

## The Kodály Concept of Music Education

Very simply the Kodály Concept could be summed up as the practice and belief in **Musicianship development through Singing**. Kodály educators believe that the learning process should start as early as possible through the learning and singing of unaccompanied songs and good art material.

A sequential learning process should operate with the main view that one proceeds from the simple to the complex by logical steps and that regular exposure to music is essential.

**Music for everyone** is a fundamental belief because music is such an uplifting experience...”It sheds light on those regions of the soul that cannot be reached by any other means” Zoltan Kodály.

Musicianship through singing should precede instrumental work and then continue alongside it once it has begun. Singing is fundamental to Kodály work because it is the finest means of music making, is in-built in mankind and is best way of ensuring a connection with the INNER HEARING, that most essential aspect of any musician.

The learning process works as follows:

1. Children start by learning a bank of selected songs which contain the first basic elements which they will need to learn....**unconsciously at first.**
2. Step by step each musical element is **made conscious** when it is right to do so, i.e. when the preparation work has been done fully at the unconscious stage.
3. The last stage sees the **reinforcing** of the element by consciously experiencing it in new material.

This cycle of **Unconscious...Conscious...and Reinforcing** is an ongoing growth of musical experience. The following list of musical skills can and should be all trained through the singing experience.

## SKILLS

Singing → Instrument → Performing

Memory work

Rhythm work

Coordination

Pitch Relationships → using Relative Solfa

Intonation → using handsigns

Multiple Hearing a) Harmonic b) Polyphonic

Form understanding

Improvisation → composing

Musical reading and writing

INNER HEARING development

Ensemble music making

The skills just listed are trained alongside the learning of musical elements. Only the best is good enough when it comes to teaching children. There are no short cuts in the teaching of music. “Those things not taught and learned properly in the early stages take their revenge on a musician later”...thus wrote Ildikó Herboly reflecting Kodály’s beliefs.

## Making the Most of Your Material

Learn how to exploit what good material has to offer, as this is what will make you a more effective teacher. Teach songs by rote and over a period of time do the following with them as part of a well organised teaching plan:

1. Sing the Song.
2. Sing and clap the rhythm of the song.
3. Sing the song, walk in a circle feeling the pulse of the song in the steps.
4. Sing the song, walk the pulse and clap the rhythm of the song.
5. Sing the Song and using a glove puppet “sing” the alternating lines.
6. Just clap the song with no audible singing. Sing the song in canon at two beats distance. (All Pentatonic material works in canon...Diatonic material might not.)
7. Sing the song and introduce Solfa with its handsign.
8. Sing the song and clap an Ostinato.
9. Clap the rhythm of the song and say the Rhythm Solfa
10. The teacher claps the rhythm of, or handsigns, a song from one of the pupils' repertoire and they have to recognise which one it is.

It is not the intention of this introduction to encompass the whole of the Kodály Concept of Music Education but to provide some starting points for teachers and musicians.