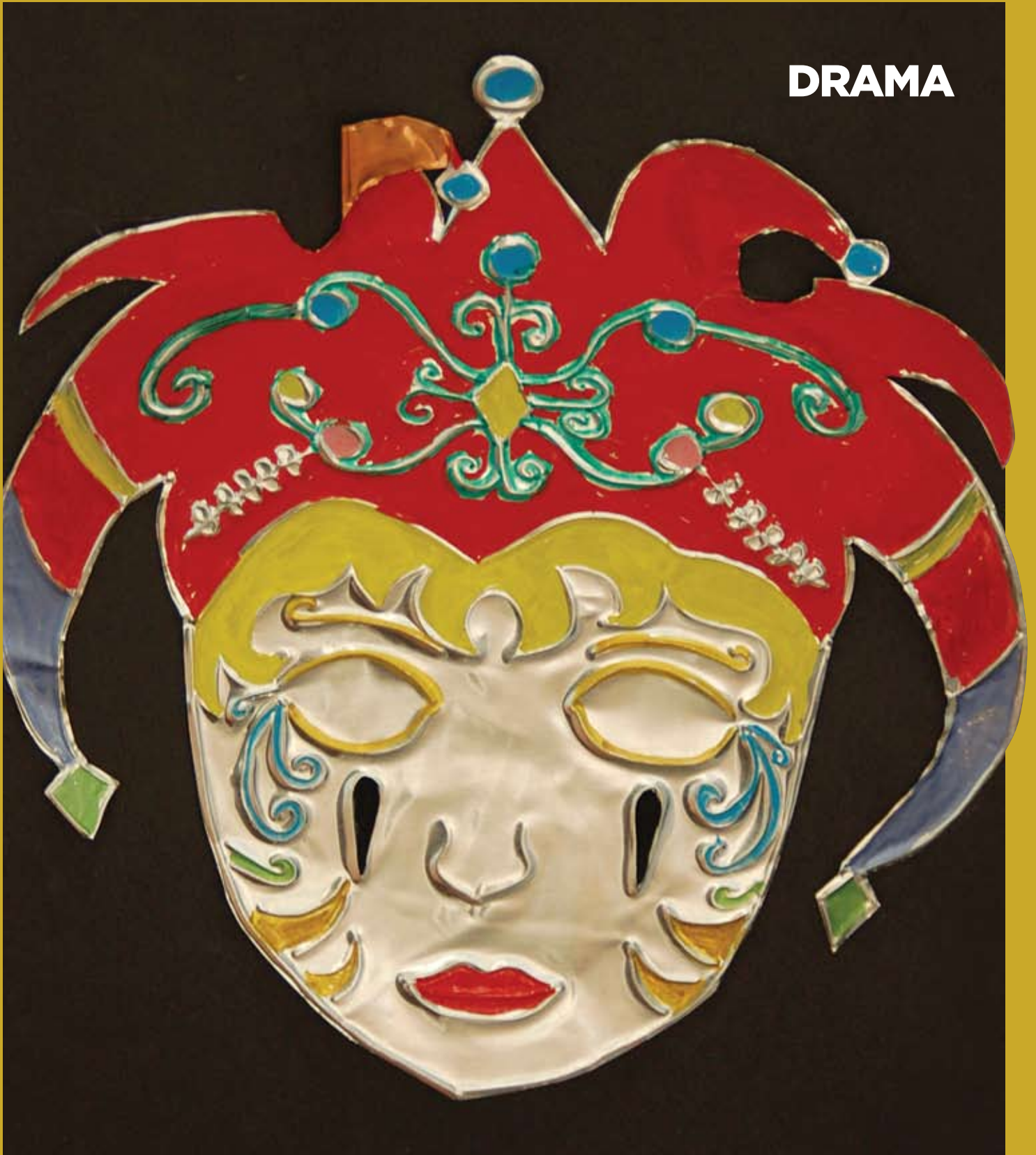


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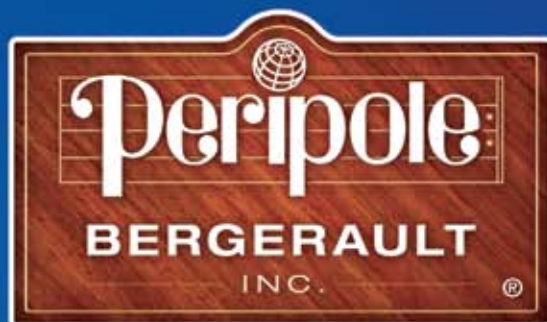
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# American Orff-Schulwerk Association

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The American Orff-Schulwerk Association is a professional organization dedicated to the creative teaching approach developed by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman. We are united by our belief that music and movement—to speak, sing and play; to listen and understand; to move and create—should be an active and joyful experience.

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- to demonstrate and promote the value of Orff Schulwerk;
- to support professional development opportunities; and
- to align applications of the Orff Schulwerk approach with the changing needs of American society.

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Issue	Topic	Coordinator(s)	Contributor's Deadline
Summer 2010	Open Submission	David Thaxton	Feb. 1, 2010
Fall 2010	Music We Bring into the Classroom: The Volumes	Judith Cole Carol McDowell	April 1, 2010
Winter 2011	Music We Bring into the Classroom: Folk Music	Martha O'Hehir Carlos Abril, Nick Wild	July 1, 2010

Writer's guidelines available through the Editorial Office

We seek articles on these topics as they relate to Orff Schulwerk or to broader areas of teaching and learning. Editing and production is in process for some articles one year ahead of the publication date. If one of these topics appeals to you, please contact the appropriate editorial coordinator soon. Also, articles on topics other than those listed above may be considered at any time. Before submitting manuscripts, please contact the editor for a copy of editorial guidelines. We cannot guarantee the publication of any submitted material. *The Orff Echo* makes every effort to trace ownership of copyrighted materials and to secure permission from copyright holders. If there is a question regarding ownership of any material, we will be pleased to make the necessary corrections in an upcoming issue.

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# The Importance of Drama in Orff Schulwerk



One more story about my mother, Martha Scott. (Well, I think this is the last one, but I won't make any promises.) It was Level II. Rick

Layton was our teacher, and near the end of the two weeks, we were ready to dramatize "The Man, His Daughter, and Their Donkey." We had learned the opening song and the travel music; we had heard the story and learned a speech piece with ostinati. It was time to assign roles.

"The man" was Bob Henry, one of two "token" men in the class.<sup>1</sup> "The daughter" was a young woman who accepted the role with glee. When Rick said, "And who wants to be 'the donkey?'" one hand went up—a little too quickly. It was my mother's. (Later, she would describe it as the role of a lifetime. I never let her forget it, and she didn't want to.)

Everyone took their places to begin the dramatization. Costumes were assembled from out of nowhere, and someone gave "the donkey" a tie, by which she could be led through the various scenes. I have a vivid memory of looking at her—slightly slumped, long face. She was in "relaxed donkey mode"—in no hurry to go anywhere with "the man" or "his daughter."

So, with songs, speech, and instrument pieces learned; opening song practiced; roles assigned; and scenes marked; it was time to create the closing dance. Rick called us all to a circle. Everyone went—except my mother.

Rick began the facilitation of the

dance: "Circle or lines?" "Partners or groups?" "Martha, come over here." I looked over just in time to see my mother, still in donkey stance, shake her head. "Martha?" Again, she shook her head, and in a soft voice said, "Come and get me." As we all fell apart with laughter, "the man" went to collect his stubborn "donkey."

I believe that dramatization of stories is one of the greatest strengths of Orff Schulwerk. It is the medium that draws all of the other media together. Through dramatization, we sing, perform rhythmic speech, move, and play instruments to tell the story. As they engage in creative play-acting, students also learn lessons about human nature.

Brigitte Warner wrote:

By recreating a story on their own, [the students] rise well above the superficial level of "acting out," since they must probe the story's meaning first and then identify with the specific problems it represents. In this manner they come to understand the fundamental concerns of mankind, which are always present in these folk stories.<sup>2</sup>

To "probe the story's meaning," students must be given opportunities to discuss, question, and explore the story. It follows then, that dramatization is one of many Orff activities that involve choice and thoughtful decision-making on the part of the students. Students enjoy having choices—having some control over what happens in the lesson.

Although we give students direction and suggestions when we are working on a dramatization, many of the decisions about the lines to speak, music to be performed, movement to incorpo-

rate, and staging are up to them. There is no script, no pre-composed music, no given stage directions. The ideas and interpretation are those of the students.

So, what is the role of the Orff Schulwerk teacher in the process of acting out a story? Warner wrote: "Play-acting differs from formal acting in that the actors are involved in creating the play."<sup>3</sup> In formal acting, the teacher is the director, but in play-acting, the teacher becomes the facilitator. This means that, just as in other facets of Orff Schulwerk, the teacher relinquishes a great deal of the decision-making to the children. The teacher's assumptions of how the story goes may have to be reconsidered. And more often than not, the interpretations of the students are far more interesting and fresh than the standard interpretations of the adults anyway.

Back to the stubborn "donkey," who got her way. You see, my mother, as the actress, knew how the story ended. The fate of the donkey, which had been revealed in Rick's telling of the story, was that she was to be sold at market. The "man" and his "daughter" were setting out on a journey to the village for just that purpose. The wise "donkey," played in the story by my mother, Martha Scott, understood their plan, and she was not going along willingly. The donkey's terms were, "Come and get me." Although they rolled their eyes, Rick, the facilitator and Bob, the "man" surrendered to her terms. As open-minded Orff Schulwerk teachers, they understood that student play-actors must be allowed their interpretations. ■

<sup>1</sup> Bob Henry later became president of the Texas Music Educators Association.

