

PLAYING WITH SOUNDS. EARLY AND PRESCHOOL MUSIC EDUCATION THROUGH KODÁLY APPROACH AND EDWIN GORDON’S MUSIC THEORY

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Abstract: The early introduction of children to the art of music is a recommendation in numerous curricula and approaches to music education. However, there is a need for a more profound understanding and the development of clear guidelines for working with music educators in children's educational institutions. In addition to guidance for music educators, it is crucial to persuade parents, the primary source of musical stimulation for their children, to engage with their children's musical development. Children in early childhood express natural curiosity in exploring the sounds of their environment. The incorporation of music into the natural surroundings of children can stimulate their interest in singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments. Many scholars engaged in research on children's music education are interested in understanding how to develop children's musical abilities to support their understanding of musical language.

Keywords: music education; methods and approaches of music education in early and preschool age; musical skills; preschool age

INTRODUCTION

This study is based on the theories of Zoltan Kodály and Edwin Gordon. Both authors believe there is a connection between music and language, and music education should begin as soon as possible after a child is born. Gordon's view is that music literacy should involve developing inner singing and inner hearing, sequencing tasks, and developing musical thinking. Kodály's approach is to use songs related to the musical folklore of the native

culture as the main activity in music education. Gordon asserts that music education should be included in the discourse on early education because children at this age possess an innate capacity to acquire, copy, learn, and understand their native language. Music can also be presented as a musical language acquired through the same auditory “channel” as speech. The scientist also draws on the latest neuroscience research and asserts that the most productive period for music education is from newborn babies to 5-year-olds, as this is the most active period for building connections in the cortex. The brain is most actively developing by age 5, and the neural cells and “pathways” not being used may remain inactive. Consequently, it is imperative to provide the child with an array of stimuli, encompassing visual, auditory, tactile, and motor modalities, to facilitate the development of all sensory systems and the neural pathways transmitting information from the senses to the brain and vice versa.

Both authors place great importance on the role of parents and the family environment in the musical education of the newborn. Kodály, concerned with ethnomusicology and the preservation of folk culture, posits the role of folk songs as the most appropriate basis for introducing the language of music. Gordon believes that tonal and rhythmic patterns can be presented to newborns the same way speech is. Initially, children listen to the speech of relatives, they begin to imitate individual sounds they hear, and then they produce words, to associate the “images” of these words with their sound, meaning, and significance. The period from active listening, “cooing”, “babbling”, and pronouncing individual words to forming a sentence with meaning is prolonged and requires active models and adult supervision. At the outset, children construct a vocabulary augmented by their developing comprehension skills. Subsequently, they become acquainted with the written symbols employed to record words. This is followed by acquiring reading skills, which enables them to comprehend written texts. Between the ages of five and seven, children develop writing skills that provide the opportunity for them to create and record their original texts shortly. A similar sequence can be observed in the process of acquiring musical skills. Initially, children perceive aural stimuli, then they sing tones, and finally, learn to read, record, and create their compositions. Along the way, they develop an understanding of musical phrases and their components, including organization, climax, and intonation.

The authors posit that parents and caregivers play a pivotal role in the early musical education of children. They further argue that educators should train and persuade adults of the benefits of early childhood music education, which can begin in the family setting before children are enrolled in early childhood education programs. In his work, “A Music Learning

Theory for Newborns and Young Children”, Edwin Gordon offers parents guidance in initiating their children’s music education without worrying about their lack of musical expertise. The author reassures parents that even though they are not writers, mathematicians, and orators they introduce their children to speech, literature, and mathematical relationships without issues. They should therefore approach musical communication in the same way, namely as a means of communication and a moment in daily life that creates joy and interconnection with family members. In this manner, the child can comprehend that music, as a constituent of the arts, and life are not mutually exclusive, but rather, ‘art is life and life is art’ (Gordon, 2003: 4). The following counsel from Zoltan Kodály as a professor of harmony and composition at the Academy of Music of Hungary, he is well-known for his advice to his students: to prioritize the musical education of kindergarten children as a means of ensuring concert halls are filled with musical audiences in the coming decades. The aforementioned counsel remains pertinent in the present era, as it assumes the role of music education not only as a conduit for comprehending musical art but also as a vehicle for safeguarding and safeguarding indigenous music. In the absence of both professional musicians and an educated populace, musical culture will inevitably decline. Investment in education can also facilitate the perpetuation of musical and cultural heritage.

