Australian Kodály Bulletin

2006

Strengthening Ties

KODÁLY MUSIC EDUCATION INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA

KMEIA

The Kodály Music Education Institute of Australia Inc

Miss Enid Scott, Secretary
9B Yates Mews
Berwick, Victoria 3806

www.kodaly.org.au
info@kodaly.org.au

FROM THE EDITOR

This edition of the Australian Kodály Bulletin continues the Strengthening Ties theme of the 2006 KMEIA National Conference held at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, 25 - 28 June 2006.

Some of the conference papers are included and more will appear in the 2007 Bulletin. Two papers address boys' vocal development, sharing research knowledge and excellent practice.

The re-printed Katalin Forrai paper, delivered at the first International Kodály Symposium ever held in Australia, in 1979, adds a research perspective that continues to be fundamental to the Kodály approach.

Refereed Papers have been subject to peer review by three referees.

Many thanks are due to all those who submitted papers. Unfortunately not all could be included for reasons of space. Guidelines for submissions for future issues are on the KMEIA website www.Kodály.org.au The editor can be contacted at bulletin@kodaly.org.au

I would like to warmly thank members of the editorial team for 2006 who were extremely generous with their time, expertise and advice, and a delight to work with.

Ann Carroll
Editor for 2006

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On the cover
Boys from St. Laurence's College, South Brisbane, singing in congregation.

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A message from the president

Darren Wicks, KMEIA National President

What's really important in music education? An address to the National Workshop on Music Education, which followed the National Review of School Music Education. Presented by Darren Wicks on behalf of KMEIA.

I've been asked to speak on curriculum design and implementation. I've also been asked to keep it brief, poignant and allow lots of opportunity for questions. With this in mind, I'd like to raise two broad points with you this morning.

1. The value of professional associations
2. Curriculum – what really makes a difference.

The Kodály Music Education Institute of Australia is a professional association of music educators with a diverse and vibrant membership comprising classroom teachers, instrumental teachers, choral and ensemble directors, tertiary students, schools, associations and other interested individuals.

In professional associations such as KMEIA (and many others) lies

- A wealth of experience, resources and skills.
- An important link to the practitioners
- Opportunity for forming valuable professional networks
- Individuals who are interested in furthering the cause of music education
- The possibility to facilitate the transition of younger teachers into the profession and to offer much-needed support in their first years of teaching.

The qualification demanded today in many pre-service music education courses in this country represents such primitive musical knowledge that nobody can really be effective as a music educator unless s/he has voluntarily learned a great deal more! It is in this area that professional associations such as KMEIA have a major role to play in building up our profession.

Outside the universities, professional associations are easily the largest provider of comprehensive and ongoing teacher training. At the same time, the resources of such organisations are stretched. The only funds that professional associations can attract come through our memberships or what we can recoup through running workshops. Moreover, we are run by volunteers, most of whom hold down full-time jobs and outside our 'real' jobs, we do our best with roles that we are not trained or qualified in – public relations, marketing, administration, finance and event management.

I believe that professional associations are a vital part

of our profession and that they have a unique contribution to make. Yet this fact has not been acknowledged by the universities and the Government. There is tremendous potential for partnership with professional associations that currently lies untapped and such partnerships could well hold the key for a higher standard of teacher training and skill.

Curriculum – Provision and Implementation

In the area of Curriculum, Senator Kemp has asked for concrete and tangible recommendations. He has asked for a model of what the ideal music curriculum would look like. My challenge to us all is that we need to emerge from this Workshop with a degree of clarity and a unified voice on what is most important to us as music educators. We cannot be everything to everyone and if we try to be, we may well emerge with something that is so vague and meaningless that we are no better off than we are now.

We need to be able to clearly define what a good music education is and distinguish that from the things that merely support a good music programme. Unless we can clearly outline what we are on about, we have no defence to

- the Primary teacher who puts on a CD for her class to sing along to and then claims she has done her Music lesson for the week
- or the Secondary teacher who has just spent 40 hours rehearsing for the Rock Eisteddfod and claims he has fulfilled the minimum music requirements for the year.

Over the last day and a half, I have listened to many words about music education. But words about music education are inadequate unless they are supported by good music teaching. In fact, bad music teaching might hinder our cause more than anything else. Music teachers will always select materials, approaches and techniques that suit them most. But if they are a truly great teacher, this won't matter!

Like many of you, I believe that something is drastically wrong with music education in this country and like you, I am looking for answers. But some of the answers I hear presented concern me, because they suggest that some teachers may be operating without a fundamental philosophy of music education – a philosophy that informs our practice and distinguishes that which is truly important.

For some of you the answer lies in having every child learn a musical instrument. Yet, what is an instrument – merely an external appendage that, at its best is an external manifestation of the inner musician and, at its worst, is a complete distraction to our cause. For others, the answer lies in technology. Yet, technology is not a teaching methodology, nor is it an approach to music education. Computer software cannot embody a teaching objective or a method. There is a great deal of research that suggests computers are no better at teaching anything than humans.

I am not anti-technology. In fact, those who know me will know that I love my technology and I love my toys. I just believe we need better teachers and a better understanding of teaching – not more gadgets. A computer is a unique learning tool and in the hands of a good teacher, any tool can be transformed into something magical! With good pedagogy as the guiding goal, technologies can be employed selectively and sensitively to make a distinct contribution to the teaching and learning of music.

I'm suggesting our focus is misdirected and that the answer is a great deal simpler than we think it is. Music education is about a process – a process in which our students become more musical. It is about musicianship and transactions with a musical teacher. The essence of a good music education involves:

- Specialist music teachers who possess a high standard of musicianship.
- Teachers who are required to maintain and build their musicianship – not finish uni only to let their musical skills slowly degrade.
- Music education for all - not just those who are identified as being musically talented.
- Active participation in music making opportunities – learning music through making music.
- A sequential curriculum that is based on the acquisition of musical skills
- As a foundation, reliance on the most accessible and natural instrument available – the human voice!
- Sound teaching that develops musical literacy and audiation (inner hearing) skills.
- Use of the highest quality of teaching materials and teachers who know the difference.
- School structures that cater for the unique nature of music learning
- Systemic support of music learning as a unique form of knowledge

Darren Wicks
28 August 2006

Engaging boys in a sequential, voice-based music program

by Scott D Harrison, Griffith University

The problem of engaging boys in music is a perennial one. Boys are typically less involved in formal music-making than their female counterparts and tend to achieve lower grades in music at school. Of all the types of musical participation, singing is one that is often shunned by boys because of its association with gender-incongruence: it is not always socially acceptable for boys to sing at school. This research addresses the fact that singing classical or folk music in class is challenging for boys. For educators involved in a sequential, voice-based program, this is a significant concern. The problem is explored through literature from the field. Responses to the problem are also offered through recent research and reference to practical examples.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Engagement in music

There is evidence to suggest that both boys and girls undervalue involvement in music. Swanwick (1988) found that between the ages of 8 and 15, music was the subject that exhibited the single greatest decline in interest, with the exception of religion. In Queensland in 1996, 72% of primary students took part in a choir, band dance group or art display, while 44.5% of secondary students reported involvement (Ainley 1996, p. 77). This data represented the lowest participation rates per capita in Australia. The data of Ainley and Swanwick also suggest that there is an issue with the transition into secondary schooling that effects student involvement. Students at this age are spending their time engaging in other activities. The Australian Bureau of Statistics figures from 2001 indicate almost 100% of children are watching T.V., almost 70% are playing electronic or computer games, almost 60% are playing sport and 30% are involved in cultural pursuits. Of those involved in cultural pursuit, the ratio of girls to boys is 2:1.

Students therefore tend to disengage from formal music making at some stage, typically at the transition into secondary schooling.

Boys' engagement in music

There is still a long way to go in ensuring some kind of gender equity in our musical world. As Mead (1962) stated 'any art is much richer when it is practiced by both sexes.' By highlighting the plight of boys, there is no intention to undervalue the plight of girls. Girls and boys both suffer as a result of the stereotyping of musical instruments. Historically, girls have been disadvantaged. The canon of western music, as it is commonly taught, includes few references to women composers and performers. In the profession there are less females involved in ensembles. The proportion of males to females in Australian orchestras is currently 56% to 44% (Harris 2006). Within this proportion, strings and wind tend to be closer to a 50/50 split, but 80% of brass players are male and over 95% of percussionists are male. The foundation for this stereotyping can be found in secondary schools: boys' tend to restrict themselves to this narrower range of activities through gender-role rigidity, avoidance of femininity and homophobia (Harrison 2001, 2003; Adler and Harrison 2004).

The history of boys' non-involvement in certain musical activities in Australia can be traced back to Bartle (1968) who found that at least half of the choirs in his sample of 474 schools were not using senior boys. Australia is not an isolated example in this regard. Nor is it a recent phenomenon. Koza (1993, 1994) studied musical activities at the turn of last century in

the USA finding choirs that consisted (on average???) of 60 sopranos, 10 altos, 2 basses and no tenors. In 1993, Green (1997, p. 248) found that 'boys and girls tend to restrict themselves to certain musical activities for fear of being accused of some sort of musical transvestism.' Girls, however, are demonstrating a willingness to cross the gender divide. Gates (1989) also found that girls appear to be adopting social values traditionally associated with males. Mahoney (1998, p.48) concurs: teachers report that girls are increasingly acting in a way conventionally associated with particular forms of masculinity. This has two possible effects: girls may end up with the same reluctance as boys and our music programs may be bereft of singers and players of 'feminine' instruments. The second possible effect is that girls will hold their ground and assume the instruments associated with the masculine.

Why are boys restricting their behaviours? If you ask them, they won't always tell you. In a study by Fortney, Boyle and Carbo (1993) only 3% of respondents indicated a 'gender' related reason for their choice of musical activity. Fortney et al (1993, p. 38) concluded that 'regardless of the reasons given, males still tend to play instruments that are considered masculine and females tend to choose instruments that are considered feminine'.

Examples of similar talk could be found in the work of Green (1993 and 1997), Koza (1993) Hanley (1998) and Harrison (2004). In one of Green's surveys of instrument selection (n=50) there were no boys. Teachers in Green's (1997, p. 253) study allude to a gendered view of some musical activities with comments such as: 'There is much peer pressure amongst boys that music still has a sissy stigma. Boys that do have the character to resist the pressure tend to achieve highly.' Essentially Green's findings demonstrate that boys succumb to heavy peer pressure and that certain activities are to be avoided because they are seen to be 'sissy' and 'unmacho'.

Harrison (2001) constructed a continuum of musical choices, based on a study of tertiary students' (n=103) perceptions of whether an instrument was masculine or feminine: *(Figure 1)*

Two further studies conducted by Harrison (2004) provide data relevant to the discussion. Primary school students (n=345) were asked to indicate which instrument they would most like to play. Of those who selected singing, 84% were female. In a similar study undertaken with secondary students (n=903), 92% of those choosing singing were female.

There are clearly issues associated with boys' involvement in certain musical activities in school.

Boys' engagement in vocal music

In reflecting on her earlier research, Green (1997, p. 185) said that boys are reluctant to sing in class or join a choir. Hanley (1998) replicated much of Green's study in Canada in 1998, with similar results. Some of her responses included comments such as: 'singing is viewed as a feminine activity – boys who engage in singing are feminine by implication' and 'boys don't sing because they are hung up on the image that boys don't sing and those who do are gay or sissies or weak or whatever.'

With regard to participation in ensembles and specific styles of music, Hanley (1998) suggested, 'some girls want to be like boys. Boys, however do not want to be like girls'. This appears to support the views of Gates (1989) and Mahoney (1998) noted above. As a result of this shift, 'more girls are joining traditionally male ensembles like stage bands, while boys are not flocking in great numbers to choir'.

The role of singing can fluctuate according to the situation. Specifically in the Australian context as researched by Collins (2005) and Harrison (2001, 2003), singing can be seen as an un-masculine or gender-incongruent activity that adversely effected socialisation, as demonstrated in this remark from one of Harrison's (2003) subjects:

Subject 21: Kind of being on the outside of things as a rather odd faggoty [sic] person at my school, singing did little to boost my social standing.

The issue of voice change and the uncertainty it brings also contribute to a lack of confidence about singing as noted in this comment, also from Harrison (2002):

FIGURE 1: Masculine – Feminine continuum of instruments

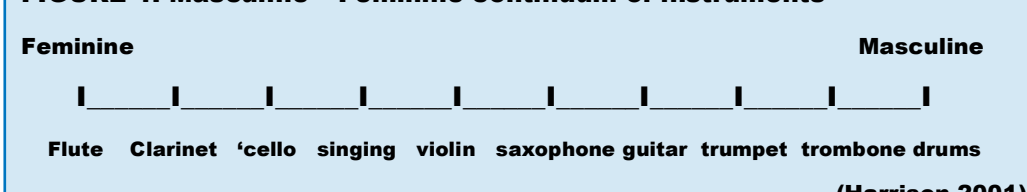

Figure 1

Subject 13: I can remember a musician being hassled - it was the Italian singer. When he sang in front of the whole school in Year 8 he was mocked for his high voice and when in later years he moved to Elvis songs, they knocked him now and then…He copped a lot of flak, mostly about his voice, especially from the older kids whose voices had broken.

A considerable body of research has been dedicated to physical changes a male voice goes through (McKenzie 1956, Swanson 1984, Cooper 1965, Cooksey 1977, 1992). The extensive details of the voice change are beyond the scope of this paper except to note that there are several stages of change and that the rate of change will vary according to the individual. Cooksey (1992) developed a five-stage model using the criteria of range, tessitura, register development, vocal quality and speaking fundamental frequency. His five stages are:

- unchanged voice
- mid-voice I
- mid-voice II and IIa
- new voice
- emerging adult.

Trollinger (1993, p. 29) comments on the nature of boys' vocal abilities noting that 'it is likely that more males than females are monotones, drones, or out-of-tune singers.' Awareness of these stages and rates of change play a significant role in boys' engagement with singing.

There are therefore both social and physical obstacles to boys' engagement in vocal music.

Boys' engagement in specific styles of vocal music

One of the comments above refers to the role of style as a factor in boy's reluctance to sing ('... he moved to an Elvis song, they knocked him…'). Green (1997) found that to be involved in slow music or in music that is associated with the classical style in school would not be considered appropriate for a boy. Hanley (1998) concurred, finding that classical music was considered too feminine because, according to one of her respondents, 'it is too slow and boring for boys.' Dislike of particular styles of music was also a feature of a study by Hargreaves (1995) et al. Students were asked to express their dislike of different styles of music. Students of both sexes were in agreement about the ranking of the four styles (see table 1, or list styles: jazz, classical, folk, opera) , but boys tended to be more extreme in the expression of their dislike. Folk music and opera fared particularly poorly as evidenced in the results presented in Table 1:

This is supported in the findings of Harrison (2003) in which one of his interviewees commented:

Subject 15: …people heard that I sang opera and they immediately assumed that I was gay. Again, this wasn't a problem, but it goes to show how narrow minded our culture is in Australia that we can't accept 'real men' to be artists.

In a recent international study investigating both style and delivery of music, Adler and Harrison (2004) found that vocal music rated poorly on males' perception of suitable activities. Furthermore, vocal class rated the most 'feminine' of any musical activity. *(Figure 2)*

Collins (2005, p. 23) also commented at length on the type of music that boys prefer, basing her findings on research by Sadker and Sadker, (1982) and Best, Williams, Cloud, Davis, Robertson, Edwards, Giles and Fowles (1977):

… male preference for louder, rhythmically accented,

Table 1

Students' expression of dislike for styles of music by gender

Style	% of boys who disliked each style	% of girls who disliked each style
Jazz	32	20.6
Classical	52	36.3
Folk	71.4	53.4
Opera	76.9	59.5

Hargreaves et al (1995)

Table 1:

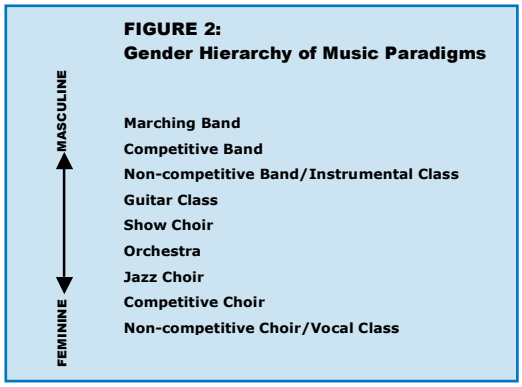

Figure 2

less predictable music, mirrors their socially acceptable traits: robust, aggressive, disorderly, dominant, adventurous, excitable, active, assertive, and inventive. These traits are reinforced by society and the educational system. The preference for male role models and concern for peer approval may be indicative of the pressures placed upon males to be manly (in Trollinger, 1993, p. 34).

The literature discussed above highlights the issue of engagement in music and the specific issues facing boys in a sequential, vocal orientated paradigm that frequently includes folk-based or classical repertoire.

RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM

Rationale for the response

The response to this problem is based in recent literature and fieldwork currently being undertaken by the author. As part of a larger project, the author surveyed pre-service music teachers (phase 1) and interviewed experienced music teachers (phase 2). The central purpose of the study was to ascertain subjects' perception in relation to identity of music teachers and core components of teacher education courses. The results reported here are preliminary conclusions with the complete findings to be published at completion of a third phase.

There is a clearly established need for change at macro and micro levels. Caution needs to be exercised in treating the symptoms at the micro level as some practices can lead to further embedding of popular masculine stereotypes. Getting the football team singing in the choir, for example, may only reinforce the tendency to consider one type of masculinity as being the only appropriate type. Change needs to be instituted concurrently at both levels. At the highest level of macro change, societal trends and attitudes towards music and specifically vocal music need to transform. In terms of policy, Pascoe et al (2005 p.128), reporting on the National Review of School Music Education, recommended that

> *Every Australian student participates and engages in initial vocal music programs; and students with identified interest and talent in vocal music are provided with sustained vocal music programs.*

Furthermore, Pascoe et al (2005) suggested that State and Territory school systems provide vocal and choral tuition for all students that reflects the breadth of music in contemporary society and that the tertiary sector ensures that vocal and choral music is an integral part of pre-service training. At policy level, therefore, change can be effected.

Macro level change can also be brought about through the well-worn adage 'think global act local.' Teachers, teacher educators and researchers each have a role to play in bringing this about in the classroom. Researchers may well provide valuable insights with strong methodological bases, but these are less valuable without an engagement in the problem and its solutions. Likewise, practitioners enacting strategies without being fully informed can be counter-productive. The development of policies that account for situational factors is crucial for individual environments and for application to similar situations.