<sup>2</sup> Brigitte Warner, *Orff Schulwerk: Applications for the Classroom*. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1991), 257.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 258.

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# The Parallel Pedagogies of Creative Drama and Orff Schulwerk

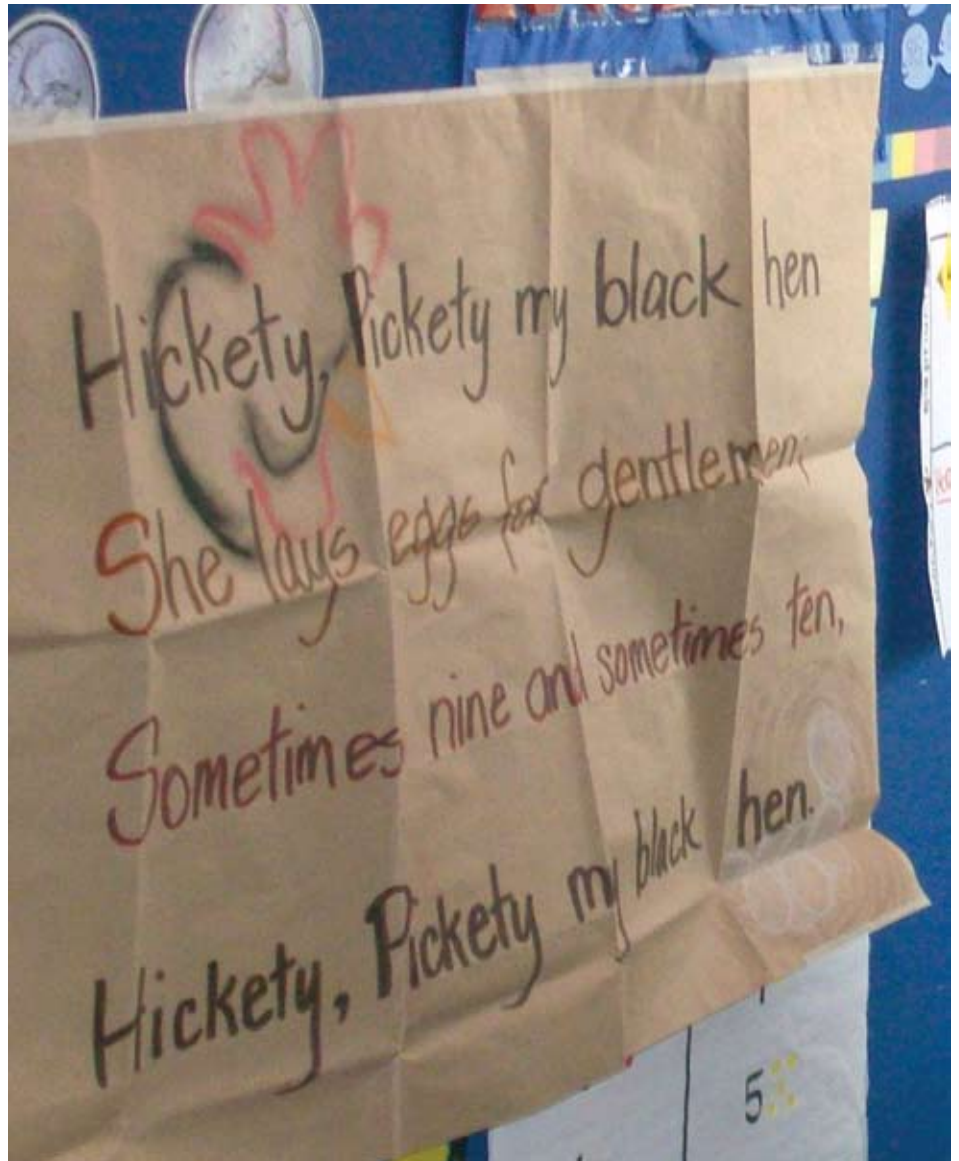
BY SUSANNE FINCH BURGESS

The improvisatory foundations of the Schulwerk are, for me, the most stimulating and challenging aspects of the pedagogy. To enter into the musical world of a second-grade class not really certain of the path your journey will take is an indescribable thrill! “Who would have thought to end the phrase that way? How could I have anticipated those musical decisions?” Through the exploration of musical improvisation, we guide students into the deepest aspects of learning, probing past the replication of known works into the creation of original ones. Creative drama is an approach to drama instruction that offers this same kind of engagement and makes a perfect pedagogical partnership in the Orff Schulwerk classroom.

Creative dramatics is a process by which imaginative and creative activities take place within a dramatic setting. The experiential process is the key; this is not a scripted endeavor. The Children’s Theatre Association of America has developed this definition that distinguishes creative drama from children’s theater: “Creative dramatics is an improvisational, non-exhibitional, process-oriented form of drama, where participants are guided by a leader to imagine, enact, and reflect upon human experiences, real or imagined.”<sup>1</sup>

Five key traits distinguish this approach from a more traditionally framed theatre experience: (a) the nurture of *imaginative response*; (b) the *collaborative ensemble creative process*; (c) the playful, *improvisational environment*; (d) the *child-centered focus* of the work; and (e) the *role of the leader*. Each of these characteristics has a parallel in the Schulwerk.

Students participating in a creative drama connect their imaginative thinking to the dramatic action of the



**Poetry serves as a rich dramatic and musical resource in both Orff Schulwerk and creative drama.**

moment. They employ the body, voice, and imagination to communicate the characters and events of a story. Carl Orff employed the vast timbres of the symphony orchestra to draw his audience into the drama of his work. In the Schulwerk classroom, we employ speech, body percussion, and movement in the same way when we invite

students to explore a poem or ballad as the entry point for improvisation. This is the perfect place to expand and develop students’ drama skills as a parallel exploration of their musical encounters.

This approach to drama education prompts students to respond to their peers as they engage in ensemble

improvisation. The play-filled environment in a creative drama lesson provides an interactive opportunity for collaborative problem solving and divergent thinking. Each participant is a vital contributor to the whole. Individuality is celebrated in the context of ensemble. Providing an environment that is safe for exploration and trial and error is essential to growing a culture that is competent to create together. It takes time to grow away from the *Saturday Night Live* skit mentality into an authentic drama environment. The leadership here begins in a somewhat structured way, gradually giving way to student ownership. A “plan-play-evaluate-refine” model emerges as students are guided to reflect on their work. A parallel to the Schulwerk can be made in the rehearsal process. As students share improvisations with their peers, discussion prompts aesthetic decision-making by the entire class. We are then engaging in the same kind of ensemble improvisation. Students are becoming their own collaborators.

The play-filled environment of a creative drama lesson can appear somewhat random and even haphazard to the casual observer. Creative drama explores the tremendous potential of play in a structured format that draws on the existing experience base of the children. Play is a familiar environment to students of the Schulwerk. The balance of structure and exploration is carefully administered in a well-designed lesson. The playful exploration so critical to the Schulwerk is likewise a fundamental aspect of creative drama and requires the same depth of understanding and pedagogical training of its leaders.

Creative drama is a child-centered approach, in that the focus of activity comes from the participants themselves rather than from a predetermined script. The children embody the characters, create the dialogue, and invent the staging for their dramatizations. It is a “whole-child” approach in its integration of cognitive, affective, social, and psychomotor endeavors. This focus on the participants (and away from the leader) places the responsibility of the drama on them, which they

Theatre is undoubtedly achievable with a few—a very small minority; but drama, like the rest of education, is concerned with the majority and there is not a child born anywhere in the world, in any physical or intellectual circumstances or conditions, who cannot do drama.



are readily able to accept and anxious to implement.

Skilled and perceptive leadership is critical to the successful implementation of creative drama. The creative drama literature uses the term “leader” in place of “teacher” to help us remember that “directing the play” is out of place in this environment. Leaders must develop an understanding of the maturational, developmental, and experiential changes that the students in their charge are constantly undergoing. The theories of Piaget provide us with much important information about how children learn and how they think. However, in pursuit of training artistic expression, it is not enough to understand their cognitive processes; we have to infiltrate their affective thinking. Psychologist Howard Gardner says of Piaget, “We learn much from his writing about children’s

conceptions of water, but little about their fear of floods, their love of splashing, or their desire to be minnows, mermaids, or mariners.”<sup>22</sup> It is this kind of questioning that comes from a skilled leader of creative drama or Orff Schulwerk. The ability to lead without directing, suggest without demanding, and facilitate without preconception is an impressive résumé for any teacher of creative pursuits.

Creative drama employs elements such as movement, sensory awareness, characterization, story-drama, and dialogue, which are pursued through imaginative and experimental processes. Participants are guided through many activities, allowing them to build a repertoire of experiences from which to create. These elements are integrated to create the dramatic action, or to “dramatize” stories, events, or characters.

The term movement evokes a wide variety of images. It is fundamental to the experiences of children. In this context, it represents the broadest sense of dance and the most general concept of pantomime. It is a way to communicate with the whole body. The students are first provided opportunities to explore their own bodies in movement and to become more familiar with this method of communication. Through varied exercises and activities, the participants continually explore movement as a means of storytelling in much the same way as the Schulwerk explores music through movement.