Furthermore, this study supports the thesis of the need for active parental involvement in the musical formation of the individual. A significant number of researchers who have studied both tribal and contemporary cultures have concluded that adults engage in singing with children for a variety of purposes, including to soothe them, to lull them to sleep, to delight them, and to introduce them to incidents and worthy persons from the history of the ethnic group. It is not uncommon for adults to embrace and cradle children, or to sit with them on their knees and engage in rhythmic, melodic vocalizations. This interaction facilitates the acquisition of both linguistic and musical skills, while also fostering an emotional bond between parent and child. When the content of these vocalizations is aligned with historical or moral themes, children gain an understanding of the historical and value systems that shape their community. This is the most natural and unproblematic way of interacting with infants that is found both in people who still lead primitive lifestyles today and in civilized societies (Quarello et al., 2014).

The necessity of incorporating music into early learning and the potential for interdisciplinary interactions with other educational fields in preschool will be the subject of another research project by the author. It therefore will not be discussed in depth in this text. However, the author will share

valuable pedagogical experience from observing that involving children in activities related to song performance is enjoyable and emotionally engaging. However, in order to comprehend and comprehend musical language, teachers must utilize musical games, dancing, and instrument playing to achieve the aforementioned musical literacy in learners. Once students have acquired the requisite musical vocabulary, including listening, performance, and reading skills, they will be able to comprehend and reproduce musical notation. This will facilitate the development of musical literacy, which is a prerequisite for the formation of musical culture.

The purpose of this study is to attract the interest of future music educators to the described theories, thereby persuading parents to engage in active support of their children's musical development. Teachers should endeavor to transcend the traditional format of concert presentations, which tend to prioritize the display of virtuosity and spectacle. While these elements may be effective for achieving a high level of engagement, their continued prevalence in music education programs may not be sufficient for achieving depth and breadth of musical knowledge. While spectacularity during a concert is not incompatible with the search for depth of musical learning, it is important to consider the need to change undergraduate, credit-bearing training programs for current teachers to focus on the methods and approaches of music education. Effectiveness has been achieved, and now the efforts of all institutions related to music education should be directed towards adapting it for society and the individual. Raya Kovacheva posits that the current focus of Bulgarian music curricula is not on singing, but rather on fostering a general musical culture and competencies for expression through creativity (Kovacheva, 2024: 12). It is crucial to recognize that the use and understanding of musical language plays a pivotal role in cognitive development, comparable to that of any other language, including spoken languages. Furthermore, the acquisition of musical and digital languages provides students with the opportunity to develop a range of skills and competencies, including cultural and digital abilities, which will be beneficial in their future careers (Dimitrova, 2022). In the initial stages of consideration, it might be perceived that the inclusion of music in an educational environment constitutes a mere luxury, an additional element to be considered. However, recent research has demonstrated the significant and beneficial impact of music-based activities on a child's cognitive abilities, physical development, psycho-emotional growth, and social inclusion, particularly through participation in musical activities. The working hypothesis is that providing educational support and resources to future educators will enable them to offer in-depth music education, which will form musical vocabulary and culture, develop children's skills and

competencies for active listening and understanding of musical thought, motivate children to participate in all performing musical activities, and help children understand the role of preserving musical heritage as an asset to society, clan, and family. To achieve these goals, it is first and foremost necessary to restore the status of the teaching profession. This is a profession to which only those who accept the education of future generations as a mission are directed. Teachers who value children's individuality and can identify their gifts and talents, who are conversant with modern methods of music literacy and apply them appropriately to each individual's needs and learning styles, will contribute to the benefits of music education described. The aforementioned goals can be achieved by following the methodologies of Kodály and Gordon, which emphasize the creation and nurturing of a musical generation that values its cultural heritage, language, and past, shares and follows common values, possesses the skills to perform and communicate, and is also capable of leading and paving the way for new developments.

The Kodály approach and the possibility of its application in the kindergartens of the Republic of Bulgaria

In 2016, UNESCO inscribed Zoltán Kodály's approach to music as part of its cultural heritage. Kodály's interest in his native Hungarian folklore led him to become a prominent collector of folk songs. He shared that his doctoral dissertation on the structure of Hungarian folk songs sparked his interest in the interdisciplinary interactions between music and language. Moreover, the chorus work he has created exemplifies the unity between music and text. Kodály's approach to music education has been applied in kindergartens and schools in Hungary. It gradually gained popularity around the world with its precise guidelines for teacher training. These are related to the methodologies employed in musical activities, such as listening, singing, and creating. Additionally, the belief is that the process of developing cultural literacy should commence with folk creativity, whereby the tasks of its preservation, conservation, and development in a contemporary environment are reflected upon.

