

2008

Nov. 25th

Carrie Elliott (050014)

## **[KODALY? ORFF?]**

Early Years Music Methods 65:364

Dr. S. Scott

The Kodály and Orff methods are two popular approaches to teaching elementary music. Zoltan Kodály was a composer and educator who collected authentic Hungarian folk songs with Béla Bartok. Kodály did not actually create a comprehensive method but rather generated principles to use in music education. After Kodály's death, his followers produced the method known today as Kodály. Thirteen years after Zoltan Kodály's birth, Carl Orff was born in Germany. Through his connection with the Gunther dance troupe, Orff designed the instruments that most people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century recognize his name from. He wrote *Musik für Kinder* to help the dancers, and instrumentalists that accompanied them, on the barred "Orff instruments." After being asked to help compose music for the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, Orff realized his musical ideas could be applied to children. Orff-Schulwerk was born from this insight. Today, the process applied in schools is similar to the original theory. This paper will compare and contrast the Kodály and Orff methods in terms of their philosophies, strategies, and tools as well as examine how to implement the ideas of Kodály and Orff into the elementary music classroom. There are other pedagogies used for teaching elementary music, including Dalcroze, Comprehensive Musicianship (CM), Music in Education (MIE), and Education through Music (ETM), but Kodály and Orff are the most prevalent.

The philosophies of Kodály and Orff both focus on the development of children by exposing them to the beauty and artfulness of music. Kodály's main theme is that music is for everyone, not only the elite, and that by teaching children high quality songs of their own heritage, children will develop to the best of their abilities. Orff also believes in beginning with one's own cultural materials but his method allows advancement into any

kind of music. Orff's premise is that in fostering personal musical growth, a sense of community will be encouraged and music can live for students. Both methods use the sound-before-symbol approach as Kodály considers experience before notation critical and Orff recommends experiencing first, intellectualizing second. Kodály is vocally oriented as "If I had to express the essence of this education in one word, that word would be singing" (Choksy, 2001, p. 336). Orff focuses on the whole musical experience and feels that body instrumentation is more important than singing as it is more natural and requires less skill. The instrumentarium that made him famous follows body instrumentation and singing because the barred instruments are outside of children's bodies. Both philosophies are still relevant to elementary music classes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Strategies between the Kodály and Orff methods vary more than the philosophies do. Both agree that learning should begin with the familiar and advance towards the abstract. The two processes use the pentatonic scale before the diatonic scale. The fourth tends to be sung sharp and the seventh flat, so when they are removed, so are their difficulties. The interval between the fourth and the seventh is awkward to sing which is another reason why Kodály eliminates it. Orff removes the two pitches because they are problematic while improvising and can cause unpleasant combinations. Kodály and Orff both advocate the sound-before-symbol approach and that one should gain music vocabulary aurally and orally. Both begin with materials from students' heritages. The difference is that the Orff process expands to include all music.

The two methods uses strategies that delay the use of instruments, but Kodály waits until evidence that the mastery of musical literacy through singing is apparent whereas Orff

just postpones instruments until basic skills are developed. Winters (1970) reasons in regards to Kodály, "an instrument is only to be taken up when reading has already been mastered; otherwise the sound will become associated with the handling of the instrument" (p. 18). Both believe that music education should be a social event and create well-rounded individuals. Kodály teaches musical reading and writing from the beginning, whereas Orff does not until students begin to learn the recorder around Grade 5.

Kodály's strategies are organized in sequences. Sol-fa introduction moves through So-me-la-do-re-la,-do'-so,-fa-te-fe-ta-si. Bennett (2005) provides a listing of songs that can be used to teach solfege. The pentatonic scale is taught before the major and minor, which are followed by modal scales like Dorian, Phrygian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, and Lydian. Intervals begin with the perfect (fifth, octave, and fourth), then the major intervals are introduced, the minor intervals, and lastly the diminished and augmented intervals. First, the treble clef is established, followed by the bass clef, and then the various C clefs. During each step of the Kodály sequences, the next stage is introduced subconsciously but is not advanced to until the current step is fairly well mastered. The previous steps are reinforced constantly while learning those concepts further along the sequence. Erzebet Szonyi (1973) provides a complete listing of all the musical elements and the order they are to be taught in.