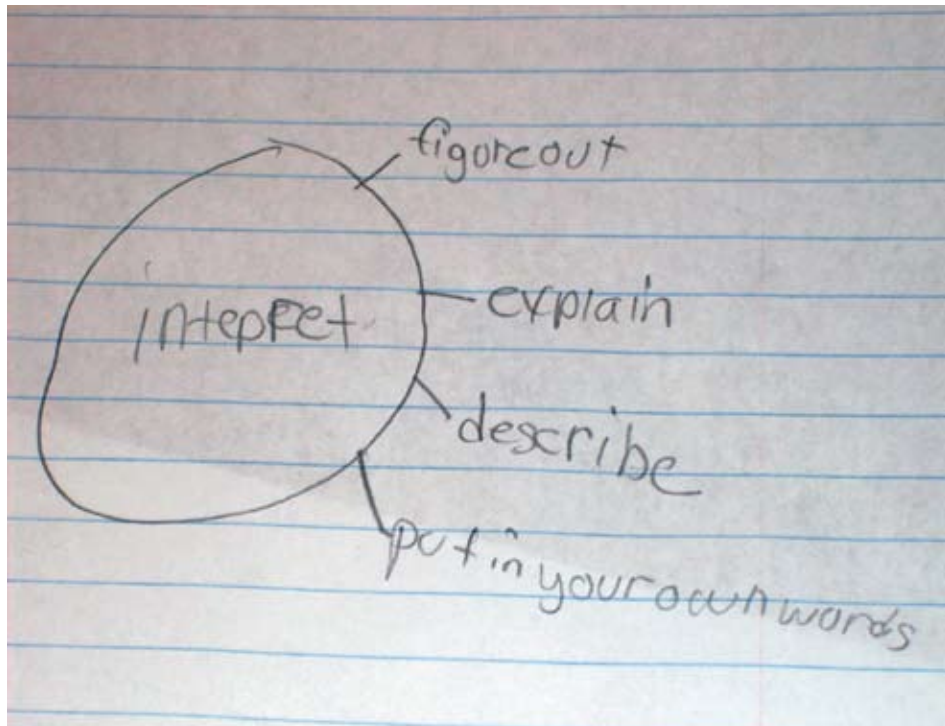
Sensory awareness, in this context, is an exploration of the senses for the purpose of communicating them within a dramatic situation. It is through our senses that we assimilate and later process information, and it is the expression of this assimilation that becomes the action within the drama. The exploration and heightening of sensory awareness helps to develop the communication skills utilized in dramatic presentation.

Characterization is the enactment of “who” (or what) a character is in a story. The pursuit of characterization is an exploration of the physical, emotional, and social attributes associated

with any character. Characters can come in a wide variety of persona: people, animals, inanimate objects, elements of the earth, and so on. We can impose human characteristics on any of these, or interpret human characteristics in a variety of ways. In creative drama, characterization is explored from within each participant and individually interpreted. This intimate relationship with a fictional character gives students the opportunity to discover and confront many personal human attributes.

Story-drama is the enactment of the plot. It involves the sequencing of events, and contains the standard elements of drama: characterization; situation (existing circumstances); conflict (the problem); action (what happens); resolution (how the characters solve the problem); and dialogue (what the characters say to one another). In creative drama, participants are guided to develop each of these elements within the story, and to express them in a variety of ways.

It is important to note that in creative drama, the development of dialogue follows as a result of the implementation of all its other elements. The participants are encouraged to work through activities without words initially to encourage other means of expression, communication, and understanding. By the time participants employ words, they have a good idea of how the action looks, feels, and relates to others. The dialogue then becomes a truly meaningful communicative avenue and not simply words memorized from a script, which is often the case in



**Older students brainstorm using a concept web to explore character development as an important element of story-drama.**

the preparation of performance-oriented theatre works. This compares to the sound-to-symbol approach we take in the Schulwerk pedagogy. Students are guided to experience music through many avenues: speech, movement, listening, singing, and instrument playing, before they are expected to decode or encode its notation. Often, a dramatization that emerges through creative drama needs no script because the children have invented the dialogue. In performance, nobody “forgets their lines” because they did not memorize someone else’s words.

The most striking parallel components of these teaching strategies are

Skilled and perceptive leadership is critical to the successful implementation of creative drama.



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their flexible and adaptable formats and the unique qualities required of skilled leadership. Their successful implementation requires attentive, intuitive, involved leadership supported by a disciplined physical and psychological environment conducive to artistic expression.

The Schulwerk employs a careful, sequential process in teaching music, as does the pedagogy of creative drama. In each of these approaches, teachers are challenged to examine the needs of their own students as they prepare appropriate activities, apart from any generalizations made to satisfy curricular goals. These child-centered considerations place the needs of the students above the requirements of the curriculum through discovery-based models designed to encounter the needs of the whole child. This aesthetic nurturing is critical to both approaches. The teacher's role as evaluator and facilitator is constantly being challenged when the curricular focus shifts from product to process. While the long-

The participatory environments and importance of the ensemble experience are two additional similarities between Orff Schulwerk and creative drama.



range goals within each method may be specific, the approach and direction can be—and must be—flexible. It's the path you take on the journey that is most important—not your arrival at the destination.

The participatory environments and importance of the ensemble experience

are two additional similarities between Orff Schulwerk and creative drama. A fundamental understanding of arts education is evidenced in the play-like environments professed in these methods. In both cases, the intention is to provide an artistic experience appropriate to all children—not just the talented few—in an open and flexible atmosphere. Pedagogue Brian Way captures the essence of creative drama when he says, "Theatre is undoubtedly achievable with a few—a very small minority; but drama, like the rest of education, is concerned with the majority and there is not a child born anywhere in the world, in any physical or intellectual circumstances or conditions, who cannot do drama."<sup>3</sup>

The multimodal experiences provided for students of the Schulwerk and creative drama require their total involvement on almost every level. They are thrust into the roles of analyst, performer, critic, composer, playwright, and audience member regularly through an ongoing balance of process and performance activities. These ensemble experiences, important to both pedagogies, provide quality social interaction and encourage the effective as well as cognitive growth of the students on a continual basis.

Just as students of the Schulwerk are challenged to create and improvise at developmentally appropriate levels, students participating in creative drama are most successful when guided in a sequential, developmentally appropriate manner. The process is clearly applicable within the Orff Schulwerk classroom, and offers students an instructionally based framework through which to explore drama. When purposefully and sequentially explored, drama becomes a viable tool through which students are able to create performance-worthy dramatizations. Program preparation becomes an instructionally relevant opportunity rather than a showy distraction.

I urge you to consider embedding creative drama into your current instructional practice. As you think about the musical activities that will challenge your students next, consider how they might be enriched or supported

## WRITE FOR THE ORFF ECHO

*The Orff Echo* currently seeks submissions for the following issues:

Summer 2010 **Open Submission**

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**RESOURCES IN  
CREATIVE DRAMA**

- McCaslin, Nellie. *Creative Drama in the Classroom and Beyond*. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers, 1996.
- Salisbury, Barbara. *Theatre Arts in the Elementary Classroom*. New Orleans, LA: Anchorage Press, Inc., 1986.
- Siks, Geraldine Brain. *Creative Dramatics: An Art for Children*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1958.
- Wagner, Betty Jane. *Dorothy Heathcote: Drama as a Learning Medium*. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1976.
- Ward, Winifred. *Stories to Dramatize*. New Orleans, LA: Anchorage Press, Inc., 1986.
- Way, Brian. *Development through Drama*. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1973.

through creative drama. When you next consider plans for a performance and you're tempted to buy a script written for children, think about the rich learning opportunities embedded in a creative drama lesson that can render a wonderful performance created by children. ■



*Susanne Finch Burgess is an Orff Schulwerk practitioner and teacher-trainer. She has a BA in music education from California State University-Fullerton and a MM from the University of Memphis and has presented workshops for AOSA, MENC, and ECMMA. She can be reached at susanne-burgess@utc.edu.*

<sup>1</sup> Helene Rosenberg, *Creative Drama and Imagination* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1987), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Brian Way, *Development through Drama* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1973), 3.

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# Using Drama in Professional Development

BY LEE D. HARRIS

In a very real sense, teaching is a performing art. You must believe that you are offering something of value in order to stand before students and guide their understanding of language, mathematics, music, or any other discipline. That value resides not only in the content, but also in the process of presenting content for effective learning. Good teaching is no accident. Despite all of the research behind instruction and how to improve it, there is an art to teaching because it is a human endeavor. Teachers tend not to think of themselves as performers, but they are. It can be fun to watch a dynamic teacher work with a group of students.

When I served as director of the Southeast Institute for Education in Music at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, we conducted summer professional development workshops for music educators as well as teachers of other subjects. At that time, school districts were sending teams of teachers and administrators to learn how to fully integrate art, music, and theater into the core curriculum. It was apparent that many teachers were intimidated at the Music Institute because they felt less competent in music than they did in art or theater. Part of this could be the visibility aspect of those art forms. Teachers make bulletin boards, visuals, and design their classroom environments. While this does not prepare one for a Guggenheim exhibition, it does involve artistic decisions. Theater is a matter of telling a story and resembles life even when the characters and situations are imaginary or fantastic. Teachers deal with stories in literature and thus, feel they have some indirect experience with drama. Music resembles nothing, though it can imitate beauty, feeling, characters,



**Music teachers collaborating in a summer institute.**

We discovered that using drama as a teaching tool for presenting information was much more interesting than a lecture.



and situations for the listener. It also calls for specific performance skills that, though not shared by all, are recognized as necessary for performing a song. Veteran teachers can still recall being told in kindergarten that they did not sing well. This became for them a prophetic label, the scarlet “A” for a musical that they must hide from the

world. It makes the task of convincing these teachers to include music in their classrooms, even something as simple as singing a song or listening to music, a really “tough sell.” We had to find solutions to move past such barriers.

