



PRIMARY KODÁLY

Karen Marshall summarises the benefits of Kodály in the primary classroom and offers advice on the best courses and resources

When you hear the word Kodály, what do you think? I honestly thought it was a kind of extreme musical religion and was quite sceptical at first.

Just under two years ago, however, I decided to investigate the approach properly, testing it in various different teaching settings, evaluating a whole range of Kodály teaching materials and attending various courses. I learned that Kodály is simply the tried and tested principles of the Hungarian composer and music educator Zoltán Kodály, who used singing as the backbone of a systemised approach that aims to instil the elements of music and make a musical education available to all. Much of what we all know about good teaching appears in Kodály.

Recently I've started using Kodály in a primary setting with Years 1 and 2 as their weekly classroom music lesson. Prior to this my lessons were very creative and organic – but not as effective. Through the Kodály approach I've discovered that repetition is not boring for children, and neither is simplicity an insult. The simple songs used in Kodály mean that children can dictate rhythm, identify pulse, hear low and high sounds, internalise music, use different dynamics, play by ear and improvise – which, after nine months' tuition at just five to seven years of age is pretty good going! And, as an added bonus, Blue Class can now sing in tune!

COURSES

Attending a course is one of the best ways of getting to know what Kodály is all about. The National Youth Choir of Scotland (NYCoS)'s Kodály Summer School runs on 5-10 August

in Edinburgh; costs range from £395 to £630 including accommodation. This year's British Kodály Academy Summer School is on 12-18 August in Gloucestershire and costs range from £550 to £625. Find out more at nycos.co.uk and britishkodalyacademy.org.

RESOURCES

JOLLY MUSIC: HANDBOOKS AND BIG BOOKS

BEGINNER AND LEVELS 1, 2 AND 3

CYRILLA ROWSELL AND DAVID VINDEN

JOLLYLEARNING.CO.UK, HANDBOOKS £29.95 EACH, BIG BOOKS £19.95 EACH

These books, each containing 30 lessons, are sequential, but experienced practitioners can summarise the beginner material and start at a more advanced level. They are perfect for Key Stage 1 up to eight years. Very little preparation is required of the teacher as the lessons are brilliantly and clearly presented.

The whole series uses a bank of songs and rhymes which keep recurring, with musical activities and games linked to each song that gradually increase in complexity. First there's marking the pulse, then rhythm, then understanding the difference between the two, then moving on eventually to rhythmic notation. Then there's high and low pitch, advancing to hand signs and finally melodic notation.

The authors both work at Junior Guildhall,



and much of the Jolly Music curriculum is used at Junior Guildhall's String Training Programme. Lots of additional resources (flashcards and templates) are included, and each Handbook has a corresponding Big Book, which includes words to all songs.

GO FOR BRONZE, SILVER AND GOLD

LUCINDA GEOGHEGAN AND CHRISTOPHER BELL

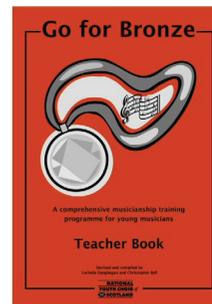
NYCOS.CO.UK, PUPIL BOOKS £25, TEACHER BOOKS £35

Developed by the experts at NYCoS, these books almost constitute a Duke of Edinburgh's award for musicianship, based on the principles of Kodály and resulting in an exemption from ABRSM Grade 5

theory when Gold level is achieved.

Ideal for children from eight years of age, this series fits well into classroom music at Key Stage 2. The books provide step-by-step lesson plans and assessment material for each award, and are detailed enough for the specialist music teacher but perhaps not a generalist. Perfect for hub music centres, this scheme works well as a musicianship class alongside ensemble activities.

Each level has a teacher book with an accompanying student book. Again using a bank of songs and rhymes with fun games, a student's musical literacy is developed gradually. Lists of musical skills acquired at Bronze, Silver and Gold level can be found at nycos.co.uk. At Gold level, students have knowledge of intervals, scales, key signatures, open and close scores, modulations, time signatures and much more.



IDEAS FOR DAILY CLASSROOM KODÁLY

- » Sing the register
- » Sing/speak classroom instructions and get the children to clap back the rhythm of the words
- » Provide daily opportunities to sing simple songs. Great song collections include: How Can I Keep from Singing (published by the British Kodály Academy and available from britishkodalyacademy.org); any of the NYCoS songbooks; Sing for Pleasure Junior Songbooks (singforpleasure.org.uk); Rounds for Children (Music Sales); and the Music Steps series (A&C Black)