



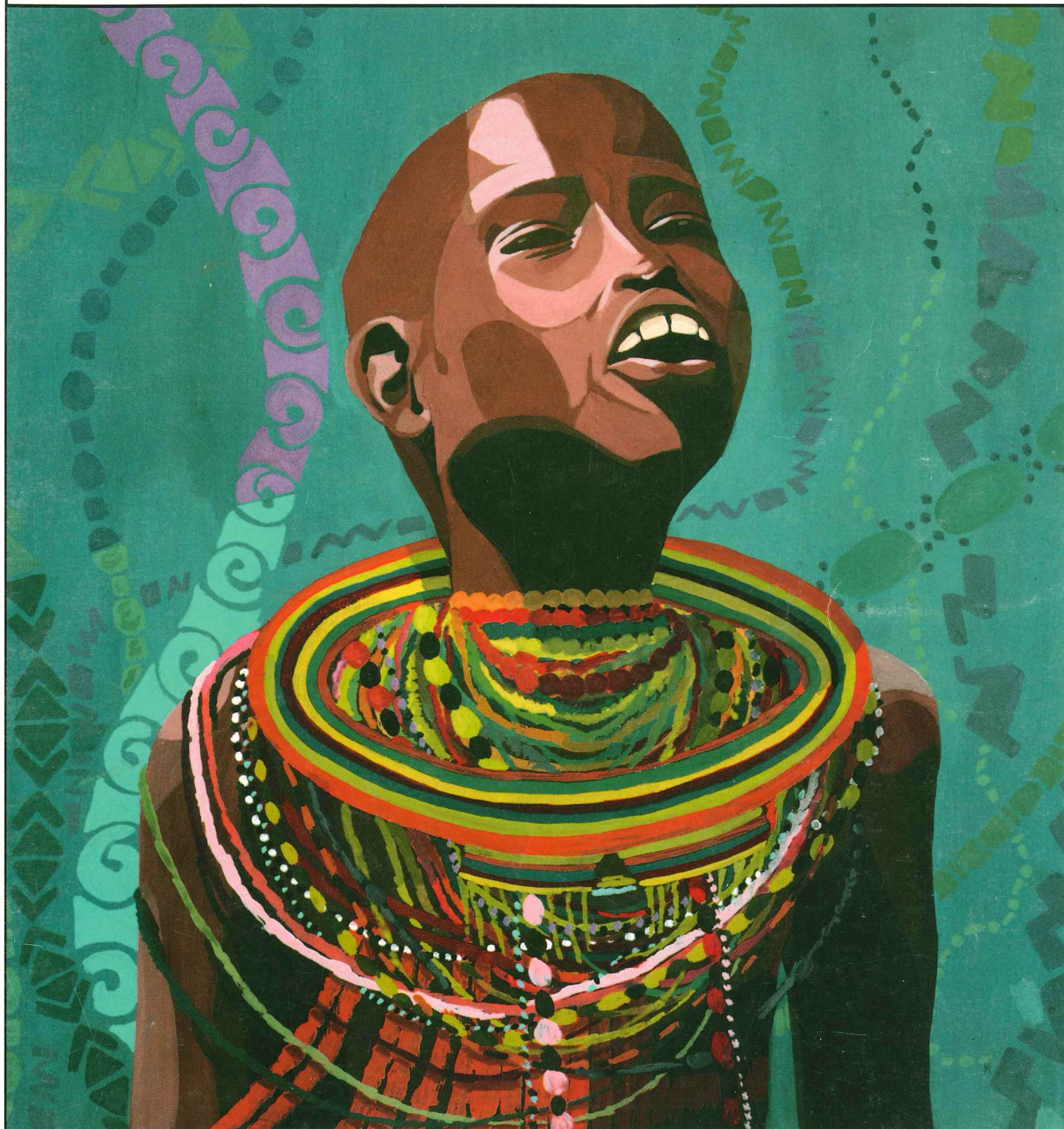
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Quarterly Publication of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association

Music and Movement Education

Winter 1998

Volume XXX Number 2



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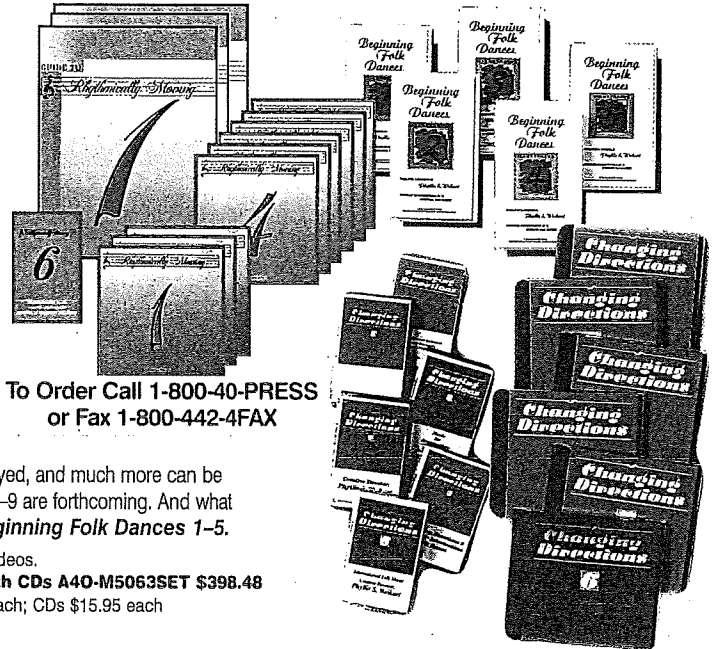
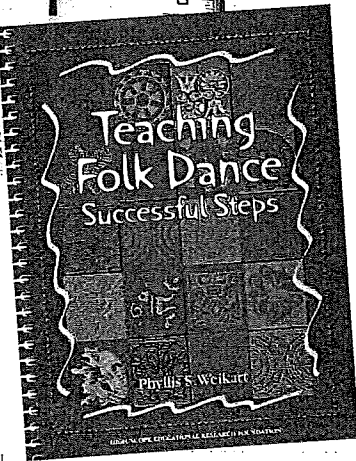
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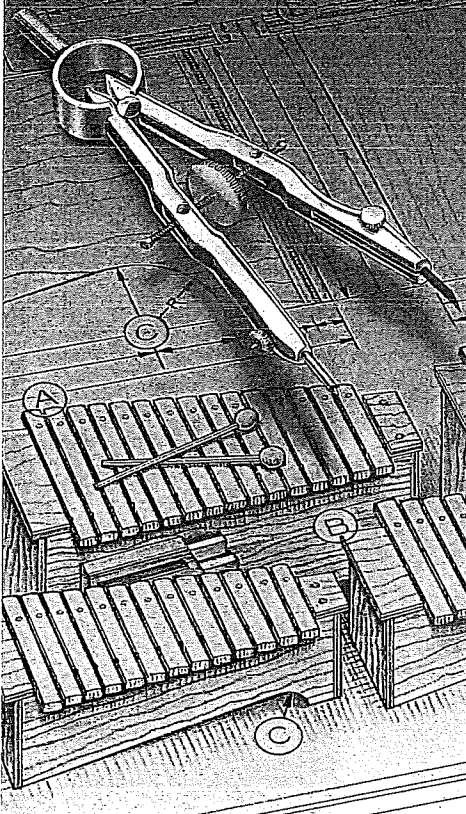
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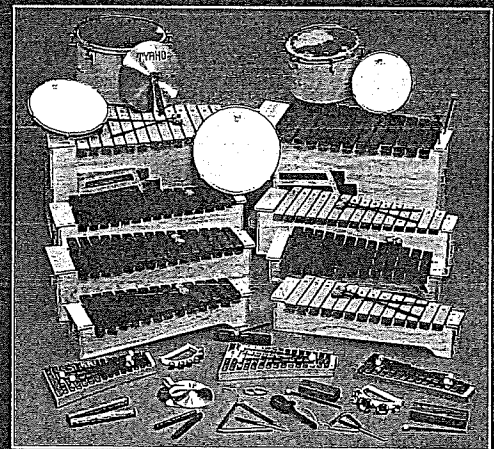
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The American Orff-Schulwerk Association is a non-profit professional organization of music and movement educators dedicated to the creative teaching approach developed by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman. We are joined by our belief that learning about music – learning to sing and play, to hear and understand, to move and create – should be an active and joyful experience.

Our mission is:

- To demonstrate the value of Orff Schulwerk and promote its widespread use.
- To support the professional development of our members.
- To provide a forum for the continued growth and understanding of Orff Schulwerk that reflects the diversity in contemporary American society.

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From the Editor

It's probably January as you read this, and you've had a nice long rest. No? Winter break was bursting at the seams with holiday celebrations and obligations? Projects long procrastinated? Or were you just trying to get those piles of laundry put away? Join the club. But regardless of how hectic December can be, we seem to approach January with a refreshed feeling about life and work.

We hope that this issue of *The Orff Echo* will enhance that renewal. Coordinated by Janet Robbins and Liz Gilpatrick, our focus this time is on singing. We offer a variety of articles, rooted firmly in practicality, about this part of our work that is at the heart of music teaching and learning.

Carolyn Beckie, Jo Ella Hug, Judith Ritchie, Vicki Salmon, Tossi Aaron, Mary Helen Solomon, Marilyn Collins and Mary Goetze all contributed to this special section. Nancy Cooper's Focus on Research column also concerns singing, as she leads us through a survey of recent research from which we may draw implications for teaching. In addition, Alan Purdum offers a creative look at how Orff Schulwerk may be used in the church or synagogue.

Beginning with the spring issue, our newsletter, *Reverberations*, will have a new editor. Jessie Vance of Rochester, New York, will be filling in as *Reverberations* Interim Editor while a search is conducted to find a permanent

editor. If you have journalistic talent (and some extra time!), take a close look at this issue to see if you might be interested.

And while you're at it, take some time to savor the photos from Northwest Horizons - Exploring the Elements in Seattle/Bellevue. If you were there, they'll bring smiles of recognition; if you weren't, they just might inspire you to make plans for Tampa in '98. The conference was truly an event not to be forgotten. Congratulations and kudos to Doug Wilson, Donna Poppe, Diane Graham, all the committees and everyone who worked hard to make the conference such a great success!

-D.M.

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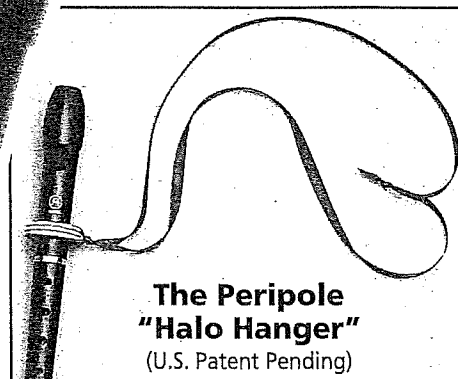
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President's Message

Jack Neill, AOSA President

Statistics are fascinating things. You can prove just about anything if you know how to interpret statistics to your advantage. Casey Stengall, the legendary manager of the New York Yankees, once said, "If you put one foot in the freezer and the other foot in the oven, statistics say that you're comfortable."

According to the statistics culled from membership applications, the vast majority of AOSA members are music teachers of one kind or another. More people check the blocks identifying themselves as "Music Specialist" and "Church Musician" than any other categories offered on the form. The uninformed might interpret this as an indication that most AOSA members are primarily interested in developing proficient young musicians for the school and the church, skilled practitioners of the musical arts whose principal goal is performance. This interpretation may lead some to assume that our students spend most of their time playing a type of ready-made performance product; these people will likely be completely oblivious that the process involved in developing a performance in the spirit of the Schulwerk is creative, exploratory rather than directive. They often remain unaware of what Werner Thomas called the "continuous *ars inveniendi*, a spontaneous art of discovery with a hundred ways and a thousand possible structures." A blind interpretation of statistics can lead one to miss the point entirely.

The point is, we're not just music teachers. Anyone attempting to analyze AOSA's membership statistics should know that teachers who espouse the

Orff Schulwerk approach have a broader definition of the word "music" than many people. These teachers and their students testify daily to Carl Orff's assertion that "Elemental music is never music alone, but forms a unity with movement, dance and speech." The skillful music teacher guides the students in the fusion of these arts, all aimed toward the students' musical and personal growth. The language teacher uses the Schulwerk in this manner to teach language, just as the movement teacher uses it to teach movement and dance.

Teachers who work with young children understand well the special significance of the kinesthetic aspect of learning. From the moment of birth, a child's development is measured in movement skills. The ability to hold the head erect, to turn over, to coordinate the hands and eyes, to crawl, to stand, to walk, to skip, to gallop, to cross the mid-line are all milestones in a child's growth. Children thrive on movement; typically, children are in motion all of their waking hours. A truly child-centered teaching approach must attempt to develop students' skills, concepts and aesthetics by drawing upon this constant impulse for movement.

AOSA was recently invited to consider a position paper produced by MENC (Music Educators National Conference) entitled "Where We Stand." This paper was published in the September, 1997, issue of *Music Educators Journal*, and includes a number of statements representing MENC's position on a variety of issues that concern music education. The AOSA National Board of Trustees was asked either to endorse or support the paper ("endorse" meaning complete agreement with all tenets of the paper; "support" being a lesser commitment

to the goals and ideals implied). The Board spent a great deal of time in thoughtful discussion regarding the document and applauded MENC for taking the lead in this endeavor. In the end, it was felt that the paper's lack of any significant mention of the vital importance of movement in teaching music to young children precluded AOSA's complete endorsement. After much consideration, a decision was made to be listed as a supporter of the MENC position paper.

Specifically, the Board felt that, in the section of the paper entitled "Objectives of Music Education," the lack of reference to movement in the Pre-K and K-12 programs was a serious omission. Phrases used in the paper such as "responding to music" and "understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts" were considered too general to express the significance of movement in musical development. It was likewise felt that the section entitled "Facilities" should include mention of the need for safe and adequate space for children's movement.

In the words of Patricia Shehan Campbell and Carol Scott-Kassner (*Music in Childhood*, Schirmer, 1995, p. 185): "In the world of children, music and movement are nearly inseparable from one another... The foundation of music is ultimately and intimately entwined with their physical selves." We have all seen this. It's not a matter of interpreting any statistics. Now we must articulate it to school boards, administrators, colleagues, and the public at large through our words as well as our actions.



