

## THE SPREAD OF ZOLTÁN KODÁLY'S MUSIC EDUCATION PRINCIPLES IN THE WORLD

ANDREA ASZTALOS<sup>1</sup>

**SUMMARY.** The purpose of this study is to summarize the essence of Zoltán Kodály's music education philosophy and concept and to shed light on the presence of this music education concept in domestic and foreign music education in the 21st century. In the study, I present how music education based on Kodály's principles has been adapted in the USA, Great Britain, Ireland, Scotland, Greece, Netherlands, Australia, Japan, and China and how it flourishes even in the 21st century.

**Keywords:** Kodály Concept, music education, singing, music literature, adaptation of Kodály Concept

### Kodály Concept

Zoltán Kodály's approach to music education is usually referred to as the Kodály Method. However, Kodály himself did not construct a complete and detailed methodological process of music education, it is more accurate to speak of the Kodály Concept. The Kodály concept refers to the composer's written and oral instructions and educational ideas, as well as the exercises and music pedagogic works he wrote. These basic principles of music education were gradually formed, formulated, and practiced after Kodály turned his attention to music pedagogy around 1925.<sup>2</sup>

Zoltán Kodály's writings must always be placed in the historical context of the given era. When interpreting them, it must be considered that he always responded to the current problems, mistakes, and shortcomings

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD, Associate Professor, Head of the Music Department of the Juhász Gyula Faculty of Education of the University of Szeged. E-mail: [asztalos.andrea@szte.hu](mailto:asztalos.andrea@szte.hu)

<sup>2</sup> Liszt Academy of Music Kodály Institute website:  
[https://kodaly.hu/kodaly\\_en\\_kodaly/kodaly-concept-107384](https://kodaly.hu/kodaly_en_kodaly/kodaly-concept-107384)



of his own time and struggled to solve them. He always placed emphasis on current, new tasks and their solutions, during which he expanded the previous goals with new ideas. At the same time, the fundamental pillars of his concept did not change but served as a guiding thread, along which he identified more and more tasks to be solved and goals to be achieved. He symbolically called their long-term implementation a hundred-year plan. More than 50 years have passed since Zoltán Kodály's death, during which time the historical and cultural circumstances have changed significantly. However, Kodály's music pedagogy concept and its main pillars are still universal, authentic, and guiding.<sup>3</sup>

### **Music belongs to everyone!**

The main feature of Kodály's principles is that "Music belongs to everyone!"<sup>4</sup>; it applies to all children and all music students, wherever they live and study in the country. It follows from this that it can only function in a unified way, so both the content of the curriculum and the main features of the method used are the same. The essential goal of music education is to educate the whole person, develop the personality, and nurture the soul: "Life without music is incomplete."<sup>5</sup>; " Music is spiritual nourishment like nothing else. There can be no complete spiritual life without music. There is a realm of the soul that is illuminated only by music." <sup>6</sup> "Music is an eternal part of human culture. Without music, one's culture is incomplete." Therefore, "... general education must include music."<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Gábor Lilla. *Kodály's Principles in the Perspective of the 21st Century. Based on Zoltán Kodály's Writings and Speeches.* <https://kodalyhub.com/kodaly-s-principles-in-the-perspective-of-the-21st-century>

<sup>4</sup> Kodály Zoltán (1952). *Legyen a zene mindenkié! (Music Belongs to Everyone!)*. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I.)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Kodály Zoltán. *Közönségnevelés (Audience Education)*. 1958. In. Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I.)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Kodály Zoltán. *Mire való a zenei önképzőkör? (What is the Music Self-education Circle for?)*, 1944. In. Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I.)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Kodály Zoltán. *Beszéd a dunapataji művelődési ház avatásán (Speech at the inauguration of the cultural center in Dunapataj)*, 1966a. In. Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

## When should music education begin?

Kodaly initially testified that music education should begin as early as possible, nine months before the child's birth, and later further modified that idea: "When should music education begin? I replied: Nine months before the birth of the mother."<sup>8</sup> He also emphasized the importance of early childhood musical education: " Music training should begin in kindergarten so that the child learns the basic elements of music at an early age since education to music hearing can only be successful through this thorough work beginning at an early age."<sup>9</sup> It is of fundamental importance that during music education, the primary focus is on acquiring musical resources and not on teaching concepts and definitions: "Children should not collect concepts and definitions, but musical treasures. Its enumeration and systematic review will be dealt with later."<sup>10</sup> "What should be done? When teaching music in school, teach it in such a way that it is a beauty, not a hardship, for the student and instills a lifelong thirst for nobler music.... Often a single experience opens the young soul to music for the rest of his life. This experience cannot be left to chance: it is the school's duty to obtain it."<sup>11</sup>

## Singing

Kodály testified that singing is the most essential and obvious means of acquiring musical literacy: "...a more profound knowledge of music is based exclusively on singing."<sup>12</sup> "The human voice accessible to everyone, free, and still the most beautiful instrument can be the only soil of a general musical culture extending to the masses."<sup>13</sup> Let us meet the greats of music with the human voice and song, the most familiar instrument to everyone.

