

MÓNIKA DEÁKNÉ KECSKÉS<sup>1</sup>**Ádám's Oeuvre in the Light of Our Days' Pedagogical Practice**

*Jenő Ádám's oeuvre in the light of our days' pedagogical practice is still potent. Kodály Zoltán's principles on music education could have not been realised without the work of Jenő Ádám (1869 - 1982). He published his Iskolai Énekgyűjtemény (Song-collection for Public Schools), which were edited according to the eight school grades of Hungarian schooling system. These volumes contained several novelties for contemporary school-music teachers: the principles of Kodály built up in a complete concept, a very rich song-material, as well as the tool of relative sol-fa. In a more favorable historical and social context, these textbook series could have been much greater impact on Hungarian music-pedagogy. What and how can we transfer Kodály Zoltán's concept (mediated by Ádám Jenő) to the current pedagogical practice? Is it worth to update Ádám's school song collection according to the favour, and pedagogical streams of our days? Should the collection rather remain an educational, and historical relic? In my presentation, I try to find possible answers for all these questions.*

Epigraph:

*"... let's whittle, shape, grind it the greatest schoolmaster: the practice itself."*

(Ádám, 1944)

As Kodály's ideas and philosophy of music education developed, Hungarian teachers began to use techniques now associated with his educational concept, including relative solmization, hand signs, rhythmic syllables, and a form of musical shorthand known as stick notation. Although some of these techniques were adopted and adapted from other successful methods, it is their use in combination with a carefully ordered presentation of folksong and art music examples that makes the 'Kodály concept of music education' (also known as the 'Kodály method' or 'Hungarian Method of Music Education') uniquely valuable in the teaching of music at all levels. Usually associated solely with elementary levels of music instruction, his approach has been adapted for the training of professional musicians. Kodály edited, together with György Kerényi, the Iskolai énekgyűjtemény ('Collected Songs for Schools'), a collection of 630 Hungarian and European folksongs and canons arranged in pedagogical sequence; a selection of materials from this volume was published in 1945 and edited with

<sup>1</sup> dr., habil.; Senior lecturer, Széchenyi István University, Varga Tibor Institute of Musical Art and Faculty of Apáczai Csere János Teacher Training College; [monimail11@gmail.com](mailto:monimail11@gmail.com)

Jenő Ádám, and together they also edited *Énekeskönyv az általános iskolák számára* ('Songbook for Primary Schools') (1947–48), comprehensive series written to develop musical literacy."<sup>2</sup>

Due to time limits, my intention is to focus on the last publication edited in 1948: representing the Kodály concept as a whole. This is the issue which was intended to make reportable Kodály's concept by putting it into practice, written by a well-trained, practical school-music teacher: Jenő Ádám. This volume is one of the most important, basic and practical resources of Kodály-concept. In its birth-decade seemed to be reasonable to try Ádám's curriculum in its entirety. Later on the historical, and social background was not adherent to Kodály's proceedings. His aims and the content of textbooks adapted a corrupted form from Ádám's original.

Let us see a bit closer, what we inherited from the method reflected in Kodály-Ádám's *Iskolai Énekgyűjtemény*. The matter in hand served as a model for further school-music textbooks. This is the reason why we've already met several of its methods unconsciously. We met them partially in school-music methodology textbooks, handbooks, as well as in several textbooks especially intended for the first four school grades.

We find in the chapter discussing the first school year the rhythm guessing game, rhythmic dialogue, as well as replacement of croche – croche- eights-eights- croche rhythm by words: big-big-small-small-big, and further games are also well known in our educational practice. From methodological point of view, we inherited the algorithms methods' of teaching a new song.

We meet at the 3rd school-grade the method and grades of teaching staff-notation:

- sol-fa letters placed in space, according to their height
- sol-fa letters with rhythm above
- sol-fa letters placed on the staves, with rhythm above. The letter of the initial note is always placed in a space between staves.
- the same, but the letter of the initial note is placed on the staves

We get example for demonstration of descending pentachord sol-fa-mi-re-do by children. Those, who represent half-note stand closer to each other. The game is to find a melody after hand sol-fa hand-signs– today is known as melody-identification after sol-fa hand-signs –, was also invented by Ádám.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/public/page/Kodaly\\_Zoltan](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/public/page/Kodaly_Zoltan). Downloaded (20.04.2017.)

After studying how to read and write on five-lines staves, in the fourth year Ádám introduces studying of an unknown melody by staves' notation. The methodology is nearly the same as nowadays.

- following the line by eyes: identification of identical bars, longer passages, the line of the melody, intervals or jumps in the melody
- singing with sol-fa (singing with alphabet is not necessary at this grade)
- observation of the rhythm: sameness and discrepancies, longer and shorter values
- knocking the rhythm (not always necessary)
- singing with sol-fa and rhythm
- reading of the text
- reading of the text with its rhythm
- singing of the whole melody with text

As we can see, we adopted the basics from Ádám's textbook. At the same time, a good deal of children games, tutorial games, were left out, as well as a good deal of songs represented in his chapters and appendices. (Szabó, 1994)

As we experienced before: the formal, systematic descriptions were adopted to always all methodology books especially in the case of training primary school teachers. The material for the further school grades in its content shows much more deflation from Ádám's textbooks, and also diversity from each other as well. Due to decreasing number of music lessons at primary schools several of resourceful rhythmic exercises of Ádám were not accepted to our everyday practice. Especially in the case of the higher classes writers of upper school grades were compelled to neglect the rich folksong material, as well as further examples from the music-history, and song-material of other nations originally represented in the Appendix of the issue.