Dunaway (1987) proposed that successful music programs were more likely to have a higher percentage of boys participating than were average programs. Harrison's (2003) findings were based on Griffiths' (1995, p. 18) processes for bringing about change in the gender order. Griffiths concluded that awareness-raising, involvement, policy development, strategies and review were required. Harrison (2003) pursued this with a number of strategies for managing gender-related issues in music. Specifically these include:

- Role models: teacher, community, industry and student
- Selection of repertoire
- Flexible scheduling of music and other activities
- Engagement and training of suitable personnel
- The use of a combination of single sex and co-educational activities
- Producing a high standard that commands the respect of the community
- Cautious use of sporting analogies for engagement and training of musicians
- A physiological approach to singing
- Strong direction from academic leaders
- A developmental program that starts boys young and keeps them singing and playing through puberty

More recently, Collins (2005) proposed a seven-element model to motivate boys. The seven features of Collins' model are

1. School Culture
2. Relationships
3. Peers
4. Parents
5. Role Models
6. Student Character
7. Teaching Strategies

In view of the work of Griffiths (1995) Collins (2005) and Harrison (2001, 2003) the following five suggestions are offered for beginning this process in relation to a sequentially based music program:

1. Support of music from school management, parents and policy makers
2. Application of motivational strategies used in other activities
3. Deployment of appropriate personnel including the recruitment of high profile peer and industry role models
4. A structured and physiologically-based approach to gradually incorporating vocal music as a legitimate part of a music program
5. Selection of appropriate repertoire

Support of music and use of strategies from other activities

Recent fieldwork encompassing interviews with experienced teachers (Harrison 2006) found that teachers attributed the success of their music programs to the support of parents and school administration:

Jane: The parents are now so on side and so for anything that we want to do in our music program. We just get 100% support but I've had to work very, very hard to get that support.

Gary: My advice would be when you've got something working really well, invite the principal in to see this is what we do…if there is a reasonable leadership team, it's valued and then you are supported and when you have the support of the leadership team it makes it a lot easier.

Harrison (2003, 2005) also found that the cautious use of strategies from other subject areas could assist in cresting a successful music program that engaged boys. Evidence of the strength of this tactic could be found in some of the remarks of staff who engaged in a combined tour with sportsmen and musicians:

What was interesting was the obvious respect and appreciation that the boys had for each other's talents and expertise. This was revealed in the constant support extended by the rugby players and community workers to the musicians when performing and the reciprocal nature of that support…

In summarising the positive and mutual benefits of music and sport working together to bring about constructive progress, Harrison (2005) commented:

… positive benefits can result from the two disciplines becoming truly complementary. This involved promotion of excellence, the development of teamwork, the sense of achievement and for music, it assisted in bringing the already high status in this school to a more elevated position through close association with sport.

Role models

The literature favours the use of role models to bring about change. It is not sufficient to state that role models are important. The specific attributes of role models have been the subject of considerable research. (Killian 1988, Adler 2001, Harrison 2001, 2003, Hall 2003, Wicks 2005). Wicks (2005), for example, supports the role model having a positive approach, being enthusiastic and maintaining self-belief while Harrison (2006) found that passion and flexibility were enormously important teacher attributes, regardless of the content or method being employed. Ballantyne (2006) also noted that early-career music teachers' passion for music teaching seems to be related to their love of the subject area. In 21 sites visited in the National Review of School Music Education, the following music teacher attributes were observed to varying degrees (Pascoe 2005): dedication, passion, enthusiasm, warmth/rapport, vision, musical expertise, continuity, collegiality, mutual respect, trust, mentoring, professional development, community music, specialist staff, musical excellence, organisational skills and teaching partnerships.

In an extensive (n=149) survey of pre-service teachers, Harrison (2006) found that flexibility, patience, sense of humour and enthusiasm ranked highly as qualities perceived as necessary for teachers to possess. In a related study, Harrison (2006) interviewed experienced music teachers, gleaning remarks in relation to important attributes with comments including:

Janine: In a general sense, teachers need to have patience, good self-esteem, passion for what they are teaching, ability to work within a diverse staff and student body and good communication skills. Teachers need to have and demonstrate a strong belief in the value and importance of education. For the music

teacher in particular, you need a love of what you teach, an ability to sell this subject area, and a desire to continue learning.

In this study role models were seen as having to 'live' being a teacher and allowing the attributes to be apparent through this, rather than through learned behaviours. This was aptly summarised in this response:

Glen: Integrity, sincerity, compassion – teaching is a lot about figuring out where students are coming from and what they need. Students learn much from what isn't taught, but simply modelled by their teachers. With the above qualities teachers should have a foundation on which to build respect. I'm also not at all confident that these can be 'taught', but they can certainly be exemplified.

The concept of how to 'teach' these qualities is a subject of ongoing research for this author. Clearly personal attributes are not sufficient and, in a Kodály-based approach, skill level is also significant, as this response suggests:

Julie: I would like to emphasise that these personal qualities are not sufficient, but I identify the other attributes as skills. These include: an extensive knowledge of the subject area, including the practical ability to demonstrate musically for students

A structured and physiologically-based approach

Dunaway (1987) and Harrison (2001) noted the need for a structured and physiologically based approach to singing. Specifically Wicks (2005) suggests a focus on the physical sensation of singing: knowing the anatomy and understanding the vocal demands of the repertoire. Respondents in Harrison's (2006) recent study also noted the need for such an approach:

Jenny: I think you need to definitely know about voice and you need to know about the methodology stuff…how to teach stuff, no matter which particular philosophy you follow. Of course I have my beliefs and what I think works best but whichever way you certainly need to understand voice and a bit about vocal technique.

I think this quote is not very supportive of the argument – 'a bit about vocal technique' does little to encourage teachers to go out and learn to sing/model with confidence. A quote which supports consistent 'life-long' learning of vocal technique so that teachers can impart correct technique and in doing so inspire their students to sing correctly would be put to much better use here.

Repertoire Selection

Choice of repertoire is critical to the growth of any music program. In an approach that incorporates a core sequence of content, it is even more significant. Harris (2005) provides a sample of repertoire for the solo male changing voice and a checklist for suitability of such repertoire. The literature cited above (Green, 1996;Hargreaves, 1995; Adler and Harrison, 2004) suggests that boys could experience difficulty in engaging with classical or folk material. There are two salient points here:

1. If all the other factors (support from administration, appropriate role models etc) are in place, then repertoire is only a *part* of the solution.
2. The sequence is the key issue for the development of the child. The choice of repertoire should therefore serve the environment in which the learning is taking place and physical capabilities of the children.

In the fieldwork conducted by the author, there was support for the notion of varied approaches to repertoire:

Jillian: I have a song collection that I can refer (to) because there are some (songs) that are just so good for teaching that I keep going back to (them), but if I get really sick of them, I just send an email to my respected colleagues and say 'what do you do for this' and we swap ideas and…

George: I've been fortunate in that what I've adapted is the repertoire more than anything else. I did pop, I did rock and adapted the stuff [concept] to suit that.

Gerald: I can use the purest folk music repertoire to teach the elements and because there's a joy in singing and a joy in developing our skills, they [the students] love it. Also can I say that I guess I'm lucky that I'm a composer as well so I write music for my classes all the time. I really want to make conscious the natural minor scale so here's a melody that I've written.

Gordon: Kodály was quite specific about the strategy for teaching a certain element and American educators took it and really formalised it. I still believe that's a really good way to go but I'm not rigid because I will use what works and it may be quite different.

The problem of boys' engagement in singing is a reality in many schools. These five strategies are suggestions for a response. Strong support, motivational strategies from other activities, personnel, a struc-

tured, physiologically based approach and the use of appropriate repertoire need to be dynamically interactive in order to begin the process of addressing the problem.

TO THE FUTURE

The rhetoric above is useless without enactment of the strategies espoused. Adler and Harrison (2004), in putting forward a philosophy for engaging with gender issues in music education, champion an approach that is both philosophical and operational. Their term, *critical genderist thinking and action,* relies on practitioners taking the approaches outlined and enacting them. In general terms there are many educational environments where the engagement of all students is taking place, taking into account much of the literature and fieldwork outlined in this discussion. Boys (and girls) are better off as a result of these proactive strategies.

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News from the International Kodály Society

Judith Johnson reports...

IKS Song Book coming...

After many years work the International Kodály Society has just completed a song book of music from around the world. Folk songs from many countries have been arranged by composers from that country and included in the album which will be available this year.

Australian composer Colin Brumby has arranged 'Click Go the Shears' for classroom use.

The book is accompanied by a CD with performances by a choir from each country singing their country's arrangement. Young Voices of Melbourne is our representative.

Go to the IKS website now for a preview and watch for the arrival of a wonderful new resource for your classrooms and music library. While you are on the website take the time to investigate what is happening around the world in Kodály music education.

Next Symposium ...

The next International Kodály Symposium will be held in Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A. in August next year. Some details are already on the IKS website. We are planning a group booking for airfares to the conference. If you are interested in joining the group please contact Judy Johnson on c_s_m@tpg.com.au

Have you considered submitting a paper for the conference? Australia was very well represented at Leicester in 2005. Papers were presented by Judy Johnson, James Cuskelly, Reka Csernyik, Sarah McGarry, Rebecca Thomas and Jennifer Bergstrum. A repeat performance would be wonderful.

Aural training in the early 20th century: Recollections and influences from South Australia

by Doreen Bridges

Doreen Bridges is an honorary life member of KMEIA, of the Australian Society for Music Education, and of the Australian Association for Research in Music Education. Her Ph.D. was the first in Australia to be awarded on a Music Education topic. She has taught at all levels from preschool to university, and towards the end of her career was in charge of music at the then Nursery School Teachers College in Sydney. She has given papers at the ISME Research Commission and Early Childhood Commission. Her AM in 1984 was awarded for services to music education.

The teachings of Kodály with their emphasis on listening skills burst upon the scene in Australia in the 1970s, largely through the work of Deanna Hoermann, and were welcomed as a new development in early childhood music. What was new to most teachers then was a comprehensive and developmental approach based on games and other joyful activities to develop children's listening, singing, and moving abilities leading gradually to aural-visual coordination necessary for music literacy. We now know that after World War II Kodály sent his leading teachers to countries of Western Europe to find out what aural training and other techniques were most successful in school classrooms. Choosing the best of such techniques and teaching strategies, and adapting them to the Hungarian language and folk song idioms resulted in the formulation of principles underlying the Kodály approach now practised in several countries. (Choksy 1986, p.70).

However, hardly any Australians knew that aural training classes for young children had been held in Adelaide in the early 1920s. Still less was it known that these classes had incorporated many ideas that were characteristic of the so-called Kodály 'method'. These ideas, based mostly on the work of Stewart Macpherson and Ernest Read at the Royal Academy of Music arose out of The Appreciation Movement in England allied with the Curwen sol-fa system and handsigns based on 'movable Doh' (anglicised spelling), French time-names, and Dalcroze listening/movement activities. Macpherson & Read encapsulated them in their three books entitled *Aural Culture* (1912-16). The first book introduced the sounds of the scale and simple note values one element at a time through very simple songs, composed by Read to words of familiar nursery rhymes, or his own made-up words, for example:

> Stay-at-home Doh saw Soh walking out
> Dressed like a soldier and shouting about:
> 'Who could be finer and braver than I?'
> Doh thought he could, but he did not try.

This is obviously the origin of the Kodály practice of introducing tonal and rhythmic elements one at a time through simple songs. But whereas Read introduced scale sounds of the tonic chord first, and provided piano accompaniments for his songs, the Kodály approach is through the pentatonic scale and singing is unaccompanied.

Macpherson and Read taught at the Royal Academy of Music in London, and developed a course to train musically-proficient teachers who could conduct classes in music literacy and appreciation, principally in infant and primary schools. This course led to a Licentiate Diploma. Four women who obtained this LRAM diploma taught for limited periods in Adelaide. The first of these was Agnes Sterry, who also had some acquaintance with Dalcroze Eurhythmics and had been appointed to take charge of music education at the Kindergarten Training College in South

Australia. She also taught the piano privately, and in addition, after World War I she set up private 'Aural Culture' classes for young children.

I was five years old when I began pestering my mother to let me have piano lessons. She got in touch with Agnes Sterry, who inquired about my age and stated that on no account would she accept me as a piano student until I was eight years old. She advised my mother that in the meantime I should attend her 'Aural Culture' class which she conducted in the city. So once a week I joined other children in 'Aural Culture' and this delightful experience was a highlight for over three years. Miss Sterry had returned to England by the end of 1924 and the classes were taken for a short time by her one-time student Heather Gell, then by Englishwoman Ivy Ayers and, briefly, by Australian Marjorie Bonnin, both of whom also had obtained the appropriate LRAM diploma. Each lesson had much singing, moving, many listening games and spontaneous creative activities, just as we now expect in a Kodály class. The foundations I received in these early years stood me in good stead throughout my later studies in music.

This explanation of aural training as it existed in Adelaide when I was a child is necessary in order to understand the significance of the support of the then Professor of Music and Director of the Elder Conservatorium, E. Harold Davies. At a time when music courses at all levels included little, if any, aural training, Davies consistently advocated its importance. He knew of the work of Sterry, Ayers, and Gell (who had a Dalcroze certificate), and arranged for demonstrations of their teaching methods at the state-wide conferences of music teachers he organised at the Conservatorium in the early 1920s. University Council Minutes show also that he had each of them appointed to the staff of the Conservatorium at various times.

Davies enlisted Miss Sterry's help (and later that of Miss Ayers) in drawing up a syllabus which he entitled 'Musical Perception', and he presented it at the annual AMEB Conference in 1925 as an alternative to the Theory exams. Although other Board members were ambivalent about group examinations for the aural section, they agreed to adopt the syllabus in the first instance for lower grades only. The 1926 AMEB *Manual* (pp140-141) included introductory remarks by Davies. He declared:

Ear and rhythm training are the first essentials of music education . . . so that music becomes to the child what it really is – a living language and lessons, instead of being a dreary task, are seen to be a joyous adventure in the world of sound. . . . Learning to play an instrument and acquiring a theoretical knowledge of music does not necessarily promote either a love of the art or any improvement in the sense of hearing. . . . Of what use is it to know that a major third contains four semitones, if its actual sound be not realised?

Even earlier, in a lecture to teachers in Melbourne he was advocating that before a child begins to learn to play an instrument, at least a year or two should be given over to aural training. (Davies, 1924). Much later, in an ABC talk to parents and teachers about AMEB broadcasts (Davies, 1940), he was still emphasising the need for very young children to be taught how to listen:

> *After teaching music for more than fifty years, I want to tell you what, in my judgement, is the most important thing of all. It is ear-training. From the very first moment the tiniest child begins to learn, it should be taught to listen quietly and thoughtfully. Start with the simplest questions. 'What is that sound?'*

Although Ayers was conducting aural training classes for Conservatorium students from 1926, with the onset of the Depression in 1927 she, like Sterry, returned to England. Not until after the appointment of Heather Gell (Council Minutes 1934, p.210) was aural training resumed at the Conservatorium, though Davies himself took every opportunity during his Bachelor of Music classes to challenge his students' aural abilities, as I well remember. His repeated insistence that 'You must be able to hear what you write and write what you hear' meant that consistent practice was necessary.

Davies never wavered in his belief that a regular music education program should be taught in every school. [We are still fighting for this!] He had hoped that his Musical Perception syllabus might provide a basis for music education in the classroom. However generalist classroom teachers could not cope with this, though there was universal class singing and sometimes perfunctory and mechanical use of a *sol-fa* modulator chart, meaningless to many children. In 1934, Davies called a meeting of school principals and the Director of Education, to urge the teaching of music, at least in primary schools, as a regular part of the curriculum. He explained that he intended to prepare a syllabus for an AMEB Licentiate Diploma in teaching Musical Perception, so that teachers with a background in music could become qualified to teach it in the classroom. (The *Advertiser*, 9/07/1934)

He enlisted the help of Heather Gell in drawing up this syllabus as in addition to her Dalcroze qualification she had obtained the Macpherson and Read LRAM Diploma at the Royal Academy of Music. Once the AMEB had approved this syllabus and published it in its 1936 *Manual*, Davies asked Miss Gell to con-

duct a two-year course at the Elder Conservatorium to prepare teachers for the very demanding examinations. But AMEB records show that the currency of the L.Mus.A (Musical Perception) was only seven years, and that the majority of the sixteen successful candidates came from Adelaide. I was one of these. Later, the AMEB changed the nomenclature of 'Musical Perception' to 'Musicianship' and adopted the much less demanding syllabus of The Royal Schools of Music (Bridges, 1971), but even this lasted for only a short time. Teacher education was, and still is, a problem, and its improvement at all levels was one of Davies' main concerns while he was Director of the Elder Conservatorium from 1919-1947.

The foregoing recollections of my own experiences in childhood and as a student, and information based on subsequent research give some indication about an isolated example of early classes in music for young children in Adelaide. I have also outlined the role of E. Harold Davies in promoting and actively supporting the teaching of music based from the very beginning on aural perception and development. But this aspect of Davies' work shows only one of his varied interests and concerns throughout his long life.

Dr Bridges has recently written a book about Davies, entitled More than a Musician, published by Australian Scholarly Publishing. It will be reviewed next year in the KMEIA Bulletin.

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Kodály News

from James Cuskelly

QUEENSLAND MUSIC TEACHERS OFF TO HUNGARY

In December 2006, James Cuskelly will lead a group of Queensland music educators in a special intensive study tour in Hungary. This two-week course will be based at the Iscola (school) of the Hungarian National Radio Children's Choir. The main lecturers in this course will be Ildiko Herboly-Koscar, Gabriella Thész (Principal Conductor of the Children's Choir) and Laszlo Nemes (Assistant Conductor of the Children's Choir).

Participants will not only have daily musicianship, conducting and music literature classes, but will also have the opportunity to observe and conduct the Children's Choir. In addition, there will be special lectures on the development of the Hungarian music system and on traditional Hungarian music and instruments. Participants will observe a range of classes from pre-school to tertiary, and will visit the International Kodály Institute (Kecskemet), the Liszt Academy (Budapest), the world famous choir *Cantemus* (Nireghaza), the Kodály, Bartok and Liszt museums. No trip to Hungary would be complete without lots of music and there will be plenty of opportunities to attend concerts, including a performance at the Budapest Opera House.

INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS FOR UQ CHOIR

In 2005, a new Chamber Vocal Ensemble called Sola Voce was established by Réka Csernyik within the School of Music, University of Queensland. This is an auditioned group, designed to provide opportunities for participants to sing more challenging works. In July 2006 the grouptoured to Europe to participate in the International Choral Competition in Pardubice (Czech Republic).

Sola Voce won all of the sections in which they participated, won the Grand Prix and were awarded a Special Prize for the best University Choir. In addition, Réka was given the prize for the best conductor of the Competition. After this tremendous success, Sola Voce have returned to Australia and have given a number for concerts. They are already planning a shorter international tour in 2007.

Classroom strategies for changing voice boys

by Anthony Young

This paper supplements a session presented at 'Strengthening Ties', the KMEIA national conference held at The University of Queensland June 25 -28 2006.

Terminology

The terms 'Head Voice' and 'Chest Voice' will be defined for the purposes of this article as follows. 'Chest Voice' is singing with substantial vocal fold mass using predominantly the shortener muscles. 'Head Voice' is singing with less vocal fold mass using predominantly the lengthener muscles. The Queensland Musicianship method is that which is commonly used in Kodály inspired Secondary Classroom music programs in Queensland. Songs referred to are taken from the resources provided at the University of Queensland Summer Schools during which teachers are trained in the method.

