

A
Curriculum
for
Music
Teachers

DISCOVERING
ORFF

Jane Frazee
with
Kent Kreuter

SMC 99

SCHOTT

for Music Teachers

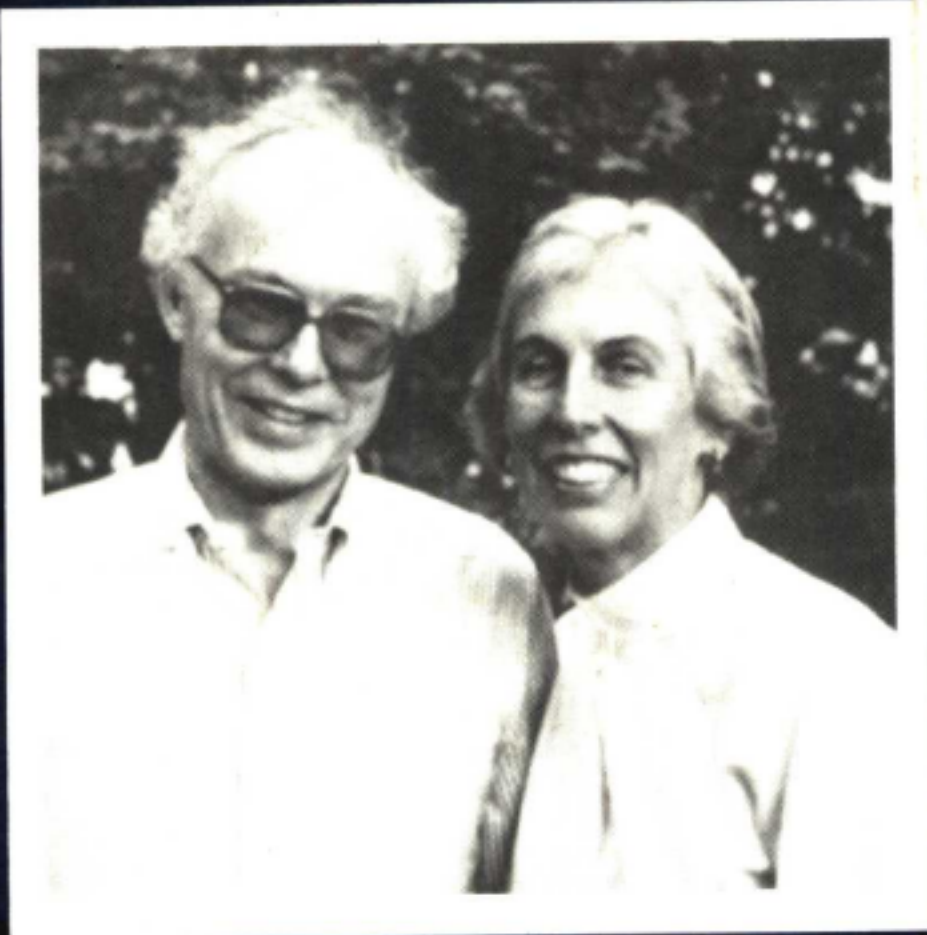
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Discovering Orff is their third collaboration.

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Discovering Orff:

Discovering ORFF

A Curriculum for Music Teachers

Jane Frazee

with

Kent Kreuter

SCHOTT

Mainz · London · New York · Tokyo

**This book is dedicated to Aleda Christensen
and to Betsy and David Kreuter**

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Preface

'Whenever I plant a tree, I never know how big it will be . . . Some trees stay small, others grow very tall. It all depends on the quality of the earth, sunshine and other factors that have to work together.' This was the answer given to me by Carl Orff in a radio interview I held with him in 1975 when I asked him if he knew or had any idea or expectation that his Schulwerk would be accepted by so many teachers throughout the world.

It would seem that the earth in many lands is really quite good and that much sunshine has contributed to growth. Consider the fact that since 1950 these are the published versions of Orff-Schulwerk: German, English, Swedish, Dutch, Latin-American, Portuguese, Japanese, Spanish, French, Welsh, Czechoslovakian, Chinese, Danish, Korean, Italian and an adaptation for the United States. Supplements and other editions have come from Greece, Brazil, Bolivia, Ghana and Estonia. In other countries the ideas of the Schulwerk or of using the instruments play a significant role. Since 1961 students from forty-eight different countries have studied at the Orff Institute of the Hochschule 'Mozarteum' in Salzburg.

This book describes the basic ideas of Orff-Schulwerk for the classroom in the United States. It states concretely how its media, pedagogy and theory must be interwoven in order to give whole classes and individual children musical competence. It also serves as a motivating source for teachers to set out on their own voyages of discovery to Orff-Schulwerk.

