

Kodaly

Zoltan Kodály's aim was to teach musical literacy to all. He saw literacy as the ability to '*...hear what you see and see what you hear...performance reveals whether the instrumentalist understands what he is playing.*'

The Kodály approach to music education provides developing musicians experience and training in developing music literacy by singing and oral participation. It helps musicians internalize pitch and rhythm in a unique way – it is another “entry point” to help a music student reach their musical potential. Through a variety of singing games, carefully selected songs, and the use of visual aids and manipulatives, students gradually acquire a more refined sense of pitch and rhythmic vocabulary.

Pitches are represented by solfa syllables (do, re, mi...) and handsigns, helping to make pitch visible. The physical aspect of using handsigns also helps the young musician to notice the distance between different pitches (or intervals) as they sing. An understanding of pitch relationship through singing is likely to lead to better intonation when playing an instrument.

For beginning musicians, the early distinction is made between beat and rhythm and is constantly reinforced and practiced in simple songs and physical movement. Rhythm names such as “ta,” “ti-ti” and “tika-tika” are useful for the musician to internalize and read rhythms with increased fluency, as these rhythm syllables convey the actual length of the musical sounds.

Children learn to read and write music initially with stick notation (the rhythm with solfa symbols underneath) and then on the staff. Staff reading is initially done without a clef so that the children learn spatially the positions of the intervals without having to worry about sharps or flats. Gradually pitch names are introduced and eventually students learn to read in a variety of “do” positions (e.g., F-do, G-do, C-do). Melodic and rhythmic patterns are introduced sequentially through carefully selected traditional folk song material and classic children’s songs. Students learn to derive the rhythm and melody of these songs through guided practice at each lesson, and eventually practice rhythmic dictation of familiar patterns. Advanced Kodály students are introduced to recognizing the melodic structure and rhythmic patterns in themes of more refined classical repertoire.

Through vocal participation, students begin to develop their singing voice and their musicianship grows. Much the same as theory classes, it requires regular attendance at classes for progress to be made.

"The characteristics of a good musician can be summarized as follows:

1. *A well-trained ear,*
2. *A well-trained intelligence,*
3. *A well-trained heart,*
4. *A well-trained hand.*

All four must develop together, in constant equilibrium."

~Zoltan Kodaly