

# The orff approach to teaching music



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The Orff approach shares some basic characteristics with its fellow alternative music pedagogies, Dalcroze and Kodaly. All three share a belief that in each person's innate musicality, emphasise active music making, begin with the ear rather than the eyes, incorporate some form of movement, and see music as essential to the total education of the child.[1]

The method of the Hungarian composer and musicologist Zoltan Kodaly (1882-1967) believes that music is a communication code, like language. Kodaly suggests that musicality and knowledge are obtained through the use of voice, which is the first natural instrument of the child.[2]The teaching techniques that are used in Kodaly's method for the development of music comprehension are the relevant system solfa, and rhythmic syllables. Zoltan Kodaly uses elements from Dalcrozes rhythmic, (clapping and moving in the place), but he also uses some elements from Orff's music-movement action, (like some instruments and rhythmic and metric forms).[3]The teaching material that Kodaly's method suggests is based on the traditional music of his country and he suggested that this helps to cultivate the musicality of children. According to Emperiadou Hungarian traditional songs and especially choral songs, traditional songs and traditional rhythms should hold over an important place, as a material in music education of early years. [4]Kodaly proposed that the cognition and the sensation of the rhythm are developed through the participation in rhythmical games, meaning that movement is encountered as an element that is developed equivalent with music and helps in the effective learning of musical concepts. Singing is the fundamental key for music actually to become a part of the child

## **2. 2. 4 Edgar Willems**

Edgar Willems was a music teacher in Geneva Conservatory. He was familiar with Dalcrozes work and he used to teach Dalcrozes opinion to his students. He supported that music education starts from cradle and that child is sensible in every music stimulus in family and that also child should practice in singing and rhythm before learning an instrument. Thus he marked the need for a music education in preschool age. He supported that young children should have the opportunity to intimate with music as earlier as possible and he appointed the age of 3 as the most appropriate. Willems believed that the aim of creating a kindergarten is to prepare a preschooler for the primary school.[5]Therefore, before teaching, which is applied to perception, an education with main parts these of movement, senses and emotions have a lead over. The same should happen in music. Rhythmic instinct, listening and sensitivity should be cultivated in children before they are taught an instrument.[6]

## **2. 2. 5 Suzuki Method**

Shinichi Suzuki was born in Japan in 1898. He considers that musical learning starts from ‘ zero age’, from the birth of the child and believes that from the first months of his life the hearing acquaintance is crucial for his future music development. Through his teaching experience he discovered that children learn much more from what we teach them. Moreover they learn more easily what adults finds difficult. Suzuki suggested a music learning method proportional with physical and natural learning of the mother tongue in the family environment and he encourages children to play instruments “ by the ear” and learn through observation, imitation and repetition.[7]Children

become experts on their maternal language despite how much difficult might be. If they succeed so well on learning their language, then they should be capable to obtain more knowledge and abilities, with the same way as maternal language that is observation, imitation, repetition and gradual intellectual consciousness. Suzuki's theory was based on the fact that each child has enormous learning abilities and the exploitation of these abilities depends on the environment. His educational approach aims to the creation of completed persons, who achieve to captivate happiness, knowledge and respect, through a harmonic and encouraging environment.

To summarize, while Carl Orff's pedagogy places the most emphasis upon creative musical expression Dalcroze believes that creative musical expression is important, but it is not central to his pedagogy which was paying attention on the importance for the child to increase its physical awareness and experience of music through training that takes place through all of the senses, particularly kinesthetic. Kodaly places the least importance upon this skill because students follow only the best models, not their own. Even though they have different approaches, they all want all their students to become superior musicians.[8] However, though their methods vary, their philosophies also have remarkably similarities. All of them underline that children should have music experiences at a very early age and through singing, movement and listening children would be able can internalize musicianship skills and developed their personality.[9]

## **2.3 The Main Media Through Which Music Education Functions**

Music education in the kindergarten can be effective only if general education principles are taken into account, and if the musical activities accord with the overall pedagogical and didactic framework devised for children of kindergarten age.[10]

