined by other parents who were unable to attend the performance due to limited space in the library. In the park, 40 pairs of parents and children gathered, each equipped with a small speaker playing the radio play *Chitter-Chatter*, and they set off for a walk. Each pair chose their direction, activities, and actions. The observer monitored and documented the events. The most interesting observations were as follows:

- Children proudly carried their speakers, joyfully listening. Some spontaneously imitated sounds, shifting their attention outward to trees, meadows, bird singing; some touched tree branches, trunks, leaves, and one child lay under a tree and fell asleep.

- Initially, they only listened and chose their path through the park. When they heard familiar sounds, they repeated them with the recording, singing along.
- Parents easily focused on their child and the walk, each pair developed a unique relationship, choosing their path through the park.
- The atmosphere of listening and the entire event was filled with joy, interest, deep concentration, and calmness; none of the children were restless or cried.

After the performance, parents made the following statements: "I would like to have these plays recorded to listen to them in the car during drives when the child is restless and bored." "Excellent, very fun and interesting; my child enjoyed it, and so did I." "The child was attentive throughout."



**2. During the radio festival, we organized a live Musical Kitchen where a musician, while listening to the musical performance, produced individual sounds. Children had the opportunity to hold a spoon, touch various containers, and engage with the music.**

Three observers followed the performance, using the Piccolo scheme to observe positive adult-child interactions (warmth, responsiveness, encouragement, and teaching). Parents also filled out a questionnaire about their observations. Eight parents with children attended the performance.

Based on the results gained through the **questionnaire for parents**, we can conclude that all parents rated the content, execution, and listening space of the RIO positively, with an excellent rating (5 to 7 parents). Two parents, however, rated the duration of the



performance as moderately good with a suggestion that the RIO should be longer. One parent gave a moderately good rating to the sound/musical aspect of RIO but did not provide any specific comments.

**Descriptive responses** from parents mainly fell into the following categories:

(1) Child's reactions: concentration and calmness, tranquillity, and relaxation (11 statements), socialization among children.

(2) RIO: Children were captivated by both the sounds and the performer. Parents suggested that the event could last longer, expressing a desire for more similar events.

(3) Parents' wellbeing: Excellent positive feelings, calmness, and excitement about their children's behaviour and the overall flow of the event. They noticed the kindness of people, but were bothered by the presence of spectators without children, recording, the heat in the room, and poor marking of the space.

(4) Parent-child relationship: The situation allowed parents to peacefully observe their children and feel the desire to connect with their child even more.

"It 'forces' you to stop and gives you the opportunity to focus on your child, to truly see and observe them!"

Results from the observation of parents' behaviour towards children using the **Piccolo observation scheme** showed that most outlined features were:

1. Warmth: Was prominently present in all parents.
2. Responsiveness: Parents were responsive to their children.
3. Encouragement: Parents mostly supported their children in their activities.
4. Teaching: There was no teaching because parents did not feel the need for it.

The fundamental insight from this performance was that the safety and friendliness of the space and execution are crucial prerequisites that create a suitable atmosphere for listening. The most surprising realization for parents was how deeply attentive such young children can be, and how they explore in a relaxed manner. It could be concluded that through the RIO performance, parents' sensitivity to children and the need for relaxed, safe, and artistically high-quality events for shared listening were revealed.

**3. As part of the radio play festival for the youngest audiences, "Listening Together," we performed the radio plays "Chitter-Chatter" (in the park near the old city power plant) and "Sea" for a group of infants and toddlers with adults in a specially equipped part of the hall in the Old City Power Plant, as well as in a kindergarten for a selected group of children with their teachers. Additionally, some kindergartens listened to the "Musical Kitchen" and "Sea" in the kindergarten and then sent us children's creations and feedback from the teachers.**

### **3.1 Live performance of the radio play "Sea" for a group of moms with infants.**

Thirteen parents with their children attended the performance.

