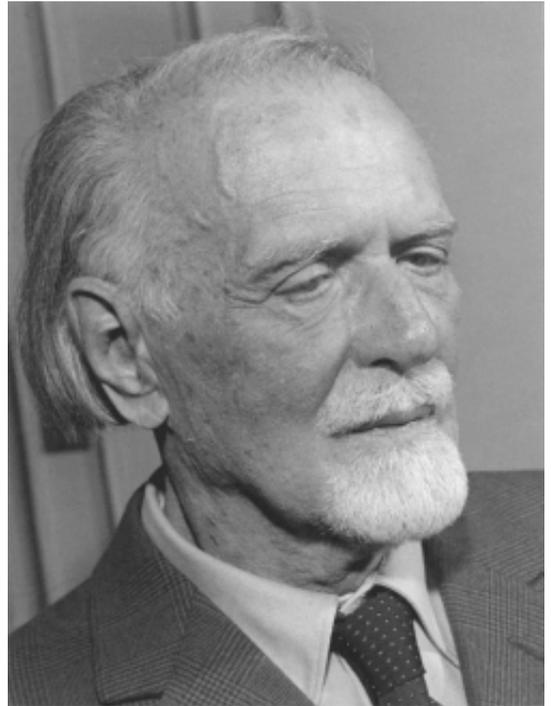


## ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

David C F Wright DMus

Zoltán Kodály was born on 16 December 1882 in Kecskemet, Hungary. He spent a lot of time in his childhood in Galanta and Nagyszombat. His father was an amateur musician and Zoltán learned the violin as a child and sang in the cathedral choir. From the age of ten to eighteen he composed much music. He entered the Liszt Music Academy in 1900 studying composition with Hans Koessler and had other academic studies at the Etvos College and at the Peter Pazmany University dealing with languages and linguistics. In 1904 he made visits to Bayreuth, Munich and Salzburg and, the following year, met Bartok and Emma Schlesinger who was to become his wife. This was also the first year of his collecting Hungarian folk songs.



In 1906, he submitted his dissertation, *The Strophic Structure of Hungarian Folk Songs*. In October there was the premiere of his *Summer Evenings* for orchestra and the *Hungarian Folk Songs*, the first ten were by Bartok and the second set by Kodály.

In 1906 and 1907, he continued his studies in Berlin and Paris. He had successfully gained his PhD in languages and linguistics. He studied with Charles Widor in Paris and, for a while, was interested in Debussy. In the autumn of 1907, Kodály became professor of composition at the Music Academy in Budapest.

In 1908, he made visits to Switzerland and Italy.

On 17 March 1910, he enjoyed a composers evening. On 29 May there were performances in Zurich of his *Quartet no 1 Op 2*, *Piano Pieces Op 3* and the *Sonata for cello and piano Op4*. He was 27. He married Emma on 3 August and collected folk songs from Transylvania.

In 1914, he completed his *Duo for violin and cello Op7* and, in 1915 his amazing *Sonata for solo cello Op 8* the most challenging and stunning work for cello, *The Six Songs* known as *Lost Melodies*, appeared in 1906 as *Op 6*.

Between 1917 and 1919 he was active as a music critic.

On 7 May 1918, he had his second composers evening in Budapest in which his opuses 7, 7, 8 and the *String Quartet no 2 Op 10* were performed. In 1919, he was the Deputy Director of Music at the Music Academy but there was trouble and he resigned and investigation took place complete with disciplinary action. He refuted accusations and won his case and was re admitted to the Music Academy in 1921, the year that saw the premiere of his *Two Songs Op 6*. The Academy was not interested in folk songs and did not approve of Kodály collecting them nor regarded them as an important part of Hungarian heritage.

The world premiere of his first great masterpiece, *Psalmus Hungaricus Op 13*, took place of 19 November 1923. There were also concerts celebrating the union of Buda and Pest. Two years later on 2 April, there was a series of concerts of choral works for children at which genre Kodály was

sensationally good. On 18 June 1926, there was the first foreign performance of *Psalmus Hungaricus*. This was in Zurich.

