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## Our Library's Music Collection in the Era of Streaming Services

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### Résumé de l'article

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# Our Library's Music Collection in the Era of Streaming Services

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"Does anyone still listen to CDs?" The presentation aims to introduce the operation of our Music Collection by providing qualitative and quantitative data linked to loans, library visits, online repositories with music content, music programs and workshops. Fundamentally, our Music Collection has a value-preserving function linked to processing, preserving, and presenting the documents of local music life in a spectacular form. Virtual exhibitions based on digitized documents, various databases, and knowledge repositories are good tools for organizing knowledge. People can also be introduced to these contents during library programs (e.g., lectures, sessions, and competitions). Due to the three pillars – knowledge organization, preservation of value, and community building – our Music Collection is a place where people return to listen to music on-site in a comfortable armchair while reading their favourite magazine. Due to the ever-changing world, we must apply innovative approaches, react proactively, and adapt to changes (an example of this could be our Creative Studio). The main purpose of this study is to describe the music-related activities of a particular library (Katona József Library, Kecskemét, Hungary); it is descriptive work and does not aim to compare the data and results with those of other libraries.

*Keywords:* music collection, knowledge organization, value preservation, community building

## Introduction

"Do people still go to the library?" "Do people still read?" "Does anyone still listen to CDs these days?" We get these questions every day. The answer is clear for those who visit the library, read, and listen to CDs. However, a significant part of society is completely unaware of the possibilities offered by a 21st-century library. Lay people still identify the librarian as an auntie wearing a bun, sitting and reading behind the counter, who tells the loudmouths to be quiet. Those who get to know the depths of our profession better see its complexity. It is a pleasure to me that here at the Katona József Library, we also receive praise for the many high-quality programs we organize.

In this presentation, I strive to introduce the music services of the Katona József Library by highlighting the possibilities with which the music collection of a public library can work for society even these days. To do this, of course, we should not think in terms of the library's holdings. In contrast, the library should be seen as a space that provides information and knowledge and strengthens community cohesion. Besides such places as the home and the workplace, the library, as a third place, can become decisive in people's lives.

## The history of development of audio carriers and the transformation of consumption habits

The first sound recorder, the phonograph, was created by Thomas Alva Edison in 1877. Using a funnel and needle, this device recorded the sound on a revolving cylinder covered by soft tin foil. A decade later, Emile Berliner invented the gramophone, which already worked on a disc, and from 1904, sound was recorded on both sides. Almost thirty years later, the 4–5-minute length per record increased to 20 minutes by changing the speed. Experiments linked to this innovation were due to Hungarian-born Károly Péter Goldmark. In 1948, the LP (25 and 30 cm) and the single (17.5 cm) became commercially available, and in 1958 the production of stereo records began. The German company AEG introduced the first magnetophon in 1935. During the process, red iron oxide powder was applied to acetate tape, which was magnetized using electric waves, and then its signals were amplified with a tube amplifier. Philips released the compact tape cassette in 1963, which reached its peak of popularity in the early 1980s. In 1979, Sony got attention due to the first Walkman, while Philips made a big splash with the first laser-scanned compact disc, the CD. On the first CD, Abba's album *Visitors* was released. Surprisingly, the parameters of the CD were determined so that Beethoven's 9th Symphony could be released on one disc. "In line with global trends, the Hungarian music market reached the peak of its expansion at the end of the 1990s, but since then, it has been steadily shrinking." (Lakatos, 2005) By the end of the decade, the dominant MCs

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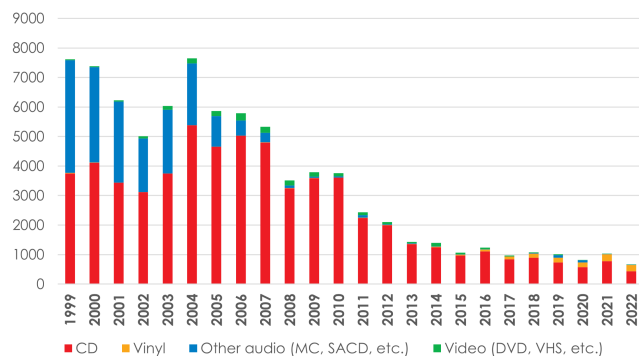
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(Music Cassettes) were replaced by the CD (more CDs than cassettes were sold for the first time in 2000), whose market share rose from 8% to 55%. Sales of half a million vinyl records in the early 1990s dropped to a few thousand by the mid-2000s. Research (published in 2005) investigating the conditions of the music industry highlighted the surprising fact that copying CDs and MCs in Hungary did not reduce the demand for music carriers. “The consumer segment, which today (in the early 2000s!) sustains a large part of the market, not only continues to buy more audio media than the one that makes copies but also increases the number of (broadcast) audio media at an even greater rate consumption than the one that makes copies.” (Ibid.)

With the appearance of the Internet, the era of illegal music downloads arrived, which was moderated by streaming services and moved in the direction of legal music listening. Apple iTunes, which has been in operation since 2003, offers the option of purchasing tracks after a 30-second pre-view. The French Deezer was launched in 2007, the Swedish-developed Spotify in October 2008, the Norwegian Tidal in 2014, Apple Music and YouTube Music in 2015 – the latter replaced Google Play Music in 2020. In 2022, 79% of music sales came from streaming services and only 21% from physical album sales.