Tony Marchetti

Singing

This issue's focus section on singing is filled with scenes from classrooms. Many of the authors take us "inside" their classrooms to view both students and the teaching process. In the first two articles we are transported to specific places, watching the thoughtful work of teachers as they help students sing tunefully and expressively. In "Coaxing Success: Developing Pitch Accuracy," Carolyn Beckie, Jo Ella Hug and Judith Ritchie describe specific

strategies for helping students find their singing voices. The delicate care that is required to help young and older students tackle problems of pitch accuracy becomes clear through their personal stories. Next, we settle into a seat in Vicki Salmon's high school choral rehearsal to experience the way she uses gesture and movement. From the warm-up to the final movement canon, the inseparable nature of moving and singing comes to life. You will find yourself dancing, too!

Then move on to "Rounds and Canons" by Tossi Aaron in which the focus shifts to song itself. What shall we sing today? is a recurring question for both novice and experienced teachers, and Tossi's musical "dig" has unearthed some lesser-known repertoire for singing. Once again, practical suggestions for teaching, accompanying, and moving to rounds bring us home to our work with children. Beyond thinking about new repertoire, Mary Helen Solomon reminds us of Carl Orff's challenge, "let the children be their own composers" in her article, "New Songs to Sing." Using examples from her work with children, she offers several possibilities for compositional work. Ideas from the Schulwerk's primary sources serve as starting points for transforming the elements of speech and rhythm into songs for singing, moving and playing.

As we contemplate ways to help students "find their voice," we may want to turn to technology for some help. Marilyn Collins leads us step-by-step through her experiences using computers to record and assess students' singing.

The final piece by Mary Goetze reveals that expertise is about insight and change. Just when we think we've figured something out, we find ourselves rethinking what we know and believe. Her personal journey is a fitting finale to this diverse sampler of narratives. Singing is clearly alive and well in Schulwerk classrooms.

-Janet Robbins

Coaxing Success: Developing Pitch Accuracy

Three different authors contributed to this article on helping people of all ages develop pitch accuracy when singing. Carolyn Beckie has outlined techniques she employs with young singers, in this case second grade students, while Jo Ella Hug describes her on-going work with the voices of middle school boys and girls. Judith Ritchie has helped adults find their singing voices and transform their sense of self.

French physician Dr. Alfred Tomatis has proven that the voice can only reproduce what the ear can hear. Though they may not have been aware of Dr. Tomatis' work, each of these authors has discovered on her own through study and experience how the student can better learn to hear his or her own voice through unaccompanied vocal and physical play.

Shining through the words of each writer is a sense of deep commitment, pervasive caring, and respect for each individual singer and for this most personal of instruments. I hope you find their experiences both useful and inspiring.

-Liz Gilpatrick

Closing the Gap: From Finding the Singing Voice to Singing a Phrase

Their names are Steve and Lisa. They're in second grade. They have not been using their singing voices. They want to know why I've asked just the two of them to come into my classroom. My answer is "singing practice." They are willing but apprehensive. The following sequence of six activities will enable students like Kevin and Lisa to become tuneful singers.

I. Steady Exhalation (Flutter the Feather)

Lisa holds a small feather one fist away from her mouth as I ask her to keep the downy tendrils moving. Her first try is weak. Coaching continually, I encourage her to blow slowly and steadily.

While they need to take a deep breath, inexperienced singers often raise their shoulders and stiffen their upper bodies. Asking them to stretch or swing their arms whenever they appear tense is helpful.

II. Throw Your Voice (The Baseball)

A few moments of pantomime are next. They show me how they throw a baseball — a short pitch — a high fly ball — a home run. Then Steve adds his voice along with the baseball movements, using "oo." At first he produces

short arcs of sound, but using the baseball analogy, he tries a high fly ball and finally the home run. Each time, the motion and the voice move together with greater strength. He has experienced a new upper range in his voice.

But experiencing a higher range as Steve has just done does not necessarily lead directly to singing a song in tune. Bridging this gap is the goal of the experiences that follow.

III. Sustaining "Yoo-hoo"

We each make a fish-face by pushing our lips slightly forward with our hands. We take turns singing "yoo-hoo" in the new higher range, not trying to match pitch exactly, but keeping the voice in the singing range. Now their challenge is to sustain "yoo-hoo" as long as they can while walking across the room. I model ("sol-mi" in E or F major) using an obvious breath and relaxed walk. When I run out of breath, I stay at the stopping point. Steve takes a big breath, follows my path, heads back and doesn't stop until he is red in the face — and he stayed in his singing voice. (Even though I give a pitch cue, his choice of pitch doesn't matter as long as he's still in his singing range.) Lisa is so intent on outdistancing Steve that she

uses her talking voice. She reviews the baseball sound and tries again. This time she passes Steve and is beaming.

This walk and sustain exercise is a catalyst in the sequence. It is highly visual and appeals to a student's competitive spirit. Staying on "oo" is very important for these fledgling singers because of the forward placement of the syllable. Keeping a little pucker in place also helps. Most important, their feelings of success are very high since they are proud to see how far their voice can travel. With this gain in confidence comes the willingness to take new risks with their voices.

V. Adding Consonants (Favorite Food)

Lisa picks a favorite food — pizza. I sing it on concert A or B, asking Lisa to echo. She matches the first time. But when Steve chooses "french fries" he sings a third lower than I do. When I follow his pitch level, he drops yet another third.

Attaching an initial consonant is a major step. "Pizza" is an easy word to sing since "p" naturally forms a pucker and helps keep a forward placement. But for Steve, the vocal shape changed from the forward "oo" to the "eh" and "i" found in "french fries," placed further back. After using his hands to renew his fish-face, he succeeds.

To check on their perception of matching pitches, we switch roles. As Steve becomes the teacher, Lisa sings "pizza" and I echo while Steve decides if we match. We continue switching roles: they feel empowered and become more critically honest with practice.

VI. Singing in Unison

I sing the last phrase from the song "Old Blue." Lisa and Steve take turns singing the phrase. The Lisa and I sing it together, asking Steve if we match. After several tries, we finally all sing in unison — there is real pride in their expressions.

continued...

Focus on Singing

I chose this particular phrase for several reasons: forward-focused words ("Here, Blue, you good dog, you"), a descending melody which starts high enough to activate the singing voice (a ninth above middle C) and no half steps. For students like Steve and Lisa, songs centering around middle C and D, so close to their speaking voices, make it very difficult for them to use their singing voices. Choosing a phrase with the characteristics of "Old Blue" makes an excellent warm-up prior to singing a song.

I find it worthwhile to take the extra fifteen minutes with students like Steve and Lisa. This special help can spell the difference between singing as joyful expression or singing as an activity to be avoided. One session, as described above, may be enough, or a follow-up might be needed. After that, integrating the activities into the classroom setting will provide the reinforcement they need.

-Carolyn Beckie

A Middle School Challenge: The Adolescent Singing Voice

THE SCENE: Seventh grade non-select choir of approximately thirty-five students (over half of whom are boys)

THE TIME: Shortly before Christmas a number of years ago

THE SOUND: Girls — breathy, wispy and mostly in tune; boys — an indescribable cacophony of different pitches, many non-singing voices, a few *cambiata* voices with three distinguishable notes, a couple of unchanged voices afraid to sing out for fear of being stigmatized

THE TEACHER: Me, finally coming to grips with the enormous task of teaching adolescent boys to:

1) Find a singing voice (many did not "sing" in lower elementary — they spoke rhythmically instead)

2) Extend the range as the singing voice becomes more solid

3) Respect each other whether the singing range is young baritone, *cambiata* or unchanged soprano/alto

It was my moment of truth and it was the beginning of a grand experiment that continues to this day. Christmas vacation provided the time needed to strategize, analyze and "swallow hard." I knew the job would not be finished when they left for summer vacation but it was time to find a starting point.

Much of the work had to be done in class with other students close by. When the first boy walked into class after Christmas break, I ask him to sing his favorite note. The first sound that came out was rather like a grunt. I praised his courage and asked if he could extend the sound a little longer. (Most non-singers fail to understand

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Gerald P. Dyck has taught vocal music in the public schools of Dartmouth, Massachusetts since 1974. He performs frequently as a singer, organist, and conductor, and holds degrees in music and a diploma from the Orff Institute, Salzburg. While living for several years in Thailand, he studied the music of Southeast Asia. He is also an avid amateur astronomer.

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the energy requirements to produce a singing sound.) We timed the next sound and his second attempt was almost twice as long. The pitch had also moved up as he became interested in "the long note holding contest."

The entire "mini-lesson" took less than two minutes while the other students were settling into their places for class. A few boys were acutely aware of my focus and actively sending me vibrations indicating reluctance to be singled out. However, others immediately wanted to know how long they could hold a note. In the initial phase, I carefully selected boys who were comfortable, even eager, for the attention. We never spent more than ten minutes with this activity. I was careful to note the pitch selected by individual voices and the capacity to hold it. When the activity became familiar, we also heard girls and "discovered" that most adolescent girls don't have pitch problems but do have trouble sustaining a note for an extended time. This knowledge gave courage to many boys who were originally reluctant to sing alone. A few individuals, both boys and girls, never developed enough comfort to volunteer and were provided time out of class to work with the activity.

The following steps have grown out of those initial desperate experiments and have been used successfully to help young adolescent boys and girls hear and produce pitch accurately.

STAGE #1

- 1) **"Sing your favorite note."** Accept all efforts positively and rejoice that a student has shared this moment with you and classmates.
- 2) **"Extend the sound."** Calculate the held note in seconds and have the student attempt to double the length on the third attempt. Most boys can hold a note at least ten seconds by the third try.
- 3) **"Choose a pitch slightly higher than your favorite note and hold that sound."** Students often sing louder at the

same pitch level and need a model to understand the concept.

- 4) **"Try to match your pitch to the boy who sang before you."** As the teacher, you must quickly find boys who vocalize sound in the same range to allow them success at this step. Set them up to succeed.

STAGE #2

- 1) **"Sing your favorite note and call it 'do.'"** As they hold the note, I sing simple solfege harmony lines over the top, adjusting to each young man's definition of *do*. If the underlying pitch wavers, we try again or simply point out how good it sounded at the beginning.
- 2) **"Identify the starting pitch and attempt to sing the melodic fragment, 'do, re, mi,' holding mi as an extended note."** Working with boys in a similar voice range, quickly bring in voices (one after the other) singing "do, re, mi." Each boy holds *mi* while other voices enter.

STAGE #3

- 1) Model a vocal slide from *do* to *sol*, landing on *sol* and holding the pitch.

The vocal slide facilitates movement out of the initial comfortable range. This step can be difficult but usually works over time even for stubborn problems.

- 2) Shorten the time required to slide between *do* and *sol*, which allows more energetic air to extend *sol*.

- 3) **"Sing the interval do-sol cleanly without sliding."**

- 4) **"Think of a mid-range note (higher than the old comfort zone) and sing sol-do."**

- 5) Have students extend patterns using different combinations of *do*, *re*, *mi* and *sol*.

If a non-singer has moved through these steps, the singing range can usually be extended on either side as the voice becomes more confident. A few things to remember:

- Accept all efforts and be encouraging as well as patient. Many problems with pitch relate to low self-esteem and fear of failure. Provide a safe environment for risk taking.
- Assume that students are trying to do the right thing.
- As the voice of a boy moves into adolescence, he must learn to hear pitch in a new range. The "kinesthetic signals" are suddenly different and it takes time to connect the ability to hear with the required factors of vocal production.
- Once a boy understands how to produce a solid singing sound, the stages of voice change are usually easier to navigate.

Every day is a new challenge for both you and your students. There are no "right answers" that work with every child. Your example of patience, understanding and love of making music may be the reason someone continues to sing for a lifetime.

-Jo Ella Hug

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continued...

Teaching Adults with Pitch Problems

Invalidated early childhood singers often become wistful adult listeners, living a number of years with excess emotional baggage. Some were told they couldn't sing. Others misinterpreted a look or a comment and stopped singing. The common denominator? They all care what others think. When I was in elementary school I could neither bounce a ball to the beat of a march nor sing in tune. Thank goodness for a mother who believed I really could sing and worked, voice to voice, on awareness of pitch variance.

With adults, I appeal first to the logical mind, cutting through defense mechanisms to release the child within who knows she or he can sing! The first question: "Do you like every singer you hear on the radio?" When the answer is "no," I ask, "Why should everyone have to like your singing?" Relaxation sets in and we begin vocal work.

We loosen up and revert to two-year-old behavior. Fun — and sometimes funny — Laban-based exercises become ice breakers, building a close sense of community and helping participants form lasting friendships. Many adults have turned off their ears, becoming oblivious to sounds (good or bad) therefore making it difficult for them to distinguish one sound from another. We spend a few minutes getting quiet inside, listening to sounds in and out of the room. Each individual then describes the sounds he or she heard. Was the pitch high, medium or low? Consensus is reached 99% of the time!

Now we use the voice itself. Each person imitates the sounds of an animal and the class guesses the kind and size of the animal. If one is unclear, we ask: "Is it a kitten or a cat?" "How could you make that sound differently?" When the person is finally able to make a sound that satisfies the class, she then describes all the elements used to produce it.

I vocally hum-sigh (~~~~) and ask participants to imitate the sound. Did the sound ascend or

descend? We stand and sigh into a seated position. After several times, we do the reverse (~~~~), seated to standing. We then do a hum-siren (~~~~), seated-standing-seated. I introduce flash cards with squiggles and whirls on them. We try to emulate the movements physically first, then vocally, then both simultaneously, finally dissolving into puddles of laughter on the floor.

For the first assignment they are asked to: "Listen to the sounds around you. Pick one and practice it every day until you are satisfied that it sounds just like the real one. Demonstrate it next week and we will guess. The only rule is that it must be made with your mouth or voice." We've had everything from dog fights to air bleeding off an airplane engine!

With practice, determining high, medium or low becomes easier. Depending on progress, we make more "formal" use of the voice, always reassuring and giving compliments. Clapping for one another and learning how to accept praise graciously is also important. The listener becomes actively involved in the performance.

We hum any pitch; then, listening to each other, we choose a common pitch. The Kodály approach with hand signals helps, but always at the pace of the slowest learner. Repetition reinforces pitch accuracy and instills confidence. When sol-mi is fairly well established and we've added la, I find Grace C. Nash's charts, "Echo Chains-Singing Games," helpful. Silent signing (without my singing the pitches) helps develop inner listening. As pitches become secure, I divide the group into two, three or four parts and let them dictate the charts to each other. (More laughter!)