On 16 October there was the first performance of the opera *Hary Janos* at the Budapest Opera House. The suite from this opera was premiered in Barcelona on 24 March 1927. On the 20 April that year Kodály made his debut as a conductor in Amsterdam performing his *Psalmus Hungaricus* and in November, he made his first visit to England.

In 1929, he worked extensively with children's choirs formulating his teaching methods. His works with choir are truly amazing such as *Norwegian Girls*, *Jesus and the Traders*, *Ode to Liszt*, *Ave Maria*. The following year he visited his birthplace and Toscanini and the New York Philharmonic performed *Summer Evening* on 3 April. Kodály was now a lecturer at Peter Pazmany University. He completed his *Matra Pictures* for mixed choir and Fritz Busch premiered the orchestral version of *Dances from Marosszek* another work of tremendous appeal, magnificent orchestration and the Dorati version is highly recommended.

His second opera, *The Spinning Room* was premiered in April 1932 at the Budapest Opera and later that year there were concerts to mark his 50th birthday. His amazing gift for orchestration is shown in his exciting *Dances from Galanta* first performed in Budapest on 23 October 1933. In 1934, he became a member of the National Literacy and Artistic Committee and completed a short but impressive choral work *Jesus and the traders*. Another 'religious' work, the profoundly satisfying *Te Deum*, was premiered in St Matthias Church on 2 September 1936. The following year, much of his Hungarian folk music appeared and, on 23 November 1939, Mengelberg conducted the *Peacock Variations* in Amsterdam. It had been commissioned by the Concertgebouw Orchestra.

On 6 February 1941, his vivacious *Concerto for orchestra* was premiered in Chicago.

On 14 May 1943, he was elected associate member of the Hungarian Academy of Arts and Sciences. Honours kept coming his way.

In 1945, while Budapest was still under siege his superlative *Missa Brevis* was performed in the cloakroom of the Budapest Opera House. Kodály stayed in Budapest throughout the war. The 16 January 1946 was the date in which he was elected President of the Hungarian Committee. 1946 and 1947 saw his first visit to America and his first visit to Soviet Russia.

In 1947, he was designated Honorary Citizen of Kecskemet. From 1947 to 1950 he was the President of the Hungarian Academy of Arts and Sciences and, in 1950, founded the ethnomusicological branch in the Academy which, in effect, was the promotion of Hungarian folk music and its valuation. By 1951, the first volume of the Archive of Hungarian folk music was produced and his own *Kallo Folk Dances* were performed.

In August 1954 Emma broke her leg and Kodály spent time with her in hospital and actually lived there for some days. He was a caring, compassionate man.

On 18 December 1955, there was the premiere of his *Hymn to Zrinyi* and he organised concerts of Bartok's music during 1955 and 1956. In October 1956, he left Budapest because of the Uprising and returned in January 1957. He called for amnesty for those condemned in the Uprising. This was another example of his fundamentally good character. As a consequence, we cannot understand how Solti was so hateful towards him but that is part of this conductor's personality. Solti was called the Screaming Skull. Solti criticised Kodály's life style since this composer was a vegetarian and liked to be bare-footed whenever appropriate. Solti hated anyone having more fame than he did. Kodály was honoured, well-respected and greatly admired and deservedly so. For his 75th birthday, Budapest University gave him an honorary doctorate.

In 1958, he became a member of the Belgian Academy of Sciences. On 22 November his wife of 49 years died. On 18 December 1959, he married a 19 year old student Sarolta Preczely. In 1960, he visited England and received an honorary doctorate from Oxford University. In the summer he supervised recordings of his work. On 1 December, he went into hospital following a heart attack. In August 1961, he was elected President of the International Folk Music Committee in Quebec. On 16 August at the Lucerne Festival he attended the premiere of his Symphony.

1962 saw his 80th birthday celebrations in Budapest and across the world.

The dedication of the new building of the Kecskemet Primary School where he delivered a speech in 1964. He was elected honorary president of the International Society for Musical Education in Budapest. In April 1965 he received the Herder Prize in Vienna and he made his second visit to the USA.