This book talks a lot about the Orff Schulwerk teacher. Thank goodness there is no such thing as a description of the typical teacher. There has never been any research to establish statistical facts which could very well result in a ridiculous statement like: 'The Orff teacher is someone between the ages of thirty-seven and forty, female, blond, eager to travel, and who plays a good game of chess!' A good teacher who works with the philosophy and materials from Orff-Schulwerk is full of ideas. He does not want to be a slave to a method which does not allow him the freedom to make pedagogical decisions in each separate teaching situation.

The teacher Carl Orff had in mind is an artistic being with good taste; sensitive, spontaneous and responsive. As a teacher one must pay close attention to observing children. He has both the quick and vocal children in view as well as the slower and quieter ones. He is protective, can stay in the background when necessary and lead the children to warm associations with partners, with instruments and with music itself. The Orff-Schulwerk teacher is moreover a human being . . . one who can be full of joy and also anger, who can be happy and also sad; a human being with strengths and weaknesses. To the children he is a dependable partner, a person who animates without being too demanding, who accepts the individual efforts of the children and is not

afraid to let his own ideas and demands for good quality be expressed along with theirs. For these reasons there is no such thing as the 'Orff-Schulwerk teacher'. There are many Orff-Schulwerk teachers, and no two are alike. Each one alone has the right and the obligation to contribute his own background, his experiences in music and movement, his understanding of Orff's ideas.

If all is so open, what then are the specific requisites? There are basic principles for working with Orff-Schulwerk that are set forth in this book. There are musical skills and concepts that give directions and goals to teaching. Furthermore, common to all Orff-Schulwerk teachers throughout the world is the caring about coming closer to a clear insight into music and movement that gives each participant a basic, fundamental experience. It has to do with the encounters these responsible teachers create in music and dance . . . not with pieces of music and separate dances, but with music and dance as universal and at the same time very specific media of human expression. It also has to do with the artistic quality intended by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman in all the adaptations of the Schulwerk. This transfer into other cultures and into present and future times is necessary.

Carl Orff and collaborators throughout the world have thought for many years about how the vision of such an education for so many children and young adults can be realized in a constantly changing world. This book represents a carefully considered and wise step toward the answer.

Hermann Regner

Director, *Orff-Schulwerk Zentrum*, Salzburg

(translated by Miriam Samuelson)

Introduction

Not long ago a visiting family brought their young daughter to my school music room. She seemed intrigued by the surroundings and was soon playing a xylophone. As we watched, she moved on to drums, then to cymbals and glockenspiels until at last she had made her way through them all. When she finished she ran to me and said, 'I have played every single instrument in this whole room and it's like magic.' My guest musician was a seven-year-old named Rebecca. She had never before been in an Orff classroom.

Most Orff teachers regularly witness such discoveries. In this particular case, the magic Rebecca spoke of lay not only in the instrumental sounds but in the fact that *she* could use those instruments to make such sounds. And therein lies one of the reasons why Orff pedagogy is so effective and such stories are so commonplace. The Orff approach combines the love of sound, love of music-making, and the need to be appreciated in such a way that children can participate in their own musical education and personal growth. Not only are their minds and imaginations stimulated but they are also urged to feel and to give musical expression to that feeling.

The ultimate aim of Orff's approach to music is the enrichment of students' lives through the development of their inherent musicality. That goal is hardly unique to Orff, in fact many other methods claim the same intent. However, what makes Orff's approach special is the way it develops the idea that the child learns musical behavior through behaving in musical ways: by creating, listening and performing.

As Orff originally developed his perspective in the 1920s, creating was of central importance. Teaching consisted of presenting musical problems with students expected to improvise their own solutions. The end result was a musically independent student.

Listening was also of prime importance because all music in an Orff program was created by groups. In order to contribute, students had to listen to the sounds of others. Skill at self-evaluation would also be impossible without this ability as would the talent to understand music one lacked the technical facility to perform.

The last fundamental premise of Orff's conception made much of performance. All students were to perform all the time, be it singing, moving, speaking or playing. So important was participation that Orff designed or adapted instruments that facilitated student contributions, whatever their level of ability.

The music that inspired this creating, listening and performing was also special. Since Orff was a German teaching German-speaking students he used the rhymes, proverbs and poetry of that language to teach the rhythms of that culture. Finding little German folk material in the pentatonic scale, he wrote

his own, the better to help students improvise. And as Orff's approach spread to a wider world in the 1950s he urged others to use comparable material from their own cultures.

