
INTERVIEW WITH DR JAMES CUSKELLY

TÓTH, TERÉZ* DISCUSSING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL KODÁLY SOCIETY, THE FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF SOUND THINKING AUSTRALIA AND THE CUSKELLY COLLEGE, THE DIRECTOR AND PROFESSOR OF BRISBANE KODÁLY SUMMER SCHOOL

JULIE ROMANIUK WITH LOVE

James Cuskelly¹, president of the International Kodály Society, is Director of the Summer School Music Program. Held in Brisbane, Australia, students learn the Kodály Philosophy with outstanding teachers gathered from all corners of the globe: Australia (University of Queensland, Conservatorium of Music, Australian National Academy of Music), Hungary (Liszt Music Academy), England (Royal Music Academy), Scotland (National Youth Choir of Scotland, Royal Scottish Opera), Brussels (Royal Conservatory) and Malaysia (Young Choral Academy). The program features music pedagogy courses which are formed and shaped by contemporary pedagogical research and best practice. Successful completion of the two-week course contributes to the Australian Kodály Certificate (AKC). Alongside music education courses, the program includes offerings for primary and secondary children, tertiary students and performers in opera, choir, jazz studies, chamber music, piano, strings and band. Community access includes participation in choir, musicianship, choral conducting, music theatre and instrumental performance.

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The interview with James Cuskelly was made during the Summer School held this year from January 1-12, 2018 in Brisbane, Australia. The paper contains some extracts from interviews with participants and course teachers. These particular „guest texts” are intended to illustrate and magnify the ideas, stories and revelations which emerge in the interview with Professor Cuskelly. The interviewer coming from Hungary, the home country of Kodály strives to return the vibrant, vivid and joyful creation of the Kodály philosophy witnessed in the Brisbane Summer School to her Hungarian readers. This paper is the first part of a larger project and is the English version of the original article which has already been published in the Hungarian music educational online journal, Parlando http://www.parlando.hu/2018/2018-5/Toth_Terez.htm .

„We will literally lose the great human potential, the spirit of the people, if we take arts education out.”

What do you think should be and must be the role of the arts education, music education in particular, in the 21st century? Is there some special role art teachers can fulfil in our time? What is at stake today?

I think arts education is profoundly important in our time. In the western world we move to a more, and almost purely, intellectual way of trying to understand human life. We reduce human experience to words, to a verbo-linguistic idea of concepts which we can talk about. In the Western World we have reduced human potential and human life to the things that we can name and put words and labels on. The greatest potential for human being is not in words. Human life is much more than that. However, I do not associate arts education only with emotional education either. Arts *do* have profound intellectual benefit. I prefer to talk about arts education as something which is so *necessary*. Kodály always said that music education was necessary to the education of the whole person. And this is what I would feel about arts education. I agree with Kodály completely. We need to *think* and understand words but we should also *feel* and *do* things that are other ways of demonstrating understanding or experiencing insights than just with words. Arts allow us other way of *being*, other way of *seeing* and *understanding*.

What will we lose if our education continues concentrating on the verbal, intellectual development of the person?

We start defining people by their marks and grades or achievements. We cannot define them as a kind, a generous or a fragile person. I do not see any of that on report cards or job applications. The corporate world requires qualities in very generic terms; we want “team players” but what does this mean? We need to be careful that we don’t lose the spirit of the person. In education, we convince people that their sense of intuition, their feeling about something, their sense of insight into a situation is not valid if they cannot talk about it, cannot name it. Worse, people then start to believe that the only way they should act is after they have named it and put words in their heads. In fact, sometimes we just feel that this is the right thing to do.

So, (to answer your question) what do we lose? We lose a whole human capacity. How does a child know to do x, y, z? They are not thinking about it; they are not necessarily using words in the same logical way. They are behaving a more instinctive, a more intuitive way. I do not pretend we should not use logic or we should be dealing in superstition. But what I am saying is alongside the development of the intellect, we should have other activities that children - and we all - are involved in. Activities which allow us to see or sense or feel or to participate in the world in other ways. And if we reduce education to the verbo-linguistic framework, we will define the rest of people’s lives... we will literally lose the spirit of the people. If we take arts education out, we will lose that great human potential.

It is also difficult in arts education to find people who themselves have some sense of all that. If you have never been moved by an experience yourself then you cannot pass that on. You can bring the wonder of that experience to other people only if *you* were touched by a piece of music or dancing or a film. In education terms it is more and more critical that we provide these opportunities for people to find themselves fully as human beings. We need to find the best of those people who themselves provide the model for children. Who are the new teachers? Once upon a time we were religiously driven, once we were superstitious and had less knowledge but we had intuition. Today we replace that superstition of the heart with the superstition of the mind. We now think that the mind can solve everything. That has not been my experience in my teaching nor in my life more broadly. I think intellect is important but the balance is even more so.



1. In Australia, Music Education programs at the tertiary level often lack dedicated courses in musicianship and pedagogy. Typically, students possess a music degree but have no formal training which can be applied to the classroom setting. This class, taught by Dr James Cuskelly, is designed to offer pathways for learning for students who have a music degree but no familiarity with the Kodály philosophy.