His last completed work *Laudis Organi* was given in Atlanta in June 1966 a splendid with an impressive organ part and some gorgeous ethereal singing.

He died of a heart attack on 6 March 1967. He was a truly great composer and his contribution to music cannot be valued.

Zoltán Kodály was also an educationalist and teacher and I am grateful to a friend in Hungary for supplying details of the Kodály method which is being used all over the world.

The Kodály Method, also referred to as the Kodály Concept, is an approach to music education developed in Hungary during the mid-twentieth century by Zoltán Kodály. His philosophies regarding education served as inspiration for the method, which was then developed over a number of years by his associates.

Kodály became interested in the music education of children in 1925 when he overheard some students singing songs that they had learned at school. Kodály was appalled by the standard of the children's singing, and was inspired to do something to improve the music education system in Hungary. He wrote a number of controversial articles, columns, and essays to raise awareness about the issue of music education. In his writings, Kodály criticized schools for using poor-quality music and for only teaching music in the secondary grades. Kodály insisted that the music education system needed better teachers, better curriculum, and more class time devoted to music.

Beginning in 1935, along with his colleague Jenő Ádám, he embarked on a long term project to reform music teaching in the lower and middle schools by actively creating a new curriculum and new teaching methods, as well as writing new musical compositions for children. His work resulted in the publication of several highly influential books that have had a profound impact on musical education both inside and outside his home country.

Kodály's efforts finally bore fruit in 1945 when the new Hungarian government began to implement his ideas in the public school. Socialist control of the educational system facilitated the establishment of Kodály's methods nationwide. The first music primary school, in which music was taught daily, opened in 1950. The school was so successful that over one hundred music primary schools opened within the next decade. After about fifteen years roughly half the schools in Hungary were music schools.

Kodály's success eventually spilled outside of Hungarian borders. Kodály's method was first presented to the international community in 1958 at a conference of the International Society for Music Educators (I.S.M.E.) held in Vienna. Another I.S.M.E. conference in Budapest in 1964 allowed participants to see Kodály's work first-hand, causing a surge of interest. Music educators from all over the world travelled to Hungary to visit Kodály's music schools. The first symposium dedicated solely to the

Kodály method was held in Oakland, California in 1973; it was at this event that the International Kodály Society was inaugurated. Today Kodály-based methods are used throughout the world.

Using these principles as a foundation, Kodály's colleagues, friends, and most talented students developed the actual pedagogy now called the Kodály Method. Many of the techniques used were adapted from existing methods. The creators of the Kodály Method researched music educational techniques used throughout the world and incorporated those they felt were the best and most suited for use in Hungary.

The Kodály Method uses a child-developmental approach to sequence, introducing skills in accordance with the capabilities of the child. New concepts are introduced beginning with what is easiest for the child and progressing to the more difficult. Children are first introduced to musical concepts through experiences such as listening, singing, or movement. It is only after the child becomes familiar with a concept that he or she learns how to notate it. Concepts are constantly reviewed and reinforced through games, movement, songs, and exercises.

The Kodály Method incorporates rhythm syllables similar to those created by nineteenth-century French theoretician Emile-Joseph Chêvé. In this system, note values are assigned specific syllables that express their durations. For example, quarter notes are expressed by the syllable ta while eighth note pairs are expressed using the syllables ti-ti. Larger note values are expressed by extending ta to become ta-a or "ta-o" (half note), ta-a-a or "ta-o-o" (dotted half note), and ta-a-a-a or "ta-o-o-o" (whole note). These syllables are then used when sight-reading or otherwise performing rhythms.

The Kodály Method also includes the use of rhythmic movement, a technique inspired by the work of Swiss music educator Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. Kodály was familiar with Dalcroze's techniques and agreed that movement is an important tool for the internalization of rhythm. To reinforce new rhythmic concepts, the Kodály Method uses a variety of rhythmic movements, such as walking, running, marching, and clapping. These may be performed while listening to music or singing. Some singing exercises call for the teacher to invent appropriate rhythmic movements to accompany the songs.