**Figure 1**

*Sales of audio carriers in Hungary by type between 1999 and 2022 (Source: MAHASZ)*

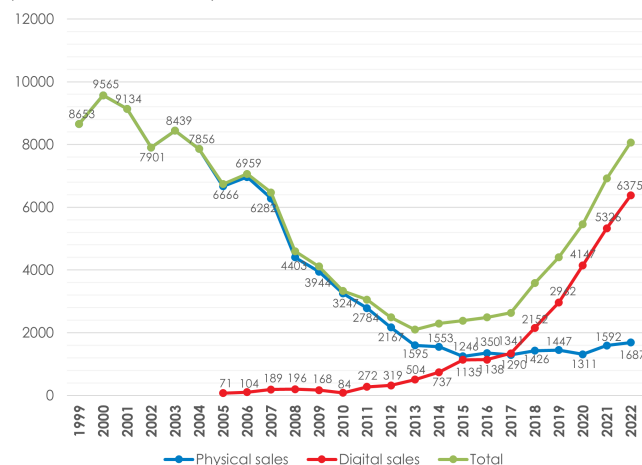


The diagram shows the decrease in demand for physical audio carriers in Hungary, which is in sync with the reduced library demand. It is visible that the year 2004 was the peak, and since then a continuous decrease can be observed. Looking at the data for 2022, the 11,336 sold DVDs and VHS are no longer visible, but at the same time, the growth of Vinyl is spectacular: 431,412 CDs and more than half of that, 218,849 Vinyls, were sold (in terms of value, namely the prices, the ratio is reversed: Vinyls were sold for 2,592,000 Eu and CDs were sold for 1,706,666 Eu). Data was provided by the MAHASZ (MAHASZ: Magyar Hangfelvétel-kiadók Szövetsége Közös Jogkezelő Egyesület = Hungarian Recording Industry

Association, [https://www.mahasz.hu/piaci\\_adatok](https://www.mahasz.hu/piaci_adatok))

**Figure 2**

*Physical and digital sales in Hungary between 1999 and 2022 (Source: MAHASZ)*



Based on the data of the last more than twenty years, while the sales of physical audio carriers are decreasing (although they have been stagnant for the last ten years), digital sales are growing exponentially. In 2022, 16,749,333 Euros worth of music content was sold via streaming platforms, and the revenue from the sale of physical albums was only 4,336,000 Euros.

Similar changes can be observed in audiovisual content consumption.

Research results published in 2023 by Nielsen Media Research (<https://www.memeinfo.hu/kutatasi-eredmenyek/panelkutatas-2023>), the Association of Hungarian Electronic Broadcasters (abbrev. in Hu MEME) and the National Media and Infocommunications Authority (abbrev. in Hu NMHH) show that the proportion of people with TV subscriptions has practically stagnated over the past five years (96-98%), while the proportion of people with Smart TVs has increased significantly: from 47% to 71%. “Half of the people between ages of 18 and 59 with Internet access use the Internet through the TV screen, and 30% of them watch video content through a smart TV application, for a third of whom this is an almost daily activity. In this way, it has proven to be the most widespread alternative screen use, which seems to complement rather than replace traditional TV viewing.” (Ibid.) Among the streaming services, Netflix is the most popular (2022: 44%, 2023: 47%), followed by HBO Max (2022: 26%, 2023: 31%), and the third is Disney+ (2022: 12%, 2023: 22%). YouTube is the leading among video sharing sites, while TikTok currently reaches only half as many people (between 18 and 59).

In the long run, streaming services will presumably defeat traditional distribution methods and lead to the death of DVD

rental companies since

“it cannot offer the viewer something extra that cannot be replicated in OTT [(over-the-top streaming services)]. The convenience of linearity often arises with multicast-type content provision, but do not forget that the convenience of passive consumption is also ensured in the case of OTT: on the one hand, by turning on the channels that can be watched online, and on the other hand, by turning on the automatic playback function. (Dóbbé and Rózsás, 2017, p. 2)

### The history of our Library's Music Collection

In the Katona József Library, the first audio records were purchased in 1973, and the collection policy of the planned Music Department was drawn up in 1974. The acquisition of the basic works and the creation of a label catalogue have begun. After opening our Branch Library in a densely populated city district, Széchenyiváros the Music Collection became accessible to readers in this branch library as well (it happened in 1983). In 1985, the creation of an Audio Library for blind and partially sighted people began. The new building of the central library opened its doors on August 15, 1996, with a new independent Music Collection (including 7,000 Vinyls, 14,700 audio cassettes, and 880 CDs at various processing levels). At that time, the service operated with three music librarians and one music technician, today two people perform these tasks. In 2008, the service of audiobooks on CDs started, and in 2011, the rental of DVD films began.