---

<sup>8</sup> Kodály Zoltán. A Jeunesses Musicales párizsi kongresszusán – Előadás (At the Paris Congress of the Jeunesses Musicales – Lecture). 1966b. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Nyilatkozat a "Fiatlok" című lapban (Statement in the "Youth" Magazine). (1941a). In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Bicinia Hungarica, I. Utószó (Bicinia Hungarica I. – Epilog). 1937a. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Gyermekkarok (Children's Choirs). 1929a. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Nyilatkozat a "Fiatlok" című lapban (Statement in the "Youth" Magazine). 1941a. In. Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Éneklő Ifjúság – Bevezető cikk a folyóirat első számában (Singing Youth - Introductory article in the first issue of the magazine). 1941e In. Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

That way, the masses, not just a privileged few, will be guided by music: "So what to do? Bringing larger masses into direct contact with real, valuable music. What is the best way to do this today? The choral singing."<sup>14</sup> "...a child should learn to read music through singing before being given an instrument."<sup>15</sup>

### **Folk Music and Art Music, Music Literature**

The children's musical mother tongue should be Hungarian folk songs and folk music; if they have mastered this, then they should turn to foreign musical material: "Folk song is the musical mother tongue of us all. Music instruction must begin with the folk songs we have grown up with since birth." Each country has a great variety of folk songs, very suitable for educational purposes. A gradual selection is the best material for introducing musical elements and making children aware of them.<sup>16</sup> Before we can try to understand others, we must understand ourselves. For this purpose, nothing is more suitable than folksongs. Moreover, knowing the folk songs of a foreign country is the best way to get to know foreigners. All these efforts aim to familiarize the students with and fall in love with the past, present, and future classics.<sup>17</sup> The pentatonic is also an introduction to world literature. The starting base should be pentatonic because "it is the key to much foreign musical literature, from ancient Gregorian chant to China to Debussy."<sup>18</sup>

Only the most valuable material should be taught, so let us lead children to masterpieces through masterpieces: "...only artistic value is appropriate for the child. All else is detrimental. An endless range of suitable masterpieces is available to schools."<sup>19</sup> "...no nation can be limited to its

---

<sup>14</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Vidéki város zeneélete (Music Life of a Country Town). 1937b. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Kodály Zoltán. A zenei írás-olvasás módszertana – előszó Szőnyi Erzsébet könyvéhez (The Methodology of Musical Reading and Writing - Preface to the book by Erzsébet Szőnyi). 1954. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Kodály Zoltán. A hiteles népdal szerepe a zenei nevelésben – Előadás, Interlochen, ISME Konferencia (The Role of Authentic Folk Songs in Music Education - Presentation, Interlochen, ISME Conference). 1966c. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Kodály Zoltán. A népdal szerepe a zenei nevelésben (The Role of Folk Songs in Music Education). 1966d. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Százéves terv (Hundred Year Plan). 1947. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Gyermekkarok (Children's Choirs). 1929a. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

songs."<sup>20</sup> "Get to know all the music that's valuable."<sup>21</sup> "We must open a gate to the great foreign masters, whatever nationality they are. They will only enrich us."<sup>22</sup>

There are, strictly speaking, only two kinds of music: good and bad. We must welcome with open arms good foreign music in appropriate doses since this includes the masterpieces of world literature without which we cannot live.<sup>23</sup>

### The Road to Musicianship

Active musical activity is essential at all levels of music education. The way to understand music is through musical activity and singing; listening to music alone is not enough.<sup>24</sup> In singing-music lessons, versatile, practical musical activities and music-making are necessary, and there is no place for "boring reasoning"<sup>25</sup><sup>26</sup> In order for someone to be a good musician, the most versatile practical musical activity (chamber music, choir singing) is necessary.<sup>27</sup> Kodály also emphasized the organic connection of music and movement, which must be present in singing-music lessons, e.g., in the