From the analysis of the provided responses gained from **the questionnaire for parents**, it is evident that all parents (13) rated the music, props, musicians, duration, the quality of the sensory experience, and the impact of the performance on children as excellent (82 responses) or very good (17 responses). Only one response of moderately good was given by one parent regarding the content, and one response was satisfactory from a parent in response to the performance space (with an explanation: "Parents need guidance on what and how to experience through the performance; it seems we all got a little scared, I, for example, would need someone to remind me to listen").

**Descriptive responses** from parents form the following categories:

(1) Children: relaxation, calmness of the children, no fear in children (24 responses), interesting for children (17), encourages interaction and movement (2).

(2) Parents: the predominant feeling was relaxation, acceptance, calmness, and attention to infants. "A super break for moms."

(3) RIO: pleasant and relaxing music, an excellent message, takes you into a fairy tale world, a rich sensory experience. "New sensory experiences for the baby." "Excellent, children enjoyed it, as did adults." Performance: beautiful puppets, even more puppets (12), attention from the performer and interaction with each individual child. "Calm music, beautiful puppets, space dedicated to children."

(4) Positive space: the possibility of movement, a pleasant atmosphere, a sufficiently large space, freedom

Results of the observation using the **Piccolo scheme** reveal as follows:

(1) Warmth: Was prominently present in all parents.

(2) Responsiveness: Was prominently present in all parents.

(3) Encouragement: Was slightly present because it was not necessary; the children felt safe.

(4) Teaching: Moderately present; parents named puppets, explained things to children, directed their attention to one of the puppets.

Based on these observations and the anecdotal record of two observers, it can be concluded once again that the prerequisite for listening and enabling full entry into the artistic experience is, first and foremost, the presence of parents with children and a space that must be pleasant, soft, allowing freedom of movement, and aesthetically refined. Puppets and the animator were also shown to be extremely important, as they could approach infants in a special and non-intrusive way. As a criterion for the adequacy of the work, the simultaneous deep calmness and intense interest of infants in following the sound part were confirmed once again. It was also evident in this event that the sensitivity of parents and their attention to children increased.

An important fact highlighted was the necessity to limit the age of children in such events to 2 years, as older children with their movement and liveliness or restlessness could pose a potential danger to infants

### **3.2 Festival "Listening Together": Listening sessions in various kindergartens across Slovenia - Educators' responses to listening sessions in kindergartens.**

1. **Musical Kitchen:** Seven groups of children aged 1 to 4 chose the *Musical Kitchen*. They mostly listened to it twice, and it greatly engaged the children in participation and creativity. Listening was an exciting and interesting experience for them. The children quickly started repeating sounds, using spoons, playing with them, and creating interesting things. The *Musical Kitchen* primarily sparked numerous ideas among educators on how to develop various skills in children through more didactic and playful games. It encouraged collaboration, conversation, recognition of familiar objects, play, creativity, and interest in all groups. The didactic charge of this play went beyond mere imitation and repetition of the familiar. It allowed children and educators to discover something new, interesting, and attractive through the known routine, opening up a spectrum of attention and creativity, facilitating the connection of different activities, and promoting various skills in children. Educators could use the play as a support for achieving various curriculum goals. Most groups listened to it at least twice, and some groups repeated the listening in the following days.
2. **Chitter-Chatter:** Two groups chose *Chitter-Chatter*, both times for calming down before lunch or naptime. Educators associated this activity with paying attention to sounds during a walk. After the walk, they played the fairy tale for the children, calming them down and helping them recognize sounds heard earlier in real life. Interestingly, educators observed that the children were

more calm and patient with each other during lunch. The play clearly addresses attention to the external environment and, therefore, attention to each other, listening to the surroundings, which also includes listening to others around you. The social aspect of this play was a surprise for the researchers, as it was not anticipated before. For one of these two groups, *Chitter-Chatter* became part of the daily ritual for calming down and falling asleep.

