Developing musicianship using Kodály's principles in Grade 2 children of an impoverished South African community

by
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation begins with an overall picture and contextualisation of the research project. Firstly, the position of music in impoverished communities in South Africa is highlighted. Thereafter, the setting in which the research took place and my interest as researcher is shared. This is followed by the problem statement, leading to the research questions and aim of the research. A brief explanation of the research methodology is included and the trustworthiness, limitations and value of the research are discussed. The chapter concludes with an exposition of what to expect in the remaining four chapters.

1.2 Background to the study

Young children in South Africa and particularly children from marginalised and impoverished communities often do not experience the handing down of traditional music in their homes anymore. Many of them come from environments where there is a high level of unemployment and parents are unable to nurture or take care of them (NCSNET, 1997; Pavlicevic, 2001). In the absence of parents many homes are headed by older siblings; consequently, the music traditions that would have been shared by elders in the home are falling away. Moreover, many parents have found it necessary to move from rural areas to urban areas to earn a living, and though ethnic traditions are not intentionally neglected, the many influences of city life intrude and dissuade them from maintaining their cultural traditions in the nucleus of the home (Emberly, 2013:85). Wiggins (2013:35) asks the question in these contexts, “Whose songs in their heads?” It would appear that traditional music is still taught and passed on in the rural areas in addition to the music they hear on television and the radio (Emberly, 2013:85) in contrast to children living in the cities or on the periphery of cities. These children move in a society where people of many different cultures live in close proximity and they identify more

easily with the music that they hear and see on television and through other media. Emberly (2013:87) argues that the South African arts and culture curriculum acknowledges South Africa's cultural diversity and attempts to include all South African musics within it. This might bode well for children who are privileged enough to attend schools where music is included in the school programme. However, for the many marginalised children living in informal settlements or similar settings there is no opportunity for such exposure.

1.3 Context

Olievenhoutbosch Christian School is located on the outskirts of Centurion. The school was founded in 2004 by a group of volunteers from the local community and a local Dutch Reformed Church who are still the primary sponsors of the school. The school also relies on donations and sponsorship from various other smaller organisations and individuals. There are fourteen staff members that take care of the children's educational needs in the mornings, and twelve staff members are responsible for after-care. Currently only one of the teachers, aside from the headmistress, is qualified. Some of the teachers are registered for studies at Unisa, though finances pose some difficulties in this regard; moreover, the language of instruction is English, which is not the mother-tongue of these teachers.

The school caters for the educational needs of 140 children from Grade R up to Grade 4. Though the children are from various ethnic groups, the teaching medium is English. Many of the children come from single parent homes or homes where there is no income. They receive one meal a day, provided by the school, and many receive a food parcel at the end of the week, which provides food for the child over the weekends. Most of them have been exposed to some form of physical or emotional abuse or neglect.

1.4 Personal motivation

As a music educator, having studied piano and flute in the early 1980s, I have directed my attention to early childhood music education in the Montessori environment since 1995. My teaching until 2012 had been of an eclectic nature, drawing from the methodologies of Montessori, Orff and Dalcroze. The practical life principles from Montessori's philosophy are useful when applied to the handling of music equipment as well as how they should be implemented in musical interaction (Montessori, 1967:153; Montessori, 1978:123). Orff's use of melodic and non-melodic instruments is viewed as essential to developing music skills in children from an early age. Dalcroze advocates movement to be the key component in the music program. However, I became more aware of the benefits of Kodály's philosophy to music since it focuses on a well-rounded approach to musicianship development. This teaching method is primarily used because many of the critical components have stood the test of time (Flohr & Trollinger, 2010:146; Houlahan & Tacka, 2008:26). Kodály collected a number of successful teaching strategies, "drawn from the best of educational thought, past and present, from around the world." (Choksy, 1981:8). He promoted these as a method, making it a highly valuable teaching approach (Flohr & Trollinger, 2010:146). My own experience in this method has enabled me to discern vital musicianship aspects that lead to a holistic music teaching programme. I am particularly interested as a Montessorian in the concurrence in the views of Montessori and Kodály that when teaching young children, there should always be sequential development from the abstract to the concrete. In addition to this Montessori's method in "educating the senses" agrees with the application of Kodály principles inner hearing (Montessori, 1978:181).

I have a deep love for working with young children and feel a particular empathy and tenderness toward impoverished children. The value of music as a therapeutic tool has been widely researched and is unequivocally acknowledged (Hanser, 1999:1). While the purpose of the study is not to investigate the value of music as a therapeutic tool, an outcome of musical

interaction in this context will be the fostering of social, emotional and physical wholeness in young impoverished children. My understanding of 'impoverished' in this particular setting refers to children who are financially deprived.

For many years, it has been my desire to both share music and to give to others who have little opportunity. This dream was realised when I became aware of a need for music lessons to children in the small Christian-based school in an impoverished community as described above. I therefore made myself available to interact in the music context with a group of Grade 2 children, and have been doing so for the past twelve months.

1.5 Statement of the research problem

There is a growing consensus world-wide that children's cultural experiences are no longer being completely controlled from their home-environment and that the musical culture which once existed within the family has become scarcer (Campbell, 1998:76). Young children's music experiences are influenced by music from pop stars and television commercials, and their musical play and singing games are laden with elements of mediated music (Lum in Campbell, 1998:76; Emberly, 2013:87). Campbell (1998:76) states that children are impacted by their environment, their ethnic characteristics and the economic status of the home, and that they will be shaped musically by the songs and dances that are passed down from generation to generation. Trehub (in Bartel & Cameron, 2007:61; Lindquist & Szego, 1998:18) provides an interesting perspective in this regard. He agrees with Campbell in that children are hearing music everywhere; in shopping malls, movies, television, restaurants and so on. He continues that experiencing music in this way is unintentional and passive in contrast to the way children experienced music a hundred or even fifty years ago where the transmission of music traditions had purpose. Bartel and Cameron (2007:61) believe that when children are enculturated in the music of a particular culture they begin to develop an understanding, an affinity and a feel for the language flow of that music. In addition to that research has indicated that music has a major role to play in helping children to become of

aware of their ethnic identity and help them integrate themselves with other cultures (Lindquist & Szego, 1998:18). This enculturation has now fallen largely onto the shoulders of music educators.

Developing musicianship in young impoverished children could better their lives socially, emotionally, culturally, physically and spiritually (Cohen & Silverman, 2013). Music provides children with joy and evokes an awareness of identity, creating pathways to cultural heritage and highlighting the value of their own ethnicity (Woodward, 2005:258; Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2013: 120).

1.6 Research questions

The primary research question

What are the observable outcomes of developing musicianship in Grade 2 impoverished South African children through the application of Kodaly's principles?

Secondary questions:

- How can children's musicianship skills be developed through Kodály's principles?
- How can singing help to develop musicianship in young children?
- How can the use of *solfa* and hand signs help to develop musicianship in young children?

1.7 Aims of the study

The aim of the study was to investigate how Kodály's principles can be applied to develop musicianship in young children. The areas of musical development to be observed – as extracted from the Kodály method – are singing, combined with the use of *solfa* and by using hand signs. Movement in response to singing

and playing of non-melodic percussion instruments with singing will form part of the musical interaction, with the aim of developing children's musicianship and inner hearing.

1.8 Research methodology

An explorative and descriptive approach is employed to investigate the research questions, placing the study into the qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative research focuses on understanding behavioural patterns within a cultural and social context with the aim of extracting in-depth meanings from the phenomena (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:70).

The research design is a case study involving six children purposively selected, and receiving weekly music lessons for 45 minutes over a period of 12 weeks. I am the teacher as well as the researcher which places me in the position of participant-observer, thereby allowing a view from the inside of the events being studied while interacting and blending with the community (Yin, 2003:35). (Please refer to Chapter 3 for a detailed description of the research methodology.)

Data collection takes an ethnographic stance since the children are observed in their natural environment in the community school setting while they are taking part in the music activities. This perspective enables me to study how music "reveals and marks" a child's roots and heritage. It also informs me how to enhance my teaching methods so as to provide musical experiences for the children which are meaningful and culturally relevant (Lundquist, 1998:39).

Qualitative data collection in this study will be comprised of video-recordings of all the lessons presented, as well as field notes written up after each lesson. Focus group interviews as well as semi-structured interviews with each child will be conducted to provide empirical data.

1.9 Trustworthiness of the research

The trustworthiness of the research is strengthened by employing a range of methods to collect data, described by Denscombe (2010b:138) as "multi-method research". I will make use of observations, interviews, focus group discussions, anecdotal notes and video-recordings in order to justify the accuracy of the research findings. Using more than one methodological tool will allow me to present research findings which are "genuine and real", and not based on "poor data and erroneous interpretations" (Denscombe, 2010b:143). Nieuwenhuis (2012:80) states that others believe "credibility, applicability, dependability and confirmability" to be the most important elements on which trustworthiness depends.

1.10 Limitations of the study

The research is based on a single case study in a small marginalised community within a charity school setting; the findings are therefore context specific and not general. However the findings could relate to similar situations in other impoverished communities.

The research study will require of me to be both the researcher as well as the teacher. This can have an impact on the data collection process and possible opportunities for high quality qualitative data collection could missed owing to the dual role I will play.

1.11 Delimitations

South Africa is a country which has immense economic extremes. There are many private schools in which music is offered as part of the school curriculum and additionally parents can afford to continue their children's music education

by paying for private music tuition. These children receive high quality music education from qualified music educators.

The sample for the study was drawn from an impoverished community since in a group of children such as these the opportunity to experience or be taught music in a formal setting using a Western teaching methodology is virtually non-existant.

While there are many music elements which encompass 'musicianship' as advocated by Kodály, this study focus on what I as researcher deem to be the most important element of his philosophy, namely singing, and whether the use of *solfa* and hand signs has an influence on singing with regard to intonation and the development of inner hearing in impoverished young children. Other elements of musicianship are also taught to enhance the music experience but these aspects are not consciously observed. Time constraints on the study do not permit expansion in these areas; they merely flow through with the music interaction.

The literature review mentions all the elements of musicianship but these are not described in detail since they are not directly relevant to the research topic at hand.

1.12 Value of the study

In a country with a multi-cultural setting such as South Africa, children are educated and interact with all ethnic groups. While it is correct that ethnic groups should mix and develop understanding and tolerance, the possibility does exist for cultural heritage and awareness of cultural identity to become distorted or even lost in such an environment. Music education can help to create awareness in children of their own cultures and identities as a part of their general education.

"By giving status to children's own musical cultures in the formal music education environment, and by using their spontaneous music making as a springboard for adult-directed learning programs, we can provide contexts that offer children security and respect." (Woodward, 2005:258).

1.13 Organisation of chapters

Following this chapter of introduction, Chapter 2 commences with the literature review and theoretical framework on which the study is based. A definition of musicianship is given and the chapter continues with explaining and discussing Kodály principles, highlighting the elements of singing, inner hearing and hand signs and solmization. The value that Kodály attached to folk music is considered and the chapter concludes with the positive and holisitic role that community music plays in its beneficence to all mankind.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the research method employed to carry out the study. The research approach is described followed by the research design. Thereafter the sampling strategy is justified and supported by an account of the ethical considerations. Next, the data collection strategies are described in detail followed by the method employed to analyse the date. The trustworthiness of the research is stated and the chapter closes with a short summary of the elements contained in the chapter.

The fourth chapter presents the qualitative findings acquired through the focus groups, interviews and focused observations. These findings are analysed and discussed and presented in answer to the research questions. The fifth and final chapter highlights the value of developing musicianship in impoverished young children and considers future potential research projects elucidated through the current study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will begin by providing the theoretical framework for the investigation. The term 'musicianship' is defined, followed by an overview of the principles, sequence, tools and material of Kodály's method. A consideration of Kodály's stance on the use of folk song and its musical value is offered. Thereafter a thorough exploration of the areas relevant to the study namely singing, inner hearing, singing in tune, solmization and hand signs and their significance to the development of his approach is undertaken. The chapter ends by examining the role of community music within the context of the study setting.

2.2 Theoretical framework

As a composer, musician and music educator, Kodály is convinced that a child's music education should begin with the music from his or her own country and culture (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008:23). He believes folk music to be the "music mother-tongue" and that the best music to nurture a young child physically, developmentally and psychologically was to be found in the folksongs of the child's community (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008:38).