Another technique in organic development is to sign and sing the first line of a simple song, playing "Name That Tune." As classes continue, I put a solfège line or two of very familiar songs on the board for them to guess by the end of that class. They also bring in the solfeggio for one of their favorite songs (at the beginning, I check for accuracy; later,

the class catches the mistakes). I rarely, if ever, use the piano. As the semester progresses, facility in solfège seems to go more quickly, the students' creativity producing endless forms of this game. We then begin reading printed music. Successive assignments are similar to the first, but gradually become more sophisticated and always fit the activities and levels of the group.

I encourage you to work as slowly as necessary to help students hear, assimilate and reproduce accurate pitches. You will give them a most valuable gift.

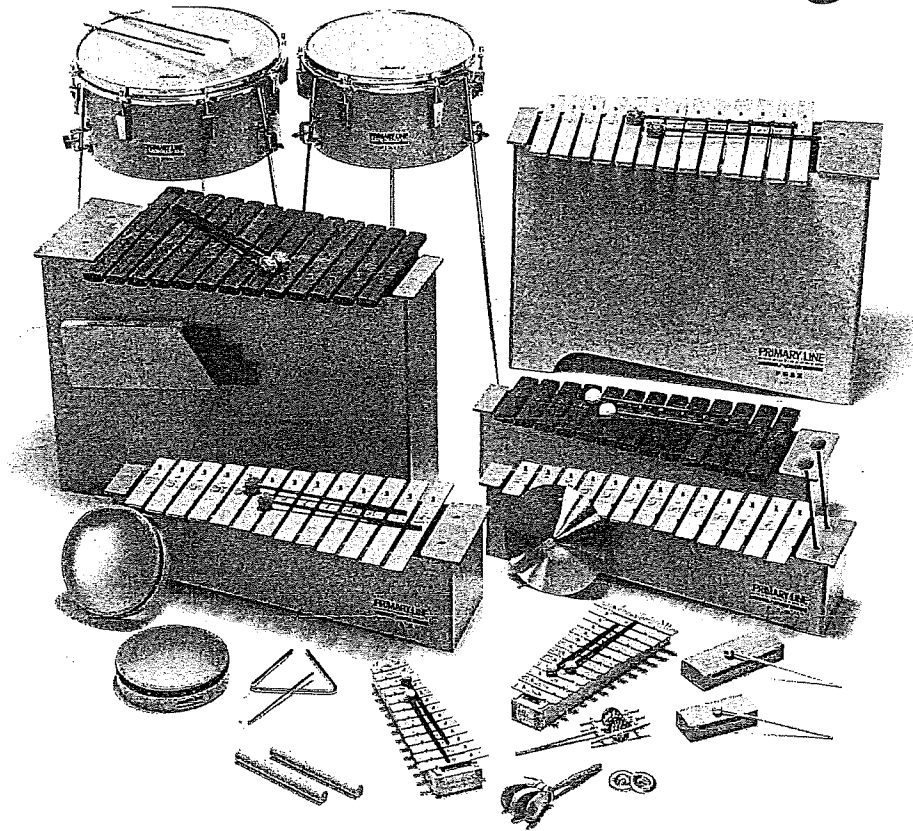
-Judith Ritchie

Carolyn Beckie is the choral director at Almerie Middle School in Fontana, California, and director of the Community School Children's Chorus and Orff Ensemble at the University of Redlands. Much of her career has been directed towards inspiring at-risk students through programs such as the I Have a Dream Foundation. A student of both Kodály and Orff Schulwerk, she is president of the Inland Counties chapter of AOSA.

Jo Ella Hug teaches middle school vocal and general music in Missoula, Montana. She currently serves on the AOSA National Board of Trustees and heads the Professional Development Committee. Jo Ella also teaches recorder at the University of Saint Thomas Summer Orff Schulwerk Training Course in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Judith Ritchie is the founder and director of Bel Canto Studios, a private voice teaching studio that attracts students from across the United States. She has sung with the Dallas Symphony and the Dallas Symphony Chorus, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Colorado West Opera and others. In the summer of 1995 she opened and continues to direct Musical Awakenings, an Orff Schulwerk-based summer music retreat near Pagosa Springs, Colorado.

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Singing Can Be Moving

Vicki Salmon

Alleluia

1.
A - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia, a le lu ia,

2.
a - le - lu - ia. A - le - lu - ia,

3.
a - le - lu - ia. A - men.
A - men. A - men.

Arrangement by Sol Weber. Reprinted with permission from *Rounds Galore*, "The Roundman," 25-14 37th Street, Astoria, NY 11103.

Take a few minutes to learn this "Alleluia" before you continue reading, dancing it around the room a few times. Experience the song yourself, in your own body, and you'll find, I hope, that it enhances the reading of this article.

The students enter the room and settle into their places. The teacher (or student leader) wordlessly signals the class to stand. Slowly and silently the leader moves shoulders, arms, head, upper body, hips, legs and feet while the class mirrors the movement.

Seamlessly, the class begins a series of deep breathing exercises. Arms are down with hands touching in a "V" (Fig. 1). As the arms are lifted above the head (taking care to keep shoulders down) the ribs expand and the lungs fill with air. (Fig. 2) This deep, expanded breath is repeated four times. The next set of breaths takes the body into side bends, exhaling on the bend, coming upright on the inhale. (Fig. 3) The tempo of the breath is still slow and relaxed. Another large breath! During the exhale, all begin to roll their

heads forward, descending one vertebra at a time until hanging over from the waist, limp like a rag doll. (Fig. X)

While leaning over, the leader does a series of short rhythms using a staccato hiss. The class echoes the rhythms, being sure to support each sound with a gentle abdominal contraction. Another deep breath and the class members gradually "roll up," imagining each vertebra piling on top of the next, resulting in a perfectly aligned standing position.

On the next breath in, all raise their arms to the side in a "T" position. (Fig. 4) This time the breath is held while the class spins their arms in eight small circular motions forward... breath out, breath in and hold... spinning arms in eight small circular motions backward. Relaxed exhalation and a deep inhalation follow. The students place their hands on

their abdomens to feel the gentle engaging of the abdominal muscles, as they sharply speak/shout the word "hook" four times together, taking care to keep the throat relaxed. (Fig. 5) The last set of breaths are connected to three easy yawn-sighs on "Ah," with the arms descending with a relaxed gesture. (Fig. 6 & 7)

The body has been warmed up and it is time for vocal warm-ups that "blend physical posturing with mental imagery to create a healthy voice production." (from *Daily Workout for a Beautiful Voice* by Charlotte Adams. See "Resources.")

The teacher tenderly begins to sing a melody based on a tune using the word "Alleluia." The song is in a moderate triple meter. The teacher sways as she sings and shows shorter phrases in a

Focus on Singing

gentle, legato style using flowing arms and hands. At the end of each longer phrase she lifts her arms slightly to indicate the breath and rib expansion. Her voice demonstrates round vowels with lots of air space: "Ah Leh Loo Yah." She carries the mood of the piece in her face as well as her body. The teacher then signals the students to echo each phrase after her. The students gently sway and show the legato phrases with their own hands and arms until the entire song is learned.

The teacher, remaining in the mood of the song, indicates that the students should sit down. Again, without speaking, she uses her own body to remind them of correct sitting posture. She pulls an imaginary string from the top of her head, simultaneously demonstrating, directing and playing with bad posture, tense posture and a relaxed upright position.

The teacher begins to sing "Alleluia" again. This time, on the "Ah," she places her hands palm to palm as if holding a tennis ball. Through the sustained pitch, she pulls her hands apart as if stretching taffy, being sure to keep a rounded space between the hands. On the "loo" she smoothly shifts one hand to form an "O" shape in front of the lips. Now the vowels seem to have a rhythm of their own with a sense of expanding and contracting. The tone is beautiful. Everyone listens carefully to the vowel sounds they can see and feel.

The students stand again, this time following the teacher as she directs with both arms in triple meter. The bodies still sway and the breath is once again indicated with a "lift" at the end of each long phrase. When the students' bodies seem to feel the pulse, the metric accent and the legato style, the class is divided into three parts and the song is performed in canon.

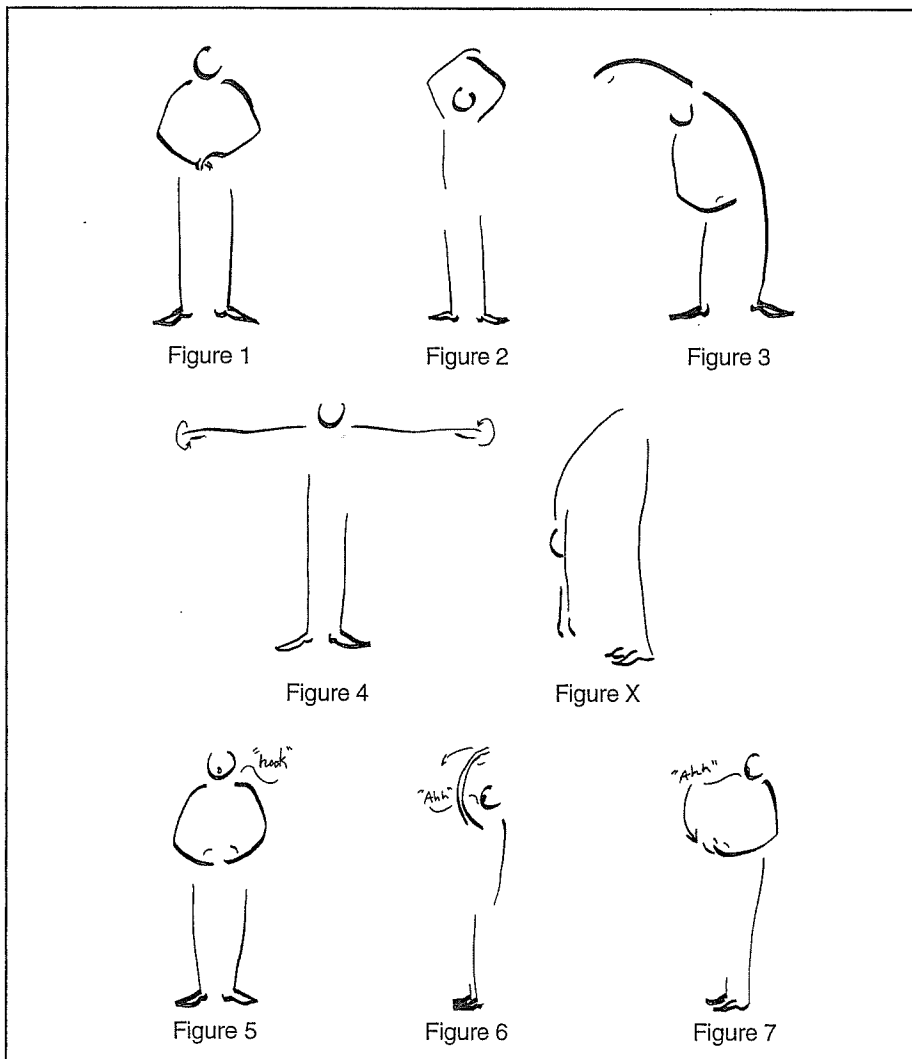
The lesson continues, the students showing the melodic contour with a linear, flowing, ascending/descending pattern as it relates to the music. Here the end of each long phrase can be stretched and supported by an upward stretching gesture. The students are encouraged to use their entire body to "dance the music" and step out into the room as they sing. The three groups sing together in canon and move as individuals. As each part concludes, every person freezes in a final shape that reflects the feeling of the music and waits until the entire classroom fills with a tangible stillness.

As a grand finale, each of the three groups is asked to work together to create a movement composition based on their experiences with the song. Each group composes a lovely movement sequence that has aspects of breath, phrase, rounded shapes, contour, pulse and a gentle metric accent. Each group performs its movement piece while the other groups sing. Finally, all three groups perform together in an awe-inspiring three part canon with a delicious unifying "peace" at the end. Class is over and the students walk out the door. Music has come alive in their hearts and minds through the vehicle of their bodies and voices.

This scenario might be a description of a single evolving class period, a series of shorter lessons using one song spread out over several weeks, or simply a list of examples of how movement might be combined with singing.

First, movement was a means to warm-up the body and gain kinesthetic awareness of the breath, rib expansion and the support necessary for good singing. The warm-up "ritual" was derived from many sources, including the choral/vocal training of the teacher, articles and books on the subject, dance classes, yoga and the specific needs of the students. (Vocalises in which physical gestures are used to reinforce good singing technique and encourage mental images can be found on videos by Charlotte Adams and Henry Leck.)

The introduction of the song emphasized the importance of the teacher's kinesthetic awareness. A multitude of musical messages were communicated to the students without a word being



continued...

Focus on Singing

spoken: the relaxed demeanor, good posture, the flow of the phrases, the breath, the pulse, the metric accent, the mood. Students mirrored the teacher's physical presence in their own bodies. The kinesthetic musicality of the teacher conveyed far more about the music than words ever could and that musicality was revealed in the students' voices.

The use of gesture to aid in the unification of vowels was a powerful tool. The taffy pull of the "ah" and the rounded shape of the "oo" provided visual and auditory focus. The gestures stimulated the imagination and created a visual/kinesthetic translation of the inside mouth shape which in turn produced a rich, resonant tone color.

Walking, conducting and singing provided a multi-layered understanding of these musical elements and when solid in the body, made singing the canon much more rhythmically secure. Moving and singing together while expressing the unifying pulse created a strong sense of

ensemble, particularly while singing in three-part harmony. The whole-body melodic contour eventually enabled the students to break free and "dance the song."

The students experienced music individually and as a community. They were given substantial images and sensations for good singing technique. They saw the teacher physically model aspects of the music that they needed to understand. They used their own bodies as instruments for understanding and "played" with specific musical and emotional elements. Ultimately, the students worked in community with others, using kinesthetically experienced knowledge and felt emotion, raising their voices together to create music that moved.

Vicki Salmon is in her fifth year as a high school choral director after eleven years as a traveling elementary school music teacher. She has an extensive educational

and performance background in music and dance. Vicki teaches movement in the summer Orff Schulwerk teacher training programs at Southern Methodist University in Dallas; Texas, California State University at Los Angeles and Mills College in Oakland, California.