According to the preface to the discussed issue Ádám revealed, that his intention was to create a sort of guide for teachers which will be formed by day by day practice. Kodály also calculated with a longer trial period for his concept as it is stated in his 100-years plan. Historical and political changes crossed their conception. There was no chance to try it in its entirety. The first reason, why the material of the discussed issue didn't put in expansive practice was the breakthrough of socialist tuition-politics, and – after the political changes – the frequent change of our national curriculum. The National Curriculums and directives in 1950, '57, and '61 reflected communist ideological directives. Short after its coming out the

textbooks of *Ádám* were smashed. Merely Kodály saved some copies of them. National curriculums of the year 1978 we met extra-curricular, additional curriculums in all subjects. This was followed by another act (25. 579/1987), according to which numbers of singing lessons were decreased to one or two lessons per week. This edict closed the door before the experimentation of *Ádám*'s method as a whole. There was no chance to include all chapters to regular singing lessons in regular public schools. The first act after the political changes – 130/1995 – the national curriculum has been the determining document for education at state institutions. “It serves as the basis for putting together the local schools' programmes and stipulates that music education at school must play an important role in developing a child's sensibility, intellect and character. The primary aim of music education is promoting the love of music and the opportunities provided for experiencing music are geared to this target. By understanding, appreciating and reproducing of music, children learn how to communicate with and through the music. Through works from the music literature they can share in the traditions of Hungarian and worldwide culture. Recognition of these values helps them to develop musical taste.”<sup>3</sup> Thanks to the act mentioned above, the re-edition of Kodály-*Ádám*'s original textbooks were published.

Generations of school-music teachers did not even know about the series of original textbooks edited in 1948. Thanks to the efforts of a magnificent pedagogue-scholar Helga Szabó, the original version was reprinted in 1999. This is a textbook, which served as a model for nearly all music textbooks in Hungary. This issue is not only a relic, but an official edition for the everyday teaching practice as well. Helga Szabó edited a handbook for teachers for the first four school grades. She tried to teach according to this, in Saint Benedict Primary and Secondary School in Buda. Helga Szabó tried to adapt *Ádám*'s issue to her existing number of lessons by dividing the material into study-units. She reported about her undertaking in 1995-1996, as it was promising. She also wrote teachers' handbook, and a detailed guide for these series.

In the 1980s several alternative programmes were licenced by the authorities. That was the turn in 1995, when the alternative pedagogical programme (called after József Zsolnay) reached its peak used in 104 schools. Zsolnay's programmes for the subject reflect a high degree acceptance of Kodály-*Ádám*'s books. Even this curriculum concludes the issue discussed above. However tuition at regular public schools were also influenced from

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nefmi.gov.hu/english/hungarian-national-core>. Accessed: 15.04.2017.

alternative programmes, there was no possibility to teach from *Ádám's* textbooks as a main source of teaching.

The entire content of *Ádám's* programme was still too much to put into practice even after the regulations in 2003, 2007 and finally in 2011. The national curriculum issued in 2011 mentioned Kodály's method as general basis of the school music teaching in Hungary. At the same time, schools under ecclesiastical maintenance, or working with alternative programmes could admit the *Ádám-programme*.

Should or could we accept Kodály-*Ádám's* issue as a whole? In our days the political and educational background is more advantageous for the Kodály-method, and its development. The basic problem is – not only on the field of our subject – but the increasing centralisation of subject matters of education. No field, no room, no time for the method in the frames of regular singing lessons, except perhaps in the case of special curriculums to musical education. Our situation is totally different from Kodály's aims. Kodály planned for 100 years, but the background changed too quickly and far more frequently. A regular school music teacher of our times has to compete the constant flow-experience given by computer-games, the virtual space. The increasing multi-cultural background does not favour to teaching of music according only to the Hungarian traditions. On the other hand, the implementation of Kodály-*Ádám* textbook-series as a whole, similarly to any educational programmes, needs at least eight-nine years to set in educational policy. We can assert, that the most serious obstacle to introduce *Ádám's* ideas into the practice is lack of time and space.

What can we do in order to change regular music lessons by making music, playing, moving and singing? Up to choral activity we should use free times during the day, and in the compulsory daycare. Besides actual investigations we need proper tuition and willingness of music teachers, and primary school teachers. Without proper knowledge of musical singing and writing, or didactical knowledge we aren't able to use properly *Ádám's* issue. Beside this we should investigate and develop an everyday-singing-programme, with special focus on the daycare activities in the afternoon. Its methodology is totally missing from the practice of actual school-music education. Further possibility is to adapt this valuable material especially in the first four grades in association with other subjects. We find several possibilities to all subjects in the first four school years, and further possibilities in upper school grades, and secondary school level especially on the field of Hungarian literature, cross-relation with Arts, or History. It has no clarified methodology at all. Our conclusion is that *Ádám's* textbooks

could use as a useful material in the practice, except for compulsory singing.

To apply the material of Ádám's textbooks as a whole is a hopeless undertaking nowadays because of the quantity of subjects and study materials. In spite of several streams towards gamification no time left for more music lessons. What we can do is to evaluate and save its values. Several workgroups are active to investigate the possible new ways of school-music teaching. From this point of view the new National curriculum in 2018 can come up to our expectations.

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