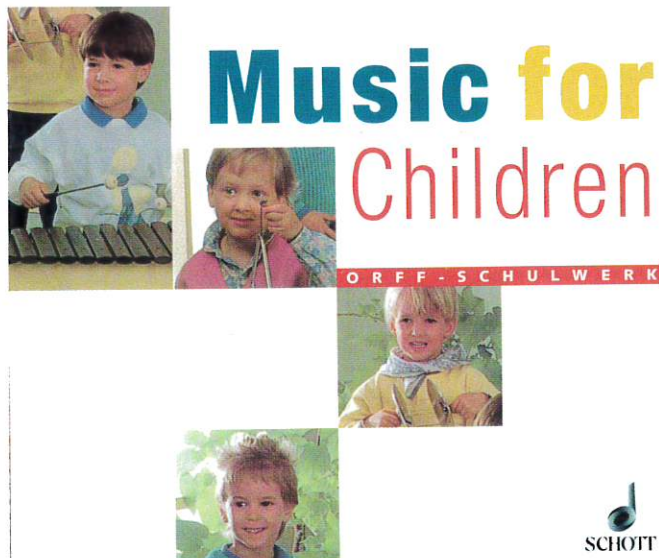


Reviews

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.



ORFF SCHULWERK: Music For Children (CD collection)

Schott and Co. Ltd.

**Under License from Harmonia
Mundi**

Many experienced teachers of the Schulwerk still remember (and perhaps still use and enjoy) the original Musica Poetica/Harmonia Mundi recordings, Music For Children - with texts sung in German. With Schott's newly released triple-CD compilation, American Orff Schulwerk teachers reap the double benefit of a CD format and English texts. One can only hope that recordings in other languages are yet to come.

The majority of the tracks comprise selections from Margaret Murray's five-volume English edition of Music For Children by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman (published between 1958-1966). Additionally, one hears many supplemental pieces, including a few songs from North America (e.g., Poor Wayfaring Stranger, in La-Pentatonic mode). Even though this collection does not provide new recordings of the old

standards, it is well worth owning and sharing with students. It is worth noting that the instrumental ensemble was conducted by Carl Orff and Herman Regner. Although the instrumentalists were professional musicians (the liner notes state that professional musicians were used for "practical reasons"), children's speaking and singing voices abound. In addition to the expected timbres of recorders, pitched and un-pitched percussion that provide the essential

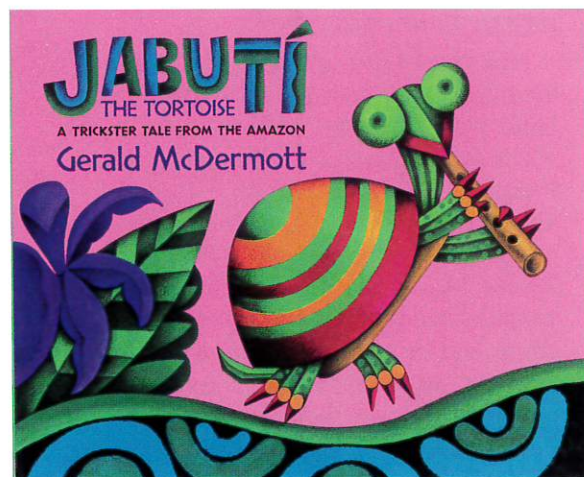
sound of the instrumental ensemble, one also hears water glasses, guitar, cello, double bass, sordun, crumhorn, trumpet, trombone, viol, viola da gamba, harpsichord and spinet.

In this quote from the liner notes, the listener is reminded that "...as with the examples in the volumes, the songs and pieces on these CDs should not be considered as parts of a blueprint to be meticulously followed in every detail, but rather thought of as outline sketches that can be varied, modified, or extended as the situation demands. Those who compare the CDs and the volumes will indeed find that many of the pieces have been changed." Indeed! How wonderful to have these recordings - demonstrating through exquisite performances the spirit in which Orff and Keetman (and Margaret Murray!) created and composed - providing such beautiful examples of how the pieces can and should be changed.

In addition to an overview of the elemental style and goals of the Schulwerk, the liner notes also provide

succinct comments about each track, including volume and page numbers, composer/arranger, pedagogical emphases, and geographical sources. The carefully articulated British accents on some tracks might not be immediately accessible to many students in the United States, but the overall power and beauty of this new release make it one to be enjoyed and studied by all Orff Schulwerk teachers who want to increase their understanding of the Schulwerk and of the primary sources from which flowed the inspiration for decades of creativity.

- Rick Layton



"JABUTI THE TORTOISE, a Trickster Tale from the Amazon," written and illustrated by Gerald McDermott.

Harcourt, Inc., 2001.

Gerald McDermott has been very successful in adapting age-old myths for elementary children and bringing the tales to life with colorful, captivating illustrations. His latest, "Jabuti the Tortoise," will delight primary children,

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preschool through approximately age eight, with its simple language and brilliant art work. Young readers immediately focus upon bright animal characters in a colorful rain forest with a neon pink background. Word and color unite to tell this tale in a most appealing way.