3. **Sea:** Four groups listened to *Sea*, choosing it as a bedtime play. Children calmed down and fell asleep while listening. This play proved to be the most challenging, as two educators reported that children were initially scared due to the unusual singing and sounds. In one group, they interrupted the listening and chose another, less demanding fairy tale for the children. In the second group, despite initial apprehension, they continued listening. The high female voice of the singer attracted the children, calming them down, and they fell asleep. In the third and fourth groups, educators used the *Sea* play for effective bedtime and no other responses were provided. Due to the introductory song about the fish Pharaonic, *Sea* is demanding as it transitions to a more symbolic and partly abstract level. It requires the listener, both child and adult, to surrender and allow themselves to mentally drift away while listening, then return. It addresses the emotional dynamics of mourning and awakening, suitable for more profound listening, especially for children and adults listening together, side by side.

#### **4. The radio play "Sea" was also listened to by mothers at home with their babies, who provided anecdotal recordings of their listening experience and answered a questionnaire tailored for them. Some of them were recorded during the listening, and the recordings were analyzed.**

Three mothers chose to listen to the radio play *Sea* at home with their babies, each providing different responses to this experience. All of them listened to the play during breastfeeding or bedtime when they wanted to calm down together with their child. For two of them, actual calming occurred. One of the mothers experienced the play as a "complete disconnect," a "rest," and "as if time had stopped." However, the third mother did not find the experience pleasant or calming. She perceived it as somewhat darker and, in some parts, even menacing. This mother interrupted the listening before it ended because she and her child did not feel comfortable in the sound environment created by the play. Perhaps contributing to this was the fact that the first two babies were girls, while the last one was a boy.

To further explore how the joint listening of each pair of mother and baby actually unfolds, a pilot test was conducted using video and audio recordings in a specially equipped studio. Initial results showed that this method could provide clearer and more detailed insights into the joint listening experience, which will be pursued for further research.

#### **5. Evaluation of the symphonic concerts for infants and parents involved four perspectives.**

We sought feedback from:

1. Creators for infants and toddlers, conducting semi-structured interviews with them and qualitatively analyzing the responses.
2. We designed an observation scheme for infants and toddlers, filled out by trained observers. We also utilized the Piccolo observation scheme to observe positive interactions between caregivers and children (warmth, responsiveness, encouragement, teaching).
3. We prepared questionnaires for parents.
4. We prepared questionnaires for performers (members of the symphony orchestra). Evaluation took place directly at three symphonic concerts, featuring four symphonic works for infants and toddlers. The concerts were held in the Radio Slovenia studio, which was spatially adapted for the youngest listeners. The space was arranged with a central area covered with soft rugs, allowing infants to crawl freely. Footwear was not allowed in the area. Parents sat on soft cushions around this space, so infants and toddlers were in their laps. Some even fell asleep, while others could safely explore the environment and create social connections with others.

Musicians were arranged around the central stage, visible and approachable for both children and parents. All musical pieces were novelties and created purposefully. Recognizable Slovenian authors of contemporary classical music from younger generations were chosen as creators. The musical pieces were crafted as a kind of sound collage.



## **Analysis of the First Concert: Larisa Vrhunc – So Quiet**

During the first symphonic concert, composed by Larisa Vrhunc and titled "So Quiet", two performances took place. The first, at 2 PM, was dedicated to vulnerable groups, while the second, at 5 PM, was designed for infants, toddlers, and their parents. There were 16 participants, including 11 boys and 5 girls, aged between 7 months and 5 years.

**Preparation of the Venue:** The concert space was meticulously prepared for infants and toddlers. Children were given soft rattles and fabric bags filled with crackling paper to create soft and gentle sounds. The audience sat on comfortable cushions and seating bags, while the orchestra musicians were arranged in a circle, allowing a clear view of various instruments, musicians, and the conductor.

**Detailed Venue Preparation:** Composer Larisa Vrhunc specifically equipped the space with two hanging bells positioned above the children's heads. These bells, adorned with feathers and dreamcatchers, were intended for interaction with the children. Performing a concert for children with special needs highlighted how detailed venue preparation and compositions can positively impact the regulation of hypersensitive children.

**Effect of the Concert on Children:** In line with the composer's statement that children are sensitive to stimuli, educators observed positive effects. Introverted children became more sociable, while extraverted ones became calmer. The concert and the event acted as a regulatory factor, simultaneously calming and motivating. This was particularly noticeable in children with special needs, where such concerts can be extremely important.