We discovered that using drama as a teaching tool for presenting information was much more interesting than a lecture. When learning about the music of ancient Greece, why not have philosophers Plato and Aristotle, along with Athena, goddess of wisdom (complete with rhinestone shades), debate the merits of music as a school subject? Our participants enjoyed seeing this sketch by our presenters, and when they opened their mouths to laugh, we gave them something to chew on. In our study of *The Magic Flute*, we assigned small groups of teachers to create and perform one-act operas based on specific guidelines:

Write your own opera. Choose a familiar tall tale, myth, legend, or fairytale and compose music to

# The Importance of Having a Will

dramatize it, along with dialogue, action, props, and anything else that will enhance the success of the performance.<sup>1</sup>

This task took the focus off of musical competence and placed it on the story. It abated performance anxiety for many teachers because they could choose their own team role, whether singing, playing instruments, dancing, or even becoming scenery (e.g., a tree). This was important because by asking them to incorporate music into the classroom, we did not invite negative experiences into the Institute. We also found that teachers could learn from one another when they worked cooperatively. The music teachers had expertise in musical performance and compositional ideas that the group could feature in their short opera, but non-music teachers sometimes had musical or dramatic abilities that were also valuable to the effort.

Teachers well-versed in Orff Schulwerk know that drama is a fundamental aspect of the history and philosophy of the approach because it was a primary focus of Carl Orff's creative output. What is contemporary practice in this regard? How many Orff workshops and courses focus on helping music teachers use drama as a teaching tool?

I have participated in some workshops and conference sessions in which we dramatized a folk tale or story through movement, acting, singing, playing, (with props, etc.), and thoroughly enjoyed those experiences. More common is the workshop that focuses on curriculum, teaching strategies, and other necessary aspects of life in the general music classroom.

Music educators are not usually professionals in the theater art form, but we should all develop basic skills to use theater in our music classrooms. In

A Will is a legal document that allows you to decide how to distribute your assets. With a Will, you are able to provide for your loved ones, clearly express your wishes, and minimize the emotional turmoil of your family trying to determine what your wishes would have been. Without a Will, state laws dictate the distribution of your estate; without a will, there is no deference to your wishes or the needs of your heirs.

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Music educators are not usually professionals in the theater art form, but we should all develop basic skills to use theater in our music classrooms.



in this respect, we are akin to the fifth-grade teacher who could make use of music in her classroom if she only had some help in doing so. In some cases, the classroom teachers are amateur musicians and able to draw upon that experience in their implementation. By the same token, many Orff teachers have theatrical experience and expertise that make them more inclined to use drama in their classrooms. There is much more we can learn from real experts and this calls for workshops presented by theater teachers.

A major objection to incorporating drama in the music classroom is no doubt the time involved because teachers are governed by the schedule and the clock. We need to know how to do things efficiently to maximize the benefits of drama activity. Essential questions would include: (a) What are the basic elements of drama? (b) How can we guide students in dramatizing a fable? (c) What are some useful and versatile props? and (d) How do we organize small groups of students as they develop and rehearse their own dramatic work? A theater expert could help teachers address these issues in a workshop centered on using drama in music education.



**Drama allows teachers to tap into their “inner actor.”**



**Learning should always be this much fun!**

Professional development is about constant improvement and is as much a part of lifelong learning as anything else. The truth of the matter is that teachers are all strong in some areas and more deficient in others. We have opportunities to help one another grow to be music educators who bring excitement into our classrooms by opening our students to their own creative possibilities. This should always be the goal of professional development, and drama can be a useful means of achieving it. ■



*Lee Harris is professor and chair of the Department of Music at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. He holds degrees from Harding University, the University of Memphis, and the University of North Texas and is certified in the Orff Schulwerk and Kodaly approaches to music education. He formerly served as the music institute director at the Southeast Center for Education in the Arts and currently directs the Kodaly Institute at UTC, which he established in 2000.*

<sup>1</sup> The Southeast Center for Education in the Arts, “Mozart: *The Magic Flute* (Die Zauberflöte),” (The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, 1999), 30.



**Artwork for scenery created by the set design team.**

## From Page to Stage

BY KATIE-BETH TOUPS TRAXLER

*“Elementary music is never music alone but forms a unity with movement, dance, and speech. It is music that one makes oneself, in which one takes part not as a listener but as a participant.”* –Carl Orff

Carl Orff’s vision inspired music teachers to expose children to the organic bonds among elemental music, movement, speech, and play through creative exploration. With so many quality resources readily available to us, teachers are discovering new ways to engage students every day. I find the greatest challenge remaining is in selecting the appropriate material that will speak to each unique group of students. I teach pre-K through fifth grade music in the Bronx, New York.

Our students are Hispanic, Latino, and African American and are of low-socio-economic status. Determined to help my students make meaningful connections between the Orff Schulwerk process and their lives, I called on the rich musical theater culture of New York City to guide the creative processes in our music classroom.

### WHY THE DRAMA?

Many music teachers are required by their administration to put on annual student performances. Depending on your style of teaching, performances could be a chorus concert, a recorder and percussion ensemble, a musical, or even a folk dance extravaganza. We often shy away from the larger stage

productions due to the difficulties presented by time and budget constraints, the lack of parent and classroom teacher involvement, and the amount of instructional time that teaching scripts, songs, and staging requires of our already too short music classes. Some music teachers even feel they may lack the theater and dance expertise needed to pull off such a production. Perhaps a good motivator would be to picture a small stage where students are hiding anxiously behind a curtain, smiling from ear to ear, and giggling nervously as they prepare to perform their very own creation.

As adults, we tend to forget the magical power that make-believe can have on a child. We forget how the

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power of a simple costume and painted set allows a child to escape his or her world and be a hero—even if only for a while. We forget that when the house lights go off, everyone becomes equal—size, money, and ethnicity don't matter backstage. We overlook the confidence and self-worth fostered by the responsibilities of being part of such a large production. For the children in my school, that power is something they rarely experience in their lives. They don't get to pretend, play dress-up, and be a kid. They seem to skip that phase and retreat into survival mode from the moment they reach the doors of the kindergarten classroom. I wanted to give my students the opportunity to *play*—to release the imagination and creativity that they fought to restrain. Students can transcend social and academic barriers; it happens when they have the opportunity to create a performance they'll never forget.

### CHOOSING A MEANINGFUL THEME

I see most of my students for forty-five minutes a week. Because of testing, in-school professional development, and field trips, this usually only ends up being three out of every four weeks each month. Because almost all of the rehearsals and stage work happens during music class, we started preparing for the show several months in advance. Although there are many shows available for purchase, most of my students take a much deeper interest in pieces they create themselves. They become highly motivated and willingly address their strengths and weaknesses. As Arvida Steen has noted, "When students are involved in the processes of creation, they will want to acquire the tools needed to make them, ultimately, musically independent."<sup>2</sup> What more could we want for our students?

I selected a topic, "Native American Ways of Life," from their state social studies curriculum. I was careful to select a topic that could be approached from many angles—through literature, music, dance, art, and theater. I was also careful to choose a topic that would be accessible to our students (library books, textbooks). By selecting a

theme from their curriculum, students built strong connections between their lessons and life.

### DEVELOPING THE SCRIPT

The folktale *Legend of the Bluebonnets* was our basic storyline. We read and discussed the story, symbolism, characteristics of Native American life, etc. during music class. I typed up a very primitive version of the story in the form of a script that we then acted out in class. This allowed me to address some of the basic theater standards essential to any performance. (Like most elementary schools, we don't have a theater teacher to cover these basic fundamentals.) We looked at the difference between the narrative folktale and the newly formatted script. We experimented with emotions, body language, volume, and inflection. Students memorized parts and auditioned for roles.

After parts were assigned by a student poll (an opportunity to analyze speaking and acting fundamentals), the students helped complete the script, offering ideas about character development, how to phrase things and what emotions to use, and deciding what should be said by a narrator or by the characters. We even wrote an additional dream scene to build on one particularly interesting part of the story that the students responded deeply to. Our librarian then read a second version of the book to the classes, after which they compared the two storybook versions and the script in a Venn diagram.

### DON'T FORGET THE CONTENT

One of my greatest concerns with producing a show was maintaining the musical integrity of our classes. I did not want to perform a show just to say we did. The children deserved to experience the connections between the actual performance and the skills and concepts taught in class. Through a wide variety of Native American music and very careful planning, the students explored musical phrasing through movement, musical form, instrumental arranging, alto and soprano recorder technique, a Native American stick passing game (steady beat), and characteristics of Native American



**Costume designer painting Native American dresses.**

music. By choosing a theme that was rich in music and dance history, I was able to provide my students with many satisfying creative musical experiences. We also watched a DVD of an American Indian powwow so they could really understand the dance forms and spiritual side of the music.