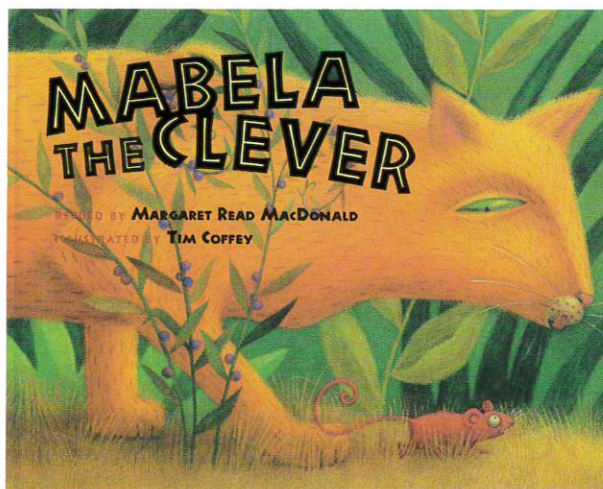
This wonderful tale comes from the oral traditions of Amazon tribes; some scholars think this story may have migrated from West Africa to Brazil. Jabuti (pronounced zha-boo-CHEE) is a tortoise with a multicolored shell who loves to play his flute in his rain forest home. He tricks the jaguar, lizard, and tapir into performing silly pranks. The birds of the air, however, love his flute music and sing whenever he plays.

Enter the big black Vulture with no singing voice at all. He is jealous of Jabuti and begins to plot ways to fool the turtle and then have him for dinner. When all the colorful birds are invited by the King of Heaven to sing to him, Jabuti accepts the Vulture's offer to give him a ride up to heaven so he can play his flute for the King. But, the Vulture turns upside down on purpose; Jabuti falls down hard and his shell breaks into many pieces.

The King of Heaven suspects foul play when the Vulture does not drop off the turtle. When asked, the Vulture does not tell the King of Heaven what happened. Instead, he hides his head under his wing. The King then sends many birds down to the rain forest to look for Jabuti. The Toucan, Macaw, and Hummingbird find Jabuti and repair his broken shell. For their efforts, each receives colorful accents on their bills and feathers which are seen even today. Vulture stays black and still can't sing. Jabuti, wide-eyed and perhaps a bit wiser, plays his sweet flute music again in his rain forest home.

If you are looking for an appealing tale for primary children that can evolve into a drama using elemental music and movement, then do consider "Jabuti the Tortoise." If a rain forest set can be created for this play, that is well and good; however, the strength of this tale lies in its animal characters and simple plot. Let Jabuti and his rain forest friends into your music room...they will sing, play, and move in an imaginative celebration of many tones and colors. And...the good guy wins after all!

-Veronika Schultz



"MABELA THE CLEVER"

Retold by Margaret Read McDonald.

**Albert Whitman and Company,
Morton Grove, Illinois, 2001.**

"Mabela the Clever" is an adaptation of a folktale of the Limba people in Sierra Leone, Africa, which first appeared in print in 1967 as "The Clever Cat." This new version contains a marching game that will appeal to preschool through first or second grade children.

The Limba people say, "Our heart's memory is our book." This cautionary tale comes from a long history of oral tradition used by the Limba to pass on tribal wisdom and morals to their children. Students will be engaged by the clever plan the cat used to try to outwit a group of mice.

Though the other mice were mostly foolish, Mabela was carefully taught by her father to "LISTEN, LOOK AROUND, and PAY ATTENTION to what you are saying." And, if she had to run - RUN FAST! These lessons proved invaluable when the yellow cat came to the mouse village.

The mice were elated when the Cat invited them to join the secret Cat Society, so it wasn't surprising that when Monday rolled around all the mice were present for the secret ceremony. After lining the mice up and assigning the smallest mouse, Mabela, to the front, the Cat taught them all a marching song:

"When we are marching,
We never look back!
The Cat is at the end,
Fo feng! Fo Feng!"

At the end of the long line
came...the cat!

Away they marched, deep into the forest. Each time the mice shouted "Fo feng," the cat grabbed a mouse by the tail and put it in a sack on his back. Remembering her father's advice, Mabela LISTENED and noticed that the singing grew more and more quiet. Then she turned to LOOK AROUND. When she PAID ATTENTION to the words of the song, she realized that no other mice had been watching the Cat - and that she was the last one!

Quickly, Mabela RAN FAST through the thick brush, with the cat following close behind. When the cat was trapped in a cluster of thorns, all the mice in the sack escaped. This is how Mabela lived to tell the story to her children and grandchildren.

In her introduction, Margaret McDonald, the author of this retelling, suggests a possible tune for the marching song. However, teachers are invited to invent their own version, as well. The story lends itself to gentle accompaniment on thumb piano or authentic Mbira, with possibilities for light percussion from drums and rattles. Because the tale is brief, it can easily be done in one class period and repeated as the children wish. For young children, the conflict between the cat and the mice is a winning combination!

- Veronika Schultz