Kodály implemented techniques that have been developed by several musicians and educators from diverse national backgrounds. "Tonica Sol – Fa" (Sarah-Anne Glover and John Curwen – England, United Kingdom), "Tonica – Do" (Hundoegger – Germany), the rhythmic syllables of Emile-Joseph Chevet (France), techniques from the "The rhythmic gymnastics of Emile Jacques-Dalcroze" (Switzerland), the manual solfege signs from the John Curwen system (England, United Kingdom), and the technique of teaching itself share numerous similarities with Pestalozzi's views. Despite the diversity of the authors from whom Kodály derived his inspiration, he successfully formulated and articulated a unified concept of music education,

literacy, and the development of musical culture. The objectives of his approach, as described by Luis Choksy, one of the leading researchers in the field of Kodály methodology, can be summarized as follows: The first objective is to develop the musicality of all children who are taught. The second objective is to learn the language of music and acquire musical literacy, which includes reading, writing, performing, and creating musical notation. The third objective is learning about the musical heritage of folk songs as part of national culture. The fourth objective is to introduce children to the world's musical heritage can be introduced to children in a way that broadens their musical awareness and ability to accept and appreciate cultural differences. This can be achieved by providing children with opportunities to learn about, listen to, analyze, and perform works that are accepted as exemplars of a particular culture or style. (Choksy, 2001: 83)

Scholars who study Kodály's approach to education believe that the author himself considered music literacy to be one of the most important goals of music education. However, the literacy described by Madden is initially related to the aural recognition and performance of melody, with the skills of visual reading of musical text only being developed later (Madden, 1983, p. 20). According to Cary, Kodály advised that kindergarten children should be introduced to folk songs with a small tonal volume, including the tones "la - sol - mi", the tetrachord "sol - mi - re - do" or the pentatonic "la - sol - mi - re - do". Gradually, the children are introduced to diatonics. Kodály postulates that the metre of children's movements and games is two-temporal, deriving from natural activities such as walking, jumping, passing and tossing a ball, and so forth. Once the songs in 2/4, 4/4 and 6/8¹ have been mastered, the three-timed metrum is then introduced (Cary, 2012: 183).

EDWIN GORDON'S MUSIC THEORY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC EDUCATION - OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR MUSIC TEACHERS IN KINDERGARTENS IN BULGARIA

The author of this study has chosen Edwin Gordon's Music Theory for the education of infants and young children due to the use of singing as an activity that connects the mother with the infant, as well as a possible channel for education, not only for the sense of music but also for the perception and reproduction of language. The music psychologist Diana Deutsch, renowned for her research on speakers of so-called tonal languages (e.g. Mandarin) and their perception of sounds in language, tones in music, and the ability

¹ The 6/8 time signature is presented as a rhythm organizing two groups of 3 eighth notes.

to memorize, phoneme and tone reproduction and recognition, discovered that maternal singing – the act of singing songs to infants is an essential factor in the formation of a bond between parent and child. Furthermore, it has been established that the use of songs in the mother's language allows the child to become familiar with certain fundamental aspects of speech, including rhythmicity and speech inflections (Deutsch, 2010: 37). The terms used in speech and music are often identical, including prosody, intonation, rhythmicity, tempo, dynamics, and metrics (verse in poetry). The emotional state of the speaker can often be discerned by the way they speak. For instance, the speech of an individual who has experienced a positive emotional state, such as joy at the success of a venture, joy in the family, etc., is characterized by a fast, loud, high-pitched tone, exclamations, and other similar features. It is also observed that the speech of an individual receiving unfavorable information or experiencing a negative emotional state is characterized by a low volume, slow pace, and a tendency to punctuate utterances with prolonged exhalations, which poets have described as “sighs”.

In her research, Kristin Lems, an educator specializing in music and a scholar examining the challenges associated with teaching English as a foreign language, draws a correlation between the utilization of musical compositions and the facilitation of more efficient acquisition of speech structures. Lems cites the insights offered by authors Gerry, Unrau & Trainer, who conducted an empirical investigation into the outcomes experienced by young children who participated in interactive music sessions and those who did not have the opportunity to engage in singing songs during their early developmental years. The experimental group demonstrated an enhanced ability to point to objects that were beyond their grasp area, as well as more purposeful hand movements for greeting and saying goodbye. However, the adolescents' participation in these sessions yielded the most notable benefit, namely, a noticeable relaxation compared to the control group (cited in Lems, 2021: 2).

In recent decades, numerous neuroscience researchers utilizing PET, fMRI, or MEG scanners have identified a degree of overlap between the cerebral regions responsible for language and music cognition and reproduction. In a series of experiments conducted by neuroscientist Stefan Koelsch and scientists at the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig, Germany, it was demonstrated that the process of perceiving and playing music activates the same areas of the brain that are involved in analogous processes related to language. The aforementioned areas include Broca's and Wernicke's areas, which are crucial to recognizing distinct language and music patterns. Additionally, the corpus callosum, visual cortex, memory areas, and the entire limbic system, which is responsible for emotion recognition, are also involved

in the process. (Deutsch, 2010: 38, Lems, 2021: 2). The preceding evidence indicates that Edwin Gordon has developed a theory of music education that is informed by the latest research findings and should be integrated into early literacy and music education curricula. Furthermore, the toolkit created by the scholar can be employed to assess musical aptitude.

