

**THE ROLE OF ‘MUSIC MEDIATION’ IN THE
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE MUSIC CULTURE
DEGREE PROGRAM IN BUDAPEST
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Summary

Music communication is a very important part of the cultural dissemination, which is the main goal of the Music Culture degree program, started in 2018 at the Institute of Arts Communication and Music of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) Budapest. The first part of the study describes the education structure of the degree program, and the mood, how music communication fits into this program.

How can we reach, educate, and develop the audience? Could an educational concert play the role of music mediation? Perhaps through a discussion before the concert, when do we introduce the composer, and the history of the creation, without teaching the special language of music?

In the main part of this paper, the writer tries to find the answer, how the instructors of the Music Culture degree program prepare the students for the role of a ‘music mediator’ after finishing their studies

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Keywords

Arts communication in music, Music Culture degree program, mediation and education, education concerts, creative music exercises.

1. The teaching of music for arts communication started in 2018 at four Hungarian universities, under the name of the Music Culture bachelor's degree. The 6-semester training started at the Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Humanities (ELTE BTK), Károly Eszterházy University of Eger, Nyíregyháza University, and the University of Szeged. The following can be read in the admission notice:

“The purpose of the training is to train music professionals who are able to perform their duties as music and art mediators, organizers, directors, editors, and facilitators, in the European region's cultural and artistic institutions, with their theoretical and practical knowledge of the cultural and artistic institutional system, with good taste and creative decision-making skills. During the training, the students acquire sufficient proficiency in getting to know Hungarian musical life and the musical life of European countries. They are prepared to continue their studies in a master's program.”²

² Magyarország Kormánya. *A felsőoktatási szakképzések, az alap- és mesterképzések, valamint hitéleti képzések képzési és kimeneti követelményei.* (Government of Hungary. *Training and output requirements for higher education vocational training, bachelor's and master's degree programs, and religious training programs*). <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/4/4b/4bf/4bf9f81a4c9fce6f09222294d1f6e2aedb010ad4.pdf> 2446 pp., p. 854. (date of access: 11.14.2025)

In other words, those who have completed the course will be able to perform background tasks related to any musical event. Therefore, the instructors participating in the training had to make this objective concretely for given job types for the training to be successful. We are aiming for the following types of jobs: artistic secretary, choir conductor, cultural associate, cultural manager, festival organizer, management of music programs, manager (for musical events), music editor and journalist (media), music event organizer, music librarian (the degree program has a specialization for this), music manager, music referent, musical theater assistant, orchestra secretary, production associate, sheet music librarian. Currently the types of jobs listed above are mostly filled by people with a music degree, who graduated as a musician / music teacher, but the field of arts communication in music requires special musical training, which we can provide to our students at the ELTE BTK.

The former ‘Department of Music’ of the ELTE University was created 41 years ago, to train classroom music teachers (from primary to secondary level), and since 2018, the profile has been enriched with the specialization of arts communication for music as ‘Music Culture’, so the designation of the Department has also changed, transformed into an Institute. Now our official name is Institute of Arts Communication and Music.³

³ Bodnár, Gábor. Az ének-zene tanárok képzése mellett megjelenő, a tanárok munkáját is segítő képzési forma: a zenei művészetközvetítés. (The degree program, which appears alongside the training of classroom music teachers, and also helps the teachers’ work: the arts communication in music.) In: K. Udvari, Katalin (ed.). *Kodály Zoltán zenepedagógiai örökségének időszerűsége a 21.*

1.1. At present the subjects of general humanities and music of the 6 semesters in the Music Culture degree program are the following:

History of Philosophy; Digital Humanities Competencies; Music Theory and Solfège 1-4 / Music History 1-6; Vocal and Instrumental Knowledges 1-2 / Vocal and Instrumental Account 1-2 / Musical Interpretation Exercises 1-2; Folk Music; Choir Conducting Practice 1-2 / Performance Practice 1-4; Preparation for the Final Exam 1-2 / Thesis / Final Exam.

However, in addition to music-specific knowledge, there are also other competencies required for arts communication (communication, organization, administration, partly IT), which are not included in the curricula of the higher education for music together. The compilation and teaching of the arts communication sub-area presented a challenge to the musician instructors. Therefore, with the involvement of external help, they managed to create a six-semester curriculum. Our courses related to arts communication are called General Arts Communication Skills (1-2) and Event Organization Skills (1-4). The lectures are music-specific right from the beginning, but also deal with general arts topics, with a focus on education.