A Safe Classroom Environment

A safe classroom environment is absolutely essential. Roe states that 'the teacher must handle emotional adjustments as well as the physical' and that 'young people tend to be somewhat cruel and unkind by nature. Those whose voices do not sound manly, or are unmanageable, are likely to be ribbed unmercifully' (1). The teacher must be valiant in establishing expectations of mutual respect in the classroom. Joel is reassured by the fact that, 'in time, boys make the transformation into responsible, caring young men' (2) but this transformation requires active nurturing on the part of the teacher.

Unexpected vocal events (my students call them 'blow outs') must be considered normal and not an excuse for ridicule. Voice training is like target practice (3) and boys often miss. Show them how to get closer to the target and they will try. Make vocal proficiency seem a mysterious and difficult achievement and boys will quickly give up. Remember the greatest fear of any adolescent is to be humiliated in front of his peers. It is much more sensitive to assess a child singing their pentatonic intervals standing in the corridor instead of in front of the class. Small group singing enables the teacher to assess progress without singling students out. Form groups of voices at similar stages of change and enable students to realize that voice change does not always occur at the same rate within friendship groups. If a small group does something impressive, they will want to show off to the class. This will lead to individuals having the courage to perform confidently.

Actively Teach Singing

Teach what happens when the voice 'changes' and emphasise that it is safe for young men to sing throughout the voice change. The old 'resting the voice' approach to voice change has been thoroughly discredited. Roe, in his characteristically blunt fashion claims that 'the traditional concept…of having boys sing soprano until their voices break…frequently smashes a voice into tiny bits for life'. Later he claims 'all of the American plans agree that the young man may sing throughout the interval of time it takes for his voice to change' and that 'the voice will emerge from its period of transition with a wider range and a better quality than if it had not been used' (4). Cooksey states that 'singing and speaking activities and training can be continued as long as efficient voice use and healthy management occur' (5).

Students need to understand the basics of why it is suddenly hard to sing in tune and must be armed with knowledge about how their voices are developing so they have the courage to keep singing. Cooksey asks 'can an understanding and effective practice of healthy voice management during voice change better enable young men to withstand negative peer pressure regarding participation in singing activities?' He answers by suggesting that 'if adolescent voices were cultivated, using methodologies based on scientific findings, more young men would be encouraged to continue their participation in singing activities' (6).

It is important that boys understand that their vocal mechanism is doubling in size and that the muscles operating that mechanism need to adjust to the change. Roe claims that 'the teacher must discuss the physiology of the voice with each class'. (7) This does not require lengthy and complicated anatomy lessons but does suggest that students need a basic understanding of vocal function and development.

A difficulty for the teacher is that there have been a range of historical approaches to singing through the voice change which are not all congruent. Some approaches suit a very gradual development while others seem designed for voices that seems to change very quickly.(8)

Another complication is that most of the research is designed for a classroom choir situation which is the prevailing context of adolescent male singing in American schools. While issues of voice type and classification are essential in a choral situation (i.e. what part will I get him to sing?), these issues are not central in a Queensland Musicianship classroom. A classroom music teacher is likely to be confronted by a group of students who are undergoing different phases of voice change simultaneously and will be trying to get unison singing with good intonation to assist the development of audiation and musicianship.

Thankfully, a number of classroom strategies can be applied with reasonable confidence. It is important to encourage students to continue to use head voice as well as developing their new lower notes. A number of students might notice a gap between the two registers where it is very difficult if not impossible to sing. Swanson believed that 'vocalizing a young man's falsetto (Head Voice) register downward

would help 'bridge'' the gap between head and chest voice and 'enable these singers to regain 'lost' notes'. (9) Cooksey supports this claiming that 'a large majority of boys can learn to sing fairly comfortably in the falsetto (Head Voice) register' and that 'physically efficient register transitions can be facilitated by vocalizing from the upper range down-ward if falsetto (Head Voice) register can be produced with ease'. 'These register transition processes can produce a very consistent, efficiently produced tone throughout the singers' pitch range'. (10). David Jorlett, Anton Armstrong and Jerry Blackstone also support the maintenance of the Head Voice with Blackstone advocating extensive use of Head Voice for settling voices. Jorlett uses a car gear change analogy in describing the change of adjustment from Head Voice to Chest Voice which the author has appropriated with success in class (11).

It is not necessary to derail normal focus teaching or take large amounts of time in lessons in order to achieve efficient singing. However if the development of vocal coordination is ignored, it will be difficult for students to participate successfully in the learning experiences of a teaching method in which the voice is central.

Use short focuses to develop vocal skills. Vocal issues can then be addressed in passing during normal focus teaching. Here is an example of a discrete vocal teaching focus:

> **Behavioural Objective:** The students will sing the known song *Blow the Wind Southerly* using Head and Chest Voice. Doh = D'
>
> **Review:** Stand, sing song to words while walking the beat (walking the beat will encourage students not to 'lift' off their breath support). Hold hands above heads to ensure the rib cage is expanded and the sternum is floating.
>
> **Point:** Sing in Chest Voice to 'you' or 'loo' while walking the beat then change to head voice. (Research suggests that it is easier to access Head Voice with a back vowel such as [u]. It also recommends using a labial consonant to prevent the sound being 'swallowed') (12)
>
> **Reinforce:** Half class sing in Head Voice then Chest Voice in sol fa (the pure vowels used in the sol fa will be easier to sing than the words)

Once a number of such focuses are taught, these skills can be easily incorporated into other focuses. For example, students might be practising fa and ti in the known song *Come Follow*. If the CSP is C' or D' the last phrase can be problematic to newly changed voices. The same problem occurs in the second last bar of *Hayes No. 126* in Classicus Canons which is likely to be taught for the same purpose. Once the 'change of gear' into Head Voice is familiar, the boys can simply change into Head Voice for the high notes. Some students might have to octave displace them instead depending on their stage of voice maturation.

Other learning experiences recommended by Cooksey include spoken sighs which glide smoothly from head voice to chest (13). These exercises also form an important part of the voice development regime advocated by Westminster Choir College (14). Cooksey suggests that these be refined into descending 5 note passages (sfmrd) as voices develop. The author of this paper has found these exercises to be very useful. Cooksey also recommends imitation of teacher modeled sounds with various pitch inflections and voice qualities.

He also advocates using 'physical gestures that serve as a visual-kinesthetic metaphor for some aspect of the vocal skill being targeted' such as 'pretending to throw a Frisbee… spreading open arms down and away with voicing or turning hands in rapid circles in front of the abdomen' to encourage active breath support and healthy voice use (15). These approaches align with the work of the conductor Rodney Eichenberger (16).

Anecdotally, untrained changing voice boys will tend to yell in chest voice if not corrected. This is not conducive to good progress; however, overly soft singing can sometimes result in unsupported vocal production with incomplete closure of the vocal folds, leading to prematurely dry, tired voices. A teacher needs to develop an ear for a clean healthy sound. Roe advocates 'allowing the young man to sing out but not shout' and warns against 'continuous use of smooth, soft singing' (17). He quotes Wilcox who claims that 'the voice mechanism functions at its maximum efficiency…….when producing tones of considerable intensity (mezzo forte power)' and that the voice is under greater 'stress with a 'soft tone'' (18).

Suitable Repertoire, Octave Displacement and CSP

Choosing suitable classroom repertoire is a challenging issue because of the range difficulties encountered by changing voice boys. Cooksey finds that during the period of greatest vocal instability during voice change, a boy may only have an effective range of about a 6th (19). Roe claims that 'it is almost impossible to sing unison melodies with newly changed

voices' (20) while Cooksey suggests that 'unison singing is possible but has its limitations'. His complaint is that 'the pitch ranges of most published unison songs have pitch ranges that are too wide' (21).

An advantage of much of the repertoire used in Queensland Musicianship Programs is that the range is small enough to be negotiated by a voice with limited range. This is particularly true of the songs early in the 'late beginners' learning sequence such as 'Who's that Yonder', 'Dinah' and 'Rocky Mountain' (recommended by Cooksey). However, once the extended pentatonic scale is approached problems start to arise as its range is an octave and a fourth. One solution is to continuously develop the coordination of the Head Voice to Chest Voice 'gear change' as described above. The students start in Chest and flip into Head voice as the pitches get high. Obviously there will often be students who do not yet have this coordination achieved. Teachers should be patient in these cases and can allow these students to drop an octave, that is, octave displace the notes that are not yet in range. Students with underdeveloped chest register may octave displace low notes up the octave in the same way. This practice must be combined with the sighing and sirening advocated above so that the development of their full singing range is not hampered.

As a result of these issues it can be difficult to prepare the extended pentatonic scale using songs which use the whole range of the scale. It can be more successful to teach high do with *pourquoi* and low la and low so with *Dog and Cat*. Once the notes are taught, the scale can then be introduced as a concept but songs containing the whole range can be delayed as practice activities to be used once the voices start to settle.

Try to find a comfortable starting pitch that works for most boys in the class on a given day. The CSP might have to change on a daily basis when the voices are at their most unstable.

Be patient but persistent with intonation

Continually work towards in-tune singing but don't demand that the whole class get it exactly right immediately – it may be simply impossible for some students some days. Of course, if you don't care about intonation they will never improve. However, improved intonation must always be viewed as an achievable challenge rather than a quixotic goal. Work on difficult intervals when students are fresh and have a positive, motivating attitude. Don't grind away at an unsuccessful intonation exercise. Move on and try another angle the next day. The word 'closer' will be more effective than 'wrong'. Conversely, it is essential that the teacher be accurate and reliable in feedback and only describe intonation as 'correct' when it is.

It is important to be able to tell between a child who is trying very hard and not being successful and a child who is simply unfocussed. Chastising a hard working child is counterproductive but failing to challenge an unmotivated student is just as unfortunate. The teacher must aim to have aural and vocal technique solutions for the hard worker as well as motivating strategies for the less involved student.

Cookesy's suggestion of the use of gestures as a visual-kinesthetic metaphor strongly supports the use of Handsigns to assist the development of in tune singing. Handsigns, when they accurately reflect the size of intervals, effectively improve intonation but can cause constriction if placed too high.

It is important to remember the basics of good singing and ensure that students are giving themselves a chance to sing well. Skelton in his article 'Choral Intonation' lists the following items for checking (amongst others) when a group is singing flat.

'Is the body of the singer lazy looking? Is the spine out of alignment? Is the neck tense? The Jaw? Is the sternum too low? Are the shoulders slouching? ….Is the breath too shallow? Too Small? Is the breath flow too slow? Too weak? Uneven?' (22). Students need to sit or stand properly in class and have a working knowledge of posture, breath support, and the basics of vocal production. This requires the teacher to have a working knowledge of vocal production and methods for teaching the basic concepts. There is no point in trying to develop intonation in students if the basic set up of their bodies in terms of vocal production is dooming them to failure. Students will normally cooperate in these areas if their importance is stressed. Students will be far happier to use good posture if they know that it will help them succeed vocally.

The value of inner hearing and 'silent singing' cannot be overstressed in this context. If students silently sing a phrase before attempting it, it will usually be performed with better intonation. Johnson and Klonski describe this as 'subvocalisation' and quote Gordon on the centrality of singing in the development of audiation. 'A student must learn to sing or she (sic) will not learn to develop her tonal audiation'. 'To be able to audiate a melody, a student must be able to sing, because when she (sic) engages in tonal audiation, she is unconsciously singing silently' (23). There seems to be a symbiotic relationship between the development of singing and the development of the aural skills necessary to audiate successfully.

Don't be obsessive or precious about the singing

Singing is a physical activity so teach it like a sport. In Australia, sport is a powerfully dominant aspect

of our culture and connections with that culture if made with care can powerfully benefit singing and can enrich sporting experiences. Roe advises Junior High school teachers to recruit athletes because of the 'prestige it gives to the music department' in the American context (24). Harrison reports on the advantages of allying music and sport but wisely cautions against an unreflective adoption of sporting concepts. He advocates the adoption of the positive aspects of sporting culture such as team work and reliability while cautioning against a win at all costs competitive mentality. (25) Sing and play activities are the most 'sport like' of the activities used in the Queensland Musicianship Method.

Singing and walking the beat or dancing can encourage better singing. The comments above about movement are again applicable here but in this context the movements can take the students' minds away from their vocal apparatus and can encourage freer better supported vocal work. Often movement will free up a stiffly held larynx or a tight breath mechanism where no amount of direct instruction will. It is important however to ensure that the activities are musically done and not counter-productive.

Use sing and play, keyboard work, computer work, book work to vary lesson activities. If singing is the only class activity used in a lesson, a student at the most dramatic stage of voice change might feel far less able at the subject than is the case. This can be dangerous given that this is the time of hormonally charged emotional development when the student can be most at risk. Success with keyboard (play and tap in canon – play and play in canon), computer, aural analysis/dictation or dancing can enable a student to feel and appear successful to his peers in the subject even if the voice is causing significant difficulties. This should never be used as an excuse for the student not to sing at all. Provided there is no evidence of pathology, the student should be vocally trained back into successful free singing at correct pitch.

Drill activities are invaluable in improving the singing

Students need multiple chances to succeed. Avoid boredom with the exercises by adding progressive layers of challenge like a computer game with always another level to master. Students will not tire of small ranged simple songs if they are being challenged intellectually by the way they are to perform them. A child who is performing 'Rose Red' in three part canon will be intellectually stimulated. At the same time, the child's vocal mechanism is developing valuable muscle memory and muscle tone in a small pitch range safely.

Develop a singing culture in your school

It is very difficult for a small number of students to confidently sing in a school that is otherwise silent. You do not want your students to be an oppressed minority. Develop community singing at every opportunity. This starts by nurturing positive attitudes to singing in your classroom and then spreading these attitudes throughout the school. Roe encourages us to emphasise 'the maleness of singing'. He pragmatically suggests using extrinsic motivation by recommending that we 'invite outstanding men in any walk of life to tell about the important part music has played in their lives and by social gatherings and parties for music groups, particularly if there is food available (undoubtedly one of the real interests of a boy at this age' (26).

It is important to remember the power of the teacher, particularly in the younger years in developing positive attitudes to singing. Clare Hall finds that attitudes to singing are being formed at ages 5 – 7 and reassuringly advises that at this age students are still susceptible to teacher direction. In the Junior High school, the teacher must rely on developing positive role models amongst the students in the Senior School as adolescents are far more strongly influenced by their peers' (27).

If the school has a young, competent and impressive male voice teacher, demonstrations of his singing can powerfully influence the attitudes of the students. Having male staff members, especially those who are not Music staff, sing at school events can also be very successful.

The whole school can sing worship songs in religious schools and the National Anthem in state schools. Appropriate the singing traditions of major sports if relevant. Learn the music and teach the songs to the teams.

Run a Rock Music festival on a yearly basis in your school. Have strong security, venue and equipment protection measures. Require auditions and have your students on the committee. Make the auditions acoustic to require finesse in the playing. The existence of the festival will do wonders for the 'street credibility' of the music department with the students. If other staff can assist and perhaps perform it strongly broadens the support for the music department in the school. Students see staff singing and if they are influential male staff all the better. As a recruiting tactic for elective music such festivals can be very useful. Hopefully the classroom music students will have far superior singing to the other students and prospective students will realize the value of the elective music program to them. This does not mean running a popular music based classroom program.

Use popular music when and if it is relevant to the learning sequence. Be willing to help students if they are having a vocal difficulty. Help them sing their music and they will be far more willing to sing your music for you in class.

Start a voice development squad. This is a group of changing voices who meet to warm up and sing on a weekly basis outside class. Choice of repertoire can be informed by the work of people like Tony Backhouse, Dr. Bob Smith in the Northern Territory or Pete Churchill in his London singing projects (28). The main aim is to cultivate a continued interest in singing during the voice change. These groups can be very important where unitized timetables result in large numbers of students in the school undergoing voice change while not attending music classes: the groups keep the students singing when no curriculum classes are available. Performances, if necessary, must be sensitively organized to ensure the students have a positive experience.

Once solid numbers of boys are singing in class it is time to start an extra curricular choral program open to boys who do not necessarily study classroom music. These students form another significant group who will spread positive messages about singing throughout the school community. Be very sensitive in scheduling performances at first and ensure that any performances in front of the student body will be well received. Performances in front of the student body should only be attempted after numerous successful performances with more supportive audiences.

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Author's additional note: Readers could do well to read Kenneth Phillips 'Teaching Kids to Sing' and might also find useful repertoire in Tony Backhouse's 'Acappella Rehearsing for Heaven'.

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The influence of music on the development of young children:

Music research with children between 6 and 40 months

by Katalin Forrai

This paper finalises our Tribute to Katalin Forrai (1926 - 2004)

One of the major ideas of Zoltán Kodály's music education concept was that education should be started early. Society and music teachers turn with an ever greater interest to pre-school age. In our days it is an already well-established fact with both theoretical and practical evidence that children having received preparatory music education between the age of 3 and 6 will acquire music reading and writing more easily at school than their class-mates with no similar background. On the possibilities of musical development in the first three to four years, however, literature is scarce although in this susceptible age music may have determining and lasting effects. In Hungary the National Institute for the Methodological Guidance of Creches launched a research programme in order to investigate the influence of music on children. (The term creche is applied to those Hungarian day-care centres where babies between 6 and 36 months are kept during the day while mothers work.) Children exposed to somewhat more musical influences and others hearing hardly any singing or music were observed under experimental conditions in a three-year longitudinal research. By comparing the experimental data the research aims at finding out whether music has any effect on the personality of children and how it influences the children's mood, activities and sociability.

The basic principles underlying the investigations were:

- Every healthy child can be developed musically.
- Singing, rhythmic Mother Goose rhymes, personal contact are necessary for the musical development of small children.
- The music applied should draw from the folk tradition.

- The methods of development should strictly follow the various developmental phases of the children.

Our hypotheses sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the optimum conditions for singing to children?
   a.) The adults do not enter into any kind of contact with the child during singing ('without contact' situation)
   b.) They use some objects or instruments to accompany singing ('object use' situation)
   c.) The adults establish personal contact with the children while singing ('personal contact' situation)

2. What kind of effect do various songs have?
   a.) slow, quiet songs performed in a low voice
   b.) fast, rhythmic, lively melodies

3. What is the optimum number and duration of the musical stimuli?
   a.) singing many times but always for a short while only ('singing in parts' situation)
   b.) singing once only for a longer period of time ('singing once' situation).

Observation recorded (in units of one minute):

1. With whom (and how many persons) does the child initiate contact, what object(s) does he touch?
2. What kind of movements does the child make, how does he act (actions, gestures, mimics, etc.)?
3. What kind of sounds, above all musical vocalizations does he produce?

Method and procedures

Antecedents:

The nurses of three creches received intensive music education; they learned to read and write music and about 150 songs and rhymes, canons, folk melodies. The nurses of three other creches used as a control group were musically not trained.