"Our teachers are collaborative, helping people, humble with the work that results in a pedagogy that can transform a person involved in it."

How can this experience, gained in conviction, life, and teaching, fit into the Kodály thinking system, the Kodály philosophy? How Kodályian is the methodology and sequencing which you follow in Summer School when you implement the philosophy?

My belief is utterly in line with Kodály's philosophy. Kodály believed that we should have music and arts education that are essential for the whole development of the person. I am utterly of the same mind. This is what is required so kids - and all of us - could participate *more fully* in music. It was not for the rare talented few. We should organize and deliver curriculum so that the maximum number of people get the maximum engagement and participation and meaning from music. Kodály and his disciples, those great young teachers

around him, developed this way of teaching, the idea of moving from the known to the unknown and slowly adding new bits of knowledge and very carefully practising those so that the knowledge is very clear and strong in the child. Kodály talks about the spiritual import of music. He included this by using the Hungarian cultural material, the folk songs, the dances, which was a familiar and immediate cultural experience for the Hungarian people in contrast with the German music. This was the way of building not just the discipline, the pedagogy, and thinking of music but also a way of helping to develop the sense of the spirit of the Hungarian people: a sense of connectedness to the Hungarian community, a sense of identity. That was Kodály's idea.

That was true in the Golden Age...

Exactly. That was his idea. Since then the world has become more interested in outcomes than the discipline of music. But I think it is very evident in Kodály's writing and thinking. He wanted better music education but he also wanted the spirit of the Hungarians.

In the Summer School in Brisbane how does this knowledge and this spiritual development reflected in the everyday classroom practice?

In the Brisbane Kodály Summer School we do have excellent teaching and pedagogy but it's the spirit, the environment of this programme which strike people as being so remarkable. And where does it come from? I have spent the last twenty years travelling the world and going to courses and sitting in classes trying to find people who are like-minded, who do not just see the world in black and white, intellectual terms, but they themselves feel something of this spirit. Certainly, they are also outstanding pedagogues and musicians. My job has been to try to gather like-minded people. And provide the opportunity for them to do their excellent teaching. They bring their own spirit of what it is to be a great human being and a great pedagogue and musician. Here, in the Brisbane Kodály Summer School we are not evaluating potential teachers just in terms of their knowledge but in terms of the quality of human being, the beliefs and values that they have so that they would fit in and work well here. This collectively produces a supportive, caring and joyous atmosphere. That is a structural thing in the course and that is all connected to the quality of the human beings who are the teachers. Our teachers are collaborative, helping people, humble with the work. This results in a pedagogy that can transform a person involved in it.

However, we do not force people to change. We are not insisting that their life needs to be altered. People feel and understand that transformative potential of music and the arts in the lives of human beings for themselves. We see people whose lives are changed by this experience. There are people who come with their lives characterized by pain and sickness and medical procedures. And they can come and get involved in community choir which allow to feel them that life is more than just their pain and medical treatment. We have young people who may be from difficult situation, they may have been a drug-addict, or they might have been in a domestic violence situation, but we can show them that there is a different way of being, a different world, and that is transformative. And it is up to the individual person to participate in that level.



2. Musicianship classes are a key feature of the program and all participants on course are allocated to a group according to their background and ability. In this photo, more advanced students are working with outstanding Hungarian teacher, Csernyik, Reka.



3. Pedagogy classes for secondary school teachers

Wendy's story:

I am a singer and I studied in the Queensland conservatorium here, in Brisbane. The Kodály Course, the Summer School has shown me where the gaps in my knowledge are and what I need to do to work to fill in those gaps. I didn't learn the hand signs before and I find them quite difficult. I can see, though, how the physical movement helps to embed the pitches and the rhythms into the body. I am starting to be able to identify pitches by the solfa.

I have choir in my house; I've had it for 9 years now. Every Tuesday night they come, and we have a choir from 7.30 till 9.30 at night. I was struggling with how to deal with the falling of pitches, the intonation. Here, at the Summer School Jason Goopy's Musicianship class, he has given us lots of ideas with singing the solfa, the cords, the scales, major, minor and the pentatonic scales. I have to learn them myself so I can teach them. I need to consolidate that knowledge.

Music has always been something which I could be good at. Something that was mine. The more I put into it the more I get back from. It saved me in a way like a life raft because I was a shy little girl and didn't fit in very well. My whole life, the problems with my children, my divorce can all be happening but I can pull myself into a safe place and get some relief not anguishing about other stuff. It is very deep and very profound for me.

And that's why I am studying hard because my personal life has fallen apart. I call my singing medicine for me in a very profound way. I was so happy to find this course. I can be with a lot of other musicians, learning more, and being able to use that learning developing myself

and my choir. It has brought me out of isolation. Living in the bush can be really isolating, living on my own, beekeeping on my own, rehearsing on my own. It's been absolute desperation which brought me to this point because I was depressed and I was at the bottom of the bottom and not wanting to perform anymore, not wanting to sing anymore, just wanted to plant trees and not wanting to see any people. But I needed that time alone and plant an orchard so that I could heal and now I am coming back into the world. If I didn't have music, I would be lost. (Wendy Murray, musician, singer, songwriter bandleader for Wendy Murray Quintet. Her homepage: <http://wendymurray.com>)

„We can deliver education in such a way that there are enormous other benefits as well.”