Orff Schulwerk strategies have a much less detailed sequence of rhythm, melody, and improvisation. Speech patterns are used as the basis for rhythmic development. Then body instrumentation (stomp, patsch, clap, and snap) is utilized to further explore rhythm. Melody begins the same as Kodály does with sol-me-la and then completes the pentatonic

with do and re. Next, the diatonic major is formed and finally church modes. Harmony is discovered through simple drones and ostinati. These eventually proceed to chord changes with I-V and I-IV-V. Winters (1970) implies that Kodály's use of vocal improvisation is equivalent to Orff's focus on instrumental improvisation. Students that are able to improvise competently are the ultimate goal of the Orff Schulwerk process. Cincinnati Classical Public Radio (2008) recognizes, "As frightening as improvisation seems to be to adults, it is freeing to children. No rules!" Orff believed that children found security in repetition, which is why ostinati is such an important tool to use. Frazee (1987) lists several types of ostinati used in the Orff process: movement, speech, sung, and instrumental. The Kodály method makes a distinction between the teaching and learning processes. The teaching procedure is prepare – make conscious – reinforce – assess, where as the students progress through hear/perform – infer/derive – hear/construct/notate – read – create.

Tools also differ between the Kodály and Orff methods. Kodály relies more on traditional games and folk dances where as Orff encourages free, uninhibited movement. Kodály uses only the best music whether it is authentic folk music or classical art music. The original Hungarian folk songs that Kodály uses are homogenous and free of outside influences. Sinor (1986) proposes that while originally studying the strophic form of Hungarian folk songs, Kodály "realized that this treasure was in peril as society became more and more urban" (p. 34-35). Comeau (1995) observes that Kodály composed many songs in this Hungarian folk manner to exemplify his concepts when he could not find suitable illustrations. The Kodály system is harder to use with North American folk music,

as it is younger and thus influenced by English, Scottish, Irish, German, African American, Hispanic, and several other cultures.

One difference in tools is that the Orff instruments are one of the ultimate goals of the Orff process whereas Kodály chooses not to leave the vocal register. Kodály teachers spend a lot of time instructing how to read and write music where as Orff teachers take a more kinaesthetic approach to classroom instruction. Jeter (2008) suggests that Orff's usage of active learning is a great vehicle for teaching music.

It is impossible to try to combine all facets of the Kodály and Orff methods but elementary music classes will benefit from the addition of these methods' philosophies, strategies, and tools. It would be fruitless to attempt a merger when Orff uses accompanied rhythmic movement to any type of music and Kodály uses only unaccompanied singing of folk songs and great art music. Kodály requires its structured sequence, which is contrary to Orff's free exploration. Kodály is considered a method suitable to be mixed with curricula where as Orff is a way of life and not a method.

One can apply the Kodály and Orff philosophies, strategies, and tools to an elementary music classroom in several ways. At one end of the spectrum is a Kodály-only curriculum and at the other is a teacher who bases the lessons solely on Orff's ideas. Aspects of the two programs can be successfully integrated by imaginative and talented instructors, but Bacon (1970) feels this "leaves too much to chance and is too haphazard for the average public school situation" (p. 17). Lois Choksy's *Teaching Music in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2001) compares and contrasts the Kodály and Orff methods, Jaques-Dalcroze, and Comprehensive Musicianship. This book is a good resource to consider when deciding

whose philosophy fits one's own philosophy best. Choksy (2001) describes the goals and functions (in terms of creating, moving, singing, playing, musical reading, writing, performing, and listening) of the four options, and this might give teachers an idea of what combination of methods they would like to pursue.