Making children aware of their cultural heritage gives them a sense of belonging, respect and self-worth, much needed in the South African setting, where children are faced with so many adversities on a daily basis. Nettl (in Campbell, 1998: vii) states that music is becoming recognised as a force that reflects and communicates culture, providing the "food" necessary for human survival. Woodward (2005:258) postulates that including and acknowledging the music of the children's culture in the classroom, indirectly gives them a sense of their own status and values. Woodward continues that children's own music gives them a sense of identity: "Folk music is the treasure trove of children's

values, beliefs, cultures, knowledge, games and stories" (Woodward, 2005:258). The focus of this study will be to investigate the application of Kodály's principles in the development of musicianship using folk music and children's music drawn from their own culture. Kodály believes that every culture has a rich and diverse selection of folk music that is well-suited for teaching purposes, providing the best material for establishing the elements of music (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008:39). Woodward (2005:258) concurs:

> By giving status to children's own musical cultures in the formal music education environment, and by using their spontaneous music making as a springboard for adult-directed learning programs, we can provide contexts that offer children security and respect.

Kodály emphasises that not all folksong texts are suitable for school use and notes that it would be acceptable to exchange one text for another in order to save a good melody (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008:39). The importance of choosing music that is age-appropriate is paramount; it is equally important to present the music within its cultural setting. This allows children to develop a proper sense of the social setting of the music as well as to understand its meaning and association in the correct context (Woodward, 2005:258). It is in keeping with Kodály's philosophy that teachers in countries other than Hungary would necessarily work out their own musical priorities within the context of their particular settings. (Westley, 2011:2; Hao-Chun Lee, 2011:33).

The multiple dimensions of musicianship training according to Kodály's principles are performing (singing, playing instruments and movement); stewardship of musical and cultural heritage; critical thinking (music literacy); creativity (improvisation and composition); and listening (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008:21). Kodály believes singing to be the foundation of all music education stating that the human voice is the child's natural musical instrument and singing should come as naturally as speaking. He makes the following

statement: “If one were to attempt to express the essence of this education in one word, it would be – singing” (Choksy, 1981:xxi).

The prerequisite for singing is the internalisation of sound, which enables direct participation in musical expression, making inner hearing the vehicle through which the essential elements of music are developed (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008:95). The guiding principles for music selection, according to Kodály, are that songs should be of unquestionable musical quality; they should be musically pleasing; the text and the music should complement one another; rhythm, text and nuances should match the language structure; songs should be relevant to the specific age groups; songs should reflect the cultural backgrounds of the children being taught; and lastly, that some songs should have pedagogical purpose (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008:41).

2.3 Defining musicianship

According to the Collins English Dictionary, musicianship is the skill or artistry in performing music. Other dictionaries include the writing music as part of musicianship. While both artistry and writing music are part of musicianship, these definitions fall far short of the meaning of musicianship in terms of Kodály’s philosophy. The Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music understands musicianship to be one’s ability to produce music which has already been experienced, internalised and then recreated. This internalisation could have been achieved either through singing, reading music notes, the ability to improvise or by being able to play from simply hearing a piece of music (ABRSM, 2013). This definition of hearing music internally resonates with the Kodály principle of musicianship development, achieved particularly through singing when taught from a young age. Later the elements of improvisation and note reading would also influence musicianship development. Kodály paints a bigger picture in this regard which is worth noting. He refers to something much broader and far deeper, embracing considerably more than mere performance,

music writing and even singing, improvisation and note reading. If one were to take away all the tools and methods aimed at learning to understand and making music, the essence of true musicianship would be found in the advancement of the human soul (Dobszay, 2009:17). This sentiment is reflected in the thinking of other notable music pedagogues, such as Orff and Suzuki. Green (2014:234) – when interviewing contemporary musicians on their views of musicianship – discovered corresponding attitudes in this regard. She cites words such as "feel", "spirit" and "sensitivity" as being more highly regarded than technical ability in a musician. Similarly Solbu (1998:36) echoes such results from interviews with musicians performing ethnic African music; music without heart is empty and meaningless. The nurturing of the soul consequently leads to the betterment of mankind in general. Kodály considers the following:

> Every person's worth is measured by how much he can help his fellow men and serve his country. Real art is one of the most powerful forces in the rise of mankind and he who renders it accessible to as many people as possible is a benefactor of humanity.
>
> (In Laycock, 2005:15)

Singing; moving; performing; reading; and composing are the means through which music is expressed and through which musicianship skills are developed. Undoubtedly every educator and every musician should always strive toward perfection in their teaching or performing; however, if this striving is merely mechanical and emotionless then we should ask whether true musicianship has been achieved. McGarry (2007:23) believes musicianship to be a "remarkably rich and highly problematic enterprise" and developing and enhancing these skills should be the driving force which compels the composer, theorist or educator to do what they do. Dobszay (2009:102) says educators should be "working with the pupil to reach the heart of the music so that music reaches the heart of the pupil".

2.4 Kodály principles

Kodály's conviction is that music is for everyone. The basic premise of his philosophy that may be gleaned from his writings confirms the following principles (Choksy, 1981:6,-8, Dobszay, 2009:15):

- True musical literacy is the right of everyone;
- The voice is our own natural instrument and all musical learning should begin with singing, which is the best facilitator of internalising music;
- The musical ear can be trained successfully only if development begins from a very young age;
- Folk music is the musical "mother-tongue" of all children and should form a large part of a child's music education;
- Children should be nurtured musically with musical material of unquestionable quality.

Kodály collected a number of successful teaching strategies and promoted them as a teaching method to preserve music in Hungarian schools. What is understood today as the Kodály method is a "compendium" or "amalgamation" of best practice and strategies, adapted as needed through the ages (Flohr & Trollinger, 2000:146; Westley, 2011:2). Choksy (1999:10) categorises the method clearly; labelling the "sequence, the tools and the materials".

- *Sequence* adheres to a "child-developmental" approach in which the subject matter is age relevant and works within the framework of the child's physical and mental abilities (Choksy, 1999:10).
    - Rhythm is initiated through the use of quarter notes and eighth notes, since children can relate these notes to walking and running. Most children's songs are made up of quarter and half notes making this logical starting point for teaching rhythm.

- Pitch is introduced through the use of short pentatonic songs. The exclusion of the *fa* semitone eliminates the difficulties initially encountered with singing semitones.

- *Tools* used in Kodály's method are the moveable-*do solfa,* rhythm syllables, stick notation (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008:122) and the use of hand signs.
  - Moveable-*do* refers to the concept in which the tonal centre of a song is *do* in the major and *la* in minor modes. This method facilitates the development of vocal sight reading, beginning with the simple minor *so-mi* pattern, which children are able to sing with ease and which can be recognised regardless of its placement on the staff. Inner hearing also begins its journey here.
  - Rhythm syllables is a system adapted from Emile-Joseph Chevé (1804-1864), a French musician and teacher. This system allocates a specific syllable to each note value, which articulates the value of the note. For example a quarter note is expressed as *ta* and two eighths are expressed as *ti-ti.*
  - Stick notation (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008:122) is a simplified form of music notation devised by Kodály where the rhythm is separated from the pitch; therefore only the stems of notes are used to indicate rhythm patterns only. (The exception is half, dotted half and whole notes). It is an uncomplicated and child-friendly aid to assist when introducing and developing rhythmic skills. 'Stick notation' is viewed as a type of shorthand which is easily converted to the traditional staff music notation later.

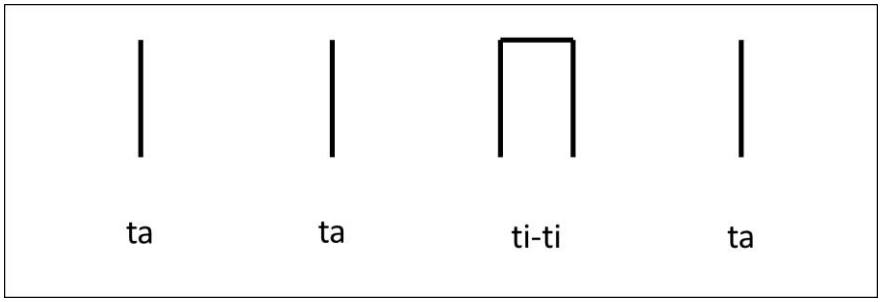

Figure 1: Stick notation

- Hand signs form a visual aid, establishing the tonal relationships of the notes, and they also facilitate the memorisation of pitch patterns. Hand signs are adapted from a method by Glover and further developed by Curwen.

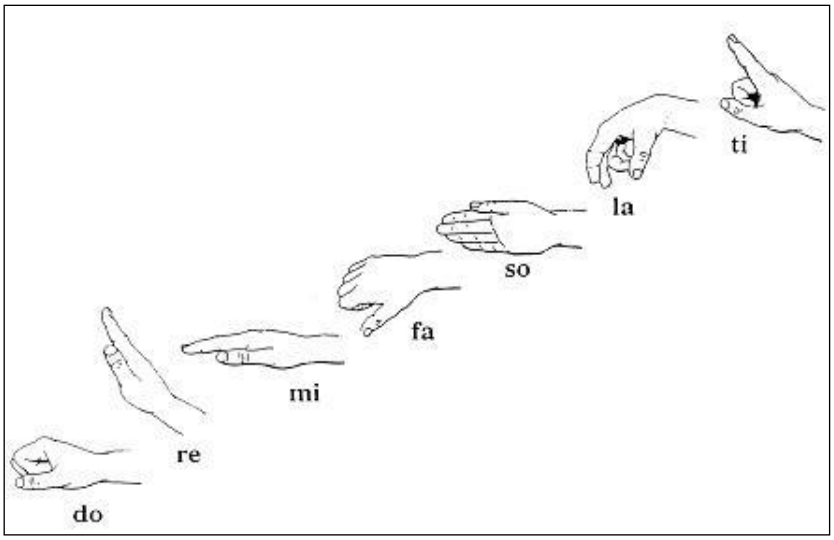

Figure 2: Hand signs

- *Materials* advocated by Kodály are authentic children's games and nursery songs, authentic folk music and quality composed music.
    - With regard to authentic children's games and nursery songs, Kodály feels that this type of music is living and has not been contrived or composed for pedagogical purposes, making it relevant and accessible to children (Choksy 1999:15).

- Authentic folk music is viewed as being uncomplicated and drawn from recognisable speech patterns experienced by children from a young age.
- Quality composed music should be understood to mean music that is written by recognised composers; Kodály is speaking here of the great masters and their works and he believes that eventually a love of the masterworks can develop through the knowledge and love of one's own folk music (Dobszay, 2009:20).

Though Kodály was not deeply involved in the development of his philosophy towards music education, he did emphasise the importance of implementing the moveable-*do solfa*, the initial use of the pentatonic scale in the training of young children, and using authentic folk songs and children's songs from the child's own culture as the initial teaching medium (Choksy, 1981:9). Whilst the application of these principles and utilisation of the pedagogical tools effect the musical development of a child, the requisite holism is undoubtedly achieved by means of correct teaching through the element that is the essence of the Kodály philosophy, namely singing.

Kodály maintains that melodic instrumental playing should commence only once a child has learnt to read music. He asserts that teaching a child to play an instrument before he is able to sing, read or dictate music is to lay a foundation in sand (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008:22). Therefore, general musicianship skills should be developed before any attempt at instrumental playing is attempted. Particularly the ability to think musical sound – inner hearing (Choksy, 1981:17) – should be established before producing it. Inner hearing is best developed through singing, since the human voice is the most intimate of all in instruments, and Kodály states that a person who does not know where the essence of the melody is before he produces it on an instrument will seldom achieve intimate "singing" on an instrument (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008:22). In Hungary, serious application to instrumental study using piano and strings usually begins at the

third grade. The recorder is introduced only in the fourth grade; it is used a little in earlier grades and then only in combination with singing (Howell, 2013:2).

Kodály characterises a good musician by four areas of development. In his view a musician must have a well-trained ear, developed through *singing*; a well-trained intelligence, developed through *note reading*; a well-trained heart developed through *exposure to good quality music*; and a well-trained hand, developed through *instrumental playing* [1](Howell, 2013:1).