Edwin Gordon's Music Learning Theory is based on 4 principles:

1. Audiation - the ability to hear and sing the music through the inner hearing;
2. Development of potential musical abilities, individual gifts and differences;
3. Formation and development of musical skills for tonal and rhythmic pattern recognition through activities in a well-defined sequence following the principle: whole – part – whole;
4. Group musical activities.

The author of this text considers audition to be a fundamental skill that should be developed in every child. In his view, it is as significant to music as thought is to language (Gordon, 1989: 78). Consequently, this quality is linked to musical thinking, anticipation of musical development, and the ability to make sense of a musical phrase. Gordon himself describes the similarities in the acquisition of speech and music in his writings. Both language and music are perceived aurally, and it is the auditory channel that underlies their formation and acquisition. Initial information about the sounds in language and music lays the foundations for the so-called 'auditory' vocabulary. The more sounds and tones are presented to the newborn, the more he can experiment with the production of the sounds of speech and the tones of music, respectively. This will result in the child 'cooing', 'crooning' and gradually speaking and singing. The vocabulary of spoken and sung words serves as the foundation for the passive vocabulary associated with the activity of listening and the active vocabulary associated with the performance activities of speaking and singing. This vocabulary expands until the child's fifth year when they are introduced to the letter and note signs that facilitate knowledge acquisition. Concurrently, they develop reading and writing skills. Gordon defines the latter two varieties of vocabulary as "reading vocabulary" and "writing vocabulary".

The website of The Gordon Institute for Music Learning presents the most effective music activities for developing and expanding the main types of vocabulary. According to the author of the theory, these activities can be arranged in the following sequence: listening, humming, melodic declamation, singing, dancing, creating, improvising, playing instruments, playing games, reading and writing music. Gordon succeeded in persuading a number of followers of the merits of his ideas and methodology, and over the years

attracted numerous educators who shared the view that every child possesses an innate musicality that, through audiation as an educational technique, will help them to understand and make sense of the music they hear, read and perform. The synaptic connections mentioned in the introduction of the study are formed in the brain and require daily stimulation because the scientist believes that “what is not stimulated is lost”. For synapses not to atrophy and for areas in the cerebral cortex to redirect their action to decode information of another type, Gordon posits that offering the child stimuli containing musical information is of paramount importance. Therefore, he asserts that the child's upbringing must include singing tonal patterns in addition to speech.

A comprehensive overview of the principles and practices of early childhood music education can be found on the aforementioned website, along with a wealth of other valuable resources in the subject area. In these, the authors present a range of strategies for parents to employ in preparing children at an early age to decipher musical meanings. This is akin to developing the ability to decode spoken words, and it allows children to comprehend musical elements in a meaningful way, regardless of their age or experience. The guidance for parents is both formal and informal and is tailored to the specific needs and abilities of the learners. Until the child reaches the age of five, the learning process is unstructured and informal. However, as the child approaches school entry age, the learning environment becomes more structured and consistent. Parents and teachers engage in special preparation, which includes an explanation of the order and manner of instruction, as well as guidance to support the child.

The process of musical thinking or preparing children for inner hearing – audition, as described by Gordon, occurs in three stages: enculturation (from birth to 2 years), imitation (between 2, 3, and 4, 5 years), and assimilation (between 3, 4 and 5, 6 years). Each of the aforementioned stages contains sub-stages that are achieved and determined by the child's cognitive, physical, and mental development.

The period of familiarity with the surrounding culture is an important stage in the life of the newborn infant, which encompasses three distinct phases: absorption, incidental response, and purposeful response. This period is associated with the infant's developing capacity to differentiate between the sounds they encounter and those they produce themselves. Parents should provide a diverse selection of music, including tunes, tonalities, meter rhythms, harmonies, and timbres. The choice of musical style depends on whether the objective is to associate the newborn with purely musical characteristics or to provoke the newborn to imitate, sing, or hum. Instrumental or vocal music is therefore the preferred option. However, at this stage, singing songs is not

the goal. In the sub-stage of 'incidental responses' sung by children, parents are advised to sing a variety of songs in tonal, metrical, and emotional terms. Between the ages of two and three, parents and early educators gradually enter the "purposeful responses" stage, in which they gradually suggest that the child reproduces tonal and rhythmic patterns. During this stage, the goal is to achieve precision, accuracy, and fidelity in intonation.