Musical activities excites the interest of early age children who through singing, listening, dancing, rhythm, movement and various musical instruments they develop the necessary musical skills in order to create and perform their own rhythmic patterns and familiarised with the world of music. According to Schiller & Veale:

Music and movement are essential components of programs for young children, both for their own intrinsic value and for the positive affect that they bring to curricula, interactions and environments of early childhood settings". Music and movement offer children unique modes of expression, response and learning and provide opportunities for individual response, multiple interpretations and a rich history and repertoire spanning the centuries. Some educators even describe music and movement, along with other arts, as the 'real business of education.[11]

The variety of musical activities shapes a great field for experimentation. Music education parameters as composition, hearing and performance could be combined and with all the other musical activities. Apart from listening, music performance includes singing, music and movement, music reading and writing, playing musical instruments and composition includes creative

activities. This discussion now aims to analyze the basic musical activities related with early year children's music education from the age of two until the age of five.

Listening to music

Singing

Music and movement

Use of musical instruments

Creative activities

### **2. 3. 1 Listening to Music**

This activity holds over a special place in music education and also represents an integral part of all the musical activities. Listening appears to be the primary modality through which music is learned and enjoyed.

Students acquisition of attentive and perceptive music listening skills is of great importance to music education, and has been identified by the music educators National Conference as one of the 11 desired outcomes of the school music program[12]

According to Swanwick listening is a reason that music exists but also the last and stable aim of music education.[13]In addition he notes that listening to music may be active or passive. Passive listening is when children listen to a music piece but they do not concentrate on what they listen, while they work on something else and applies in young children until about the age of four. Active listening is when they are able to listen to a piece and imagine,

observe the melodic line, rhythmic elements, and dynamics and is possible for nursery age children (at the age of two) and older (at the age of five. [14]Such active listening could be achieved by the use of body movements, clapping and playing instruments etc. In contrast with composition in which a musical score creation can be seen, in many occasions listening to music is a passive situation because as Sloboda mentions that maybe it can be observed a high degree of intellectual activity during listening, but physical activity is not essential to be obvious.[15]In an interesting statement that focuses on energetic listening, Paynter argues that passive listening is an obvious social phenomenon, but from artistic point of view, its importance is not music.[16]Listening to music aims at helping children to acquire auditive sensitiveness, so that he/she can discriminate several sounds, natural or unnatural and can cultivate the auditory ability so that he/she can listen to and appreciate good music.

### **2. 3. 2 Speech**

Rhythmical speech, with rhythm and melody, embodies the basic structure of music-movement method. The inherent rhythm of children's mother tongue is used as a starting point for further investigation on rhythm, music and movement. Speech is used for studying notes, followed by words, sentences, poems, proverbs, gnome and then jawbreaker. Apart from the correct use of speech, the use of verbal exercises holds out boundless potentials for musical and rhythmical experimentations. The direct relationship of speech with singing is another important factor that prescribes speech in the set of educational-musical actions.

### **2. 3. 3 Singing**

Kodaly said that music education should begin with the instrument we all have, the voice. Singing is a combination of music and speech and it possesses special place in kindergarten, thus it should cover a big part of the programme. Singing and movement are the most significant ways, through which child expresses musically. Singing creates in kindergarten an expression climate and creative activities. It creates an atmosphere through which aspirates and finds child rhythms. The preschooler has the need to sing, just as the need to talk and move. Singing is fun and pleasure for the children because it creates them an entertaining and pleasant mood and it develops them the desire to express, sing with their voice, either by theirselves or with a group. In early years singing should be pleasant, with a simple melodic line, clear rhythmical shapes, simple verse and content proportional with children's experience. Most children sing without realising the difference of tonality and how melody moves. They imitate and participate according to speech and rhythm. Singing constitutes the most expressive ability, relieves emotions and calms the child. The combination of singing with the use of musical instruments helps towards obtaining independence between voice and hands. By singing, children develop their musical awareness, they cultivate their rhythmical perception and they enhance their oral skills.