The subjects:

were 4 children from each of the three creches with musical activities (experimental group) and 4 children from each of the three other creches (control group), altogether 24. The protocols were taken of every child on 13-14 occasions with observations in 7 different situations. During the 3 years of research about 1.800 protocols were taken.

Methods of data processing

Protocols drawn up on a minute basis from three different points of view were typed and prepared for analysis and evaluation. The data were compiled in a manner which allowed computer processing. The results of the analysis established during this short time indicate that there is a tremendous difference between the very young and the 1 to 3 year old children regarding the effect of music. The data of babies and those of children who are between the 13th and 40th month are analysed separately.

Analysis of the babies' protocol data

Figures 1 to 5 show average values of the babies' various reactions (e.g. vocalization, movement, social initiation and reactions reflecting their emotional state) in individual experimental situations. (The data refer to the average frequency of behavioural reaction in question, i.e. to its average frequency in each child in one period of observation.)

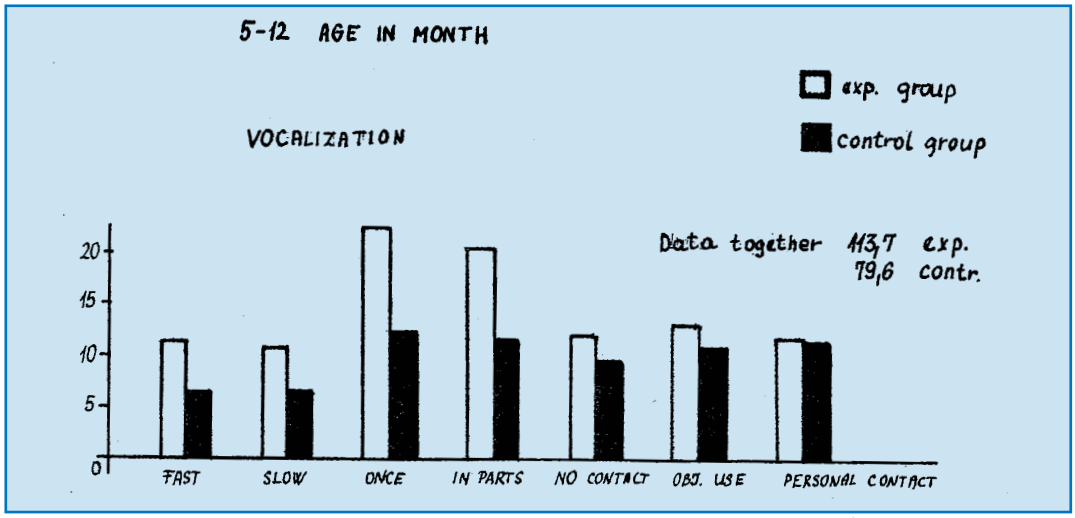

Figure 1

The total figure (∑) shows that children in the experimental group exceeded those of the control group in the number of *vocalizations* by one and a half on an average. (Mean vocalization was 113.7 and 79.6 respectively.) *(See Figure 1)*

When breaking down sound formation data in such a way as to analyze and evaluate vocalization, reproduction of melody and word fragments and lip movements separately, further remarkable relations maybe

singing without interruption for a longer period of time increased the number of vocalizations to the greatest extent, while singing in parts with interruptions provided better opportunities for the children to observe and imitate the adults' sound formation. It was in this situation that the most lip-movements were recorded.

If the experimental and control groups are compared with regard to *vocalization,* the two groups do

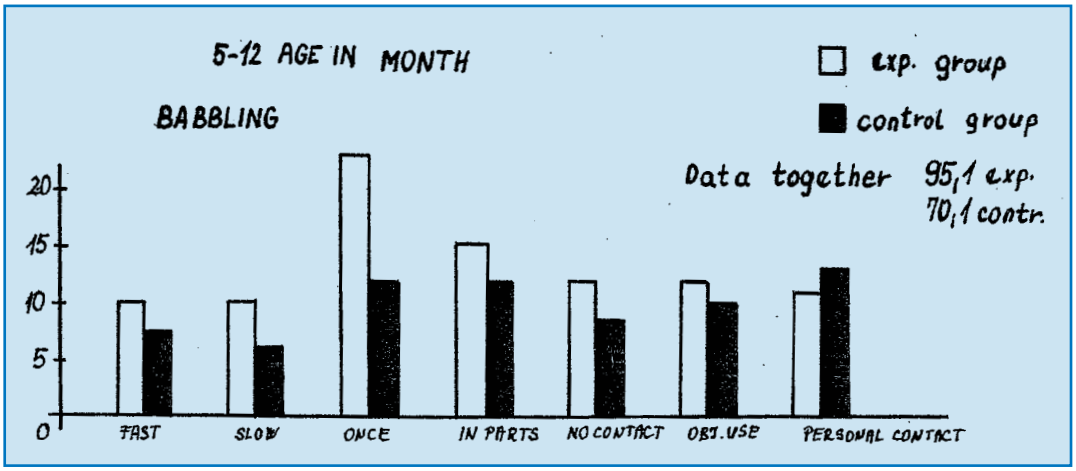

Figure 6

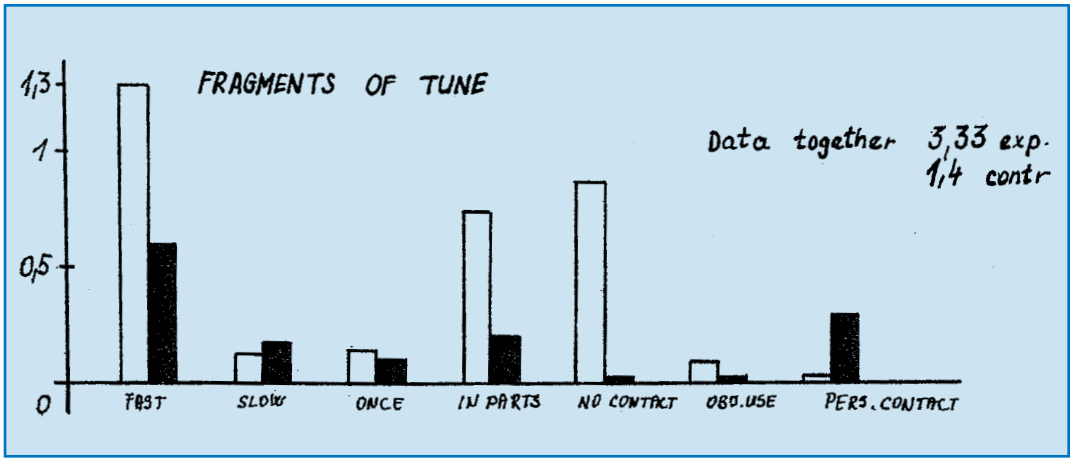

Figure 7

arrived at:

As far as the various *experimental situations* are concerned no major difference could be observed; members of the experimental group uttered more sounds in every situation; neither the different character of the songs nor the diverse performance styles resulted in considerable differences with regard to the number of vocalizations. It is perhaps the *frequency of performance* that can be stressed in one respect: on the basis of the available data one could state that

not stand very much apart in the mean number of *melody and word fragments:* as it was anticipated babies reproduced very little from the tune and words of the melody sung. A significant difference between the two groups is observed in other forms of vocalization: children in the experimental group crow, babble more, form more sounds (the mean value is 95.1 and 70.1 respectively). *(See Figure 6)*

As regards the number of *lip-movements* the difference between the two groups is even larger: children

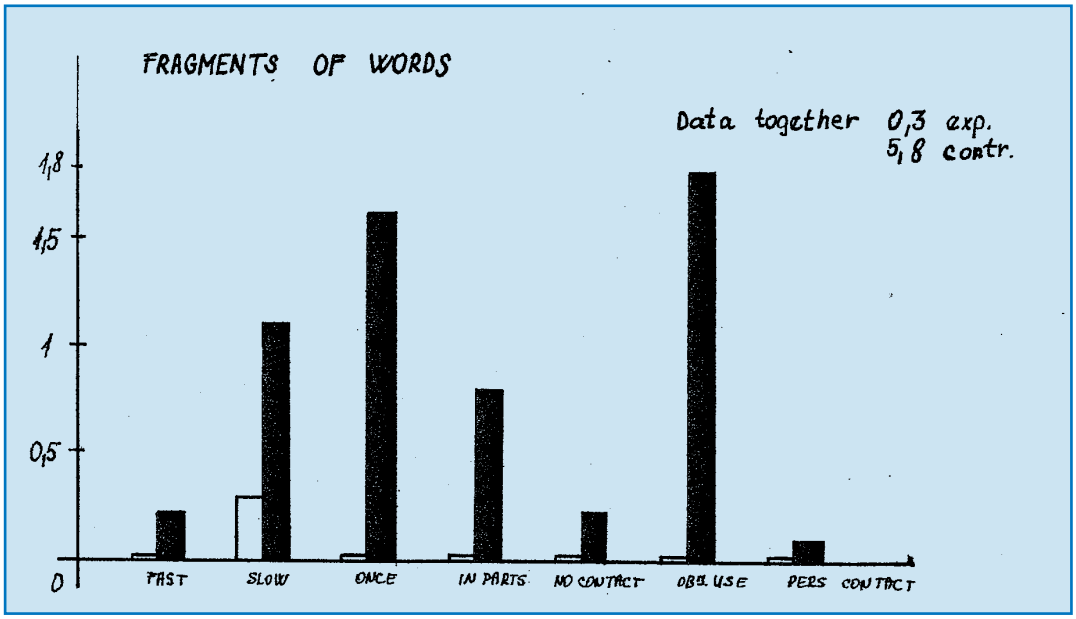

Figure 8

in the experimental group made lip-movements and shaped their lips almost five times more frequently than members of the control group (14.86 vs 2.5! on average). *(See Figure 9)*

Why do we consider these results as worthy of attention?

Observations in child psychology attach importance in the early period of speech acquisition to the fact that babies produce in the first months of babbling a great variety of sounds (according to some observations more than 200 different kinds of sounds), the majority of which does not exist in the child's environment and mother tongue. Children 'play' with their organs of speech and try to use them for forming any sound that they are capable of producing. Sounds not heard in their environment will gradually disappear from their set of sounds due to lack of reinforcement while those occurring in the speech of the adults become fixed in the second half of the first year. Thus it may be said that in the months of babbling children 'work out' the store of sounds corresponding to their mother tongue. In this process the imitation of an external example plays an even greater role.

This type of lip movements – as referred to previously may thus be regarded as a specific phase of the speech acquisition process, i.e. when the child tries to form 'soundlessly' sounds, words and syllables by imitating the lip movements of the adults.

Consequently, the results achieved call the attention to the fact that more singing and an environment richer in musical stimuli not only increase the children's 'inclination for vocalization' considerably but also incite speech acquisition in this early period of life.

Rhythmic movements

Figure 2 contains the total of the average numbers of rhythmic movements made by the limbs, the trunk or the whole body during the period of observation.

The data reveal that the children of the experimental group made twice as many rhythmic movements on an average as members of the control group. (The mean value of rhythmic movements during the period of observation was: 48.18 vs 28.2).

With the impact of more frequent, regular singing small children made more movements and with greater pleasure.

Analyzing the effect of the various experimental situations on their own it was found that against all expectations no significant differences occurred in the number of movements when songs of different character (fast – slow) were sung. All the more striking appeared the situation when singing was accompanied with some kind of object use: it was here that most rhythmic movements occurred (shaking and swaying objects, shaking hands or arms, rocking the trunk, etc.) and it frequently went together with pleasant feelings laughing, smiling and crowing. (In view of the positive emotional state this situation assumes a great significance.)

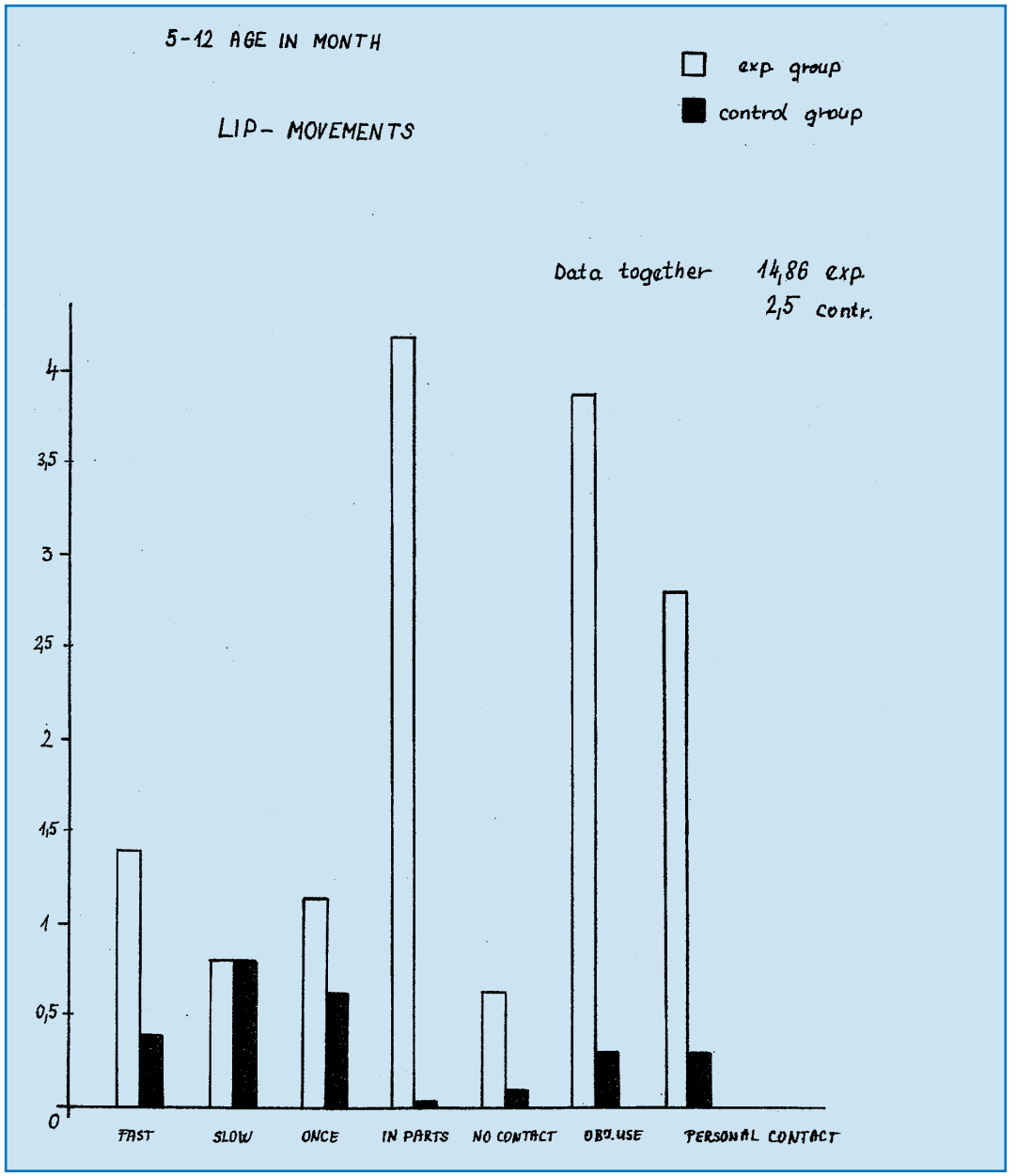

Figure 9

Initiations of social contact

The data which have been received for this category are highly interesting even if difficult to explain for the time being. Members of the control group initiated more social contact than children in the experimental group. *(See Figure 3)*

It cannot be defined with any precision yet what lies behind this phenomenon. As the data refer to the social contacts initiated by the children observed (towards adults and children alike) and they were directed towards adults the assumption may be ventured that nurses attended to members of the experimental group more frequently; thus they were less *impelled* to initiate contact on their own. This is, however, merely a hypothesis; as a matter of fact, the phenomenon needs further explanation and analysis.

Emotional reactions

Figure 4 indicates that members of the experimental group showed much more positive and much less negative emotional reactions than their counterparts in the control group. The number of positive emo-

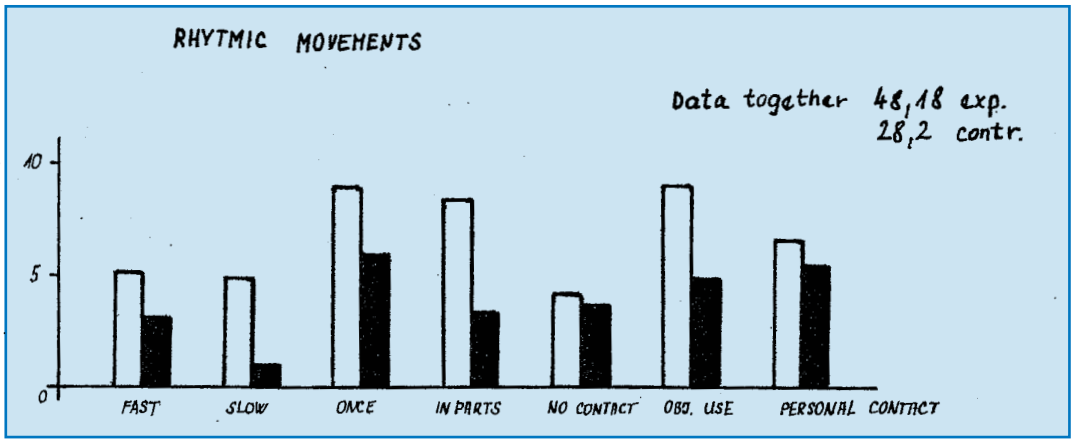

Figure 2

tional reactions in the experimental groups is more than double compared with that of the control group (68.7 vs 33.7!). *(See Figure 5)*

Thus the available data bear special significance in our evaluation as the *emotional, affective state* of the children constitutes a very important factor of their development.

The harmonious development of the child's personality requires that from the first months of life on, not only his *physical* needs should be completely satisfied (feeding, changing the baby's diaper) but also his basic need for *security* met, the basis of which lies in the harmonious, stable contact between the child and the adults in his surroundings.

Analysis of the data of 1 to 3 year old children

From 1 year but especially 20 months onwards *singing the stimulus song is* the predominant from of vocalization. It is very frequent in every age group, regardless of the specific situational characteristics. Within this overall tendency, slight differences can be found in connection with some particulars.

Singing the stimulus song in an identifiable way appears earlier with children attending the experimental creches. In the control group there are very few instances of this reaction below 20 months of ago. On the contrary, the corresponding average data in the experimental group reach or even exceed 1 in most situations (which means that the children in the experimental group are able to imitate the songs earlier than in the control ones). (See Figure10).

In the experimental group the *'singing in parts'* situation elicited more singing as reaction than the *'singing once'* situation did (the only exception being the 30-35 month olds). In the *'singing in parts'* situation the average amount of singing the stimulus song is above 1 at any age level. In the control group the same situational factor results in an inverse proportion. (See Figure 11) This interesting finding may be interpreted as evidence of the children's being rather used to hearing songs in the experimental group, therefore being more sensitive even to short musical stimuli.