The imitation period represents a transition between inaccurate chanting and the acquisition of correct intonation and rhythmic reproduction. Gordon divides this period into two sub-periods: the first is associated with the acquisition of self-knowledge and musical capabilities, while the second is characterized by the development of the skills required for encoding musical information. During this stage, the music educator must collaborate with the parent, as the accuracy of children's responses in this period plays an essential role in shaping their future musical abilities. The teacher establishes a pattern and prompts the child to imitate it. If the child displays a near-correct imitation, the teacher repeats the two patterns precisely and highlights the discrepancies between the original pattern and the child's reproduction.

The most crucial preparatory stage for the development of inner hearing and the comprehension of music is the assimilation period. This stage is of paramount importance for a child's musical education, as it paves the way for the acquisition of musical language, enabling them to accurately reproduce tonal and rhythmic patterns and to perform independently while still under the guidance of an instructor or mentor. Gordon posits that fostering this capacity within the sub-stage, which the scholar himself termed "introspection", is essential. In the final sub-stage of coordination, the teacher must educate the child to respond with movements to the musical pattern and to control the motor nature of his or her performance related to the processes of breathing, vocalizing, articulating, clapping, and dancing. This completes the child's preparation to listen and sing, which will prepare for subsequent periods in which children can read, write, improvise, and create their own music.

The stages of child development and the upbringing of musical hearing and abilities in children aged 2–3 are not the primary focus of preschool education. This is because children can be admitted to these educational institutions after the age of 3. The age of three is the latest that has been discussed as the appropriate age for the early years. Experts in the Ministry of Education have expressed the opinion that nursery-age children should be covered compulsorily and offered an education led by specialists trained in pedagogy and psychology. It is evident from the aforementioned positions that alterations are necessary in higher education with a view to training professionals to address the development, education, and training

of children at this early age. In light of these considerations, the author of this study proposes that Edwin Gordon's Music Theory is an appropriate subject for music education at the aforementioned stage. To implement the aforementioned changes in higher education, it is necessary to motivate teachers to become familiar with the basic premises, guidelines, and activities. It is evident from the aforementioned instructions that order and consistency are of paramount importance. Training professionals who can comprehend and adhere to this order is of critical significance to achieve one of Gordon's key objectives, namely, the development of musical abilities and their translation into abilities in all children.

Another key aspect of Music Learning Theory is the influence of the environment and family on children's music education. From the moment of birth, infants begin to acquire knowledge of their native language and culture, with parents acting as the primary agents in this process of cultural 'assimilation'. In light of this, it is crucial to consider the potential benefits of educating adults on the value of early education and fostering the musical abilities of their children. Edwin Gordon outlines two distinct stages in the development of musical ability: the developmental stage and the stable stage. The first stage of musical development lasts until the child is nine years old. After this age, musical ability becomes stable and cannot be developed further. This feature of musicality demonstrates the crucial role of all adults in the lives of their children. Primarily, it is the parents and preschool teachers who must first instill a love and knowledge of the native language and musical culture in their children. They must then facilitate the child's development of musical thinking through the audition process.

These requirements highlight the necessity of persuading parents to attend training courses or academies where clear and focused instructions are given to adults on how to sing to children to develop their musical gifts. While such parents may emerge, it is also essential to cultivate the requisite professionals to provide support and set the direction of music education for future generations. In light of these considerations, the author of this paper proposes initiating a dialogue between educational institutions (universities and kindergartens) and experts from the Ministry of Education to develop effective policies for future music education. If there is a desire on the part of higher education and specialists are trained and prepared, but there is no demand for or hiring of them, the process is futile. This is also true if society is seeking assistance and support for early childhood music education, yet the educational system has not produced the requisite specialists. Consequently, there is a pressing need for dialogue between institutions, persuasion and training of teachers who can confidently fulfill the mission of early music education and introduce children to the native music culture.

MUSIC-PEDAGOGICAL SITUATIONS USING ELEMENTS OF BOTH APPROACHES

The author has extensive teaching experience and, throughout his career, has experimented with various elements of both Kodály's philosophical concept and Gordon's music theory. Utilizing such a methodology is linked to the term 'method'. While the authors of theories of music education, such as Emile Jacques-Dalcroze, Carl Orff, and Zoltan Kodály, present their ideas of music education as philosophical concepts, allowing teachers considerable freedom to select musical repertoire and creativity, Gordon's theory provides compelling reasons to present it as a 'method'. The approaches and methods employed by art teachers in their teaching are not solely determined by the curriculum and syllabus, but also by the characteristics, experiences, and interests of the students. The differing personalities of adolescents, determined by their physiological or psychological characteristics, influence how modern teachers approach new knowledge. Ivan Kabakov elucidates the distinctions between the terms 'approach' and 'method'. According to Kabakov, the term "approach" is predominantly used to describe the main direction of research and its related lines of development, thus establishing a point of view and a position of observation toward the object under study. In contrast, the term "method" is used to describe a set of techniques and ways of research work through which predetermined research or practical goals are primarily achieved (Kabakov, 2017: 171). In other words, a method is a set of instructions for achieving a specific outcome in a variety of ways, whereas an approach defines the perspective from which the process is approached and the direction in which it is conducted to address the identified problems (Kabakov, 2022: 353).