2.4.1 Folk song and its musical value

Dobszay, who studied folk music under Kodály, enlightens us to Kodály's reasons for advocating the folksong in fostering musical development. He states that for Kodály, the original appeal of the folksong lay not in its value as an educational tool but in its elevated position of artistic and national value. Briefly explained, Dobszay (2009:13,108) claims "the folksong is simple, and it possesses a form which even a child can follow and it communicates artistic and national cultural value of the highest order".

The use of folk music as a teaching tool is an important perspective for the current study. According to Dobszay (2009:25) the monophonic nature of folk music makes it suitable for teaching purposes, which is very much in keeping with Kodály's belief that the best musical learning begins with singing without accompaniment. Dobszay (2009: 26) says that monophony exposes children to the real meaning of music through a living and interactive medium as opposed to passively listening to music. His argument is that children are constantly exposed to music with chordal accompaniment which renders them immune to the depth of accompaniment as being an "artistic building element of the masterpiece" (Dobszay, 2009:26). Naturally, he is speaking here of music

[1] Italics my own

education at a more advanced level. Moreover, he states that music education is a journey, and although the child might not necessarily understand all that is being taught immediately, the seed of musical knowledge has been planted.

Dobszay (2009:13), Cuskelly (2012:27) and Hao-Chun Lee (2011:32) maintain that many schools of thought exist around the significance of folk music in education. Some music educators emphasize the holistic development of children and how it can foster a sense of belonging in their own community or even strengthens their attachment to the country. Others use folk music as a means of creating an awareness of other cultures. Yet others say folk materials encourage musical development since these materials hold many key elements, creating opportunity for teaching and learning. Zemke (in Lee, 2011:32) states that the phrasing, form, rhythms and nuances of a nation's language are contained in its folk music, making it a good pedagogical device as well as a means for creating a national conscience.

2.4.2 Singing

As indicated, Kodály based his teaching philosophies on a solid singing foundation. He holds that singing provides the best start to a music education; in particular, singing without an instrument develops deep training of a child's musical abilities (Choksy, 1999:16). Kodály believes that the voice is the instrument which relates most closely to our humanness, and is the most personal way of self-expression in the context of music (Sargent & Sargent in Lee, 2011:35). It would therefore make sense to begin any musical training with the voice (Houlahan & Tacka, 2010:72). Singing is part of every musical culture, historically and around the world, and vocal sound defines elements of being human (Lamont, Daubney & Spruce, 2012:255). In addition to this, and very importantly, singing is so deeply interconnected with musical listening that it is the best instrument for developing aural aptitude (Dobszay, 2009:52).

Rowsell (2004:5) claims that singing has a profound effect on a child's physical, emotional, social and cognitive development. In her view, learning through a musical instrument is a skill learned externally, whereas singing is an internally learned skill, a complete experience and something deeply personal (2004:5). Singing helps children to connect to themselves and to others, and they find a sense of belonging, especially when they have experienced the harmony and joy expressed through singing with others (Dias-Jayasinha, 2010:32).

Singing is one of the key cornerstones of Kodály's teaching and has the greatest influence over inner ear development (Cuskelly, 2009:26); the ability to sing in tune is inextricably linked to inner hearing.

2.4.2.1 Inner hearing

According to Forrai (in Dias-Jayasinha, 2010:31) inner hearing is "the auditory image which exists in our minds even without acoustic input". Dobszay (2009:108) quotes Kodály: "The enhancement of inner hearing is the final aim of all professional music study. Every musical manifestation must be led by an inner conception, hearing and imagination, and this is trained by singing". Choksy (1981:36) refers to inner hearing as the process of "thinking sound", saying that sound should first be heard inside the head in order to produce it. To develop such a musically valuable skill takes time and practice and therefore needs to commence from a young age. According to Choksy (1981:36), and concurred by McGarry (2007:21), the most useful way of developing inner hearing with younger children is by "hiding the song". This is achieved by singing a song aloud and at the signal from the teacher to "hide" the song in their heads by continuing to sing the song inaudibly and still maintaining a steady beat. At the teacher's signal, they should resume audibly with the song. If they recommence at the correct place in the song, it means they have continued to hear the song in their heads. At a more advanced level, this exercise would be carried out with the children being able to continue the song at the correct pitch as well.

In recent years the word “audiation” has become equated with inner hearing and aural development. This word was coined by Edwin Gordon in the 1970s, and he identifies audiation as the foundation of musicianship which occurs when a cognisance of music takes place without any actual audible sound (McGarry, 2007:20). There appears to be some debate as to whether audiation and inner hearing as understood by Kodály is in fact the same thing and McGarry (2007:20) raises an interesting point here. She concedes that there is consensus in the writings of Kodály and Gordon regarding musicianship, namely how musicianship is developed through hearing music without any audible sound as well as the many other elements of music such as rhythmic and pitch recall and writing music. Cuskelly (2009:27) agrees that many Kodály teachers, as well as others who are not necessarily Kodály followers, make no distinction between “inner hearing” and “audiation”. However, McGarry (2007:20) argues that the emotional component of musicianship that features so clearly in Kodaly’s thinking and understanding is lacking in Gordon’s writings (refer to 2.1).

2.4.2.2 Singing in tune

Studies highlight three areas that inform pitch precision and vocal response, viz.:

- The physical ability to receive sound waves and transmit them to the brain;
- The ability to assimilate what a sound means, based on prior knowledge or experience;
- The ability for the voice to accurately imitate the perceived tone.

Stimulating these processes in children from a young age holds great benefit for their music development with regard to intonation. This is achieved through the use of short songs within a limited range sung with good intonation by the teacher and without the accompaniment of a musical instrument (Dias-Jayasinha, 2010:34). Music educator and researcher John Feieraband found

that the best way to develop singing with good intonation in young children is to let them sing without accompaniment (Tysoe, 2010:41).

When singing, some children have difficulties with distinguishing between their "head" voice or 'singing' voice and their "chest" voice or 'speaking' voice, as they are sometimes called (Houlahan & Tacka (2008:75). Houlahan and Tacka (2008:75) describe the difference in terms of physical technique, considering the way vocal chords vibrate when singing. They assert that vibrations are felt behind the nose and checks when singing in the "head" voice and when employing the "chest" voice, vibrations are felt in the throat and chest (Houlahan & Tacka (2008:75). Music educators need to help children become aware of the physical sensations of these two instances and handle situations with children who have difficulties in these areas with sensitivity. How many times have children given up trying to sing or said they cannot sing simply because they were never gently given help in finding their 'singing' voice? There are a number of fun vocal exercises that can be used to help children find their "head" voices.

Most Kodály educators and many other music educators agree that the best singing interval to begin with when teaching young children is the descending minor third, so-mi. This interval is easy for children to hear and sing. Houlahan & Tacka (2008:77) also maintain that beginning a song with a descending melodic pattern enhances listening skills and enables children to pitch their voices accurately and sing more in tune. It is important for the teacher as role model to sing with good intonation, choose an appropriate tempo and articulate clearly if the child is required to learn correctly. Singing softly and without the use of piano accompaniment helps to develop in tune singing (Houlahan & Tacka (2008:79).

2.4.3 Hand signs

According to Choksy (1981:10), Kodály's writings do not make any direct reference to the use of hand signs. He did, however, request for hand signs to be included as part of his methodology, as reported in a book written by Jenö Adám. Adám wrote this book entitled *Módszéres Énektánitas* (Systematic Singing Teaching) in 1944 which began melodic training using the minor third interval (Choksy, 1999:3). He studied composition under Kodály at the Budapest Academy of Music. From 1935 he worked together with Kodály on reforming the music education system at the lower and middle school levels in Hungary. This collaboration resulted in several textbooks on singing (Sadie & Tyrell, 2001).

Each individual hand sign represents a note of the scale, providing a visual picture that reinforces the pitch of each note and establishes a sense of tonal function (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008:25; Choksy, 1999:13). Rowsell (2004:3) states that *solfa* accompanied by hand signs provides a link with the sound that is heard and produced. She continues that solmization articulates relative pitch and establishes the tonal function of each note. According to Mizner (2008:22), learners have informally commented favourably on the use of hand signs, which have helped them with memorising melodic patterns. Other music educators successfully use hand signs combined with singing with children as young as three or four years of age (Garner, 2009:48). The use of *solfa* and hand signs are useful tools employed towards developing musicianship as advocated by Kodály (Westley, 2011:2). Dias-Jayasinha (2010:32) claims that the visual aspect of hand signs forges a pathway to inner ear development and creates recognition of tonal relationships.

2.4.4 Solfége and solmization

The solfége system was developed as far back as the eleventh century and was used for musical instruction by Guido d'Arezzo, the inventor of the first music

notation system (Reisenweaver, 2012:37). D'Arezzo derived the syllable name from the hymn "Ut queant laxis", taking the initial syllable of the first six half-phrases (half-lines) of the hymn to establish "ut-re-mi-fa-sol-la" (Reisenweaver, 2012:42). In the early nineteenth century, this system was further developed and adapted by Sarah Glover, who extended it to a full relative *solfa* – or moveable-*do* – system. Glover's method is regarded to be the first example of an organised programme of musicianship development through unaccompanied singing and *solfa* (Waterhouse, 2010:3).

Kodály first encountered this system and realised its value for teaching when he observed it being used in choral training while on a visit to England. In this system the "home tone" of a song in the major is *do* and in the minor is *la* (Choksy, 1999:12). The minor third descending interval of *so-mi* are the same in any key which makes this easy for children to recognise when placed anywhere on the staff. In this way the process of inner hearing begins from a young age as the visual and aural merge (Choksy, 1999:12). This tool, used for music instruction, was carried further by John Curwen in 1862 by introducing hand signs, and it was Curwen's *solfa* that interested Kodály. However, Kodály was not content to simply adopt this solmization as a worthwhile teaching technique. With great care, he investigated how solmization would blend with the basic concepts of music education and the existing proposed music material (Dobszay, 2009:53). *Solfa* is not linked to scales, but rather it evokes tonal images which connect the notes in our hearing; this means that it can be used with any tonal system and specific intervals will always have the same accurate relative sound (Dobszay, 2009:53). Kodály states that experience has shown that in countries and schools where solmization is used and taught, singing intonation is better (Dobszay, 2009:102). Kodály argues that "solmization through play implants in the pupil the foundations of musical thinking" (Dobszay, 2009:102).

Dobszay (2009:106) provides a concise summary of how Kodály masterfully incorporated solmization into an essentially complete educational system. He says solmization as a teaching tool successfully develops tonal hearing, musical thinking and inner hearing, leading to pure intonation, and is of particular value in teaching the masses.

2.5 Community music

Dobszay (2009:110) raises the point that singing and music-making are part of community life, and musical interaction as a community helps people to experience their humanity more fully. Laycock (2005:15) maintains that music holds a unique position in the arts in its ability to draw people together into communal inspired music-making irrespective of race or language. In some impoverished communities in South Africa, parents have realised the value of music in the lives of their children and encourage this kind of input, seeking out opportunities for their children to receive music exposure (Herbst, 2012:4). Community music programmes often provide highly successful alternatives to formalised school music programmes. Music educators working in a community setting have the freedom to develop and contextualise their own music programmes without compromising their own accountability through continuous constructive and personal assessment (Veblen, n.d.). Veblen cites multiple diverse community music projects worldwide, and emphasizes the positive effects of this kind of musical interaction.

2.6 Conclusion

The Kodály method is a distinct teaching approach with a long and successful history, owing to the many components of which the method is comprised. The aim of the Kodály methodology is to develop total musicianship beginning with very young children, using the human voice as the best instrument to bring about inner hearing and ultimately the desired total musicianship. This implies that music can develop self-knowledge, self-awareness and emotion through

performing. Children exposed to the Kodály method – being stewards of their own culture and heritage– can become critical thinkers, discerning listeners and creative human beings (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008:24). This study highlights the role that a Western methodology can play in developing musicianship in young children, using familiar and unknown material from their own culture thereby helping to create in them a sense and awareness of their own belonging and drawing out their own music potential.

The following chapter will outline the methodological procedures employed to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter validates the research paradigm employed to answer the research questions of the study. The sampling and ethical implications are explained. Thereafter the data collection tools are described, justifying their appropriateness for this study. The way in which the data was analysed is explained and the trustworthiness of the data is considered.