Do you articulate this kind of transformative power of music making, community singing to participants? Is it a gradual or a sudden change?



4. The centrality of performance is clear in the many performances throughout the course.

While there are a number of formal concerts, there are also a number of more casual concerts at lunch time and “On the Green” (above). These concerts are a form of community outreach and serve to provide both entertainment and education about the benefits of music education and performance.

We do not talk to people about that. It is their personal, spiritual journey, it is not for me to tell them what to do and how to do it. I might tell a story about something which might have a pedagogical purpose. And it might not affect

some people at all. But I might tell a story and it affects other people profoundly. However, we are not abandoning education in any way. It is so common when a more caring and nurturing or pastoral approach is taken that we lose expectations in terms of education and learning. It is not what we do here at Summer School; I am not suggesting that we should be spending our time in a sort of therapeutic way. I am not employing these people as therapists, counsellors; that's not our expertise. Our job is education. What I am saying clearly is that we can deliver education in such a way that there are enormous other benefits as well.

Recently, we have become fascinated by the other possible intellectual and academic benefits of music. Apparently, "Music makes you smarter". I am suggesting that we should not limit ourselves to just academic benefits or increasing even more academic progress. I think there are so many other ways of the benefits from music. If it is delivered well, if it is delivered kindly, it is like any human activity. I can make a meal, a perfectly nutritious meal, it should be good for you. But if you are upset, angry, frightened then you get no benefit from that food. I can throw music in front of you, and you feel sick. I can cook a meal and I can make you feel welcome and we can sit there together and enjoy that meal and the overall benefit. And it is the same with education. Music has such great potential. And I feel the same with all the arts. This potential for human greatness that doesn't mean playing on stage in great concert halls. There is potential for this greatness in the arts for us individually and for us collectively. But I am not sure we've understood that because we haven't experienced the greatness, the transformative, the uplifting power. We haven't experienced the sense of connection with our identity ...

Carmel's story:

I became interested in singing. Not in a professional way just to express myself. Someone suggested I should join the Jazz Choir in 2016. It was very challenging first to me. Because the way I was taught music was a very intellectual, left-brain way of learning to read the music and the words in front of you. In Pete's choir you don't have the words and the sheet music in front of you. It is training the musical intelligence not training the brain. There are lots of clapping, stepping and movement in it, using different modalities at once. You really have to get over that feeling „I can't do this". Feeling music is a whole body, a whole mind experience. It gives me an access to the core of music. I derive a lot of joy from music. It is taking away something very human from us when we think that we cannot sing well enough. ...Music has a connecting force.

There is always a lot of talking about the differences of people. In my view, we are all the same despite all those differences. We have the same human needs. I have had periods of depression in my life, acute period seven or eight months last year. Dancing, singing and musical expression were things that came up for me and they just sought expression from me, and I let myself do them. I try to understand the world and I try to understand myself in it. Music is for everyone. Music seems to be a natural expression: when you see children they don't hold back. But as we get older we start to sense of ourselves educating around music and we distance people from that: „You can only sing if you are good at it, if you are a really serious student”. I think singing and musical expression generally important for us to express who we are. And probably not everyone to the same degree; other people might find the same through painting or writing.

One little story is important to me. I have volunteered as a psychologist and a counsellor in palliative care. I've had about 4 or 5 clients now. And the one I've been with for two months is in a very complicated progression, she has a lot of pain. When I saw her last week, we started singing together. I had been telling her about the Kodály Summer School and she said “Oh, I was in a choir when I was a child.” So, I said, “Oh, were you? What sort of songs did you sing?” And she started singing little bits. Then we just started going through all the songs we both liked. And it was just a little joyful thing about again how music can provide connection. My client doesn't want to be talking about her dying and her death. She just wants distraction. She just wants to have some time and enjoying and not having to think about where she is. And she was so happy singing! There is so much about the conditions of living and part of the condition of living is how time passes and we die one day. We are born, we live, we die... but it is gentle. (*Carmel Dyer, psychologist, Gestalt-therapist, volunteer in palliative care, student at Summer School*)



5. Lunch time concert – Community/Jazz choir led by Pete Churchill.

„...some of them start to realize this is a chance for them to learn. They literally make a choice to become more for themselves.”

When recruiting teachers for Summer School you consider not only professional criteria but also intangible, quality-of-the-person criteria. Do you have any selection criteria for the participants as well?