Drawings by Kris Yenney

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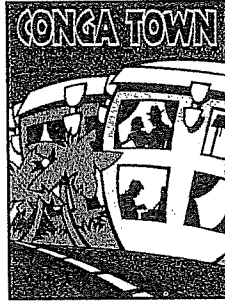
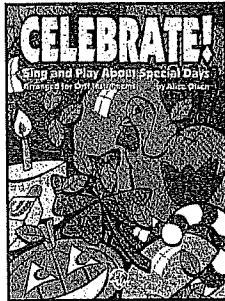
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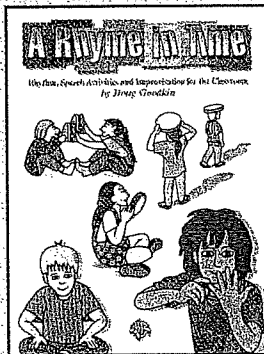
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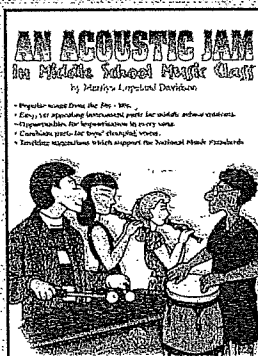


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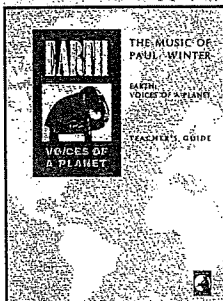
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Focus on Singing

hearing parts trying to outshout one another. Students frequently react visibly on hearing the whole round sung well by their own blended voices.

“Kookaburra” and other lively canons have survived for generations because they are fun to sing and easy to pick up by ear. But singing them well requires sensitivity to the other voices, precise diction and placement of pitch. One alto recorder can be played with each part as support, or try seating an uncertain singer among stronger ones. Change the grouping and order of entrance often. Small percussion or an open bordun played once or twice to a measure keeps things unified rhythmically. In “Kookaburra,” the I-IV chord change always surprises fifth graders.

Using instruments

Rounds and canons are traditionally sung *a capella*, and this is truly the final aim. Guitar or similar sustaining instrumental accompaniment should not be intrusive, nor overwhelm the clarity of the canonic structure. If an ensemble setting is desired for performance, adding one sound layer at a time is an articulate form. Even “Diggi-diggi-dong” or any other simple canon can be renewed this way:

1. Sing the canon melody once in unison, then in two parts. Suitable small percussion (finger cymbals, wood block, temple blocks, handbells, triangle) if germane, can continue throughout.
2. As a short prelude, play two measures of a bordun on bass xylophone, then add the melody on recorder or another instrument.
3. Sing the canon in two parts, perhaps with a recorder.
4. Add a simple ostinato or guitar chords.
5. The finale can consist of the canon sung in four parts, accompanied by all the previous parts.

Movement with canon and rounds

Unfortunately, we have few records of how English rounds were danced; movements are frozen in old engravings. Now the canon principle appears regularly in ballet and modern dance

choreographies. In a desk-blocked classroom, small movements can still enhance a canon. Gestures like hand rolling, body swaying, alternately raising and lowering arms may be improvised. (Isn't “the wave” we see in sports stadiums a canon?)

Seated in chairs in a half circle so all can see each other, develop pantomimes or combinations of stand, clap, sway, step, turn, snap; stand to sing and sit down when finished, or pop up on one word.

1.

Here . comes a bum - ble - bee from a - round the barn,

2.

car - ry - ing a bag - pipe un - der his arm!

Words: traditional; Melody: Tossi Aaron

Suggestion: Stand, walk around the chair, fold hands, sit down while “flapping” elbows as if playing bagpipes. Sit down.

More open space in the room will allow for construction of forms for longer rounds, as suggested here:

1. Small groups, circles (at random in the space), or short lines, one behind the other, sing and move in turn. (See “Harvest Time,” p. 15, *In Canon*, Bisgaard/Aaron)
2. First, develop a sequence of small movements while standing in a whole circle. Discuss the spatial limitations and develop non-invasive movements.
3. Divide the circle into the number of groups needed for the round.
4. These segments of the circle start their gestures as they begin to sing. Movements can be dance-like or simple pantomimes.
5. With more experience or in a smaller group, students number off “1, 2, 3, 4,” then sing, enter and move in turn. (All the “ones” start, then the “twos” enter and so on.)

continued...

Sweet and Lovely

1.

Sweet and love - ly is a sin - gle line of mel - o - dy.

2.

Then the sec - ond is add - ed to ac - com - pa - ny.

3.

And the third one fills out a per - fect har - mo - ny!

Adapted from German: Tossi Aaron

Focus on Singing

6. To prepare for three concentric circles: a) step to the beat around the circle; b) change direction; c) take a few steps in and out, sway or rock in place. Explore turns, arm gestures or swings.

Though He May Rage and Roar

Though win - ter pounds his i - cy fist u - pon the kitchen door, we'll
nev - er let him in; no, nev - er let him in, though he may rage and roar, though
he may rage and roar, we'll not let him through the door!

By Liz Gilpatrick. Used by Permission

“Oh, How Lovely Is the Evening” also fits this form nicely. Improvisations, such as moving and singing with small percussion (perhaps bells on the ankles) or playing tuned percussion alternately with movement, present even more options. Re-examine the *Music for Children* volumes and the American Edition, Volume 3, for other rounds and canons. And be sure to learn some new ones this year for the sheer pleasure that singing and teaching them can bring.

Tossi Aaron has authored and co-authored several books for Schulwerk teaching and was a contributor to the American Edition of *Music for Children*. She is a frequent presenter at AOSA conferences and chapter workshops and has taught teacher training courses in the United States and England. Tossi was editor of *The Orff Echo* from 1986 to 1994.

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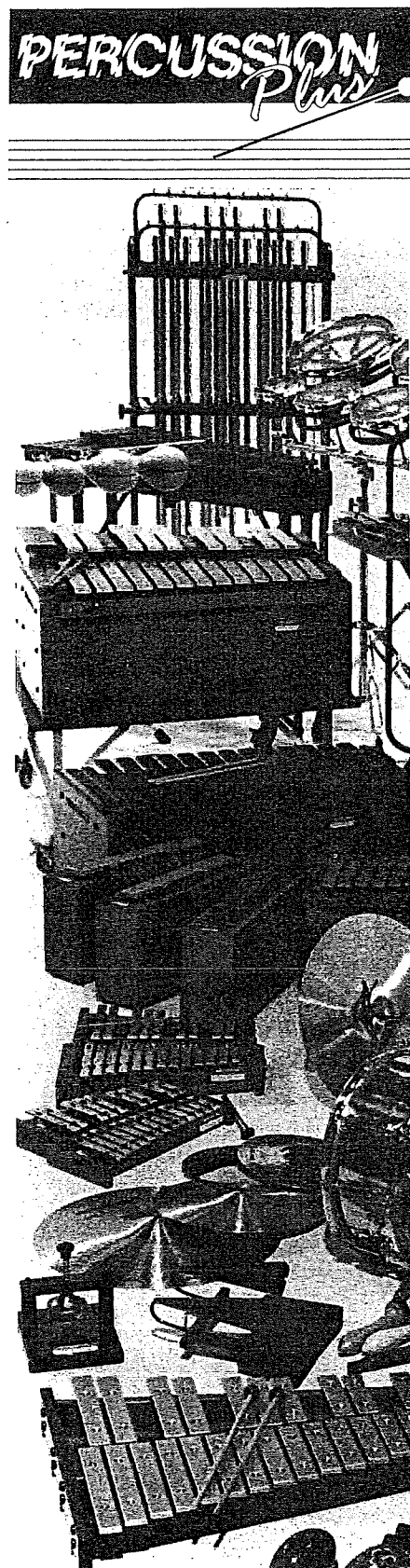
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New Songs to Sing

Mary Helen Solomon

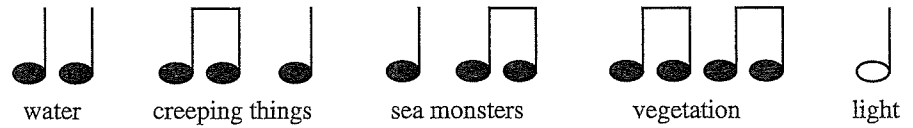
Carl Orff said, "Let the children be their own composers." When children create their own music they become more intimate, more familiar with the elements used to build that music. Their understanding and appreciation are intensified through this powerful process. Children can create their own songs, and often will, even without our encouragement. Most young children enjoy humming to themselves and making up little pieces about their play. They invent short conversations with adults who are willing to share in their singing games. Frequently, beyond the early childhood stage, after age six or so, the children become more inhibited and are less likely to create their own songs.

What are some of the ways we can assist older children to continue on this path of original song-making? It is a challenging question, yet one that we can answer if we study the source books, *Elementaria*, by Gunild Keetman, the *Music for Children* volumes (Margaret Murray Edition), and if we use our imaginations. These texts recommend speech as one important starting point. The songs in these primary source books and various movement activities can also become good starting points for new compositions.

Using speech to create new songs

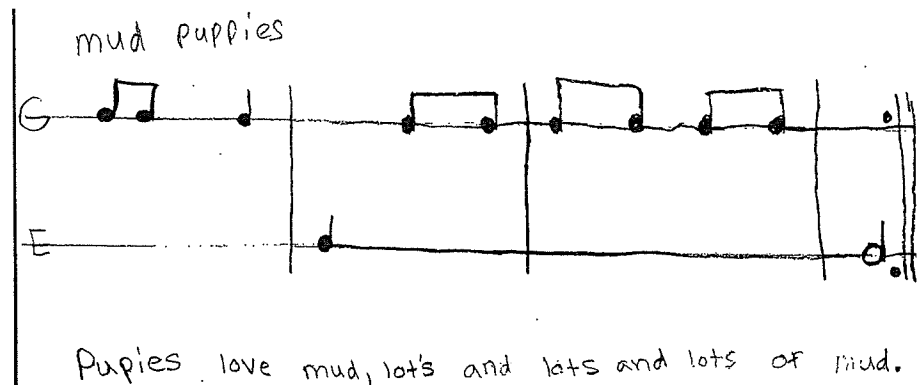
Songs are words set to music; therefore, speech becomes one obvious starting point for song writing. Children enjoy stories and playing with word sounds, experiences that can become a springboard for writing new songs.

Word lists that students compose can be an immediate beginning source for singing material. Students at my school have recently explored word lists derived from the Creation Story. We started with about fifteen words, but eventually reduced the number to these five because they fit the rhythms we needed to practice:



Students then selected two, three or four words from the short list and created an ostinato, such as "water, vegetation." They practiced saying these together with their small groups (usually around four or five students in a group) and later added movement to their ostinato performance. Non-pitched instruments were added when time allowed. The children also wrote the rhythmic notation for their ostinati and illustrated their papers with pictures about their subjects. Finally, we took selected ostinati to the barred instruments (older classes tried using the recorder also) and created melodies for them using *sol* and *mi* (G and E). The children played and sang what we created together.

Phrases were practiced in a similar manner. Here is an example of one of the classes' compositions. The familiar word rhythms gave rhythmic structure to their composition but were then replaced by new words to sing.



Making melodies for proverbs and poems, gradually adding more and more pitches is the next step. These pitches first come from within the pentatonic and later, the modes (ionian, dorian, etc.). It is always important to return to the pentatonic for grounding though, because an understanding of this scale enables more extensive improvisation in the modes. Incorporating *sol* or *mi* in important positions (i.e. strong beats and at phrase beginnings and endings) can be a helpful aid when working with simple melodies.

Using the *Music for Children* volumes to create new songs

To be a songwriter, one should know how to create lyrics; there are opportunities within the *Music for Children* volumes to develop this skill. One way is to select an instrumental piece that lies within the children's singing range and

flows well for the voice. Then, invite the students to add words, or simply sing with a syllable such as "la." There is also a section in Volume I titled "Rhythms for clapping, melody making and fitting words to rhythmic patterns." These examples can be adapted for singing. Another possibility is to add new verses or whole new texts to the vocal pieces. All of these new song creations can have student-created accompaniment as well.

Many songs contained in the five primary volumes are useful in their original form for upper elementary

chorus. These pieces can also serve as springboards for new writing experiences. Here is one possibility: The simple form of "Rundadinella" (Volume III) can be a model for students to use to create a similar piece. The question and answer phrase, first sung in unison and then again with accompanying vocal parts, is repeated over and over with more instruments being added each time. Students can recreate this form using their own question and answer phrase, adding a second vocal part and gradually layered-in instrumentation, resulting in a new choral/instrumental piece developed by the students themselves.

Focus on Singing

sage to Darth Vader and you didn't know what the message said?" "Who has a rhythm to accompany the movement?" "Some words to fit that rhythm?" "What mode shall we use to create a melody to fit the rhythm? Phrygian?"

3. Using only verbal cues, "Sing rising pitches when you walk forward, falling pitches when you walk backwards, using the syllable 'doot.'" "Try playing something like it on a barred instrument. Can you sing with it?"

Reflection

Reflection and evaluation at many points along the way are an important part of the creative process. This is one of the most difficult aspects. It might seem impossible to have time for reflective discussion, yet it is crucial. We must make room for the ideas and conversation about the music to help our students become thinking artists!

These are just a few of the endless possibilities for creating new songs. As teachers of the Orff approach, it is imperative that we let the children compose their own songs. This work not only encourages young composers, it also helps us enjoy our students and their ideas in a richer, deeper way.

Mary Helen Solomon teaches music to children in grades Pre-K through six at Riverside Presbyterian Day School in Jacksonville, Florida. She is also the Level II and III Orff Schulwerk teacher training instructor at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. She is the author of several music collections.

Selected pieces from *Music for Children* for choral performance and for use as starting points for new compositional work:

Volume I:

Ding, dong, diggidiggi-dong. p.24 (add new verses)

Volume II:

Dance, lassie, do. p.24 (the drone vocal part can be transferred to BX)

Fabian, Sebastian. p. 40 (you can create a simpler recorder melody and accompaniment in 6/8 for the B section)

Girls and boys come out to play. p.74

Sumer is icumen in. p.80

Volume III:

If all the world were paper. p. 6 (transpose to G, and create new verses; soprano recorder can also play this simple melody)

Sur le pont. p. 36

Dance-Song. p. 69

Rundadinella. p. 90 (simplify to 3 vocal parts)

Volume IV:

Marmotte. p.28 (adapt the string parts to bars, if necessary)

Norwegian goatherd's song. p. 34 (SR play an octave lower, with alteration of the melody in the last two measures)

The jolly ploughboy. p. 114 (play the soprano parts on the SR and down an octave, if necessary)

Volume V:

Zu Maien, zu Maien. p. 40

The wraggle taggle gypsies. p.66

Using movement to create new songs

Gesture and body movement help students to understand the melodic concepts of high and low, and step and skip. Movement activities can be used to develop rhythms, and can also help students become aware of emotional qualities. Any of these movement activities might inspire a song. Here are some ways I have guided students to create songs from movement:

1. We watched the flight of bubbles floating in the air and popping. Then I asked students to "follow the path of a bubble in the air with your hand and add your voice, singing 'aah.'" Later they drew pictures of their bubble songs. Individuals displayed their pictures and sang their work for the class.

