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AN ANALYSIS OF THE MUSIC EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY OF CARL ORFF

A Seminar Project Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Education-Professional Development

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By Lisa B. Jorgenson

We recommend acceptance of this project report in partial fulfillment of the candidate's requirements for the degree of ME-PD Initial Certification in EC-A General Music Education.

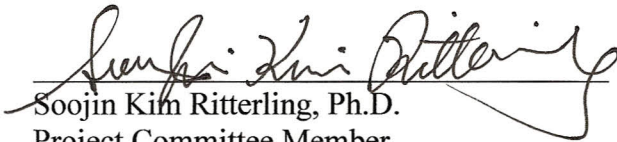
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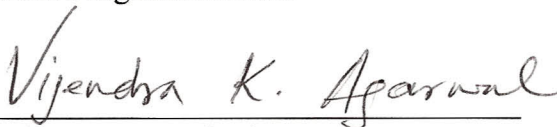
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## ABSTRACT

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This literature review focuses on the music education philosophy developed by Carl Orff called Orff Schulwerk. Orff Schulwerk is a child-centered approach to learning music through hands-on techniques, centered on children's natural, elemental behaviors and interests. The philosophies and themes behind the Orff Schulwerk curriculum are examined, including movement, speech, instruments, and creativity and improvisation. This review also provides teachers a collection of resources, foundations, and ideas that will help them to fully understand the concept of Orff Schulwerk.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Carl Orff.....	1
What is Orff Schulwerk?.....	3
Table 1: Orff Schulwerk Timeline.....	5
Purpose.....	6
CHAPTER 2: DEFINITIONS AND KEY AUTHORS.....	7
Definitions.....	7
Key Authors.....	22
CHAPTER 3: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	25
Schulwerk Curriculum.....	25
The Basis of the Approach.....	25
The Educational Philosophy of Carl Orff.....	26
Play.....	29
Movement.....	31
Speech.....	34
Instruments.....	36
Creativity and Improvisation.....	40
Curriculum Challenges.....	42
Solutions to These Challenges.....	45

Curricular Guides.....	45
Table 2: Notable Orff Schulwerk Publications.....	46
Other Solutions.....	48
CHAPTER 4: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION.....	51
REFERENCES.....	54
APPENDICES.....	57
A. Suggested Sources.....	58
B. Institutions for Further Information.....	60

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Carl Orff

Carl Orff (1895-1982) is considered a visionary in the world of music education. Orff not only distinguished himself as a German composer of works such as *Carmina Burana* but also contributed a child-centered approach to music education. Along with colleague Gunild Keetman, Carl Orff developed an approach in the 1920s to be used by music teachers called “Schulwerk.” Since its introduction to North America in the 1950s, Orff Schulwerk has grown and thrived in music classrooms all over the nation along with the rest of the world. In fact, many music positions in elementary, middle-school, and college-level institutions call for experience or certification in Orff Schulwerk (Steen, 1992).

Carl Orff was born in Munich, Germany in 1895. At that time, Munich was a cultural center where concert music, opera, and drama flourished. Orff found himself in the midst of young musicians, painters, writers, poets, and dancers who were striving to break away from old, conventional traditions (Warner, 1991). As a result of his immersion, involvement, and interest in this artistic lifestyle, Orff began to delve into ways of blending music and dance for which he would become recognized and celebrated.

Orff's vision of creating new educational attitudes and tactics started as a result of his affinity toward dance and movement. Orff was inspired by Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, who was one of the first innovative music educators to bring music theory into the human body by encouraging students to feel an emotional connection to music. For example, Dalcroze's students were known to step away from their musical instruments and interpretatively dance the phrases they were studying. Orff was also intrigued by the parallels between dancing and elemental music—organic, concrete music—and sought to try out new ways of teaching these ideas to children.

Having parallel goals to those of Orff, Dorothee Gunther, a German artist and writer, desired to create an organic movement education. As a result of their mutual philosophies of education, Orff and Gunther, in 1924, opened the Guntherschule in Munich where students studied dance and music equally. The pair's credo behind the arts integration at the Guntherschule was "Out of movement, music. Out of music, movement" (Goodkin, 2004, p. 4).

A few years later, Gunild Keetman entered the Guntherschule as a student and soon afterward became a teacher at the school. Keetman was quite skilled at both dance and music and certainly made a name for herself at the Guntherschule. She composed many pieces of music to accompany the Dance Group at the school, and due to their popularity and originality, her compositions were performed for an international audience at the 1936 Olympics (Frazee, 1998).

The curriculum at the Guntherschule eventually expanded to include instruction on instruments suitable to play elemental music. Instruction on instruments such as xylophones and recorders—which are today referred to as “Orff instruments”—led to lessons on the concept of improvisation, a key feature of Orff Schulwerk. Unfortunately, the Guntherschule was bombed and destroyed during war in 1945; but, the ideals behind Gunther’s, Orff’s, and Keetman’s visions did not die (Shamrock, 1997).

### **What is Orff Schulwerk?**

The definition of Schulwerk is simply too large to fit into a sentence—or even several paragraphs. A common misconception about Orff Schulwerk is that it is a method (Perlmutter, 2009). However, one must realize that Schulwerk is not a method. It encompasses so many elements and ideas, and there is no methodical, stepwise procedure to follow. Rather, it is an approach, a philosophy, a concept, and a process—which is open to exploration. Simply stated, Orff Schulwerk is a child-centered approach to learning music. Before delving into the elements of the Schulwerk approach, let us look into how it came to be through Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman.

By the end of the Guntherschule era, Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman had each developed and accumulated a number of pedagogical works and materials. Between 1950 and 1954, Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman teamed up to reflect upon and combine their works and approaches. The two colleagues wished to create an educational source that encouraged children and teachers to learn about music through discovery, creativity, and improvisation. These collaborations revolving around movement, dance, song, and



playing musical instruments resulted in the publication of the five volumes known as *Musik für Kinder (Music for Children)*.

*Music for Children* quickly became popular among music teachers. Beginning in 1953, teacher-training courses based on the concepts highlighted in *Music for Children* were offered at the Mozarteum in Austria. Then, in 1963 the Orff Institute in Salzburg was opened due to the great interest in *Music for Children* and what became to be known as “Orff Schulwerk.”

The first adaptations in English based on the German text of *Music for Children* were the British edition by Margaret Murray and the Canadian edition by Doreen Hall and Arnold Walter. Due to the publications of the English adaptations as well as the teacher-training programs, Orff Schulwerk was gaining international recognition. The first Orff Schulwerk conference in North America was held in Toronto, Canada in 1962, and the popularity of the approach among Canadian and American teachers grew. By 1968, the American Orff Schulwerk Association (AOSA) was born. A timeline of events associated with Orff Schulwerk is presented in Table 1 (See Table 1).

The literal translation of Schulwerk is “schoolwork,” directed toward the notion of accomplishing something—a work of art or simply the work of children (Goodkin, 2004). The purpose of the Schulwerk program was to give students the opportunity to create and compose music through hands-on exploration, improvisation, and discovery. Basically, it is an active approach to music education (Shamrock, 1997). The ultimate goal of Orff’s music education approach was to enrich students’ lives “through the development of their inherent musicality” (Frazee & Kreuter, 1987, p. 7).

The educational traditions that Orff and Keetman had set forth for the benefit of children learning music continues. In fact, Orff's perspective and philosophy of combining discovering, creating, and performing in the realm of music and dance continues to be celebrated today and remains one of the most popular approaches in music education (Orff celebrated around the world, 1995). At this writing, the Orff Schulwerk: *Music for Children* is sixty years old. In addition, the Orff Institute still functions today as an international training center for Orff Schulwerk (Warner, 1991).

Table 1. Orff Schulwerk Timeline

<b>Year</b>	<b>Description of Event</b>
1895	Carl Orff was born in Munich
1904	Gunild Keetman was born in Germany
1924	Carl Orff and Dorothee Gunther co-founded the Guntherschule in Munich
1926	Gunild Keetman enrolled at the Guntherschule
1945	The Guntherschule was destroyed
1950	The first volume of Orff/Keetman's <i>Music for Children</i> was published
1956	The first English adaptations for <i>Music for Children</i> were published, the British version by Margaret Murray and the Canadian version by Doreen Hall and Arnold Walter
1961	The Orff Institut was established in Salzburg
1968	The American Orff Schulwerk Association was started
1969	The first issue of <i>The Orff Echo</i> was published
1970	Gunild Keetman's <i>Elementaria</i> was published
1974	The first Orff Certification program took place at Denver University
1982	Carl Orff passed away
1987	Jane Frazee & Kent Kreuter's <i>Discovering Orff</i> was published
1990	Gunild Keetman passed away
1991	Brigitte Warner's <i>Orff Schulwerk: Applications for the Classroom</i> was published
1992	Arvida Steen's <i>Exploring Orff</i> was published
Present	The traditions of Orff Schulwerk in classrooms all over the world continue

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this research and review is to provide an understanding for music teachers about the Orff Schulwerk approach. The philosophies behind the Orff Schulwerk curriculum and its various facets—including movement, speech, instruments, and creativity and improvisation—will be examined. Further, curriculum challenges will be presented.