The allocation system of the arts communication subjects:
General Arts Communication Skills: 1-2. semester, 2 hours per

század globalizálódó világában (The timeliness of Zoltán Kodály's music pedagogical heritage in the globalizing world of the 21st Century), Psalmus Humanus Művészetpedagógiai Egyesület (Psalmus Humanus Association for Arts Education), Budapest, 2021, pp. 21-30. https://tehetseggondozaskodaly-psalmus.hu/kecskemeti-pelda/07/kodalyi_zenepedagogia.html (date of access: 11.14.2025)

week. Event Organization Skills: 1-2. semester, 4 hours per week (2 theory hours, 2 practice hours). Event Organization Skills: 3-4. semester, a total of 7 hours per week, 196 hours over two semesters.

Among our four guest instructors, we developed the main thematic with Nóra Czvikli, who is a MÁV Symphony Orchestra's foreign affairs representative, and Vera Meczner, who is an artistic manager. In addition, Noémi Miklós and Dalma Toadere, who work in the fields of music management and music mediation and teach these subjects at the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj, have also been helping us for the second year. The job opportunities we mapped and marked as aims also helped us in developing the curricula, to help our students to become successful arts communicators. The already mentioned options are all linked to a specific institution, in addition to institutional operations, we also had to include management, legal, and mediation classes, all from the perspective of music culture.⁴

In this way, we were able to define seven major areas that are essential in musical arts communication:

1. Institutional structure, financing, applying tenders, fundraising

⁴ Czakó, Dóra. A zenei művészetközvetítés oktatása: új oktatási platform. (Instructing the arts mediation in music: a new education platform.) In K., Nagy Emese et al.(eds.) *“Értéktéremtés – Kihívások a Pedagógiában, Gyógypedagógiában és a Tanárképzésben”*: Tanulmánykötet a XIII. Országos Taní-tani Konferenciáról (*“Creating value – Challenges in Pedagogy, Special Education and Teacher Training”*: A study booklet of the 13th ‘Taní-tani’ Conference). Miskolci Egyetemi Kiadó, Miskolc, 2022, pp. 461-471, p. 466. (date of access: 11.14.2025) <https://pedagoguskepzes.uni-miskolc.hu/files/19466/Tanítani%202022%20kötet.pdf> (date of access: 11.14.2025)

2. Concert organization, tour organization
3. Cultural and artist management, project management, cultural tourism
4. Communication in music art broadcasting (PR, marketing, social media, press, protocol, sales, audience organization)
5. Types of musical events and their locations in Hungary, symphonic orchestras, and musical theater operations
6. Music education and mediation
7. Legal knowledge related to art broadcasting (copyright, performer's right, musical score right).

1.2. The arts communication includes mediation and education. Mediation is also an educational activity—while education is usually only applied to children; mediation affects a wider audience. Musical mediator forms a bridge between music and people, introduces the language of music and musical semiotics to the audience, makes people understand music better through a given concert, introduces musical (formal) components, special expressions, gives stylistic knowledge, creates a real connection between music language and the audience. Numerous institutions deal with education, and in most cases, they request the services of a competent professional to act as a mediator.

However, can an informational concert be mediation if it only talks about the history of the creation of a piece of music? What about an introductory talk before the concert, which introduces the composer himself and his relationship to the work, without teaching (for example) real musical elements?

The other question is: to what extent can music culture program deal with this task and ensure that its students can also take the role of mediator?

The stated objectives of the training program and the job descriptions listed above differ somewhat from the duties of a mediation specialist. But it is possible that some of our students will be able to take on the role of mediator.

That is why we consider it extremely important to have outstanding experts give theoretical lectures on mediation in our courses. In this way we introduce this area to our students, and we also present them with opportunities where they can take on a fully-fledged mediator role after completing the courses.

2. Our previous music mediator instructors are the followings.

2.1. Ilona Gáll Gróh received help from Katalin Forrai – a student of Zoltán Kodály – a world-famous music teacher, for the training of nursery teachers and the musical education of preschool children.⁵ She is the founder of ‘Ringató’ (‘Cradle swinging’) sessions, which aims to educate young children between the ages of 0 and 3. The Hungarian Heritage Prize winner method has now crossed the borders of the country and has reached many Hungarian communities abroad. Currently, 141 session leaders hold regular ‘Ringató’ sessions every week in 344 settlements at 386 locations.⁶ The half-hour music sessions teach the parents, they learn the

⁵ *Ringató*. Bemutakozás – Családoknak – Gróh Ilona. (‘Cradle swinging’. Introduction – For families – Ilona Gróh.) <https://www.ringato.hu/bemutakozas-csaladoknak> (date of access: 11.14.2025)

⁶ *Ringató*. <https://www.ringato.hu/> (date of access: 11.14.2025)

musical materials, which they will then be able to practice with their children at home. It uses the Kodály concept and is based on Hungarian folk music supplemented with songs from other nations. The method achieves musical experience through simplicity since the children's attention is focused only on the singing voice and the session leader's instrument. The sessions mostly take place in the morning, usually in community centers and parishes. Many publications help parents, 21 volumes have been published so far, which can be divided into three large series. Numerous volumes of the publication containing musical material drawn from the sessions – called ‘Ringató’ – illustrated with pictures, text and sheet music have been published so far.⁷ The ‘*Ringató-flippers*’ are volumes of books with thick pages.⁸ The series of *Ringató-mesék* (‘*Cradle swinging*’ tales) and *Borsi-mesék* (‘*Borsi*’ tales) written by Emese Viktória Gáll is interwoven with the introduction of musical instruments and Hungarian folk songs, all with a CD attachment.