---

<sup>20</sup> Kodály Zoltán. A zeneoktatás társadalmi jelentőségéről – Nyilatkozat (On the Social Importance of Music Education – Statement). 1966e. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Százegy magyar népdal – Előszó (101 Hungarian Folk Songs – Introduction). 1929b. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Kodály Zoltán. A magyar karének útja (The Way of the Hungarian Choral Singing). 1935. In Bónis, F. (ed.) (1964a): In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Kodály Zoltán. A népdal szerepe az orosz és magyar zeneművészetben. – Előadás (The Role of the Folk Song in Russian and Hungarian Music. – Lecture). 1946. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Kodály Zoltán. A zeneoktatás társadalmi jelentőségéről – Nyilatkozat (On the Social Importance of Music Education – Statement). 1966e. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Ki a jó zenész? – Beszéd a Zeneművészeti Főiskola 1953. évi tanévzáró ünnepélyén (Who is a Good Musician? – Speech at the 1953 closing ceremony of the College of Music). 1953. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>26</sup> Kodály Zoltán. 333 olvasógyakorlat – Utószó az új kiadáshoz (333 Reading Exercises - Afterword to the New Edition). 1961. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>27</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Ki a jó zenész? – Beszéd a Zeneművészeti Főiskola 1953. évi tanévzáró ünnepélyén (Who is a Good Musician? – Speech at the 1953 closing ceremony of the College of Music). 1953. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

framework of singing games, as these enhance the social feeling and simultaneously perceive the rhythm with their whole body.<sup>28</sup>

According to Kodály, the way to get to know and understand music is through musical reading and writing: "Those who cannot read music are musically illiterate. "...Without literacy today, there can no more be a musical culture than a literary one."<sup>29</sup> "The way to get to know music is accessible to everyone: musical reading and writing. With this, everyone can be a part of great musical experiences."<sup>30</sup>

According to Kodály, children's sense of rhythm should be intensively developed in kindergarten, as they could become rhythm virtuosos by playing at this age: Rhythmic practice should be done much earlier and much more comprehensively than is customary these days and should be divided into two parts. ...two-part musical practice offers such a developmental tool about which, in unison, one cannot even dream. Moreover, once kindergarten will also contribute to rhythm training, musical reading in primary school will no longer be an illusion."<sup>31</sup> Rhythm should be the true empire of kindergarten. By the time the singing voice is developed, polyrhythmic play can turn any child into a true master of rhythm without great effort... with simple percussion instruments.<sup>32</sup>

Kodály believed that relative solmization is an aid to music reading and precise intonation, which also determines the tonal function of each note. "Finally, I mention relative solmization as an enormous help for music-reading and achieving pure intonation."<sup>33</sup> Relative solmization also determines the role of each note in the given tonality.<sup>34</sup> "The aural concept of syllables is more tangible and enduring than alphabetical letter names.

---

<sup>28</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Énekes játékok (Singing Games). 1937c. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>29</sup> Kodály Zoltán. A zenei írás-olvasás módszertana – előszó Szőnyi Erzsébet könyvéhez (The Methodology of Musical Reading and Writing - Preface to the book by Erzsébet Szőnyi). 1954. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>30</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Mire való a zenei önképzőkör? (What is the Music Self-education Circle for?). 1944. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Énekeljünk tisztán! – Előszó (Let's Sing Clear! – Preface). 1941b. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>32</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Zene az óvodában (Music in Kindergarten). 1941c. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Új célok felé (Towards New Goals). 1942. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Kodály Zoltán. A konzervatóriumi igazgatók koppenhágai tanácskozásán – előadás (Presentation at the meeting of the conservatory directors in Copenhagen). 1963. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

The syllable immediately conveys the tonal function, so the sense of function can develop alongside the sense of intervals."<sup>35</sup>

Part-singing affects the development of polyphonic hearing and the clarity of monophonic singing, so it is important to gradually and consistently start this as soon as possible.<sup>36</sup> "Part-singing and the abilities of musical hearing and perception, developing simultaneously, open the masterpieces of world literature for those who do not play an instrument. Furthermore, the masterpieces fulfill their goal only if they echo in the souls of millions."<sup>37</sup>

"In the first years, the songs taught by hearing are more difficult than the songs that are made conscious, solmized, and then written."<sup>38</sup> "...the elements of the theory are derived from the material that is already known."<sup>39</sup>

Culture cannot be passed on like an apartment, furniture, or clothing. Each generation must learn and experience it anew:

- "a well-trained ear – listening and singing skills
- a well-trained mind – musical understanding through music making and musicianship skills development
- a well-trained heart – emotional development and social skills
- a well-trained hand – musical performance skills"<sup>40</sup>