An abundance of methods exist in music education, and music teachers know that Carl Orff's philosophy is among the most popular and praised. However, while more than 10,000 American teachers use the Orff approach, many of them shy away from it due to criticisms and challenges (Perlmutter, 2009). For instance, skeptics claim that it lacks structure and organization (Steen, 1992; Warner, 1991) and that its methods aren't geared toward current American culture (Wheeler & Raebeck, 1977). Further, many teachers claim to lack the funding for instruments to use in their classrooms (Perlmutter, 2009). Fortunately, solutions to these challenges will be offered.

This review will also provide teachers a collection of resources, foundations, and ideas that will help them to fully understand the concept of Orff Schulwerk. Further, the subjects and literature examined in this paper are intended to guide contemporary music teachers in putting the Orff Schulwerk approach into practice.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **DEFINITIONS AND KEY AUTHORS**

#### **Definitions**

##### American Orff Schulwerk Association:

The American Orff Schulwerk Association (AOSA) was started in 1968 in support of the popularity of Orff Schulwerk. There are more than 90 AOSA chapters in the United States. Members of AOSA receive a monthly subscription to *The Orff Echo* and are encouraged to attend frequent professional development conferences and workshops. These conferences and workshops guide teachers to understand the philosophy of Orff Schulwerk and how to teach the process. The association also offers several scholarships and grants.

##### Approach:

An approach is a philosophy and a concept. Orff Schulwerk is an approach, not a method, because it is open to exploration and interpretation. Orff simply described Schulwerk as an “idea” (Shamrock, 1997). Whereas a method is based on an order of steps with the purpose of accomplishing something, an approach focuses on the process instead of an end result.

### Barred instruments:

Barred instruments are pitched instruments. Barred instruments allow users to play melodies with pitches. The xylophone, metallophone, and glockenspiel are the typical barred instruments in an Orff ensemble.

### Child-centered approach:

Carl Orff believed in creating a child-centered education. This active approach centers on the child's natural behavior—play. It is designed to promote a child's interests and qualities rather than to provide training or information.

### Choreography:

Choreography is the art of creating and arranging dances. Choreography is present in the Orff Schulwerk approach as it centers on the exploration and integration of movement and music.

### Creativity:

Creativity refers to musical responses in which there are no restrictions placed on the student. Creativity can mean anything from any form of expression to improvisation on instruments.

### Curriculum:

Curriculum is the set of courses and their content in schools. Curriculum can also refer to any means of learning. Although the Orff Schulwerk music education approach encompasses various strategies and techniques, there is no sequenced or standardized

curriculum. Teachers design their lessons and objectives in accordance to the needs of their students.

### Dance:

Dance, an art form and means of expression, is concerned with visual effect. Dance is a key characteristic of Orff Schulwerk as teachers are encouraged to explore commonalities of movement and music.

### Dalcroze, Emile Jaques:

Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950) was one of the first innovative music educators to incorporate dance and movement into curriculum. He taught at the Conservatory of Geneva beginning in 1890. He set about to have his students move away from their instruments and dance the phrases, dynamics, and stylistic touches they were studying in their music. Dalcroze's emphasis on his concept of Eurhythmics—moving to the phrases and sounds of the music—as well as improvisation are what motivated Carl Orff to develop new methods and approaches toward music education.

### Dewey, John:

John Dewey (1859-1952) was an American philosopher whose ideas were based on creating educational reform. Dewey offered the philosophy of education referred to as “Progressivism,” which centered on interactive, hands-on pedagogy and building social relationships.

### Echo-play:

Echo-play is a call-and-response classroom technique for teacher and students developed by Brigitte Warner. The teacher plays a musical phrase on an instrument, and students echo or repeat the phrase back to the teacher.

### Elemental music:

Elemental music is music that is not abstract. It is pattern-based music built on the integration of natural speech and movement. The materials used in elemental music making should be simple, basic, and natural (Shamrock, 1997). Teachers can expand upon this idea of elemental music by working with the materials nearest to them—the body, the voice, and the imagination (Goodkin, 2004).

### Ensemble:

A musical ensemble refers to a group two or more instrumental or vocal musicians. The Orff ensemble consists of musicians or students playing barred wooden or metal instruments, unpitched percussion instruments, and recorders.

### Eurhythmics:

Eurhythmics is an approach to music education developed by Swiss music educator Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. The concept of Eurhythmics focuses on discovering and expressing music through physical movement.

### Gestures:

Gestures are physical or body movements. Gestures associated with movement in the Orff Schulwerk setting include snapping, clapping, patting, and stamping. Gunild Keetman used these sound gestures to serve as foundations for building future rhythmic and melodic work (Frazee, 1998).

### Glockenspiel:

A glockenspiel is a musical instrument, used in the Orff ensemble, made with removable metal bars of different pitches. It is played by striking a mallet on the bars. Glockenspiels are similar to metallophones in that they are made of metal, but glockenspiels produce higher pitches. Glockenspiels come in altos and sopranos only—no bass.

### Gunther, Dorothee:

Dorothee Gunther (1896-1975) was a German artist involved in painting, writing, and theatre. Gunther was inspired by the works and methods set forth by Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. Gunther envisioned developing new ways to teach movement, dance, and music; and, in 1924, this vision came alive when she and Carl Orff opened the Guntherschule in Munich, Germany.

### The Guntherschule:

The Guntherschule was started by Dorothee Gunther and Carl Orff in Munich, Germany in 1924. Students enrolled in the school studied dance and music equally. Carl Orff was the musical director at the school, where he focused on group improvisation,



dance, and speech in the curriculum. It was at the Guntherschule where Carl Orff and colleague Gunild Keetman developed their ideas toward a music education curriculum that centered on music and movement. The Guntherschule was eventually confiscated by Nazis in 1944 and then bombed in 1945, which destroyed the instruments, costumes, photographs, and all archives.

Hall, Doreen & Walter, Arnold:

Doreen Hall and Arnold Walter adapted Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman's five volume publication *Music for Children* from the original German text to English, published as a Canadian edition. Hall studied with Orff and Keetman in Salzburg, Austria and is responsible for having introduced the Orff Schulwerk approach to North America. In 1974, Hall founded the Orff-Schulwerk Society of Canada.

Hands-on approach:

Hands-on learning in education involves active participation by students. The hands-on approach is affiliated with learning-by-doing and student/child-centered attitudes. Orff classrooms are set up in ways where children can be active and have the opportunity to explore, create, play, and discover. This includes singing, moving, and playing instruments.

Improvisation:

Improvisation is an inference in learning in which students create or invent rhythmic or tonal pattern responses with no restrictions. Improvisation allows children a

creative outlet in their growth as musicians. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments is among the National Standards for Music Education.

#### Learn-by-doing:

Learn-by-doing suggests an experimental and discovery approach to learning. This approach is sometimes also referred to as discovery learning. Educators who value this concept believe that students gain competence, confidence, and a sense of pride in their work and discoveries. The Orff Schulwerk philosophy recognizes the importance of actively involving students in the process of creating. Improvisation is a part of the learn-by-doing method of musical instruction.

#### Melody:

Melody is the arrangement and succession of musical tones to make a phrase or idea. It is the tune of a piece of music. Melody is often used in contrast to rhythm. Many melodies seen in the Orff repertoire are traditional and folk melodies.

#### Melodic work:

Melodic work refers to the practice of performing melody on an instrument or by singing. This may be done by listening and playing-by-ear or through reading notated music. Melodic work in the Orff setting may be sung or performed on barred (pitched) instruments, such as xylophones, metallophones, glockenspiels, and recorders. The goal of practicing melodic work is to perform individually or as an ensemble with technical proficiency and accuracy.

### Method:

A method is a set of procedures or techniques that are consistent with an approach. A method differs from an approach in that it involves a structured, ordered arrangement of parts or steps for the sake of accomplishment, whereas an approach is more holistic, open, and left up to interpretation. Orff Schulwerk is not a method; it is an approach.

### Metallophone:

Metallophones are musical instruments, used in the Orff ensemble, made with removable metal bars of different pitches. They are played by striking a mallet on the bars. There are three sizes of xylophones: bass, alto, and soprano.