We have no entry requirements. Everyone is welcome. It is open access for everyone. The difference, however, is once you are here we have certain expectations about how you behave. In terms of the pedagogy, we start as if people have done nothing. But you must reach a very high level to get the certificate - the choice is up to you. If you choose to work hard, listen to the feedback, reflect and read the literature you may very well achieve the certificate at the very end. We, the carefully chosen staff are trying to help the participants develop such that by the time they exit they are better, they are fuller, they are more themselves as a person. We've seen people arrive feeling intimidated as a music educator. They are defensive, they are angry, they blame everybody else. Then, some of them start to realize this is a chance for them to learn. They literally make a choice to become more for themselves. We are not trying to save people or convert them. It is free choice. We provide a model of teaching and learning, a model of community, a model of how we can be as people.

“The Kodály philosophy has preconceptions that cannot be applied in the New World.”

A carefully selected repertoire, which is suitable for achieving the goal, forms a very important part of the education of the Kodály identity forming and the spiritual ascension of Hungarians. In addition to folk songs, Kodály considered the most outstanding music is classical music. According to Kodály, the child deserves the best of both music and teaching. The child must first be introduced to the music of the native language of their own people, and later to introduce them to the music of other peoples. This is an important element of the Kodály concept. You live in Australia, founded Cuskelly College, lead the Kodály-based Summer School Program. Participants are not exclusively, but mostly

Australians. What do you think about the repertoire in the Australian multicultural environment?

“Music education as aesthetic education has been widely criticized, but for the purposes of this discussion I will restrict the discussion to the most relevant shortcomings. Firstly, there is the assumption that music is defined by and in the collected works—those tangible products of music chosen for their aesthetic qualities. Thus, certain works fulfil the criteria for inclusion in the canon whilst others must necessarily, be omitted. Even a superficial consideration of the decision-making processes that surround the selection of music for inclusion in the canon serves to further emphasise the exclusive and hierarchical nature of this approach; only specific music, chosen because of its supposed ability to engender that ill-defined special moment of sense perception is deemed worthy. The choice is seemingly quite arbitrary, made according to the particular tastes of a select few within an inner circle. A music education program that utilises such an approach remains fixated on particular music, omitting music that may embody a different world-view, that may be say, popular in style or that may be culturally “other”. Given an ever-increasingly mobile population and the trend toward globalisation, a fixed music repertory within a music education program is unlikely to continue to serve the needs of the real target group, and indeed, may serve as a deterrent”. (Excerpt from the Phd-thesis of James Cuskelly, 4.3.2 Problems with the aesthetic view in music education)

Bartók and Kodály found a musical tradition that was hundreds of years old, an almost-intact tradition that had remained for centuries. They could collect archaic folk songs as the Hungarian peasant culture which had preserved and maintained the musical tradition, and the traditional lifestyle that surrounded it. Since then, big changes have taken place, this traditional way of life has disappeared. In addition, Kodály studied and worked at the Academy of Music, a major institution of classical music. It was clear for him that artistic music was equal to classical music. In his age, a certain social structure, known to everyone was in place, where everyone knew where he was: the peasant, the middle class, and the aristocracy. Kodály’s thoughts were born within this social structure. There is no such thing in our country - the Australian society lacks the idea of such deep divisions in social class. We did not have or have not had an aristocracy, which has been privileged for centuries. Our mindset is shaped in a different social environment. At the same time, it means that some of the preconceptions and elements of the Kodály thoughts do not apply to us. Hungarian folk tradition and culture have a history of hundreds of years. Our

tradition is much younger and the popular media leaves a deep mark on it. This changes the rules of the game.

We may talk about a tradition of about 150 years old that was not born in here. It came from elsewhere, Anglo-Saxon, Irish and Scottish, but it has taken root here. The social, cultural and political context of the two countries is so different that the two should not be compared. The Kodály philosophy has preconceptions that cannot be applied in the New World. Our cultural identity is not singular, not homogeneous. The identity of the Hungarian people, is the Hungarian tribe. We, Australians came from all over the world. Our thinking is new, multicultural. We originally had an Anglo-Saxon base, but after the Second World War there were large numbers of Greek, Italian and Yugoslavs, waves that followed each other. In the 70s and 80s Asian immigrants and refugees came to us. This has profoundly affected our cities, our culture. We do not have monoculture. There is no clearly defined culture which we can say is our folk culture.



6. One of the most popular classes of the course is Pete's MegaBand. Run by renowned British jazz musician, Pete Churchill, students are welcome to perform on any instrument (including voice) and are involved in an improvisatory compositional process which develops their understanding of harmony, voice leading and stylistic characteristics

„The strength of the philosophy whether it can adapt to a changing environment. By changing environment, I mean the folk music of people. There is the authentic historical folk music, the original which needs to be preserved and conserved. But the reality is the day-to-day music of the people. We have a hugely multicultural world over the planet and you educate with a range of children who bring lots of music. Even if it is not a folk music it is a music that underscores their life. So, the strength of the system is whether we can adapt Kodály concept and embrace wider range. If there is a methodology that can only work with a certain kind of music that methodology probably won't last long. Because the reality is whether you like or not is not tidy like that. The system or the concept can exist separate from a certain kind of music. (Pete Churchill, Professor of Jazz Composition at the Royal Academy of Music in London whilst running the jazz choir at Trinity College of Music. Professor at the Summer School running the Megaband and the Jazz Choir. Jazz pianist and composer. <http://www.petechurchill.co.uk/>)

But you must have a repertoire of some sort...