The essence of Zoltán Kodály's music pedagogy concept is that he places artistic education at the Center of the child's education, and with the development of musical skills realized through singing, he gives young people the opportunity to absorb artistic values and thereby develop the personality of the individual.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Énekeljünk tisztán! – Előszó (Let's Sing Clear! – Preface). 1941b. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>36</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Énekeljünk tisztán! – Előszó (Let's Sing Clear! – Preface). 1941b. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>37</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Tizenöt kétszólamú énekgyakorlat (Fifteen Two-part Singing Exercises). 1941d. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>38</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Megjegyzések a „Szó-Mi” népiskolai énektankönyv bírálóinak viszontválaszára (Comments on the Response of Critics of the "Szó-Mi" Folk School Singing Textbook). 1943. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>39</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Iskolai énekközzétással az egyetemes zenekultúráért – Nyilatkozat (With School Music Education for the Universal Music Culture – Declaration). 1966f. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>40</sup> Kodály Zoltán. Ki a jó zenész? – Beszéd a Zeneművészeti Főiskola 1953. évi tanévzáró ünnepélyén (Who is a Good Musician? – Speech at the 1953 closing ceremony of the College of Music). 1953. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

<sup>41</sup> Nemes László Norbert. *Az iskolai zeneoktatás válsága. (The crisis of school music education)*. 2016. in *Az iskolai zeneoktatás válsága* (mzmsz.hu)

## **National Core Curriculum (2020)**

Music education in Hungary is based on the principles of Zoltán Kodály's music pedagogy and national education. The developmental activities available to all students participating in public education rely primarily on singing. The aim of learning musical reading and writing, which is an important part of music education and is to be taught with the tool of relative solmization, is to develop an understanding and love of the value-centered musical mother tongue. The student's knowledge of music is initially based on the transmission and learning of folk music, Hungarian folk songs, and then dealing with high art is based on this. Singing and choral singing play a prominent role in classroom music education. It is necessary to provide protected time directly related to the lessons in order to ensure adequate school choir operation. The essence of the Kodály philosophy is singing in the community, as the students' knowledge in the singing class is rewarded with artistic, creative work. In the choir, under the guidance of the choir director, a group of students with different abilities creates a new community value that they could not create individually. Students learn to adapt, take responsibility, work devotedly toward a goal, and be demanding, disciplined, and considerate of each other.<sup>42</sup>

Zoltán Kodály's concept of music education is today the basis for public music education in Hungary and plays an important role in vocational education as well. However, the curriculum has a quantitative approach and tries to convey mostly unnecessary music theory and music history material precisely because of the one-sided interpretation of the concept of musical literacy.<sup>43</sup>

## **Development of musical educational materials in the spirit of the Kodály concept**

In recent years, several music educational material developments have taken place in Hungary in the spirit of the Kodály concept, which I will present below.

The Kodály HUB is a public, online knowledge center developed by the Kodály Music Pedagogy Institute of the LFZE. On this platform, in the music collection, there are professional materials for experience-based music teaching following the principles of Kodály music pedagogy. Furthermore,

---

<sup>42</sup> Nemzeti Alaptanterv (National Core Curriculum). 2020. In *Magyar Közlöny*, 2020. évi 17. szám, 407

<sup>43</sup> Nemes László Norbert. *Az iskolai zeneoktatás válsága. (The crisis of school music education)*. 2016. in *Az iskolai zeneoktatás válsága* (mzmsz.hu)

there is an opportunity to make contact between teaching colleagues, exchange information, and build the community. The events calendar includes domestic professional events related to music pedagogy.<sup>44</sup>

The Move mi Music application is a digital teaching aid for singing and music lessons developed by the instructors of the Kodály Institute of the Ferenc Liszt University of Music and the engineers of AutSoft Zrt., which effectively supports the development of the musical hearing of children studying in the lower grades of elementary school, musical writing, reading, and polyphonic skills. This program uses the tools of Kodály-based music pedagogy practice, the application of which makes classroom music lessons varied, playful and experiential. The program package is a framework the teacher can use to prepare tasks that can be done in class and at home. This digital technology supports the teacher's work but cannot replace it. When planning lessons, it is worth using this digital aid, wedged between the traditional methodological workflows (singing, games, circle games, rhythmic instruments), keeping the correct lesson planning proportions in mind. This training package is available for schools, not for individuals.<sup>45</sup>