3.2 Research approach

This research project investigated impoverished children's responses to Kodály principles, which develop musicianship utilising folk songs and familiar music material drawn from their own community. This resonates with an explorative and descriptive approach which falls in the qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative research focuses on understanding behavioural patterns within a social and cultural context, interacting and observing participants in their natural environment (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:47). Additionally qualitative research seeks to extract in-depth and detailed meanings from phenomena with the emphasis on the quality of the information sought and not on the extent or range of information (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:60).

3.3 Research design

The research undertaken was a case study consisting of a small group of impoverished young children. A small sampling group allowed for a qualitative exploration of the phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:178). Schram (in Fouché, 2011:320) states that a case study can be viewed as a way of "conceptualising or encapsulating" human behaviour, but its value lies in its ability to highlight what immense teaching value it holds. Stake (in Fouché, 2011:322) adds that a case study is unique, and that a researcher becomes deeply familiar with the case exploring "what it is and what it does". A case study therefore proved to be the best way to become immersed in the lives of the participants in a natural

setting providing the opportunity to gain an in-depth view of the research problem.

As researcher I acted as a participant-observer, teaching the children but also participating interactively within the group. Bernard (in Kawulich, 2005:3) defines participant-observation as the researcher building a relationship with the community and blending within the culture, then removing oneself from the environment to understand and analyse the data. Participant-observation allowed me to have an exclusive view of the events being studied, providing the opportunity to obtain accurate information (Yin, 2003:94). At times it was necessary to alter or manipulate aspects in the teaching process to investigate a response in a particular setting (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:85; Nettl, 1998:25). Data collection was done from an ethnographic perspective since observation of the children took place in their natural environment in the community school setting while they interactively engaged in the music activities. This perspective enabled me to study how music "reveals and marks" a child's roots and heritage. It also informed me how to enhance my teaching methods so as to provide musical experiences for the children which were meaningful and culturally relevant (Lundquist, 1998:39).

A descriptive case study was used allowing for "how" and "why" questions, thereby creating the opportunity to give a precise account of the unfolding of children's responses and provide accurate observations (Durrheim, 2010:167). It also assisted me as researcher in providing deeper and richer descriptions derived from intensive exploration of events (Fouché & Schurink, 2011:320).

3.4 Sampling strategy

The study population was drawn from the children at Olievenhoutbosch Christian School. Purposive sampling was used, since participants were selected for their suitability to the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:79). Six children

were selected by the headmistress at her discretion but in compliance with the requirements of the study. Children from the Grade 2 classes were chosen to be the sampling group since they were considered to be already comfortable with the language medium of the school – which is English – as opposed to the Grade 1 or younger children. The younger aged children were still coping with language barriers as well as adapting to school life, thereby making communication difficult for the research.

The sample as selected by the headmistress took the following aspects into account: the grade of the child; an equal selection of both sexes; a mixture of ethnic groups; and an equal level of academic ability. In addition to these considerations, only children attending the after-school care group were eligible for selection since the music lessons took place during the afternoons once the school programme was over. The final sample consisted of three boys and three girls. A variety of indigenous languages were represented by the participants: one of the boys was a Sepedi, another boy was a Zulu and the third boy was a Venda speaking child. Two of the girls were Sesotho and one girl was a Sepedi. All of the children were able to communicate comfortably in English.

3.5 Ethical considerations

The research was context specific and respected all ethical implications displaying sensitivity and consideration towards the participants (Wilkinson, 2000:6). Foremost, every effort was made to ensure that the participants did not come to any harm or experience any discomfort through their participation in the research study (Denscombe, 2010a:63; Wilkinson, 2000:6).

The music lessons took place in the afternoons, therefore causing no interruptions to their school routine. The lessons took place on the school premises and the lesson time was planned around the participants' homework

schedule in order to avoid undue disruption to their afternoon routine (Denscombe, 2010a:64).

Permission was obtained from the headmistress of the Olievenhoutbosch Christian School for the research to be conducted (attached as Appendix C). The school operates as an independent organisation; therefore it was not necessary to obtain authorisation from the Department of Education. Letters of informed consent (attached as Appendix D) were sent to the parents or legal guardians of the participating children (Denscombe, 2010a:67). All relevant information pertaining to the nature and aims of the research was contained in the letters of consent (Denscombe, 2010a:67). Permission was granted to allow each lesson to be video-recorded (Attached as Appendix D).

Informed assent was obtained from the children participants (attached as Appendix E). It was explained to the children how and when the research would take place and the part they would play in the process. This was to be done in language that was simple and culturally relevant (Wilkinson, 2000:8). Since all the children were literate in English, the assent letter was in a language that was child-friendly and made provision for them to sign, indicating their willingness to participate. It was explained clearly to them that that their participation would be voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage should they wish to do so (Denscombe, 2010a:72). Permission was also obtained from the parents of the participants as well as from the school, allowing the lessons and focus group interviews to be video-recorded.

All information obtained from the investigation was treated as confidential (Denscombe, 2010a:64), only allowing access to the data to the researcher and the supervisor. The study required face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the participants, which implied that anonymity could not be guaranteed. However, pseudonyms were used in the final writings of this

dissertation to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants (Denscombe, 2010a:75).

3.6 Data collection methods

Data collection was effected during group music lessons that were presented over a period of twelve weeks. The duration of each lesson was approximately forty-five minutes.

Several data collection methods were employed to gather information, namely:

- Focus group discussions
- Field notes
- Anecdotal records
- Video recordings of lessons
- Focused observations of lessons
- Semi-structured individual interviews

3.6.1 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were used to explore the children's perceptions and experiences of musical interaction in a more informal environment. Hart (1992:17) claims that even very young children are able to provide accurate information if it is recalled spontaneously. He continues that a researcher would need to be sensitive to the children's position and find ways that will make them comfortable in the setting, allowing them to express themselves freely.

The advantages of focus group interviews or discussions is that participants can build on each other's input and the group dynamic can stimulate conversation; often forgotten valuable details are recalled through group interaction

(Nieuwenhuis, 2012:91; (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005:60).

Two focus group discussions took place. The first discussion was conducted half way through the research process and the second formed part of the last lesson. The focus group discussions were approximately thirty minutes long and all six of the participants took part in both of these discussions. (Please refer to Appendix B for the focus group discussion schedule.)

3.6.2 Field notes

According to Strydom (2011:372) field notes should hold a detailed account of the participants themselves, the communications and responses and also the observer's perceptions and attitudes.

Short hand-written notes were made by myself on the day of each lesson and converted into systematic and accurate field notes that describe the recorded events chronologically (Strydom, 2011:372). Field notes helped to keep a textual record of what was seen and heard at each lesson. Kelly states that capturing verbatim quotes helps to "convey the flavour of a particular culture" (2006: 315). These notes were expanded and written up more comprehensively after each lesson, describing events in a narrative form to avoid happenings which took place during the lesson from becoming lost to memory and causing the data record to be less accurate (Mack et al., 2005; Strydom, 2011:372).

3.6.3 Anecdotal records

Anecdotal records were kept of each child individually and of the group as a whole. An anecdotal record is a valuable tool for keeping track of events after they have happened. They provide brief detailed accounts "describing incidents, behaviours and interactions" (Feeney, Moravcik, Nolte, & Christensen,

2010:102). Anecdotal records provided short descriptive and objective accounts of the observation, carefully noting key phrases or words (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:85) and physical actions or reactions. These records enhanced and deepened the data, allowing for rich cameos to form part of the research.

3.6.4 Video recordings

Video-recordings of each lesson were made and helped to ensure that the observation reports were accurate and relevant. Special attention was given to retaining the "normality" of the lesson even though it was being video-recorded (Denscombe, 2010a:64). The children were introduced to the idea of being video-recorded prior to commencing the study, making them feel comfortable with the idea, which helped to minimise any disruption to the flow of the musical interaction (Feeney et al., 2010:112). Nieuwenhuis (2012:92) cites video-recording as a valuable tool especially for capturing non-verbal aspects when working with groups as well as being able to observe the group dynamics which play a role. The video-recordings were made by an assistant who was neutral to the data collection content but assisted with all practical arrangements for the lessons each week.

All the video-recorded material was thoroughly examined and re-examined afterwards to gain insight into the children's responses and their development of the areas designated for observation as discussed in the research questions.

3.6.5 Focused observations

Focused observation allowed for focus to be centred on specific elements under investigation (Kelly, 2006:310). Kelly suggests two strategies in interpretive research. Firstly, an unstructured approach to observation can use "continuous time sampling" where the entire observation process is recorded as it takes place. Secondly, a "naturalistic" approach can be employed where

observational notes are recorded after the event has happened (2006: 311). The latter approach was found to be the most suitable for the study, given that I was both the teacher as well as the researcher-observer. These notes which were made during observations formed part of the expanded field notes and anecdotal records.

A second method in which focused observation took place was through assessment of video-recorded material. As stated in section 3.6.4, all the lessons were video-recorded and observations of the elements relevant to the research questions were studied and analysed once the data collection period was concluded.

3.6.6 Semi-structured individual interviews

Using a semi-structured approach to interviewing is a useful method when seeking to gain meaningful insight into people's experiences or feelings according to Kelly (2006:297). This author also suggests that working from a list of pre-determined interview topics is advisable. These topics would provide a guideline for the interview yet be flexible in the topic direction depending on the interviewee's responses.

Semi-structured interviews with the individual children took place near the end of the data collection period on the ninth lesson day. Each of the children was interviewed for approximately twenty minutes and each interview was video-recorded (See the semi-structured interview schedule attached as Appendix A).

The semi-structured interviews were also video-recorded, and therefore no notes were taken during the interviews. This allowed for me as researcher to be totally involved in the interview process on a level which expressed interest in the child as an individual as well as in their perceptions and responses; not

merely viewing the interview as a means of gathering information. Even though the children were already comfortable with the idea of the lessons being video-recorded, the recording was done sensitively considering that the child as individual was now the sole focus of the recording as opposed to being video-recorded in a group setting.

Regarding the compilation of questions for the semi-structured individual interviews and for the focus group discussions, the following comments are important. The focus group discussions took place before the individual interviews, and emphasised the same broad topics. Therefore, this provided some familiarity to the children. During the focus group interviews I realised that some children tended to simply copy another child's answer. Therefore, asking the same or very similar types of questions in the individual semi-structured interviews gave each child the opportunity to answer how they really experienced the music without the pressure of peers. During the individual semi-structured interviews I sometimes did not use all the questions because often one answer lead to or overlapped with an area of another potential question.

3.7 Challenges encountered during the study

Several limitations which could influence the result of the study should be considered. Firstly, the setting where the research was undertaken proved to be difficult. The lessons took place in a 'wendy-house' classroom on the school premises and even though it was the classroom most far removed from the outside activity there was always peripheral noise from children playing and laughing outside. Given the fact that the research project was focused on investigating the development of singing – which required concentrated listening skills – these distractions were significantly challenging. Related to this particular challenge were the distractions outside of the school grounds. The classroom was right next to the fence bordering the school grounds. Therefore

distractions from passers-by conversing with one another were not uncommon; barking dogs and on several occasions herded cattle could be seen from the classroom. Not surprisingly the children were always intrigued by these outside activities.

Secondly, for the most part the research took place during the summertime; temperatures during the middle of the day, which was around the time the lessons were conducted, were often extremely high. This appeared to have an effect on the concentration and energy levels evidenced in the children's sometimes lethargic behaviour. Thirdly, the children interacted with each other within the music class but out of the music context. Conflict situations and particularly issues arising from the home environment of one individual altered the dynamics within the group at times.

3.8 Conclusion

A qualitative research approach was employed to assess how young children from an impoverished community responded to musicianship development strategies as proposed in the Kodály philosophy. A case study provided opportunity for gleaning valuable information and deeper insight into the children's responses.

Validity of the findings was improved through the employment of several data collection procedures namely; video recordings of each lesson, field notes, anecdotal records, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and focused observations during the lessons and through repeated examination of the video-recorded data.

