

# Not a Torture but a Joy The Kodály Philosophy of Music Education

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## Aristotle – *The Politics*

Is music an education, amusement, or a pastime?

It participates in all three:

Amusement: relaxation, which is necessarily pleasant.

Pastime: pleasant and harmless, which fits into the cultivated life.

Education: pleasant and yet still a source of gain—the young should especially receive.

## Zoltán Kodály

1882 – Born in Kecskemét

1884 – Family moves to Galánta – becomes acquainted with folk-song and instrumental folk music.

1900 – Enters Budapest University, studying Hungarian and German literature.

Studies composition at the Academy of Music.

Graduate Thesis on strophic structure of folk music.

1905 – Begins collecting folk-songs.

1907 – Continues studies in Paris.

Becomes acquainted with the music of Debussy.

Teaches composition at the Academy of Music.

1910 – Works begin to appear in public.

1913 – Begins project for new encyclopedic collection of Hungarian folk-songs with Béla Bartók.

1918 – Director of Academy of Music.

1923 – *Psalmus Hungaricus* achieves international success.

1925 – Begins to focus on music education.

Leader in music education and the rebirth of choral music.

1927 – Begins to conduct his own works.

\*1929 – “Children’s Choirs” is published, outlining his ideas for music education in Hungary.

1951 – Head of the Ethnomusicological Section of Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

1967 – Dies in Budapest.

*A vast area of Hungarian children’s souls, a region that can only be cultivated by music, is wasteland today.*

- (Lois Choksy) The major goals of all Kodály training are:
  1. To develop musical literacy—the ability to think, read, write, and create with the traditional language of music;
  2. To impart a sense of cultural identity through use of the students’ own folk music heritage and to further the understanding of other peoples and cultures through knowledge of their folk music;
  3. To encourage the performance abilities of all students—to sing in classes and choirs, to participate in ensembles and orchestras—to use such participation in musical group as a way of enriching their lives;
  4. To make the great music of the world the property of the students.
  
- Preparation – Make Consious – Practice

\*The italicized headings for this presentation are quotes taken from this article.

## Rhythm Syllables

## Sol-fa Names and Handsigns

	Quarter Note/Eight Note “ta ti-ti”		ti
	Quarter Rest		la
	Half Note “too”		so
	Sixteenth Notes “tiki-tiki”		fa
	Syncopated Rhythm “ti-ta-ti”		mi
	Eight Note Followed by a Dotted Quarter Note “ti-tum”		re
	Uneven Sixteenth Notes “ti-tiki”		do
	Uneven Sixteenth Notes “tiki-ti”		
	Dotted Quarter Note Followed by an Eight Note “tum-ki”		
	Dotted Eighth Note Followed by a Sixteenth Note “tim-ki”		
	Scotch Snap or Lombard Rhythm “ki-tim”		
	Triplet “tri-o-le”		

- Sequencing based on the developmental stages of the child and the musical expressions of the folk music.

*Bad taste spreads by leaps and bounds...bad taste in art is a veritable sickness of the soul. In grown-ups this sickness is in most cases incurable. Only prevention can help. It should be the task of the school to administer immunization.*

- (Lázló Dobszay) “Kodály wanted to make the folksong the mother tongue; the natural musical expression closest to the child. He would have wanted to do this even if not one single child had showed any familiarity with these melodies when he came to the school or kindergarten.”
- (J. David Cooper and Nancy D. Kiger) The following items have an effect on a student becoming literate:
  - When they have a need that is meaningful and real.
  - Through interactions with peers and adults.
  - By making approximations of real language.
  - At varying rates and in various stages, even though they all go through similar phases of development.
  - By having the language modeled for them both directly and indirectly.
- Just as language depends on an oral tradition to support literacy, music must also depend on an oral tradition of musical selections best suited to the needs of the child.

*An instrumental culture can never become a culture of the masses.*

- (Lázló Dobszay) “Why did Kodály wish at all costs to strengthen the leading role of singing? One reason is that in this way he wanted to highlight the leading role of hearing or, as he put it, the ‘culture of hearing.’ ‘The extension of inner hearing is the ultimate object of any kind of special musical learning’ – he says. All our musical manifestations must be guided by an inner conception, by hearing, and by imagination, and this is trained by singing: ‘singing without any instrument, free singing, is the really deep training of the child’s musical faculties.’”
- Singing allows for the universality needed for effective music education. While instrumental education may be pursued as well, it must always be offered in tandem with the study of sol-fa.