All of these concepts are part of the fifth-grade New York City Blueprint for the Arts: Music Standards. Every lesson was carefully planned so that no time was wasted, and so that fundamental musical objectives were always being addressed. Finding appropriate musical selections for this project took a considerable amount of time and effort on my part outside of the classroom; however, I like to look at that as my own professional development time. I bought several Native American Indian songbooks, CDs, and a DVD. I spent many hours researching American Indian culture, music, instruments, and dancing so that I could guide the children in their musical explorations.

### ASSESSMENT

Over several months, the students choreographed stick dances, drum circle

dances, and arranged Orff ostinati for several of the tunes we studied. I encouraged them to try several different arrangements and use a variety of timbres and movements. They decided which tunes were appropriate for different scenes in the play and discussed their choices during small-group reflection time. Every student learned each dance and instrument part, regardless of his or her role in the final production. The students worked together as a creative community to design their final performance. Everyone's ideas were welcomed. I was easily able to assess their knowledge of the musical concepts I was teaching by watching them work together to play, sing, and dance. I observed their technique, their accuracy in movement and singing, and their level of participation during this project.

### PLAYING TO THEIR STRENGTHS

While some of my students beg to be in the spotlight from day one, many of my students do not feel comfortable getting up in front of even small groups. So, in the final month of preparation, the students who were

not in the cast were given the opportunity to sign up for one of four jobs: orchestra, stage crew, set design, or costume design. Orchestra included playing instruments for all songs, dances, interludes, and sound effects. Stage crew worked the lights, curtains, props, and they were in charge of programs and seating during the performances. Set design and costume design students looked at historical books from the library to help them design authentic Indian patterns and symbols. Set designers painted teepees, mountains, dream catchers, and totem poles. Costume design painted t-shirts and feather headdresses and made Indian bead jewelry. One student also designed the cover art for the program and fliers. Every student was able to make a valuable contribution to the final performance according to his or her talent. Because each student was allowed to choose his or her assignment, every student was proud of his or her role.

### SHOWTIME!

In the week leading up to the performance, the fifth-grade teachers allowed me to pull groups of students out of class during my free time for dress rehearsals and to finish the costumes and props that we were unable to finish in class. This of course happened during my lunches and prep times, but the time spent was beyond worthwhile. When crunch-time came, several teachers provided assistance. Our visual art teacher helped the children with the designing and painting and put all of the finishing touches on the set. Our librarian spent hours helping to make props and running lines, reader's theater style, during library class with the cast. Our technology teacher worked the sound system during the final week. After all was said and done, the fifth grade put on two beautiful performances for the school's parents and students. Of course we had our

Despite of our lack of funding for specific programs, the students experienced basic dance and theater techniques. Students developed a deep appreciation for another culture.



flops—mics not working, props getting lost, and cast members absent on the performance day—but the show went on! These kids were beaming from ear to ear. For most of my students, they will not get another opportunity to be a part of something so extravagant, so magical—and *something they created!*

### BENEFITS GALORE

It is very easy to get bogged down with all the extra work that goes into putting on a performance of this magnitude and overlook the numerous benefits. By using well-developed themes from curriculum, students were able to experience tangible connections between the classroom and life.

Despite our lack of funding for specific programs, the students experienced basic dance and theater techniques. Students developed a deep appreciation for another culture. They learned that every person is important and that any success of the production relied on the entire grade's ability to work cooperatively. They developed a greater sense of satisfaction and self-worth because they knew they were appreciated for their specific skills. They

worked hard to accomplish small tasks, and because they got to share it with an audience, their success became an even more public event. For some, this positive recognition was deeply needed. Some of my students did not have much success in the academic setting, and this positive creative experience rewarded them with the self-confidence they sought. They were motivated to start fresh in the academic classroom.

Although all of these benefits have lasting effects, I think the most important benefit was their personal growth and development of peer relationships. Over the course of the five months of the project, I saw dramatic changes in some of the relationships among students. Cast members would help one another run their lines, making constructive criticism in such mature ways. Dancers would help teach one another parts they had missed when absent. Stage crew would cover for one another when they missed a cue, instead of offering an insult or a harsh word. These students became something more through this project. They learned to trust and to accept—not only themselves, but also others.

It was best said by Carl Orff himself: "Just as humus in nature makes growth possible, so elementary music gives to the child the powers that cannot otherwise come to fruition ... Everything that a child of this age experiences, everything in him that has been awakened and nurtured is a determining factor for the whole of his life."<sup>3</sup> ■



### Katie-Beth Toups

*Traxler holds a master's degree in music from Louisiana State University. She received her Level I and II Orff education at Belmont*

*University. She has taught band and general music in Louisiana and currently teaches music at The Crescent School in the Bronx, New York.*

1 Carl Orff, "Orff-Schulwerk; Past and Future," Orff Institute, Salzburg, 25 Oct.1963, reprinted in *Orff Re-Echoes: Selections from the Orff Echo and the Supplements*, ed. Isabel McNeill Carley, trans. Margaret Murray (American Orff-Schulwerk Association, 1977), 6.

2 Arvida Steen, *Exploring Orff; A Teacher's Guide* (New York: Schott Music Corporation, 1992) 6–7.

3 Carl Orff, "Orff-Schulwerk; Past and Future," Orff Institute, Salzburg, 25 Oct.1963, reprinted in *Orff Re-Echoes: Selections from the Orff Echo and the Supplements*, ed. Isabel McNeill Carley, trans. Margaret Murray (American Orff-Schulwerk Association, 1977), 9.

# Integrating the Arts into the Elementary Classroom Curriculum

BY ANN PORTER GIFFORD

**M**y husband and I received a large federally funded grant from 1995–2000 for the purpose of integrating the arts into the elementary-classroom curriculum. To earn this grant, we had to do extensive research to demonstrate the value of arts integration. With all the facts and figures in place, the next major task was to present both a graduate and undergraduate curriculum that would motivate all classroom teachers to utilize these techniques. With the assistance of four university fine arts professors, we designed a course syllabus covering all the fine arts (music, drama, movement, visual arts) that was successfully ushered through the necessary channels in order to become a new, required, three-credit hour undergraduate class for elementary-education majors. This shared course, including all four disciplines, was a new concept, but once we presented the idea, the professors were excited about the possibilities it offered. The course was designed around common elements (line, rhythm, color, form, and texture) and was taught by all four professors representing their different art areas. The first week of classes combined all one hundred students with the four professors, observing how these common elements related to each discipline. One hundred students were then divided evenly into four sections (music, drama, movement, visual art) with each professor teaching his or her area of art expertise. The students were exposed to an in-depth knowledge of these basic elements in each art specialty. The professors met weekly to coordinate their lessons and share thoughts and feelings about their successes and failures.

Students rotated through each of the four arts areas approximately every

This class has evolved over the past ten years, and professors have retired, but the concept of the value of arts integration into the elementary classroom has remained the same.



three and a half weeks, or seven class periods. The final assignment for these sophomore elementary-education students was to write and teach an integrated lesson plan that involved any two of the arts areas with a “core” subject. This integrated lesson was then taught in the elementary classroom where they were assigned for their field experience that semester. The four university professors divided the number of students between them and observed these students teach their integrated lessons. During the final week of class, all of the university students again came together to observe the integration activities led by the four professors.

This class has evolved over the past ten years, and professors have retired, but the concept of the value of arts integration into the elementary classroom has remained the same. The class was originally designed to meet the university’s need to ensure that our students were successful on

the PRAXIS exam, of which fourteen percent of the questions dealt with the arts. More importantly, the need for future elementary-education majors to know, understand, and enjoy the arts and share that joy with their future elementary students was the driving force for the course and still remains its top priority.

## “ARE WE REALLY LEARNING? THIS IS SO MUCH FUN!”

The graduate classes were designed for weekends. Can you imagine attending a graduate class for thirteen hours on a weekend (five hours on Friday and eight hours on Saturday) after you have just taught your heart out all week? The pressure was on to design classes that would be intellectually challenging, emotionally rewarding, and physically stimulating. The only logical solution: integrate the arts. This is exactly what we did for a fun-packed weekend of learning, laughter, and friendship. By the end of each Friday evening, the graduate students (formerly exhausted classroom teachers) were rejuvenated, laughing, and had bonded into a high-energy, motivated, “hungry for more” group of students. Comments were: “It can’t be over! Have we really been here for five hours? Sure doesn’t seem that long!” “Wow, I can’t wait to get home and tell my husband about this—I thought it would be long and boring but the time has just flown!” The ratings at the end of each graduate class were off the charts. We couldn’t have asked for more success—integrating the arts is powerful!

How did we do it? Experts from various disciplines were guest speakers who knew that their presentations had to be interactive, memorable, and practical for the classroom teacher as



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well as research-based, so that administrators would accept the ideas.

During the first class session of the weekend, we invited a local expert in music, an Orff teacher, to conduct the first classroom demonstration. She had several obscure nursery rhymes printed on oversized charts. She divided the class of thirty adult students into three groups of ten. She asked each group to develop a voice and use that voice to read their assigned lines of the nursery rhymes. Each stanza was marked on the chart with different colored magic markers. Each group read their lines in their selected voice, as most shy, intimidated performers would. She immediately praised them for using their “inside voices.” She asked the group to read the entire nursery rhyme with the “animal voice” selected by the first group, but this time use their “playground voices.” This was repeated using each group’s selected “animal voice,” which they had successfully modeled for us utilizing a different volume or pitch. She coached us with her hand gestures, showing us how to develop phrasings. When all of the groups finished this activity, we discovered how involved each person had been and how very enjoyable and how fun this experience was for everyone. By doing this as a group, no one felt that their weaknesses were exposed and everyone felt good about their contribution to the group. They discovered we had repeated these unknown nursery rhymes so many times and in such a variety of ways that they had memorized them without even trying. She demonstrated how effective this can be for young emerging readers to boost their confidence in reading and helping them develop fluency.