2. We created movements and songs reflecting a mood. "How would you walk if you were traveling to deliver a mes-



Mary Helen Solomon

“DOUGH, RE, MI...”

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Kids and "Kid Pix": Looking at Pitch Accuracy

Marilyn Collins

Sometimes you learn more by giving a workshop than by taking it! While I was presenting on the topic of computers in the elementary music classroom, one of the participants asked if I used "Kid Pix." (Kid Pix Studio, Broderbund, \$34.95.) I knew this program only as a writing and drawing tool. The question led me to explore the program's other possibilities.

Kid Pix, which may already be in your classroom teachers' or computer lab's collection, has an option that allows you to record sound. You can also write on the same file as the recording. In other words, students can sing and record their voices, and I can write them a private note about their singing. They can listen to themselves and read my suggestions.

Since I feel that evaluating pitch and rhythm abilities is part of my job, I decided to try this additional way of learning about my students' skills. Of course, I still evaluate them by hearing them match pitch in class, either during testing or informally during a game format.

The children were already very familiar with this program but most had not used the recording capability. I took each class up to a computer lab for one class period. To my surprise, this took only about ten minutes of my regular music time. If you have no lab in your school, students might do this individually at the computer in your room or in their own classrooms.

Once in the lab, the students were told to follow my instructions exactly. It is vital for you to stress this to your students because if they try to jump ahead (as students with computers often do), stopping to assist individuals will result in chaos! You must also know exactly what you want the students to do and give instructions carefully in the correct order.

Some classes used earphones and some did not. I noticed no difference in the procedure or the results. Students

seemed to tune each other out and concentrate on the computer screen.

We warmed our voices up briefly, and then I played a series of pitches on the recorder and asked students to sing the same pitch into the computer microphone. (This microphone can be external or internal). The first few pitches were stepwise, but I played increasingly larger jumps and covered a range from middle C to high E.

During the class before the lab experience, I had asked students to have a song in mind to sing into the computer. This would be recorded into a second file. Most of the students had chosen their own song. I told unprepared students to sing "Happy Birthday," or "Jingle Bells," or any song in which they were very certain of the pitches.

I found that the students listened to their recordings several times and seemed delighted to hear themselves, after the initial giggling at the sound of their voices was over! For many of them, this was a first experience at hearing their solo voice recorded.

Once the class recordings were finished, my job was to listen to all the children. So that the task for me was not overwhelming, I spread the lab classes out over several weeks. I listened to each child's two recordings and wrote them individual notes on the same file about what I had heard. I think honesty is very important here. I tried not to be too negative and to tell each child something positive about his or her singing. When

continued ...



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students were off pitch, however, I told them what I heard and how they could improve.

I found the results very informative. Some students had been singing so quietly in class that I was not aware of their pitch problems. Some who were off pitch in the group were able to sing on pitch alone. I discovered some quiet singers who had beautiful voices. Some students shared ethnic songs that they had been hesitant to sing alone in class.

After all my comments were written, I let the students go to the computer one at a time to open their files while I taught a normal music class. This process took more than one session because the students seemed very interested in what I had written and in hearing themselves again. Many asked me further questions about what I had suggested that they work on. I noticed some students began running "Claire" during their free time at my music-room computer. ("Claire" gives student immediate feedback about their pitch matching.)

I treated all this as privileged communication between the student and me. No student was allowed to hear or read what was in another student's file. The students had the option of deleting their file as soon as they had read it.

I tested the whole school and intend to repeat the lesson once a year. Doing this activity with one grade level or evaluating this way once or twice during the elementary years might be enough for a teacher with more than one school or with larger classes.

Marilyn Collins is department chair and teaches choir and vocal music for grades three, four and five at Detroit Country Day School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Mrs. Collins has presented numerous workshops on computer-assisted music instruction, the Orff and Kodály approaches, choir techniques and multicultural programming. Her choir or vocal classes have sung at Midwestern Music Teachers Conference, MKMEA conference, the White House, national AOSA conference and various local venues.

Using Kid Pix

- 1) Launch the program.
- 2) After the opening credits, go to the menu across the top of the screen. Find "Goodies" and click and pull down the Goodies menu to "type text."
- 3) Look at the menu at the bottom of the screen and click on any of the font choices.
- 4) Click anywhere on the white part of the screen and have the student type any identifying information you wish to have. (For example, name and class.)
- 5) Go back to the "Goodies" at the top and click and pull down to "record a song."
- 6) When you are ready to sing, click on "record." Hold the external microphone near your mouth or sing into the computer microphone and sing your song (or match recorder pitches). You have only thirty-two seconds to sing. Notice the 0-32 bar move on the box as you sing.
- 7) Go back to "Goodies," click and pull down "hear a song" to hear yourself. You may record the song again by repeating the "record a song" procedure.
- 8) When you are finished, go to the file menu at the top of the screen. Click and pull down to "save as." Where it says "please enter file name," have the student type in his or her name. Then click in the box above to save the song wherever you would like them to save it. This could be on a disk or in a folder you create on the hard disk.
- 9) If you are finished, click on the file and pull down to quit.
- 10) If you wish to save another song (or the recorder pitch test), pull down file to "new" and repeat the entire procedure from #1. NOTE: this time when you save be sure to have the students put a #2 by their names. If they save under exactly the same name they will erase their first recording.

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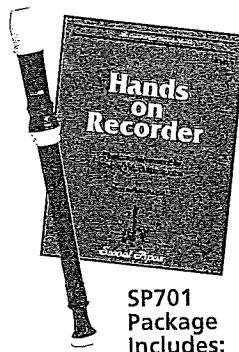
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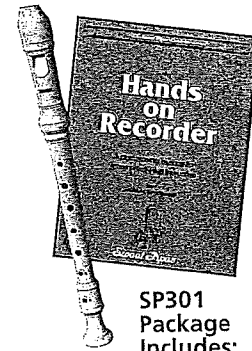
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Letter to the Editor

I was very interested in the letter from Doug Goodkin on the problem of fees for clinicians and consultants. I also do consultant work in education and find it difficult negotiating a fee. I believe Doug is understating the amount of preparation time that goes into a presentation. In addition to preparation and the actual presentation, the time it takes up includes sitting in airports, time away from family, and loss of income from the clinician's regular work.

Some other educational groups pay \$300 to \$700 — sometimes even more — per day plus food, hotel and transportation as a standard practice. I enjoy doing Orff workshops because

that is where my heart is, but Orff groups certainly do not pay the going rate among education groups, and certainly nowhere near, as Doug mentions, the rates paid in private industry. I was once told that if I were not a member of AOSA a higher fee could be paid. It seems a little strange to be penalized for belonging. I am sure Doug runs a risk of being criticized for his statement, but he speaks the truth, and I would like to add my voice in support.

*Lynne Jessup
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On Change

Mary Goetze

Old and set in my ways? Well, I hope not! Quite to the contrary, aging has the potential to prompt new perspectives on life and teaching if accompanied with study, observation, and reflection on personal and professional experiences. In my own life, the past ten years have brought changes in the way I think about vocal training — about some of the ideas that were once at the core of my zealous attempts to help teachers teach children to sing. I recognize that a change of stance may be disappointing and disturbing to some readers who may have trusted my judgment and implemented some of the notions that I advanced. Now it may sound as if I was wrong. But wait! Gaining new insights that require letting go of previously held assumptions is what learning is all about. So please hear me out. This article is written for two purposes. First, I want to relate my current thoughts regarding singing skills in light of recent insights. Next, I'll share with you how and why I've come to a different view on some aspects of vocal training. I'll also comment on the importance and benefits of rethinking one's hard-won views.

The primary change in my thinking about teaching children to sing is in the degree to which I currently emphasize singing in the "light" or "head" register. In the past, I have strongly advocated that teachers teach children to sing in the head voice to the exclusion of singing in the "chest" or "heavy" register. The primary reason for this was that the light register provides access to higher pitches. I still believe that it is critically important to acquaint students with the light mechanism, but they should not be told that it is the "singing" voice or the "right" voice (which I was once prone to

say). It is simply one vocal register used in singing which is most useful when singing higher pitches in some styles of music. Children should also be trained to use the heavy mechanism or chest voice and to move smoothly between the two registers.

Two aspects of my previous approach were unconsciously ethnocentric. The light mechanism is the one used predominantly in Western art music. Its range perfectly matches the treble clef. To perform this music with the appropriate vocal timbre, it is necessary to teach children how to access this register. However, to teach them that this is *the* singing voice is clearly inappropriate. Many musical styles, including Western popular music as well as numerous non-Western vocal traditions, use the heavy mechanism or chest voice at both high and low pitch levels. The timbre of the voice changes markedly with register and with pitch levels, and timbre is critically important to musical style. We would question the thinking of an orchestra conductor who would substitute a clarinet for an oboe, or a trombone for a cello in a symphonic composition, and yet think nothing of singing with a Western tone quality when teaching music from traditions that employ a different vocal timbre.

My naive ethnocentrism was also revealed in echoing unquestioningly the argument that the light mechanism is healthier, suggesting that singing in other ways is unhealthy. While it is true that there is more "collision" of the vocal folds in phonating in the heavier mechanism, there is nothing unhealthy about it. Some individuals may find that they can sing only for a limited duration in the chest voice. However, instead of using this fact as a justification for teaching light mechanism singing exclusively, I now recommend that we teach students how to take care

of their voices. This entails teaching them to drink plenty of water during rehearsals, to recognize the symptoms of vocal fatigue and to rest the voice when it is tired.

My change of thinking on these issues was prompted by an increased interest in music that springs from traditions outside Western art music — an interest that led me to make a major shift of focus from children's choirs to multicultural music education. This new direction in my thinking has yielded more than musical growth, information and the opportunity to travel. It has brought new excitement into all aspects of my life.

The process began when I found myself choosing to listen to a Bulgarian chorus more often than a children's choir, and preferring to go to a world music event rather than a rendition of a Beethoven symphony. I fanned this spark by buying recordings, reading and thinking. Then one night I sat up in bed with a vision of the choir I now conduct in my mind — a college ensemble that recreates music from around the globe — one that is now part of our School of Music and music education curriculum. Literally, it is a dream come true.

Change, exploration and experimentation are an essential part of being the best teacher we can be. It is vitally important for us as teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of the approaches we incorporate into our teaching. It is the essence of improving one's skills — to notice when something is not working, to try to figure out what's wrong, then to test the hypothesis.

Change in practice can result from new insights, whether they are gained from reading, a course or a session at a conference. *Moments of illumination*, as I call them, are

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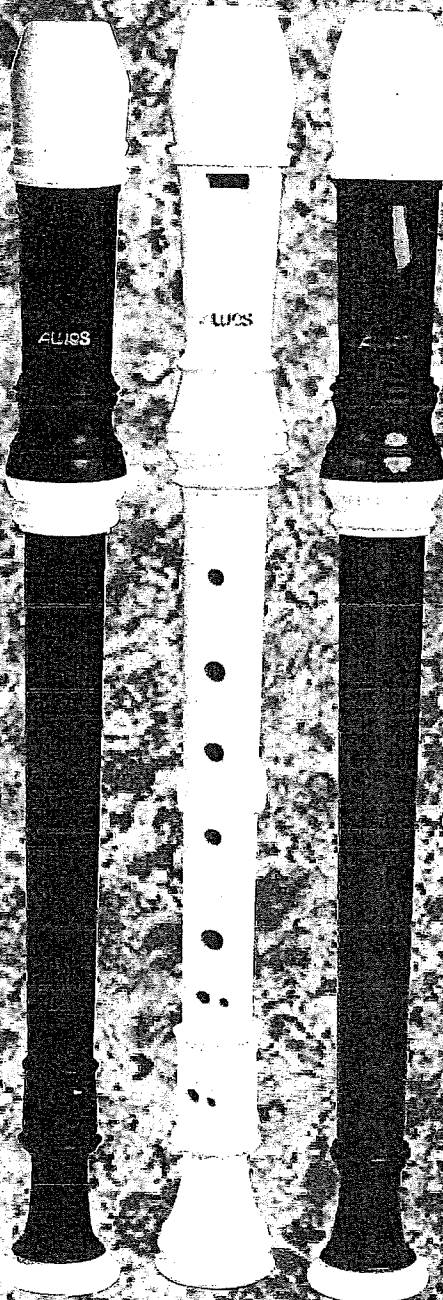
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Creative Worship: Orff Schulwerk in the Children's Choir

Alan Purdum

**“Sing unto the Lord
a new song.”**

-Psalm 149

Xylophones in worship? Creative movement during prayer? Recorders and hand drums in an anthem? While these ideas may seem foreign to many, is there a good reason not to try some new ideas in the church or temple? Many of the psalms exhort us to sing “new songs” and to praise God with “timbrel and dance.” Worship is a celebration of the presence of God in our lives. As this presence is revealed in new ways throughout our lives, should we not offer “new songs” and other new avenues of praise?

Introducing new ideas into worship can be a delicate matter. (There are probably no words more divisive in some congregations than “liturgical dance.”) However, when children introduce the changes, most congregations have little trouble accepting them. When I first brought my Orff training to the church choir, I was unsure of the reception the children would get. To my delight, the worshippers enjoyed the presentations and respected the children for giving their offerings to the church. Indeed, if humans are made in God's image, and if God is a creative being (in fact, the Creator), then we are — and were intended to be — creative beings. Orff Schulwerk recognizes this creative nature inherent in each person and therefore seems a very proper avenue for helping people worship and grow “in spirit.”

On a practical level, how can the children's choir incorporate Schulwerk techniques into a once-a-week rehearsal while still fulfilling its role as a performing ensemble and a vehicle for religious education? The answer is in two parts. First, activities selected for exploration and creativity should also be usable as worship materials. Second, time can be saved by using the children's suggestions to create accompaniments, interludes and texts, rather than teaching involved,



Alan Purdum

sophisticated orchestrations. Incorporating their ideas into the choir presentations also gives the children a sense of being active worshippers and contributing members of the congregation.