### Montessori, Maria:

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) was an Italian educator and philosopher. She is known for developing the Montessori method of education which focuses on the natural development of children. Not only does the method provide an environment that is child-centered, but it can also be described as self-directed where students experiment and create their own meaning through natural instincts.

### Movement:

Movement is a key component in Orff Schulwerk as it gives students the opportunity to be active and to engage in social interactions. Its purpose is to form the body as an instrument of expression (Goodkin, 2004). Movement should begin with large-muscle movements, such as walking, jogging, and jumping and later extended to

small-muscle movements, such as snapping, clapping, and patting. Students should experience these types of movements to reinforce rhythmic competency, as these movements are transferred to playing instruments (Lange, 2005).

#### The Mozarteum:

The Mozarteum is a music and dramatic arts university in Salzburg, Austria. The Mozarteum is largely recognized for its orchestra and its annual celebration of composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Beginning in 1953, Orff Schulwerk teacher-training courses took place at the institution.

#### Murray, Margaret:

Margaret Murray adapted Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman's five volume publication *Music for Children* from the original German text to English. She also adapted Keetman's *Elementaria* to English. Murray founded the Orff Society UK in 1964 and continues to be actively involved in Orff Schulwerk programs.

#### Music:

Music is the art of arranging sounds in time. Music is produced by vocal or instrumental sounds that possess a degree of melody, harmony, or rhythm. The study of music is seen in various forms of educational settings or institutions.

#### Music Education:

Music education is a field of study that focuses on the learning and pedagogy associated with music. Music education is present in elementary, middle, and high

schools as well as colleges, universities, and other instructional institutions. Orff Schulwerk is a major international music education approach.

#### Music for Children:

*Music for Children* is a five volume series published by Schott Publishing Company. *Music for Children* grew out of Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman's work with children and presents a fundamental study of printed word and musical scores for gaining understanding of music and language. The first volume of *Music for Children* was published in 1950 with the others published by 1954. Margaret Murray translated all five volumes to English by 1966.

#### Nursery Rhymes:

Nursery rhymes are short poems, chants, or songs for children. Research shows that nursery rhymes may be one of the most important foundations of a young child's development as they develop skills in language and music.

#### The Orff Echo:

*The Orff Echo* is the quarterly journal of the American Orff Schulwerk Association. The journal features various articles by music educators. Each issue includes a focus and a theme pertaining to either general music education or Orff Schulwerk. Teachers can find these journals helpful in terms of gaining ideas for lessons and classroom activities.

### Orff Institut:

The Orff Institut in Salzburg, Austria maintains a steady schedule of movement and music classes. It was established in 1961 by Carl Orff as a center for the training of teachers in elementary music and dance education.

### Orff Schulwerk:

Orff Schulwerk is an education approach to teach music to students. It was developed by Carl Orff and his colleague Gunild Keetman in the 1920s. The term “Schulwerk” translates to “school work,” emphasizing the importance of viewing the approach as a process. Orff Schulwerk is considered a child-centered approach where students learn-by-doing through improvisation, creativity, music, movement, and speech.

### Orff Schulwerk teacher:

Schulwerk emphasizes the artistry of teaching (Goodkin, 2008). The trained Orff Schulwerk teacher is able to teach instrument parts to every student. Orff teachers are expected to be flexible in their approach, which allows them to use creativity in their classrooms (Lange, 2005). Orff teachers must draw from various classroom techniques and procedures to teach music in a child-centered manner.

### Organic movement education:

Organic means living, natural, whole, and fundamental. “Organic movement education” was a phrase used by German artist Dorothee Gunther. The phrase reflects Gunther’s vision of combining natural artistic actions and expressions of human beings: art, movement, dance, and music. This idea of creating an organic movement education

and linking it with music education resulted in the Guntherschule, where students studied dance and music equally.

#### Ostinato:

Ostinato is a short pattern that repeats itself over and over again. The repeating idea of an ostinato may be a rhythmic pattern or part of a melody. It also often relates to elements of speech, poems, chants, or simple nursery rhymes. Ostinato is widely used in Orff Schulwerk as it serves as an accompaniment and foundation for improvising, composing, and dancing or singing (Goodkin, 2004).

#### Participatory environment:

A participatory environment is one that encourages active learning. Orff Schulwerk teachers provide hands-on activities and opportunities for students to create and make discoveries. Active participation can be achieved through improvisation, composition, and performing in an ensemble. In Orff Schulwerk, a participatory environment goes hand-in-hand with a social learning environment.

#### Philosophy:

A philosophy is a principal belief, concept, or attitude of an individual or group of people. Orff Schulwerk is considered a philosophy and approach toward music education, in contrast to a method. The philosophy embraces and is based on a hands-on, child-centered attitude toward teaching and learning music.

Phrase:

A phrase is a musical sentence or thought. A phrase can be rhythmic or melodic. In the Orff Schulwerk setting, phrases are typically exercised as ostinatos or put together to form a song.

Piaget, Jean:

Jean Piaget (1896-1980) was a psychologist known for his studies on the development of children. He was an advocate of child-centered approaches in education. Further, Piaget is associated with the “Constructivism” philosophy of teaching and learning where students construct meaning through hands-on, explorative learning experiences.

Recitation:

Recitation means to precisely repeat something. It can also be considered a response. The method of call-and-response is often used in the Orff Schulwerk setting where teachers demonstrate a phrase and students echo or respond the phrase either by singing, speaking, dancing, or playing an instrument. Echo-play is an example of a classroom activity that centers on recitation.

Recorder:

A recorder is a melody wind instrument. Recorders are included in the Orff ensemble. The high pitch of the recorder adds contrast to the other instruments of the Orff ensemble. In the early days leading up to Orff Schulwerk, Gunild Keetman



experimented with both the technique and the means of integrating the recorder into music lessons.

### Rhythm:

Rhythm is a description and arrangement of sound, usually in relation to beat, tempo, and meter. Tempo is the rate of speed; and, meter refers to groups of beats. Rhythm can also be described as the pattern or organization of movement in space and time (Goodkin, 2004; Warner, 1991). Rhythm is an integral part of elemental music as it is the basis of speech and movement (Warner, 1991).

### Rhythmic competency:

Rhythmic competency refers to the skill and understanding an individual possesses in regards to demonstrating and performing accurate rhythms in music or dance.

### Rhythmic work:

Rhythmic work refers to the practice of performing rhythms through singing, speaking, or playing an instrument. Rhythms can also be performed through dance and movement. The goal of practicing rhythmic work is to perform individually or as an ensemble with technical proficiency and accuracy.

### Schulwerk:

See Orff Schulwerk.

### Social learning environment:

A social learning environment is one where students are engaging and working with one another. Games, play, rhymes, and songs are all means to bring children together—all elements of Orff Schulwerk.

### Tonal pattern:

A tonal pattern, or melodic pattern, is the combining of both rhythm and melody into one pattern, thought, or phrase. Tonal patterns can be demonstrated through singing or playing a pitched instrument.

### Unpitched instruments:

Unpitched instruments are instruments that have no fundamental frequency of sound or musical tone. In the Orff ensemble, these include percussion instruments: woodblocks, finger cymbals, hand drums, shakers, scrapers, etc. Generally, these instruments are used to play rhythmic figures and ostinatos (Lange, 2005).

### Vygotsky, Lev:

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a psychologist and author interested in child development and education. His work also covered the psychology of art, play, thought, and language. Vygotsky asserted that art and imagination are social acts natural to children.

### Xylophone:

Xylophones are musical instruments, used in the Orff ensemble, made with removable wooden bars of different pitches. They are played by striking a mallet on the bars. There are three sizes of xylophones: bass, alto, and soprano. Orff recognized the suitability of the simple pitched percussion instrument for elemental music-making and improvisation and introduced the xylophone to the Guntherschule in 1926.

### **Key Authors**

#### Frazee, Jane:

Jane Frazee is the founder and director of Graduate Programs in Music Education at the University of St. Thomas at St. Paul, Minnesota. Frazee has taught music at St. Paul Academy/Summit School and directed the Center for Contemporary Music Education at Hamline University. She was a Fulbright Lecturer at the Orff Institut in Salzburg in 1981-1982. Frazee has also served as president of the American Orff Schulwerk Association. She is author of various books, including *Discovering Orff: A Curriculum for Music Teachers*, *Orff Schulwerk Today*, and *Discovering Keetman*. Her articles on Orff Schulwerk have been featured in *The Music Educators Journal* and *The Orff Echo* as well as other Orff-related publications.

