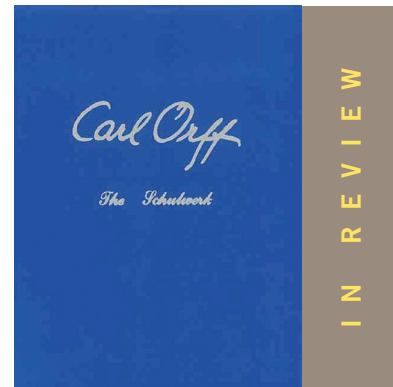


Reviewed by **Judy Bond**

The Schulwerk

Written by Carl Orff/Translated by Margaret Murray
New York, NY: Schott Music Corp.
English Edition, 1978

and collaboration. The contribution of each person comes alive through Orff's storytelling. He acknowledges those who provided support and inspiration during the 1920s, beginning with dancer Mary Wigman: "... her dancing was



elemental." Historian and scholar Curt Sachs is acknowledged for providing intellectual support, encouragement, and practical advice, as well as inspirational ideas. Orff describes Sachs as "helper, friend, and advisor." It was Sachs who stated, "In the beginning was the drum." Later, when Orff was searching for a suitable melody instrument for the instrumental ensemble he envisioned, he sought the advice of Sachs again. The advice: "You should use recorders ... the pipe to the drum, corresponding to historical development."

Collaboration with Dorothee Günther and the founding of the Güntherschule in 1924 offered Orff the opportunity to experiment with the same media we use today—singing, saying, dancing, playing. The young adult students were eager to explore the ideas and questions springing from Orff's imagination. Fascinating descriptions of the "experiments" in music making indicate an atmosphere of creativity and artistic freedom. The story of the Güntherschule is told in eight sections that describe students "singing, saying, dancing, playing" as they experienced the curriculum, starting with improvisation with movement, poetry, drums, tympani, and rattles, and moving through experiments with piano exercises, choir exercises and performances, conducting classes,

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"Dance stands nearest to the roots of all the arts."

An unattributed nod to dance introduces *The Schulwerk*, Volume 3 of Carl Orff's autobiography, which tells in his own words (translated) the story of how the *Schulwerk* was born, developed with young adults, re-developed for children, and ultimately became an internationally recognized music/movement pedagogy (roughly 1924-1975). It is an engaging story, told in a style that speaks directly to the reader. Even though I had used the book as a reference many times, I felt a sense of excitement as I read once again about Orff's search for the elemental; his exploration of rhythm, tone color, dance, improvisation; and the concept of a new starting point for teaching music: "artistic rather than purely educational." The story is conveyed through multimedia on the printed page: text (c. 80 pages), photos (c. 75 pages), and musical examples (c. 103 pages).

From the beginning, development of the *Schulwerk* concept involved communication

2002

Schott publishes *Play, Sing Dance: An Introduction to Orff Schulwerk* by Doug Goodkin.



percussion instruments, barred instruments, and recorders. The fortuitous arrival of two amazing new students, Maja Lex (1925) and Gunild Keetman (1926), provided expanded energy at the school, giving both “the dance and the music a new, unmistakable profile.” Keetman soon became a valued colleague, and Orff pays appropriate tribute to her work and artistry, stating that without Keetman, “*Schulwerk* could never have come into being.”

The unique variety of photographs, drawings, and documentation of musical events contributes significantly to the story. The extensive inclusion of musical examples reveals much about what later became content in the five volumes many Orff teachers know and love. It is clear the experiments in music making were creative steps along the pathway toward developing the philosophy of elemental music. Some of these experiments are described in detail—for example, an improvisation with the title “Fear” focuses on exploration of tone color. Following a description of the improvisation, Orff states, “We tried this many times, and it was always different ... the ability to make music in this way came from our previous experience with the rhythmic exercises.”

“1930. The time for experiments had come to a kind of conclusion. We had traversed our first field and a new one lay before us.” Stories of the first years at the Güntherschule are exhilarating, but the time for moving ahead came with Orff’s realization that “publication was inevitable and necessary if I wanted my work to be known to a wider public.” The *Schulwerk* story continues from this point, with publications and demonstrations resulting in worldwide growth and eventual adaption to different environments,

cultural norms, and expectations. The adaptation and growth continues today through the work of those who adopt Orff’s philosophy and who explore new ways to expand the vision of the *Schulwerk*.

“Out of movement, music. Out of music, movement.” —Dorothee Günther

For those who love Orff *Schulwerk*, this book is an absolute treasure! Orff begins the story with a vivid, personal description, stating that “it seemed to me as if a spring storm were sweeping through the city of Munich.” My own sense of anticipation grew as I read how imagination, exploration, experimentation, improvisation, and Orff’s search for the elemental came to fruition in the birth and evolution of the *Schulwerk*. An essential and fascinating aspect, also described in detail as part of the story, is the inclusion of people who seemed to emerge at the right time to provide what was needed to carry out Orff’s vision. This is a book that could sit on your library shelf as a reference manual, but the real joy is found in reading it as a story, told by Carl Orff, a master storyteller, musician, and visionary. ■

JUDY BOND, professor emerita at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, is a past president and honorary member of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association and a founding member and current co-chair of the Alliance for Active Music Making. She is an author of the K-8 series *Share the Music* and *Spotlight on Music*, published by Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, has been a frequent presenter at international, national, and state music education conferences, and an instructor for Orff *Schulwerk* Teacher Education courses.