

"If you cannot teach me to fly...."

## Teach me to Sing!" JM Barrie - author of Peter Pan.

One thing I am most often asked is why do I use **Tonic or Movable do solfa** to teach?

I believe that one of the most important goals for a music teacher is to teach **true music literacy**. This is the ability to see what you hear (as if it were written on a score) and hear what you see (hear the notes you see on a staff) – inner hearing.

*"He who cannot hear what he sees and cannot see what he hears is not a musician"* Zoltan Kodály.

To truly and profoundly UNDERSTAND music, musicians need an **absolute** and a **relative** system for referring to pitch – **letter names** is our absolute system (therefore we DO NOT need fixed *do solfa* as well – if C is always *do* then let's just call it C) and **tonic or movable do solfa** is our relative system.

Here are just SOME of the reasons why I teach tonic solfa:

1. Music, unlike other abstract universal languages e.g. maths – is most meaningful when actually **EXPERIENCED** – therefore we experience music and express music as sound, hence we **SING** (and play too of course!).
2. Tonic solfa gives you a **language** to use to "spell" music you see or hear;
3. It helps you to hear music **internally** (in your head with NO external stimulation) and understand what you hear;
4. It allows the musician to interpret and name each note's **function** in a given key and in relation to one another. This is REGARDLESS of key, clef or instrument. In other words, *do* is ALWAYS the tonic of a Major key, so is ALWAYS the dominant in a Major key, *la* is ALWAYS the tonic of a minor key etc.
5. It allows students to **hear and experience patterns** in all music – not just know them at an intellectual or academic level;
6. It allows for the **integration** of the aural, theoretical, spatial and kinesthetic in an approach to learning the musical language (the use of **handsigns**)