Shuler presents the scientific rationales of several educators regarding the use of approaches, philosophical concepts, and methods in the U.S. childhood education system. Quoting Webster, a method is "a procedure or process for accomplishing a goal described by a clear and systematic plan for guidance and instruction in presenting certain material"² (as cited in Shuler, 1991:3). Shuler also distinguishes between two commonly used concepts in music education, educational 'technique' and 'method', and in his article uses Edwin Gordon's definition, "method is the order in which sequential tasks are presented in the course of instruction to achieve an overarching goal"³ (ibid). In other words, technique allows the attainment

² "Webster defines 'method' as a procedure or process for attaining an object; as a systematic plan followed in presenting material for instruction" (1970, p. 533)

³ The text in Shuler's article that was used for the purposes of this study is as follows: "Gordon, using more specific terminology, writes that a method is 'the order in which

of a specific and proximate goal and method is a means of achieving long-term goals through well-defined systematicity, order, sequence, detail of instruction, and efficiency. Effectiveness must be testable and measurable. Leonard & House extend Gordon's definition of "method" by adding the learner's ability to retain information that has been learned (ibid.). This links to methodology, which is based on precise criteria for measuring the success of the proposed methods. However, the two authors also add the role of the adolescent's attitude in the success of music learning, whether 'philosophical concepts' or 'methods' are used. In this line of thought, the author of the rising study believes that nurturing a positive attitude in learners towards the art of music should begin in the family environment and continue in early childhood and preschool education.

The title of the study was not chosen with any particular intention. It is evident that "Playing with Sounds" is essential for young explorers of the sounding world around them. Teachers could suggest several games in which children take on the roles of 'sound explorers', 'sound seekers', or 'musical detectives'. Preschoolers who cannot write can draw objects that make sounds. Another appropriate game is to examine the sound of children's musical instruments and try to give definitions for the different sounds. In this manner, interdisciplinary connections are established with the educational theme of "Environment", as the children observe the materials from which the instruments are made, describe the distinctive timbre of the instruments (link with the English Language and Literature strand), and attempt to conclude its ringing, brightness, loudness, or muffled sonority.

The methodology employed in the presentation of a new song may be informed by elements of Zoltan Kodály's approach, which encompasses an examination of the rhythmic structure, form, melodic movement, tempo, and dynamics. The present study utilizes folk songs or suitable light songs by the first generation of Bulgarian composers, including Dobri Hristov, Panayot Pipkov, and Emanuil Manolov, among others. The selection of songs from the period following the Liberation to the years after the Second World War is not arbitrary. This period has been the subject of examination by numerous historians, literary and musicologists, intending to preserve and transmit "Renaissance social and moral ideals to adolescents through various forms of creativity, including didactic poetry" (Mangova, 2024: 24). In her monographic work, Boryana Mangova identifies several distinctive characteristics of

sequential objectives are introduced in a course of study to accomplish a comprehensive objective, a goal'. He draws a clear distinction between 'method', a more general term, and 'technique', which operates on a smaller scale. The latter he defines as "a teaching aid which is used to achieve one or more sequential objectives" (1989, p. 28).

children's literature created during the period under discussion, to convey the aforementioned values. A significant proportion of this literature is didactic, as the poets' objective is to instill moral values in children rather than to develop their appreciation of poetic language. Furthermore, Mangova cites Peter Stefanov, who, like her, studied children's literature for children during the period from the Renaissance to the end of the Second World War. Stefanov asserts that Renaissance literature for children aimed to influence "Christian morality" and represents "an intersection between Enlightenment rationalism and the religious moral code" (Mangova, 2024: 25).

The author of this study employs such songs in his pedagogical practice to illustrate the richness of Bulgarian musical heritage to children. It is not coincidental that many of the songs are presented by performers whose interpretations are regarded as exemplary within their respective styles or genres. In this context, the initial perception of a new work by children is of great importance. It is therefore essential that the teacher performs the song with great skill or finds an appealing recording of it before introducing it to the children. The term "brilliantly" is not used in isolation; rather, it is employed with the intention that a song presented attractively to a young audience will encourage adolescents to learn and sing it. The second step is to learn the lyrics by chanting in rhythm. The researcher recommends that young music teachers memorize the text in its musical rhythm rather than just following its poetic rendering. This requirement is produced by the ability of the young ones to memorize the text in the rhythm they will sing. In this way, they learn the long and short syllables as well as the logical accents of the musical phrase and the correct intonation. In their treatise, Dimitrova and Karaatanassov consider the rhythmic value of the note as a "time reference". They posit that this "time reference" is "necessary for correct judgment in the constant mental juxtaposition that goes on in the mind of the performer while making music". This determines the endpoints related to the organization and placement of tones in the abstract time while the work is in progress (Dimitrova, Karaatanassov, 2022: 22).

