

Musical Development in American Students

EDUC 313: Elementary General Music Methods

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967) was a Hungarian composer who lived at approximately the same time as Orff, but who created his own method on music education. According to Mason (2012) his Hungarian philosopher “believed that children have the right to a musical education,” (Mason 2012, p. 28) and wanted to “provide all children with the best musical experiences possible that incorporated the music from the children’s ‘mother tongue,’” (Mason 2012, p. 28). One of the biggest caveats of teaching a Kodály based curriculum in America is that it isn’t Americanized in any way. Autio (2013) addresses this in his reflection that “the answer for starting with *sol-mi* has always been clearly laid out by instructors: “children seem to develop in the same musical pattern the world over” (Choksy, 1999, p.11) and all begin with songs based on the falling minor third,” (Autio, 2013, p. 26). The problem with this is that most American folksongs do not start with Sol-mi, and therefore this is highly less beneficial for American students.

References

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JOHN FEIERABEND

Feierabend (1952) is “considered one of the leading authorities on music and movement development in childhood,” (“John Feierabend” 2019). Feierabend (2018) said that the most important part of any music education is that the students learn to be tuneful, beatful, and artful. He said that the best way to do this is to start teaching music to children as early as possible because the most musical development happens before age 7. To best teach children, Feierabend created three distinct curriculums for music education: *Conversational Solfege*, *First Steps in Music for Infants and Toddlers*, and *First Steps in Music for Preschool and Beyond*. Feierabend is still mostly prominent in the United States, however his theory is much younger than his predecessors. Part of John Feierabends success can be accredited to Kodály from where he took inspiration but comes mostly from the time in which he lives. Feierabend has access to better scientific equipment, which allows for more precise and in-depth studies, and his results and ideas can spread rapidly through social media. However, because Feierabend did have access to this technology his methods and curriculums are naturally better suited to meet the needs of American children in the music classroom, as well as in the home.

Similarities & Differences

- Kodály focuses on Hungarian folk songs and believed in singing first. His curriculum starts with school-age children.
- Orff focuses on instrumental improvisation for musical exploration. His curriculum starts with school-age children.
- Feierabend (2018) focuses on American folk songs and becoming “tuneful, beatful, and artful.” His curriculum starts with infants.

Future Research

- Effects of listening to different genres of music on musical development during developmental years—not musical interest
- Can the Orff-Schulwerk approach be implemented early enough to produce as well-developed musicians as the Feierabend method?

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Spring 2020

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CARL ORFF

Carl Orff (1895-1982) created, as Beegle and Bond (2016) explained, that the Orff-Schulwerk approach fosters that “musical imagination and creativity is present in every person and can be developed through singing, saying, moving, and playing,” (Abril & Gault 2016, p. 25). Orff’s curriculum provided use of instruments, hence the “Orff” instruments found most commonly in elementary school music rooms. However, his curriculum must be “cumulative, sequential, integrated, and progressive...moving from simple to the complex,” (as cited in Southcott 2012, p. 22). This allows little room for differentiation which is problematic because “differentiated musical experiences allow the struggling learner, the advanced learner, and the on-grade-level learner to experience appropriate levels of challenge as the work to master essential information ideas,” (Standerfer 2011, p. 44). According to John Feierabend (2018), musical development needs to start before age 7, but what Orff perceived to be extremely important isn’t being applied until much later in student’s lives.



Picture from feierabendmusic.org