Kodaly Report

SPECIAL KODALY PROGRAM DEVELOPING IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY, ONTARIO

It has long been a concern of educators how to implement programs in the arts and philosophies in order to give our children a healthy spiritual and emotional growth that will parallel equally with their intellectual and physical development. Music plays a large part in this "wholesome" education and in Middlesex County under the direction of John Barron, Music Consultant, and the music staff, a special Kodaly program is being implemented in several schools.

Why Kodaly? Because the Kodaly approach is the one method that recognizes the voice as the main musical instrument; it is based on sound logic; all is child developmental in sequence instead of the traditional subject logic; all skill development comes from the child's repertoire; of particular interest to members of the Canadian Folk Music Society, it establishes its roots in the native folk song.

The early repertoire consists of children's songs and games and Canadian folk songs of the region, followed by Canadian folk songs from across the country. It is through the Canadian folk song that the children gain a deeper understanding and respect for their ancestors and their struggle to survive in the harsh wilderness of early Canada. It is from the Canadian folk song that the children develop skills and gain knowledge of music as an intellecual, emotional and physical process.

The teachers of Kodaly-oriented programs must be well-trained pedagogues and highly-skilled musicians. In the Middlesex County experiment, trained music specialists teach all of the music in the assigned school, rather than the traditional weekly visit. All primary classes have four music lessons each week, while the junior classes have three periods and the senior classes two each week.

It has been noted that the special learners are motivated to concentrate longer and consequently accomplish more. The very alert student is continually enriched. Children who have speech problems often are able to sing well, when they are unable to speak properly, and shy children suddenly find themselves singing alone in a singing game. These students with difficulties feel much pride in their musical successes and begin to feel better about themselves as people. As well as learning musical skills the program promotes an environment of social harmony and goodwill. Each class is a "team" and each individual is special.

It is hoped that this program will grow and spread to other counties throughout the region, for it is truly a significant improvement in music education.

A SPECIAL GRANT FOR FOLK SONG ARRANGEMENTS

A special grant has been obtained from the McLean Foundation to commission forty two-part arrangements of Canadian folk songs for the Middlesex Board of Education. Professor Gerhard Wieunch and Professor Ken Bray from the Faculty of Music at the University of Western Ontario and Nancy Telfer, a graduate of the UWO Music Faculty and former student of Ilona Bartalus, will be arranging these folk songs. They will be selected for their appeal and skill development in the junior grades. Future plans are to build up this area and will include three- and four-part arrangements for the intermediate grades. This song material will be the Canadian parallel to the Hungarian Bicinia. These arrangements will be a great asset to the music educators in our school systems. This project is under the directorship of John Barron, Music Consultant, Middlesex County Board of Education.

- Alice Lingard

Bulletin