### **2. 3. 4 Music and Movement**

Music could be more understandable, to children when they actively participate in music through actions and movements. Indeed, music pedagogical systems were created because of the need for a pedagogical



method, of a more scientific and complete approach for teaching music, which will combine music with movement, for an easier comprehension of musical concepts by children in their early years. According to Nye & Nye the comprehension and understanding of music, is the result of a combination of cognitive, psychomotor and emotional processes and it is not possible for one of them to operate without the other.[17] This is evident when considering the importance of movement an issue that in music has been established empirically by many researchers such as Moore[18] and Siemens work.[19]

The pedagogical base of the music-movement system is influenced by the theory of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1764-1827), which rejects memorization and repetition and substitutes them with observation, experimentation and cognition.[20] According to this theory, great importance is given to children's mood for initiative, the development of creativity, imagination, self-activity and participation in group activities. This method emphasizes not only cognitional learning fermentation, but also the physical and is based on children's kinetic activities.[21]

Movement is an important element in music. Without it we would have only music that is learning the names of the notes and how they are written on the stave, to play a recorder as we are taught in conservatory. But in the kindergarten movement is an integral part of everyday. Children move all the time, they have incredible energy, and if we don't help them to drain their energy in constructive works, then they are likely to drain it out into hostile actions. Movements like running, walking, jumping, stretching, pushing and swinging are used in music-movement method accompanied

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with musical instruments leading children to learn rhythmical values, form, dynamics and measures through practice. Through movement children realize the difference between high and low notes, fast and slow, discriminate the difference between long and short sound. They also become aware of their body and its abilities and they express their feelings. Through team movement activities they communicate, cooperate, guide and follow others.

From an early age children are taken into a set of movement exercises using their whole body or parts of it. These movements, which usually have roaring results (clapping, exclamation, foot beating) look like game. However, they could constitute a significant factor for the beginning of a rhythmic-music education. Movement plays a key role in the musical and aesthetic development of the child. The techniques that are used aim to encourage the creative development of children's movement and are based on imitation, exploration and improvisation.

### **2. 3. 5 Musical Instruments**

The instruments that usually are used in the early years are metallophones, xylophones, triangles, bells, maracas etc. and they are used for the theatrecalization dramatization of the songs, whether accompanying the rhythm or to represent pictures with sound. With the use of instruments children explore the sound, the rhythm and they help in practicing the auditory observation, concentration, in acquainting themselves with the rhythm and in acquiring movement coordination. The pieces are easy to play on a simple tonal and they are accompanied with a G-C. With the use of a pentatonic climax children can freely improvise and they are encouraged to

play by imitation or from memory. Construction of musical instruments offers much to the child and most of all the enjoyment of creativity. By constructing musical instruments they mobilize all their competence and they learn to cooperate. They should learn the names of some instruments, what they sound like. If possible some instruments should be brought into the class so the children will be able to see them.

## **2. 4 Conclusions**

All children have abilities and capabilities, regardless of their maturation level. Their imagination is developed through the opportunities they are given and the encouragement for creativity. Creativity helps in discovering new potentials, relationships and experiences and develops the imagination. Music could act as a determinative factor in the formulation of their emotional world. Through music children can express positive or negative feelings, the results of which maybe a more balanced personality. The introduction of music education in kindergarten makes children more sensitive towards music, helps them comprehend and become familiar with some musical elements (rhythm, dynamics, timbre) and develops their hearing.[22]Especially with music-movement games the child has the opportunity to express itself freely, relax and defuse, cooperate with other children and gradually develop self-control movement coordination.[23]But above all, the aim is the pleasure they get from music, the sensitivity that develops inside them through music and the discipline they obtain from their participation in musical activities whose results are to help them grow up and be happy, more mature and ready to be part of society.[24]

## **CHAPTER 3: A COMPARISON BETWEEN MUSIC EDUCATION IN CYPRUS AND FINLAND**

### **3. 0 Introduction**

Education is an important investment for a country as it develops young people by aiming to establish well-shaped personalities and responsible citizens. It also provides a basic social element in all the levels of the educational system. Someone doesn't become free or happy because he is educated. Through education we realize that we are happy. It stresses that there is only one freedom that matters, that of the mind. Further down, I am going to focus and compare two different curriculums. One is music curriculum in Cyprus and the other the music education in Finland. There are two reasons why I have chosen to compare these two models. The first one is because Cyprus is my country and as a future teacher there, I would like to see one of the best music curriculum models particularly for young children. The second one is that Cyprus is going through an educational reform based on the Finnish Music Curriculum. The students of Finnish schools may not differ from other students in the world, but their educational performance stands out. It is widely accepted and based on international research that while the educational system of Finland is highly successful the cost is lower than in other European countries.[25]