**Figure 3**

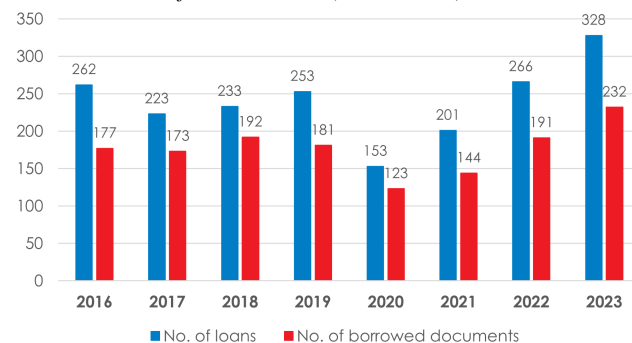
*Interior of the Music Collection (Photo: Róbert Banczik)*



Previously, in addition to music magazines, sheet music, CDs, and DVDs, the Music Collection contained only books that could be used on site, while manuals that could be borrowed were placed in the Borrowable Collection. Due to the

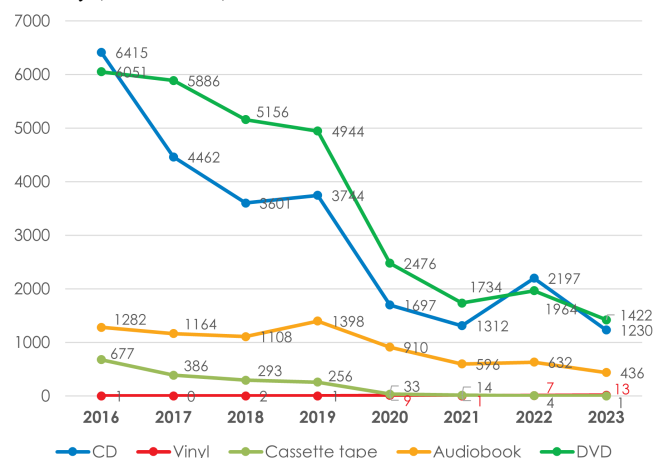
**Figure 4**

*Data on loans of music books (2016-2023)*



**Figure 5**

*The number of loans of music documents in the Katona József Library (2016-2023)*



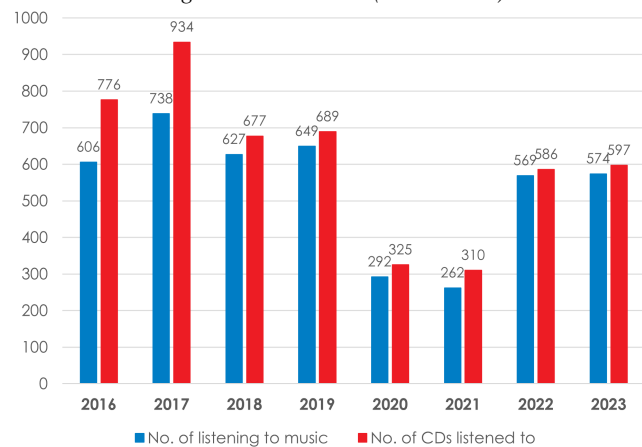
decrease in book use on-site, in 2022, we merged the two stocks and set all music books to loanable status.

The diagram showing the rental data of music documents (CDs, DVDs) reflects the change in people's music and film consumption habits. At the same time, a strong 50% decrease in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic can also be seen. It is good to experience that life is getting back to normal, there is a slight increase in this area.

We still have many old vinyl records in the warehouse, although as they are not available on free shelves, our visitors rarely borrow them. Last year, we started buying vinyl records again, those new releases, because we are experiencing what we also saw in the sales data: listening to vinyl is having a renaissance now. We are confident that a well-designed, not too large, but valuable vinyl stock on the free shelf will increase the document turnover of the Music Collection.

The adverse effects of the pandemic and the energy crisis can also be observed in the data on listening to music on



**Figure 6***Data on listening to music on site (2016-2023)***Figure 7***Listening to music in the Music Collection (Photo: Róbert Banczik)*

site: in these years, following the rules of protection against the epidemic, the opening hours of our institution were temporarily reduced. In any case, there is a stable audience of listening to music on site, those who like listening to music in comfortable armchairs while reading a magazine and are happy to return again and again.

### The Creative Studio

On January 24, 2019, the Creative Studio was opened in one of the library's rooms, previously used as a smoking room. The service's primary goal is to provide theoretical and practical help linked to media studies (especially for high school students). For instance, we introduce the basics of multimedia content production (film, music, and programs).

Library users can make, edit, and save audio and video recordings, use a smart TV, practice with our digital piano or

**Figure 8***Making an interview during a special media course in the Creative Studio, January 24, 2019 (Photo: Róbert Banczik)*

their own musical instrument, and reserve space for individual knowledge acquisition and group work.

**Figure 9***Instrumental practice in the Creative Studio (Photo: Alfonz Fuchs)*

From the fall of 2022, readers can also enjoy the individual use of VR glasses, and this is where our staff holds workshops in robotics. My colleague, Dániel Molnár presented these sessions and their methodological background in detail at the 2022 Bobcatsss conference in Debrecen. These novel technologies are never used for their own sake but always with educational intent, enriching the visitors' knowledge and developing their skills and abilities.

In 2017, the Music Service launched the country's first library radio, BOOK FM, to reach the younger generation, teenagers. The major concept was to gather those teenagers who were interested in the worlds of radio and media from various high schools of the city (Kecskemét), to produce

**Figure 10***Robotics workshop (Photo: Róbert Banczik)*

programs so that the individual schools could then broadcast them on their school radios. Hence, young people make shows for young people! Students prepared book, movie, and travel recommendations, but also an interview with János Csík and Sziámi Péter Müller, nationally known musicians. In terms of media consumption, especially among young people, the genre of radio has been replaced by the world of podcasts. In 2022, we changed BOOK FM for the Prologue podcast series, in which we ask questions to the speakers who come to the Library, bringing our guests and their research topics closer to our readers. Since (after an editing procedure) we also publish the library lectures on our YouTube channel, our online followers get extra content with the podcasts (also available on Spotify).