According to followers of Kodály's approach, symbolic representations are used to represent time durations and syllabic names – 'ta' for quarter note and 'ti-ti' for eighth notes.

ta		ta-ah-ah	♪.
ti-ti	▮	ta-ah-ah-ah	。
tri-o-la	▮▮	syn-co-pa	▮ ▮
tiri-tiri	▮▮▮	tai ti	. ▮
tiri-ti	▮▮	ti tai	▮ .
ti-tiri	▮▮	tim-ri	▮▮
ta-ah	♪	ri-tim	▮.

Fig. 1⁴

In addition to the way presented with the Kodály tone durations, several variations can be made representing rhythmic patterns by Gordon's method. The children are arranged in a circle, seated cross-legged on the ground, and follow rhythmic patterns set by the music teacher. Repetition can be either by clapping or by saying syllables. The teacher also presents two rhythmic patterns that may be the same or different. When saying the first pattern he may, for example, raise his left hand, and when saying the second pattern his right hand. This helps to distinguish the two patterns. Children should listen to them carefully and determine whether they are the same or different. Another game with rhythmic patterns can be presented similarly to the folk song from the Chopska folklore area "Ima-nema". The teacher says syllables in different durations with the word for the affirmative answer 'yes', and the students repeat the same rhythmic pattern but use the negative 'no'.

By age, the pronunciation of syllables in a specific rhythm can be augmented by the addition of different intonations, including ascending, descending, smooth, choppy, questioning, narrative, exalted, and calm. These exercises, in addition to enhancing the perception of the meter, are also conducive to the development of auditory memory and auditory attention. The creative abilities of older children can be cultivated by capitalizing on

⁴ <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-music-and-the-child/chapter/chapter-4-approaches-to-music-education-2/>

the following task from the game “There – not there”. The teacher recites a rhythmic pattern comprising the syllable ‘yes’ and the child responds with the syllable ‘no’, but improvises and alters the established rhythm. This game fosters children’s improvisational abilities and their creative thinking.

In preschool, children were able to observe the graphic representation of durations in melody, both in the conventional model with geometrical figures and in the Kodály model.⁵ The teacher would elucidate the patterns in a step-by-step manner, and the younger students would repeat them by repeating the simple syllables ‘ta’ and ‘ti-ti’, which are typical of the Kodály approach and are spelled out with just the dashes of the notes. The adult then suggests that the children examine which phrases are the same and which are different. In children’s folk songs, repetition and sameness are guiding principles, and therefore these songs are appropriate for analysis. Typically, the couplets are short, consisting of repeated phrases with minor variations at the end. The choruses are memorable and easy to sing. Frequently, the form of children’s folk songs is monophonic, which greatly facilitates children’s tracking of musical phrases. In the Bulgarian educational system, the use of the Kodály manual symbols to indicate pitches is not a common practice. However, tonal movement can be demonstrated through hand movements. Recently, several music educators have been employing a method whereby the tones in a melody are shown in pitch volume up to the interval of a pure fifth by pointing with the index finger to parts of the face.

To illustrate, if a song commences on the note ‘do’ and ascends to the pitch ‘sol’, the pitch sung when the chin is pointed is ‘do’, above the upper lip is ‘re’, the tip of the nose is ‘mi’, the base of the nose at the eyes is ‘fa’, and the forehead is ‘sol’. One suitable example of a song that could be introduced to children to help them learn about tonal movement is Dobri Hristov’s song “Bagpipe” („Гаўга“). This is well-known for its opening phrase “Listen, the bagpipe plays, plays, and talks”.

⁵ The syllables ‘ta’ for quarter note and ‘ti-ti’ for eighths are borrowed by Kodály himself from the French theorist Émile-Joseph-Maurice Chevé.