#### Goodkin, Doug:

Doug Goodkin is a globally recognized Orff Schulwerk teacher and has taught music to students of various ages in several countries. Goodkin has taught classes at the Orff Institut in Salzburg, the Mills College of Orff Certification Program, and the San

Francisco Conservatory of Music. Goodkin is the author of six books, including the popular books *Intery Mintery: Nursery Rhymes for Body, Voice, and Orff Ensemble* and *Play, Sing, and Dance: An Introduction to Orff Schulwerk*.

Keetman, Gunild:

Gunild Keetman was born in Germany in 1904. At the age of twenty-two, she enrolled at the Gunthershule, a new school created by Carl Orff and Dorothee Gunther. At the Guntherschule, Keetman composed various works, many set to choreography. She proved to be equally talented in music and movement and was actively involved in the Dance Group at the school. Keetman later shifted her musical focus toward children; and, during this time, she joined forces with Carl Orff to develop a hands-on approach to music education called Schulwerk. Keetman and Orff sought to inform the world about their Schulwerk approach by creating five volumes of instructional method books, called *Music for Children*. With the success of Schulwerk reaching to an international audience, Keetman continued to produce many instructional publications through the years.

Lange, Diane M.:

Diane M. Lange is Assistant Professor and Division Coordinator of Music Education at the University of Texas at Arlington where she teaches courses in Early Childhood and Elementary Music Education. She is a certified Orff teacher and has illustrated her experience with Orff Schulwerk through her book *Together in Harmony: Combining Orff Schulwerk and Music Learning Theory*.

McRae, Shirley:

Shirley McRae is largely recognized as an Orff teacher, a composer, and an arranger of music. She is Professor Emerita at the Rudy E. Scheidt School of Music, The University of Memphis and has taught Orff certification courses for many years. McRae has published two textbooks and ten books of arrangements for voice and Orff instruments as well as numerous sacred and secular choral works.

Steen, Arvida:

Arvida Steen is a music teacher at the Blake School in Hopkins, Minnesota and is also a faculty member at the Institute for Contemporary Music of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. Her work focuses on Orff curriculum and teaching Orff certification levels. She has also contributed many publications, including *Exploring Orff: A Teacher's Guide*. The Arvida Steen Orff Schulwerk Studies Scholarship was established in 2004 through the University of St. Thomas to recognize her support and contributions toward music education.

Warner, Brigitte:

Brigitte Warner is a music teacher and author. She studied organ at the Leopold Mozart Conservatory in Augsburg, Germany, traveled to Munich to receive instruction from Carl Orff, and also was a student at the Orff Institut in Salzburg, Austria. Inspired by Orff, she became a music teacher in the United States. Her efforts and experience as an Orff teacher led to the publication of her book *Orff Schulwerk: Applications for the Classroom*.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Schulwerk Curriculum**

##### **The Basis of the Approach**

Various elements and concepts are encompassed within the methods of the Orff Schulwerk approach. Due to the assortment of themes that constitute Orff Schulwerk and the fact that each area alone deserves a lifetime of study, “no one can ever be an expert in this teaching style that requires them all” (Goodkin, 2004, p. 9). However, teachers and students can gain pleasure in knowing that Orff Schulwerk is a life-long process. In fact, Orff Schulwerk inevitably becomes a way of life as much for the teachers as the students (Orff centennial celebrated around the world, 1995).

Before examining the themes and specifics of the Orff Schulwerk curriculum, let us look at the principal, underlying basis of the approach. Probably the most essential foundation supporting Orff Schulwerk is to give children the opportunity to be active participants and to learn-by-doing. Therefore, Orff Schulwerk is considered a hands-on, child-centered approach. To further adhere to the student-centered goal of the Orff Schulwerk philosophy, many classroom techniques are used but universally follow this basic pattern: the teacher sets up an active, participatory environment, the teacher stands with the children in a circle, students learn-by-doing, and they perform by singing,

moving, and playing instruments (Keetman, 1970; Steen, 1992; Lange, 2005). All of these techniques reflect both the child-centered attitude as well as the opportunity for social engagement. Yet, as influential as Orff is in the world of music education, he was not the first to develop a child-centered, hands-on approach to education. His style and philosophy can be compared to the works of other renowned educational figures.

### **The Educational Philosophy of Carl Orff**

Ultimately, Orff Schulwerk is based on learning through being active and creative. Orff Schulwerk has also been termed “elemental,” meaning that the content is pertinent and natural to the needs and interests of the child. The content also speaks to the child in an ideal language that he or she understands. Orff’s child-centered music education philosophy is in accord with the findings and philosophies of other notable contributors toward education (Warner, 1991). The works of developmental and educational theorists such as Piaget, Vygotsky, Dewey, and Montessori serve as foundations for child-centered educational practices.

First, the work of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) supports the importance of creating a social learning environment in the classroom. Through games and play—via individual creativity and the use of the imagination—children are essentially socializing with one another as well as developing language, speech, communication, and cognitive skills. In his 1930 publication *Imagination and Creativity in Childhood*, Vygotsky asserted that creativity is not only the foundation for imagination and art, but it is also “essential to the existence of humanity and society” (Lindqvist, 2003, p. 249). Therefore, play and art (music) are natural social acts, as they encourage social relationships between people.

Vygotsky explicitly maintained that all humans, including children, are naturally creative beings and that creativity is a “normal and constant companion in childhood” (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 33). This idea of natural creativity presented by Vygotsky coincides with Orff’s notion of elemental music: the integration of natural actions and tendencies with music-making, speech, movement, and play.

Jean Piaget (1896-1980) is esteemed for having addressed the importance of child-centered learning and teaching. Piaget promoted active learning environments in schools that focused on children’s individual interests. From the position of the Piagetian perspective, individuals construct a personal reality from previous knowledge and experiences (Tzuo, 2007). In other words, children best learn and make meaning of educational experiences when they are creating, exploring, and engaging in hands-on activities. In some ways, Orff’s Schulwerk approach can be looked at as a blend of both philosophies: the Piaget emphasis on individual learning-by-doing and the Vygotsky focus on social interaction through play and creativity.

Other significant figures in education—John Dewey (1859-1952) and Maria Montessori (1870-1952)—assert viewpoints about children, education, and learning that also encompass a child-centered attitude. Dewey’s curricular goals are rooted in ideas of social interaction and learning through hands-on experiences. He further advocates that “the curriculum should be flexible enough to permit free play for children’s individuality of experience” (Tzuo, 2007, p. 36). Dewey also claims that children value the concepts learned in their constructive activities because the concepts enable the children to carry out their creative impulses (Martin, 2002).



Montessori agrees that children are naturally creative beings and possess healthy impulses to explore. Ron Miller writes that “Montessori’s central concern was the natural development of the child, the healthy formation of the physical, mental, and spiritual qualities that are latent in the human being and which unfold, she believed, according to a purposeful, even divine, life force” (Miller, 1997, p.160). Fundamentally, the approaches of all figures mentioned—Orff, Vygotsky, Piaget, Dewey, and Montessori—ultimately stem from a child-centered attitude. Children are not merely observers; they are creators, thinkers, improvisers, and composers.

It must be reiterated that Orff Schulwerk is not a method; rather, it is a philosophy, a process, and an approach (Perlmutter, 2009; Goodkin, 2001). The approach embraces the natural ways children speak, sing, and move to reflect the elemental human intuitions, emotions, and attitudes that children possess. Therefore, because Orff Schulwerk stems from such a diverse and extensive way of thinking, there is no end result to the approach. Teachers and children can continue to discover and enjoy the many facets associated with Orff Schulwerk throughout their lifetime.

The term “Schulwerk” represents a pedagogy for guiding children through their development as social, active learners. It translates to “schoolwork,” which implies the notion of working toward something, as in a process. Schulwerk also represents a microcosm of Orff’s work and focus on musical themes—exploration through sound and movement, development of skills in rhythm and speech, singing and performing on instruments, improvisation, and creation (Shamrock, 1997).

Because there is such an emphasis on Orff Schulwerk as an approach, philosophy, and idea, one may be misled to think that it involves no specific content or curriculum (Shamrock, 1997). Yes, Orff Schulwerk is rooted in beliefs centered on the natural behaviors of children through play and the use of the imagination, which to an outsider may seem far from curriculum. But, the concept of play has been supported and backed by educational researchers.

## **Play**

Several scholars cite play in regards to child development and education. For example, research shows that through play children use their imaginations and trial-and-error to work through ideas (Williams & Rask, 2003). Authors claim that this universal concept of games play is a means of growth for children in terms of well-being and social development and interaction (Brooking-Payne, 1996; Goodkin, 2004; Ramstetter et al, 2010). According to Colette Gosselin, “in play, [children] engage in dialogue that center around make-believe, sharing of resources, and the division of roles” (2007, p. 41). Gosselin further states, that in these exchanges, “children are challenged to mediate between their ideas and the expectations of others and make meaning of their own world” (2007, p. 41). In other words, play is a very social learning experience in which children use their imaginations to make meaning of their environment. This statement reflects Vygotsky’s theories of creativity and imagination by means of games and play.