A Kodály specific work that suggests how to implement its ideas is *The Kodály Method I: Comprehensive Music Education* (2002) by Lois Choksy. This book lists a repertoire of songs that complement the topics to be taught at each age level. For instance, "Hot Cross Buns" and "Rain, Rain, Go Away" can be used for rhythm in Grade 1 as they emphasize the quarter note or "ta". Each grade level also names songs for listening, which will be analyzed in the next grade level. Rhythmic and melodic learning are categorized into chart form by month with specific outcomes to teach. In Grade 1 music in November, the teacher should prepare the learning of higher and lower pitches, make the children conscious of the highest and lowest notes of a song, and reinforce the fact that higher and lower pitches exist by singing songs in different keys.

Books to reference with an Orff point of view are Jane Frazee's *Discovering Orff* (1987) and Arvida Steen's *Exploring Orff* (1992). Frazee (1987) lists the expectations for each grade in terms of grouping, vocabulary, rhythm, notation, accompaniment, melody, and listening. Steen (1992) provides sample lesson plans that follow the presentation, exploration, conclusion, and evaluation process of Orff Schulerwerk. Steen also includes a curriculum goals grid that suggests what rhythm, melody, texture, harmony, and form topics should be considered in each grade. *Exploring Orff* notes which ideas are to be made conscious and which are for experience only.

The application of Orff appeals to teachers who prefer flexibility in selecting and developing materials to suit their students. Shamrock (1997) advises, “Orff flourishes best in a natural setting without much cultivation” (p. 41). The Orff design uses different routes to reach the same goals. Echo clapping, singing, and playing are three Orff methods that can be applied to elementary music classes as well as higher-level classes. Pattern repetition and “walking the beat” are two more techniques that are useful for learning the difficult pieces at any level. Through using the Orff instruments, one finds a natural entrance into multicultural music. Shehan Campbell and Scott-Kasner (2006) suggest studying “improvised drumming traditions of Ghana, xylophone music of Zimbabwe, and percussion music of China” (pg. 55). Repetition is a major focus of Orff, and Szonyi (1973) notes that nervous children might not demonstrate their ability when it is their turn to, but rehearsal will enhance their sense of security and display more accurately what they can do.

Kodály can also be employed in the higher level grades. Turpin (1986) notes, “band and orchestral directors have long stressed the need for their ensembles to sing individual instrumental part to develop musicianship” (p. 58). By being able to sing scales in their head, students are able to play on their instruments more in tune. The Kodály hand signs are also a very efficient mode of instruction. In chorus, Kodály offers teachers with warm-ups and skills to manoeuvre through difficult passages. Using the hand signs, major, minor, church modes, scales, and intervals can be rehearsed and then put back into their original context. The hand signs and absence of the piano enable teachers to save their voices and not shout directions. Kodály is useful when teaching new songs and recommends emphasising the lyrics when they are interesting or beautiful. If there is a difficult melody

of difficult words, they can be taught separately by beginning with teaching the melody with solfege and then adding the words to the piece. When a new rhythm appears in a song, Kodály suggests using echo clapping or reading the rhythm from stick notation. Activity songs are learned best by repetition as children play the game. Boshkoff (1991) reminds teachers to select material they enjoy because “the joy of singing is contagious and songs that teacher likes will be appreciated more readily by students” (p. 34).

Both Kodály and Orff strongly emphasize early introduction to music. The younger the students are the more open they are to exploring, singing, and listening to other musics. Szonyi (1973) notes, “children reared on major and minor modes later find the pentatonic strange and exotic, and therefore difficult to learn.” (p. 44) Kodály recommends beginning to teach music when children start to develop their own. Kodály also suggests that the music language is acquired in the same timeframe as a student’s speaking language. Russell-Smith (1967) writes, “musical notation is considerably easier to read than any language, yet, similarly, it represents sound” (p. 43).

One aspect that Kodály and Orff differ on is the teachers. The Capital University website remarks that Kodály feels that in order to be a great teacher one must not only be an exceptional musician, but also a scholar. Sinor (1986) notes that pre-school teachers in Hungary are required to have had four years of music instruction and be able to sing, sight-read, and play music. Frazee (1997) suggests that Orff also has high expectations, but his musician/pedagogues are only required to be creative enough to find their own paths to his goals.