This book does not radically alter Orff's goals and practices. Instead, the following pages take up where Orff left off. Content with developing the main objectives, he did not provide the step-by-step process needed to implement his intentions. We now know that such concerns need to be addressed. Hence this book is for those of you who want detailed, practical assistance in how and why to use Orff techniques and materials in your classrooms. We have made an effort to outline goals and explore the best ways to achieve them, but the principal focus is on the arrangement of the curriculum in a logical sequence. Such a structure provides a reasonable progression from simple to more complex objectives not only from day to day but from year to year.

Since an emphasis on sequence is rare in Orff literature, perhaps a few words of explanation are in order. I have placed a major emphasis on sequence because in more than twenty years as a teacher of both children and teachers of children it is clear that this is the greatest need. To some, this sequential approach may seem the rankest heresy since structured learning does appear to be the enemy of improvisation, surely one of the most characteristic features of Orff pedagogy. But for those who read on it will soon become clear that these pages abound with opportunities for student creativity. Actually, the real issue is not the merit of improvisation but rather how best to provide students with the tools they need to improvise. Not only my experience but that of many other teachers, suggests that those tools are best acquired in a carefully planned curriculum that develops steadily over the years. From such learning will come the independent musicianship we all so deeply want for our students.

In order to provide detailed assistance, we have arranged the book as follows: after an introduction to the development of Orff-Schulwerk we turn, in Part One, to a discussion of the distinguishing features of this approach. Chapter Two introduces the activities children use in their music-making. The teaching procedure that structures those activities is taken up in Chapter Three while Chapter Four explains the vocabulary and accompaniment theory essential to the Orff teacher. Part Two applies these elements in a sequential curriculum designed for Grades One through Five. Especially important in each chapter is the inclusion of supporting activities designed to aid you in teaching the various skills and concepts.

This book does not claim to have the magic formula for teaching excellence. Even if these pages contained nothing but wisdom such insight would be useless without the committed teacher. Rather, this book has the more modest intent of trying to help channel energies and talents so that you and your students can more easily make music that delights the ear and enriches the mind.

1 · The Gift and the Challenge of Carl Orff

Carl Orff's great gift is to children. In essence that gift is a way of looking at music that deeply involves them in its creation, and thereby entails respect for their capabilities.¹

Orff's challenge is to teachers. He requires of us the care and ingenuity to devise the methods that will, in the daily wear-and-tear of teaching, not crush but bring to flower the capabilities that can so deeply enrich the lives of young people. Orff paid teachers the great compliment of assuming that because they were musicians as well as pedagogues, they would find their own ways to the musical and human ends he sought.

That teachers have been eager to accept the challenge is borne out by the swift rise of Orff instruction in this and many other countries since World War Two. Actually, that burst of interest is just one of the latest examples of a process nearly as old as America itself – the borrowing and adapting of European musical ideas to American circumstances. Such influence goes back at least to Pestalozzi and his great American disciple Lowell Mason and we can see further examples of this interplay in the impact of Jacques-Dalcroze and Kodály in our own time.

All of these methods have posed problems for their American adherents but none more so than Orff. The reasons are rooted in the particular interplay of personality and historical circumstances that shaped and fostered his ideas. Among these ideas improvisation is fundamental and even the most cursory view of Orff's early life shows how important it was to him. Early on, he developed a marked distaste for performing any music but his own. By the age of ten (in 1905) he was creating stories as well. Soon he branched off into theater, creating puppet plays scored for, among other things, the kitchen stove. When he began publishing his music a few years later, the originality – if not the stove – was still in evidence.

This intolerance for musical convention drew him to reformers like Mary Wigman and, particularly, Dorothee Günther. These two remarkable women were revolutionizing dance in Germany, and Wigman was fast becoming the continental equivalent of Isadora Duncan. Out of this association, no doubt fuelled by the excitement born of much talk and collaboration, came the decision in 1923 to found the Güntherschule in Munich, a place where young, aspiring musicians could deepen and enrich their musical understanding through a synthesis of music and dance. It would be no ordinary school. For one thing, Orff wanted it free of 'the deficient or out-of-date musical activity that was customary in most gymnastic schools', as he put it.² For another, it would replace the old, shop-worn approaches with what Orff called 'elemental music'. By that he meant an improvised music shorn of centuries of convention; a music that was magical and spiritual and pure, played on the

instruments of primitive peoples and using movement as a fundamental component. First and last, the Güntherschule was *not* where one went to reproduce the rights and wrongs of other people's music.