**Parents' Responses:** All parents were very satisfied with the concert. They rated the musicians/performers and the performance venue the highest. Despite the somewhat less popular music and content, parents were thrilled with the sound environment, props, and the overall aesthetic experience.

**Performers' Responses:** The performers were well-prepared and positively assessed the conductor's leadership and the venue's preparation. However, they highlighted that the atmosphere was better at the beginning than at the end. They also pointed out the inappropriate duration of the concert and the complexity of the music. Three of them emphasized that the music should be more suitable for children.

**Conclusion:** Venue preparation, interactive elements, and detailed attention to the special needs of children are crucial for the success of concerts for infants and toddlers. Despite some criticisms regarding the music and the complexity of the work, parents and performers recognized the positive impact of the concert on children and called for more similar events in the future. Establishing these connecting and positive experiences in early childhood can have a significant impact on their overall development.

## **Analysis of the Second Concert: “Defiance of the Glorious Children” by Svetlana Maraš and “Perpetuum Mobile” by Matej Bonin**

At the second symphonic concert for babies and toddlers held on Thursday, June 15th, two premieres of works by composers Svetlana Maraš and Matej Bonin were presented. The RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Steven Loy, was once again accommodated by the spaces of Studio 26. The first concert at 2:00 PM was dedicated to vulnerable groups, while the second concert at 5:00 PM was for infants, toddlers, and their parents. The venue was arranged according to the needs of the children, who were seated in the center of the action on soft mats or sitting bags, surrounded by the symphony orchestra.

The second symphonic concert was performed twice, with a different order of compositions each time. In the first performance, Maraš' composition took the lead, while Bonin's was first in the second. Due to the nature of the concert (two pieces performed together), it was challenging to evaluate responses to each individual concert. Only a general difference based on the order of play and the overall listening process was observed. Therefore, the evaluation is more general.

**Piccolo Form:** In almost all pairs, a significant amount of warmth and responsiveness was clearly noticeable. Parents dedicated themselves entirely to their children, giving them full attention and being relaxed in their interactions. They remained physically and emotionally close to their children, following their lead and appropriately responding to their actions. Encouragement of children was evident, especially in supporting their decisions and allowing them to explore the space, musicians, and sounds in their own way. Parents showed slightly less enthusiasm for what their children were doing. Clear behaviour was also observed in praise, with parents either clearly praising their child or not praising them at all. As no props were included in the second symphonic concert, encouragement through playing with toys was minimal or non-existent. Teaching was also less pronounced due to the age range of 0-3 years. Parents mostly suggested activities to prolong the child's interest or talked with the child about the characteristics of objects, in this case, instruments.

**Parents' Response:** Overall, all parents were very satisfied with the concert. They rated the musicians/performers (98.9%) and the venue (96.8%) the highest. They liked the music (95.7%) and the content of the musical performance (93.7%). The concert proved to be a positive experience and had a positive impact on the child (92.6%). The symphonic work was considered an appropriate length (90.5%), and the quality of the aesthetic experience was also rated the same (90.5%). Props received a lower rating (73.7%), as they were not specifically included in this concert.

More than half of the parents (10/19) answered that they liked the music or composition the most. They highlighted that the music's calmness allowed children to relax and feel safe. Positive atmosphere in the room and the arrangement of the space were mentioned in five responses, while instruments, the opportunity for children's free movement, and the overall experience for the child were also appreciated. All parents, except one, gave positive responses regarding their child's feelings during the concert. Most children (10/19) felt excellent, and 6 children were relaxed. Parents noted that children were curious, exploring the space, reacting to sounds, and enjoying themselves.

During the concert, ten parents felt great, comfortable, and pleasant. Six of them emphasized that they were relaxed and calm. One mother mentioned sweating due to nervousness, without specifying the reason. One parent was vigilant to prevent their child from taking its neighbours' toys. All parents, except one, responded positively to the question about the concert's effect on their relationship with their child. They highlighted that the effect was very connecting, unifying, and positive. Parents had fun, cuddled, listened to music, and enjoyed the concert. Only one parent stated that the concert did not affect their relationship with their child.