Mediation cannot be observed here in a concrete form, since the primary aim is not to create a relationship between young children and music, but to educate the parents.

⁷ Examples: *Ringató – Piros könyv: Hetvenhét magyar népdal* (*Ringató – Purple book: Seventy-seven folk songs*), *Ringató – Hatvan magyar népdal* (*Ringató – Sixty Hungarian folk songs*), *Ringató – Sárkányparipán vágtattam* (*Ringató – I galloped on a dragon steed*), *Ringató – Szunnyadj, kisbaba* (*Ringató – Slumber, little baby*). <https://www.ringato.hu/webshop> (date of access: 11.14.2025)

⁸ Examples (the titles are beginnings of Hungarian folk songs): *Én elmentem a vásárba*, *Cifra palota*, *Megfogtam egy szúnyogot*, *A part alatt*, *Hej, Dunáról fúj a szél*, *Kis kece lányom*, *Este van már, nyolc óra*, *Hull a szilva*. <https://www.ringato.hu/webshop> (date of access: 11.14.2025)

At the same time, specific stylistic traits can be passed on to parents through the Hungarian folk music repertoire, which is also realized in practice at home, and lap games and nursery rhymes also cover the role of mediation. In addition to the sessions, the ‘Ringató’ concerts should also be mentioned, which also play a mediation role.

2.2. Emőke Solymosi Tari,⁹ instructor at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, is active as a mediator of two concert series (*Pastorale* and ‘*Felfedezőúton*’ [‘In a Discovery Tour’]) in addition to her research.

The *Pastorale* concert series initiated by Kálmán Záborszky has existed since 1997. From the beginning, the series was about general art: in addition to live music, there was always film, dance, knowledge dissemination, illustration with projected images, and live discussions with artists and invited professionals. In this way, *Pastorale* became a real success series.¹⁰ The Szent István (St. Stephen) Philharmonic are also the performers of the ‘*Felfedezőúton*’ program series, which includes 36 performances

⁹ Emőke Solymosi-Tari is a significant László Lajtha researcher, her main publications in this project are the followings. *Két világ közt - beszélgetések Lajtha Lászlóról* (*Between Two Worlds. Conversations about László Lajtha*). Hagyományok Háza, Budapest, 2010. “...nem akartam Bartókos lenni... – Lajtha László Bartók-képe (“...I didn't want to be a Bartókian... Lajtha László's Bartók picture”). In: Fehér, Anikó – Windhager, Ákos (eds.): *Divertimento concertante – Tanulmányok Bartók Béláról és Járdányi Pálról* (*Studies on Béla Bartók and Pál Járdányi*). Magyar Művészeti Akadémia Művészetelméleti és Módszertani Kutatóintézet, Budapest, 2017, pp. 23-37.

¹⁰ More information: *Szent István Filharmonikusok* (Saint Stephen Philharmonic). *Pastorale*. <https://sztif.hu/berlet/pastorale-eloadassorozat/> (date of access: 11.14.2025)

every year. 5- to 10-year-olds and 10- to 18-year-olds are participating in the general art performances, 18-18 times. “We usually host more than 11,000 students each year, giving them the great opportunity to experience the high arts (various genres of vocal and instrumental music, ballet, folk dance, historical dance, modern dance, film, as well as projected paintings, with statues, famous buildings, etc.), even if their parents cannot give it to them.”¹¹

2.3. Győző Lukácsházi, who defuncted away recently, was one of the most respected representatives of music education in Hungary. In addition to his positions as editor-presenter of Bartók Radio and director of the Szeged Symphony Orchestra, he emphasized the musical education of children. Between 1998 and 2022, he organized the children's concerts with unbroken enthusiasm, for which he always performed the duties of presenter.