With the goal of creating equal opportunities, our library also joined the project From Sheet To Sound, in which librarians and library visitors read current articles aloud. The recording is made available via the Internet in a closed group for the visually impaired.

### **Kecskemét Kodály's city**

Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967), composer, music pedagogue, and folk music researcher, was born in Kecskemét. Although he moved to another city with his family after a few months, he said the following on his 50th birthday: "My father brought me back as a student to show me my hometown. As we walked the streets, my father stopped before a window and said:

I saw your mother here«. If nothing else, the feeling that could have seized my father at this moment makes me a local here. . . I am happier now than Dante was. Dante was exiled by Florence, for which he sacrificed everything, and

Kecskemét accepted me into her heart, for which I could do nothing. (Heltai, 1967, p. 676)

During his life, he visited the city several times: he monitored the opening of the first vocal-music school based on his educational principles in 1950, looked at the development of the first class carefully, and also participated in their graduation ceremony. When Kodály, the honorary citizen of Kecskemét, was asked what the essence of his method is, which the whole world is interested in, he answered that it is singing, folk songs and moving Do, that is, relative solmization (Kodály, 1974: 187). Kodály emphasized that the goal of these schools is not to train artists but rather that musical education is an essential condition for the education of the whole person. "The instrument is for the privileged few. The human voice, the free yet most beautiful instrument available to everyone, can only be the breeding ground for a general music culture available to many." (Kodály, 1974: 117) Zoltán Kodály's entire oeuvre was defined by the rediscovery of Hungarian folk music, so it is natural that he primarily but not exclusively chose the melodies of the ancient Hungarian peasant culture, moving from the pentatonic scale to the seventh scale. Relative solmization, which is always a means and not a goal in Kodály's statements, allows you to quickly learn how to read sheet music and easily achieve spectacular results. Zoltán Kodály prepared a series of reading exercises and choral works to systematically help students progress from simpler examples to more complex and difficult tasks.

### **Databases and knowledge repositories**

We prioritize the collection of Kodály's works and literature about him. In 2010, music librarians started to set up the Zoltán Kodály Knowledge Repository (URL: <https://www.kjmk.hu/kodaly-zoltan-tudastar> where various virtual exhibitions, articles, recommendations of relevant links, and what is more, a Kodály Encyclopedia (<https://www.kjmk.hu/kodaly-zoltan-lexikon/>) became available. The composer's life and oeuvre are shown through the articles of the Encyclopedia.

I wish to highlight my paper on the Kodály concept published in Parlando (Virág, 2015). In the article called the Kodály School in Kecskemét (URL: <https://www.kjmk.hu/kodaly-iskola/>), you can read about the history of the first vocal-music school, illustrated with archive photos. The knowledge repository is under continuous development. In addition to Zoltán Kodály, there were several other music composers associated with Kecskemét (URL: <https://www.kjmk.hu/kecskemeti-kotodesu-zeneszerzok/>) such as Géza Bordeaux, Gyula Dávid, Pongrácz Kacsóh, János Kékesi, Pál M. Bodon, Emánuel Moór, Ferenc Neumann, Gyula Szent-Gály, Zoltán Vásárhelyi, András Szerellemhegyi, and László Zimay. Their lives are also detailed on our website, of course, with the



Figure 11

*Zoltán Kodály Knowledge Repository on the website of the Katona József Library*



thoroughness of a librarian, with references. It was the 150th anniversary of Pongrácz Kacsóh's birth and the 100th anniversary of his death in 2023 when his memorial plaque was renovated, and we organized a commemoration in his honour in December. Kacsóh was the author of the musical play János the Valiant (epic poem by Sándor Petőfi). Another important musician, Pál M. Bodon, who collected folk music together with Béla Bartók, was the director of the city's music school for half a century from 1910, which was later named after him.

Zoltán Vásárhelyi, a violinist and choirmaster, trained a number of renowned conductors. He initiated first premiere of several plays in Hungary, these were St. Matthew Passion and Christmas Oratorio by Schütz, the Missa Pange lingua by Josquin Desprez, Dido and Aeneas by Purcell, and of course, several choral works by Kodály (The Aged, Too Late, Jesus and the Traders, and Annie Miller, among others). In 2018, when the Kecskemét Symphony Orchestra performed Zoltán Vásárhelyi's Symphony in A minor, in cooperation, we digitized the music manuscript sheet, thereby helping the ensemble's work. In 2023, the music antiquarian Ádám Bősze gave us an original manuscript of Zoltán Vásárhelyi, a three-part choral work, as a gift.

In the project called Our Digital World (URL: <https://digit.kjmk.hu/>), we processed the history of the most significant institutions associated with school and education history of Kecskemét (<https://digit.kjmk.hu/kecskemeti-iskola-es-oktatastortenet-2/>), and the 130-year-old City Music School (<https://digit.kjmk.hu/varosi-zeneiskola/>) was among those.

Figure 12

*The chronologically organized virtual exhibition on the history of the City Music School, Kecskemét, Our Digital World portal*



We digitized the yearbooks of the institution and made a virtual exhibition from the processed documents, where we summarized the most important events and happenings in the life of the school over the years. The material is enriched by video recordings of two performances by József Palotás (who died in 2022). He was the school's director for 30 years and was an enthusiastic researcher of the city's musical life until his death.