The Kodály Institute of the LFZE carried out curriculum development and empirical research in the project. Active music learning with song and movement - methods and impact evaluation. (2016-2020). The aim of the research was to renew the practice of music pedagogy from the point of view of the teaching method in the spirit of the Kodály concept and develop methodological elements applicable to new models of active music learning and examine their effects. Two music teaching models were investigated in the lower grades of the primary school: Model 1: Creative singing games with rhythmic movement, Model 2: Adaptation of the Kokas pedagogy in classroom music teaching. The Subject Pedagogical Research Program of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences supported innovation and related research.<sup>46</sup>

In summary, in a well-led classroom music lesson, the activities are multidimensional: children sing, write sheet music, memorize, analyze musical form and harmony, improvise, listen to music, and play instruments. Since childhood can be considered a critical period from the point of view of brain plasticity, musical experiences gained in childhood positively affect intellectual development due to the multidimensional nature of musical activity.

---

<sup>44</sup> <https://kodalyhub.com/>

<sup>45</sup> <https://kodaly.hu/movemimusic>

<sup>46</sup> <https://aktivzenetanulas.hu/>

## **International interest**

In 1966, Kodály and his students (Erzsébet Szőnyi, Klára Kokas, Katalin Forrai, Helga Szabó, and Lajosné Nemesszeghy) gave a highly successful lecture at Stanford University in the United States, which generated ever-growing international interest in the concept of music education and the teaching methods developed by his students. Erzsébet Szőnyi, head of the Academy of Music then, was in charge of the music training of teachers coming to Hungary from abroad. The 1st International Kodály Seminar was held in Kecskemét in 1970 at the initiative of Zoltánné Kodály Sarolta Péczeli. In 1975, under the leadership of Péter Erdei, the Kodály Institute was opened in Kecskemét, where music pedagogues from abroad are still being trained in the spirit of the Kodály concept.<sup>47</sup>

## **Adaptation of the Kodály Concept in America**

In 1969, two Kodály centers were opened in America, on the west coast in Oakland at Holy Names University, and on the east coast in Boston: Kodály Musical Training Institute.

The Kodaly Center at Holy Names University provides training and resources for teachers, conductors, parents, and others interested in the musical development of children. Located on the campus of Holy Names University in Oakland, California, the center attracts students from around the world to develop their skills as musicians and learn how to apply Zoltán Kodály's philosophy in the chorus and in the classroom. The Kodály Center was founded in 1969 by Sr. Mary Alice Hein and is supported by the Ford Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The Center has earned an international reputation as one of the major centers for Kodály music education in North America. Alumni teach in Australia, Japan, Taiwan, Peru, Brazil, and the Philippines, as well as in the United States and Canada. The Kodály Center offers seminars and introductory classes, summer courses for professional development, and academic year certificate and degree programs for musicians and music educators. The master's degree program offers courses in solfege and musicianship, choral conducting, and choral music, taught by Hungarian faculty.<sup>48</sup>

The Kodály Music Institute provides professional development for music educators and promotes best educational practices. Inspired by the vision of Zoltán Kodály, the Kodály Music Institute, as an affiliate of the

---

<sup>47</sup> [https://kodaly.hu/kodaly\\_english](https://kodaly.hu/kodaly_english)

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.kodaly.hnu.edu/>

Kodály Educators Organization of America, supports the highest quality music education through education, artistic performance, advocacy, and research; promotes universal music literacy and lifelong music-making; and is dedicated to the United States national. Its mission is to preserve the musical heritage of the. The courses and degree programs are offered: Kodály Music Teaching Certificate Levels I, II, III, and IV; In-Person and Online Summer Seminar; Master of Education with Kodály Music Emphasis.<sup>49</sup>

The purpose of both Kodály centers is: to collect musical material suitable for the American environment; retrain teaching staff; primary school and kindergarten music education; science research work (transfer effect studies: e.g., reading and writing skills)

OAKE (Organization of American Kodály Educators) was founded in 1974. Its purpose is to promote Zoltán Kodály's Music for All initiative through the improvement of music education in schools. Inspired by the vision of Zoltán Kodály, the mission of the American Kodály Educators Organization is to support the highest quality music education, promote universal music literacy and lifelong music making, and preserve the musical heritage of the American people through teaching, artistic performance, advocacy, and research. Training as a "Kodály Teacher" is usually at the post-baccalaureate level, as part of a master's degree, or as a certificate. Several institutions throughout the United States offer this training. Each year, OAKE hosts a conference and organizes lectures, concerts, teaching demonstrations, and exhibits that provide new ideas and resources for music teachers interested in Kodály's concepts of music education. The National Conference Choir is composed of OAKE member students who are selected by national audition.<sup>50</sup>