In some respects the Germany where Orff and his allies were dreaming their dreams could not have been a worse place to be. The legacies of World War One included much political and social unrest coupled with and fed by severe economic problems. And yet, perhaps in even more significant ways, Germany in the 1920s was the perfect place for creative men and women intent on changing a corner of cultural life. While the war had taken a tremendous toll it had also inadvertently undermined old ideas and old leadership. More than four years of unprecedented bloodshed had opened the door to those who championed the new. As the Bauhaus alone exemplifies, the atmosphere was rife with much creative energy and accomplishment. Hence Orff, innovative from almost his first day, now found himself quite unexpectedly in a social environment much more conducive to experimentation than he had any right to expect. Tragically, it was a time quickly passed.

Orff and his friends were equal to that fleeting opportunity. In September of 1924 the school opened and what Orff liked to call his 'new balancing act' began its educational adventure.³ Part of the adventure lay in the search for alternatives to Western music. The quest for the primitive, so powerful a force in much turn-of-the-century art, was also strong in Orff. In his case it meant turning to Africa and Asia for the percussion instruments he needed to create adequately his elemental music. But the principal addition in the mid-twenties was Gunild Keetman. In her creativity and energy Orff found the help he needed to sustain the Schulwerk.⁴

By the end of the decade the experiment in improvising with novel instrumentation and movement could be judged a success. The work of Orff and his associates was opening new vistas in the professional training of a growing number of young adults as well as making a more modest contribution to the spread of modern dance. Ironically enough, there even seemed a chance that this educational protest of the twenties might become the educational orthodoxy of the thirties. However, the arrival of National Socialism in 1933 meant that Orff's friends in high educational places soon had no places at all, and with this shift in power went any hope of a broad institutionalization of Orff methodology.

Yet this disastrous decade did contain one brief moment that turned out to have far-reaching consequences for the spread of Orff's approach to music education. That moment came with the 1936 Olympic games, held in Berlin, when Orff was asked to help in the composition of music for the opening festivities. The end result was processional music and a group dance for thousands of young children. Ironically, the situation could not have been less Orff-like. Instead of small groups of children improvising their own melodies, there were thousands of children performing the music and movement prescribed by others. However, out of that Olympic experience arose an entirely new and more significant emphasis in Orff education.

The crucial metamorphosis began in 1948 when a German administrator,

Annemarie Schambeck, listened to a recording of the music those children had performed twelve years earlier in Berlin. She had never before heard such music played on such instruments. Would Orff consider composing simpler versions so that young children could also play, she asked? Orff accepted the challenge, realizing that this new audience required a somewhat different approach.

The major change was a new stress on singing. It now seemed that the natural starting-point for children should be the songs of children. As he noted years later, 'the recognition of this fact gave me the key for the new educational work'.⁵ Much else in his approach to this younger audience remained as it had in the Güntherschule. There was no need to change the instrumentation since xylophones and glockenspiels were more suited to the child's music-making than pianos and violins. At most, some reduction in the size of the instruments would be sufficient. Movement and improvisation would continue to be of fundamental importance as would the basic goal of awakening children to music. Given modest resources and enlightened teachers, children would soon be making music for children.

Propitious circumstances gave Orff a chance to try out his ideas. Unlike the early thirties when support was lost, Orff now had friends in key positions, such as Annemarie Schambeck who saw to it from her position with Bavarian radio, that children throughout Bavaria heard and performed the new music composed by Orff. And it seemed to work. One critic offered this early appraisal:

The numerous letters and essays, questions and stimuli that have been sent in during this last half year give credence to the high pedagogical value of this musical work. It lies in education for independence. If school children send in melodies they have written . . . it is not a question of unusual talent but of children who have been awakened, for whom the elemental originality of the Schulwerk way of making music has released in them musical powers, that, if their musical education remains solely reproductive, stay buried.⁶

Also in 1948 the influential Mozarteum came under the direction of an old ally Eberhard Preussner. Quickly Keetman and others were reproducing for young children the work done at the Güntherschule. Demonstrations soon followed in Austrian colleges. Meanwhile, a new associate, Klaus Becker, was producing appropriately sized instruments for the younger players. By 1950 the *Music for Children* volumes began to appear providing invaluable instructional materials. Translations into other languages quickly followed as did demonstrations of Orff techniques to foreign educators. Expansion to a wider world was beginning. A culmination to these years of growth came in 1963 with the opening of a permanent Orff Institute in Salzburg. Only one hundred miles and thirty-nine years separated this second home from the first but in many ways the past seemed much further away.