Filling the gap, we initiated and launched the page Concert Life of Kecskemét (<https://www.kjmk.hu/esemenyek/category/koncertelet/>) on our website a few years ago, where we try to list all music events in Kecskemét, regardless of their genre. The Hungarian Institute of Music has registered the 200,000th Hungarian folk song, of which 100,000 have already been published (cf., a total of 6,000 folk songs were collected in Germany, with a population of 80 million). In 2020, for the 100th anniversary of the dismemberment of our country at Trianon, we prepared the spectacular collection called Hungarian Folk Songs from the Carpathian Basin (<https://www.kjmk.hu/magyar-nepdalok/>). On the virtual platform, you will find a typical song for each county, with a film illustrating the dances belonging to the relevant region. As part of our latest project, we digitized the local music historian, dr. Mihály Ittész's writings (<https://digital.kjmk.hu/ittzes.aspx>) include articles, studies,

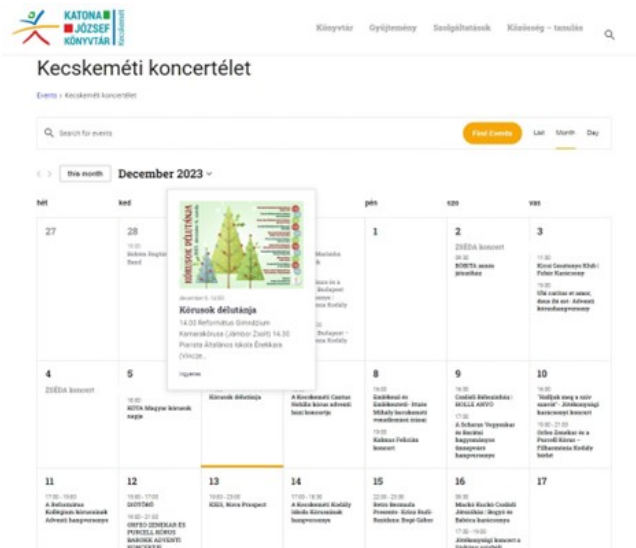


Figure 13

*The Concert Life of Kecskemét on the website of the Katona József Library*

and lectures related to Kecskemét. Mihály Ittész lived and worked in Kecskemét from 1970 until his death in 2018, so his writings are crucial in the local musical life and, in a broader sense, local cultural life. Nearly half a thousand articles were proofread and annotated by the musicologist's widow, which was again proofread by our colleagues who added metadata to it and organized the material into a database, enabling full-text searchability. In addition to Mihály Ittész's writings, we can find further documents in the database Our Digital World, for instance, Sándor Tóth's photo documenting the opening ceremony of the Kodály Institute.

## Music classes

Documents of the Music Collection, the aforementioned databases, and digital contents available on the Library's website can be used well in planning and performing music classes in the Library. With the title Zoltán Kodály through the Librarian's Eye, we have already held resource-based special classes for children who participated in summer camps in our Library, but communities of retired people could also visit these classes on several occasions. It is a special experience to read the articles that report on Kodály's visits to Kecskemét.

It has been a tradition in our Library for several years that we hold workshops for children in December. It is called Christmas of European Nations, where the musical world of a European nation (e.g., Scandinavian, British, Italian, Austrian, French, or Spanish), especially its Christmas melodies, customs and food are presented. In these programs, the music librarian works together with our blind colleague, who tries to live her life as independently as possible despite her vision

problem. She loves to cook and can talk about food in a way that makes people want to eat that delicious meal.

## Music programs in the Library

### *Programs and the number of their participants*

I have been working at the Katona József Library since December 2014: I was a music librarian for seven years and became deputy director in January 2022. From 2016 to now, in eight years, 97 music events have taken place in the library, not counting those programs for children where musicians appeared only as contributors. For a public library, an average of 12 specific musical programs per year, I think, is a good result. Locals can easily accuse me of being biased towards music, but the results also show a demand for these programs.

Figure 14

*The number of music programs in the Library (2016-2023)*

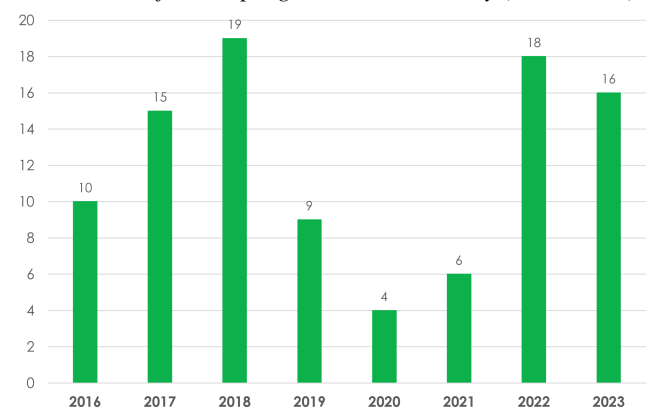
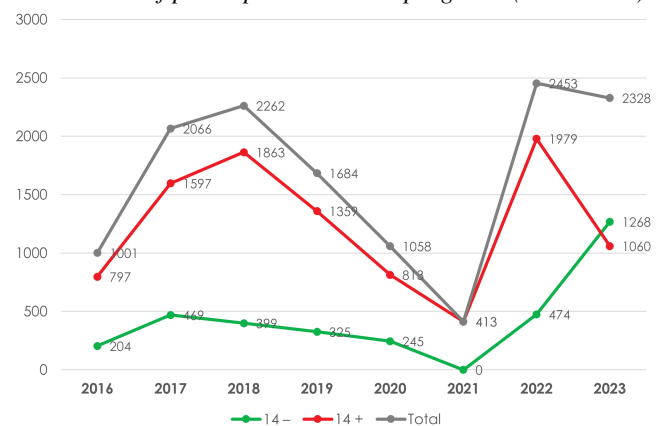


Figure 15

*The number of participants in music programs (2016-2023)*



The first diagram shows the number of music programs, while the second indicates the number of guests over the years.