This activity was followed by the distribution of some of David Harrison’s books: *The Animals’ Song*, *When Cows Come Home*, *Somebody Catch My Homework*, *The Mouse Was Out at Recess*, and *The Alligator in the Closet*. Each group selected one of Harrison’s books to develop a choral reading experience that they could teach the class. After they accomplished the basic choral reading, they added musical instruments and movement to their

performance. They had an opportunity to use barred instruments (which had been purchased with the grant money), classroom percussion instruments, and home-made instruments, such as drums made from gallon pickle buckets and shakers made from photo film canisters filled with different amounts of rice, beans, and lentils. The author, David Harrison, played jazz trombone and composed his poetry with a musical rhythm. Some groups decided to keep the rhythms basically simple, but other groups became more courageous and developed a jazz beat to their recitation.

Their favorite book to use was Harrison's "The Animals' Song," which reads:

There was a girl  
With a silver flute,  
Toot toot  
Tootity toot,  
Who puckered her lips  
And blew her flute,  
Tootity tootity toot.  
She met a boy  
With a rumity drum,  
Rum tum  
Rumity tum,  
Who joined the girl  
And played his drum  
Rumity tumity tum.

Harrison continues to add animals with the appropriate onomatopoeia sounds and ends his book with:

They danced and sang,  
Tootity toot,  
Rumity tum,  
Hootity hoot  
Yippity yap,  
Moodily moo,  
Neighdity neigh,  
Doodily do  
Snortity snort,  
Tweetity tweet,  
Hissity hiss,  
Bleatity bleat  
Quackity quack,  
Cooity coo,  
Squeakity squeak  
The whole day through.  
They sang and danced  
And skipped along

With a flute and a drum  
And the Animals' song.

Another poem that became very popular with the class was:

My Book  
"From Somebody Catch  
My Homework"

I did it!  
I did it!  
Come and look  
At what I've done!  
I read a book!

When someone wrote it  
Long ago  
For me to read,  
How did he know  
That this was the book  
I'd take from the shelf  
And lie on the floor  
And read by myself?

I really read it!  
Just like that!  
Word by word,  
From first to last!

I'm sleeping with  
This book in bed,  
This first FIRST book  
I've ever read!

The above examples are only a small portion of the semester-long class, but hopefully it provides a glimpse into the nature and intent of how we integrated music and movement into the graduate classes. Undoubtedly, the class was exhausted after Friday evening, but after participating in the musical activities, drama, and creativity, they felt rejuvenated and refreshed. Many students stayed after class to try different ideas or share something they discovered. We met once a month four times during the semester; one of the major assignments was to take any fifteen of the different ideas demonstrated during the weekend back to the classroom and adapt the ideas to use with their own students. The graduate students (classroom teachers) found that trying these ideas with their own classroom students was one of the most meaningful learning experiences of the entire semester. At the beginning of each weekend class, I would ask each student to share one success story of how they had adapted these music and movement ideas to suit their classroom. Because I had already graded these assignments, I judiciously selected one idea from each student that represented each academic area and grade area, thus allowing for the class to see the various adaptations made for content and grade levels from kindergarten through high school. The



graduate students eagerly anticipated this sharing of success stories and surprising outcomes. I considered dropping the sharing time because I was afraid that students would think I was wasting their time by not introducing new concepts. Instead, they requested its return and commented about how valuable it was. On Saturday morning, it was the first item on the agenda. Students who had not taught a particular idea as one of their fifteen lessons the past month asked if they could try it the following month with their students. Of course, the answer was “yes.” By observing the teaching success of their colleagues, these teachers wished to offer that same opportunity of success to their own students. What higher praise could one have for integrating the arts in the curriculum than firsthand success stories from fellow classroom teachers? Success was and continues to be the best motivator! The addition of music and movement into the regular classroom was a rewarding and fulfilling experience our students—hopefully, the

## RESOURCES

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same will hold true for future elementary classrooms. ■



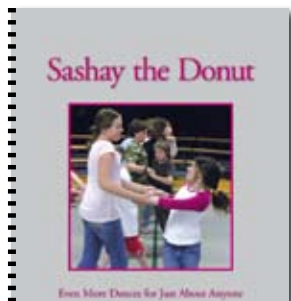
*Ann Porter Gifford is a professor of education at Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. She has spoken on integrating the arts into the curriculum at national and*

*international conferences in Hawaii, Costa Rica, Barbados, Bermuda, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Ukraine, and Hungary. She can be reached at [apgifford@semo.edu](mailto:apgifford@semo.edu).*

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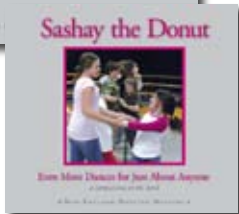
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# Using American Folk-Heritage Folktales in Drama

BY ARNOLD BURKART

*Editor's Note: In the earliest days of AOSA, Arnold Burkart, the first president of AOSA, published a pamphlet with information for teachers new to Orff Schulwerk. Back then, everyone was new to Orff Schulwerk. His "talking points" for creating a musico-drama from a folktale are sketched out in his book, The Orff Schulwerk Handbook, which is a republished collection of highlights from the old pamphlets. Perhaps these early guidelines will inspire story development for teachers early in their careers today.*

**A**long with such things as riddles, rhymes, weather sayings, auguries, myths and legends, folktales belong to the vast realm of verbal folklore in any culture. These are stories handed down orally, which were told primarily to entertain. They are refreshingly naïve, abounding in humor, sincere, and concerned with the fundamentals of living.

Folklorists have classified these tales into many categories and sub-groups according to type. One such large type-categorization is (a) jokes and anecdotes; (b) tall tales; (c) fairy tales; (d) tales of the supernatural; and (e) legends. (A tale with supernatural elements is used in this article.)

## USE IN ORFF SCHULWERK

Outstanding traditional stories have been bequeathed to the children of today. Their charm remains, and it would be a shame not to use them. The excitement of the imagination is so very often involved in these stories that they are especially useful in any program fostering creative endeavor such as Orff Schulwerk. A folktale can be the core around which an entire musico-drama can be developed. A suggested procedure follows:

**1. What kind?** First, find a short folktale highly spiced with the elements of drama, action, suspense, and humor. Don't use a story you don't like! It's difficult to interest students in something in which you are disinterested yourself! Keep in mind the following characteristics of good folktales for children: (a) action filled without extraneous narrative; (b) language of common oral speech; and (c) events so clearly depicted that a child could see them.

**2. Know the story!** As a teacher, know the tale well; know the entire chronological sequence of events.

**3. Tell it.** Tell the tale in your own words—simply, interestingly, and naturally, like folk-tellers do. The following is an example of re-telling of a folktale from Maryland, found as item no. 2695 in *Folklore from Maryland* (collected by Whitney and Bullock, Vol. XVII of the *Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society*, 1925).

## THE SINGING GEESE

One day a man went out hunting to shoot something to eat for dinner. As we was walking, he heard a sound in the air. He looked up and saw a big flock of geese, and they were singing like this:

'La-lee-lu, come quilla, come quilla, bung bung bung, quilla bung.'

The hunter grabbed his gun and shot one of the geese. As the goose was falling to the ground, a strange thing happened: it sang:

'La-lee-lu, come quilla, come quilla, bung bung bung, quilla bung.'

He took the goose home and told his wife to cook it for dinner, but as she plucked the feathers off, each one

she plucked flew out the window. She put the goose in the oven, but all the time it was cooking, she could barely hear some muffled singing in the oven:

'La-lee-lu, come quilla, come quilla, bung bung bung, quilla bung.'

When the goose was cooked, she set it on the table, but when her husband went to pick up his knife and fork to carve it, it sang again:

'La-lee-lu, come quilla, come quilla, bung bung bung, quilla bung.'

He was just about to stick a fork into the goose when he heard a tremendous noise, and a whole flock of geese flew through the window singing

'La-lee-lu, come quilla, come quilla, bung bung bung, quilla bung.'

And each goose that flew in stuck a feather in the goose on the table. Then they picked it up off the dish and they flew out the window singing:

'La-lee-lu, come quilla, come quilla, bung bung bung, quilla bung.'

● **Tell it again.** On another day, perhaps with some help from the class, tell it again—even add some non-plot elaborations like the clothes the characters may have worn and how they may have been feeling. Now, both the teacher and the students should know the story well.

● **Motivation.** Using whatever motivational strategies and tactics the teacher is competent with, prepare the "climate" for developing a cooperative dramatic setting of the tale. This is probably not a problem if the class has participated in this kind of activity before. If not, a good strategy would be to be the first to do some miming exercises, using characters and events in the story.