Singing with using objects and singing with *social* contact elicit a somewhat higher amount of singing reaction compared with the situation *without contact* – the

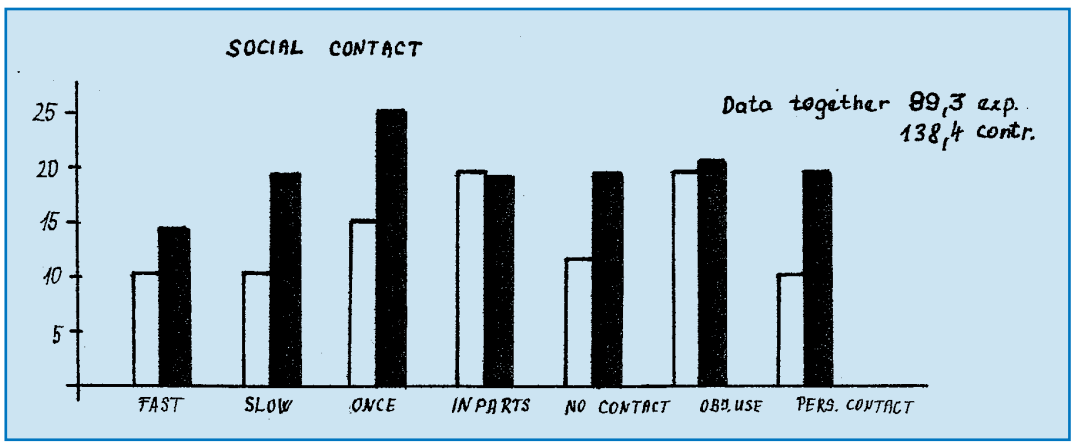

Figure 3

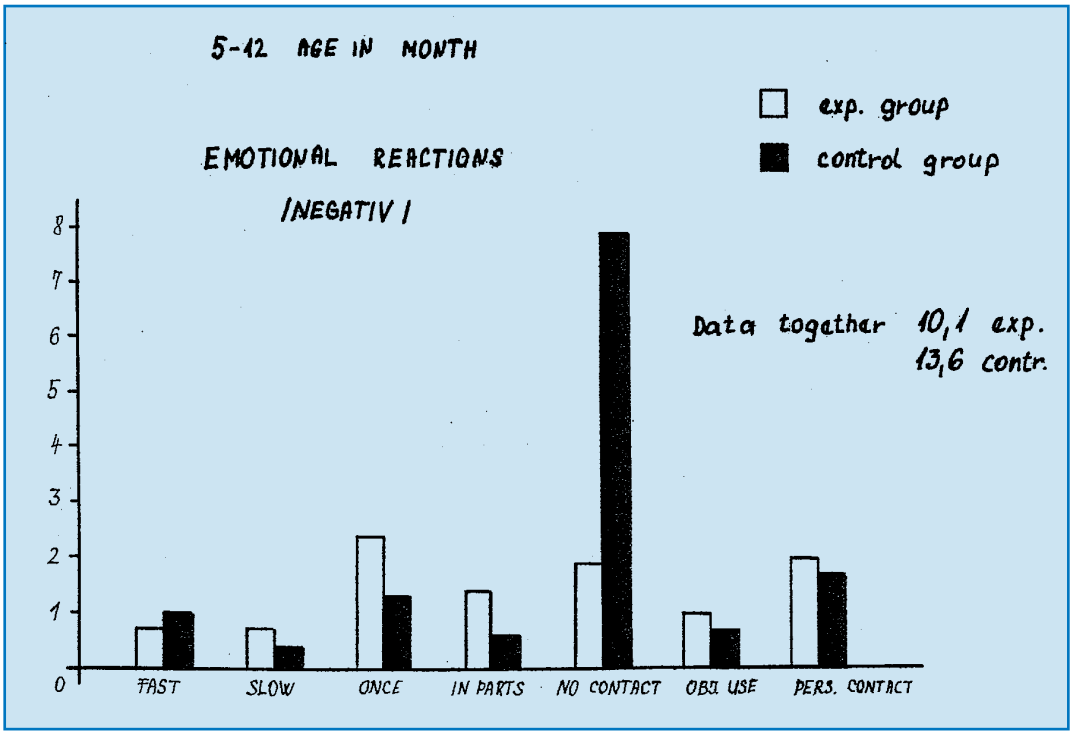

Figure 4

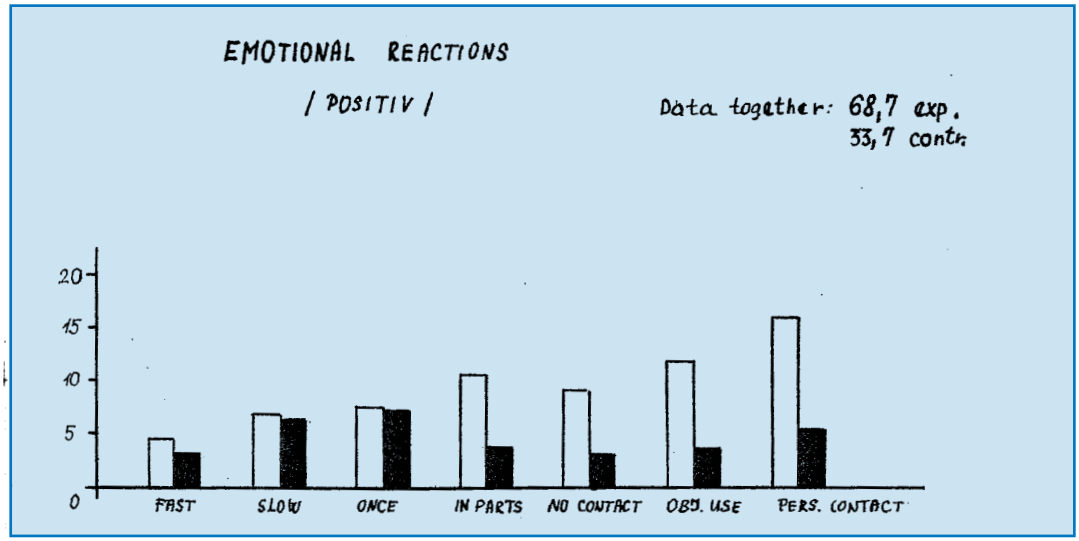

Figure 5

same tendency being manifest in both groups. *(See Figure 12)*

In the children between 1 and 3 years of age other vocalizations than those which were recorded occurred very rarely and there is no evidence of their having any specific relation to the nurse's singing. (Normal speech acts were excluded from analysis since speech becomes the usual way of communication as children grow older. It appeared therefore more and more difficult – eventually impossible – to record each speech act in detail.)

There is a marked difference between the experimental group and the control one in the frequency of *rhythmic movements*. In the experimental group, from 20 months onwards, rhythmic movement is one of the children's predominant reactions to the nurse's singing. It is worth mentioning some figures: in the experimental group only 7 out of the total 28 average

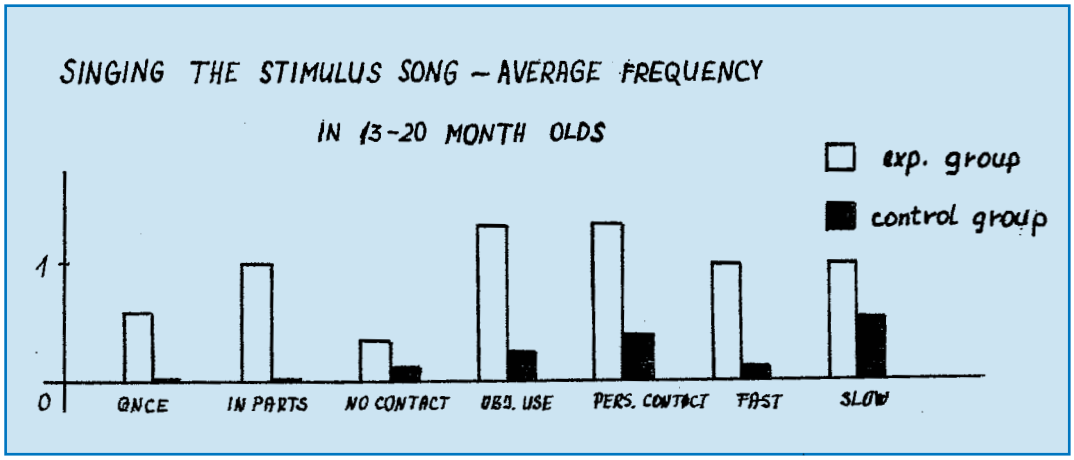

Figure 10

data referring to the occurrence of rhythmic movements are below 1 and only 2 fall below 0.75 while in the control group merely 5 out of those 28 reach 1 and many of them are extremely low (between 0 - 0.2).

These findings seem to prove that the development of the sense of rhythm – manifest in overt movements – can be facilitated by regular stimuli of singing as early as from the first years of life.

No situational factors make any evaluable difference in the occurrence of rhythmic movements.

The amount of the *imitative-symbolic behaviour is* not very high altogether. Regarding the age period in question even these few instances may, however, be considered as an important influence of hear-

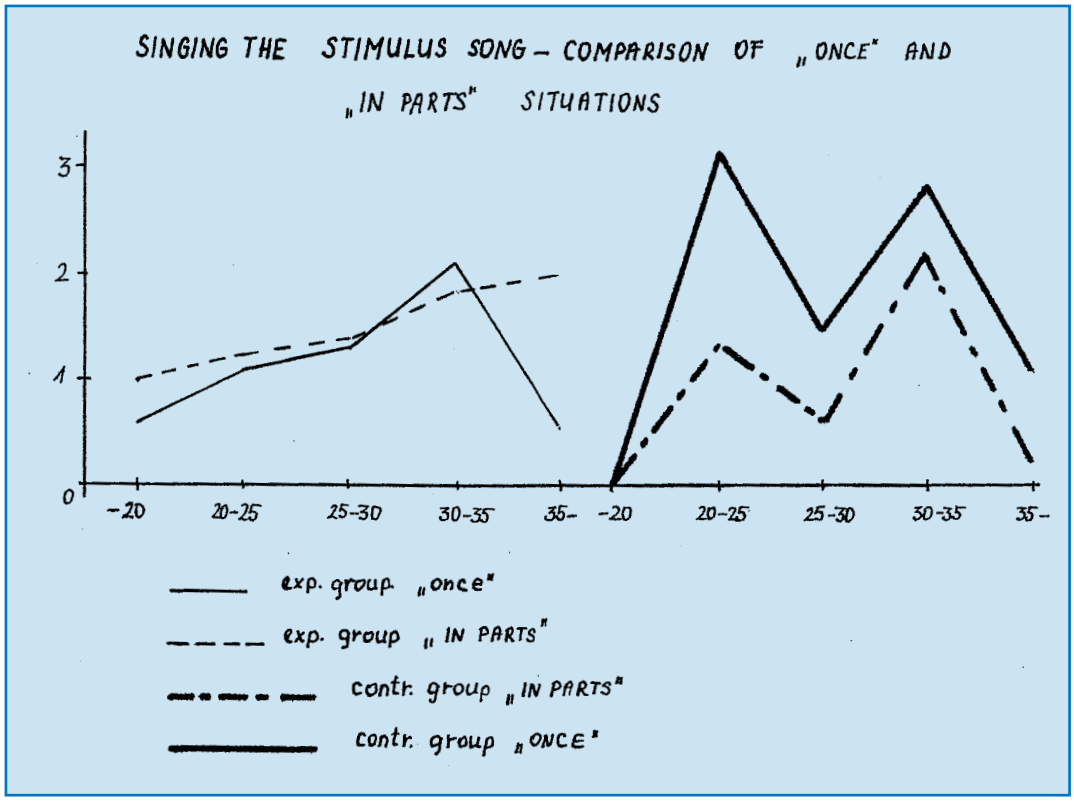

Figure 11

ing songs. It seems that hearing (then singing) these simple texts facilitates the construction of imaginary situations and the formation of symbols.

There is only one marked difference between the experimental group and the control one. In the control group both singing with using objects and singing with social contact are followed by a greater number of imitative-symbolic behaviour than in any other condition. There is no such tendency in the experimental group. *(See Figure. 14)* It may be assumed that difference in children of the experimental group represents a higher level of development as a result of training: they do not need external aids to apprehend the content of the song and to process it mentally.

A great number of *social contact-initiations* were recorded in the protocols. Naturally, they cannot all be considered an effect of singing. However, it deserves attention that the social contact-initiations in the experimental group outnumber those in the control group to a great extent (in certain situations the rate is 2:1). It is also worth mentioning that in the experimental group there is a definite developmental trend manifest in the frequency of the social contacts. No similar trend can be found in the control group. *(See Figure. 15)*. Again, the situational circumstances do not cause any noticeable difference in this field. It would be most interesting to know more about the nature of those social contacts and the developmental phases of children with regard to music, but unfortunately no details are available at present as the analysis of data is still in progress.

I should like to make grateful acknowledgements to Dr. Magda Kalmár and Éva Kósa for the psychological analysis in the material.

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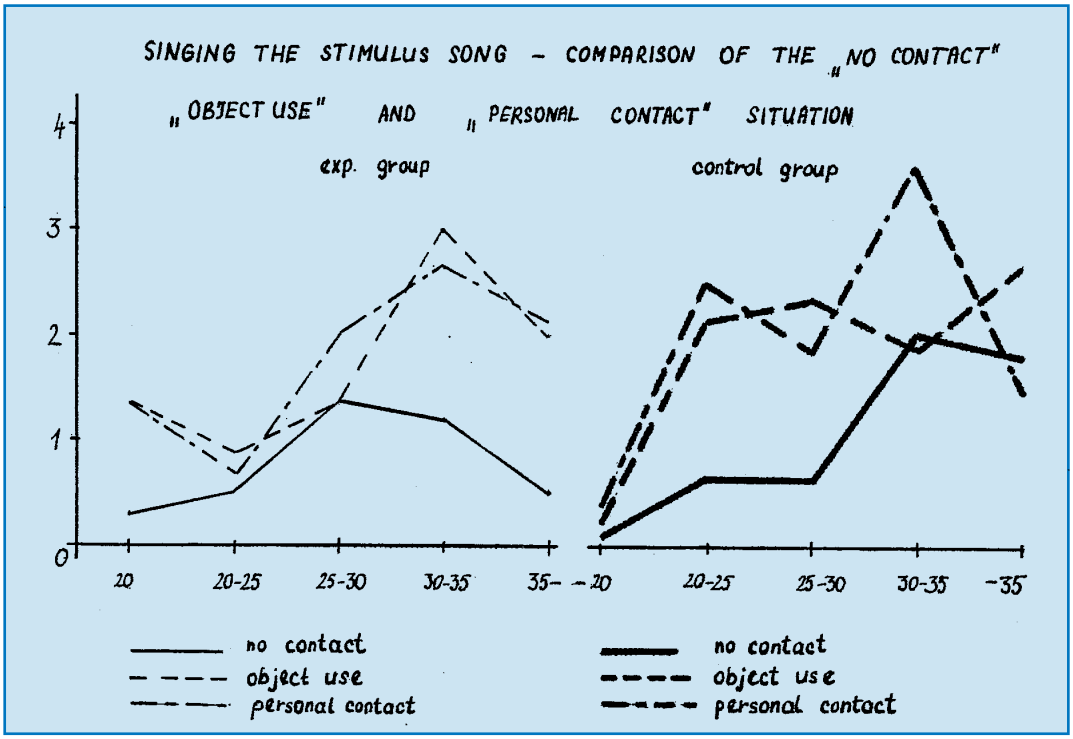