Chapter 4: Data collection and analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the qualitative information gathered using two primary methods. The first data collection method made use of in-depth focused observations of the video-recorded lessons taken each week. The second method employed an analysis of the material recorded via notes and video-recordings of the initial focus group discussion held with all the children, as well as the individual semi-structured interviews which were held with each child. An interpretative approach was employed to analyse the attitudes, perceptions, understanding, views and experiences of the participants. Inductive analysis allows for frequently recurring themes to emerge from the data (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:108).

Before proceeding with the qualitative analysis, the children's participation and rate of attendance will be discussed.

4.2 Attendance and participation

A record of the children's attendance was kept. They participated in this activity on occasion by helping to find their names on the list and ticking their attendance next to the relevant lesson number. In an attempt at not making them feel that they were being checked up on, they were not requested to assist with the attendance register every week. Subsequently, when the children did help with the register, it was an event of great pleasure for each of them to observe how often they had attended.

The rate of attendance was significantly high: out of the twelve lessons presented one child missed one lesson due to an unscheduled soccer match and a second child missed two lessons owing to a domestic problem.

The children were keen to come for the lessons and were always ready to go directly to the lesson venue despite the fact that they were ending their school day only to begin another educational activity without a break. Once the music activities commenced, they all participated with enthusiasm and the relevance of the song repertoire was evidenced in their often spontaneous singing of the songs prior to the music lesson as well as during the lesson.

4.3 Focused observations

Each music lesson was video-recorded. Although I made direct observations during each lesson, I also studied the video footage thoroughly and systematically afterwards so that each child's progress and development could be critically observed and examined as relating to the research questions. The aspects which I focused on during observation was singing, particularly singing in tune and the development of intonation, singing using *solfa* syllables and intonation development, and singing in *solfa* syllables while using hand signs.

4.4 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held with each child individually near the end of the data collection period. Only me as researcher, the individual child and the assistant doing the video-recording were present during these interviews. The aim was to allow the children – out of hearing distance and possible influence from their peers – to express their own feelings, perceptions and experiences of music participation individually, particularly regarding the use of singing with *solfa* and hand signs. In a group, children will often simply adopt a peer's expressed opinion, perhaps in fear of appearing silly or because they are unsure of what is being asked in the question. Individual interviews can elicit useful information in a non-threatening environment, especially if the researcher has built up a trust relationship with the child. In spite of English being the language medium of the children's school, I found that a question sometimes

needed to be repeated or rephrased in order for it to be properly understood. This may have impacted the replies given by the children.

4.5 Analytical procedure

The findings from the focused observations and semi-structured interviews overlapped significantly, and in view of the fact that the interviews involved only the children and not a second party, they will be discussed as one unit pertaining to each child individually. The research questions will also be answered during this analysis process, based on the themes which emerged and will be supported by the material from the literature review. (Please refer to Chapter 2, Literature Review for a detailed description of Kodály's principles of musicianship).

The investigation will commence with an examination or an overview of the children's musical responses to musical interaction in a general way. The initial lessons contained the fundamental elements of music learning and were therefore necessary for laying a solid foundation for the deeper learning of singing with good intonation, *solfa* and hand signs. This paved the way for the musical elements not pertaining directly to the research questions to be viewed in the context of the study.

Firstly, the children will be considered as a group, while exploring their progress in general musicianship. Thereafter, each child's journey will be traced individually to investigate the development in singing, *solfa* and hand signs. The children's names have been replaced by pseudonyms, indicated by an asterisk after each name, and they are discussed in no particular order.

4.5.1 Whole group

Prior to the commencement of each lesson I would provide a small snack for each child. The children had come directly from their school classroom to the music venue and had therefore not had any kind of food supplement. I felt that the children would not be able to focus on any kind of activity if they were hungry. These few minutes each week before the music lesson proved to be a special time of connecting, interacting and observing the children in another context providing some insight into the dynamics of the group.

At the beginning of the first music lesson, six mats were set out in a semi-circle for the children to sit on and each child was allocated a mat to use. Initially they could each choose where to sit, but it became clear after the first lesson that it would be better not to seat all the girls together and all the boys together. Subsequently they were seated alternating boy with girl. This seating arrangement remained so for the duration of the study and proved to be satisfactory, preventing possible mischief-making opportunities during the lessons.

This group of children had not had any previous exposure to music in a formal setting, making it necessary to begin by establishing a structured learning environment in which certain music elements could be taught. Out of this basic structure it was then possible to teach singing, *solfa* and hand signs in a meaningful way.

The children were clearly interested in learning songs from other cultures and it was an exciting challenge for the child whose language was being used in the song to try and translate for the others and the researcher. It was significant to notice however, that there was always an immediate rhythmic response even when they were hearing a song for the first time. They would either clap a beat or tap the rhythm on the carpet as the song was progressing. There was also

often a spontaneous rhythmic and melodic addition which they made up as they waited for the duration of longer notes in the songs or in the pauses between phrases. These embellishments were responses of the children's own emotional and musical expressions of the music they were experiencing. The rhythmic element in their music-making was very strong. There was no child who had difficulty adding or playing a rhythmic accompaniment or keeping the beat while singing. However, it was evident that when movement was added to singing, the singing would sometimes take second place.

The singing of songs was usually done at a high volume and it was necessary to suggest that they would be able to hear themselves better if they sang at a lower level of dynamics. Quieter singing almost always improved the intonation and the quality of the sound they produced and they acknowledged this to be true once they had experienced this phenomenon themselves. (Refer to 2.4.2.2 in the Literature Review, Chapter 2).

All the singing in the lessons was done in unison without instrumental accompaniment; therefore I, in my role as teacher, usually sang the songs with the children. (Refer to 2.4.2.2 in the Literature Review, Chapter 2). However, there were often times when the children were given non-melodic instruments to play or scarves with which they could enhance their movement activities. I would then sing alone and the children would either keep the beat or dance making up their own movements. This was a spontaneous action on their part and an unplanned activity which simply evolved with the music-making. They appeared to enjoy this immensely and it gave opportunity for them to express themselves freely; there was no right or wrong way in this music-making process.

The children enjoyed demonstrating their ability to sing on their own, whether it was a song or even following a melodic pattern being sung in *solfa*. Even the shy children were happy to sing alone. Solo singing was always applauded

enthusiastically by their peers. On one occasion one of the girls gently and with much emotion murmured “beautiful” in praise of her friend’s efforts.

Initially the children had difficulty with imitating notes of the same pitch, or keeping the pitch constant when a note had to be repeated. This improved once they were presented with a visual picture of what was happening, such as when the hand bells – each representing a different pitch of the *solfa* scale from low ‘do’ to high ‘do’ – were set out and they were able to see the repetition via my finger indicating that a note was being repeated.

Figure 3: Coloured hand bells

Throughout the research it was clearly evident that the children responded very well to visual and tactile material which related to the topic at hand and a high level of learning took place during these times. A particularly effective method was to point to each hand bell and to sing stepping and jumping patterns after the teacher had already established the sound relating to each bell. Drawing steps with *solfa* names on paper and reading picture and graph patterns of stepping and jumping patterns were also valuable teaching tools. Firstly, in my observations I noticed that the children’s body language revealed a more positive response to the visual aids; they sat closer and become very attentive and inadvertently their listening became more finely tuned, which led them to the second step of the learning process. This was their ability to match their voices more easily with regard to pitch direction when they were seeing the upward or downward direction pointed out to them. Thirdly, their intonation

improved because in the process of deep concentration while following the visual material, they sang naturally much more quietly. This was established and confirmed to be an effective means of improving intonation. (Refer to 2.4.2.2 in Chapter 2 of the Literature Review.)

The children began to develop skills of internalisation and inner hearing with relative ease. Singing the songs in their heads was included in every lesson and it became the accepted way for their singing to be done in the music class. Each song was sung audibly with movement and then gradually the audio elements were removed while the song continued in their heads. This strategy worked well and the children were challenged to 'get the song right'. When an action was required to match the 'silent song', it was clear that the song had been successfully internalised, as evidenced by the correctly matched action. They enjoyed this activity and, though not directly relevant to the study, it improved their concentration skills noticeably as well. The other strategy that contributed to an improved intonation was the singing of songs or scale patterns using the word 'doo'. Singing 'doo' loudly is quite difficult, so the children naturally adapted their voices to singing more quietly. This immediately improved their intonation and unconsciously focused them on the sound and quality of their voices. Often vowels sound within a text can affect intonation negatively and singing with only 'doo' served to remedy this. The children also enjoyed singing without the text because it was something novel and a little challenging; yet it yielded such valuable results.

The children of this case study really enjoyed singing and it was clear that singing could play a valuable a role in relaxation. Oftentimes there were lessons that required much concentration from the children for extended periods and certain material was repeated several times to help instil a specific learning aspect. Usually a song followed a time of concentration and it was evident that singing immediately helped the children to loosen up and unwind again. Their bodies visibly relaxed, their faces lit up as they sang and they sang with

enjoyment and energy, bearing testimony to the power of singing. It was a time of just 'letting go' and allowing the music to carry them away.

All the children appeared to enjoy learning and using *solfa* and hand signs. Whenever the colourful hand bells were set out from the low to the high 'do', there was an immediate connection with *solfa* and they would often start singing the *solfa* scale as they were viewing the setting up of the hand bells. This bears testimony to the beginning stages of inner hearing development: the hand bells weren't audible but the children could already hear the sequence of intervals from simply seeing the scale progression.

There was a clear correlation between intervals and hand signs. This was particularly effectively proven when the children had to sing intervals which involved a jump of a fifth, from 'do' to 'so'. They were required to sing this interval using the hand signs a few times but each time beginning on a higher 'do'. They were comfortably able to maintain the pitch jumping up a fifth.

When they were required to use the claves to tap the rhythm and sing using words simultaneously they were able to sing the jumping intervals of thirds and fifths, maintaining correct pitch relatively easily. However, when using the claves and singing an interval of a second in an ascending or descending scale pattern their intonation deteriorated significantly. This was a significant observation, indicating that the intonations of smaller intervals are more difficult for young children.

During the last lesson, the children were introduced to singing in canon. The song was one that they all enjoyed singing and they knew it well. This was a Sesotho folksong called *Mangoane Mpulele* which has a gentle lilting melody. Singing in canon was a new experience for the children and they coped quite well with the part singing. They concentrated really hard in keeping the different

parts going which they managed remarkably well, and were able to maintain the rhythmic element of the song. However, their intonation deteriorated significantly, mainly because some of them started singing much louder. Overall it was a brave effort and showed commendable development in their musicianship skills.

As was mentioned previously, all the singing for the duration of the study was done in unison without any melodic accompaniment. During the last lesson, however, I played CD recordings – with singers being accompanied by instrumental backing – of some of the songs that they had learnt. Hearing the professional recordings being performed with accompaniment was a moment of revelation and great excitement for the children and they responded by joining in with singing and movement and joyous energy. It was clear that the children had learnt the songs well during the lessons; the textual meaning of the songs had been explained, and certain parts of a song being sung with hand signs and *solfa* names had also been used in areas that were compatible with their level of cognisance. Therefore hearing the accompaniment was clearly a meaningful experience for the children; they were hearing with a degree of musical knowledge and understanding, which rendered a much richer music experience. (Refer to section 2.4.2.2 in Chapter 2 of the Literature Review.) After the recording of a song had finished playing, the response that echoed amidst bouncing bodies and smiling faces was, “Ma’am, do another one!”

4.5.2 Individual children

In the following section, each child’s progress will be individually discussed with regard to the development of their general musicianship skills, their singing ability and how they fared with intonation awareness, and finally their ability in learning *solfa* and applying of hand signs. Each child will be studied according to the same aspects of musicianship.

Joy*

Joy is an eight year old girl whose home language is Sesotho and was clearly the most animated participant in the group. She has a deep husky voice and usually interacted in what seemed to be a loud manner owing to these qualities in her voice. She is outgoing and vivacious and usually has a smile with bright happy eyes. She had good leadership qualities and was fairly attentive in the group in spite of her very lively spirit. She got on well with all the children in the group on a personal level, although she had a very strong sense of right and wrong and frequently the words, “Ma’am they are doing …” could be heard when she felt her peers were not co-operating or as she perceived that they were not performing or answering correctly. Her ‘tale-telling’ was never reported in a malicious way but was simply her summation of the situation. This was a forward step in her own cognitive learning since it meant that she was aware, listening and absorbing what was happening in the group while at the same time also taking charge of her own musical growth.