In addition, play not only provides a means to develop social interactions, but it also provides a unique contribution to the creative and emotional aspects of a child's development (Ramstetter et al, 2010). When children engage in play, they are expressing

their emotions and making sense of their world (Goodkin, 2004). Because music-making also requires creativity and the imagination, children naturally “socialize, vent emotions, and entertain themselves through music” (Campbell, 2000, p. 29).

Orff also saw play as an opportunity for children to express themselves and to use their imaginations. He once stated that “it is the imagination that should be awakened and trained” (Goodkin, 2001, p. 3). Orff expert Doug Goodkin refers to this opportunity for imagination to take place in the classroom as “romance” (Goodkin, 2001). It is a curriculum based on children’s raw impulse of fantasy that elicits creative responses. This notion will be discussed further in the creativity and improvisation section of the paper.

Play can be explored through games. Brigitte Warner refers to these types of games as “creative play-acting” (1991). An example a game that can be incorporated in an Orff Schulwerk classroom is “the beanbag game.” In the beanbag game, the teacher plays a xylophone and the students toss the beanbag to the beat of the music that the teacher is playing. Whoever has the beanbag at the end of the song must use their imagination to perform an improvisational pattern on the xylophone (Lange, 2005).

Another example of a game to be played in an Orff classroom is “Doctor Foster.” In “Doctor Foster,” students sit in a circle and sing a song while one student (Doctor Foster) walks around them carrying an umbrella. When the students in the circle raise their xylophone mallets and chant “he stepped in a puddle,” Doctor Foster steps into the circle and sinks down into the puddle. On their xylophones, the students tap the rhythm of “pitter patter pitter patter drip, pitter patter pitter patter drop” (Goodkin, 2008).

To summarize, through imaginative play children engage with one another and consequently develop social skills. Music classrooms are environments to facilitate social relationships. Lori Gooding (2009) suggests that “because music is an inherently social activity, the music classroom is an ideal place to help students develop or improve vital social skills” (p. 1). In other words, social skills are a natural part of the music-making process. Further research on music and social skills has shown that benefits of musical involvement include facilitation of self-expression, development of interpersonal skills, facilitation of positive changes in social behaviors, and development of group cohesion (Eidson, 1989; Gunsberg, 1988; Reid et al, 1975; Steele, 1977). The Orff Schulwerk approach highlights these benefits through hands-on, participatory musical activities by means of movement, speech, playing instruments, and creating and improvising.

## **Movement**

According to Doug Goodkin, “music is sounded movement, movement is danced sound” (Goodkin, 2004, p. 17). Since his involvement at the Guntherschule, where music and dance were studied equally, Orff’s ideals of integrating music and movement in a creative context carried through to Orff Schulwerk classrooms. Movement gives students opportunities to be active, to engage in social interactions, and to shape the body as an instrument of expression. These attributes of using the body for purposes of expression have been present since our earliest movements in life, as illustrated by Cheryl L. Sanders:

For the new born baby, movement has been happening since before birth. An infant moves in direct relation to the sounds in its environment, most

especially in the sound of the mother's voice. Each of these movements that seem so erratic and non directed by the infant is the body responding to, answering, dancing with the sounds (and to a lesser degree sights) by which it is surrounded. The choreography of the first movements of the body are evidence of the deepest learning that takes place from the moment of birth (Sanders, 1996, p. xv).

Sanders' excerpt reflects the natural ways of human beings. Movement is not only natural but it is also a response to the world. In fact, movement—through interaction with others and the natural world—can be seen as a healthy, healing and balancing mechanism for individuals (Sanders, 1996). Maria Montessori (1967) supports movement in an educational setting as it stimulates the mind, saying that mental development “must be connected with movement and be dependent on it. It is vital that educational theory and practice be informed by this idea” (p. 141). Orff takes these vital, elemental attributes and desires of human beings and uses them as tools and sources for music instruction and learning. Basically, he is taking our origins and giving them purpose.

Movement is ultimately based on the concept of rhythm. In Orff Schulwerk, rhythm is tied to movement because one of the most elemental human manners of expression is movement expressions (Warner, 1991). Diane M. Lange suggests that movement should be included in every Orff Schulwerk lesson (2005).

Basic movements in which rhythm patterns are present include walking, jumping, hopping, and running. Orff took these basic movements further by incorporating sound gestures, or what Orff teachers refer to as “body percussion” to instill an understanding of rhythm patterns among young children. Sound gestures include stamping, patting,

snapping, and clapping (Frazee, 1998). Clapping is probably the most common form of body percussion. Clapping to the beat is a common accompaniment to singing songs. Ethnomusicologist Curt Sachs further highlights clapping and other body percussion instruments:

The original time beater is the stamping foot...to the dull stamping sound is added the sharper sound made by slapping the hand on some part of the body; thus the upper arm, the flanks, the abdomen, the buttocks and the thighs become musical instruments...Besides stamping...only hand clapping is found among all cultures at all periods (Sachs, 1937, p. 177).

For further exploration of body percussion, Doug Goodkin suggests giving children an object—perhaps a hula hoop, a scarf, or a drum—to perform rhythmic movements (2004). These objects provide opportunities for children to imagine and interpret music through the combination of using the object and their body.

Body percussion can be used for many purposes, perhaps for simply developing rhythmic work or teaching a particular musical phrase. Later, these rhythmic concepts performed through movement and body percussion can be transferred to playing instruments (Lange, 2005). Therefore, body percussion is an important step in the process of learning music in an Orff Schulwerk setting.

Gunild Keetman's *Rhythmic Exercises and Pieces for Xylophone*, later compiled together in Jane Frazee's book *Discovering Keetman*, provides a foundation for building rhythmic and melodic work, centering on the concept of rhythm (1998). Keetman's exercises are intended to build future rhythmic and melodic work. She combines sound gestures (body percussion) with short instrumental pieces. Additionally, she suggests

that adding text and speech to the exercises may add to further musical and social development (Frazee, 1998).

Through rhythm comes not only movement but also speech. Each concept is interconnected. The development of musical concepts—such as melody, harmony, playing instruments, and singing—is dependent on the fusion of rhythm, movement, and speech.

## **Speech**

“The natural rhythm of speech is an important ingredient in the Orff process” (Lange, 2005, p. 11). The basic principles of rhythm are developed through language because it is the most natural and elemental path to follow (Warner, 1991). Orff teachers believe that out of speech comes rhythm, and out of speech/rhythm comes melody. Shirley McRae, an Orff teacher, stated that “speech is one of the unique features of Orff Schulwerk, and many concepts are taught through and with speech. Just as a child must crawl before he walks, so must he speak before he sings” (Ferguson, 1988, from Lange, 2005, p. 11).

Because both language and music are crafted in sound, the Orff Schulwerk approach ties these concepts together. One of the easiest ways to integrate language and speech into the Schulwerk curriculum is through short, repeated patterns called ostinato (Lange, 2005). Ostinato is often associated with poems, chants, or simple nursery rhymes. Doug Goodkin (2008) believes that nursery rhymes are “the perfect way to begin a formal study of both language and music” (p. 7). Various researchers support the use of nursery rhymes in the classroom in order to develop language.

For example, Susan Kenney (2005) asserts that nursery rhymes may well be one of the most important foundations of a young child's development since rhymes stimulate the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and musical development of children.

Nursery rhymes are used in classrooms because they are easy for children to repeat and are models for literacy and language. They're short, they're easy, and they are fun in the domain of play, as many rhymes include movement and opportunities for the use of the imagination.

Nursery rhymes are often correlated with games and play. It was mentioned earlier that games and play develop social skills. Research also suggests that rhymes, games, and play also help children to learn important concepts and values (Holdaway, 1979). In addition, the repetition of nursery rhymes and poems allow children to learn the sounds of their language and to gain phonetic awareness (Fisher & Williams, 2000).

Nursery rhymes also elicit opportunities for movement. For example, nursery rhymes such as "Little Miss Muffet" allows children to create pantomime movements and expressions. First, children can pantomime the motions of eating her "curds and whey;" then they can show facial expressions to represent fright when the spider comes near. By the end of the nursery rhyme, children have created a play of actions and expressions (Warner, 1991).

Speech can also serve as a means to express oneself. In order to link expression through speech with later expression through music, Gunild Keetman asserts that chants and speech patterns should be expressed in a lively manner from the start:

Attention must be paid to well-rounded, meaningful, clear speech, spoken naturally and at a moderated degree of loudness; thoughtless, monotonous



intoning is to be avoided from the start. Speech should always have life and movement and should be supported by the breath (Keetman, 1970, p. 42).