We teach the Anglo-Saxon folk music. It is about colonial times, arrivals, landing, settlements, convicts on Australian coasts, hot weather, dust; how the first industrialization took place. That is a colonial type of folk music. Furthermore, it is also adult music. There was little interest in women's and children's songs, the stories are about men. Of course, there are songs, tales and stories for children, but nobody has collected them. When the other immigration waves reached Australia, the settlers brought their own music, which was followed by other influences.

Another remark about the repertoire question is the notion of excellence. Why does Kodály choose certain particular songs, particular music material? Because he wanted a musical source that represents the high level that children deserve. Certainly, I agree with it. But why did he want this? I do not want to question Kodály, I just ask questions. Why did we educate generations of children in western art music, especially in Italian, German, French and Hungarian music? Why an academic set of music? I still think we are operating in a social, cultural and political environment that aspires to this upper-class music. This is not peasant music. What was it about? Where was this? Why did Kodály do this? I also agree that this music is a great achievement of humankind, this intellectually outstanding music. We cannot really understand Wagner, Bach, Beethoven, Mozart without the understanding and knowledge of music, which means knowledge of Western art, tradition and repertoire. Like understanding Shakespeare, it is necessary to know the age and tradition. I want Australian

children to connect with this music, even if it is a music of time and place that is not ours, but Austrian, Hungarian, Germanic, High European art. Does it have relevance? Yes, it does. Music is both a musical and a scientific achievement. It also makes it possible for us to lead our children to a deeper insight into the human conditions.

Kodály and his disciples developed his methodology and pedagogy such way as to give the children these skills to engage with music.

So, the classical music tradition, which can be regarded as an elitist, can carry universally valid values that we can get acquainted with. What do we need to reveal the musical meaning?

In Australia the majority read and write in English, in Shakespeare's language. In Shakespeare's works, beyond the technicalities - which is relatively easy to understand with language knowledge - there is a deeper, more profound meaning. Just like Western art music. Shakespeare is an elite and special tradition like western classical music. To reveal the depth, you need knowledge, skills and understanding of music. That is what Kodály wanted to teach everyone.

We were trying to destroy the indigenous culture for a couple of hundred years. Hardly any people survived in Tasmania. We made a conscientious decision to wipe out the whole race. We took children from families and gave them to white families. And we finally apologized for that as a nation 10 years ago. We have got bad history with them. Now we try to recognize their culture, but there is not much left. Their music is strongly connected with actions in communities. You cannot just hear a song and go and sing it. It would be an insult. You need permission. And some of those songs relate to certain private events such as male initiations ceremonies or secret women business. We, men could not sing women songs. Girls are not allowed to play the didgeridoo as it is a boy's instrument. The whole set of cultural things is we are not very well aware of and we do not do very well. So, we sing Islanders songs instead. Because they are more accessible. And the Islanders, people from Papua-New Guinea, Tonga, the Philippines do not mind that other people singing their songs. So that is not good but it is better than nothing. *(Dr Anthony Young, Teacher*

at Summer School, Head of Classroom, Choral and Liturgical Music, St Lawrence's College Brisbane talks about the aboriginal heritage and culture in Australia.)

Kodály and his disciples developed his methodology and pedagogy such way as to give the children these skills to engage with music. How does anyone arrive at understanding Shakespeare? You have to learn letters, sounds, words, sentences to fully understand this human experience of insight wrapped up in it. We have held onto this insight for centuries. It is the same with folk music. We have kept it. We didn't let it go. And we want each generation to have that skill in the language. So, they get the benefit of Shakespeare. And that's what I would say also about Bach or Mozart.

Filipe's story:

I was born in New South Wales and my first memory of music comes from my Dad. He was in a church band and he played the euphonium. Sometimes he was bringing me and I listened. I come from a Polynesian background. I am Tongan. My granddad was a conductor of a church choir. When we went to gatherings, like funerals, or wedding celebrations we all sang traditional Tongan hymns and I was listening. I tried to sing those hymns so I've got a strong foundation of singing and harmonies as well. A Tongan hymn has two parts sung by women and men. It was word of mouth when I learned the hymns but two years ago I went to a Tongan choir where I saw them reading sheet music but it was notated by numbers. I wanted to learn that system but I was never brought up with it so I wasn't sure how they read that music. You cannot stereotype all Polynesian music as one although they are kind of similar.

I had strong foundation of that which led me naturally into Kodály system in Australia. I was brought up with Kodály at high school and I graduated 2 years ago at St Laurence's College. I was Anthony Young's student. At Summer School we have a great methodology teaching. It helps me to sight read as well. It's a great culture. And all the Kodály people. This is my second time here. We come back here to learn from the Kodály teachers so we see what we can do. I have friends here. I want to be a music teacher. I think what Kodály brings in to the 21st century is that it is so simple. Students have short attention spans; and the simplicity of Kodály makes it learn so much easier. What's good about Australia is it doesn't stick to one system but rather brings everything in. What I have learnt from Anthony Young is to try to bring different culture so when we leave high school we have a broad exposure to different types of music. (Filipe Afu, Student at Australian Catholic University, student at Summer School)

“Visual, aural and kinesthetic intelligence, the associated learning modes are integrated in an ideal learning environment”.