This brief survey of the birth, death and rebirth of Orff's musical pedagogy should enable us to gain a deeper understanding of not only the gift and the

challenge he left us but of why adapting Orff to America has been a major part of that challenge.

Probably the best way to get at the essence of his approach is to think of it as a pedagogy of suggestion. As we have seen, Orff was determined not only to create but to inspire others to create. Hence the openness to innovation was quite intentional. This had tremendous liberating possibilities. For teachers who felt bored and confined by the conventional rote of music education it meant freedom. For children it meant liberation from mechanical instruction plus a chance to participate in their own musical growth.

But in this very openness lay a problem. Part of the difficulty arose from the kind of student Orff first tried to educate. Those who came to the Günterschule in the 1920s were young adult musicians and dancers. Consequently there was no need to teach the basic vocabulary of music. For Orff it seemed much more important and certainly far more exciting to have students discover the elemental qualities of music. This was to be an education in revitalization, not in quarter notes.

The crucially important result of this blend of literate student and brilliant, self-taught teacher was that no one found it necessary to think through how to teach the basic vocabulary of music. In fact, the very success of the Günterschule confirmed this absence. In addition, that success very likely attracted those least interested in teaching the less dramatic dimensions of music. This orientation made no difference as long as students were taught that vocabulary by someone else. But such was not always to be the case. Paradoxically, what began as a method assuming knowledge of the basics had soon to teach those basics itself. In fact, in America there never has been a student body of the sort Orff originally taught; the only students of Orff in this country are the youngsters he never considered when making his original plans.

Orff began to confront this problem after World War Two. The result was as we might expect: much emphasis on participation but very little on vocabulary. When Orff and Keetman began publishing their *Music for Children* volumes in 1950 that approach was retained, as it was in the English translation which soon followed.

Now, over thirty years later, we can see that while that approach has much to recommend it there is still need for further development. It is well and good to urge that children be given a chance to create. However, there is a much greater chance that something will come of that hope if teachers are given guidelines in how to lead children to that objective.

In the best of all possible educational systems, teachers make themselves superfluous. Orff wanted that but for reasons we have seen he didn't set forth the steps to accomplish what he thought so important. It is the purpose of this book to provide those steps.

Part One:

THE
ELEMENTS
OF
ORFF-SCHULWERK

2 · Orff Media

The Orff approach to elementary music learning addresses every aspect of musical behavior: performing, creating, listening, and analyzing. But it is the variety of means by which these behaviors are cultivated that has created such delight in Orff classrooms. The original challenge to take a wider view of music education than the prevailing preoccupation with printed symbols came from Orff when he defined the ideal kind of music for children as, 'never music alone, but music connected with movement, dance, and speech – not to be listened to, meaningful only in active participation.'¹

Orff teachers have responded to this challenge by offering their students a wide variety of participatory activities to foster musical growth including speech, movement, song, instruments, and listening.² Musical ideas are consistently explored through this array of active means in increasingly sophisticated ways. The activities may be used singly or in combination to involve the entire class in learning. Readiness, skill level, and activity preference will vary among the children; the Orff teacher respects these individual differences and so uses a variety of media to develop each child's maximum musical potential. For instance, a child who is not an able singer may master a given melodic motive on a bar instrument because visual reinforcement of the sound occurs when it is played. Skill mastery thus becomes possible for children who might not succeed in a one-dimensional approach. In fact, these activities provide avenues that lead to understanding and using *all* the elements of music.

Speech

The rhythm inherent in the child's native language is an important resource for Orff teachers. The rhymes, word-games, riddles, proverbs, and poems from the child's heritage offer unlimited possibilities for exploring musical elements. A few examples have been selected from the wide variety available to help illustrate some of the ways in which this is accomplished.

Spoken rhythms may be clapped and perhaps transferred to unpitched percussion instruments.

2.

	h		h		h		h	
Ap	-	ple	on	a	stick			
makes		me		sick				

|. |. || |. |
 makes my tum - my go
 |. |. |. |
 two four six.

2
 Snap Triangle
 Clap Tambourine
 Patsch Wood Block.

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Rhymes are also particularly useful for meter and tempo exploration.

2
 || 7 ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | etc.
 I have a ro - cket in my po - cket

3
 || ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | etc.
 I have a ro - cket in my po - cket

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Two or more speech patterns may be combined to illustrate texture.

3
 I { ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ |
 Whis - tle and hoe, sing as you go,

II { ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ |
 (know) Whis - tle and hoe, sing as you

R { ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ |
 Patsch
 L { ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪ |

*All examples are drawn from *Music for Children, American Edition, Volumes I-III*, Schott Music Corp., 1977, 1980, 1982