

Reviews

Carol Erion and Marjie Van Gunten, Editors

The opinions stated are those of the reviewer and not of the editors or the American Orff-Schulwerk Association. The editors wish to thank those publishers and members of industry who graciously donate copies of books and material for review.

THE SCHULWERK: Vol. Three of his eight volume autobiography, Carl Orff/ DOCUMENTATION: His Life and Works)

*To understand what Schulwerk is and what its aims are, we should perhaps see how it came into being suggested Carl Orff and for those interested in heeding his advice, there is no finer source than Volume Three of his autobiography, *The Schulwerk*. Affectionately known as "the blue book," it is the definitive story of "what Schulwerk is" told by the man who created it. One would imagine that this book would be on the shelf of every Orff teacher nationwide—and yet, strangely, this is not the case. When I asked a prominent vendor of Orff materials how many of these books were purchased last year, the reply was, "About three." This review hopes to turn the reader towards this neglected source material and give a taste of the riches that await.*

The book opens *In the first decades of this century it seemed to me as if a spring storm were sweeping through the city of Munich*, beginning the story with an image that sets the tone for all that follows. The air is charged with possibility, and this atmosphere permeates the story of the Schulwerk's unfolding. Far from today's academic atmosphere of assessment, standards and tests, Orff and his colleagues experiment, question, search, and seek to bring ideas into form, following the play of their imaginations and improvising their way towards an elemental aesthetic.

Time and again, Orff proves to be the right person in the right place at the right time and his work becomes the magnetic center of the storm, attracting a host of like-minded visionaries who contribute decisively to its development. Here we trace back to the people who helped

bring to life all the various components of the Schulwerk we enjoy today — Dorothee Günther, Gunild Keetman, Maja Lex, Curt Sachs, the Swedish sisters, Karl Maendler, Eberhard Preussner, Walter Panofsky, Klaus Becker, Arnold Walter, Doreen Hall, Margaret Murray and more. It seems that Orff's meeting with each of them is "meant to be," and it is fascinating to reflect that had even one of those meetings not occurred, the Schulwerk as we know it would not be as we know it. Orff's artful storytelling (translated by Margaret Murray) makes it a delight and pleasure to meet these people, whose stories we ought to know.

In addition to this engaging narrative, what can the reader expect from these 300 pages?

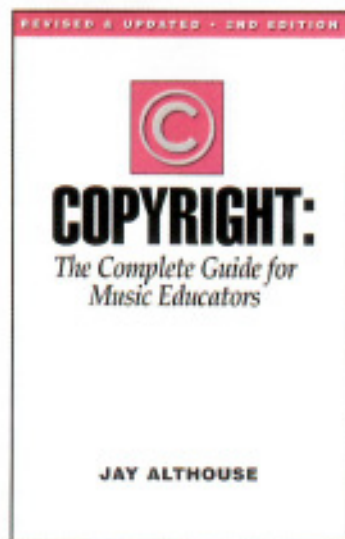
- Marvelous archival photos of Güntherschule dancers, instruments and more.
- Early musical scores not found in the *Music for Children* Volumes that illustrate the emerging elemental style of composition.
- Orff's speeches and comments that comprise the bulk of his original statements about the aims of the Schulwerk. (Virtually all quotes one may have seen elsewhere can be found between these two covers).

Orff's ideas have both passed through generations and traveled across cultural borders, and there is always the danger that we can lose the meaning of his original intent.

This book serves as a beacon to guide us in our practice, shining its light back to "how it came into being" and forward to "what it yet might be." Orff himself was well aware that his work required a perpetual new beginning, but was equally aware that the "reproductive spark" could flicker out and die if moved too far from the hearth of its inception. This marvelous book, replete with its mythic story, poetic images, vibrant ideas, stirring photos and exquisite

musical examples, is a testimony to the breadth and depth of elemental art. It is time for the blue book to take its place amongst the brown ones in the home of every Orff teacher!

- Doug Goodkin



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Disclaimer: This is not a book review. This is a personal testimony.

When I was first given this book to consider for review in *The Orff Echo*, I had time only to scan it quickly. My immediate impression was that it seemed fairly comprehensive and easy to read, and I put it in the "To Review" pile. After taking a closer look, I decided to test the book's applicability to the work of Orff teachers by seeing

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whether I could use it to answer a few questions: Can I photocopy this song (this poem, these song lyrics) and use it in my fourth grade class today? Can I make an audio-or videotape of our concert and sell tapes to school families later as a fundraiser? Can I use this poem to compose a song and create an Orff arrangement? I started out using the book as a reference, skipping here and there to find the answers to my questions. To research one of the questions I read an entire section in order to get the complete answer. An hour or so later, I realized that I had read the whole book from cover to cover—not because it was necessary to read every chapter to find answers to my three test questions—but because it was interesting and compelling!

The book gives an overview of the principle of copyright and a short history of copyright law. The main body of the book describes how the law works in all those situations familiar to music teachers. The last section of the book contains a glossary of terms, sample letters to publishers and copyright owners that can be easily adapted to your circumstances, and a list of publisher web sites useful for finding copyright owners.

After spending this short time with the book, it was obvious to me that every music teacher ought to own it. Then, in a kind of "duh" experience, I realized that since I was in a position to do so, I should buy this little volume for all the music teachers in my district and I did. Early in this school year, a middle school drama teacher called with a question about copyright while putting together a Broadway Revue. I bought copies of the book for all our drama teachers. (Art teachers are beginning to have copyright issues as well, and I am in search of a book for them that is as well-written as this one.) If you cannot persuade your

school or school district to buy a copy of *Copyright: the Complete Guide for Music Educators* for your school, I suggest you purchase one for yourself. It could be the best investment of your own money you've ever made. In our current litigious society, author Jay Althouse may have just saved your job!

- Carol Erion

(Editor's note: I happen to know that Carol did indeed set out to craft a review, but just as she said, a funny thing happened on the way.)

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