- **General musicianship development**

Joy has a strong sense of pulse and rhythm and she enjoyed moving spontaneously to the songs while at other times she would respond by either keeping the beat or adding an ostinato pattern. Sometimes she would close her eyes and move with the music or gently sway or wave her arms in time to the music. She was very animated in all her music-making and it was clear that she was experiencing the music with her whole body. In addition, while enjoying the music on an emotional level she also showed a keen understanding of other music elements such as dynamics, tempo and even phrasing which was depicted at times in her musical performance.

- **Singing**

Joy loved to sing. She participated in singing with much enthusiasm on every occasion. Her singing was initially usually at a high volume. This had an impact

on the quality of her singing, resulting in poor intonation and generally a sort of semi-shouting sound. There was a noticeable improvement in her intonation when she was guided to sing more quietly; this also created awareness in her of the sound that she was producing. Quieter singing also helped her to focus on internalising the sound. She liked to initiate songs and would simply begin singing one of the songs heartily while encouraging others to join in. She would also often be the one to prompt a song to be repeated once or twice.

Joy particularly liked a certain song, *Naledi*, (Van Aswegen & Vermeulen 2000:85) which is the second one they had learnt. This is a Setswana song about a little girl who was sad when she saw the evening star because it reminded her of the one she loves. There was a somewhat free translation of this so that there could be an added emotional expression of sadness and joy when including music instruments. In the first half of the song *Naledi* was sad but she brightened up when she remembered that her loved one would return. Joy related a story and repeated the same story later, articulating what this song did for her. The story was in reference to a time when her sister was not nice to her, "I sleep, I sleep, when I come tears" (here she wiped her arm across her eyes to show she was crying). "When I wake up, when I wake up I start to jump like this, I sing *Naledi*'" (here she started to hop around in a happy way with a smiling face). She was therefore saying that singing this song helps her to feel happy when someone has not been nice to her. She related this story on two separate occasions; in a slightly different context each time, but the essence of her story was that she always felt better once she had sung this song. Whenever the children were given the chance to suggest a song to sing, *Naledi* would be her choice

- ***Solfa* and hand signs**

Joy showed a very quick and clear understanding of intervals moving in thirds when demonstrated with round discs placed on the floor. She was able to apply this cognitive learning by singing these intervals correctly and clearly. This was

a most pleasing development since her husky voice often tended to cause the quality of her voice to be a little 'fuzzy' and indistinct. She also demonstrated her understanding of singing a descending third in tune in this same lesson. One of her peers had difficulty in placing the discs in the correct melodic order. A typical singing conversation would be when she started singing the melodic phrase "I know what" (so-so-mi) to which I replied back "do you know" (so-so-mi) and she responded back "yes I do" (so-so-mi) with a big pleased smile on her face. She was able to hear this descending third interval and sing it while applying words that were relevant to the situation at hand. This was a pleasing moment and strongly indicated to me that some inner hearing was developing within her.

Joy showed pleasure in using the hand signs. She would always take up the challenge to try and match the hands correctly with its related *solfa* tone. She did this showing more aptitude from week to week. Joy's intonation improved significantly when singing from the low 'do' to the high 'do' with the use of hand signs. When singing without the hand sings, any notes beyond 'fa' did not rise sufficiently to allow the high 'do' to be at pitch. Clearly though, she was able to distinguish an upward movement inwardly once she had used her hands as a visual guide. Because of the short time of exposure to music training and singing skills, her intonation was not one hundred percent accurate, but it was good enough in order for me to ascertain that she was able to control her voice tone according to the upward steps of the scale as indicated by the hand signs.

Serena*

Serena was a very quiet, gentle little girl and the most controlled of the three girls in the group. She was eight years old and her home language was Sesotho. She had a husky, slightly high-pitched voice but she spoke very quietly at most times, almost in a whisper. She interacted well with all her peers in the group and always appeared to be managing her pace of learning. She had the ability to sit quietly and listen intently for extended periods without making any contribution to the music interaction, as many of the other children

often did. It became apparent, though, through her responses, that she was absorbing all that was taking place in the music environment. This was an admirable quality since there were often many distractions inside and outside the classroom which could cause her concentration to be broken.

- **General musicianship development**

Serena coped well with all the general music elements which had been taught. She was more comfortable to follow rather than lead or initiate any musical movement. When movement was included and the others started to move she would then join in and become freer, sometimes expressing herself with abandon. She was comfortably able to tap out the rhythm of a song while it was being sung while also being able to simply keep the beat while singing. In addition to this she showed an ability to maintain a rhythmic pattern on an instrument with part of the group while at the same time the other part of the group was tapping a different rhythm.

- **Singing**

Serena enjoyed singing, though she usually sang quietly within the group. The tone and quality of her voice was only audible when she volunteered or was requested to sing alone. She had a particular song which she always favoured singing, both when being a choice of song to sing as well as when it had been selected by me as the teacher. This song was in her home language and therefore it always evoked an emotional response in her.

- ***Solfa* and hand signs**

When singing a *solfa* pattern upwards or downwards Serena often had difficulty pitching her voice with the required melodic pattern. She tended to simply stay on the same note when required to sing an ascending or descending scaled pattern, though she did not have difficulty in pitching her voice or singing in tune

when singing an actual song. It was clear that she understood that the hand signs indicate direction, but she had difficulty in applying this practically when she was required to sing out of context of a song. This phenomenon posed an interesting problem for me as researcher: was she able to sing songs more easily than simply singing a scale pattern because songs have rhythm, a pleasing melodic movement and meaningful text in a language she understands? Perhaps, for her, songs created a music platform which was more manageable, more pleasurable and which required less intensive listening effort? However, Serena was comfortably able to sing the downward minor third, *so-mi*. (Refer to 2.4.4 in Chapter 2 of the Literature Review.)

Serena was very relaxed with the positioning of the hand signs. She would place her hands gently, carefully and precisely in their positions and was able to relate the correct *solfa* name to each hand sign with ease. She was also able to match her hands correctly from the vocalising of a *solfa* name, either sung or spoken by the teacher. She showed admirable aptitude in matching the appropriate hand sign with her eyes closed while a specific tone was being sung by the teacher.

Lerato*

Lerato was a lively little girl with a likeable open-faced demeanour. She loved giving hugs and making physical contact with others. Her home language is Sepedi and she was eight years old at the time of the study. Lerato had quite a deep gruff voice and she usually spoke quite loudly even in simple conversation with her friends prior to the music lesson. During the lesson she was quite active physically, but her speech was more toned down than when she was outside with her peers. When asked to sing alone or express an opinion she was a little shy but clearly enjoyed the opportunity to perform alone or give her perception of a particular aspect. She participated well for the most part although she was easily distracted by outside disturbances and at times had issues with others in the group, particularly with some of the boys. In spite of

this, during times when she was concentrating hard which usually occurred during the learning and singing of *solfa* and applying hand signs, she clearly showed an ability to absorb new information and skills at a rapid rate.

- **General musicianship development**

Lerato showed a good understanding of the difference between beat and rhythm. She was comfortably able to maintain the beat with body percussion or with percussion instruments while singing at the same time. She also had the ability to tap the rhythm of a song while singing. She enjoyed moving to the music while singing and her movement usually held an emotional element relating well to the mood of what was being sung.

- **Singing**

Lerato participated enthusiastically in all activities and was able to correlate most non-singing activities with her singing. Usually her singing was accompanied by some kind of spontaneous movement; she seldom simply just sat and sang. She had a small voice which made it difficult at times for me to isolate and identify the tone of her voice within the group though she clearly was singing.

Lerato was not shy to express emotional elements in the songs. She liked to show sadness through facial expressions and had an endearing way of displaying displeasure with something by rubbing her tummy and pulling a grumpy face. She generally made a show of crying when we sang the goodbye song to show her sadness that the lesson was over. She was also usually the child who would initiate adding a melodic and rhythmic element to longer notes in certain songs or activities. She would insert these little musical gems without disturbing the pulse of the music and the melodic additions were usually fairly well pitched.

Lerato found it difficult initially to sing all the way up the scale from low to high 'do' while maintaining the pitch. Reaching the higher notes proved more difficult for her owing to the huskiness in her voice with a possibility that she was switching over to her "chest" voice to compensate. Consequently, she would end up straining her voice and start to sing louder in an attempt to reach the higher notes; the effect was not musically pleasing and was also vocally unhealthy. She and others in the group found this rather funny the first few times. However, once she had been guided to listen to her voice carefully while singing quietly and also following the upward direction of the hand signs, there was a significant improvement in her intonation. She began to sing from 'do' to 'do', becoming more confident with reaching higher notes in tune. The others in the group as well as Lerato herself no longer laughed at her attempts as they heard the improvement and saw what she had accomplished. Once this vocal hurdle had been overcome, she was able to sing any upward moving patterns in her higher range without any discomfort.

- ***Solfa* and hand signs**

Lerato coped easily with *solfa* and hand signs on a cognitive level from the outset. She enjoyed singing with *solfa* and really responded animatedly when the hand signs were included. This was true when the hand signs were used in the context of a song as well as when it was used to accompany ascending and descending scale patterns and patterns with skipping notes. It would appear that she enjoyed the challenge of trying to apply hand signs correctly whether in a song, or visually following a pattern indicated on the hand bells or even matching a pattern through pictures or graphs. She might have viewed this as a fun exercise, but it was evident to me as researcher that much unconscious learning had been taking place. Whilst her intonation was not always accurate, she was clearly aware of what *solfa* and hand signs implied with regard to pitch movement. Furthermore, she was able to match her voice with the direction of the *solfa* and/or hand signs.

Lerato fared particularly well with an exercise in which the children had to close their eyes. They were requested to sing ‘do-mi-so’ in an ascending and then descending order while matching the appropriate hand signs to the pitch of their voices. This was a very valuable activity and highlighted her progress in this particular area. There was a significant improvement in her intonation and it also indicated that she had no difficulty with the kinaesthetic aspect, especially since she was not able to see what her hand was doing, being all inner body development. This was clearly a satisfying moment for her.

Praise*

Praise was a cheerful eight year old Sepedi boy. He interacted well for the most part with his peers in the group and participated comfortably in most activities, particularly when there were rhythmic elements included in the music-making. He had a little mischievous streak in him, which was evidenced in his eyes and facial expression at times. This mischief-making was usually triggered in moments when there was a lapse in his concentration and he sought to do something which would attract some attention from his peers or even from me as the teacher.

- **General musicianship development**

Praise evidenced a natural response to the rhythmical aspect of music-making at the very first lesson. While he was comfortably able to keep a steady pulse while the group sang a song, he consistently inclined towards incorporating a different rhythmic element whenever the group was required only to keep the beat. He did this well and was usually permitted to continue expressing himself in this way unless there was a specific pedagogical reason that he should rather maintain the pulse with the rest of the group. His ability to spontaneously play a rhythmic pattern against the beat showed good listening and co-ordination skills on his part. When he was adding a rhythm or keeping the beat, he usually did

not participate in the singing, possibly because this calls other skills into play which were as yet undeveloped in Praise.

- **Singing**

While Praise was the most rhythmically responsive boy in the group, he was the only child in the group who consistently had difficulty in finding his “head” voice. For this reason he was frequently picked on a little by the others when singing together in the group. Time restraints did not allow me to give attention to this specific area of his musical development properly, but whenever help was offered in this regard, he was always keen to try and improve in this area of his musicianship. Considering that his peers even laughed at him at times – as children tend to do – he showed no ill-effects and bravely kept trying to better himself with admirable fortitude. Praise appeared to enjoy singing though he did not participate in singing as much as the other children did. This could have been due partly to him not singing with his “head” voice and the other children’s reaction to that. However, it could have been a desire to just absorb all the music input that was taking place. There were times when he would sit in the group and just listen and then participate again when he felt so inclined. On more than one occasion he inadvertently revealed encouraging musicianship development in his singing and inner hearing abilities. This happened when he was behaving mischievously by purposely singing a phrase in the song with a deep voice to try and get the others to laugh at him; but he was in fact singing the melodic phrase an octave lower. He was singing in tune, albeit an octave lower. Praise found it difficult to hum in a legato style; his humming was almost as though he was trying to sing words with his mouth closed and this was also done with the “chest” voice. These difficulties persisted throughout the duration of the study, but he was undeterred and continued singing with the group. Fortunately the potential exists for this area of his musicianship to be corrected and developed because of his openness and willingness to learn. Despite the difficulties it was clear that Praise did enjoy using his voice to make a joyful sound.