The lower activity characteristic of the Covid period can be read from both figures. During these years, the Katona József Library tried to maintain contact with its readers; therefore, a wide variety of online content was provided, such as virtual performances, online rhyme books, book recommendations, and games.

Active adults and retired people mainly visit our music programs. The annual Afternoon of Choirs program significantly increases the number of children under 14 years of age, where some of the performers are school choirs. More than 80% of the programs are on classical music, and the remaining 20% include folk music, pop, and jazz performances.

### Could Kecskemét be the 'Hungarian Salzburg'?

Why is there so much interest in music programs in our city? I will mention only a few important institutions: a music school was established in Kecskemét as early as 1884, the first vocal school based on the Kodály method has been operating here since 1950, the Kodály Institute, which welcomes students from all over the world, was founded in 1975, and a Symphony Orchestra and several choirs operating in the city, with an increasing number in recent years. The jazz also has serious traditions: the Bohém Ragtime Jazz Band was founded in 1985, the Bohém Festival has been organized on the last weekend of March every year since 1992, and since 2016, the summer festival Jazz Capital with local and world-known musicians has been held. Kecskemét is home to our country's largest collection of musical instruments, the Leskowsky Musical Instrument Collection, which contains more than 1,800 instruments. "The collection is spectacular because it is very diverse, both in terms of instrument classification and geographical distribution" – can be read on the collection's website (<https://hangszergyujtemeny.hu/index.html>).

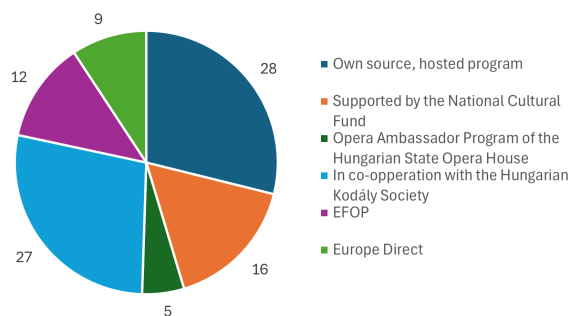
### Funding of the programs

Unfortunately, the budget of public institutions that can be spent on program organization is very limited even if the subsidy is higher in Hungary in international comparison. We can primarily rely on tenders and local collaborations.

We can see that the largest part of our music programs is performances realized from our resources. I also listed those performances where the performer did not ask for an honorarium. Another large group of our programs are carried out in cooperation with a Kecskemét Branch of the Hungarian Society. Since I have been a member of the board of this NGO since 2015, and I became its president in 2023, we can work well together in both professional and organizational matters. In the case of programs, the name of the Society becomes a watchword for the performer and the audience. The organization usually applies for the performer's honorarium, and the library provides the venue and technical and personal assistance for the event. The National Cultural Fund distributes

**Figure 16**

*Music programs in the Library according to their funding (2016-2023)*



state grants in the form of tenders, while the Human Resources Development Operative Program (<https://www.kjmk.hu/katona-jozsef-konyvtar-egy-eleten-at/>) was the most significant EU support between 2017 and 2019. As part of the Ambassador Program of the Hungarian State Opera (<https://www.opera.hu/hu/rolunk/az-opera-nagykovetei/>), the artists of the Opera (singers, orchestra or choir artists, conductors, theatre staff, etc.) tour the country and promote the genre with their performances.

### Organizing the audience

The Katona József Library has an independent Communication and Event Management Department, so different people are responsible for creating harmonious yet unique posters and invitations that match the institution's image, delivering the posters and notifying the media. Another takes care of the institution's social media interfaces and mailing lists. In addition to traditional methods, the most important tools in organizing the audience for the programs are our thematic mailing lists, which you can sign up for or library users can also register for an event. Due to the thematic approach, we can inform those interested in music events about our programs in a separate letter.

In library quality management, we follow the principles of Total Quality Management, so we consider it important that the user and the reader are at the center of our activities and services. "The quality – among other things – depends on the user, the partner who formulates their needs, and these needs express the quality requirements. [...] The modern way of approaching quality matters focuses on partner-centeredness, which also expresses the approach adopted by the service providers in library practice." (Skaliczki and Zalainé, 2003: 78) "All activities of the institution must serve the satisfaction of user and partner." (Ibid.)

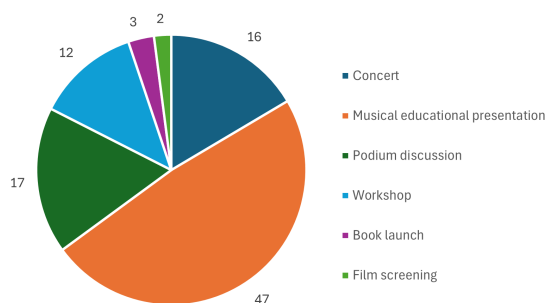
During the Katona József Library programs, we regularly ask our visitors to fill out satisfaction and demand assessment

sheets. In this, we ask our guests to evaluate the program on a scale from 1 to 5, formulate who they would like to see as a performer and on what topic; we also ask them about how they found the program and, in general, what time is the most suitable for them to visit our lectures; and, of course, we also provide space for comments and suggestions.