Figure 12

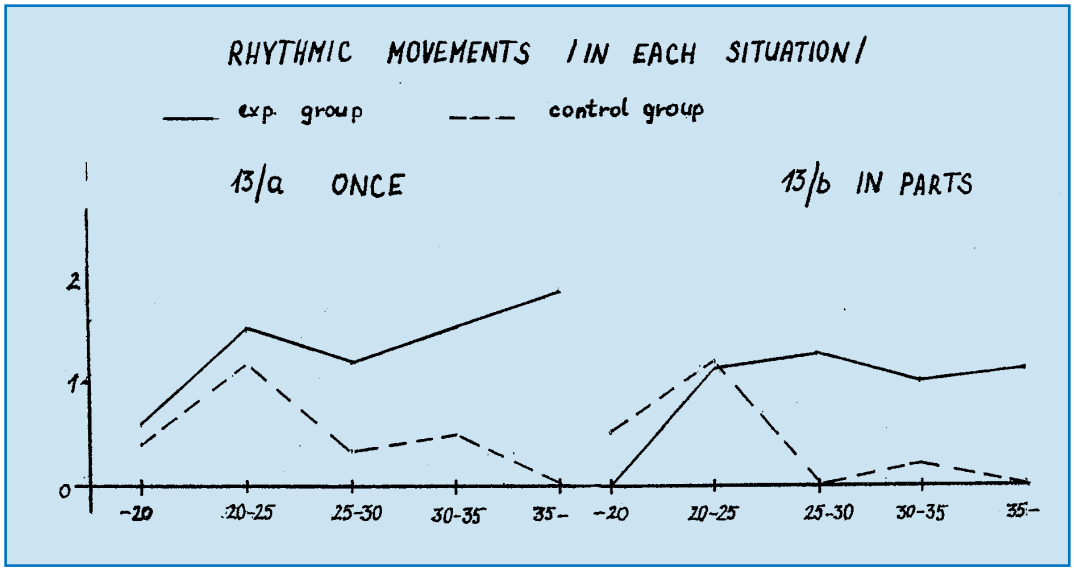

Figure 13a/b

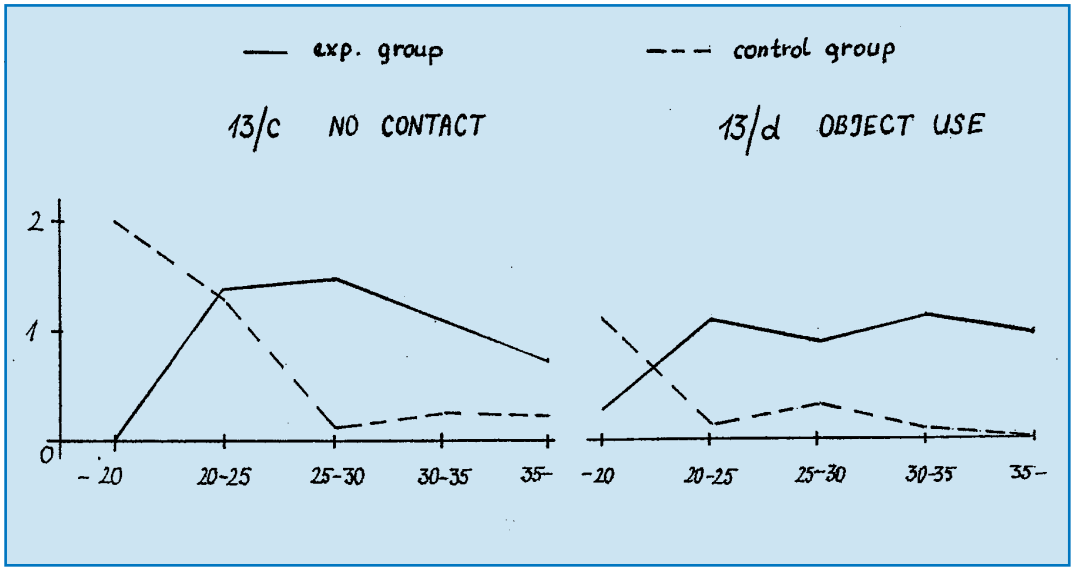

Figure 13c/d

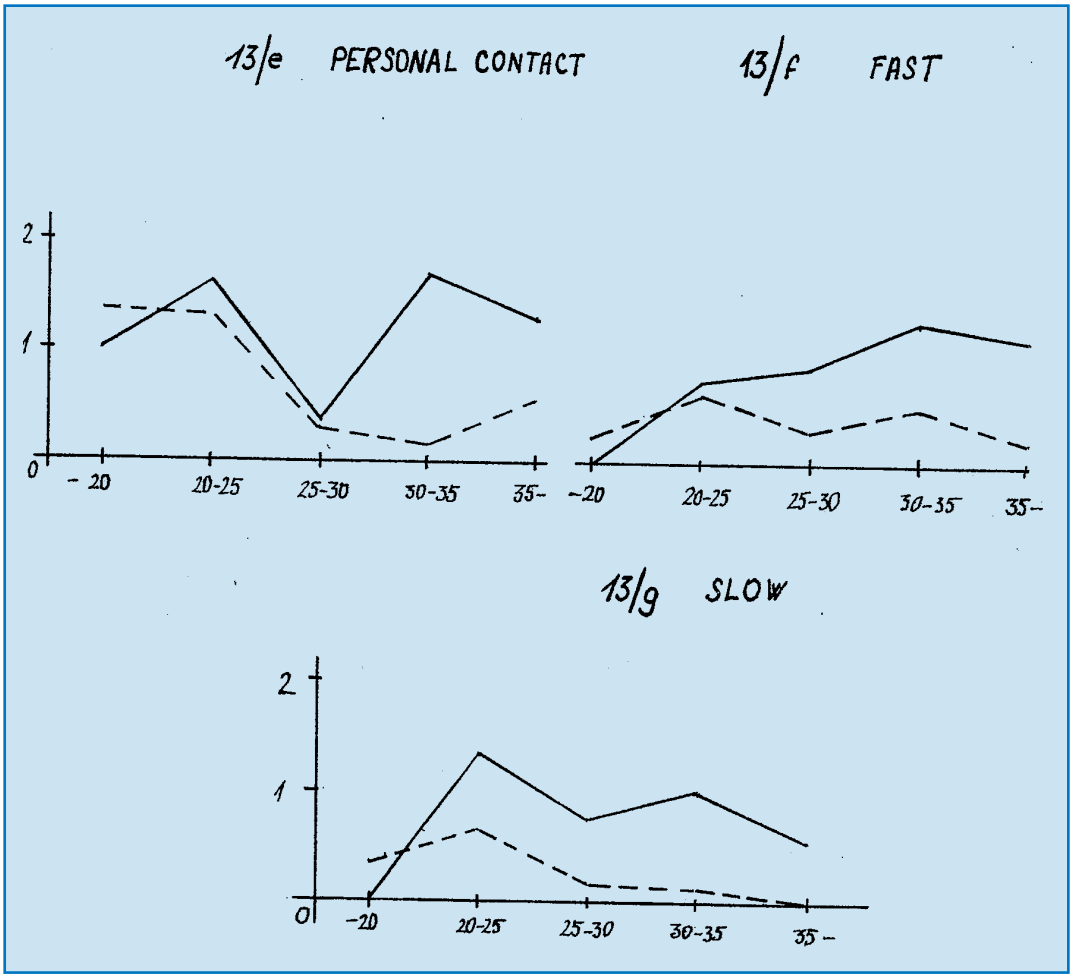

Figure 13e/f/g

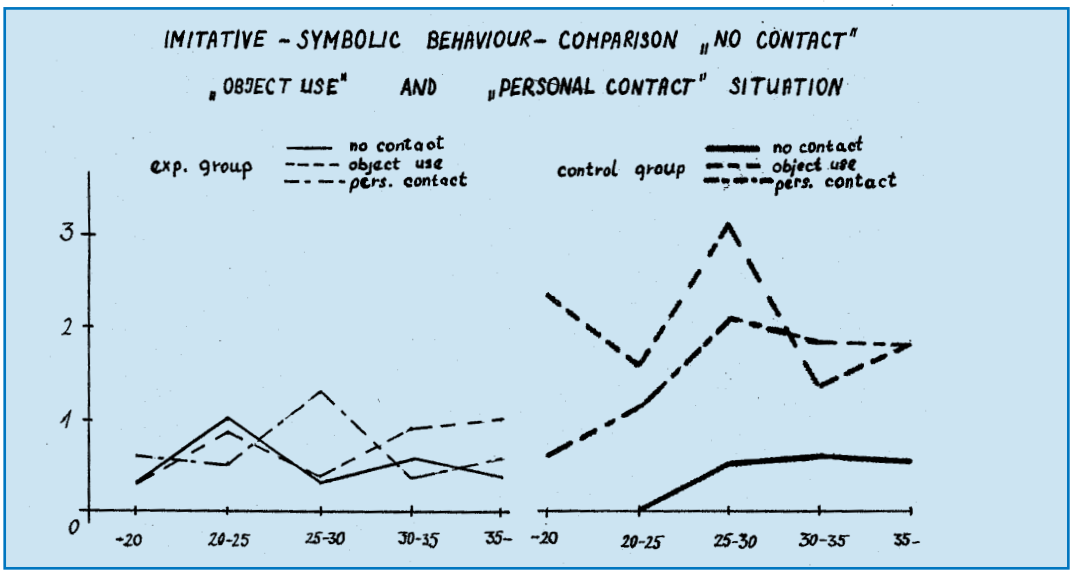

Figure 14

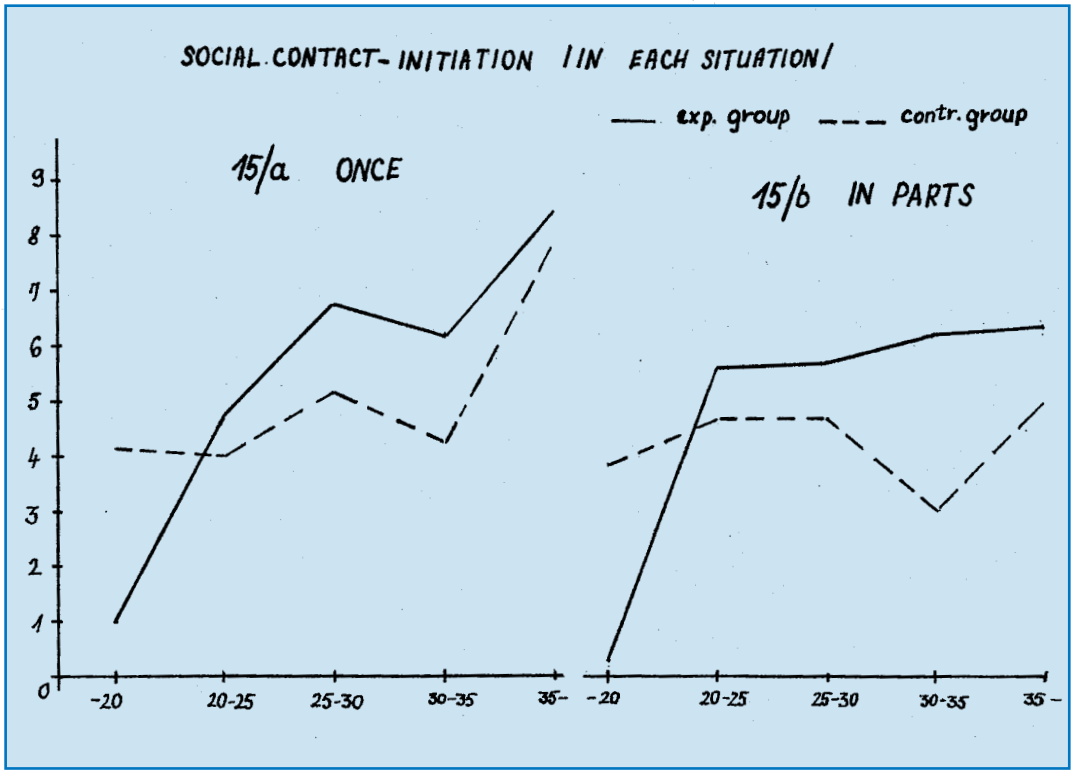

Figure 15a/b

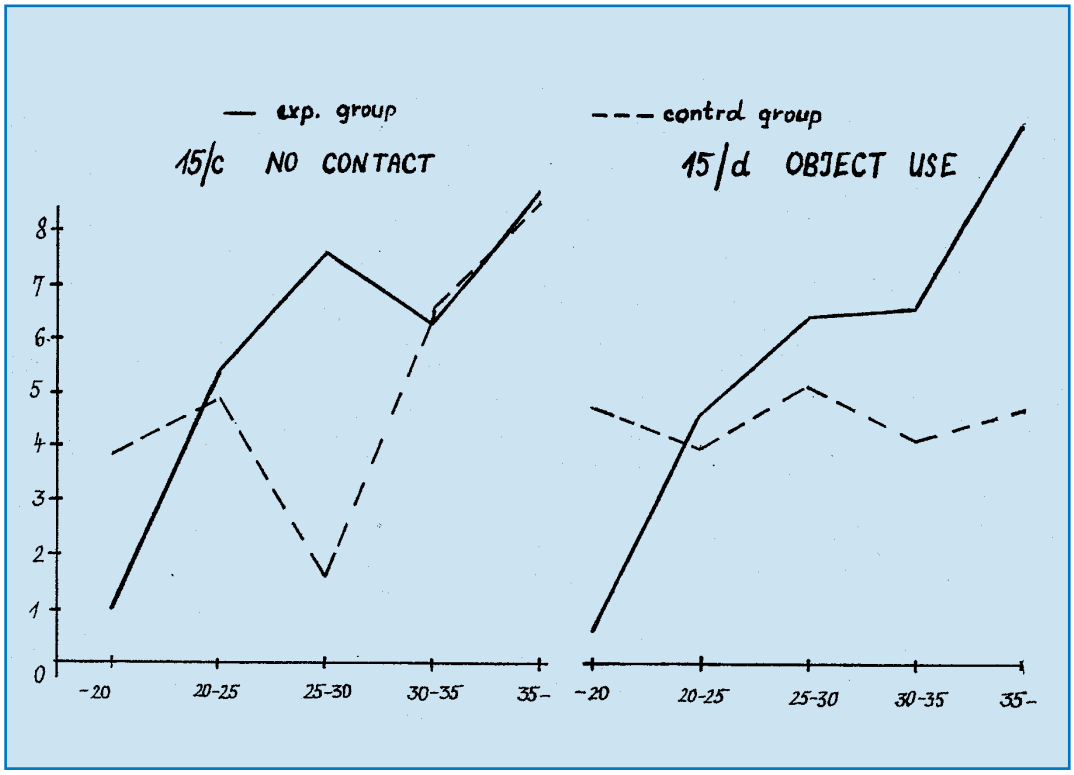

Figure 15c/d

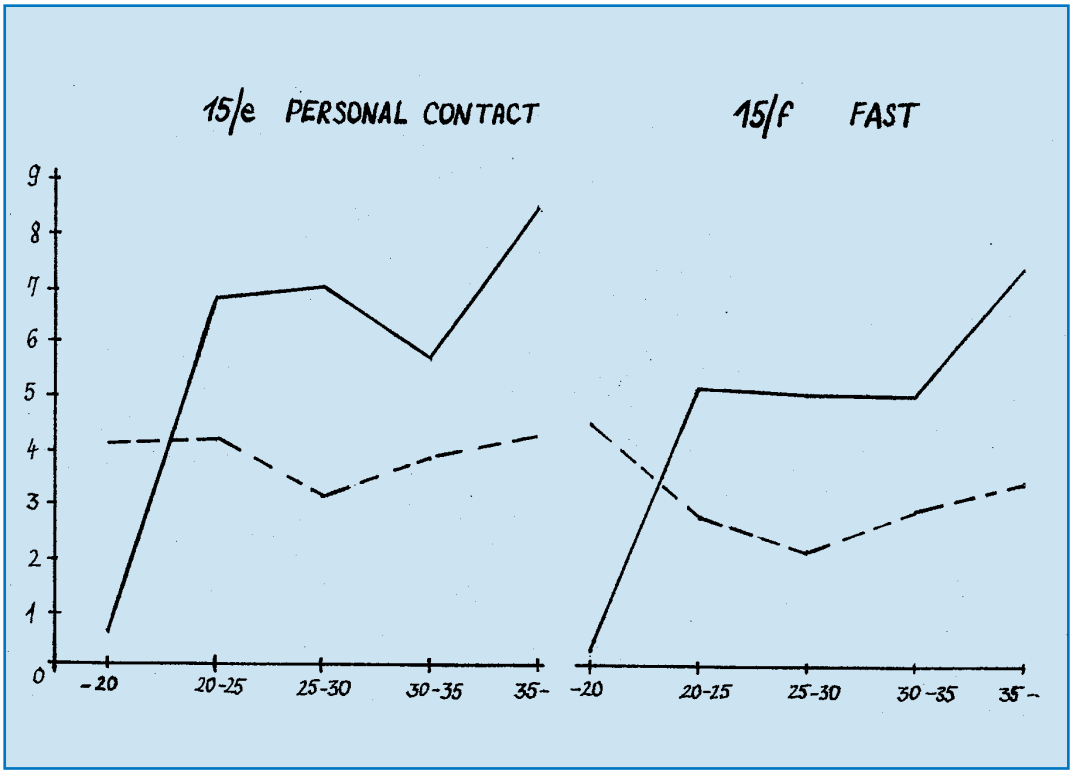

Figure 15e/f

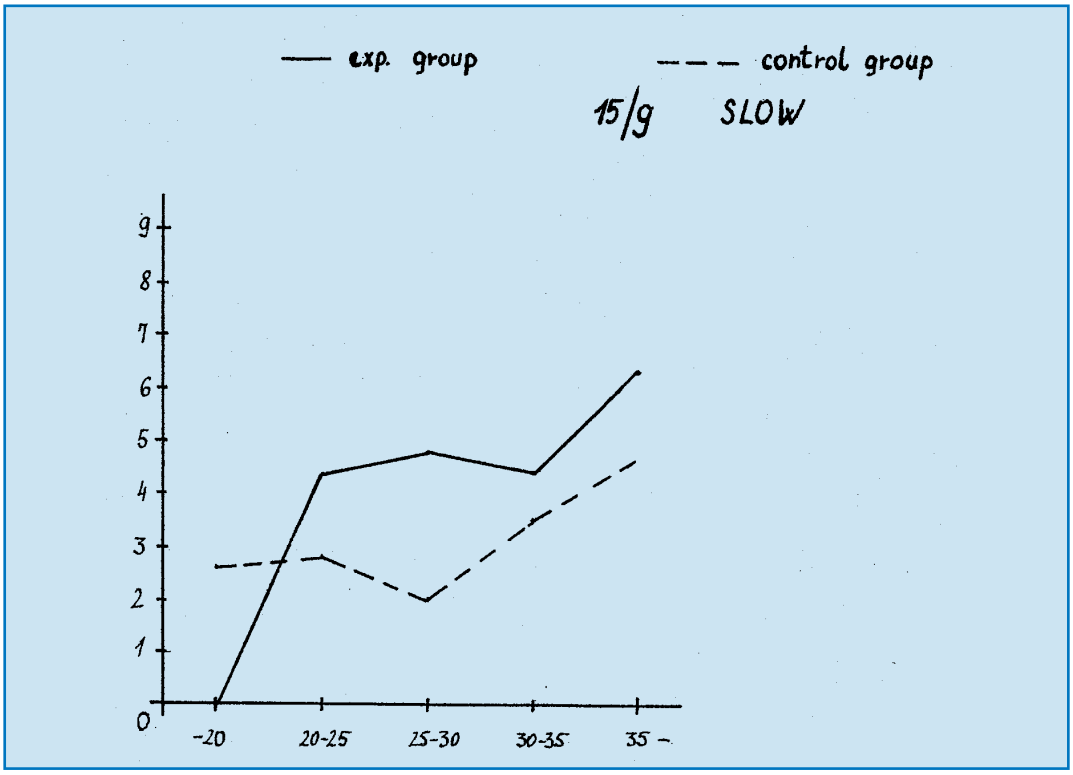

Figure 15g

Reflections on a Hungarian pilgrimage

by Aleta King

As I walk in through the entrance of the Kodály Institute the portás (receptionist) hands me the key to my new room and suddenly I am speechless, partly because I am unable to speak Hungarian back to him, but mostly because I am overwhelmed with excitement and relief as I realise my dream of 10 years is about to become a reality. This is it…I'm living the dream!

As providence would have it, I first hear about the mysterious Kodály Institute from Merrill Debski and Sayuri Kishi-Debski who are responsible for my initial encounter with aural musicianship during my undergraduate music studies. With sudden awareness of how much these studies open up my inner world of music I instinctively develop an affinity and passion for all things 'aural' [I was what I think you'd call an 'aural nerd' really!] and I quickly become enchanted with the idea of studying aural musicianship in Hungary. Subsequent inevitable encounters with Judith Johnson and later Ed Bolkovac and Ildikó Herboly arouse my curiosity even further. Ildikó very graciously arranges for me to attend the Kodály Institute for one day during my first visit to Hungary. I'm hooked!

My desire to study at the 'source' is very real by now. I devour my way through as many 'sing&plays', C clefs, 7th chords and chord progressions as possible but it is not enough! No amount of practice or research will quench my thirst. Hearing my mentors speak of their own personal experiences only whets my appetite still further. I know now that I *must* experience this wonderfully enigmatic country and its equally enchanting music for myself.

I am determined to get to Hungary with or without a scholarship so I take Hungarian lessons and pack my bags for London. Why England? The plan is to work for at least one year in order to save the stronger currency using England as a stepping stone for Hungary. Little did I expect that I would be living in London for almost 4 years during which time not a day goes by without me thinking about Hungary. I am consumed by the desire to study there!

Finally, I am blessed with generous assistance from the International Kodály Society's 'Sarolta Kodály Scholarship', the 'Hungarian Government scholarship', and the foundation for the Kodály Institute's 'Sarolta Kodály Scholarship'; all of which enable me at long last to follow my destiny.

After a week of intense auditions and placement tests I am mentally, emotionally and physically exhausted. I liken the experience to being poked, prodded and stripped down to one's inner musical core. The staff must know all my musical strengths and weaknesses by now. It is a humbling experience and I console myself as I go to sleep with the knowledge that I would not be here if I thought I was a perfect musician!

