

“Viennese Musical Clock” from *Háry János Suite* ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

Born: Dec 16, 1882

Died: March 6, 1967

Zoltán Kodály spent a great deal of his life collecting and studying the folk songs of his country, Hungary. He was famous as a composer and as a teacher who created a new way to teach music to kids. His teaching ideas became known as “The Kodály Method,” and are still used today by teachers around the world.

Kodály’s life long interest in folk music began early. His parents were both amateur musicians, and as a boy, he learned to play the violin, piano, viola and cello. He performed in his school orchestra and at home with his parents.

Because Kodály’s father worked with the Hungarian Railway System, Zoltán was able to travel around and learn about the music in different parts of his country. As an adult, Kodály continued traveling around Hungary to collect and study Hungarian folk music. He wanted to preserve it so that today’s kids could enjoy it as much as he had. Much of his music was based on the folk songs that he collected on his travels.

Kodály’s most popular work is the suite of music from his opera *Háry János*. *Háry János* was a real man who liked to sit around at the village inn telling tall tales about his youth. One of those tales had him defeating Napoleon’s army all by himself. In the “Viennese Musical Clock” he’s remembering the clock that struck noon at the court of the Austrian emperor.

“The Kodály Method” is a system for teaching music to children from the time they’re born until adulthood. Kodály thought the voice was the center of everything musical, so singing plays a big role in his system. The next time you’re singing in music class, remember Zoltán Kodály, the man who wanted to teach children to learn to love music!