- ***Solfa* and hand signs**

Praise showed a keen interest in learning and using the hand signs. He usually enjoyed this component of the lesson. He was always able to remain focused for this activity: his whole body would become calm and he would sit with eyes almost transfixed as he copied the hand movements of the teacher. Usually hand signs were accompanied by *solfa* singing, so even though he was not always able to pitch the notes correctly as discussed above, the link between the tone and the hand was being forged. At times the hand signs were used to depict short melodic patterns without singing and the children were required to try and hear the tone inwardly. He enjoyed this activity and it would be at this time that inner hearing took place.

Praise responded well to the activity which required him to close his eyes while singing *solfa* and using hand signs. Clearly this enabled him to focus on matching the hand sign with the *solfa* tone that I as teacher was singing. He tended not to sing during these times, concentrating his efforts on performing the physical activity of shaping his hands to form the correct signs.

Happy*

Happy was a quiet and gentle little eight year old boy. His home language was Venda. He had an open happy face and smiled a lot. He participated well enough in the group in a very quiet way. He didn't ever initiate any kind of interaction or music making but appeared to be content with simply going along with whatever the rest of the group was doing. He was very dependent on the other children within the music context.

- **General musicianship development**

Happy had the capacity to develop musically but his progress in general musicianship was comparatively slow owing to him being a follower. He was more inclined to want to copy or see what the others in the group were doing rather than taking some risks and trying out things for himself. Many of his actions, rhythmic accompaniments and keeping the beat to songs tended to be tentative and he often sought assurance for his actions by watching and copying the others. However, development of his musicianship skills, through the continued exposure to interactive music-making with the group, will undoubtedly manifest themselves, albeit a little later than some of the others. While some musical skills were still at an embryonic stage, another and perhaps more valuable musical skill was already taking shape in Happy, namely a good singing voice.

- **Singing**

Happy had a sweet, pure singing voice which was evident only when he was requested to sing alone since he tended to sing very quietly, even in the group setting. When he sang a song or part of a song on his own his voice was clear and clean; he had no difficulty finding his “head” voice and was able to maintain his singing without compromising good intonation. He was able to adjust the pitch of a note to match the required tone on the rare occasion that a note was not entirely correct. While he was always highly praised for good intonation and beautiful singing, he seldom showed any kind of emotional change because he was usually smiling anyway. He had a constantly cheerful demeanour; perhaps this had an impact on intonation owing to a very relaxed body posture. He sang very quietly while singing in the group and it was unfortunate that he did not quite realise his ability to sing well because it would have given him the self-confidence to participate more fully in the other music activities as well.

- ***Solfa* and hand signs**

Happy participated in the singing of *solfa* and the use of hand signs in much the same way that he interacted with all the other music activities: tentative and taking his cue from the others, unless specifically requested to demonstrate some aspect on his own. Even then, when he was showing hand signs or singing in *solfa* alone, he would be looking to the teacher for assurance that what he was doing was correct. This insecurity in Happy was confirmed when he had to sing and show hand signs with his eyes closed. He was quite at sea as to where his hands should be when he was not able to see what the others were doing.

Kamo*

Kamo was an eight year old isiZulu speaking boy. He was a very energetic child, and found it difficult to sit still for extended periods. Kamo's liveliness in the classroom was at times even unruly to the point where the others in the group would become annoyed with him because he was distracting them. He would often lie on his stomach or jump up and try to move places in the classroom. This did not always bode well with the others, since they all had their own allocated places at which they sat. Despite him being difficult at times he was a very likeable child and displayed a teachable spirit when he was in a calm frame of mind and able to exercise self-discipline.

- **General musicianship development**

Kamo demonstrated a considerable amount of understanding and natural musical aptitude. It would appear that, even through all the physical activity, he was absorbing all that was happening around him. He responded well to all the rhythmic elements and enjoyed improvising with movement while songs were being sung. Kamo did not seem to be tuned into the quieter emotional aspects of music-making too much though. He was physically able to perform the music activities well and showed understanding of music concepts which had been

taught, yet his music-making appeared to be a little mechanical at times within the general music context.

- **Singing**

In contrast to the above paragraph which describes a perceived lack of emotion in Kamo's music-making, singing presented an entirely different picture. He enjoyed singing and his voice had a very clear and clean sound. He had excellent hearing abilities and was able to sing through a song correctly and accurately once given the starting note. It was usually in the quiet moments when concentration was required to enable listening skills to be developed through pitch matching, that Kamo's emotional connection to the music manifested itself. It would appear that he needed calmness around him to be able to recognise that there are other components in the music-making process as well. This is not to say that Kamo was not permitted to enjoy the lively and louder music-making with instruments and movement described in the first paragraph; but the study sought to investigate principles of musical development which at times could only be discovered in a quieter environment.

- ***Solfa* and hand signs**

Kamo was able to sing the *solfa* scale as well as parts of the scale with clear intonation and he often did this between songs or when the hand bells were being set out. At these times his singing was spontaneous and he usually sang in a gentle voice with a relaxed body posture. His eyes would follow each hand bell individually as he sang each tone. This was a forward step towards inner ear development. Kamo provided a beautiful illustration of intonation development on one occasion. The hand bells had been set out in front of the children on the floor and a small picture of the *solfa* hand sign was being placed underneath each hand bell. As each picture was put down I sang the *solfa* name using the appropriate pitch. Kamo was so taken with each picture that he softly exclaimed an 'aah' at the correct pitch after each picture had been placed.

This individual 'a-ha' moment for Kamo created an unprompted rendition of "do-aah, re-aah, mi-aah" which was encouraging and proof of his own growth. While in the process of admiring the related pictures, his inner ear was enabling him to also sing each note at the correct pitch.

He was comfortable with the hand signs and appeared to enjoy using them. He had the ability to match the hand signs while singing the *solfa* tones with accuracy and precision especially when his eyes were closed. This was again a time when there was quiet and calmness in the classroom and he was better able to concentrate. This activity proved to be valuable for his development given his very busy temperament.

Kamo was the child in the group who had days when he was quite disruptive and had difficulty with being physically inactive. Yet he showed good understanding of music concepts, had the ability to pitch notes easily and could sing in tune. He was also able to apply hand signs correctly and showed clear development of his general musicianship skills. When he was having a good day, he displayed excellent concentration skills and it was at these times that this growth took place. There were occasions when he responded with correct intonation and supplied relevant answers to questions not directed at him even while he was behaving in an unruly manner. This bears testimony to unconscious learning and inner ear development having taken place.

4.5.3 Focus group discussions

During the focus group discussion, all six of the children expressed a deep enjoyment of singing and they were all given the opportunity to sing a song of their own choice, the intention being that they would sing their song solo. However, once the selected child had uttered their first note and word of the song, the rest of the group would simply join in with the first singer. This spontaneous participation with the soloist occurred with each of the chosen

songs and it appeared to be a completely natural thing for them to interact like this. All the songs were sung with enthusiasm, yet the children still expressed the emotion which related to the meaning of the song. For example the words of one of the songs, which was a Zulu song, roughly translated in the children's own words as "we don't like Satan, Jesus is all-powerful". This was sung forcefully and with conviction. The accompanying body movements expressed this same forcefulness. By contrast, another song which was sung in English and Sepedi called "We are marching in the light of God" was sung also with enthusiasm but with a more gentle spirit. Each child had a chance to choose a song and, significantly, they did not all necessarily choose a song in their mother tongue. The songs were chosen simply because a particular song gave the child pleasure to sing. This unplanned and spontaneous selection of songs speaks of an acceptance of the languages of other cultures and an ability to enjoy music, no matter what language or culture it comes from. The singing of these songs was a text-book example of community music and provided an indisputable portrayal of the significant contribution music-making can have in the lives of children.

After the choosing and singing of songs activity, the children were then questioned as to what kind of singing they enjoyed most with their friends in the group. Four of the six children expressed enjoyment of the Setswana song *Naledi* (refer to 4.2.1 for a description of this song). The other two children rubbed their tummies and pulled unhappy faces to express their dislike for this song. It would appear that one of the two children was simply mimicking the other since this particular child usually sings *Naledi* enthusiastically. The child who mainly disliked *Naledi* said she preferred a Sesotho song. This song had a gentle lilting rhythm and was in her mother-tongue. Singing this song always evoked an emotional response in this little girl; she would get a far-away look in her eyes and start singing gently while her body swayed in time (refer to 2.2 in the literature review). This particular little girl was the most moderately tempered child in the group, and clearly the musical character of the song resonated with her inner self.

I also asked the children which activity they enjoyed most in the music class. Three of the children responded that it was singing, two said it was using the hand bells and singing, and one said it was using hand signs and hand bells. For me this was a response to take note of since all the lessons had included other music activities as well such as movement and instrumental playing which they clearly enjoyed as well.

The children were then required to share which language they enjoyed most to sing in. Surprisingly again, not all the children affirmed their own language necessarily as their preferred language to sing in (refer to paragraph 1 of this chapter). However, the child spoken of previously who did not enjoy the song *Naledi* once again made reference to her favourite song discussed earlier in this section, the song being in her own home language.

Lastly, I enquired how the children experienced singing with *solfa* and hand signs. Three of the children said they liked using the hand signs and two spontaneously expressed further opinions on hand signs. One child volunteered that “it teaches us to sing” while another said “it’s beautiful”. One child said that it was not enjoyable to use the hand signs, while the remaining child did not voice an opinion.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed analysis of the research findings. The group was considered as a whole and each participant’s development was discussed individually.

The next chapter will conclude the study with a summary of the most significant findings, share the researcher’s personal reflections and put forward possible avenues for further research.

Chapter 5: Summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

In this final chapter a summary on the main findings of the research will be presented. This will be followed by some self-reflections of me as researcher. The conclusion will confirm and provide evidence for the value of the study and recommendations for possible further study will be suggested.

5.2 Summary of findings

Qualitative findings reflect the information acquired from focused observations, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Repeated in-depth examinations of the video recordings of each lesson provided information for the focused observations. A focus group discussion was held during the sixth lesson in which all the children participated. To enable detailed observation and analysis, this meeting was video-recorded. Lastly, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with each child and these were also video-recorded to be studied comprehensively at a later stage.

The data provided information which was divided into three categories, namely general music development; singing; *solfa* and hand signs (grouped as one unit). Although general music development was not a primary focus it was viewed as integral to the study since it was the cornerstone of this investigation and played an important role in the development of the main subject.

5.2.1 General music development

All the children demonstrated an ability to understand and perform the basic elements of music with relative ease. From the outset and throughout the

project as the children became more comfortable with the music environment and the music material they became more bold with their own interpretation and creativity in their music-making; both physically through free movement and vocally through their singing. Although no child was ever left out of the interaction, personality and self-confidence and played a significant role in the level of musical communications.

5.2.2 Singing

Singing, and in particular the singing of songs, was the area of musical interaction from which the children derived the most pleasure. Their enjoyment was obvious in their responses whenever it was suggested that a song should be sung. This rang true for songs which had been taught during the research period as well as their own songs which they were given the opportunity to share with the others. Clearly the emotional content of the songs played an important role in their performance and enjoyment, weaving a therapeutic thread into the music-making which could not be ignored.

Children were encouraged to sing with good intonation while the positive impact of softer singing on intonation was highlighted by me as their teacher. The children acknowledged these aspects and, as the research process progressed, their ability to intonate well as well as their general musicianship improved significantly.

5.2.3 *Solfa* and hand signs

The children's improved intonation could also undoubtedly be attributed to the continued exposure of *solfa* and its visual companion, the hand signs. The novelty of using strange sounding symbols combined with odd hand signs made this activity enjoyable for the children. Finally linking these two elements with a vocal sound was the ultimate challenge and through the whole process

immense musical growth took place, particularly in the area of learning to sing in tune and the development of inner hearing.