Parents expressed a desire for more such concerts, seeing potential in introducing music to the youngest listeners, educating audiences, exposing children to different instruments and classical music. They emphasized that infants and toddlers love music and believe it has a positive impact on their emotional development. They see potential outside the concert hall – in kindergartens, schools, and parks.

In response to the question "What bothered you?" one parent wished for a longer musical experience, while another felt the concert was slightly too long. It was also suggested that the number of children/people could be smaller, and there could be a break between compositions. Some comments were made about the musical work, suggesting it could be livelier and include solo performances by individual instruments.

Regarding the last question "Would you like more such concerts?" 18 parents answered affirmatively, while one parent did not provide an answer.

**Performers' Response:** Fifteen performers completed the survey. All performers were excellently prepared for the situation (92.0%). They felt very good during the concert (82.6%). They rated the atmosphere in the hall at the beginning of the concert the highest (93.3%), while the atmosphere at the end of the concert was very good (85.3%). Children responded better (92.0%) than adults (85.3%) this time. They considered the duration of the performance appropriate for children (85.3%). They positively experienced the conductor's leadership (84.0%) and communication with him (80.0%). They also rated their interaction with the children (80.0%) similarly. While they agreed that the venue was very well-equipped for this event (82.7%), they had some issues with the orchestra's setup (73.3%) – the orchestra had to move between the first and second pieces. The musical piece they performed was least convincing for them (70.7%). They rated the entire event very well (80.0%).



Ten performers answered that they liked the children's visit, the atmosphere brought by the children, the proximity of the audience and performers, and the reaction of the children most. Three performers stated that they liked the relaxed atmosphere most.

Performers had the most issues or comments about the orchestra's setup and movement between the first and second symphonic pieces. One performer also highlighted mobile devices, stating: "Phones. I noticed that infants' attention shifted to technological devices when mothers were recording memories."

Regarding suggestions for improvement in the last question, most responses related to the choice of music. Performers expressed a desire for more information about each composition and for instruments to play "normally" so that children could hear the basic sounds of each instrument. They also suggested a different choice of music, including Mozart, short and modern compositions. They mentioned considering the setup and movement of the orchestra, which took quite some time this time, was noisy, and musicians moved among the audience.

**Conclusion:** Both parents and performers rated the atmosphere in the venue, the arrangement of the space, and the musical performance highest. They highlighted good interaction between performers and children. They agreed that the duration and appropriateness of the musical performance were well chosen and suitable for children, despite some musicians providing suggestions for improvement. Although musicians had the most difficulty with moving the orchestra, this did not bother parents, and it was not emphasized in their responses. It is clear from the answers that everyone involved had a positive experience.

### **Analysis of the third concert: "Sense-S" by Petra Strahovnik**

The third concert, held on September 30, 2023, featured the "Sense-S" composition by Petra Strahovnik. It was performed by the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Steven Loy. The uniqueness of the third symphonic concert lay in the addition of electronics and the performance of the magician Aljaž Šon. In the adapted space for a relaxed and comfortable experience for infants, toddlers, their parents and companions, the author also incorporated sound objects—balls emitting sounds. In this way, the audience became co-creators of the concert.

**Piccolo form:** Due to the (small) sample size of observers (5 pairs), Piccolo analysis is not meaningful.

**Parents' response:** Overall, all parents were satisfied with the concert. They rated the musicians/performers (98.8%) and the performance venue (88.8%) the highest. The concert proved to be a positive experience and had a positive impact on the children

(85.0%). They also liked the props (82.5%), and the duration of the performance seemed appropriate (80.0%). They rated the overall quality of the aesthetic experience lower (78.8%), but the music and the content of the musical piece were deemed acceptable (75.0%).

**Parents' feedback:** The majority of parents (5 out of 15) responded that they liked the play and the combination of sounds, including the heartbeat sound. They also highlighted sitting on the floor, the atmosphere, spontaneity, props for children, and the magician's performance, which added extra excitement to the event. Half of the children (8 out of 15) felt very good during the concert, 4 were calm/relaxed, and one was at ease. One girl, experiencing the event for the first time, was a bit "in a trance," and one parent noted that the child felt restless.