### **Adaptation of the Kodály Concept in Europe**

Cecilia Vajda founded the British Kodály Academy. The Kodály Academy in the UK promotes the development of music education in the UK, following the teachings of Zoltán Kodály. The Kodály Approach (Musicality through Singing) provides the tools to develop the fundamentals of pulse, inner ear, good tuning, and sight-reading ability. With courses for everyone who wants to improve their singing, musicianship, and conducting skills, teachers will gain the skills and confidence to deliver music lessons at all levels: early childhood education, KS1, KS2, KS3, and even higher education and instrumental instruction, Develop the skills and confidence to deliver music lessons at all levels: teachers will gain the skills and confidence to

---

<sup>49</sup> <https://kodalymusicinstitute.org/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.oake.org/>

deliver music lessons at all levels. The structured and sequential learning process is based on understanding how musical skills and concepts are absorbed through practical activities and songs, using appropriate repertoire, from simple children's songs to complex art music. The BKA covers many aspects of teaching and musicianship, a variety of online and in-person courses and residential opportunities are offered: Kodály Musicianship Classes; Model Music Curriculum Course; Kodály Foundation Level Certificate; British Kodály Certificate of Professional Practice.<sup>51</sup>

The Kodály Society of Ireland was founded in 1993. Since then, it has created opportunities for national and international musicians, teachers, and educators to improve their skills, practice, and knowledge-based Zoltan Kodaly philosophy concepts. From basic to advanced, Kodály's courses offer a sequential and structured approach based on the tools, skills, and concepts of the highly developed programs used in Hungarian music schools. (Solfège Classes; Playful Music in the Primary Classroom) Its purpose is to develop individual musicianship through active learning strategies; to develop music teaching methods through singing, conducting, and musicianship (solfège); and to provide professional development and support for teachers. The mission is to promote Zoltán Kodály's concepts and strategies of teaching and learning through workshops, seminars, and courses. Development in music education is ongoing, and we bring the best and most important of these to their members.<sup>52</sup>

Christopher Bell founded the National Youth Choir of Scotland (NYCOS) in 1996. The National Youth Choir of Scotland held its first summer residential course in July, during which 24singers were invited to form the NYCOS Chamber Choir. NYCOS is an organization dedicated to encouraging youth to sing in Scotland. It provides opportunities for young people, teachers, and choir directors to support and develop choral singing throughout Scotland. (Online Kodály Musicianship Classes, Training for Music Practitioners, Kodály Summer School) The Kodály approach is used in many schools, universities, and choirs throughout Scotland as well as within NYCOS. Our Active Learning with Music program is directly tied to Curriculum for Excellence outcomes.<sup>53</sup>

The Kodály Conservatory of Music, located in Charandri, is internationally recognized as one of the best conservatories in Athens (Greece), founded in 1989 by its director, Michalis Patseas. The school is named after the great Hungarian composer and educator Zoltán Kodály.

---

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.kodaly.org.uk/>

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.kodaly.ie/>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.nycos.co.uk/#>

Professional music educators and renowned soloists make up the faculty. The Conservatory offers courses in classical and contemporary instrumental and vocal music, music theory, and ancient music in English and other languages. Tutors specializing in music for young children are designed according to the Kodaly Music Education System. Degrees and diplomas are fully recognized by the state in all music specializations. Vocational training according to the Kodály Music Education System.<sup>54</sup>

The Royal Conservatory of The Hague offers a master's specialization in music education according to the Kodály method from an international perspective (taught in English), which trains students to become experts in music education according to Kodály's concepts. In addition, students will acquire the knowledge and practical skills necessary to teach instrumental music and singing in schools and other settings.<sup>55</sup>

### **Adaptation of the Kodály Concept in Australia**

Founded in 1973 by Dr. Deanna Hoermann, The Kodály Music Education Institute of Australia Incorporated (Kodály Australia) an organization of people who aspire to music for all. They are united by the philosophy established by the Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály. Currently, there are about 1000 members in Australia, comprising the ACT, NSW, QLD, SA, VIC, and WA state chapters, as well as the Mackay and Townsville chapters, and the do-re-mi organization, which offers classes for young children. It also has members in New Zealand and Southeast Asia. The Australian Kodály Certificate is offered by the Institute in the areas of early childhood education, primary education, secondary education, and stringed instrument instruction. The Australian Kodály Certificate is also accepted as graduate study credit. The Australian Kodály Certificate (AKC) is the only fully accredited and nationally recognized teacher training program in Australia for the Kodály Concept. The course provides in-service classroom and studio music teachers with the skills and knowledge to deliver a sequential, cumulative, develop mental, aural-based music curriculum. Kodaly Australia is a national member of the International Kodaly Society and a partner in the Professional Associations Council of the International Society for Music Education (ISME).<sup>56</sup>

