

Reviewed by Janet Robbins

## Orff Schulwerk in Diverse Cultures: An Idea that Went Round the World

Edited by Barbara Haselbach and Carolee Stewart  
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**O** *Orff Schulwerk in Diverse Cultures: An Idea that Went Round the World* is the second volume in the series, *Texts on Theory and Practice of Orff-Schulwerk*. In the Introduction, editors Barbara Haselbach and Carolee Stewart stated the purpose: “To follow the traces of [Orff Schulwerk’s] dissemination and to document the various ways of adaption by representatives from the respective countries.” Their words reflect on the history and legacy of Orff Schulwerk (OS) as they consider the ideas, issues, and ways it has reverberated around the world. Organized in two parts, this volume includes a collection of selected essays and reports by member OS associations.

Part I, “Texts on Theory of Orff Schulwerk,” includes five essays by well-known OS pedagogues, each one rich with history and insight. Reprints of two articles, by Hermann Regner and Michael Kugler, provide a retrospective on the pioneering work that took place at the Güntherschule in the 1920s and 1930s and the important role the Orff Institute played as a center for training and education. Regner’s involvement during the early years at the Orff Institute and his oversight of two generations of translations of *Music for Children* support a fascinating look at phases of the spread of OS to other parts of the world. Kugler’s

research on the Güntherschule and the influences of Expressionism and Ethnomusicology on Orff’s aesthetic are reminders of the intercultural aspects and border-crossing concepts that provided inspiration from the very beginning. Both articles are historical gems worth reading again and again.

Articles by Mary Shamrock, Wolfgang Hartmann, and Doug Goodkin examine foundational principles of OS and serve as touchstones for issues of global dispersal and culturally specific applications of OS. Shamrock’s article is an update of her 1995 monograph, *Orff Schulwerk: Brief History, Description, and Issues of Global Dispersal*. Her research on cross-cultural adaptations calls for sensitivity to musical, social, cultural, and educational practices (particularly in Asia) and provides an important lens on varied challenges faced when adapting the Schulwerk in “foreign” soil.

Hartmann opens his essay by asking “So, what is ‘Orff Schulwerk,’ actually?” and reminds us that OS evades simple definition. Hartman’s essay is a thought-provoking discussion of eight characteristics that capture the essence of the teaching artistry and pedagogical spirit fundamental to OS. Goodkin’s essay, “Something Old, Something New: World Music in the Orff-Schulwerk,” explores five connecting points between OS and musical practices around the world. He includes wonderful examples to illustrate the parallels between non-western

sonorities and their cultural traditions and proposes many possibilities for exploring World Music in the OS classroom. It is no wonder that Orff's ideas have resonated with so many teachers in all corners of the world.

Part II, "Texts on Practices of Orff Schulwerk Around the World," features 24 reports that trace the worldwide dissemination of the Schulwerk and shed light on the conditions and timelines for its development in diverse cultures. Organized by geographic regions—Africa, North and South America, Asia, Europe, and Oceania—reports include perspectives on the histories and development of OS, inclusion of culturally specific sources, and integration of creative, experiential, and process-oriented learning uncommon in some educational systems.

Written by teams of authors representing member associations of the Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg, each report gives voice to the kind of unimaginable growth Orff spoke of in his interview with Regner. For Orff, the growth of

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the Schulwerk in many parts of the world was quite impossible to encompass; he recognized that many adaptations were very different from what he envisioned or planned. "If I plant a tree, I never know how big it will become ... it depends on the soil, on the amount of sun, and on other conditions."

It is interesting to consider the decision by Orff and Keetman "against a fixed system and in favor of openness of the inspiration for carefully trained educators in Schulwerk." Perhaps it is this openness that led to its appeal and adaptability in diverse cultures. An idea that seemed impossible to Orff may have survived and thrived around the world because of the possibilities for change. Global

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