The ‘*BonBon Matiné*’ performance series gave 30,000 children the opportunity to learn about classical and contemporary music every year. As an independent institution, his colleagues hold 120-130 lectures per year, even today.¹²

2.4. From September 2022, the Hungarian State Opera has announced an internship program for ELTE BTK Music Culture students, which gives many students an insight into the educational programs of the institution. They have a very large number of programs aimed at arts communication and mediation: in addition to

¹¹ More information: *Szent István Filharmonikusok. Felfedezőúton:* <https://sztif.hu/koncert/felfedezouton/> (date of access: 11.14.2025)

¹² *BonBonMatiné.* <https://www.bonbonmatine.hu/index.php/rolunk.html> (date of access: 11.14.2025)

the introductory musical concerts, children's activities and informative lectures, the other workshops and galleries operating in the building are also presented, so the introduction of all art is given great emphasis in the institution. On one occasion, opera singer Éva Bernáth gave a presentation from the opera's youth programs. Since, in addition to her role as a soloist, she is also present as the hostess of several programs on Opera, one of these events is the '*Erre varrj gombot*' (appr. '*Take that!*') series, which gives an insight into the work of large sewing workshops, the hatter's, the wigmaker's, and the shoemaker's workshop.

2.5. Conductor Dalma Toadere, assistant professor at Babeş-Bólyai University, can be welcomed several times to Budapest through the Erasmus+ Program. She has published numerous studies on the topic of music mediation, so she also gave a lecture on this to our students, and in addition, she presented her own concerts as a practical professional—including the preparation of a special children's concert, which she will be performing with them in the near future.

In her theoretical courses, Dalma Toadere presented the problems and development of the audience, the concept and forms of mediation, as well as the possibility of new concert forms.

3. Considering all this, it is still not clear to what extent our students will be able to take on the role of mediators in the future. Several people apply to us with a degree in music pedagogy, but there are also those who are students of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music but also want to acquire the knowledge taught by us.

It is clear that those who come as music teachers will be able to take on the role of mediators with the knowledge we provide. But we can also provide opportunities for those who have not completed (or about to complete) a teaching minor. Since our students do not receive pedagogical, sociological, or psychological knowledge, the following solutions are open to them they can complete at our University:

3.1. For those who are seriously interested in the mediation profession, we can offer to spend their free credits on pedagogical subjects coordinated by the ELTE Teacher Training Centre, so they can acquire complex knowledge and be successful as mediators. Furthermore, the students can attend other interesting lectures at all the faculties of the University, for free credit points. (The offer of our “mother faculty”, the Faculty of Humanities is very rich, so they can attend courses on subject of media and communication, theatre and film, aesthetics, foreign languages from Classical and Neo-Latin to Scandinavian or even East Asian languages.)

Among the professional practice places, we are in contact with several institutions where our students can gain insight into the music mediation profession. An example is Filharmonia Hungary, where they can participate in organizing summer concert series; but we are in close contact, among others, with the Hungarian Opera House, the House of Hungarian Music, the Association of the Hungarian Choirs, Orchestras and Folk Music Ensembles (‘KÓTA’), and the Budapest Puppet Theatre. We also make contacts with the Hungarian State Publisher called Editio Musica Budapest (former ‘Zeneműkiadó’), where the students could

become acquainted with a special branch of music mediation, across the world of sheet music.

3.2. Our colleague Anikó Fekete deals with creative musical practices, she teaches this in her courses. It can be an additional element of mediation, since the purpose of these exercises is not only to develop skills, but also to learn about musical expressions, which makes the audience an active participant, and can also be used together with concert pedagogy. One of our former students works in a community center in a small village and her feedback was very positive about how she can apply these practices at the local level. Anikó Fekete summarized her experiences in her latest book *Kombinált kreatív zenei gyakorlatok (Combined exercises of Creative Music)*.¹³

Another colleague Ágnes Horváth is also a researcher of music mediation, through creative improvisation, especially in the field of music theory and solfège.

In her study “Tanulás – improvizáció – alkotás: Kreatív zenei műhely és innovatív szemléletű zeneelmélet-oktatás az ELTE-n” (“Learning – improvisation – artwork: Teaching with a creative approach at the ELTE University”) she investigates new education strategies employing her own system, based on the creativity of the students, managed by the instructor (even in composing own musical pieces or exercises).¹⁴

¹³ Fekete, Anikó. *Kombinált kreatív zenei gyakorlatok (Combined exercises of Creative Music)*. Aktivitás Alapítvány, Budapest, 2021.

¹⁴ Horváth, Ágnes. “Tanulás – improvizáció – alkotás: Kreatív zenei műhely és innovatív szemléletű zeneelmélet-oktatás az ELTE-n.” (“Learning – improvisation – artwork: Teaching with a creative approach at the ELTE

Finally, it is difficult to draw the line, what can be part of the concept of mediation, among the various methods, educational programs, children's concerts, but maybe it's not even necessary. But if we transmit musical high culture, pass it on, live it together with the audience – be it in a large concert hall or in a small group's children's activity – then we have reached our aim.

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