

The specifics of Colourstrings

Characteristics of the conception

It is essential, particularly in the early years that instrumental teaching is of highest quality. These formative first years are crucial for the child's future in music. The Kodály philosophy-based Colourstrings approach was developed by the Hungarian brothers Géza (violin) and Csaba Szilvay (Cello). This method creates a firm musical foundation for the child, which means child-centred music teaching. The philosophy and method does not form or mould the child to the need of the instrument but rather domesticates the instruments and the instrumental teaching to meet the child's need.

In more than 30 years of successfully teaching this method was developed further and refined. With a huge farsightedness Colourstrings is connecting all the relevant elements of the string literature in an artful effective and gentle way so that there are no gaps. At the very beginning of learning to play an instrument the child will master the elements on which all the later musical and technical requirements are based. The structure of the material gives a lot of freedom for the individual personality of teacher and child. Colourstrings offers a frame, which can be filled by the teacher's and child's creativity, phantasie and musicality.

Colourstrings is not limited only to teaching manual dexterity movements made by the two hands but tend also to give the whole music as an "art-package" to the child, where the developing of instrumental technique, the musical hearing (with the help of the relative Solmisation), understanding (music theory) and the musical emotions occur in equilibrium all the time.

Colourstrings involves many senses in learning any new idea. To teach more complex notions, the instrumental school will make use of Colour- and Picture symbols. These illustrations bring complex musical ideas within the child's sphere of understanding. To see and to hear goes hand in hand. Thus the learning is deeper and more lasting.

But also musical writing and reading is connected from the very beginning with playing. While playing and reading movements are connected with intellectual processes. Playing and instrument thus develops also to an intellectual activity.

Colourstrings teaching means individual teaching, which is complemented by group teaching. The aim of group teaching is to introduce the child playing chamber music at an early age.

Characteristics of the development of the instrumental technique

As a first method in the history of string pedagogy Colourstrings is using systematically natural harmonics to develop the first technical skills on the instruments. Through e.g. octave harmonics the child becomes acquainted with whole fingerboard. The arm is doing changing of positions movements at a very early time and the child learns immediately a very free and relaxed handling of the instrument. Also for the development of the bow technique is the regularly use of harmonics very useful: The flutelike, intensive and pure sound of a harmonic can just appear, if the child's bow stroke is straight, with the right amount of speed, length, pressure and bow hair.

Another focus is the pizzicato of the left hand. Colourstrings introduced as a first method the "Number Pizzicato": Not just the little finger is plucking but in turn all fingers of the left hand (a higher string with a higher finger and a lower string with a lower finger). Thus the children learn before stopping the string to move the fingers independently.

Unique in Colourstrings is also the systematic connection between learning the instruments and relative Solmisation. The use of the relative Solmisation (movable DO respectively LA as the Major and Minor tonic symbol) facilitates transposing in all registers starting from any finger. The child hears inside the next tone step before playing it. The fingers are led by the ear. This promotes a very good basic intonation. Without problems Colourstrings children can play scales even in Fis major or B flat minor. The relative Solmisation serves also a very free handling of the instrument because the child can discover already at a very early stage the whole fingerboard with the help of transpositions. A free playing position can be easier developed.

As summary a Colourstrings trained child has developed all important skills for expressing music:

- Equally sophisticated technique in both hands
- A developed musical intellect
- Fine intonation
- Good note-reading
- Artistic aptitude for musical colours, shades, details and phrasing
- Rich creativity developed through transposing, transforming, improvising and composing
- Soloist activity developed together with chamber musicianship