Visiting the courses and lessons, I had an impression that music and learning of music is such a body experience. Teaching and learning music here is combined with the music experience in the body. Movement, dance, rhythm exercises, clapping, and sound training are both learning processes in the body and in the mind. What do you think about the role of the human body in the learning process?



7. Students are given the opportunity to work collaboratively; peer tutoring allows students to learn from one another.



8. Younger students use a range of learning modalities – aural, visual and kinaesthetic – to form and consolidate the understanding of concepts.

In the case of musicians, the human body, the hand, the fingers, the holding on the instrument, the coordination is necessary to sound their instrument or their voice.

They are technical aspects of the issue. I would rather like to know how to lead the way to musical comprehension through the body? What does body experience mean in this sense?

Basically, three questions are worth discussing here. One of the most complicated is the most special nature of music that it is simultaneous. When we talk, one of us speaks at a time and uses words so that we can understand each other. However, in music more than one part at a time may sound harmonious. However, it is still a technical property. The unique, individual, talented attribute of the human brain is that you hear simultaneously different parts. Kodály and his disciples considered this ability to be extremely important and applied the *sing and play technique* to develop the ability of thinking in more than one part. I will take this approach one step further. How can we connect sound, hand signals, and rhythm with physical body movement? By using the body more and more, we help the brain to be able to hear more than

one part simultaneously. Kids can get to this extremely high level because they can simultaneously listen to the multidimensional nature of music. This is truly particular to music.

The third aspect that is worth highlighting in this matter is the research of the past 30 years. We know that human learning can take place in different learning modes and preferences. However, education is profoundly dominated by visual learning - we write and read. Those who have problems with visual learning will face difficulties within the school system. Getting into college is even harder. Many children struggle at school because their visual skills and visual memory are not strong enough. The school does not always identify this weakness and does not develop it in the child. Visual, aural and kinaesthetic intelligence, the associated learning modes are integrated in an ideal learning environment. Kinaesthetic learning is important to attach the intellect to the body. It attaches the intellect to the experience of the music. Otherwise, music becomes disembodied: there will be nothing more than some abstract sounds. Movement influences brain function. The corpus callosum connecting the two hemispheres is the area where millions of nerve fibers pass through and transmits information from one center to another. As early as 30 years ago, I was confident that the idea that separate spots in the brain are responsible for music or mathematical knowledge cannot be tolerated. Now we know that this is not the case. Musical function is scattered across the entire brain area, and it is responsible for several collaborating areas that are simultaneous in nature.

We, in the Summer School's pedagogy, strive for completeness, creating whole musicians. Our program is not a music education but rather a whole brain education. In the case of children, the whole brain is developed during physical activity. The concept is that the mind is in the body, the body is in the mind. If we work with infants and babies, developing the mind can best be achieved by physical activity. If the child does not climb or does not walk, you need to intervene and develop the interconnections between the two hemispheres. Most of our education, especially secondary education, develops certain areas of the brain more strongly, while others are neglected. We reward the development of certain brain areas at school, and others are not really appreciated. There are some kids who cannot catch a ball, but they are excellent at physics. The social skills of our students are underdeveloped whereas they can be among top achievers in mathematics or science. I believe in interconnections. Yes, I want the kids to be intelligent. But I also want them to integrate with their whole

body, their bodily experiences. Connect with their emotional world as well. I cannot separate intellectual, physical and emotional education because I teach the whole child.

In line with the thinking of Gordon, Gardner, Small and Elliott, I believe that it is these engaged performance based activities, driven by the individual's inner sonic conception of music, which most powerfully lead to the development of meaning in musical performance. These engaged performing opportunities will be evidenced first and foremost in singing and the development of the ability to "think in sound". Such a view of performing thus has quite a different emphasis. The issues of goal imaging and self-monitoring are more directly and purposefully addressed in such a framework and the development of these abilities as a prerequisite provides an inner framework of music intelligence from which meaningful performance may emerge. Issues of motor co-ordination are much diminished where students already hold a sophisticated inner sense of "how the music goes". While such a framework would be considered radical by those who are more involved in traditional "method" approaches to instrumental learning, the development of core audiation, musicianship and music thinking processes as a platform out of which instrumental and vocal performance emerged is an entirely more defensible and relevant educative position, and one that has enormous potential to radically transform educative practice in this field. (*Excerpt from the PhD-thesis of James Cuskelly 6. Meaning and Musical Performance 6.10 Conclusion*)