Every morning I'm woken by the 7:10am bells from the old, yellow Catholic Church in the town square. The sound of the bells wafts through the window of my room on the top floor of the Institute, itself originally a baroque monastery built in 1736.

In the centre of the Institute there is a square courtyard with a spectacular Linden tree as the centrepiece providing an ever changing palette of colour according to the four seasons. This courtyard is integral to the life of the Institute which is host to anything from weekend solfége practice to summertime outdoor concerts.

Internal features of the Institute include polished marble and wooden floors with large rectangular, hand-woven rugs and carpets displaying traditional patterns akin to Hungarian folk culture. Complementary to the rug and continuing in the traditional Hungarian folk theme is the handmade furniture – chairs, desks, bookshelves, sofa beds, mirrors, cupboards and bedside tables. Admittedly the chairs are functional at the expense of comfort at times. My fellow Australian student Jennifer Gjisbers (2002-03) once says to me, 'I think about staying for a second year but then I remember the chairs!'

High windows amidst extremely thick whitewashed walls, very high vaulted ceilings and ornately carved doors are traits common to most rooms in the Institute. In my second year I am blessed with room százhat (106) which is situated in a quiet corner of the Institute. I draw back the curtains of both windows and sunlight streams in to greet me with warmth and hopefully the promise of blue skies again…such a comforting change to the endless grey skies of London where I've been based for the past six years.

Natural light is always a craved commodity particularly in winter when you can expect little more than seven hours of daylight during winter solstice (around December 22). The windows are relatively small in comparison to the size of the room but there are two windows in Százhat and hence the reason why this room is of prize value and worthy of acquisition for this antipodean who misses the warmth of the Australian sun on her face.

My mornings usually progress down four flights of stairs to the basement where an L shaped corridor to the left houses the bathrooms, and the corresponding L shaped corridor to the right leads to the gymnasium. I would not normally dwell on the attributes of a basement but there is a sense of unmistakeable mystery and historical intrigue as one wanders around the lower ground floor.

I envisage these subterranean chambers originally functioning as a cellar of some sort. Perhaps wine, preserved fruit, vegetables and meat were stored here in preparation for the relentlessly long winters. I imagine too that the back wall of the gymnasium might still disguise a hidden passageway to a vault or crypt below the adjoining church.

A trip to the basement is incomplete of course, without a deserved mention of the two grand communal spa baths. Perhaps the spa baths were at one point used for pressing grapes into wine - an idyllic notion that proves to be untrue. Alas, they are a recent but welcome addition during the 1973-75 refurbishments.

The many hours required to fill the baths beforehand are more than worth it as the reward for patience is many an evening submerged in blissful relaxation amidst friendly conversation and laughter. Late one night I find the uninhibited German (who loves the combination of thermal baths followed by an icy plunge and then sauna in quick succession), closely followed by the Spaniard and the Venetian instigating the practice of soaking in the hot baths below and then running quickly and furiously up to ground level and out into the courtyard to roll around unclothed in the winter snowfall!

The kitchen and dining room symbolically represent the melting pot of international student life in the Institute. These two rooms are witness to the true spirit of multiculturalism as students converge to share diverse conversations, languages, recipes, cooking tips, food, drink, music, song, birthdays and culturally significant calendar events together.

Who can forget the three full days of food preparation that anticipate the northern American Thanksgiving celebrations? Unsurprisingly there is enough food to occupy a table the entire length of one corridor although nobody complains about eating left-over food for days afterward. Equally memorable events include the Italians making ravioli in their time honoured tradition, homemade olive oil from a Greek grandmother, the Japanese sushi making session, Spanish tapas and sangria along with the pungent aroma of authentic German sausages sizzling in the pan to name just a few.

The Institute's walls are likewise privy to the constant passage of a myriad cultural customs and traditions: International folk dance evenings, cabaret nights, poetry soirees in honour of Scotland's Robert Burns, the German/Australian St Nicholas filling the shoes of those who had been 'good' with assorted sweets and notoriously, the Italian American tenor singing Verdi opera arias which float down the Institute corridors at 2am in the morning after a night of particularly salubrious drinking at the local pub.

Of course none of these festivities would be complete without the celebration of Australian culture also. Jennifer teaches the Australian folk dance 'Waves of Bondi' and we make sure Australia Day is duly celebrated in the middle of European winter complete

with an indoor BBQ and Anzac biscuits. The Americans still cannot come to terms with the function of Vegemite but most students instantly warm to Tim Tam Slams and develop a taste for lemon, lime and bitters!

The organisation of one's day is punctuated by bells ringing almost every hour on the hour. And if you think you may have not heard enough bells, you can pay money to hear more bells ring for births, deaths and marriages from either one or all of the Town Hall, Catholic, Franciscan Catholic, Calvinist Reform or Lutheran Churches to name but a few located in close proximity to the centre of the town square. They range from regular ding-dong church bells to classical melodic and harmonic excerpts of compositions by Beethoven, Mozart, Händel, Erkel and Kodály from the Town Hall.

When all churches and the Town Hall strike at once the resulting cacophony of sound will often bring conversations to an abrupt halt. Ringing church bells can be quite deafening and rather distracting when you are trying to practise, sing, listen or think about your own music during those times. At one point I remember timing the cacophony lasting at least two minutes or more!

On any given week day one can observe a timetable consisting of the following core and optional subjects: pedagogical methodology, solfége, conducting, piano, voice, choir, score reading, Kodály's life and works, Hungarian music history, folk music, chamber music, choral methodology, research and individual consultations.

Monday mornings begin with observations at the Kodály Iskola (the primary and secondary music school in Kecskemét) followed by Sarolta Platthy's guided discussions and analysis of lessons observed. We are also privileged to observe other kindergarten and primary school classes locally and at the original Kodály Music School in Budapest, in addition to undergraduate solfége classes at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music. Experiencing these undergraduate classes is a truly humbling experience. I am always impressed by the thoroughly seamless methodology and pedagogy apparent from kindergarten right through to undergraduate solfége classes. Afternoons back at the Institute generally allow for further methodology/pedagogy studies with Sarolta.

Solfége is the class everyone takes extremely seriously particularly Klára Nemes my petite, sweet teacher who leads me to love Bartók's choral works and the late, beloved Éva Vendrei, a gifted pedagogue for whom life was truly 'wonderful'. Five hours a week are allocated to the study of solfége (theoretical and practical musicianship) and rightly so because it is one of the cornerstones of Kodály's practical outworking of his philosophy of music. I love solfége classes for their systematic approach to methodology and pedagogy and for their perfect balance between intellectual challenge and the systematic practical pursuit of musical excellence.

Conducting lessons with Dr Katalin Kiss are an inspirational experience as some of you may be aware from her first visit to Australia in 2004. She is an intuitive musician and holds a formidable reputation as a choral conductor both nationally and internationally. Kati quickly becomes my mentor and inspires me to let the music speak for itself – the music will tell you all you ever need to know if you listen with understanding.

Kati tells this anecdote about her conducting teacher at the Liszt Academy. They have retired to the upstairs Liszt Room after a concert at the academy. I understand he begins to play a Beethoven sonata in E major by memory. He then encourages his students (Kati being one of them) to sing it by memory along with him at the piano. After a little while he abruptly stops and indicates that it is too late in the evening to be singing so high and why don't they try singing it in E flat major instead. And he promptly proceeds to transpose it down a semitone, still by memory.

You have to meet Orsolya Szabó in person as words are not enough. She is a child prodigy, a fine artist, a poet, a pianist and an outstanding piano pedagogue.

I am reminded of the day Orsolya is interviewed about her public life as a professional teacher, pianist, poet and fine artist. This event is to mark the opening of her art exhibition. She has very graciously invited us her students along to share the occasion with her. Midway through her guided tour she suddenly becomes very animated and points to a huge canvas explaining that this was originally a bed sheet which just had to be used when an artistic idea needed to be expressed and this was the closest and largest canvas to hand!

Dr János Klézli is an intuitive voice teacher who always seems to be able to get the best out of you and your voice. My Hungarian language skills embarrass me at the conclusion of János' Doctoral concert for which he sings excerpts from Bach Cantatas. Unwittingly and innocently I tell him that he and his performance was 'nagyon finom' – very delicious! He simply smiled and said, thank you, you are very kind but I think I know what you mean!

The charming Dr Carlos Miró Cortez (from Chilé) is always ready to flash his welcoming smile, stop for

a chat, tell a joke or dance and sing at a moment's notice whether in folk music classes or at a social gathering. He likes to invite the entire student body to his small village for a memorable evening of music, food, wine, song and dance.

Roland Hajdu continually challenges you with his consummate musical ear and innate musicality in chamber music. Roland can often be found in Zita's (the Institute Administrator) office sipping a martini complete with green olive and martini glass reserved for such occasions.

Péter Erdei is the ever diplomatic, professional, didactic director of the Institute and faithful ambassador for Kodály. Péter's conducting classes always begin promptly at 8am. Whether it be conducting, choir, performances, meetings or public speaking he is never late.

And, if there is anything you need to know about the history, literature or analysis of Western Art Music, Hungarian music or in fact anything specifically Liszt, Bartók or Kodály related just ask Dr Mihály Ittzés because 'Mihály knows everything' according to general staff and student consensus. A quick flick through the back catalogue of IKS journal articles will confirm this fact!

And when the endless solfége practice becomes too much for one day I escape the Institute to the comfort of my favourite Hungarian cuisine: forró csoki (hot chocolate), meggy nektár (cherry juice) or perhaps gulyás (pronounced gooyaash) which is a type of hearty Hungarian stew.

At the entrance to the Institute there is a little Hungarian lady who sells fruit (gyümölcs) and vegetables (zöldség) at her stall. Every day she is there regardless of the weather. I always make a point of smiling and saying hello to her on my way somewhere. In fact it is she who unknowingly helps me learn the Hungarian names for various fruit and vegetables.

My favourite time of the market calendar is strawberry season which is usually around May. Their deliciously sweet smell entices you to keep buying them by the bag full and somehow you can never get tired of eating them. Hungarians leave the markets with huge woven baskets filled to over flowing with strawberries to be eaten and then perhaps later preserved for the long winter months ahead.

In winter, the search for food means donning hat, scarf, gloves, and fur coat as temperatures regularly soar below 0 degrees Celsius. European winter initially holds equal amounts of anticipation and dread for this subtropical Queenslander who has never lived in snow before and once believes that anything below 18 degrees Celsius might be dangerous to the health.

Two things about my first Hungarian winter stand out quite vividly in my memory: the fact that there is snow on the ground for a sold five months and at one point in January I think I'm going to snap freeze as snow storms bring temperatures down to a seasonal low of -21 degrees celsius.

But with winter comes the redeeming promise of ice-skating and outdoor, natural thermal baths, thanks to the historical Turkish influence on Hungarian culture. My regular weekend visits to Budapest usually consist of ice-skating on the frozen lake at Hösök tere (Heroes Square) followed by a relaxing defrost in nearby Széchenyi fürdö (thermal baths).

Historical connections to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the *communist* regime and an ideal geographical location between eastern and western Europe together with Kodály's legacy to Hungarian culture contribute to quality musical performances at largely affordable cultural events in Budapest. This well known reality affords some wonderful opportunities to see international artists of the highest calibre in a city which is unquestionably attractive to the international touring artist's diary.

Budapest also famously boasts an abundance of superb architecture, art, music and culture as do many other European cities. A feast for the eye and the ear is the magnificently regal Opera House which enjoys pride of place along Adrássy út. Similarly the majestic Mátyás templom perched high above the Danube river on the Buda side is breathtakingly beautiful. It is here that I am charmed by the Tallis Scholar's effortless performance of Allegri's Miserere which once famously captivated Mozart's ear too.

The Budapest Annual Spring Festival of 2004 hosts an unforgettable performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's immortal 'St. Matthew's Passion' by the Bach Collegium Choir and Orchestra; conducted by the iconic Helmut Rilling, a world renowned expert in the performance of Bach's choral repertoire. That evening I know instinctively that I am in the presence of true greatness and I am also certain that I hear Bach's music for the first time like the great man himself intends it to be realised.

I am generally intrigued by other people's hands and I'm particularly in awe of Liszt's rather unusually large hands and very long fingers as one can see from his sculptured statue outside the main entrance to the Franz Liszt Academy of Music.

A performance in the Franz Liszt Academy of Music Concert Hall with its marble floors and columns, wooden panelled doors and walls, and rich antique gold interiors has a sensuous effect on the eyes equal to that of the ensuing music on the ears. My first concert at the Liszt Academy on Saturday evening 14th December 2002 is a memorable event. I am privileged to be in Hungary and in particular Budapest during the IKS celebrations marking the 120th year since the birth of Kodály on December 16th 1882.

This particular evening I listen in awe as I am initially mesmerised by the purity of intonation from each and every choir. I remember later commenting to my solfége teacher, Klára Nemes, about my amazement at the pure and beautiful intonation I'd heard that night. She looks at me rather incomprehensively as if to say 'how else should it be?' A country who considers intonation a matter of national importance…I think I am in musical paradise!

In reality what I begin to understand is much deeper than just pure intonation. I have come face to face with a refined level of musicianship I'd never encountered before. I have the sense that each conductor is innately musical, almost as if they 'are' the embodiment of music in its purest form. It was evidently clear that there is intelligent musical thinking behind each perfectly executed performance.

I also sense a feeling of raw national pride particularly from the large, all male choir from the Hungarian countryside. The amount of exuberant energy they expend singing national folk compositions and arrangements by Kodály, in the name of their beloved country is contagious and the crowd duly responds.

For the first time I can really appreciate Kodály's overwhelming impact on not just Hungarian music education but on Hungarian national pride also. The love and respect they have for Kodály is tangible in the concert hall that night.

And for the first time I really understand the meaning of Kodály's philosophy behind his famous statement in selected writings: Who is a good musician? One who has a well trained ear, mind, heart and hand, in that order. Being a good musician is no secret. It is not a birthright, privy only to the geniuses amongst us. It is a rich inheritance available to everyone and discriminates against no-one. Music is connected to the soul. It will either flourish or perish given the right environment. And it is our duty as musicians, educators and colleagues to champion this truth that music is indeed for everyone.

I am honoured to meet Madame Sarolta Kodály on a few occasions. I recall two things in particular from these meetings: firstly, that Kodály required her to play a Bach Prelude and Fugue each day in transposition and secondly, Kodály's parting words of advice to any student would always have been this: 'Continually strive to be a better musician!'

Is it really just about being a better musician though? Certainly Kodály's dedication to the continuing legacy of musical excellence is obvious however he also displayed a passion for the systematic cultivation of music for everyone not just the privileged few.

As I hear for the last time the Town Hall bells gently chime out Esti dal to conclude their evening programme I reflect upon the poignant words of the folk song. And I will go to sleep soundly in the knowledge that I have accomplished in two short years more than I could ever have dreamed…and tomorrow I leave confident that I am a much better musician now than I was before.

I know with certainty that I will always continue to strive to be a better musician because it is through music I have become a better person who is in turn more effective in reaching out to others through the precious gift of music.

I am eternally grateful for the priceless opportunity given me, to experience the Hungary which once informed Kodály; and I am confident in the knowledge that his legacy will continue to inform us, his international descendents, in the future.

Leaving the page:
Strengthening the use of improvisation in a Kodály based program

by Ann Slade

Rationale

The workshop 'Leaving the Page' was presented at the KMEIA National Conference held in Brisbane this year. In a 50-minute workshop I engaged eleven children aged 6 – 12 years, (from where I currently teach – Clayfield College, Brisbane, Queensland), and the workshop participants, in a range of improvisatory activities using repertoire and ideas as described. Rather than spend valuable workshop time talking through my rationale, I wrote this article for participants to read at their leisure. It provides the philosophical framework which underpins my enthusiasm for, and approach to improvisation in my sequential developmental program.

Introduction

I teach and teach and teach and equip my students with a myriad of skills and concepts. They develop good aural skills and become musically literate, but of what use are these skills if my students cannot operate freely with them, spontaneously and creatively. If I learn a new language, can read it and understand it, and recite well-known portions of its literature but cannot freely converse in new and unrehearsed ways I am not truly fluent in its use.

Active or Passive learning

Guy Claxon (2004) in his list of Deadly Habits developed by teachers gives as number three 'Teacher leads, students follow'. This habit is a very effective means of delivering sequentially built foci and providing endless practice in known concepts but, is this style of education one that best befits our students? Claxon, instead, points out the need for the learners to be involved in the making. By giving even the youngest of children the means to explore their musical experience through ***improvisation*** we are providing this opportunity. It is important that we do

not simply expect that our music students 'take the package, unwrap it and give us something of it back' (McWilliams, 2005).

Just as our first attempts at speech were rarely perfect, and even as adults, being 'tongue-tied' is not an uncommon phenomenon, so too we can expect that not all improvisations are going to be perfect. Instead the risk taking that is involved by participants in this venture is to be both admired and encouraged. We live in a society where much of our time as teachers and even as parents is spent reducing the 'risk' in our children's environment. As a result of this climate, Claxton feels that being prepared to take a risk has never been more important as learning strategy to be taught to this generation. Increasingly performance anxiety in students is stifling risk taking and creativity. Students, particularly in upper grades, become unwilling to 'risk' their mark/OP by not conforming to the assessment criteria. Therefore wherever possible we need to open avenues of experimentation for our students. Improvisation is one way to provide this opportunity in our music programs.

Making time for improvising in the program

One major issue is of course time in the program. Therefore we should seek opportunities within existing repertoire and not look to add extra to an already crowded curriculum. Similarly I don't believe large scale improvisations are appropriate for the majority of junior school students, rather that we should lay the foundations by giving young children simple and fun activities whereby they can 'stretch their wings' and for a moment ***'Leave the Page'***. The student becomes the creator within the repertoire, not just the reproducer of someone else's composition. In this small way we change the focus and shift from consumer to creator even if only for four beats.

Creating a successful environment for Improvisation

The classroom environment largely governs the degree of success that teachers experience with improvisation in their classrooms. Improvising vocally can daunt children who have had little experience in singing individually in front of their peers. Building up this environment takes time and providing an opportunity for individual singing in every lesson is vital for building such a base. In the meantime, teachers may wish to explore rhythmic and instrumental improvisations until they feel that the culture of their classroom is ready for vocal improvisations.

All class members need to be educated about their own role during improvisation activities so that performers feel safe from judgment from their peers and too, from their teacher. Improvising in the classroom is an experience not a performance. The teacher should welcome effort, embrace error and allow for possible failure without shame. Students cannot freely 'have a go' if they are overwhelmed by performance expectation or anxiety.

To reduce this performance anxiety and diffuse competitiveness, I explicitly instruct my students that no-one expects all improvisations to work well each time, and that it's the effort not the end product that is important. Therefore it's necessary to do repeated improvisations with the same material if you want your success rate to improve. I return repeatedly to the same or very similar activity. This type of stability enhances the student's confidence and more and more children will volunteer to take the risk, as the environment becomes more familiar to them. Additionally they get to hone their skills with each improvisatory attempt. Then you move on, by placing these skills in new repertoire or extending the concepts involved. Slowly though, is the key.