### Contents of our programs

**Figure 17**

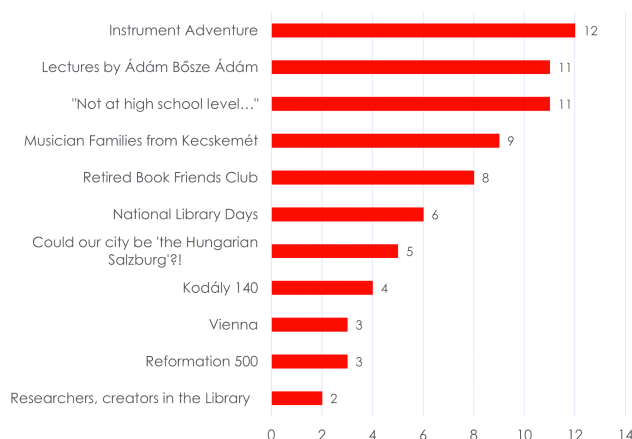
*Music programs in the Library by type (2016-2023)*



I also listed our music programs by their type. The most characteristic—also because of the library's information-distributing function—is the musical educational program: we had 47 of these programs in eight years. We regularly organize podium discussions on various musical topics (17 programs), and our large hall is also suitable for smaller concerts (16 programs). In the past eight years, we organized 12 workshops, three book launches, and two film screenings in the Library.

**Figure 18**

*Music programs in the Library by series (2016-2023)*



As series and mini-series become increasingly typical of movie streaming services, I also like to think about series.

Series allows for a deeper explanation of each topic, and a multi-faceted approach is possible. The Library's Music History Lectures are popular, where prominent professors of the local professional life and internationally renowned professors present on various topics (our presenters were, for instance, Péter Erdei, Salamon Kamp, Katalin Komlós, Sándor Kovács, and Péter Ordasi).

**Figure 19**

*Ádám Bősze: Mozart in Bikini, November 3, 2022 (Photo: Róbert Banczik)*



The music historian Ádám Bősze, who was an employee of the Hungarian classical music radio for 14 years, visited the Library eleven times in two years between 2022 and 2023: he gave eight lectures, we also presented the book *Great Musicians, Great Loves* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KstVr1BN5IU>), which will soon be published in English, and Bősze guided two music history walks in Kecskemét. On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the most important Bach expert in Hungary, Salamon Kamp, gave three lectures about Bach's musical greatness: 1. The theological background of the persona of Johann Sebastian Bach; 2. Johann Sebastian Bach's Magnificat and Cantatas; and finally, 3. Mass in B minor by Johann Sebastian Bach.

We announced a series covering three centuries with the theme of Vienna: 1. Beethoven, the Pianist (presenter: Katalin Komlós fortepiano player) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Suu4j6rcy90>); 2. The operetta: the common musical and theatrical experience of the Monarchy (presenter: Péter Bozó music historian) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDy48GCfybI>); and finally, 3. Arnold Schönberg (presenter: Sándor Kovács music historian) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzMypdcbbfc>).

In the series Kodály 140, we organized three performances on the occasion of the 140th anniversary of the birth of Zoltán Kodály, our presenters were Anna Dalos (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msRYEj7U44c>) and Szilvia Becze (URL: /url-



**Figure 20**

*Greetings to Mrs. Kodály Sarolta Péczely, March 9, 2023 (Photo: Róbert Banczik)*



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKoQZrGTPGY>), the guest of the closing event was Mrs. Kodály Sarolta Péczely (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zn4BXZaZCuw>), the composer's widow.

**Figure 21**

*Dr. Katalin Kiss: György Orbán's Choral Art, performance by Ars Nova Vocal Ensemble, February 12, 2022 (Photo: Róbert Banczik)*



A few years ago, we launched a series to introduce Contemporary Hungarian Composers, where each time, a high-quality local choir participated. In the series, the composition *Miracle-Son Stag* by Miklós Kocsár, as well as the choral art of Levente Gyöngyösi, György Orbán (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkfiFSmPi7M>), and Zoltán Kodály (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1O7cs7eSVk>) were presented.

We organized round table discussions a few years ago. In the *Musician Families from Kecskemét* series, we hosted nine multi-generational local musician families. The series,

**Figure 22**

*Musician Families from Kecskemét – The Pusker Family, April 26, 2017 (Photo: Róbert Banczik)*

**Figure 23**

*Could Our City Be 'the Hungarian Salzburg'?! Podium discussion, February 6, 2019 (Photo: Róbert Banczik)*



*Could Our City Be 'the Hungarian Salzburg'?!* was about the past, present and future of the musical life in Kecskemét to make people think about what we could do so that something similar to Mozart-cult in Salzburg could be formulated in Kecskemét that could be associated with Kodály.

With the support of the European Union, we realized the twelve-part *Instrument Adventure*, in each episode of which the audience could learn about a group of musical instruments. The presenters were the art teachers of the Kodály School, and the performers were the school's talented students.