It is worth examining the question in anthropological terms. We put too much emphasis on words. Human beings, almost without recognizing it, began to see, understand, and interact with the world around them through the language. Of course, from an evolutionary point of view, language is the one that puts us at the top of evolutionary development. Mammals are born, grow, develop, breed, and die. Humans in the instinctive world have exceeded this limited prescription of life. We have created verbal language, this extremely complicated and complex communication tool, but we begin to see the world in which the word matters more than experience. In my teaching, I let the child be surrounded by the music, we immerse them in it. The child thus experiences music, the sound and movement at the same time. The three-year-old can do by themselves. We immerse the child in music. So where is the first experience? In the child's body. Not in words. And then when they are 4, 5 we start to draw that experience into their conscious mind and form words about it. This is an anthropological model. That is how the human being develops. You first experience it in your body. We lived for centuries, we experienced reality, but we're just talking about it lately. We started to become other creatures. What I found disturbing is this: We are abandoning the body. We are abandoning the experience. We are abandoning

the anthropological connection we had and just becoming this disembodied intellect of words.

You have to awake the inner ear in Kodály methodology. Hear things before sing and play. This is the aural tradition of the world. More people make music all over the planet without looking at notes. You have to do things where your ear is your guide. You dance on the beat you make music off the beat. Internalizing the rhythm and if you make the body movement your body is your metronome. Your body moves very naturally in a rhythmic way and your feet sing. We go from listening, singing to slowing it down on a rhythmic instrument. Then articulate. The concept is you do sound first and meaning later.

Notation is a great device but it is also a device which allows you to spend less time together. For me teaching by ear is an opportunity for spending more time together. It is slow, deep learning. What notation is for? To speed up the learning process... But here at Summer School we have the luxury of time. We have the luxury of daily rehearsals. Learning by ear it takes time but what happens is you are putting the music you are learning into the same part of the brain as nursery rhymes, folk songs things you've never „learnt”. Just absorbed. And I think we don't access that part of our memory. Because we have our visual memory we see what they look like and it is very easy to forget. Whereas you teach something by ear for your choir here at Summer School when they come back next year within 5 minutes they can remember the music because it is going in deep memory. It is the aural tradition. I am not against notation. We use notation in my choir in London. What I would like to see a bit more balance. All I am doing is to provide a balance to the prevailing wisdom of music education. (*Pete Churchill*)

We must see the person in full, especially when teaching children. We know from ethnomusicologists that in many cultures there is no specific word for our music, for music has always been accompanied by dancing and clapping. These three existed in a phenomenon and was labelled with one word. Standing still rigidly and singing is another, bizarre interpretation of the concept. Our education system is increasingly seeking control. We give them information, notes, song lyrics, the child stands up and sings what we ask of them. Not long ago, a mom asked me what kind of CDs she should buy for her baby. And I said to her, „Don't buy CD! Pick her up, hold her to yourself and sing to her.” Many families, especially middleclass families will buy all sorts of classical music CDs, because their kids will be smarter – so they say. If you want to teach her to

talk, you are not going to buy them a disc. To hear the same thing over and over again? A mechanical sound? This way you can only create a robot. When we talk about teaching the child, we have to talk to him, formulate the sounds, teach the words to them. The same goes for music. Music is not a product. Music is action. People are doing it. Sing, move, with others. Musical movement is immensely important. We are not sitting straight, motionless, and we sing the song! Musical movement develops the musicianship. If you want the child to have a concept of the beat, let them experience it in their own body. Move, feel, do it. They will be happy to do it. There is no point *in telling the child what the beat is*.

Heru's story:

So what does Kodály mean to me? It means a logic, an order of understanding music. I did a BA in Music in University of Queensland, Australia. Here the aural training wasn't very substantial. When I did the musicianship classes here at Summer School it was kind of an epiphany, a logic which made sense to me. Because they have a moveable do so you can move every piece you look at you can work out its tonality. The Kodály training is not really snobby – I like that. Because it doesn't look at music that it is only classical music, it makes sense of any music. It looks all music equally. Pop, opera, classical, jazz everything is valid. It makes sense to me because I am a modern person. Kodály has the same idea that all the music is valid. You understand the music more so you get to know the beauty of it.

In a way I agree with Kodály that children should learn really high quality, serious music. I don't think that children should learn the sort of simplified music for kids. I think they get bored. They can listen to Bach, they can listen to Mozart, children love Mozart. He is bright as spark, he is logical and easy to memorize his tune.

What I like about Kodály is that they want to engage with a child so it is fun, also it is interactive, it is physical. It is not just sitting and listening in one position. They use their body. Because children need to use their body I think: the hand signs, lots of clapping, rhythm, and the games. I think the games are excellent, it is just a natural way to learn. And children progress. They challenge them so they move further. It seems to be the best way to learn. The teaching staff here are excellent. My son enjoys very much Lucinda Geoghegan's class learning about the composers, the music a little bit and to put some meaning to it.