Rhythmic concepts are introduced in a child-developmentally appropriate manner based upon the rhythmic patterns of their folk music (for example, 6/8 is more common in English than 2/4 so it should be introduced first). The first rhythmic values taught are quarter notes and eighth notes, which are familiar to children as the rhythms of their own walking and running. Rhythms are first experienced by listening, speaking in rhythm syllables, singing, and performing various kinds of rhythmic movement. Only after students internalize these rhythms is notation introduced. The Kodály Method uses a simplified method of rhythmic notation, writing note heads only when necessary, such as for half notes and whole notes.

The Kodály Method uses a system of movable-do solfege syllables, in which, during sight-singing, scale degrees are sung using corresponding syllable names (do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, and ti). The syllables show function within the key and the relationships between pitches, not absolute pitch. Kodály was first exposed to this technique while visiting England, where a movable-do system created by Sarah Glover and augmented by John Curwen was being used nationwide as a part of choral training. Kodály found movable-do solfege to be helpful in developing a sense of tonal function, thus improving students' sight-singing abilities. Kodály felt that movable-do solfege should precede acquaintance with the staff, and developed a type of shorthand using solfege initials with simplified rhythmic notation.

Scale degrees are introduced in accordance with child-developmental patterns. The first Kodály exercise books were based on the diatonic scale, but educators soon found that children struggled to sing half steps in tune and to navigate within such a wide range. It is thus that the pentatonic scale came to be used as a sort of stepping stone. Revised Kodály exercises begin with the minor third (so-mi) and then, one at a time, add la, do, and re. Only after children become comfortable with these pitches are fa and ti

introduced, a much simpler feat when taught in relation to the already established pentatonic scale. Kodály stated that each nation should create its own melodic sequence based upon its own folk music.

Depiction of Curwen's Solfege hand signs. This version includes the tonal tendencies and interesting titles for each tone.

Hand signs, also borrowed from the teachings of Curwen, are performed during singing exercises to provide a visual aid. This technique assigns to each scale degree a hand sign that shows its particular tonal function. For example, do, mi, and so are stable in appearance, whereas fa and ti point in the direction of mi and do, respectively. Likewise, the hand sign for re suggests motion to do, and that of la to so. Kodály added to Curwen's hand signs upward/downward movement, allowing children to actually see the height or depth of the pitch. The signs are made in front of the body, with do falling about at waist level and la at eye level. Their distance in space corresponds with the size of the interval they represent. The hand signs were featured in the 1977 film, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

Kodály Method materials are drawn strictly from two sources: "authentic" folk music and "good-quality" composed music. Folk music was thought to be an ideal vehicle for early musical training because of its short forms, pentatonic style, and simple language (2). Of the classical repertoire, elementary students sing works of major composers of the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic music eras, while secondary-level students sing music from the twentieth century as well.

Kodály collected, composed, and arranged a large number of works for pedagogical use (Young 1964:83). Along with Béla Bartók and other associates, Kodály collected and published six volumes of Hungarian folk music, including over one thousand children's songs. Much of this literature was used in Kodály Method song books and textbooks. High quality music was needed in short and simple forms in order to bridge the gap between folk music and classical works. For this purpose, Kodály composed thousands of songs and sight-singing exercises, making up sixteen educational publications, six of which contain multiple volumes of over one hundred exercises each. Kodály's complete pedagogical works are published collectively by Boosey & Hawkes as *The Kodály Choral Method*.

Studies have shown that the Kodály Method improves intonation, rhythm skills, music literacy, and the ability to sing in increasingly complex parts. Outside of music, it has been shown to improve perceptual functioning, concept formation, motor skills, and performance in other academic areas such as reading and maths.