## The Singing Geese—Folk Cantana Work Sheet Possibilities

Possible Sequence of Dramatic Events	Singing	Speech	Movement	Body Percussion	Non-Melodic Instruments	Melodic Instruments
Man goes out hunting		Chanting introduction		Rhythmic stamping with chant		Recorder on walking theme
Sees flock of geese—singing	La-lee-lu in ensemble		Dance of the geese			Instrumental accompaniment to dance and song
Shot one goose—sang as it fell	Solo La-lee-lu in ensemble		Sad solo dance, crumpling on the floor		Claves and tympani for effects	
Took it home for wife to cook		Chanting narrative		Selective rhythmic stamping and clapping		Recorder on walking theme
Wife plucked—feathers flew out the window	Feather-plucking song					Ascending glissandi on Orff instruments
Put goose in stove - it still sang	Solo La-lee-lu in Phrygian					Phrygian drone fifth
Put goose on table for husband—it still sang	Muffled solo continues					Add Phrygian ostinati—become louder
Husband about to carve goose—flock of geese fly into room		Chant pp to ff		Help build dynamics	Drums build to climax	Gradually add more instruments
Geese stick feathers in and carry roast goose away	Solo and ensemble	Shouts	Victory dance	Assist in climactic ending	Accompany dance	Accompany dance

(Show how a man goes out hunting with a shotgun. Show a reaction of surprise when the geese fly in the window, etc.)

- **Sequence of scenes.** Together, build a chronological sequence of small “scenes” that make up the entire tale. Ask what happens first, where the action is, and who is involved. In the same way, decide what part of the action occurs next, and so on. (See the chart for a possible sequence.)
- **Characters.** What characters are necessary to the whole play (main characters and subsidiary characters)?
- **Settings.** Explore creative portrayal of sets, including use of students. (How can you build an oven, using only students? How can you portray a forest?) Try for minimal use of actual props to necessitate development of more creative mime and portrayal.
- **Try a “Greek” Chorus for some narrative portions**—great device for developing and using chants and songs.
- **Add Orff Schulwerk-type activities.** Explore places in the drama that lend themselves to use of not only chants and songs, but also dance, individual, and ensemble speech, rhythmic body percussion, playing of non-melodic and melodic instruments.
- **Instruments.** Use instruments for introductions, interludes, and codas for accompaniment of songs and chants, for accompaniment of dances, and for background interpretive enrichment of the dramatic episodes.
- **Unifying thread.** Give attention to developing an integrated non-musico drama, one which hangs together. To accomplish this, look at the possibility of recurring themes, recurring activities, relationships of form, relationships of rhythm, and tonality.
- **Chart.** The chart is included as a helpful device for teachers as they develop such a musico-drama from a folktale. It not only keeps track of various scenes, but it also acts as a reminder to bring in activities char-

acteristic of Schulwerk to make this a truly Orff-style musico-drama.

### SOME OTHER USEFUL TRADITIONAL TALES

Here are some other folktales that might be considered to adapt into a musico-drama: The Old Woman and her Pig (interesting accumulative effects); Henny-Penny (great fun with name manipulation—recurring “sky is falling” idea); Three Little Pigs (theme and variations); The Three

Bears (again, repetition); Jack and the Beanstalk (a wonder tale); Three Billy Goats’ Gruff; and many of Aesop’s fables. ■



*Arnold Burkart is one of the founding members of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association. This article is an excerpt from his book, the Orff Schulwerk Handbook, and is reprinted with permission.*

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## Music Advocacy as a Semantic Challenge

Some general educators think “cultural arts” teachers are so “special” that in many schools, these teachers (e.g., art, music, physical education, and media teachers) have become marginalized members of the faculty. What is the basis for this opinion? We use a specialized vocabulary, we are able to “perform publicly,” and our curriculums demand special skills beyond the ordinary demands of common life. Because we are not a tested subject, our colleagues may believe that we are not accountable to meet standards. Some may perceive music, physical education, and art classes as “enriched recess” that provides busy teachers planning time much like day camps provide child care for busy parents.

In response, we may try to prove the importance of music to brain growth or creativity. We may demonstrate how music can be utilized to teach other content like math facts or algorithms, reading skills or rules, or history dates and states. We might cite research that indicates a strong correlation between the arts and improved behavior and well-being. Yet, we may be disappointed by this approach if it creates a servant role for us and for music. If we are not careful, we can actually cause music to lose its place and integrity as a core subject in the program of studies. We can inadvertently nurture the gap between ourselves and our colleagues and administrators.

One way to overcome this breach is to find bridges of understanding and a common vocabulary about our practice that our colleagues can grasp easily; they may then appreciate what we do and what children gain from music itself and from good instruction in music class. In this way, we advocate for music by the simple spin of semantics. Our colleagues have no reason to study

our specialized terminology; clearly it is incumbent upon us to make the connections for them.

While taking a required reading course, I realized that many music teachers already use excellent learning strategies to teach music and that these strategies have *names* in the world of reading instruction. We employ these important strategies to *teach music*. I was required to write about my understanding of the reading strategies and how I used them in my classroom. In each case, I tried to do three things:

- Listen to understand the reading strategy and learned its name and technique
- Define it in the language of the reading instructor.
- Demonstrate the strategy as I use it with the intention to teach music.

Again and again, the instructor’s comments on my papers betrayed her surprise that such depth and breadth of (reading) technique was happening in the music room. I maintain that I never stopped teaching music and took up teaching reading, though coincidentally, I may have been teaching reading better than some do. Her gift to me was to help me learn a common language of the shared names of great teaching strategies, and when I use this common language to communicate with other teachers, they understand and find it easier to value what I do with and for children. It was a semantic challenge and now is a daily opportunity for music advocacy. Music teachers who speak the lingo are seen as part of the family, the team, the tribe, the professional learning community. What follows is a reflection of music practice with a reading comprehension lens. You’ll recognize many common music teaching strategies. I invite the reader to mine the paragraphs for the italicized

vocabulary that could be employed as a bridge, especially to reading teachers, and to consider how to advocate for music through meeting the semantic challenge of translation into a common language.

### READING STRATEGIES: USING LISTENING ACTIVITIES TO PRACTICE COMPLEX SKILLS

Teachers can “provide occasions for students to pre-practice drawing conclusions and inferences during listening comprehension exercises ... Teachers should write or locate short passages, read these to the students, then ask them to draw an inference or a conclusion.”<sup>21</sup> For this strategy to work, the text must contain both explicit and implicit information. In this case, the music teacher has found a short passage (song) that has value for the music class and for reading comprehension: an educational double-header because it advances skill sets for both subject areas.

### Retelling and Sequencing

The first graders listened to the new singing game song. It rhymes, and the easy, four phrase structure is a logically sequenced plot. Musically, the rhythmic structure is simple, the phrases are clear, and it includes new combinations of quarter and eighth notes to identify and practice. But the children are struggling to sing it, because, in spite of the simplicity of this children’s song, there is a major disconnect with comprehension. It is largely unvoiced, but the children’s faces belie the problem as they struggle to retell (sing) the story (song):

Lucy Locket lost her pocket. Kitty Fisher found it.

Not a penny was there in it, only ribbon round it.

### Drawing Conclusions (Inferences) from the Story Map

First, I predisposed the students to learn the song by listening for the answers to several *literal questions* as I modeled the song. I asked them to listen for the names of the *characters* as I sing (Lucy Locket and Kitty Fisher). I asked them to listen for who lost what (Lucy lost her pocket). I asked them to listen for who found it (Kitty Fisher). I sang it again and they listened for a *description* of the pocket (no penny, only ribbon 'round it). The story map is the setting, time, place, characters, problem, plot, and resolution.

### Echo Singing and Discovering Text Features

I held up one, two, three, or four fingers in the air as each of four phrases was sung, and they echo sang (*repeating with inflection*) each one. We listened and identified the number and pattern of syllables in the similar and different phrases (ABAB). Now, they had heard

it four times and echoed it twice, by phrases and by double phrases. This is normally enough to teach any such song. Why were they still struggling?

### Semantic Non-Sense: Inferences that Make No Sense with Prior Knowledge

The song makes no sense. The children were questioning. How could Lucy possibly lose her pocket? Did her pants fall down? Is Lucy outdoors in her underwear? (tee-hee-hee) What exactly did Kitty Fisher find? Just a pocket? Did someone cut out the pocket and keep the skirt or shorts? Is it short for pocketbook, since there was a penny in it? Why would anyone put a ribbon around a pocket? Or even around a pocket book? It is very hard to retell (or sing) a story, even after answering literal questions, if the text doesn't hang together logically. The inferences, though logical, make no sense with the *prior experience* of the children.

### Using Objects to Revise Schemata

Lots of lesser and higher-order questions can be raised to try and answer their questions, and various digressions are possible. In the end, one strategy is to bring in the object in question: a colonial pocket. I enjoy demonstrating how the pocket is a separate piece of clothing, how it is worn, why it came to be, how the ribbon goes through the loop, how it fits under the slit in the outer skirt which is also tied at the waist, how one's hand can slip through the slit of the skirt into the slit of the pocket, how the pocket is reusable, and how easily the ribbon could come undone while at play, falling bit by bit under the skirt and short gown until, alas, it lies undetected in the grass way behind Lucy as she skips down the path of her life. Handling objects increases comprehension by expanding experience and by making sense. Making an emotional connection, enjoying humor, and solving a riddle all contribute to understanding and to retention, which forms the foundation for higher-order questioning.