5.3 Reflections

Participating as a teacher in this research has been an enlightening process for me. I have learnt things about my own teaching which have caused me to pause and consider my approach and presentation. I have realised that I need to be aware of my position on a daily basis before I enter the classroom to interact with children. If I am seeking to make a difference in the lives of others then, according to Newberger (in Hanser, 1999:xi) I need to humbly and philosophically appraise my own life, my history; examining my motivations and human aesthetic responses. My own frame of mind or emotional position can surely influence my presentation, create bias, or render me insensitive to the position of the children I am teaching, particularly in an impoverished community with young children. My reflections have led me believe that if, as is generally agreed, music is a tool which can bring healing, joy and wholeness, then in a community such as this I should be doing less talking and more *musicking* (a term coined by David Elliott in his book, Music Matters of 1995). A child in a slightly older age group at one of the schools where I teach once said to me, “Rose, you are always talking”. I think there is so much to learn from the voices of the children we teach. Children do learn from just doing and creating; the explaining can come once the music-making has been experienced.

My daily teaching routine takes place at schools where the children come from homes of affluence and many of them want for nothing. Teaching music on a level of some depth with young and impoverished children in an environment which is so far removed from the comforts that many South African children take for granted has taught me many things about these young children. Firstly I realised how resilient these little beings are. In spite of their home situations, often with a lack of proper care and economic insufficiency, they always showed

great pride and pleasure at being a part of this school which provides only the basics. Secondly, and I can only report here on their musical development; they were very eager to learn and keen to realise their musical potential.. Finally, owing to the limited time available for the study, many of the music aspects presented to the children were more advanced than I as researcher would have presented or expected of other children their age. However, in the face of all these new challenges, these young children really excelled. They did not simply give up or fall out of the programme but took up the challenge like champions and far exceeded my expectations in the music arena.

As a researcher I had to learn to step back from my teaching position and realise that I was not responsible for the children's responses. I was there as researcher to investigate their responses. While I did all that I could as teacher to guide them and to facilitate music making opportunities, as researcher I had to learn let go in certain parts of the journey. This was not an easy task because the lines become blurred between teacher and researcher.

5.4 Conclusions

This study conclusively showed that musicianship in young impoverished children can be developed through Kodály principles. In addition to music adding pleasure and meaning to the lives of young children, the study demonstrated that using *solfa* and hand signs were beneficial towards developing inner hearing and improving intonation in young children's voices. The study confirmed that children love to sing and that singing songs from their own cultures was an uplifting and enjoyable experience for them. There was no evidence of cultural bias and this emphasised that participating in community music-making helps to teach tolerance, understanding and appreciation of one another's cultures.

5.5 Recommendations

This study took place over twelve weeks which is a considerably short time for young children to build up and develop a number of musicianship skills which will equip them well enough to realise their full music potential in years to come. The research topic on musicianship is very broad, but to provide focus only the areas of singing, *solfa* and hand signs were covered in some depth. A recurring observation during this study was that children from this cultural environment vocalise at a dynamic level which is quite loud, often with a loss of control. While singing loudly is not wrong *per se*, in this particular setting loud singing impacted tone and intonation negatively. Further research in this area could help to negotiate ways of improving young South African children's intonation without expecting them to compromise on the musical values within their culture.

The children's spontaneous movement responses highlighted the importance of such involvement within their musical experiences. Whilst movement in music-making is enjoyable for most children, the study showed that tonal quality and pitch were adversely affected when movement and singing took place simultaneously. In addition to this the balance between the rhythmic and melodic elements was influenced. Exploring these two areas relating to movement and intonation could provide worthwhile insights for music educators. Further examination of the research material demonstrated the cultural significance of movement in developing children's identities. Investigating this area of development within a South African context, particularly with young children, could make a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

Other possible research areas identified through the study are:

- Investigating melodic embellishments in folk music as opposed to performing in strict adherence to the written music;
- Exploring the importance of tactile and visual interactions;

- Examining the impact of adding melodic accompaniment when teaching young children folk music and children's songs.

South Africa has many music community programmes which are run by passionate teachers willing to help others find joy in music-making. A vast number of these programmes are run by instrumental teachers, though not exclusively, and many young children are being trained as instrumental players. Kodaly's premise is that the way to become a good instrumentalist and to play with musicality is by first being able to sing. He is of the view that this will enable a musician to sing through an instrument as well since the instrument becomes an extension of the whole body.

This community project has come to an end, in terms of these children being taught certain music elements, and also in the development of specific musicianship skills for the purposes of research. Yet in some ways it is really just the beginning of a journey for the children. They have shared their lives closely with each other on a cultural level, gaining some understanding and exercising tolerance of one another's cultures through the singing of folk songs. Whilst appreciating another child's culture, they have simultaneously strengthened their own ethnic standing and realised that it is possible to enjoy someone else's musical culture yet to retain their own cultural identity. They have also begun to develop valuable musicianship skills, specifically in the area of *solfa* and hand signs and how it is applied in singing and intonation development. Undoubtedly, this project has shaped each child on a musical level and a human level.

Janácek's *Uncollected Essays on Music* contain a quote which embodies the value of this community project. He states:

> In folk song, there is the whole man: body, soul, landscape, all of it, all. He who grows from folks song, grows into a whole man…Folk song can

bind the nation-indeed-nations- and bind all of mankind into one spirit, one kind of happiness, one kind of bliss.

(Dorsey, 1996:31)

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Appendix A: Semi-structured interview schedule

(This instrument was used for individual interviews with the children)

1. What do you enjoy most about singing and making music with other children?
2. Please sing me a song that you enjoy singing.
3. Which music activity do you enjoy the most in the music class?
4. What are the languages that you enjoy singing in?
5. Which language is the easiest for you to sing in?
6. How do you feel about using hand signs while singing “do, re mi, fa, so”?
7. Do you think that your voice sounds better or not when you sing and use the hand signs at the same time? Why?
8. Do you prefer singing songs with movement or without movement?
9. How do you feel when you sing?
10. How do you feel when you move and sing at the same time?

Appendix B: Focus group discussion schedule

(These questions are similar to the first ten questions of the semi-structured interview schedule to provide some familiarity to the children)

1. What do you enjoy most about singing and making music with other children?
2. Please sing me a song that you enjoy singing.
3. Which music activity do you enjoy the most in the music class?
4. What are the languages that you enjoy singing in?
5. Which language is the easiest for you to sing in?
6. How do you feel about using hand signs while singing “do, re mi, fa, so”?
7. Do you think that your voice sounds better or not when you sing and use the hand signs at the same time? Why?
8. Do you prefer singing songs with movement or without movement?
9. How do you feel when you sing?
10. How do you feel when you move and sing at the same time?

Appendix C: Letter of informed consent for the Headmistress

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Music Department
Faculty of Humanities
University of Pretoria
Date

Contact details of study leader
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Researcher: Rosemarie Graham
Department: Music
Student no: 29567239
Student address: 31 Mulder's Mile, Eldoraigne Ext. 3, Centurion
Tel no of student: 082 779 2780

Title of the study: **Investigating the development of musicianship using Kodály's principles in Grade 2 children in an impoverished South African community**

Dear Madam

Your school is invited to participate in a music research project aimed at nurturing cultural heritage in young children. The research will be done through presenting the principles of Kodály's philosophy of music education towards developing musicianship in young children.

I hereby kindly request your permission for a number of children, whom you may select, to participate in this project. The parents and the participating children will be required to complete a letter of informed consent and assent should they agree to participate in the research project. The children's confidentiality is assured. You as headmistress, the parents and/or the children may withdraw their participation from the project at any time without providing reasons.

Data collection will take place by means of weekly music lessons spanning 8 weeks. Each lesson will be video-recorded, the researcher will be doing focused observations while the lessons are in progress, and 2 semi-structured interviews will take place. The first interview will be with the group together and the second interview will be with each child individually.

Data collected may be required at a later stage for further research purposes.

All data will be stored safely at the University of Pretoria for 15 years. Only I and my supervisor(s) will have access to the raw data.

If you are willing to allow selected children to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent.

I, _____, give permission that children selected be me, may participate in this research project. I am fully aware of the nature of the research and acknowledge that participation in this research is voluntary. I also understand that I, children or other participants may withdraw from participating at any time. The information that will be obtained from focused observations, interview responses and video-recordings, is not regarded as being sensitive. However, should I wish for the school to remain anonymous, this will be respected during the dissemination of the research. All information will be treated as confidential. I understand that this research is for the development of music education in South Africa.

Appendix D: Letter of informed consent for the parents

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Music Department
Faculty of Humanities
University of Pretoria
Date

Contact details of study leader
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E-mail: dorette.vermeulen@up.ac.za

Researcher: Rosemarie Graham
Department: Music
Student no: 29567239
Student address: 31 Mulder's Mile, Eldoraigne Ext. 3, Centurion
Tel no of student: 082 779 2780

Title of the study: **Investigating the development of musicianship using Kodály's principles in Grade 2 children in an impoverished South African community**

Dear Parent

Your child has been invited to participate in a research project aimed at nurturing cultural heritage in young children through the medium of music. The research will seek to observe musical development in your child by using folk music and children's music taken from your child's own culture. I hereby kindly request your permission for your child to participate in the research which will include observations, interview responses, photographs, video-recordings and journal articles made during the research period.

The time period of collecting information will take place over three months, once a week for forty five minutes. Your child will participate in a group with five other children from the school. The lessons will take place in the afternoons so as not to disrupt valuable school time. I do not regard the information that I will gather during this research as being sensitive. However, your child's real name will not be used in the report. You (parents name) on behalf of (child's name) may decide to withdraw at any stage should you wish not to continue with the project without having to provide reasons for wanting to discontinue. Your child will be requested to complete a letter of assent should you and he/she agree to be part of this research project.

If you are willing to allow (child's name) to participate in this study please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent.

I, _____, give permission that my child (child's name) may be observed, participate in interviews, be photographed and video-recorded for purposes of research in music education. I am fully aware of the nature of the research and acknowledge that I (parent's name) on behalf of (child's name) may withdraw at any time and that my child (child's name) participation in this research is voluntary. The information that will be disclosed in observations, interview response, photographs, video-recordings and journals articles, is not regarded as being sensitive. However, should I wish for my child (child's name) to remain anonymous, his/her anonymity and confidentiality will be respected. I understand that this research is for the development of music education in South Africa.

All data will be stored safely at the University of Pretoria for 15 years. Only I and my supervisor(s) will have access to the raw data.

I wish for (child's name) to remain anonymous:

(Please tick the appropriate box)

Yes		No	

Participant: _____ Date: _____

MMus student/researcher: Rosemarie Graham _____ Date: _____

Appendix E: Letter of informed assent from the participating child

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Music Department
Faculty of Humanities
University of Pretoria
Date

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Title of the study: **Investigating the development of musicianship using Kodály's principles in Grade 2 children in an impoverished South African community**

Dear (child's name)

I am a music teacher who would like to learn a lot more about teaching music to young children. I am doing some more learning at the University of Pretoria to earn a Master's degree in music education.

I would like to invite you to join a small music group of children at school to help me in making music together which I think you might find enjoyable and a lot of fun. We will be singing and dancing and playing musical instruments. While you are singing, dancing and playing the instruments I would like to take some photographs and do video-recording of how the music-making looks so that I can write about it in my research. I would also like to ask you questions about the music, such as what kind of songs you enjoy the most or which instruments you like playing.

I will come to the school once a week for three months and give music classes to you and the other children. The music lesson will be for forty-five minutes and will be in the afternoons after school. If you decide to join in the music group but find after a little while you do not want to participate any more, you may stop coming and continue with your afternoon activities as you did before you joined the group.

All the information will be kept safely at the university for 15 years.

I wish to join the music group

(Please tick the appropriate box)

Yes		No	

Please fill in this section:

Yes, I (write your name and surname) _____, would like to participate in the music research project.

I know that:

- My name will be changed to protect my privacy
- All information will be treated confidentially
- I can stop participating at any time.

I (write your name and surname) _____, give permission that photographs and video-recordings of me may be used for the research, as well as being willing to share my music experiences through answering questions. All the information will be kept safely at the university.

Date: _____

(MMus) student/researcher: (Rosemarie Graham): _____ Date: _____