*But the bad teacher may kill off the love of music for thirty years from thirty classes of pupils.*

- Quality music teaching takes years and years to achieve.
- Utah Fellowship of Local Kodály Specialists <https://ufolks.wordpress.com>
- BYU InterMuse Academy <https://intermuse.byu.edu>
- (Maria Montessori) “If we really aspire to better things, at spreading the light of civilization more widely in a given populace, it is to the children we must turn to achieve these ends.”

## The Songs

Great big house in New Or - leans, for - ty sto - ries high.\_\_\_\_  
Ev' - ry room that I've been in, filled with pump - kin pie.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 2/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics, ending with a long horizontal line under 'high'. The second staff contains the melody for the second line of lyrics, ending with a double bar line.

Went down to the old mill stream  
To fetch a pail of water,  
Put one arm around my wife,  
The other 'round my daughter.

Fare thee well my darling girl,  
Fare thee well my daughter,  
Fair thee well my darling girl  
With the golden slippers on her.

Informant: Pete Seeger, Mika Seeger and Rev. Larry Eisenberg, 1959. The game-play for this particular song may be found at <http://kodaly.hnu.edu/song.cfm?id=738>.

"Cuck - oo, who are you?" "I'm a bird." "Can you sing?"  
"Yes, I can." "Sing for me." "Coo - coo, coo - coo."

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics. The second staff contains the melody for the second line of lyrics, ending with a double bar line.

Informant: Nancy Whitaker, Holy Names University, 1975. The song is a call and response song, with one student closing his or her eyes and the other student singing in conversation. After the song is completed, the student with eyes closed guesses who the other voice has been.

This song can be paired with the *Allegro* from George Frederic Handel's *Organ Concerto in F Major HWV 295: The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*.

Let us chase the squir - rel, Up the hick' - ry, down the hick' - ry,  
 Let us chase the squir - rel, Up the hick' - ry tree.

Informant: Unidentified children, Buncombe County, NC, 1927. Game-play: The students stand in a circle, holding hands with partners—one partner on the inside of the circle; the other, on the outside. One set of partners raises their hands to create a standing bridge. As the song is sung the partners (all except the bridge) step to the beat around the circle. As each set of partners goes under the bridge they in turn stop stepping the beat and create their own bridge directly next to the opening from which they just exited. Thus the students begin to form a long tunnel as they continue to step the beat. As soon as the last set of partners enters the tunnel, the first bridge-partners drop hands and follow them into the tunnel. They are then followed by the second bridge-partners and so forth, creating a perpetual tunnel. The tunnel continues to wind around the room as the song is sung. More information and game-play possibilities can be found at <http://kodaly.hnu.edu/song.cfm?id=876>.

This song can be paired with Aleksander Gretchaninov's *Berceuse* as well as Charles Ives's *Illmenau*.

Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car - ry me home.  
 Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car - ry me home.  
 Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, Com-ing for to car - ry me home.  
 Com - ing for to car - ry me home.

I look'd o - ver Jor - dan, what did I see,— Com-ing for to car-ry me home?

A band of an - gels com-ing af-ter me,— Com-ing for to car-ry me home.

Swing low, sweet char - i - ot,— Com-ing for to car - ry me home.

Swing low, sweet char - i - ot,— Com-ing for to car-ry me home.

Informant: T.H. Burleigh (arranger). This piece was reportedly related to Antonín Dvořák while in America, who continuously asked to make sure that the flattened third was exactly how Burleigh's grandmother had sung it to him. This song allows for a wealth of musical expression, being particularly available for excellent melodic ostinato work—especially in the opening A section.

This song can be paired with T.H. Burleigh's wonderful arrangement, Florence B. Price's *Five Folksongs in Counterpoint: No 5. Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, and Antonín Dvořák's *Symphony No. 9 in E "From the New World"* (which makes use of it in the secondary theme of the first movement according to Mr. Burleigh).