Speaking and performing rhymes and chants in an Orff Schulwerk classroom allow children to understand that language contains rhythm and pulse (Warner, 1991). When students make this connection, they are essentially being introduced to the foundations of music. Not only does attention to speech in Orff Schulwerk help students to understand the presence of rhythm and opportunity for expression, but it also highlights other concepts pertinent to both language and music: vocabulary, recitation, call and response, form, texture, and alliteration (Goodkin, 2008). To summarize, play, movement, and speech are means and methods necessary in learning music. By having these foundations, children will be ready to engage in further developments of music, such as playing instruments.

## **Instruments**

Any person walking into an Orff classroom will see various instruments scattered on the floor. Orff instrumentation includes barred (pitched) wooden or metal instruments. Barred instruments—such as xylophones, metallophones, and glockenspiels—give students the opportunity to perform and improvise simple melodies and ostinatos with pitches. These instruments can also be used to accompany chants, rhymes, and singing (Frazee, 2008).

Further, the unique tones of Orff barred instruments can enrich the text of stories. Stories can be told entirely in sound. For example, xylophones can be used to tell the story of *Jack and Jill*:

Tilt a bass xylophone against the seat of a chair with the high register on top. One student, Jack, stands on one side of the xylophone; Jill is on the other. Each holds a mallet in one hand. As the group says the rhyme, Jack and Jill proceed from the bottom of the instrument to the top. Jack falls down to a descending glissando. Striking the mallet on the wood is the sound of his crown breaking, and Jill glissandos after (Frazee, 2008, p. 5).

The *Jack and Jill* storytelling exercise is not only fun for children, but it highlights several concepts: play, rhythm, speech, and imagination.

Unpitched instruments are another part of Orff instrumentation. Unpitched percussion instruments—such as woodblocks, finger cymbals, hand drums, shakers, etc.—act as a contrast to the barred instruments. They generally are used to play rhythmic figures and ostinatos. Doug Goodkin (2004) explains that “the word percussion stems from ‘quater’—to shake, strike, or dash. Joined with the preposition ‘per’ meaning ‘through, by or by means of,’ ‘per-quater’ is to express by means of shaking or striking” (p. 80). When students engage in the actions associated with striking a percussion instrument, they are essentially utilizing their innate desire to move.

Percussion instruments link back to the discussion of movement in the Orff Schulwerk classroom. Movement and sound gestures—such as patting, stamping, and clapping—are the fundamental beginnings of playing percussion instruments, as they help students to understand rhythm. In reverse, the drum “induces dance” (Goodkin, 2004, p. 82). Goodkin further illustrates this point by saying that the sound of an instrument can provoke the drive for movement. As movement is one of the most elemental human manners of expression, so is performing percussion instruments. Therefore, Orff thought of percussion instruments as a necessary component in creating

elemental music. In fact, they are the very center of the connection between the body, movement, music, rhythm, and voice (Goodkin, 2004).

The final piece of the Orff instrumentation is the recorder. With the exception of the human voice, it is the only non-percussive instrument associated with Orff Schulwerk. A common method for introducing the recorder to students is through teacher modeling. Research results show that modeling is one of the most effective techniques to elicit student performance. For example, Sang found that students who had teachers that demonstrated strong modeling skills were better performers than those who had teachers that demonstrated weaker modeling skills (1987). Modeling is most often accomplished through call and response techniques, such as echoing.

Brigitte Warner discusses an idea for teachers to use called “echo-play” which builds upon the natural means of playing by ear (1991). In echo-play, the teacher initially plays a phrase on the recorder, which the children then repeat. Games incorporating movement can be devised to make practicing this ear-training question and answer technique interesting. For example:

The children stand scattered throughout the room. One child, while walking around, echoes the phrase given by the teacher. At the end of the phrase he or she stops in front of another student. During the repeat (tutti), the two children walk and play together, while everyone else walks and plays by themselves. Then the child who was chosen as a partner becomes the new soloist to repeat the echo before the tutti (Warner, 1991, p. 235).

When barred instruments, unpitched percussion instruments, and recorders are used together in a classroom, students are creating an ensemble. The importance of students playing Orff instruments is that every child is given the opportunity to

participate as a member of the group, and through this participation “the students’ musicianship is strengthened by several musical themes: rhythmic and melodic training, understanding of form, experimenting with contemporary music, an acquaintance with techniques of composition, the use of traditional notation, and experience with graphic notation” (Brown, 1980, p. 320). In other words, students gain the necessary skills to read, understand, improvise, compose, and perform music. Not only do they deepen their musical knowledge through playing instruments, but students also gain opportunities to express themselves and strengthen social behaviors (Denac, 2007).

In her Orff Schulwerk handbook, *Elementaria*, Gunild Keetman illustrates various activities that revolve around the playing of Orff instruments (1970). For example, in one activity, she combines movement, body percussion, and several layers of instrument playing. The particular activity starts with students accompanying their own walking with clapping and snapping and later small percussion instruments such as hand drums. Then, while the teacher plays a melody on the recorder that acts as a question, the students answer with clapping back the rhythm of the melody. This exchange between teacher and students acts as echo-play. Students continue to repeatedly clap the rhythm as an ostinato accompaniment while the teacher improvises a melody on the recorder. This activity is dependent on the participation of all individuals in order to adhere to the nature of the Orff ensemble.

Orff instruments serve various purposes, such as providing a fun approach to storytelling, accompanying chants, songs, and dances, and performing as a musical ensemble. Lastly, one must realize that Orff Schulwerk is not a method for teaching children how to play xylophones, drums, and recorders. Rather, the instruments aspect

of Orff Schulwerk is an approach for children to gain a whole sense of the interconnectedness of play, movement, rhythm, creativity, and working together. Further, it provides opportunities for children to further create, explore, express emotions, and improvise.

### **Creativity and Improvisation**

Perhaps the most exciting aspect to the Orff Schulwerk approach is creativity and improvisation. As Orff originally developed his perspective in the 1920s, creating was of central importance. The typical relationship between the teacher and his or her students in an Orff classroom is that the teacher presents musical thoughts or problems and expects students to improvise their own solutions. Orff teachers set their classrooms up in a way that allows children to not only be active participants in an ensemble but also independent explorers of music (Frazee & Kreuter, 1987). Doug Goodkin explains the benefits of improvisation for students:

Since improvisation is the jumping-off place from imitation to creation, it directly involves the student in the music-making process. Improvisation can provide the student with a sense of ownership and pride in his or her work. When a student improvises, all the lights are on—thinking, hearing, feeling, and doing (Rudaitis, 1995, p. 34).

As improvisation typically follows a process starting from imitation and leading to creation, a common technique associated with teaching improvisation is question and answer (Lange, 2005). Echo-play, as discussed earlier, is an example of a question and answer technique. Judith Thomas, an Orff Schulwerk specialist, suggests that teachers should begin teaching improvisation by modeling the desired technique and then inviting the class to try it out, which parallels with the same techniques in teaching Orff

instruments (Rudaitis, 1995). For instance, the teacher may play a “question” rhythm on a hand drum, and the students, one at a time, “answer” by improvising a rhythmic pattern of the same length as the teacher’s “question” on another drum. This activity is based on set parameters and guidelines of instruction given by the teacher, but students are able to use their imagination to develop their own improvisations.

Improvisation can be explored in many ways and on many different kinds of instruments—vocally, rhythmically, physically, or instrumentally. Improvisation may also be explored as a group, as suggested by Gunild Keetman:

To give children the courage to improvise and play melodies, group improvisations, in which they do not feel so exposed, can serve as a transition to individual improvisation. Over an ostinato that provides the basic pulse for everyone the other children enter quite freely. Each child plays quietly according to his own idea of a melody; no one dominates (Keetman, 1970, p. 89).

Going back to Doug Goodkin’s notion of “romance,” Orff Schulwerk is rooted in elemental desires among children to express themselves (Goodkin, 2001). Romance, in the context of Orff Schulwerk, refers to the opportunity for the use of the imagination. To adhere to this concept, teachers’ procedures should be based on presenting an idea to children and then asking open questions, leaving room for interpretation, such as “What can we do next?” Children inevitably will use their imaginations to develop strategies and responses to the questions. When children are devising and creating their own strategies, they are constructing their own meaning of the material. This is improvisation in its truest form and is certainly a reflection of the child-centered nature of the Orff Schulwerk philosophy.

