

The Kodaly Approach to Music Reading
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“Teach music in such a way that it is not a torture but a joy for the pupil; instill a thirst for finer music in him, a thirst that will last a lifetime” Zoltan Kodaly

In my opinion, Zoltan Kodaly and Shinichi Suzuki would have been great friends had they met. The essence of their philosophies is the same. They share the fundamental belief that music should be an integral part of every child's education and that music can change the world.

Zoltan Kodaly (1882-1967)

Prominent Hungarian composer and musician
Like Bartok, a collector of Hungarian folk music

His goal was to make his country musically literate
And to instill in everyone a love of music

He chose the human voice as his vehicle because the voice is “free and accessible to all”
Kodaly students learn reading and writing through singing

Kodaly said

“music is a spiritual food for everybody” (1966)

Kodaly believed that

Music education is the birthright of all children
Music is part of everyone's basic heritage
Music is necessary for human development
Children deserve only the best
Teaching styles must evolve from an understanding of how children learn

In his approach to music education he advocated:

Training the ear before eye
Letting the child experience the concept before addressing the intellect
Early training
Paying attention to the environment
Creating a trusting and joyful relationship between student and teacher
Building the child's self esteem through successful experiences
A step by step approach
Mastering each step
Preparing the child for success
Learning through games

Children learning from one another

He stated that

It is the teacher's responsibility to continually strive to become a better musician
It is the teacher's responsibility to continue researching to find new and better ways to teach.

In the Kodaly approach

The students accumulate a repertoire of songs through games and role models
Through varied repetition the students have the repertoire thoroughly internalized
They are then led to experience the written symbols for the sounds already in the ear
Melodic and rhythmic elements of music are presented sequentially
Form and analyses are later addressed

Kodaly advocated a natural learning process (common to Kodaly and Suzuki)

Ear
Experience
Read and write
Analyze

Kodaly advocated the use of:

Solfege, using moveable do (or tonic solfa) developed by John Spencer Curwen, based on the
"Norwich sol-fa" system, created by Saah Ann Glover
Handsigns, invented by John Curwen
Rhythm syllables developed by Chev e
Stick notation

Reading and writing evolve from repertoire already in the ear using music that the student has
already sung: "known repertoire"

Little by little the student is led to discover the same concepts in music that has not been heard or
performed (in other words, sight singing); "unknown repertoire"

Kodaly's ultimate goal: to make his country musically literate. To train students to be able to
read with the ear

**"To see the score and hear it
To hear music and see it**

**Train the ear to see
Train the eye to hear"**

*Kodaly Selected Writings in which he quotes Schumann's preface to Album for the Young.