Гайда

музика и текст Добри Христосе

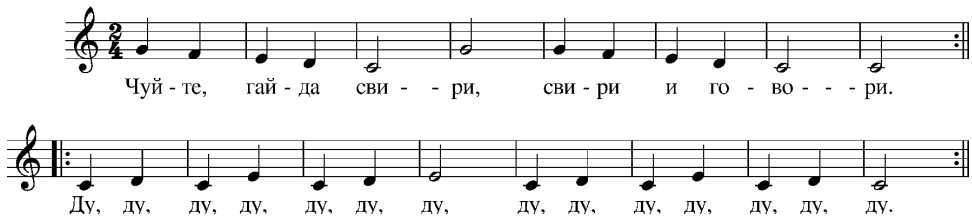


Fig. 2

Following the learning of the songs, a survey of their rhythmic and melodic aspects should be conducted. This should be followed by a dance game with movements. The dance choreography depends on the tempo, melody, and mood of the chosen song. The song “Bagpipe” („Гаѹга“) could be presented with its choral movement. The children hold hands and walk in the two-timed metronome to the right while the verses are being performed. After the couplet, the participants halt their movement and turn towards the center of the circle. On the syllables of the chorus, the children take seven steps inwards, and on the eighth step, they strike the ground with their feet. On the repetition of the chorus, the same steps are repeated, but this time the movement is from the center of the circle in an outward direction. Once the children have learned the dance, the teacher draws on the board the positions of the children from the inner to the outer circle. The steps form the rays of the sun. The educator then makes the connection that the dance steps of the chorata contain a hidden meaning. The cult of the sun and its chanting in folk songs is found in the Lazarus rites, which are associated with the rebirth of nature for new life. The role of the sun, water, and air in planet life can be presented in a common pedagogical situation integrating themes and methodology from several educational areas, including Bulgarian Language and Literature, Environment, Physical Culture, Music, and Fine Arts. Such an interdisciplinary lesson will present rituals in their entirety, as well as the relationship of ritual rituals with topics from natural sciences.

It is possible to present some songs as children forming two concentric circles, with the inner circle facing the outer. They stand facing each other in pairs and clap their hands and those of their partner. At some point, it is possible to suggest a change of partner by moving only those in the outer circle to the right. Details of how songs can be played are given by teachers working on the Kodály approach. These can be found on the Internet. However, teachers need to be aware of the sequencing of tasks in

the proposed music activities.

Edwin Gordon makes a significant distinction between rote singing and the way a child learns to recognize and analyze the same song as a well “listening” performer. What the researcher means is that singing by rote involves a process of breaking the phrase down into small elements to make sense of its sequential structures so that its complete memorization and subsequent reproduction is possible. However, the audition process is different from rote singing because it means that the individual has developed the ability to read or sing a melody without the support of an actual sounding instrument or voice. Moreover, everyone must have the ability to immediately be able to determine its tonality or key, melodic movement, rhythmic pattern, meter, tempo, and dynamics. Good listeners should be able to try internally singing a given song by changing the key or the size, etc. These demands on performers are perfectly feasible if music education begins from a very early age and is conducted systematically, purposefully, and effectively by music educators.

CONCLUSION

The described process of music education in early childhood and preschool, which draws upon elements of Zoltan Kodály's philosophical concept and Edwin Gordon's methodology, will facilitate the development of musical skills, abilities, thinking, memory, and skills for successful participation in performance activities, including singing, playing musical instruments, listening with understanding and creating musical compositions. Nevertheless, this process must be continued in the subsequent stage of primary education, which encompasses pupils in Years 1 to 4. In light of the reasons above, the author believes that the necessity for normative changes exists to continue the stated positions of purposefulness and effectiveness of music education commenced in early childhood and preschool, and subsequently continued in the primary stage of education.

The benefits of implementing elements of Zoltan Kodály's approach and Edwin Gordon's music theory can be verified and quantified by the results achieved by current preschool students taught by both the author of the study and teachers who have completed undergraduate and graduate programs in music at St. John's University. Kliment Ohridski. The basis of music education is the performance of songs from the national folklore, which develops the sense of rhythm, speech, and music, the inner "audition" of familiar and unfamiliar melodies, and the ability to perform musical phrases with exact intonation, rhythm, meter, tempo, and dynamics. These abilities are necessary for the formation of musical literacy and the education of musical culture. Only individuals who can understand and make sense of

musical language can gain insight into the musical content of different genres and works. These individuals will be part of the musical audience, and their education, according to the study's author, is the goal of music education in early childhood and preschool. Without the formation of musical abilities in adolescents to listen, perform, and understand the art of music, developing musical audiences is an unthinkable process. However, this process is possible if two conditions are met. One of these conditions pertains to musical literacy, which commences at an early age through the practice of "playing with sounds." The second condition pertains to the necessity that it be led by trained specialists in "Music Pedagogy" who possess a genuine passion for music and the requisite methodological knowledge to teach it in a language they understand. Music educators are well-versed in and utilize several methods and approaches, which imbue music pedagogical situations with dynamism and allure. The aforementioned approaches facilitate the achievement of the stated results, namely the development of children's musical abilities, creative thinking, and the need to engage in musical art and to preserve and transmit musical culture to future generations.

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