Romance is emotion, interest, and motivation. Romance doesn't focus on specific technical aspects of music; it instead concentrates on the feelings, the shapes of the phrases, the moods, and the fantasies behind music: the same themes that inspire individuals to move, play, and dance—and the same themes that Orff was drawn to in his cultural, artistic, expressionist, nonconventional surroundings in Munich at the turn of the century.

### **Curriculum Challenges**

Doug Goodkin (2004) views the Orff Schulwerk approach to be a challenging path and states that “the joy of discovering the simplicity of music-making is seductive for the newcomer, but behind it all lies a complexity of thought that feels formidable at times” (p. vii). There are three main challenges that music teachers face when attempting to implement the Orff approach in their curriculum. They feel that (a) the approach is neither designed for nor is relevant to an American classroom, (b) it is disorganized, and (c) and they lack funding for Orff instruments.

First, let us look at why there is the criticism that Orff Schulwerk does not apply to American classrooms. The first publication of Orff Schulwerk was a five volume text called *Music for Children* which was intended to be used as guides for teachers. Although these texts can be considered the most important of the Orff Schulwerk texts, since they were written by Orff and Keetman, authors and teachers claim that they are too difficult (Warner, 1991). These books move at a pace that may not be suitable for the typical American music classroom. For example, these books have pieces and examples that are built on advanced musical concepts, such as layered ostinati which may be too

challenging for young students to grasp. In addition, the many-voiced pieces in the *Music for Children* volumes were and continue to be intimidating to Orff teachers (Frazee, 2008).

Then, there is the criticism that Orff and Keetman did not set up their approach in an organized manner. The curriculum behind Orff Schulwerk is simply not always clear and is not spelled out in great detail (Warner, 1991). In other words, it lacks structure (Steen, 1992). With such an abundance of activities, one may lose focus of the concept being learned. Orff set his philosophy and classroom practices up in neither a guided manner nor curricular way.

However, this vagueness associated with *Music for Children* and the curriculum behind Schulwerk was intended. Orff's vision was to step away from traditional, lectured classes and move toward student-centered exploration and learning. His challenge to teachers was to see how they can take his philosophy and develop their own pedagogical ideas to music learning. Orff purposely did not provide solutions for problems in the classroom; rather, the approach is designed in a way for teachers and students to use their imagination, to make meaning of the material in their own way, and to develop their own strategies (Keetman, 1970).

In her *Music Educators Journal* article, Mary Shamrock further emphasizes the lack of a set sequence of materials in the Orff Schulwerk curriculum (1997). Not only was this lack of sequence intended for teachers' freedom, but also the materials and goals must be determined by each teacher according to the needs of his or her students as well



as the needs of the particular program. Shamrock also reiterates the meaning behind Orff Schulwerk as a process rather than a method:

The term ‘process’ is often used to describe the series of steps through which the teacher guides the students to reach short- or long-term goals. In a larger perspective, the Schulwerk is considered a process rather than a product-orientated methodology. The interactive activity of a particular lesson may result in something quite significant for that group that day, but rarely in material to be used with other classes in the same way. The same basic elements and format may be used repeatedly, but the essence of the pedagogy is that each group of participants must go through the ‘discovery learning’ process of experimenting, selecting, evaluating, discarding, and finally combining materials in a way that satisfies that particular group (Shamrock, 1997, p. 43).

Shamrock’s description of “process” illustrates the open, flexible ideals behind Orff Schulwerk pedagogy.

Despite this open approach and room for interpretation and creativity, teachers are still looking for structure in their teaching. Authors agree that the philosophies and activities behind Orff Schulwerk need to be organized into a curriculum so that students can retain musical concepts (Frazee & Kreuter, 1987; Lange, 2005). Therefore, my goal is to bridge the gap between the goals behind *Music for Children* set forth by Orff and Keetman and contemporary curriculum. My goal is to inform teachers of solutions to the mentioned challenges, to motivate them to implement the approach in their classrooms with comfort, and to learn that contemporary supplemental literature to *Music for Children* serve as valuable guides.

## Solutions to These Challenges

### Curricular Guides

Several authors have taken it upon themselves to develop methods and literature in order to bridge the gap between Orff's philosophy and America's society and classrooms (Wheeler & Raebeck, 1977). Contributing to this development and notion of bridging the gap, Jane Frazee has concluded that after many years of the presence of Orff Schulwerk in music education, it is time for a more helpful, sequenced approach to be set forth for teachers (2008). I have chosen resources that I believe will benefit music teachers in broadening their understanding of Orff Schulwerk and that can be directly used as part of their curriculum. Each resource is applicable to current educational practices and is organized with lessons. Also, these are resources that are easily accessible, and teachers should consider adding them to their library.

There are three publications that I feel are the most revered and valuable in terms of contemporary Orff Schulwerk literature that teachers might use as curricular guides. These three publications are: (a) *Exploring Orff: A teacher's guide* by Arvida Steen (1992), (b) *Discovering Orff* by Jane Frazee and Kent Kreuter (1987), and (c) *Intery Mintery: Nursery rhymes for body, voice, and Orff ensemble* by Doug Goodkin (2008). Of course other useful contemporary Orff literature exists, but they consist of mostly informative explanations and introductions to Orff Schulwerk as well as compilations of musical excerpts and examples (See Table 2 for further notable Orff Schulwerk publications). These three texts I had mentioned I believe are most valuable as organized, sequential, and laid-out curricular guides.

Table 2. Notable Orff Schulwerk Publications

Title	Year	Author(s)	Description
<i>Music for Children</i>	1950-1954	C. Orff & G. Keetman	<i>Music for Children</i> is a five volume series that introduces and addresses the fundamentals of Orff Schulwerk. Each volume contains short pieces and exercises that introduce basic musical concepts to children. The music is composed and arranged for Orff instruments. Margaret Murray later adapted the texts to English.
<i>The Orff Echo</i>	1969-present	Various	<i>The Orff Echo</i> is the quarterly journal of the American Orff Schulwerk Association. Each issue features articles of various topics pertaining to music education.
<i>Elementaria: First Acquaintance with Orff Schulwerk</i>	1970	G. Keetman	<i>Elementaria</i> is a handbook to Orff Schulwerk. The book is divided into two sections: Part One includes rhythmic, melodic and speech exercises. Part Two discusses elementary movement training. There is an illustrated appendix containing descriptions on how to play the instruments with correct technique.
<i>Discovering Orff: A Curriculum for Music Teachers</i>	1987	J. Frazee & K. Kreuter	<i>Discovering Orff</i> is a pedagogical guide to Orff Schulwerk. The authors describe fundamental aspects of the Orff Schulwerk classroom in the United States. Sequences of skills, goals, and concepts are organized for grades one through five.
<i>Orff-Schulwerk: Applications for the Classroom</i>	1991	B. Warner	<i>Orff Schulwerk: Applications for the Classroom</i> is a detailed guide to Orff Schulwerk. Warner explores the fundamental aspects of the approach and provides examples and activities pertaining to rhythm, melody, instruments, and speech.
<i>Exploring Orff: A Teacher's Guide</i>	1992	A. Steen	The contents of <i>Exploring Orff</i> includes two parts: Part One addresses planning curriculum and lessons, and Part Two covers teaching guides equipped with goals, repertoire, and objectives for kindergarten through fifth grade.
<i>Discovering Keetman</i>	1998	J. Frazee	<i>Discovering Keetman</i> is a compilation of Gunild Keetman's musical works in the Orff style. This collection focuses on simple to complex rhythmic exercises and pieces for xylophone.
<i>Play, Sing, and Dance: An Introduction to Orff Schulwerk</i>	2004	D. Goodkin	<i>Play, Sing, and Dance</i> is an overview of the Orff Schulwerk approach. Goodkin puts a contemporary take on the approach and uses his firsthand teaching experience to illustrate classroom games and activities.
<i>Playing Together: An Introduction to Teaching Orff-Instrument Skills</i>	2008	J. Frazee	<i>Playing Together</i> is a step-by-step approach to Orff-based mallet instruments that includes musical pieces and studies. The text and exercises in this book help to build instrumental technique as well as musical and artistic creativity.

While recognizing that Orff and Keetman's *Music for Children* lacks structure and may force users to lose focus on concepts being learned, Arvida Steen's goal in *Exploring Orff* is to help teachers develop a curriculum with lessons that address Orff's approach and the needs of students with [their] "best thinking and planning" (Steen, 1992, p. 8). This book is an excellent source for teachers who wish to understand the Orff philosophy and develop ideas for the classroom. Steen provides a curriculum outline in addition to lesson suggestions and objectives. These lessons require active participation, an essential element to the Orff Schulwerk program. Not only does Steen's material reflect the Orff approach with recognition that the teacher is of great importance in modeling musicality, expression, creativity, and imagination; but, she also has set up the book in a sequenced manner with clear objectives and organized steps. Therefore, this publication acts as a solution toward the challenge of the claim that Orff Schulwerk is disorganized.