Both the Kodály and Orff methods can be used to increase students' learning whether through a structured program or a new way of looking at elementary music. The philosophies, strategies, and tools of each are important to consider when planning to implement either Kodály or Orff into the classroom. Both philosophies focus on the developing child, but Kodály is more vocally oriented whereas Orff employs the entire body instrumentarium. Strategies are similar but Kodály is extremely sequenced by category and grade while Orff is based upon free advancement toward the ultimate goals. Tools are also more specified in the Kodály program, which only accepts first-rate compositions, compared to Orff, which encourages use of all musical materials. The application of Kodály and Orff to the elementary music classroom also varies. Books like Choksy (2002) *The Kodály Method I: Comprehensive Music Education* provide an outline for inserting Kodály into the music program and Jane Frazee's (1987) *Discovering Orff* presents ideas of how to incorporate the Orff philosophy. Teachers need to remember that by trying to fully merge the Kodály and Orff ideals, the programs are compromised. Aspects of each can be used, but educators should choose which best fit their program and their learners. Some students will benefit from the structured Kodály curricula and others will profit from the liberty of Orff. Considering new additions and options for early years music class never hurts, and society always needs to be mindful of its children's growth. As Kodály said, "I would advise my young colleagues, the composers of symphonies, to drop in sometimes at the kindergarten, too. It is there that it is decided whether there will be anybody to understand their works in twenty years' time" (Bónis, p. 151).

### References

- Bacon, D. (1970). Kodály and/or Orff? [electronic version]. *Music Educators Journal*, 56(8), 17-18.
- Bennett, P. D. (2005). So, why sol-mi? [electronic version]. *Music Educators Journal*, 91(3), 43-49.
- Bónis, F. Ed. (1974). *The selected writings of Zoltan Kodály*. London: Boosey & Hawkes.
- Boshkoff, R. (1991). Lesson planning the Kodály way [electronic version]. *Music Educators Journal*, 78(2), 30-34.
- Capital University. (2008). *The Kodály philosophy*. Retrieved October 8, 2008 from:  
<http://www.capital.edu/3413/>
- Choksy, L. (2000). *The Kodály method I: Comprehensive music education*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Choksy, L. (2001). *Teaching music in the twenty-first century*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Cincinnati Classical Public Radio, Inc. (2008). *Orff 101*. Retrieved October 8, 2008, from:  
<http://www.classicsforkids.com/teachers/training/orff101.asp>
- Comeau, G. (1995). *Comparing Dalcroze, Orff and Kodaly: Choosing your approach to teaching music*. Vanier, ON: Centre Franco-Ontarien de Ressources Pédagogiques.
- Fraee, J. (1987). *Discovering Orff: A curriculum for music teachers*. New York: Schott.
- Jeter, D. (2008). *The Orff Process*. Retrieved October 8, 2008 from:  
<http://www.musicstaff.com/Lounge/article5.asp>
- Jordan-DeCarbo, J. (1997). A sound-to-symbol approach to learning music [electronic version]. *Music Educators Journal*, 84(2), 34-37+54.

- Russell-Smith, G. (1967). Introducing Kodály principles into elementary teaching [electronic version]. *Music Educators Journal*, 54(3), 43-46.
- Shamrock, M. (1997). Orff-Schulwerk: An integrated foundation [electronic version]. *Music Educators Journal*, 83(6), 41-44.
- Shehan Campbell, P. & Scott-Kasner, C. (2006). *Music in childhood: From preschool through the elementary grades*. Boston: Shirmer.
- Sinor, J. (1986). The ideas of Kodály in America. *Music Educators Journal*, 72(6), 32-37.
- Steen, A. (1992). *Exploring Orff: A teacher's guide*. New York: Schott.
- Szonyi, E. (1973). *Kodály's principles in practice: An approach to music education through the Kodály method*. New York: Boosey & Hawkes.
- Turpin, D. (1986). Kodály, Dalcroze, Orff, and Suzuki: Application in the secondary schools [electronic version]. *Music Educators Journal*, 72(6), 56-59.
- Winters, G. (1970). The Kodály concept of music education [electronic version]. *Tempo*, 92, 15-19.