### **3. 1 Cyprus Education System. Music Curriculum and Music Opportunities**

Public education in Cyprus is provided through pre-primary, primary, secondary or technical schools, special schools, the University of Cyprus and other colleges.[26]There are also private schools owned by private

individuals but are registered with the Ministry of Education and culture. This chapter will start with a small general review of the educational system in Cyprus, from age six to eighteen. At the age of six the child has the opportunity to attend a public school or a private school. As far as public school concerns, from the age of six until the age of twelve, the child is obligated to attend a primary school (Protovathmia ekpaidefsi). At the age of thirteen the child is required to attend lower secondary education (gymnasio) which last three years and is also obligatory. Upper secondary education (Lykeio) starts from the age of sixteen until eighteen but is not obligatory.

As far as music concern, in both primary school and the gymnasium, music lasts forty five minutes twice a week and music lesson is compulsory. In contrast, in Lyceum children are free to choose any lessons they like. For those who choose music, music lesson also lasts two periods, forty five minutes each. In private schools the ages are divided the same as above, with the different names. The names are primary and elementary. In primary schools usually the teachers are non-specialists, but in the universities where they are trained they have a one hour music lesson once a week. On the other hand, in gymnasiums teachers are specialists and should be music graduates from a university recognized by KY. S. A. T. S. KY. S. A. T. S is the Cyprus Council for the recognition of qualifications.[27]

Now that a general plan has been presented above about Cyprus educational system and musical education system, further down will be presented the preschool music curriculum. In Cyprus, nursery schools are optional for children between the ages of two and five years. The music lesson in Cyprus

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a kindergarten (Nipiagogia) is taught two times a week, sometimes three-it depends from the teacher-and lasts twenty five minutes each. The children are obliged to attend pre-primary school for one year from the age of five until the age of six and the music lesson also lasts twenty five minutes, twice a week. The music teachers in government nursery and pre- primary schools are not specialists and they don't possess any special music qualifications. Sometimes private nurseries and private pre-primary schools employ a music specialist teacher, paying extra.

In both public and private nurseries and pre primary schools there are no music classrooms and music lesson runs into the classroom where children are taught all lesson. Though there is a “ music corner” in the classroom where could be found musical material like musical instruments and books with songs. Regardless of musical material existence, still the variety and quantity of them is not too much. The music analytical programme concerns only pre primary children and its aims, objectives, outcomes and content is the same with six year old children who attend for the first time the primary school. The whole program is based on modern musical systems places and is divided into the following: 1) singing 2) listening 3) music and movement 4) use of instruments 5) reading and writing music and 6) creative works

The aim of the detailed programme for music in Cyprus, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture (1996 page?) is[28]:

... to assist students progressive entry into the world of sound, develop their musical sensitivity through the understanding and use of sound patterns which are an essential element to the development of their inner emotional

and innate musical abilities. In this way they become able to enjoy and create music, as well as contribute both to their own musical development and to that of society.

There are several objectives and outcomes in the detailed music programme for pre primary children. Pre primary children are expected to:

Sing correctly and with pleasure

Develop their acoustic ability

Learn music symbols and use them for reproducing and creating music

Express their inner world, by producing or creating music according to their abilities, using several ways (voice, improvise instruments,

traditional instruments, movement, etc) for their satisfaction and communication with other

Intimidate and understand the basic elements and concepts of theory, morphology and history of music

Appreciate, enjoy and accept good music and aim at listening to it

Appreciate other countries music heredity

Cultivate their ability to set and choose folk compositions

Develop their individual music abilities

Use music for developing team spirit, cooperation, responsibility, discipline and communication

Acquaint, use and be familiar with contemporary technology according to music

Become acquainted with, love and respect their national music tradition.