My mother is from Papua New Guinea but my dad is Australian. As a child I learnt traditional folk songs that have Irish background or Scottish background, we learnt them at school. The song, *We're bound for Botany Bay* is nice. I love it. I know some Torres Strait Island songs because I grew up in Kent. My father was the organist and in the main Anglican church a lot of Torres Strait Islanders came. We had traditional English hymns and others like Bach or Brahms. But every Sunday, Torres Strait Islanders came for communion. And they had their big drums. They sang hymns modified or their own hymns. They had one lead singer who starts and then others come and sing in response. And then do the harmonies and some men beat the base. Usually the men hold the drum. They sing their own language. Some

Australian composers like Steven Leak, have documented their tunes. So now the schoolchildren can learn them. There aren't too many hymns though, and those old people who sang them are dying or already gone. Some people individually trying to bring some indigenous songs, Torres Strait Islands songs into the classroom. (*Heru Pinkasova, opera singer, English teacher. Returning student with her son at Summer School.*)

By visiting methodological classes or music lessons for children, I found that children spending proportionally more time immersed in rhythmic and singing games, circular games than verbalizing and drilling knowledge. Although the latter process is much shorter but it is easier for children to solve those tasks. They could easily describe with rhythmic patterns or sing the sol-fa of that they had already experienced in their body movement.

Research shows that children are best able to learn when they are happy. If you want to maximize your learning, just let them play happily.



9. Physical movement is an essential part of learning and assists in the embodiment of key music concepts. The inclusion of singing games provides obvious enjoyment for students and promotes the development of safe and enjoyable learning environments.

However, it can also be seen, for example, in certain digital learning materials that children enjoy somehow what they do, at least for a while, but they do not actually learn anything.

Kodály did not want the children to remain illiterate in music. But it is important for us to create a positive atmosphere. We start the lesson with a concentration activity, then break where we refresh, then concentration and break. After the concentrated learning activity, we play games. Games are carefully chosen to relate to our learning goal. Games have enormous value; in Australia, we are very aware of how much a child can benefit from them. Kodály said we should teach music in such a way that it is a joy for the child. Visiting singing classes in Hungary, I did not always experience this joy. Those Hungarian children are clever. They are further advanced than our children here. But I'm not particularly worried about it. I do not feel the pressure having our kids burdened with further intellectual learning. I want the child to experience the joy of learning. Later, it influences their whole life, their life in society whether they love music or not.

Talent keeps the personality in a very narrow field.

If you were in a position of making decisions on music education in Australia, would you set up more community-based music education and elitist selected music education for the students who are aiming at pursuing a musical career? Would you actually separate these two types of music educations and send kids to different settings?

I certainly would not separate them apart. The situation is that it is not uncommon among professional musicians that they lack social skills. They were picked up early by given a label of being “talented”, participating in programs where they were with the other talented and gifted children. Then they lost a broader social context. I agree that the talented need to be able to develop their skills. But I am not sure about the benefits of running national specialist programmes for the talented or setting up specialist schools for them. I am not convinced of the concept. I am especially unconvinced of the teaching practice in such situations. They audition the most talented kids and then push them. We worked a nine-year-old boy; he was an extraordinary violinist. He was able to play the most complicated pieces and he had perfect pitch. However, all his knowledge tied him to the violin. What would happen to this child if an accident occurred with his hand? What sort of a musician will he be? What kind of person is being formed? Talent keeps the personality in a very narrow field. I

met a lot of kids in my career who started out as a special talent, but never managed to progress. Who cares for them? The Kodályian way of teaching in the classroom does not in any way inhibit the talent of the very gifted child. Not at all. It enhances it. If it were up to me, I would not separate the talented and less talented children. Also, I would strive for a gifted child to be a more whole child. Only very few people reach the world's best music stages. Still, in Australia, there are countless schools, conservatories and universities that focus on musical talent. We do not help them when we define them in such narrow terms.

In many cultures and mythologies there is the archetype of the great musician. In Greek mythology, the gods allowed Orpheus to bring his wife back from the underworld, as a reward for his music. Around Vejnemöjnen, in the Finnish Kalevala, animals gathered from the woods to hear his music. It seems that the image of a lonely musician living in his own world, music, is deeply rooted in the culture of humankind.

This is a misunderstanding. These ancient stories are not about the musician but the music itself. The music, the power of music, calls us back to life. The potential for our life is music, it is not having one person who is a celebrity. We misunderstood. Instead of trying to find the potential for music in our life, we try to find who is talented. It is a mistake. It is not the person who is important. This is our misunderstanding. Kodály said that we are all more profoundly talented under 15 years of age than thereafter. Until the age of 15, everyone has much more musical talents and opportunities. That is, we would have the chance to bring music out of the person. After that it's harder. What if our music education were so? Only after the age of 15 would we start selection and differentiation? Our great loss is that we do not ever try to explore fine ways to harness the real power of music in our lives. We've sold it out as a commercial product. Pop culture produces celebrities. It's completely the wrong idea. We have to convince people of their own musicality. The ways music can impact their lives, change their lives, affect their lives. We can lead children and adults to the arts.

Summer School provides them a look into how to participate in, engage with and experience music. We all so deeply involved in the experience. It does not matter if you play the wrong note or you sing the wrong note. Summer School provides this real *experience of being involved in arts*.

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