The spoken word: Many verses from Psalms, Proverbs and other scriptures lend themselves to speech activities. Children can learn to use expressive speech to portray the mood or message of the passage and can create ostinati from related words, using speech, body percussion or hand drums. Experimentation with the words can produce canons, layers of verses, call and response settings, or similar elemental forms. In other words, scripture and appropriate poetry can receive the same treatment as any speech text in the school classroom. A piece created in this manner could be used as an introit, an introduction to scripture reading, an anthem or as the scripture reading itself. Excellent examples of speech pieces for worship are found in the works of Shirley McRae and Louise Eddington.¹

Anthems: Modern hymnals contain a wealth of tunes from the United States and around the world. Many of these are pentatonic or modal folk melodies and can be harmonized in an elemental manner — just as folk songs are arranged for classroom use. Many hymns classified as “spirituals” have tonic-dominant harmonies in simple patterns which children can easily transfer to barred instruments. Folk songs learned at a chapter workshop can often be used as an anthem with a minor change of text. Since children sing better from memory than from a hymnal, it may be best to sing only one or two verses. Introductions, interludes, accompanying ostinati and codas can be devised by the children or taught by the teacher.

Hymns: In a like manner, hymns sung by the congregation can be enhanced by additions from the children's choir. After the organist leads the people through the first verse, another verse can be accompanied or introduced by barred instruments, drums or recorders. The children

may study the text of a hymn and create their own verses (or individual lines), which they may sing or which may be printed in the bulletin for all worshippers. The choir may add visual beauty to the hymn by dancing their own movement compositions.

Instrumental pieces: A look at the classical organ repertoire reveals numerous pieces with non-liturgical titles: Adagio, Toccata and Gigue, Prelude and Fugue, Bouree, Sonata. These pieces, purely musical or deriving from secular dances, have been accepted as "church music" for hundreds of years. There is no reason why instrumental pieces written for xylophones, glockenspiels, recorders and hand drums cannot be used in the same manner. Many of those found in the *Music for Children* volumes are appropriate for preludes, postludes, offertories, calls to worship, prayer responses and religious processions. Pieces that children create with specific liturgical purposes in mind are truly offerings to the congregation and to God. They also promote spiritual growth in the child who has learned that talent is both a gift and a responsibility which must be used for the good of all.

Dance and creative movement: Movement is a natural part of music

making (watch the organist or the handbell choir!), but movement alone is also a powerful force for portraying faith and emotions. Children can dance to the interlude of an anthem. One or more can move to the words sung by the rest of the choir. Dramatic movement can enhance the reading of scripture or the recitation of a prayer. The dances children create for themselves are often the most meaningful for them and for the congregation. Children naturally enjoy movement and should be encouraged to learn to use this ability for the expression of their faith.

The "Musical": Many choirs have a tradition of presenting an annual musical play at Christmas or in the spring. While there are many excellent compositions commercially available, why not make your own? Many presenters at AOSA conferences and chapter workshops have given examples of this type of setting using children's literature. A story from scripture can be used in a similar way. Some of the necessary steps are listed below.

Select a story that has appeal for children and a message for the congregation. Read and discuss the original with the children. Find the main theme — is there a moral? Look for recurring ideas

which can be developed into a song that weaves throughout the story. Write a script, asking the choir members to help update the language without changing the message of the story. Look for places to inject some humor (whatever they laugh at they will remember).

With the children's input write song texts and/or instrumental pieces which help tell the story or comment on the characters' actions. Decide where movement or dance will enhance the story or move the plot along. Decide on the type of staging: will there be lots of scenery or just a few props? Will the choir wear costumes or modern clothes? Will there be a narrator, actors or both? Are there enough children for separate actors and instrumentalists or will the actors accompany themselves? While developing the script, look for places where improvisation could be encouraged in playing, singing or movement.

A musical of this type, in addition to bringing a religious message, offers the opportunity for extending the musical and creative abilities of the children in a manner which is both enjoyable and worthwhile. Carl Orff's "The Christmas Story"² is an excellent, if ambitious, example of this genre.

Working with children in a religious setting is somewhat different from teaching in a school. Often the church choir is a smaller group, and usually has a variety of ages and grade levels. The choir is often "self-selected" while the school classes are all-inclusive. The church group may have more frequent performance expectations. The church choir will likely perform traditional choral music as well as pieces in the Schulwerk style. In spite of these minor differences, many aspects of working with children remain the same in church, synagogue or school. Teaching with the Orff approach makes one adaptable to various situations. Many orchestrations are readily adaptable to the size and abilities of different groups. In smaller groups there can be more time for exploration and creative expression. Children are much the same in all environments: those in a religious setting learn readily when taught with respect, concern and compassion — just as school children do.

The specific techniques for leading children to prepare pieces for worship or to create their own are the same ones used by AOSA members in school classrooms every day. Only the choice of material is different. Church musicians who are unfamiliar with this approach may wish to seek out a local chapter of AOSA and inquire about workshops and teacher-training courses.

Encourage your children to show their creative powers in a worshipful manner. If your congregation doesn't know the difference between a glockenspiel and a hand drum, if your choir has never danced an anthem, if the pastor's voice is the only one heard speaking, maybe it's time to "Sing to the Lord a new song!"

Alan Purdum is Director of Music at Howland Community Church in Warren, Ohio, and teaches elementary music in the Grand Valley Local Schools of Ashtabula County, Ohio. He is past-president of the Association of Disciple Musicians and currently serves on the AOSA National Board of Trustees as Regional Representative for Region VI.

Notes

¹Shirley W. McRae. *Celebrate (A Practical Guide for the Use of Orff Techniques and Materials in the Church)*. 1984, Augsburg 11-5328; Louise L. Eddington. *Praise the Lord*. 1981, Choristers Guild C-7.

²Carl Orff/Gunild Keetman. *The Christmas Story*. 1962, Schott ed 5144.

Move It First!

Whether playing a traditional singing or play-parties game or creating movement from a song they have learned, children in Orff Schulwerk classrooms are often singing and moving at the same time. Experiencing these two activities simultaneously often helps the child experience an aesthetic whole greater than the sum of either of its parts.

Over the years, the lessons of child development and the suggestions of colleagues have helped me understand more effective ways to help children reach that goal of dual performance in ways that are both musically and physically satisfying.

To arrive at a starting point for teaching simultaneous movement and song, ask this question: Will the child be asked to create movement for a song, or will she learn a traditional set of steps and hand movements for the song through imitation?

If the goal is to create, then the starting point is obvious: the child will need to be able to sing the song in order to respond to it in movement. But if the goal is to learn a pre-existing song and movement, the answer may seem less obvious until we observe children in action.

Children live to move and move to live. Seeing movement of any sort will excite the child, especially the youngest, quickly into action. This need to move overwhelms other sensory information, whether incoming or outgoing. If we are wise, we will work with the movement imperative, teaching movement first whenever possible and adding verbal information later.

While this little flip-flop in the teaching order may go against what some have learned as a traditional instructional pattern, the ease with which children learn new singing games convinces me otherwise. Children learn to sing a song accompanying a traditional singing game

accurately and aesthetically when the requisite movement is already flowing smoothly through their bodies.

In teaching movement to singing games, consider some following hints:

- Teach each section of movement separately before putting them together into the larger whole.
- If movements involve both hands and feet, teach only the movement of the footwork first, because it is the more difficult. Only when **all** of the footwork is mastered is it useful to add upper body movement.
- Show movements without speaking at all so that students can concentrate on what they are seeing and process only visual information. Asking learners to simultaneously process two types of information confounds learning and slows it down considerably.
- Later, verbalize names for various movements while performing them to aid memory. For example, the words “sway, sway, sway, sway, jump, jump, turn (rest)” may be used to describe an eight-count movement phrase while performing it.
- Encourage learners to practice movement at their own speed before coordinating the tempo with the entire group.
- Similarly, learn actions without partners before coordinating with partners. Coordinate with one partner before asking all sets of partners to coordinate with a whole group.
- Invite the learners to internalize the verbal movement names until they can perform the movement smoothly without speaking out loud.
- The teacher may now sing the song while the group performs the actions. Play the game a few times, inviting the players to join you in singing when they feel comfortable. This way, all can continue to play the action of the

game while the new learning integrates itself naturally.

Most songs for singing or play party games are repetitive and are easy to learn by imitation. When necessary, the teacher can now safely stop to fine tune the song, clearly pronouncing lyrics and straightening out any melodic uncertainties. When resuming the game, begin the movement first and then add the song after a turn or two.

Over the past seven years of teaching singing games to both children and adults alike using a “movement first” methodology, I have observed that:

- accompanying songs are nearly always learned with melodic accuracy and that only an occasional word or phrase needs clarifying. (Model singing the song the way you’d like to hear it from the group, and you will hear what you ask for.)
- more learners are more successful at playing the game and singing more quickly, often asking to play the new game again and again.
- the song is actually learned more quickly and sung with greater expression when it is added after movement than when it is learned before.

When calling upon students to solve a creative movement problem growing out of the characteristics of a previously learned song, it is advisable to be certain that students know the song well and are able to put it on “automatic.” Singing usually stops when movement is added until the new information is integrated with what is already known. And, the more complex the words of a song, the more difficult it becomes for the mover to both sing and perform movements simultaneously. When movement patterns are rhythmic (as opposed to beat-oriented), it is also very difficult for the learner to both sing and move. In such situations, allow the learner to take plenty

of personal practice time to learn new movement patterns without singing until they can be re-integrated with the song from which they have sprung. If we insist that the learner sing while moving when he or she is not ready, what began with joyful expectation turns into hard labor and children cry, "do we have to do this?"

While my observations took place in my own classrooms, these ideas are neither new nor original. Colleagues like Grace Nash, Dee Coulter, Phyllis Weikart, Judith Cole, Judy Lynn Johnson and many others have helped me to learn to pay closer attention to what children were telling me with their actions when they could not tell me in words. If any of what we have learned helps you, we'll all have something to celebrate with more singing and dancing.

-Liz Gilpatrick

Do you have classroom suggestions you'd like to share with readers? Send your ideas, no more than 1,000 words, to Liz Gilpatrick, From the Classroom Editor, 305 Grouse Court, Louisville, CO 80027. Please do not include lesson plans or original songs and rhymes. Reading this issue's column and others from past issues will give you a good idea of what we seek for From the Classroom.

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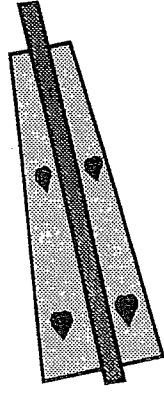
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BOOK REVIEWS

Ruth Hamm, Editor

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THE LISTENING BOOK **Discovering Your Own Music** by W. A. Mathieu Shambhala, 1991. \$13.00

In his introduction to *The Listening Book*, Mr. Mathieu suggests the reader skip around freely among this captivating collection of brief essays, not only within each section but randomly throughout the book. I strongly concur. The five sections, entitled "Listening," "Joining In," "Practicing," "The Sound Connection" and "Practices and Big Ears," have brief but widely divergent essays in each section. According to the author, "they are arranged linearly from passive to active... from awareness and appreciation of everyday sounds to participation in musical practices."

But this little book is that and more: a delicious smorgasbord of words illuminating feelings, thoughts and reactions, not only to our environment but to our hopes and strivings. It not only greatly intensifies our awareness of sounds around us, but also those sounds we can produce, and even of which we may dream. There are moments of singular beauty in the writing and an imaginativeness that reveals an author of acute sensitivity. The reader will be inspired to further cultivate his or her own potential and to reach out and beyond previous boundaries.

-Jacobeth Postl, Illinois

CHIPMUNKS, CICADAS AND OWLS by Natalie Sarrazin Schott, 1996. \$9.95

This Schott Supplement to the American edition of *Music for Children* consists of twelve songs from five Native American tribes: the Southeast Creek, Plains Sioux, Northwest Skagit and Snoqualmi, and the Southwest Hopi. The songs are archival, collected forty to fifty years ago and housed at the Library of Congress. The author asks us to view them as historical examples. Because the Indian photographs in the publication are from the collections at the Smithsonian Institution taken in the early part of this century, they also are not a depiction of Indian life as it is today, but rather the conditions of an earlier era. The pictures represent stereotypes no longer typical, though unfortunately many people still harbor these misconceptions.

Although some Native people have been grouped into areas of proximity, it should be noted that this does not necessarily mean similarity. Sarrazin makes reference to the Hopi, the Zuni, the Navajo and the Pueblo. These people are all located in the southwestern United States, but the only major similarity is that they all live in close-knit groups. There are many Pueblo Indian tribes with different languages and tradition and individual Pueblo names.

The presentation of material in the book seems sketchy, and in some cases confusing. For example, in the book's lesson from the Southeast, there is a list of the names for the numerals one to ten used presently by the Muskogee Creek tribe. If we try to hear these

names within the songs as the author suggests, we are handicapped by the lack of a clue as to their pronunciation. (The author does tell us that the words in the three short counting songs are phoneticized.)

What is the subject matter of the Indian text in the Sioux song presented in the book? We have no inkling, other than the suggestion that the singing style show that the "timbre is warm, almost like a lullaby."

The Snoqualmi song, we are told, is a lullaby. There are no words; therefore, we may assume it is to be hummed. The author suggests it be "sung at a rather fast tempo." There are verbal instructions indicating tempo in two other songs. Only one of the twelve songs has a metronomic marking.

The teacher does have a hint to the meaning of the hunchback boy's song in the Northwest Coastal Skagit story, though it has no translation. It is suggested in the story. Perhaps the teacher might have students create a variety of their own ideas of its meaning as an extension to the story.

The author emphasizes how exceptional the aural acuity of Native people must be due to their auricular tradition. Indeed, until the proliferation of tape

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recorders this was true. Years ago, as Indian children began to talk and walk they began to learn the native music and dance through imitation. Today one finds Indians taping their heritage, since they realize their traditions are in danger of being lost.

The verbal description the author gives to imitate the timbre of the vocal sounds for these Indian songs is a valiant attempt, but it is crucial that the authentic sound be heard, for both the unique quality produced by American Indian voices and for aid in pronunciation. Though she mentions that recordings and videos are available, there is no bibliography to help the teacher make a proper choice.

The paucity of suggestions for instruction and the limited information may be a handicap for some teachers using these materials. Perhaps the book will tempt teachers especially to examine our Native peoples' music and dance in much greater depth, as well as to become acquainted with their elegant companion arts and crafts, such as painting, sculpture, pottery, weaving, beadwork, basketry, jewelry and flute making, and other art interests.