The Library is not a concert hall, but at the same time, just as it provides space for exhibitions, it also supports the sophisticated club concerts with their uplifting and community-building power. Zoltán Kodály said: "The education of the audience is the education of the community." (Kodály, 1958



**Figure 24**

*Instrument Adventure – Brass Instruments, June 12, 2018*  
(Photo: Róbert Banczik)

**Figure 25**

*The Afternoon of Choirs, December 12, 2017* (Photo: Róbert Banczik)



cited in Kodály, 1982: 318) Every year since 2015, we have organized the Afternoon of Choirs, where during one afternoon, short Advent-Christmas choral sessions are held by local children's and adults' choirs, church and secular choirs within the walls of the Library. Since the Zoltán Kodály Mixed Choir has been a regular performer on these occasions, we gladly welcomed their season finale concert in June 2022. This choir consists mainly of seniors.

In the summer of 2022, three talented young artists gave a baroque chamber music concert in the Library. Its title was Sounds Like Bach – Chamber Works from Johann Sebastian Bach's Sheet Music Collection. A nice international festival is the Night of Museums, organized on the last Saturday of June in Hungary. A lot of cultural institutions across the country join in, including us. In 2018, on this evening, six young music students from the Music Academy gave the participants

**Figure 26**

*Arnold Schoenberg: Transfigured Night – string sextet on the Night of Museums, June 23, 2018* (Photo: Alfonz Fuchs)



truly intimate moments by performing Arnold Schönberg's string sextet, the Transfigured Night. It was also a special experience when we held a so-called poetry concert in the green courtyard of the Library in 2022 with the participation of two local artists.

### Choir singing at workplace

Based on the results of several international studies, Dr. Andrea Asztalos summarized the psychological effects of choir singing in her paper (Asztalos, 2023). According to this study, singing in a choir positively impacts an individual's mood and communication skills. It reduces stress and anxiety, helps overcome psychological trauma, enhances subjective well-being and increases happiness, energizes, provides social support through the community, results in healthier self-esteem and greater self-confidence, strengthens focused attention and commitment, lowers cholesterol and improves immune response.

The neurobiologist, Dr. Tamás Freund, president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, gave a lecture (Freund, 2013) in the Katona József Library on November 23, 2023. In his presentation, Freund compared the positive psychological effects of active participation in artistic processes (e.g. in choirs) to defending a PhD thesis, sports activities, and the use of drugs. "Cathartic art experiences release dopamine in the nucleus accumbens, so all these are inexhaustible, cheap and healthy sources of joy and satisfaction!"

The choir of the Katona József Library was founded as a women's choir in the Katona József Library under my leadership in 2015 for an internal workplace celebration. In 2022, it became a mixed choir, and it currently consists of 25 people, which is almost a quarter of the collective. The choir of the Library also has the function of strengthening organizational

**Figure 27**

*The choir of the Katona József Library is singing on the Festive Book Week, June 12, 2022 (Photo: Róbert Banczik)*

**Figure 28**

*Beethoven: Ode to Joy – Flash mob by M. Bodon Pál Elementary Art School of Kecskemét and the Choir of the Katona József Library on Europe Day, Európa-nap in front of the Library, May 9, 2023 (Photo: Róbert Banczik)*



culture and developing community, as people who rarely meet each other during their daily work also work and sing together during rehearsals. Of course, the choir strives for the most beautiful performances possible to provide a lasting impression to others. However, at the same time, the primary goal is still the spiritual fulfillment and joy of the singing individual. It is no coincidence that this also has a positive effect on work.

The choir's performances are mainly related to library events, but we have also performed at exhibitions, openings, and city commemorations. On March 15, 2023, the Hungarian National Day, we held a musical devotion in the Great Catholic Church of Kecskemét, and on May 9, 2023, Europe Day, we organized a flash mob ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lf\\_MjVEorCc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lf_MjVEorCc)) in cooperation

with teachers and students from the M. Bodon Pál Elementary School when we performed Beethoven's Ode to Joy in front of the Library.

### Summary

It is not worth burying traditional library services and lamenting over them, rather, we should look for opportunities for renewal and social usability.

The library is still providing authentic information. We live in a knowledge-based society, where a huge amount of information pours down our necks, and libraries can clearly help navigate between them, whether online or offline.

One of the essential tasks of libraries is *organizing knowledge* (1): various databases and knowledge repositories, as well as spectacular virtual exhibitions compiled based on digitized documents, are good tools for this. However, it is not enough to prepare them, they must also be introduced to people. It is not enough to work and create something with a lot of energy, you also have to show the results of your work. Library workshops, activities and lectures for different age groups can be good platforms for this. We consciously do not call these events library programs because they are not for their own sake but aimed at gaining knowledge transfer.

Another very important task of music collections is the *preservation of value* (2): processing, preservation, and provision of documents of the local musical life in a spectacular form. Of course, not every settlement can boast such a defining figure as Zoltán Kodály, but even if there is only one choir or folk song group operating in a given place, its history can be just as significant and waiting to be processed for the local community.

Although the *raison d'être* of traditional music collections is strongly questioned by streaming services, at the same time, people want community, which was further strengthened and confirmed by the closures that occurred during the Covid waves and the energy crisis.

Perhaps the function of *community* (3) has never been so strong in our institutions. Many people come to the library to exchange words with the librarian or another reader, speak about their sorrows, and share their joys. The same is true, perhaps even more so regarding people with similar interests. Various musical programs, sessions, and games provide space for meetings, and we regularly experience these in the Katona József Library.

In addition to the present library presentation, the research aims to map the activities of Hungarian county libraries in this field and continue the work on the international stage, with special regard to the international character of the Kodály method.

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