Children in Cyprus also have some extra – curricular music opportunities. At the age of six, they have the opportunity to learn an instrument, particularly those that are less popular such as the saxophone, trumpet, and cello, paid by the Ministry in order to cultivate and develop the teaching of the less known instruments. At the age of nine they can participate in a State Youth Symphonic Orchestra or in the Chamber Orchestra. Pre primary children can have private instrument lessons at home or there is an alternative choice of going to a conservatory for instrument lessons. In conservatories is essential to attend in groups or individual lessons in theory, harmony, solfege and history of music. The cost for a child to attend all these lessons plus the instrument lesson is high. There are several recitals and concerts that take place in Cyprus, performed twice or three times a month in a theatre hall, where young children can attend. Special facilities for Cypriot students are the different competitions either instrumental or singing competitions.

### **3. 2 Finland’s Education System. Music Curriculum And Music Opportunities**

In this chapter the Finnish educational system will be introduced, starting with a general presentation of Finnish curriculum. From the ages of seven to twelve children are required to attend primary comprehensive school and between the ages of thirteen to sixteen the lower secondary comprehensive school, which both of them are compulsory. Generally speaking,



comprehensive schools are those for children of all ability levels. In Finland this term is used with this meaning but also in the sense that every child has to complete nine years of education between ages seven and fifteen.

In point of music, in both lower and upper comprehensive schools music lasts one hour and occurs once a week. In lower comprehensive schools usually the class teacher teaches music without any music qualifications, but they have some music training in the university. In the upper comprehensive they are specialists and have a degree in music.

Moving to music in preschool, in Finland there are kindergartens (day care centres) for children from birth to the age of six which is optional and at the age of six they can attend pre primary schools. The music in Finnish pre primary preschools lasts 45 minutes almost every day. Moving on to the music teachers and their qualifications, in pre-primary school they are not specialists but some basic knowledge is needed. Though, a masters degree is a requirement with a major in pedagogy.[29]

In Finnish music schools there is a separate classroom where music lesson takes place, with a variety of instruments, computers, music books with songs, puzzles and music equipment.

The aim of music curriculum in Finland is the child to develop his musical expression through playful and integrating activities. Is the teachers responsibility to offer to the children experiences with a variety of sound worlds and music. Moreover the teacher should encourage children to express their selves.

The objectives of Finland's detailed music programme are that pupils, both in a group and alone, will learn to use their voices and express by singing, moving and using musical instruments. They will also learn to use different elements of music to compose and they will act as members of a performing group and as music listeners. Moreover they will learn to listen and observe sounds from the environment.

Music lessons will include repertoire of songs and singing exercises, song games appropriate to their age and exercises using the voice by singing, speaking, talking. Moreover the lesson should consist from instrumental repertoire and exercises that prepare the pupils for playing together, using rhythm, tuned and untuned instruments and their bodies as instruments. Listening to a variety of music is also a core activity in Finnish music lessons. Furthermore, children should be familiar with basic concepts related to elements of music like rhythm, melody, dynamics.

Until the end of the year children will know how to sing in unison with others, be acquainted with a variety of songs, recognize the music they hear and express their listening feelings by moving, drawing or speaking. In addition they will learn to act as group members and taking into account other children's opinion. They will also learn to appreciate the heritage of other cultures and understand the diversity of the musical world.[30]

There are also extracurricular opportunities in Finland where children who are keen on music can attend. For younger children there are music playschools for children who are under seven to learn music. Children under three attend the class with a parent. The duration of the class ranges from

30-90 minutes, depending on the age of the child and on the school policy.

The class structure does not include instrumental studies but involves listening to music, playing instruments, singing, playing games and movement. The aim of the lesson is to support the children's cognitive, emotional, motor and social development. Attending music playschools does not guarantee automatic entry to Music Schools.

Private music schools also exist to provide music education for children from age 7 to 18 but they often also have a music kindergarten for ages two until five. The basic curriculum consists of instructions of an instrument, theory, history and solfege. The duration of the class is 30-60 minutes and most popular instruments that are taught are piano, guitar, violin and flute. The students that play in the orchestra are required to play in school bands. In order to attend these schools children are chosen