-Madelyn Schnick, New Mexico

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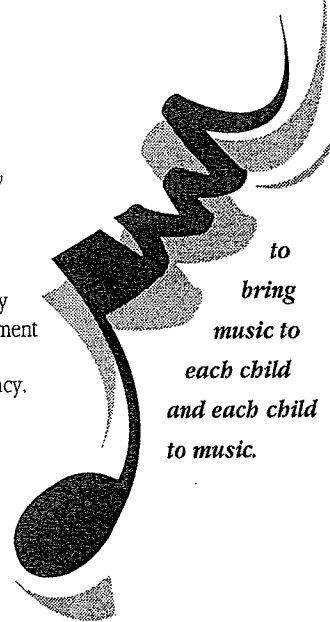
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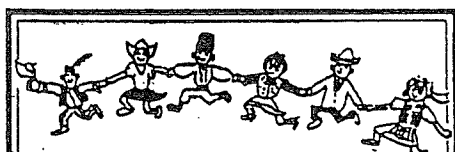
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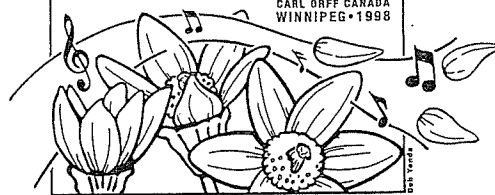
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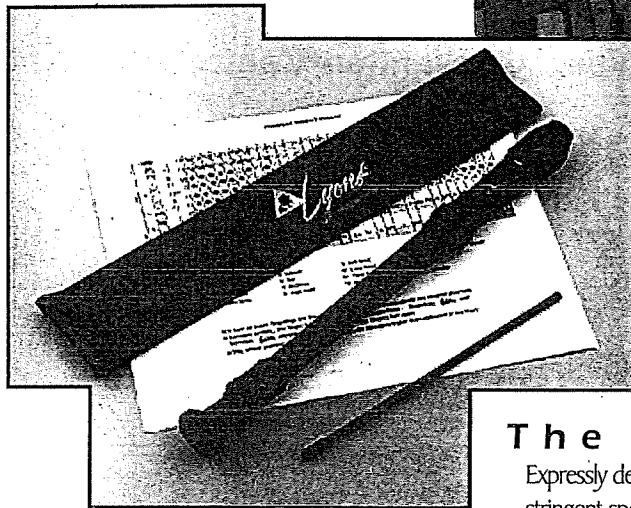
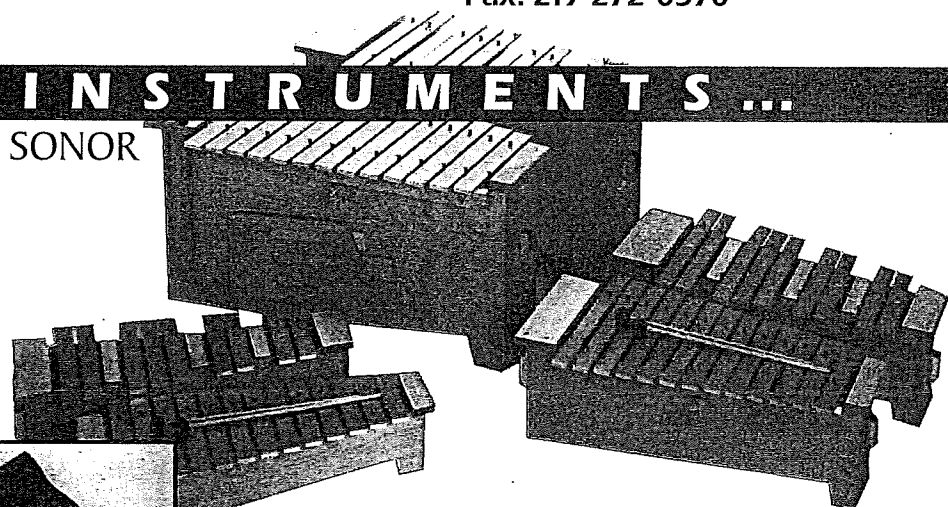
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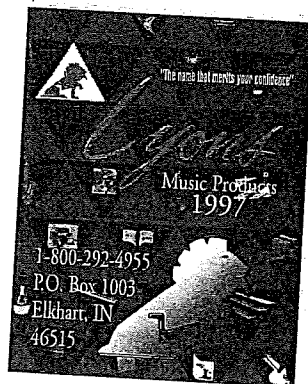
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Resources For The Classroom

Marina Gorny, Editor

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Classical Kids: The Classroom Collection

by Susan Hammond

Set with CDs, \$259.98; set with cassettes, \$159.98. Some components available separately. Contact Children's Bookstore Distribution, 1-800-668-0242, for more information.

It all began a few years ago with a demo tape, *Mister Bach Comes to Call*. Later, in 1988, the first Classical Kids recording was produced. Other recordings followed: *Magic Fantasy (Mozart)*, *Ring of Mystery (Vivaldi)*, *Tchaikovsky Discovers America*, *Daydreams and Lullabies* and *Hallelujah Handel*. This wonderful collection consisting of audio and video recordings, books, and even interactive software, is being continuously updated. It combines music, history, drama and fun for all ages.

The Classroom Collection features seven full length, award-winning Classical Kids compact discs; the Emmy Award-winning "Beethoven Lives Upstairs" video; comprehensive Teacher's Guides for each recording; a full length music-only CD; "Bach, Beethoven and the Integrated Curriculum," a premium teacher resource manual; a full-color poster; and thirty collectible stickers, all in an attractive bookshelf box design. (The collection with cassettes does not include the *Hallelujah Handel* CD and corresponding Teacher's Guide.) The *Beethoven Lives Upstairs* CD-ROM (priced separately) is an adventure with Ludwig van Beethoven as your host and musical guide, teaching through games and activities how to read notation, identify rhythm and pitch, and actually make music.

We all know how children become involved in stories. It is the first test which this collection passes with flying

colors. Each recording presents a fictional tale in which a composer's life intertwines with that of a child. Tales are based on biographical anecdotes, historical facts, and accompanied by carefully selected music. The music and its composer are seen through the eyes of a child. Says Hammond, "It always begins with the music. Of course, I'm looking for best loved and well-known works as well as perhaps more obscure pieces, and often my own personal favorites. Many of the great composers wrote for children, too... Needless to say, children are at the center of our stories." Hammond, a former concert pianist and music teacher, begins each Classical Kids project with a full year of research into the composer's life and music.

Each recording gives an engaging forty-five minutes of listening, either continuously as an entire story, or in vignettes of five to ten minutes. The Teacher's Guide includes a synopsis of the story and suggestions for possible relevant discussions. The Guide also informs about the length of each scene, CD track numbers, music selections, as well as the opening and final words of the dialogue. This organization proves especially helpful if listening will be spread over a few lessons.

The series is an exciting way to introduce children to different historic periods and geographical places such as 17th century Venice (Vivaldi), 18th

century London (Handel), turn-of-the-century Vienna (Beethoven), 19th century America (Tchaikovsky), and even time travel to the 20th century (Bach played in a spaceship). Some of these stories have been adopted for live presentation and successfully performed with professional symphony orchestras.

Although Classical Kids recordings have been used in classes kindergarten through nine, Hammond considers them most suitable for grades two through six. The series offers suggestions, ideas and activities designed for use by the music specialist or the classroom teacher in any classroom environment, based on the teacher's own talents, interests and areas of study.

The series has been honored with the Teachers' Choice Award, which recognizes excellence in classroom and curriculum materials that enhance the classroom teaching experience with practical, hands-on materials.

Says Hammond, "The goal of Classical Kids is to present classical musical excellence to all young people... They should not be deprived of meeting challenges and achieving goals. In a small way perhaps Classical Kids can help to bridge the gap between classical music and today's pop culture." Hammond successfully builds bridges by entertaining, educating and challenging children.

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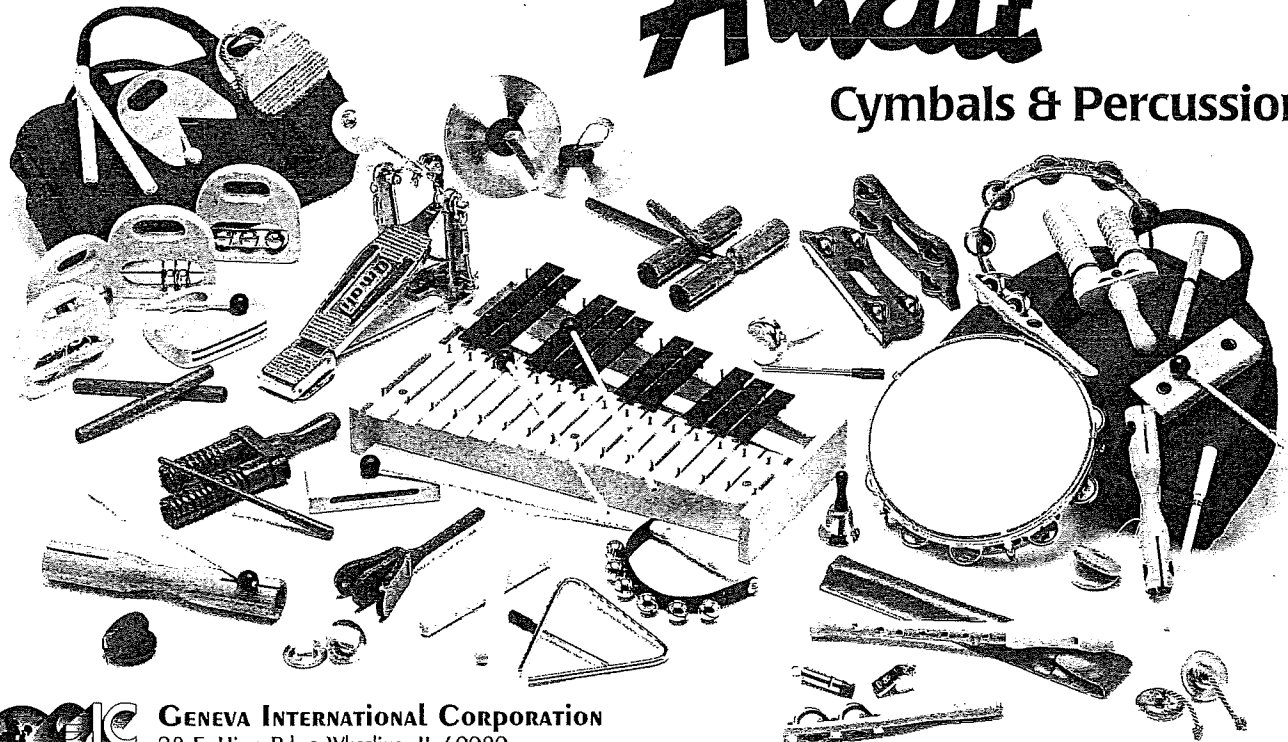
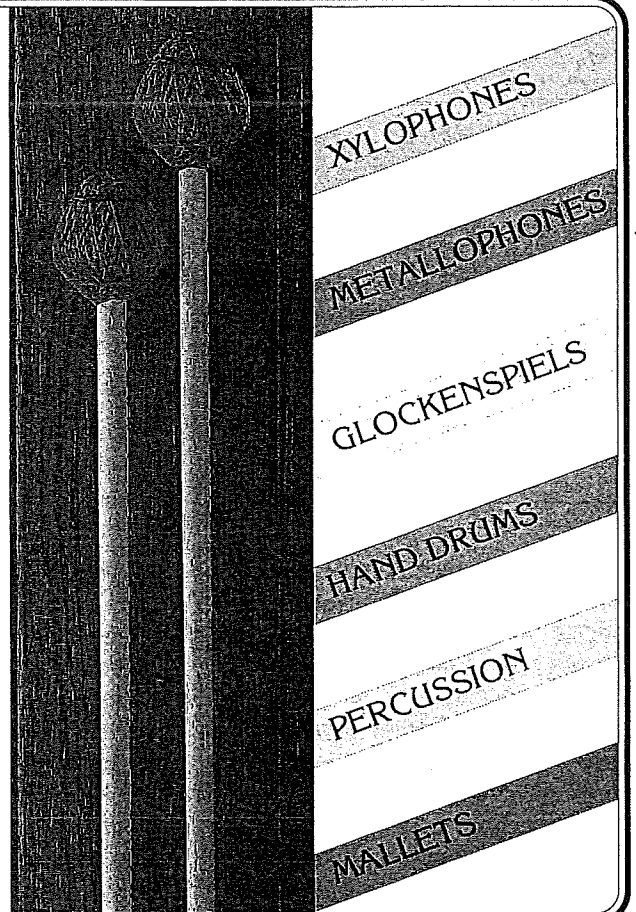
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Developing Singers: Implications from Recent Research

Nancy A. Cooper

Children's singing has been the focus of a great deal of research over the years (see Goetze, Cooper, & Brown, 1990, for one review of literature through the late 1980s). This brief overview will summarize selected studies from the past ten years, highlighting recommendations for practice that may help us in our efforts to improve the quality of singing in our classes. Welch, Sergeant, and White (1995/1996) remind us that "given the diversity of the world's musics...any model of singing development must be viewed as culture-specific" (p. 156); therefore, it is important to note that the studies discussed here are based on Western notions of pitch matching and singing accuracy. Throughout this discussion, pitches will be identified as follows: C4 = middle C; C3 = the octave below; C5 = the octave above, etc.

Sequential vocal development

It has been proposed that children's singing voice development generally proceeds from rhythmic accuracy (with a focus on words, resulting in chant-like performance) to more accurate melodic contour and eventually to the ability to maintain a consistent tonality throughout a song, with no major errors in pitch (see, for example, Rutkowski, 1990; Welch, Sergeant, & White, 1995/1996). Progression through these stages is not age-specific; rather, teachers are likely to notice considerable individual differences in the rate at which children progress, depending upon maturity, experience, instruction, or other factors that may affect their singing accuracy.

Effects of range and registration

Several recent studies focusing on the variables of vocal range (i.e., lowest and highest singable pitches) and vocal register (i.e., chest voice or heavy

mechanism vs. head voice or light mechanism) highlight the distinction between children's so-called "comfortable" singing range and the broader "potential" range available to them when they are able to use the head register appropriately. In a study of potential singing ranges and preferred tessituras for familiar songs, Moore (1991) asked ninety children (ages eight to eleven) and 100 adults (undergraduate elementary education students) to sing "America" on a starting pitch of their choice, then to sing descending five-note scale patterns to the lowest and highest pitches they could comfortably produce. Moore found that both boys and girls had approximately a two-octave range (G3-G#5), but that the tessitura they chose for "America" was significantly closer to the lower end of their range than the upper; in fact, the upper quarter of the range was never selected. Based on his finding that the upper and lower limits of female adults' vocal ranges dropped three semitones below those of the children, Moore suggested that the upper singing range may disappear if it is ignored, thus emphasizing the importance of teaching and encouraging children to use their upper vocal range.