The Cuskelly College of Music offers courses for educators, singers, school students, and community members. A variety of courses help people from all walks of life to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for

---

<sup>54</sup> <https://kodaly.gr/home/en/>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.koncon.nl/en/programmes/master/music-education/masterspecialisation-musiceducationkodaly>

<sup>56</sup> <https://kodaly.org.au/>

effective teaching, learning, performing, or simply enjoying music. Taught by experts in their fields at home and abroad, internationally recognized programs include the Summer School Music Program (Brisbane) and the Australian Kodaly Certificate Programs in Perth, Malaysia, New Zealand, and Indonesia. In-service programs and workshops for teachers are also offered. Upon completion of courses in early childhood, primary, and secondary music classes, students can earn the Australian Kodály Certificate.<sup>57</sup>

### **Adaptation of the Kodály Concept in Asia**

In the 1960s, Hani Kyoko studied at the Academy of Music in Budapest, and after returning to Japan, she founded the Japanese Kodály Institute. They consider the retraining of teachers to be their most important task. About a thousand kindergarten teachers and teachers take part in the Institute's courses every year.<sup>58</sup>

According to Gao Jianjin (Director of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing), the essential principles of Chinese music education based on the Kodály concept are: music belongs to all Chinese; all children should have access to music education; Kodály believed that the human voice is the best tool for learning music, and this idea suits the Chinese people. Therefore, the new system defines musical competencies in four categories: 1. awareness of the role of music in one's life, 2. performing ability, 3. quality of emotional experiences gained through music, and 4. comprehensive knowledge of musical culture.<sup>59</sup>

The Kodály Point operates in the Hungarian Cultural Institute in Beijing, where hundreds of children learn music based on the Kodály concept. Further training courses are organized for Chinese music teachers. In addition, Hungarian master teachers teach at Kodály Point, using teaching materials prepared for Kodály Point.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> <https://cuskellycollegeofmusic.com/>

<sup>58</sup> *Kodály Mindenkié - dokumentumfilm a Kodály-módszer nemzetközi sikereiről (Kodály belongs to everyone - a documentary film about the international successes of the Kodály method)*. In <https://youtu.be/9VuZl8hW0l8>

<sup>59</sup> *Kodály Mindenkié - dokumentumfilm a Kodály-módszer nemzetközi sikereiről (Kodály belongs to everyone - a documentary film about the international successes of the Kodály method)*. In <https://youtu.be/9VuZl8hW0l8>

<sup>60</sup> Idem

## REFERENCES

- Gábor, Lilla. Kodály's Principles in the Perspective of the 21st Century. Based on Zoltán Kodály's Writings and Speeches. In <https://kodalyhub.com/kodaly-s-principles-in-the-perspective-of-the-21st-century>
- Kodály, Zoltán. Gyermekkarok (Children's Choirs). 1929a. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Százegy magyar népdal – Előszó (101 Hungarian Folk Songs – Introduction). 1929b. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. A magyar karének útja (The Way of the Hungarian Choral Singing). 1935. In Bónis, F. (ed.). 1964a. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Bicinia Hungarica, I. Utószó (Bicinia Hungarica I. – Epilog). 1937a. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Vidéki város zeneélete (Music Life of a Country Town). 1937b. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Énekes játékok (Singing Games). 1937c. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Nyilatkozat a "Fiatalok" című lapban (Statement in the "Youth" Magazine). 1941a. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Énekeljünk tisztán! – Előszó (Let's Sing Clear! – Preface). 1941b. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Zene az óvodában (Music in Kindergarten). 1941c. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Tizenöt kétszólamú énekgyakorlat (Fifteen Two-part Singing Exercises). 1941d. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Éneklő Ifjúság – Bevezető cikk a folyóirat első számában (Singing Youth - Introductory article in the first issue of the magazine). 1941e. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Új célok felé (Towards New Goals). 1942. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Megjegyzések a „Szó-Mi” népiskolai énektankönyv bírálóinak viszontválaszára (Comments on the Response of Critics of the "Szó-Mi" Folk School Singing Textbook). 1943. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

