Characteristics of Klara Kokas’s Pedagogical Methods and Kokas-course at Liszt Academy in Budapest

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Proposal information

The Hungarian music pedagogue and music psychologist Klara Kokas (who was born in 1929 and died in 2010) centered her pedagogical concept on children’s creativity, human relations, acceptance and complete attention to others. This world view and ideology was constructed around a child-centered sensitivity, music being her primary pedagogical resource.

The goal of this paper is to explore the main elements and characteristics of Klara Kokas’s pedagogy, which were revolutionary new on the fields of personality development, music and complex art education compared to the practices of the reform pedagogy trends in the 20th century’s Europe and United States (Pukanszky-Nemeth, 1996), and to the changing attitude in pedagogy via self-development offered by scouting life since 1907 (Nyul, 2018. 252). These elements were representing a special way of education, and they are contributing to ability development through music, motion and manual arts. We call it the Kokas-method. After this there will be presented a newly developed discipline based on the music pedagogy of Klara Kokas and researches on it. This educational innovation is part of the higher education program of Liszt Academy in Budapest since 2014 (Deszpot, 2015).

The main content elements of the lecture are: presentation of specific characteristics of music education methods of Klara Kokas, presentation of music teacher training based on self-experience and music, according to the Kokas-method. There will be outlined the importance of teacher education based on improvisation and effectiveness.

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As a response to the recent Hungarian national curriculum according to the newest educational goals, the Liszt Academy of Budapest started a new optional discipline in its music teacher educational concept: the introduction of the Kokas-method. This presentation relies on this recent research of Vass-Deszpot (2017), whose research is a qualitative one, using interviews and their analytical and morphological investigations. The intention of the course works on the inclusion of alternative pedagogy in traditional teaching forms, where the accent is on the child.

Methods

We first analyze and summarize the pedagogical methods of Klara Kokas, her own musical activities, than we will methodize its principles, concepts and art pedagogical elements. There will be outlined the contours of the Kokas method. This part of the lecture uses qualitative research methods as text analysis, from a phenomenological point of view.

The presentation draws out those characteristics and specifics, which construct the Kokas-method. Our analytical and systematizing research methods rely on her publications, writings, essays, books, short-film compilation, movie archives and interviews, also on my personal experiences. The most convenient way to draw out the main elements and characteristics of Klara Kokas's pedagogy is to analyze and conceptualize its phases and moments around some notions and principles. We will methodize, then classify and briefly display these features one by one.

After being involved in the complex art pedagogy methods of Klara Kokas, we can certainly confirm that she really is a reform pedagogue, although her concept does not cover the development of skills and competencies as a whole. It also beneficially develops socialization, association, communication, coordination skills and abilities, aesthetic sense, empathy and concentration. In other words: holistic education. The accent is on personality development and self-expression through musical inspiration.

Conclusion

As a result of our research we expect also to reveal those components, which are modifying the Kokas-activities to a reform pedagogical method, and they also turn Klara Kokas into a reform pedagogue. The expected result of the research is a presentation of an effective sample course for adult and higher education. There will be processed the documents of the lifework of Klara Kokas with new focuses. It will be explored and methodized the elements which reflect to her spirituality, her ideological approach and their effects on personality. This is the way of applying the pedagogy of Klara Kokas on new educational fields.

As an outcome of my research there will be created some methodological guidences for teachers, educators, kindergarten teachers, religious and music teachers, preceptors,
pastors and youth foundation workers, specialists or volunteers, who are working on the filed of mental health education.

**Keywords:** Kokas-method, complex art pedagogy, personality development, music teacher training, higher education

**References**