#### Orchestral Works

- Ballet Music

- Concerto for Orchestra

- Dances of Galánta

- Dances of Marosszék

- Four Dances from Children's Dances (transcript for orchestra)

- Háry János Suite

- Minuetto serio

- Summer Evening

- Symphony

- Theatre Overture

- Variations on a Hungarian Folksong 'Felszállott a páva' [Peacock]

#### Chamber Works

- 3 Chorale Preludes, J. S. Bach, trs. for cello and piano

- Adagio (3 versions: violin-piano, viola-piano, cello-piano)

- Duo for violin and cello (Op. 7)

- Epigrams for double bass and piano

Gavotte for 3 violins and cello  
Háry: 6 Easy Pieces, transcript for 2 clarinets and piano  
Háry: Intermezzo for violin and piano  
Hungarian Rondo/Old Hungarian Marching Songs for string orchestra, two clarinets, two bassoons  
Intermezzo for String Trio  
'Lute' Prelude in C Minor (Schm. 999) J. S. Bach, for Violin and piano  
Prelude and Fugue in E flat minor, Book I, J. S. Bach, for cello. and piano  
Romance Lyrique, cello and piano  
Rondo from the 5th violin sonata, Joseph Haydn, arranged for junior string orchestra (2 violins and violoncello)  
Sonata for cello and piano (Op. 4)  
Sonatina for Violoncello and Piano  
String Quartet No. 1 (Op. 2)  
String Quartet No. 2 (Op. 10)  
Trio Serenade for 2 Violins and Viola (Op. 12)  
Valse (transcript for piano and violin]

#### Solo Instrumental Works

Ballet Music (piano)  
Capriccio (cello)  
Children's Dances (for piano)  
Dances of Galánta (for piano)  
Dances of Marosszék (for piano)  
Epigrams for organ  
Epigrams for piano  
Fantasia Cromatica, J. S. Bach (transcript for viola solo)  
Háry: 3 Pieces from Háry for piano  
Low Mass for organ/Organoedia ad missam lectam  
Méditation sur un motif de Claude Debussy (piano)  
Organ Prelude (for Pange Lingua)  
Pange Lingua for organ  
Piano Music, Op. 3: Nine Piano Pieces; Valse  
Seven Piano Pieces (Op. 11)  
Sonata for Solo cello (Op. 8)  
Spinning Room (piano version)  
Te Deum of Buda Castle (piano)

#### Solo Voice With Piano Accompaniment

16 Songs (Op. 1)  
20 Hungarian Folksongs (1-10 Bartók, 11-20 Kodály)  
Eight Little Duets  
Epigrams  
Epitaphium Joannis Hunyadi  
Five Mountain-Cheremis Folksongs  
Five Songs (Op. 9)  
Four Songs  
Háry: voice-piano version  
Himfy Song - Revelation of Love  
Hungarian Folk Music I-X (1917-1932); XI (1964)  
Kálló Double Dance  
Seven Songs/Belated Melodies (Op. 6)  
Three Songs (Op. 14)  
Two Songs (Op. 5)

Solo Voice With Organ Accompaniment

Advent Song  
Communion/ Admonitiones Diaconi  
Hungarian Mass

Solo Voice With Orchestral Accompaniment

5 Songs of Béla Bartók (Op. 15)  
Katie Kádár (Mother listen) with small orchestra  
Three Songs (Op. 14)  
Two Songs (Op. 5)

Children's and Women's Choruses

5 Tantum Ergos  
A Christmas Carol  
A Song of Faith  
Angels and Shepherds  
Angels' Garden  
Ave Maria  
Bell Ringing  
Birthday Greeting  
Christmas Dance of the Shepherds  
Dancing Song  
Drop Down, Dew  
Epihany  
Evening Song  
Falcon  
False Spring  
Fancy  
Four Italian Madrigals (1. Chi vuol veder, 2. Fior scoloriti, 3. Chi d'Amor sente, 4. Fuor de la bella caiba)  
Geneva Psalm No. 150  
Giddy-up, Horsey  
God's Blacksmith  
Gopher Trap  
Gypsy's Lament  
Hair-raising  
Have Good Courage  
Hippity, Hoppity  
Hymn to King Stephen  
King Ladislaus' Men  
La Marseillaise  
Ladybird  
Mountain Nights I-IV.  
On the Feast of St. Agnes  
Orphan I am  
Password  
Saint Gregory's Day  
See the Gipsy Munching Cheese  
Seven Easy Children's Choruses  
Song of Peace  
Straw Guy  
The Boys from Harasztos  
The Colt  
The Deaf Boatman  
The Leveret