- Kodály, Zoltán. Mire való a zenei önképzőkör? (What is the Music Self-education Circle for?). 1944. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. A népdal szerepe az orosz és magyar zeneművészetben. – Előadás (The Role of the Folk Song in Russian and Hungarian Music. – Lecture). 1946. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Százéves terv (Hundred Year Plan). 1947. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Legyen a zene mindenkié! (Music Belongs to Everyone!). 1952. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Ki a jó zenész? – Beszéd a Zeneművészeti Főiskola 1953. évi tanévzáró ünnepélyén (Who is a Good Musician? – Speech at the 1953 closing ceremony of the College of Music). 1953. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. A zenei írás-olvasás módszertana – előszó Szőnyi Erzsébet könyvéhez (The Methodology of Musical Reading and Writing - Preface to the book by Erzsébet Szőnyi). 1954. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Igaz, hogy nem engedik énekelni a gyerekeket? (Is it True that Children are not Allowed to Sing?). 1956. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Közönségnevelés (Audience Education). 1958. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. 333 olvasógyakorlat – Utószó az új kiadáshoz (333 Reading Exercises - Afterword to the New Edition). 1961. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés I. (Retrospection I)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. A konzervatóriumi igazgatók koppenhágai tanácskozásán – előadás (Presentation at the meeting of the conservatory directors in Copenhagen). 1963. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Beszéd a dunapataji művelődési ház avatásán (Speech at the inauguration of the cultural center in Dunapataj). 1966a. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. A Jeunesses Musicales párizsi kongresszusán – Előadás (At the Paris Congress of the Jeunesses Musicales – Lecture). 1966b. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. A hiteles népdal szerepe a zenei nevelésben – Előadás, Interlochen, ISME Konferencia (The Role of Authentic Folk Songs in Music Education - Presentation, Interlochen, ISME Conference). 1966c. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.

- Kodály, Zoltán. A népdal szerepe a zenei nevelésben (The Role of Folk Songs in Music Education). 1966d. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. A zeneoktatás társadalmi jelentőségéről – Nyilatkozat (On the Social Importance of Music Education – Statement). 1966e. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- Kodály, Zoltán. Iskolai énekoktatással az egyetemes zenekultúráért – Nyilatkozat (With School Music Education for the Universal Music Culture – Declaration). 1966f. In Bónis, F. (ed.). *Visszatekintés III. (Retrospection III)*. Argumentum Kiadó, Budapest, 2008.
- \*\*\*. *Kodály Zoltán zenepedagógiai koncepciója (Zoltán Kodály's concept of music education)*. In Kodály Institute Website: Kodály Zoltán zenepedagógiai koncepciója | Zeneakadémia Kodály Intézet (kodaly.hu)
- \*\*\*. *Kodály Mindenkié - dokumentumfilm a Kodály-módszer nemzetközi sikereiről (Kodály belongs to everyone - a documentary film about the international successes of the Kodály method)*. In <https://youtu.be/9VuZl8hW0l8>
- Nemes László Norbert. Az iskolai zeneoktatás válsága. (The crisis of school music education), 2016. In Az iskolai zeneoktatás válsága (mzmsz.hu)
- \*\*\*. Nemzeti Alaptanterv (National Core Curriculum) (2020). In *Magyar Közlöny*. 2020. évi 17. szám, 407.
- <https://kodalyhub.com/> (Accessed: 10.12.2022)
- <https://kodaly.hu/movemimusic> (Accessed: 10.12.2022)
- [https://kodaly.hu/kodaly\\_english](https://kodaly.hu/kodaly_english) (Accessed: 10.12.2022)
- [https://kodaly.hu/kodaly\\_en\\_kodaly/kodaly-concept-107384](https://kodaly.hu/kodaly_en_kodaly/kodaly-concept-107384)(Accessed: 10.12.2022)
- <https://aktivzenetanulas.hu/> (Accessed: 10.12.2022)
- <https://www.oake.org/> (Accessed: 11.12.2022)
- <https://www.kodaly.hnu.edu/> (Accessed: 11.12.2022)
- <https://kodalmusicinstitute.org/> (Accessed: 11.12.2022)
- <https://www.kodaly.org.uk/> (Accessed: 11.12.2022)
- <https://www.kodaly.ie/> (Accessed: 12.12.2022)
- <https://kodaly.org.au/> (Accessed: 11.12.2022)
- <https://cuskellycollegeofmusic.com/> (Accessed: 11.12.2022)
- <https://kodaly.gr/home/en/> (Accessed: 12.12.2022)
- Royal Conservatoire The Hague:  
<https://www.koncon.nl/en/programmes/master/music-education/masterspecialisation-musiceducationkodaly> (Accessed: 12.12.2022)