In another study emphasizing the connection between range and registration, Brown (1988) compared ranges of first-, third-, and fifth-graders ($N = 82$) by having them sing "Mary Had a Little Lamb" and a series of ascending and descending major scales under two conditions. In the first assessment, participants selected their own starting pitch for the song, and Brown took their final note of the song as the starting point for the scales they sang to find the lowest and highest notes of their range. In the second assessment, one week later, Brown first led partici-

pants through some brief vocal exploration activities using head voice (e.g., imitating siren sounds, cuckoo calls, etc.), then had them echo the song from her model (beginning on B4). The scales used to check limits of the range this time began on G4. Brown reported a significantly wider range span (an additional 4.68 semitones) and higher upper range extremes (an additional three semitones) across the sample in the second assessment, suggesting that a model of head voice production and even very brief vocal exploration activities in head register can significantly increase a child's singing range.

Distinctions between vocal registers was the focus of a study by Wurgler (1990), who found that 88% of the participants in her study (285 kindergarten through sixth-graders) were able to demonstrate two primary vocal registers (chest and head) with a transitional area occurring around G4. Wurgler reported that 12.3% of participants sang only in heavy chest production; 4.2% could find head voice but chose to sing primarily in chest; 10.9% could use both registers but were unable to move back and forth between the registers smoothly; 32.3% could lighten their vocal production to extend their range somewhat, but either would not or could not make the adjustment to head voice production; while the largest percentage (40%) could make smooth transitions between registers so that register production did not limit their range (p. 87-91). The ability to make smooth transitions increased with age, experience and training (i.e., participation in choir in addition to general music class).

Among other interesting findings in this study, Wurgler reported that

continued...

accurate pitch-matching was more likely to occur in chest voice because of its overlap with the familiar speaking voice range; however, students who tried to force this heavy production above its natural limits (around G4) tended to strain the lower jaw forward and try to push the tone higher with bursts of air, resulting in a forced sound and intonation problems. She also noted that singing ascending scale patterns prohibited an easy register transition, while descending from higher pitches in head voice facilitated easier transitions.

So that students' vocal ranges will not be limited by their inability to use both registers, Wurgler recommends that teachers not rely on song literature alone to teach correct vocal production. Rather, she suggests that teachers approach singing systematically, as they would other skill development, beginning with light production, then finding head voice (starting above D5), and finally, once head voice is secure, extending this downward through the range. "There can be no successful blending of the two registers until the head voice production is secure. It is easier to stay out of chest tone than to get out of chest tone. Teachers must work to develop the unused register, which in children is the register least like the familiar singing voice" (p. 123).

Effects of vocal model

Characteristics of the model children imitate may also affect singing accuracy. Brown (1988) noted that a small number of participants in her study could phonate in head voice "only immediately after hearing the teacher model; if they sang for very long without hearing it, they apparently lost the feeling or sound...and lapsed back into their modal [chest] register. This was especially evident during the scale singing when only the piano gave the stimulus pitches" (p. 86).

Further evidence of the importance of the vocal model was reported by Green (1990), who found that children in grades one through six (N=282) responded most accurately to a child voice model, followed by a female adult voice and male adult voice, respectively. Sletto

(1992) also reported less accurate pitch-matching with an adult male vocal model. In his study (N=100, grades one through six), children sang melodic patterns more accurately in response to either a soprano or a falsetto model than to a tenor or electronic keyboard model. The soprano model facilitated the most accurate responses, while use of the tenor model resulted in the least accurate responses overall, with many participants being confused by the octave difference. Sletto suggests that "the best alternative for the male music educator is to use his falsetto voice when teaching pitch-matching skills... however, care must be given to use a light, relaxed vocal mechanism so as not to... produce a tension-filled tone that may be emulated by the children" (p. 70-71).

The vocal model is important for all young singers, but it may be even more crucial for uncertain singers. Recent studies have found that uncertain singers perform more accurately in response to a female rather than a male model (Yarbrough, Green, Benson, & Bowers, 1991); a female model with no vibrato rather than a non-vibrato child voice or a female voice with vibrato (Yarbrough, Bowers, & Benson, 1992); non-vibrato tenor and bass voices rather than sine waves of the same pitches (Price, Yarbrough, Jones, & Moore, 1994); and (in a study including only boys), tenor and bass voices in falsetto, and sine waves in higher octaves rather than the same voices in their regular octaves (Yarbrough, Morrison, Karrick, & Dunn, 1995).

Conclusions

Research has defined a broad developmental sequence for singing accuracy; however, individual differences abound and must be viewed in light of many other factors. From this brief overview of selected studies, two major implications for teaching emerge. First, if we want our students to have full use of their potential singing ranges, we must teach them to find and use their light, head voice register fluently. This also implies that we must carefully select song literature

of appropriate range and tessitura, avoiding loud, heavy chest voice production. Second, if we want our students to develop accurate pitch-matching skills, especially our uncertain singers, we must provide appropriate vocal models. It appears that children perform better with a child, adult soprano (without excessive vibrato) or male falsetto model than with keyboard or adult male models. As research continues, we will undoubtedly gain more understanding of how best to nurture the developing singers in our classrooms.

Nancy Cooper is Assistant Professor of Music at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey in New Brunswick, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate music education courses and directs the Rutgers Children's Choir, which she founded in 1993. An active guest conductor and clinician for children's choir festivals and workshops throughout the country, she holds undergraduate and masters degrees from the University of Colorado in Boulder, and the Doctor of Music Education degree from Indiana University.

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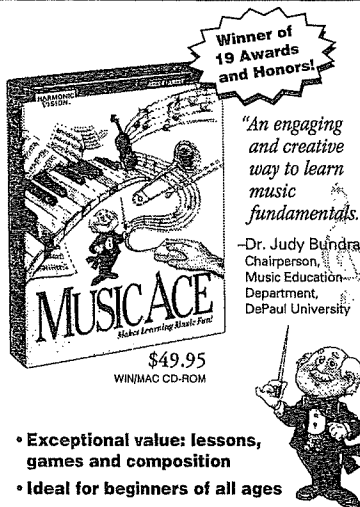
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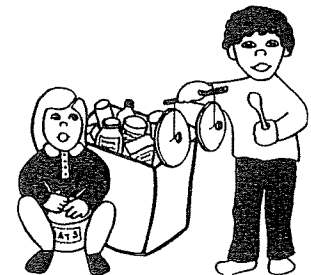
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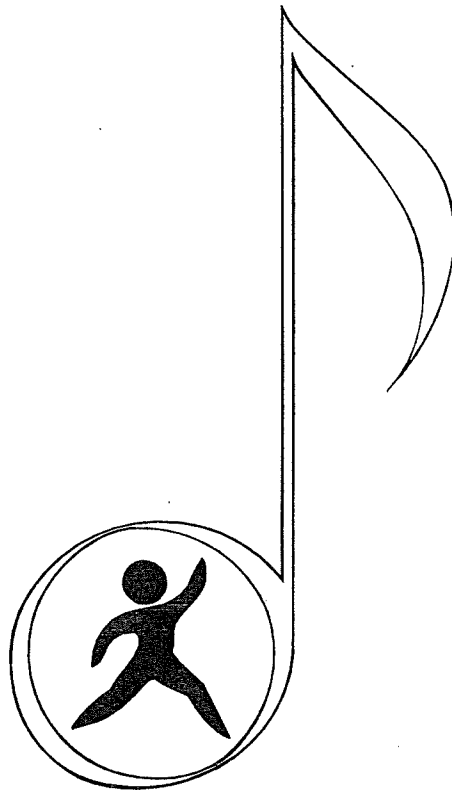
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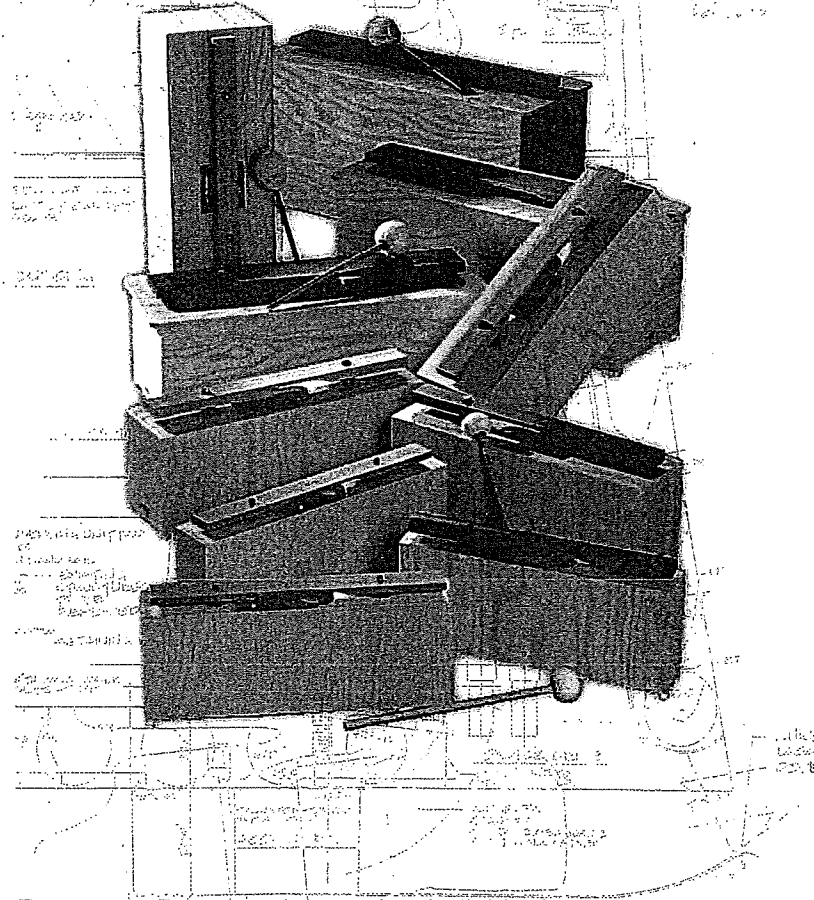
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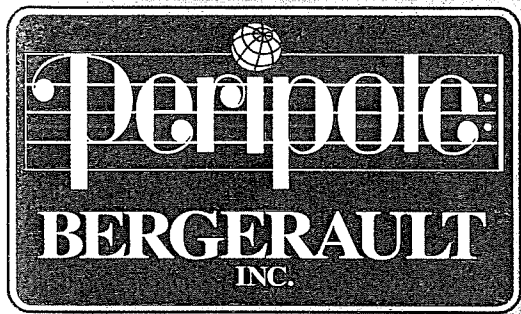
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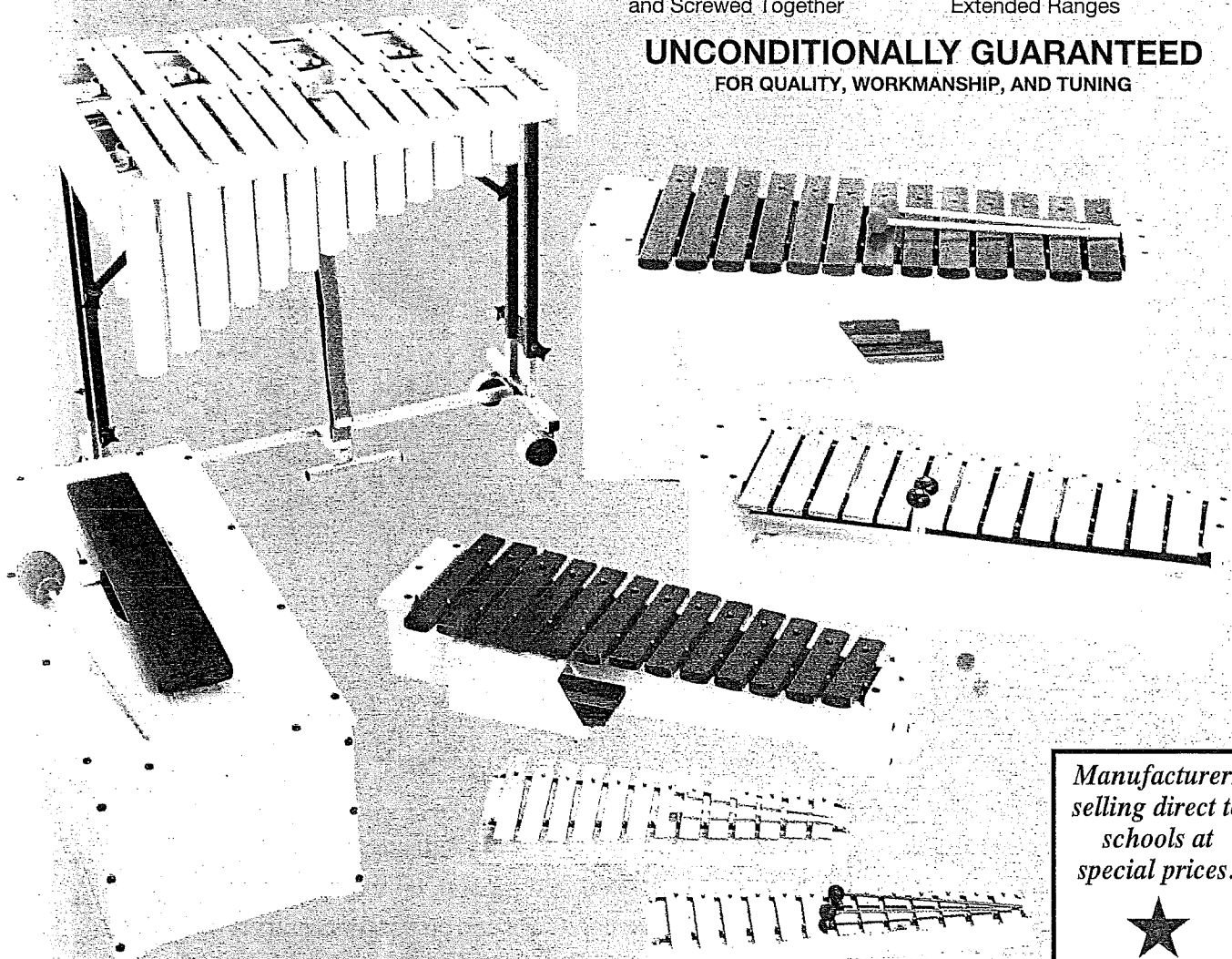
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