The Shepherd  
The Swallow's wooing  
The Voice of Jesus  
The Wedding of the Mole  
Three Folksongs from Gömör  
To Singing Youth  
Two Folksongs from Zobor  
Whitsuntide  
Wine, Sweet Wine

#### Male Choruses

Evening Song  
God's Mercy  
Have Good Courage  
Hey, Andy Büngözd  
Hymn to King Stephen  
Justum et tenacem — Unshakeably (Horatius)  
La Marseillaise  
Lines in Memory of András Fáy  
National Song  
On the Changes in France  
Password  
Songs from Karád  
Stabat Mater  
The Bachelor  
The Colt  
The Peacock  
The Ruins  
The Son of an Enslaved Country  
The Voice of Jesus  
The Watchman of Nándor  
To Live or Die  
Two Male Choruses

#### Choruses For Mixed Voices

A Song For Ever  
A Song of Faith  
Adoration/Hymn to the Sun  
Advent Song (Veni, Veni, Emmanuel)  
An Ode for Music  
An Ode. The Music Makers (O'Shaughnessy)  
Annie Miller  
Battle Song  
Beseeching/Ernest Prayer  
Birthday Greeting  
Cohors generosa  
Communion/ Admonitiones Diaconi  
Evening  
Evening Song  
Geneva Psalm No. 121  
Geneva Psalm No. 50  
Greeting for John Horatii Carmen II – To the Muse of Beautiful Song  
Hymn to King Stephen

I will go look for death  
Invocation of Peace  
Jesus and the Traders  
La Marseillaise  
Laudes organi (with org.)  
Mátra Pictures  
Media vita in morte sumus  
Miserere (Psalm 50 [not Geneva]) – double chorus  
Mohács  
Norwegian Girls  
Ode to Franz/Ferenc Liszt  
Pange lingua  
Password  
See the Gipsy Munching Cheese  
Sík Sándor's Te Deum  
Song of Gömör  
Stabat Mater  
The Aged  
The Arms of Hungary  
a The Forgotten Song of Bálint Balassi  
The Hungarian Nation  
The Peacock  
The Ruins  
To Singing Youth  
To the Transylvanians  
Too Late  
Transylvanian Lament  
Zrínyi's Hymn/Appeal

#### Choral Works Accompanied by an Instrument

5 Tantum Ergos (certain movements with organ acc.)  
Ave Maria (org.) – women's  
Christmas Dance of the Shepherds (recorder)  
Geneva Psalm No. 114 (org.) – mixed  
Hymn to King Stephen (org.)  
Jesus and the Children (org.) – children  
Laudes organi (org.)- mixed  
Missa brevis (org.)  
Pange Lingua (org.) – mixed  
Soldier's Song (trumpet and side drum) – male  
Wainamoinen Makes Music – harp (piano)

#### Choral Works Accompanied by Orchestra

At the Grave of Martyrs  
Kálló Folk Dances  
Missa brevis  
Offertorium/Assumpta est Maria  
Psalmus Hungaricus, Op. 13  
Te Deum of Buda Castle

#### Canons

A Song of Faith  
Aurea libertas

Six Funny Canons  
Solfa Canon  
Sorry!/Three-Part Canon

Stage Works

Háry János, Op. 15  
Spinnery/Spinning Room

Educational Compositions

15 Two-Part Singing Exercises  
22 Two-Part Singing Exercises  
24 Little Canons on the Black Keys  
33 Two-Part Singing Exercises  
333 Reading Exercises  
44 Two-Part Singing Exercises  
55 Two-Part Singing Exercises  
66 Two-Part Singing Exercises  
77 Two-Part Singing Exercises  
Bicinia Hungarica I–IV.  
Chamber Music Exercise  
Children's Dances (12 Pieces)  
Epigrams  
Let Us Sing Correctly  
Nursery Songs/Songs of Little People  
Pentatonic Music  
Tricinia  
Twelve Little Piano Pieces

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