Seven parents felt excellent, comfortable, and pleasant during the concert. Four emphasized that they were relaxed. Three parents felt uneasy during the concert due to the crowded space. One parent expressed anticipation—what would happen. All parents (except one) provided positive responses regarding the concert's impact on their relationship with their children. They highlighted the concert's highly connecting, calming, and positive effect. During the concert, they cuddled, listened to music, and enjoyed themselves. Only one parent stated that the concert had no effect on their relationship.

Parents emphasized the desire for more such concerts, seeing potential in introducing the youngest audience to music, educating listeners, exposing children to different instruments and classical music. They suggested more short concerts and supported the idea of subscriptions, incorporating well-known classics (Mozart, Vivaldi, etc.). They also mentioned that focusing on individual instrument sounds, more melodic symphonic pieces, rhythmically expressive compositions, and greater interaction with musicians could be beneficial.

Regarding the question "What bothered you?" parents mentioned that the space was too small, making it difficult for children to see individual instruments; the number of props should match the number of children in the audience, as some were left without them and became upset; they also highlighted that the event was too long. Before the concert, parents wished for specific instructions/rules to be presented to them, as they were confused about what to expect from the event. They also suggested holding the event in the morning, to be more suitable for children.

The concert surprised most parents with children's reactions to specific sounds, their calmness, and diligence. They also appreciated the props, the magician, and the overall flow of the event.

On the last question "Would you like more such concerts?" 13 parents answered yes, and one answered no.

**Performers' feedback:** Nineteen performers filled out the questionnaire. Overall, the performers rated the entire event very poorly (47.8%). They felt very uncomfortable during the performance of the symphonic piece (45.6%), despite being well-prepared for the concert (68.2%). They considered the piece they performed very poorly (43.5%), and the duration of the symphonic piece was deemed inappropriate for children (41.2%). They believed that both adults and children reacted similarly to the concert (58.8%). Although their interaction with children was good (66.7%), the atmosphere in the hall was good at the beginning of the concert (74.4%) but only acceptable at the end (57.8%). They had a positive experience with the conductor's leadership (67.1%), and their contact with the conductor was also good (68.9%). They rated highest the orchestra's arrangement (71.1%) and the venue's equipment (82.1%).

Five performers answered that they liked the children's attendance the most, the proximity of the audience and performers, and the reaction or response of the children. Among other responses, they also highlighted the magician, confetti, and good attendance.

Performers had the most criticism regarding the choice of musical piece. They pointed out that the composition was unsuitable for children; they didn't receive much information about it; the instruments they blew into or tapped on played "distorted" sounds; the composition was tiring and uninteresting, as certain parts repeated too often... They did not feel comfortable during the concert, and the event was labelled as too long for children. One performer, who is also a mother, emphasized: "Unpleasant sounds, anxious sensations, a feeling as if I were in a mental health institution. As a mother, I did not want to bring my children to the concert!"

Regarding the last question (suggestions for improvements), most responses again referred to the choice of music. Performers expressed the desire to offer children a better musical experience. They also wished for more information about each piece, its content, and purpose. They mentioned that there was very little music in the symphonic part, and in this chaotic time they would like to play more pleasant sounds and melodies. Some responses also related to the organization of the event, as they had to wait (too long) between the rehearsal and the concert.

**Conclusions:** Parents and performers rated the preparation of the space and the orchestra's arrangement the highest. They also liked the props, although there were too few of them this time, causing individual children to be upset. Consequently, parents were nervous too. The interaction between children and performers was good, but parents emphasized that there were too many people, so certain children of the performers did not see well. Both groups were least convinced by the music and the content of the musical piece. The performers found the symphonic piece unsuitable for children. Parents and performers had many suggestions for improvements regarding the musical part. They mentioned that, in the future, they would like more contrasts, more rhythms and melodies, and, above all, instruments playing with their own sound. Both groups found the event too long.

## FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Based on the evaluation of symphonic concerts, the following findings can be summarized: Symphonic concerts for infants and toddlers have positively influenced the psychological wellbeing of both children and parents, as indicated by their responses and child observations. The satisfaction of both groups was evident, and positive effects manifested on emotional levels (relaxation, satisfaction, security), social levels (spontaneous creation of social interactions), cognitive levels (attention and concentration), and musical levels (rhythm, vocalization). Performers also perceived these aspects as significant and actively engaged in planning and thinking. The novelty and potential of this newly opened artistic space are encapsulated in the words of editor Gregor Pirš: "Adults 'followed' the children, thereby completely relaxing the atmosphere and opening a new perspective and emotional warmth: 'Contemporary symphonic music needs infants and toddlers, in terms of reflecting on humanity, returning to humanity, ... how we can reconnect with humanity and the mechanism of listening.'"

- **Responses of Musicians:** Musicians' responses varied greatly. It would be advisable to explain the purpose of such concerts to performers before implementation, prepare them for it, and consider their preferences regarding the music they perform.
- **Challenges for Music Creators:** Composing for the youngest presented a challenge that they were not accustomed to. Those who considered the developmental characteristics of the youngest achieved more positive responses from the children, less unrest among them, and consequently, less effort required from parents to calm, inspire, and soothe their children.
- **Importance of Coordination:** Exceptionally crucial is the coordination of all involved actors, including composers, performers, organizers, and experts, as they collectively exert the strongest influence on such events.
- **Parental Responses:** Parents responded with the utmost gratitude and satisfaction to the opportunity for listening in a relaxed and child-adapted setting. The need for such events is evidently substantial.
- **Key Success Factors:** The safe and comfortable space provided for parents and children to listen, along with the freedom for children to move around, emerged as the fundamental factor in the success of such events. Another influential factor was the opportunity for interaction with musicians and the connection between children and musicians, which excited both parties and influenced the gentle execution of compositions, even if the performers themselves were not fond of them.
- **Challenges for All Involved:** The entire situation posed a challenge for all involved, except for the children, who, within the context, could explore and respond to those elements of the experience that were most accessible and interesting to them, thanks to the safety and presence of caregivers.

## OVERALL EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the monitoring of the entire project, collaboration in the creation and execution of newly developed works has proven to contribute to:

- **Sensitization of Parents and Adult Caregivers to Children's Experiences:** Numerous surprises emerged regarding how children can calm down without the efforts of adults, how they show interest in the world around them, and how clearly and deeply they express their experiences of the world.
- **Sensitization of Artists:** Artists became more sensitive to what they perform, the sounds they bring to children, concerns about not offering pleasant sounds and music to children, enthusiasm for interaction with children during concerts, and curiosity in observing children's responses to radio works.
- **Dialogues in Art:** The entire process of creating a dialogue between creators, listeners, and experts/evaluators was a significant surprise. Where this collaboration was more extensive and intense, the works proved to be stronger and more holistic, addressing both children and adults more powerfully.
- **Interaction and Intent:** The sensitivity of the youngest to the intent of individual works was evident, with works being directed toward a specific goal or with less clearly defined purposes. A significant difference appeared between works based on sensitive monitoring and exploration of the children's world and those that focused more on the materiality of art.
- **Meaning, Significance, and Purpose of Creating for the Youngest:** One of the greatest surprises of the evaluation was the development of numerous fundamental questions related to creating for the youngest. These questions ranged from the nature of this process to specific technical frameworks and factors that such creation must consider. There was also creativity in seeking details of aesthetic experiences and the comprehensive integration of artistic messages into the world of intimate relationships between a child and their caregiver. It could even be said that such works have the greatest significance in creating a more delicate relationship between adults and their youngest.
- **Mutuality in the Relationship between Adults and Children and Considering the Child in Artistic Creation:** The mutual relationship between adults and children and the consideration of the child in artistic creation were emphasized.
- **Development of an Interdisciplinary Team:** Throughout the entire process, from creating webinars and radio plays to experimental listening and concerts for infants, an interdisciplinary team of professionals from various fields developed. Together with artists, they created a new field of exploration and creation known as relational art, providing a space for mutual sensitization and the establishment of connections.