Jane Frazee and Kent Kreuter agree that teachers should interpret Orff Schulwerk material in their own way (1987). Further, they suggest that the structure of lessons in an Orff classroom should be flexible. This will allow for improvisation and creativity to take place as well as student feedback. Picking up where Orff left off, Frazee and Kreuter's pedagogical guide *Discovering Orff: A curriculum for music teachers* bridges the gap between Orff's philosophy and classroom application. Music teachers can use the basic principles presented in this book in order to develop goals and direction toward their teaching. What music teachers may find most useful in the book is the "Orff-Schulwerk in Practice" section. Frazee and Kreuter offer a sequence to act as a

curriculum outline, allowing teachers to use the abundance of Orff media and to tie them into goals of the program.

*Intery Mintery: Nursery rhymes for body, voice, and Orff ensemble*, by Doug Goodkin (2008), is a book of nursery rhymes and songs that reflect the Orff approach. This book is a source for Orff teachers as well as general music teachers to gain not only a handy compilation of repertoire but also ideas and suggestions for lessons. This book contains a total of 48 songs of various levels and difficulty. Goodkin (2008) explains that this book is about “the things that capture children’s imagination and speak to their heart—rhymes, poetry, music, dance, stories, and celebration” (p. 5). He further states that these songs help individuals to understand and articulate the structures of language and music.

### **Other Solutions**

While all three books serve as tangible curricular guides of structured lessons, teachers may also further build their Orff Schulwerk knowledge and classroom ideas by joining the American Orff Schulwerk Association (AOSA). The association is dedicated to the creative teaching approach and provides professional development opportunities for instructors. Teachers who are part of the AOSA receive quarterly issues of the journal *The Orff Echo*.

A final solution for teachers to carry out in regards to the challenges brought forth by implementing Orff Schulwerk in the classroom is a simple but most valuable proposal: keep an open mind. Be ready to make adjustments and modifications if necessary. Suggestions provided in each of the three recommended books can be interpreted by

music teachers in order to explore, create, and develop their own ideas. Wheeler and Raebeck also support the open approach put forward by Orff (1977). The authors hope that teachers will explore the ideas, make meaning of them, and adapt them to meet their own unique classroom situations. Because many of the concepts covered throughout the Orff approach may often overlap and interweave, Wheeler and Raebeck also stress the idea of experiencing all concepts learned in relation to one another in order to gain an elemental, yet thorough, musical education.

Lastly, many teachers shy away from implementing the Orff Schulwerk approach in their curriculum because they lack funding for instruments. While Orff instruments play a large role in improvisation and learning music in general, they are not a critical component to the approach. One must remember that Orff Schulwerk is rooted in elemental music concepts, meaning that the materials used in the classroom should be simple, basic, and natural (Shamrock, 1997). As a solution to the challenge of lacking instruments, teachers can work with the elemental materials nearest to them: the body, the voice, and the imagination (Goodkin, 2004). Body percussion and sound gestures are just as effective in creating music as xylophones, recorders, and drums. Adam Perlmutter explains that “language and movement, improvisation, rhythm, melody, form, and expression can all be explored without the support of the Orff instruments” (Perlmutter, 2009, p. 48).

In summation, the Orff Schulwerk approach is certainly open and touches on a diverse set of themes and is therefore seen as a challenge to some music teachers. But, these characteristics leave room for teachers to interpret the material in their own way and to manipulate it to fit the needs and structures of their classrooms. Together, teachers

and students are continuously finding joy in the process of exploring, discovering, and developing strategies to make meaning of music.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION**

Orff Schulwerk is a child-centered approach to teach and to learn music. However, it is not a method; it is much more. It is an approach, a philosophy, and a process. Through Orff Schulwerk, children are exposed to techniques of improvisation, expression, creativity, and discovery, which provide them a lifetime of pleasure through personal musical experiences. The term “Schulwerk,” or “schoolwork,” is an indication of the educational process taking place: working by means of active participation and creativity. The purpose of this literature review was to provide a foundation of understanding for music teachers about Orff Schulwerk, to explore the challenges associated with the approach, and to provide solutions to these challenges.

The Orff Schulwerk approach came to be through Carl Orff. Having grown up in Munich, Germany at in the early 1900s, Orff found himself surrounded by a cultural environment where concert music, opera, and drama flourished. He took interest in the unifying of self expression, music, and dance and sought ways to create new attitudes on how to teach these concepts to children. This interest ultimately resulted in the Guntherschule, a music and dance school founded by Orff and his colleague Dorothee Gunther. It was at the Guntherschule where Orff joined forces with fellow music and dance teacher, Gunild Keetman.



Orff and Keetman were mutually interested in elemental music and thought it should be the focus of music curriculum. Elemental music is natural, organic music, meaning that it is rooted in what comes naturally to children, such as play, movement, and speech. Orff and Keetman began to incorporate barred instruments—xylophones, glockenspiels, and metallophones—as well as drums and recorders to their lessons in order for students to perform elemental music.

Elemental musical exploration using the Orff Schulwerk approach can be achieved through hands-on activities and instincts such as singing, chanting, clapping, dancing, and playing an instrument—all things that not only come naturally to children but also things that they like to do. This concept of hands-on exploration is a reflection of the philosophy of child-centered education, which is in accord with the philosophies and findings of other notable contributors toward education, such as Vygotsky, Piaget, Dewey, and Montessori (Martin, 2002; Tzuo, 2007)

When engaging in these hands-on, child-centered activities—through play, movement, speech, playing instruments, and improvisation—students are inherently gaining developmental skills and attributes. These include: social skills (Brooking-Payne, 1996; Denac, 2007; Gooding, 2009; Gosselin, 2007), interpersonal and group skills (Eidson, 1989; Gunsberg, 1988; Reid et al, 1975; Steele, 1977), creative and emotional characteristics (Campbell, 2000; Ramstetter et al, 2010), body movement skills (Goodkin, 2004; Montessori, 1967; Sanders, 1996), speech and language skills (Fisher & Williams, 2000; Kenney, 2005; Warner, 1991), attitudes toward the world (Goodkin, 2004), and learning about important values (Holdaway, 1979). Further, students also

gain skills specific to music, such as playing an instrument (Frazee, 1998; Lange, 2005) and overall musicianship (Brown, 1980; Frazee & Kreuter, 1987).

Critics of the Orff Schulwerk approach claim that it is not relevant to an American classroom and that it lacks structure and organization. It is true that Orff set his philosophy and classroom practices up in neither a guided or curricular way. However what these critics probably do not fully understand is that Orff purposely designed Orff Schulwerk in a way for teachers and students to use their imaginations and to make meaning of the material in their own way. His challenge to teachers was to see how they can take his philosophy and develop their own pedagogical ideas and strategies to music learning (Keetman, 1970). In other words, Orff teachers have freedom in how they develop techniques and styles in order fit the needs of their students and their classrooms.

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APPENDIX A  
SUGGESTED SOURCES

## SUGGESTED SOURCES

### **Orff Schulwerk Books**

*Orff-Schulwerk Music for Children: Volumes I-V (Margaret Murray Edition):* Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman: Schott & Co. Ltd. London

*Elementaria:* Gunild Keetman: Schott

*Orff-Schulwerk: Applications for the Classroom:* Brigitte Warner: Prentice-Hall

*Discovering Orff:* Jane Frazee: Schott

*Discovering Keetman:* Jane Frazee: Schott

*Exploring Orff:* Arvida Steen: Schott

*Orff Schulwerk today: Nurturing Musical Expression and Understanding:* Jane Frazee: Schott

*Make a Joyful Sound: A Celebration of Orff Schulwerk Media:* Don Dupont and Brian Hiller: Memphis Musicraft Publications

### **Games and Songs**

*Games Children Play: How Games and Sport Can Help Children Develop:* Kim Brooking-Payne: Hawthorn Press

*120 Singing Games and Dances for Elementary Schools:* Lois Choksy and David Brummitt: Prentice Hall

*100 Music Games:* Hunter House

*A Rhyme in Time: Music Activities Book:* Doug Goodkin: Alfred Publishing Co.

### **Poetry and Nursery Rhymes**

*Name Games:* Doug Goodkin: Warner Bros.

*The Mother Goose Treasury:* Raymond Briggs

*The Word in Play: Language, Music and Movement in the Classroom:* Judith Thomas and Susan Katz: Brookes Publishing Company

## APPENDIX B

### INSTITUTIONS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION



## INSTITUTIONS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

### AMERICAN ORFF SCHULWERK ASSOCIATION

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