Where do I begin?

Rather than overwhelm beginning improvisers with too many instructions I begin with as free an improvisation as reasonable. Expectations, such as using a singing voice, are communicated but few constraints are added. In this way your students have little they can do incorrectly in their early efforts. This allows for a greater experience of success and more opportunity for encouragement. The initial aim is to develop children's enjoyment of and confidence in their ability to 'make up music on the spot'. Gradually though, you can become more structured along music guidelines, ask for the improvisation in time names, then in a specified tone set, to a set rhythm, within a chord progression and so on.

The song 'Skin and Bones' is excellent for this type of development and can be used across many ability levels and for a wide range of improvisation opportunities. Here is a list of some of the activities that this song lends itself to.

- Make up your own tune on the OOOH (as long as it's a singing voice and fits in the 'space' in the song it's a successful attempt)
- Make up your own rhythm on the OOOH (children do not necessarily need to know compound time to do this they will respond intuitively by clapping in an appropriate style, and anyhow, mixed metre works.)
- If you have made compound time conscious then ask for the rhythm in time names.
- If your class have learnt melodic concepts you can ask for an improvisation within a certain range of solfa notes – begin with just *d* and *l*, (or *s m* if you rather – it's just a minor third)

and then later extend up to *m, r d and l*.

- Set up a tuned percussion instrument with the required tone set and have the children play their improvisation for you.
- Have the children play their improvisation on their recorders – you can start with just G and E and extend the tone set according to the ability of your group.

These ideas and other improvisations with text; rhythm; melody and instrument, work with a wide number of songs already used in many developmental programs. These include 'Grandma Grunts', 'Old Macdonald Had a Farm', Charlie Over the Ocean, 'Wake Snake' and others. These too will be presented in the accompanying workshop. Improvisations do not always have to be linked to a song, but it is a great way to start. Once your classes are comfortable with improvising, you can move into more abstract ideas such as improvising within a given form, in the style of the composer you are listening to at present, to a set rhythm, or improvising an ostinato or a harmony line.

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SONG SOURCES

Skin and Bones –'The Kodály Context' – Lois Choksy, Prentice Hall

Grandma Grunts –'The Kodály Method' – Lois Choksy, Prentice Hall

Wake Snake – 'Catch A Song' – D. Hoermann & D. Bridges, Dominie Publication

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BINGO –'The New Useful Book' – ABC Publications

Kodály News

Judy Johnson reports

TRAINING COURSES IN MACKAY

Many people will be aware of the 10-week (300 contact hours) full-time primary music teacher in-service courses which were conducted by Education Queensland from 1985 to 1998, and which were preceded by three week (90 contact hours) full-time courses from 1979 to 1984. Since these courses came to an end, Principals are beginning to notice that many teachers who have been co-opted into music teaching now need the in-put previously supplied by the 10 week course.

The network of music teachers in Mackay, together with some very supportive Principals set about finding a way to fill this gap. With the support of Education Queensland they made a proposal to the district that new music teachers be released in Semester 1 for four weeks to help them plan and implement the music stream of the Queensland Arts Syllabus.

Through the help of all Principals and the District Office, Judy Johnson was asked to plan a course to cover the required training over four weeks. The first two weeks were held at the beginning of the Semester and the final two weeks at the end of the Semester. The teachers gave up some of their public holidays and were released for the pupil free days and the Department gave them paid leave for the remainder of the four weeks.

Eighteen teachers from Mackay and the surrounding districts completed the course, which covered Musicianship, Methods of Teaching, Conducting, Practice Teaching, Materials and Resources. There was ample opportunity for the students to observe the Years 1-7 classes being taught by Jill Green. At the end of the first two weeks, assignment work was set which had to be completed before the students met again at the end of the Semester.

There has been an opportunity to follow-up with these students who have stated that they feel much more confident in their teaching and better able to plan effective music lessons for their own pupils.

Because of the success of the course in Mackay the teachers in the Townsville region have taken this course as a model and have approached Education Queensland in their area. It is expected that a four week course will begin in Townsville in January, 2007.

Music – the tie that binds:
The effect of music in our daily lives

by Judith Johnson

When the topic of this conference was announced as 'Strengthening Ties', the first words that leapt into my mind were the line from an old hymn: 'Blest be the tie that binds' by Samuel Wesley. I gave myself a shake and thought, 'This is not a theological conference, it's a music conference, so get your mind on the right track'. My thoughts, having a mind of their own, continued to return to that hymn, so out of curiosity I went to the hymnal to read all the words. In the second verse I read:

'Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts, and our cares'.

For me, these words not only summed up the making of a musician but also listed the requirements needed for a successful, on-going musical life whether as a performer, a teacher, a student or a music lover.

Zoltan Kodály once said.

'It is the richness of musical experiences and of their memories that make a good musician' 1.

As students, performers and teachers we fear we will not be good enough; we fear that the right opportunities will never come; we fear that our hopes will not be realised. We are aware that there are many whose aims are similar to ours but we must quickly understand that these are not competitors but colleagues and that we need to support one another as we work towards our common goals. We are so lucky that our chosen field has the ability to comfort us through our troubles and through our cares as well as delight us in the good times.
To quote Kodály again:

'No man is complete without a feeling for music and an understanding of what it can do for him'. 2.

As the Kodály movement has developed in Australia we have finally moved away from believing that the tools of teaching – moveable do, rhythm names etc, are the method. More and more we have tried to understand the philosophy behind good teaching for effective learning and we have gradually moved to the understanding that what is really important is 'The Music'. We firmly believe in the Kodály philosophy of:

- music as a necessary tool for the development of man's personality – and –-
- the right for each person to become literate in music by being taught by a well trained teacher using the very best of musical material.

However, if this is not done through music making and the joy of music then this philosophy will never truly be achieved.

Mary Travers of the singing trio Peter, Paul and Mary put it this way.

'We sing to each other or listen to music together or make music together in the knowledge that the sharing of sound makes us all belong to each other. It enables us to give all of ourselves in every way we can, with all the feeling we have inside. That's communication!'. 3.

My first musical memories are as a very young child, sitting on our lounge room floor listening to my father sing in the Albion Male Quartette. My father, his younger brother and two young friends began to sing together in their early teens and they continued to sing together for 45 years practising once a week in one of their homes. None of them were trained musicians. My father never had a music lesson in his life – one of them played a little bit of piano but all their singing was done a capella. They would never have used that word – they would simply say they sang without the piano! They found their notes on this – a pitch pipe. When I was young, none of this seemed remarkable to me. I just revelled in the fact that on

one Tuesday night of each month it was my father's turn to have the practice in our lounge room where I would sit listening until my mother would make me go to bed and there I would fall asleep with the close harmonies of those male voices ringing in my ears.

As I grew older my father ensured that I was given the musical education he had never received but it took me many years to realise just how remarkable that small group of men was. No formal music education, but they had a formidable repertoire of music which they sang. Almost every week-end they would journey to various parts of Brisbane where they presented Sunday afternoon concerts. Once a month they sang at the church service at Boggo Road Jail; once they even sang on the radio, but they always seemed to be proud of the fact that in all of those 45 years they were never paid as much as one penny for performing.

Many years later I remember very proudly producing the one pound note I had been paid for singing at a wedding – my first 'professional' singing engagement.

My father's response was so typical of him.

'That's very good dear, but remember, the money will never be as important at the music. You don't need to be paid for something you enjoy'.

He had never heard of Zoltan Kodály but perhaps he thought in the same way. Kodály reminded us:

'It is the bounden duty of the talented to cultivate their talent to the highest degree, to be of as much use as possible to their fellow men. For every person's worth is measured by how much he can help his fellow men and serve his country.'4.

At one of the first summer schools held at Clayfield College there were many women, but very few men enrolled. Ed Bolkovac suggested that as there were not enough men to balance the women's voices in the choir, I should take some special ensemble work with the men. The only male music I had was some old music from my father's quartette. So for the two weeks we sang along and enjoyed ourselves and then did our ten minute performance at the final concert. That night, Ed complimented me on a wonderful feeling for male music and how I obviously understood how to produce a style which was not always heard. You know – I truly didn't understand anything! I had a sound in my ear that tied me to a wonderful part of my past and all we did was to copy that sound. We did what I had lived.

Of course, I am not implying that music education is not necessary and that there is no need for us to persevere in training ourselves to the highest degree. Nor do I suggest that we no longer need the tools which have become associated with the method we teach. They are an indisputable and proven part of setting a student's steps on the way to understanding and loving music. However, we cannot be content just to use these tools and teach music literacy if that does not involve our students and us in music making. It would be like building a beautiful home in which no one ever lived, or building a wonderful car in which no one ever drove. As we make each small step we need to be encouraged to create music together at whatever level we may be. One never knows when an event, a concert, a performance, will create a musical memory that remains with us forever.

In 'Music and its Future', the composer Charles Ives quoted an anonymous writer:

'How can there be any bad music? All music is from heaven. If there is anything bad in it, I put it there – by my implications and limitations. Nature builds the mountains and meadows but man puts in the fences and labels'. 5.

We have to give students the opportunity to experience music making because as Kodály reminds us:

'The aesthetic emotional effect can come before you analyse and understand all that is to be analysed in music. The emotional experience must be as spontaneous as the singing.' 6.

It is often these emotional experiences which lead to the music memories that can so enrich a musician's life. I would like to indulge myself by telling you of three events which I experienced which have remained with me as memories, never to be forgotten.

Some years ago I was in Salt Lake City, Utah and I went to church on Sunday morning to hear the Mormon Tabernacle Choir sing. After the service I had to immediately write a post card and send it to Australia – just because the choir had sung 'O God, our help in ages past' – the school hymn of Clayfield College. That short melody triggered so many memories for me that I just had to tell the Principal that I had heard it on the other side of the world!. The tie that bound me to all those memories was a short 8-bar melody sung by a beautiful choir .

But it is not always the quality of the performance but the music itself which acts as the trigger. In 1970 the last pandemic hit Australia. It was a bird flu they named the Hong Kong flu. During that time our 19 month old son was stricken and after ten days succumbed to the infection. At his funeral service, the minister chose, not one of the well known funeral hymns, but the children's hymn 'Jesus loves me'. That

little melody forever ties me to 19 months of love and joy, not ten days of heartache and sorrow. Even after 36 years, that melody, sung by a grieving congregation in a little country church has the power to bring those wonderful memories flooding back.

In 1989 I travelled to Hungary with the choir from Clayfield College. Every day for two weeks we sang at least one, sometimes two concerts. When we left Budapest to travel to Japan on our way home we had to spend the night in Meintz in Germany before flying out the following evening from Frangfurt. In the morning we were taken on a walking tour around this small city and of course we ended up in the cathedral. The guide asked if the girls would sing so they lined up and decided they would sing the Kodály 'Ave Maria'. Sometimes when you perform everything comes together in a way which you cannot explain but you just know is special. After the first few bars that is exactly what happened and what is more the girls understood what was happening. I stopped conducting and stepped back into the church with the people who had gathered to listen. Those girls knew they were creating something that was special for them. Today when that groups meets together, and they often do, someone always remarks – 'Remember when we sang in the cathedral in Meintz!

We must never underestimate our ability to offer our students memories like this because:

'Music once admitted to the soul becomes a sort of spirit and never dies. It wanders perturbedly through the halls and galleries of the memory, and is often heard again, distinct and living as when it first displaced the wavelets of the air'. 7.

These then are the ties that strengthen our hearts, which in turn strengthen our ties to one another. As teachers it is only by working together that we can build an environment which enables our students to develop their musical skills to allow them to experience the joys of involvement in music and begin to create the memories that may last a lifetime.

We need:

- to support one another
- to support good music programs
- to be not afraid of affirmative action to tell others about the value of and the need for good, developmental music programs at all levels of education.

Have you ever watched wild birds lying in a Vee formation? Why do they do that? Because eons ago they discovered they needed each other. Science tells us that the air displacement caused by that Vee pattern allows the birds to fly 77% further as a group than if they all flew their own individual routes. If the birds are wise enough to work together for their greater good, how much more could we accomplish by co-operation and collegiality. Not only could we fly like the birds but indeed, we could soar for the heavens on the wings of song.

A conference like this gives us the opportunity to reassess where we are in our teaching and in our musical life.

- Do we still make music with joy or has it become something that other people do?
- Have we become so obsessed with administering music that we no longer take the time to plan our lessons creatively?
- Have we become so busy that we no longer search out new and interesting material but simply regurgitate what we have done in the past?
- Have we become so obsessed with academic pursuits that we stifle creativity? Every teacher needs to know and understand how to write and teach a strategy for a musical concept, but we also need to know that there is more than one way. Our interest is not in producing musical clones but in developing thinking musicians.
- Do we compromise on quality for expediency?
- Do we become obsessed with new fads in music education without evaluating their relevance or effectiveness for the children we teach.
- Do we make excuses about time constraints just because we fail to organise ourselves effectively?

And of course the list could go on. If we are honest we would all cry guilty to many of these. However, admitting guilt is only stating an awareness of a problem. Provided we think about solutions and act upon them it is easy to return to the, so called, straight and narrow:

- to go back to planning and executing creative, fun filled music lessons,
- to enjoy music making with our students and colleagues,

- to provide opportunities for ourselves and our students to be immersed in good music,

- to take every chance to improve our musicianship and teaching skills through reading and research and listening and performing,

- to learn something new every day.

'Blest be the tie that binds', the hymn which started me thinking along these lines concludes with this couplet:

'And perfect love and friendship reign
Through all eternity'.

It seems to echo the thoughts of Kodály. He finished the preface of the Hungarian edition of Bicinia Hungarica with these words:

....'It is left with you who use this book to show that while singing in itself is good, the real reward comes to those who sing, and feel, and think, with others. This is what harmony means. We must look forward to the time when all people in all lands are brought together through singing, and when there is a universal harmony.' 8.

Together, we can strengthen the ties to attain that end.

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A place called 'Ether-Land'

by Harley Mead

There is a special place where musicians can live, but they choose not to. It is a land where music exists in the abstract, but it does not have a life. This land has grown and now casts a shadow on other places. Some people visit this place and return, others visit and are never heard from again. It is a place that the imagination created and now drains the imaginations of those who created it…the place is 'Ether-Land'.

A man once dreamt of a time when those who made music had an audience who filled concert halls, when that audience had a musical knowledge that assisted them in engaging in music from their homeland and the people were musically literate. 'Ether-land' does not have any concert halls, nor does it necessarily require an audience to have any musical knowledge, however, it is a fascinating creative space. 'Ether-land' enables composers of all ages to create music and let it exist for an unknown audience in 'cyber-space' (postcode unknown). This recent development has been made available through the technological advancements of programs produced by groups such as Sibelius and Finale.

Ether-land comes from the collective planet system called 'Performance Environments'. Musicians take journeys to these which include concert halls, recordings, digital devices (ipod, mobile phones and computers), DVD's, festivals and churches / cathedrals. As young musicians prepare for a new future, perhaps it is time for music educators to consider the place where new compositions are performed.

In a galaxy far, far away, a young Jedi knight called Zoltan Kodály, took on the dark forces to create a world that valued quality musical experiences. Quality was dictated by this Jedi and was based on the European model of elite art music. The dark forces were ruled by a being; part human, part machine, he was called… (nar, I'll let you guess). It was years down the track when the Jedi and dark forces realised they had a lot in common, in fact they were related (apologies to those who have not yet seen the Stars Wars series).

Kodály wanted an audience for quality music. The 'Force' created an environment far reaching and accessible to a new world of music lovers. Perhaps the spirit of the Jedi Kodály has visited Ether-land, a place where music of un-controlled quality exists. Who knows what he would think?

Compositions can exist without an audience, they can be performed without performers and they can be intellectually challenging without requiring a knowledge base upon which to be appreciative. With the rapid growth of on-line composition and musically creative environments, new compositions can now exist on-line and never actually be heard. New music can be created, made available to an audience and the composer may never know whether or not the work has been heard.

New composers (speaking of students in this circumstance) are able to create music for an audience that may simply not exist…or at least, not yet. Does this unknown audience lack merit? Is there a point in writing music if it will not be heard? Does this new environment make the concert hall, gallery and cathedral obsolete?

Composers for generations have written music that was never heard by an understanding or appreciative audience. The desire to be musically creative seems to have outweighed the need to be heard for centuries. The history of musical development is filled with anecdotes about composers who were understood after their death. The new performance environment 'Ether-land', now allows for music to be created and simply exist in a performance space.

'Ether-land' will never make concert halls, galleries and cathedrals obsolete. It is up to the audience to decide where they will engage in music. With a pas-

sion for engaging in music and a desire to become involved in the creative process, young composers are now more free than ever to compose for an audience that will accept their new sounds. These composers may never meet the audience directly, in fact the audience may never exist, however the creative product of young composers has at last found a place to dwell…

In that galaxy far far away, the Jedi knight Kodály sat beside the Dark Force of technology and realised there was much to offer beyond that of being a source of heated debate…to the reader who is familiar with the Star Wars series, technology is not the father of the Jedi Kodály…ahh but are they related none the less ??? … until the next instalment…

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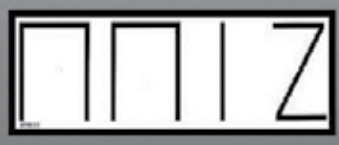

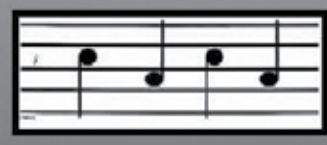

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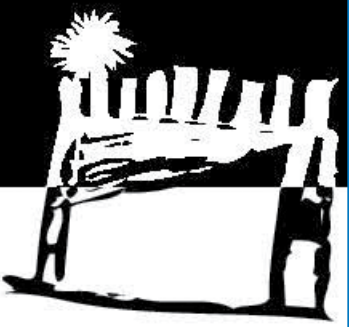

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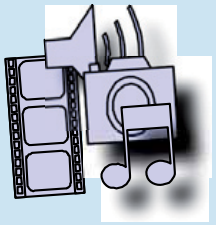

DR DOREEN BRIDGES AM is an honorary life member of KMEIA, of the Australian society for Music Education, and of the Australian Association for Research in Music Education, and a distinguished music education researcher, now living in Adelaide

JAMES CUSKELLY is Coordinator of Music Education and Aural Studies in the School of Music, University of Queensland

DR SCOTT D HARRISON lectures in Music Education at both the Mt Gravatt and Queensland Conservatorium campuses of Griffith University

JUDITH JOHNSON lectures in Music Education and Aural Studies in the School of Music, University of Queensland, served for eight years as a Vice-President of the International Kodaly Society, and is currently co-editor of the Bulletin of the IKS

ALETA KING is a part-time lecturer and tutor in Aural Studies and Choral Conducting in the School of Music, University of Queensland

HARLEY MEAD is Director of Music, Moreton Bay College, Brisbane

ANN SLADE is a music teacher at Clayfield College, Brisbane

DARREN WICKS is the National President of KMEIA and Director of Music at Firbank Grammar School, Melbourne

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