### Drawing Inferences

Even after seeing the pocket, the text provides more opportunities for inference. It can be interpreted in different ways. Some divergent possibilities arise. Aah, was there ever a penny in it? Did Kitty Fisher find it with, or without, a penny? Did Kitty take a penny out of it? How did Kitty return it? What did Lucy do? The class can analyze what information we know because it is *in the text*, what information we infer because *it is implied*, and how far can we go with the inference, before we are writing our own *fiction*.

### Extensions

History lessons can ensue, which would build on *prior knowledge*. (How much was a penny worth in those days? Why did children play singing games instead of watching TV?) Students could write a story together *predicting* what happened next. Musically, students will write the rhythms in notation, determining the meter, filling in bar lines, and maybe rewriting

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the lyrics to tell the story of two boys. They will create instrumental accompaniments, learning harmony and the power of expressive articulation and dynamics. The students will definitely play the actual singing game, a chase game, again and again, always perfect for an indoor recess day. In reading and in music, this repetition leads to *fluency*. Sometimes children diverge to *character studies* on honesty, discussing what to do if you find something that belongs to someone else. We can create *set texts* (groups of primary sources to be studied together for a greater gain in comprehension of each) by juxtaposing “Finders keepers, Losers weepers” and “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” We can begin a word study: what is the difference between a lyric and a poem? What is a proverb? An augur? We can even ask the children for other visual and aural ways to create the musical *form* ABAB

and to compare it to the pre-algebraic patterns ABAB they studied in math class with colored plastic cubes, beads, and chains.

Consider the possibilities for demarginalizing the music teacher, the music room, and the subject of music through using common vocabulary about our teaching and learning strategies. Meeting this minor semantic challenge may lead to a major new perspective: instead of viewing music and the arts as outside the core curriculum or as servant to other “core” subjects, we will celebrate great learning strategies as servants of good instruction in all subjects, including music and the arts. ■

*Martha O’Hehir teaches elementary music for Anne Arundel County Public Schools in Maryland and is a member of The Orff Echo Editorial Board. She can be reached at mawfra@aol.com.*

## Ethics Statement

The American Orff-Schulwerk Association strongly encourages members to be positive and discreet when discussing our organization, specific courses and/or teachers, and the Orff movement. The very nature of the Orff Schulwerk philosophy embodies a broad spectrum of expressions, exploring different paths to arrive at artistic and educational goals. Members are encouraged to recognize and remain open to varied approaches and to celebrate both our differences and our similarities.

<sup>1</sup> Sandra McCormick, *Instructing Students Who Have Literacy Problems*, 5th ed. (Pearson Education Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2007).

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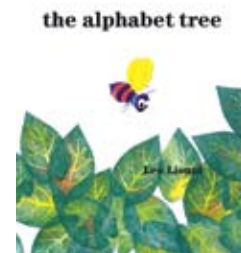
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## The Alphabet Tree

By Leo Lionni

Knopf Books for Young Readers, June 2004



This charming parable by the late author and illustrator Leo Lionni is the tale of letters living in a special tree who learn to stand up to the wind by joining together to form words and sentences. Guided by a wise word-bug and strange caterpillar, they discover they are stronger collectively than individually and that they have something important to say that can make a difference. The story will delight children with its simplicity, humor and clever word play while engaging adults with the theme of the power of words and cooperation in a democratic society.

Told from the perspective of a tiny black ant to his friend, the story unfolds not so long ago when the letters lived happily in this very tree. But one day a strong wind comes and, though the letters try with all their might to hold on, many are blown away and others are terrified. After the storm passes, they huddle together frightened until the word-bug arrives to teach them how to gather in groups of “threes and fours and even more” to make words so they will be stronger when the wind blows again. The word-bug patiently works with the letters while they create short words like *dog* and *cat* and more difficult ones like *earth*. Climbing back into the leaves of the tree, they are able to hold on without fear against the wind when it returns.

One day a strange caterpillar happens upon the letters in the tree, remarking upon the confusion he observes, with random words scattered about the leaves. He suggests they cooperate to make sentences. Intrigued by this idea, the letters practice writing different kinds of sentences. The caterpillar approves but says it is not good enough, surprising the letters. “You must say something *important*,”

Lionni, called “the master of the simple fable,” honors the child’s ability to grasp complex ideas. Although it was written more than forty years ago, *The Alphabet Tree* has a contemporary message.



remarks the caterpillar. After much thought, the letters come up with the most meaningful sentence they can think of and the caterpillar helps them to carry their message beyond their own tree.

Much of the story is told in Lionni’s beautiful watercolor stamps and colored pencil illustrations. Young children will be drawn to the bright-colored, often humorous artwork which fills and overlaps the pages of the book, making the text somewhat of a footnote. The bold, black typeset for the letters against the lush greens of the leaves creates quite a cozy effect.

Lionni, called “the master of the simple fable,” honors the child’s ability to grasp complex ideas. Although it was written more than forty years ago, *The Alphabet Tree* has a contemporary message. It is a metaphor for celebrating individuality within the community. The step-by-step progression of the plot keeps the interest of the reader

until the end.

Every summer, I look for a story to use for a creative musical drama camp with about thirty kids. My toddler found this story for me in a collection called Frederick’s Fables. Here are some of the ideas we explored based on *The Alphabet Tree*:

**The Word:** Adapt the story into a longer stage play. Begin by brainstorming all of the characters of the story: vowels, consonants, wind, ants, word-bug, caterpillar. What is each character’s personality and what kinds of things would they say? What consonants would be friends and hang out together? Practice spelling words and creating sentences using your bodies. Show verbs through movement. What important sentences could we write?

**Creative Drama:** Block, dramatize and dance the story using student ideas. How can we dance the wind-storm? Make sure everyone has an important part. Show three movement words that start with your letter. Now show three emotion words.

**Play:** Choose simple melodies, canons and instrumentals from *The Volumes* (Murray edition) to create songs and dances for the story. Create spoken chants, rhymes or letter games with body percussion or instrumental accompaniment.

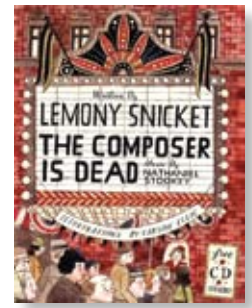
**Visual Art:** Build an Alphabet Tree using recycled materials: brown paper bags, old boxes, cardboard, etc. Inspired by the artwork in the book, paint large leaves and connect these to the Alphabet Tree with clothespins. Allow the students to design their own sets and costumes. Keep it simple! ■

*Kerri Lynn Nichols, a children’s composer, author, and recording artist, has taught Orff Schulwerk for more than twenty years.*

## The Composer Is Dead

By Lemony Snicket, Music by Nathaniel Stookey,  
Illustrations by Carson Ellis

Harper Collins, 2009



A terrible crime has been committed against classical music. The composer is dead and is slumped over his desk decomposing: “The Composer’s death was very suspicious, and so the Inspector was called in to find the murderer... Like all people in his line of work, this Composer had many enemies lurking in the orchestra.” The inspector is determined to find the guilty party.

This whodunit is a clever introduction to the instruments of the orchestra. The inspector questions the string, woodwind, brass, and percussion sections. During his interrogations, he discovers the inner workings of the orchestra and gets to know the personalities of each instrument. He meets the egotistical concertmaster, the wimpy flutes, and the often forgotten violas. The inspector learns that every instrument has an alibi and wonders which one butchered the composer.

Daniel Handler, writing under the pseudonym Lemony Snicket, has filled *The Composer is Dead* with suspense and humor by using rich alliteration and clever plays on words. His prose keeps children engaged and adults chuckling. When the inspector asks the percussion section for an alibi, the percussionists

respond, “We conquered the concert, battered the band, agitated the audience, rattled the roof... By then we were beat-too exhausted to commit murder.”

Carson Ellis illustrates the book. The musical suspects are depicted in silhouette, while their alibis come to life in watercolors. Lines of musical notation are threaded throughout the images of waltzing couples, parading patriots, and swinging sailors.

The book’s unique feature is the companion CD. *The Composer is Dead* dramatically comes to life with the scintillating performance by the San Francisco Symphony that accompanies the text. Composed by Nathaniel Stookey, the melodramatic score sets the scene. The foreboding opening chords are repeated every time the narrator speaks the word, “dead.” When the inspector vows to find the enemies of the composer, the trumpets proclaim him the hero. Stookey introduces each character/instrument with a leitmotif. As the plot unfolds, one can recognize the violins by their graceful waltz, the violas by their lamenting counter melody, while a steady one-two-three accompaniment announces the celli and basses. Perhaps the most endearing theme is that of the tuba and the harp. The unlikely two

are introduced as a pair, the confirmed bachelor and his landlady, in a delightful duet. Despite its low range, the tuba melody soars above the delicate arpeggios of the harp.

The true genius of Stookey’s piece is apparent in the finale. While the narrator is listing famous dead composers, Stookey is quoting their works. These excerpts are layered and interwoven in a way that creates a captivating composition. The funeral bells and *Dies Irae* of Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* lead the piece to a thundering climax.

Students in the Orff classroom will be enthralled with the book and CD. During the sections of instrumental music, students will be eager to improvise movement. They can waltz with the strings, create a parade with the trumpets, and swing with the low brass and percussion.

Along with Britten’s *Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra* and Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf*, *The Composer is Dead* is sure to become a classic in the young listener’s repertoire. ■

*Linda O’Donnell teaches elementary general music at the South School in Andover, Massachusetts, where she also conducts the South Side Singers.*

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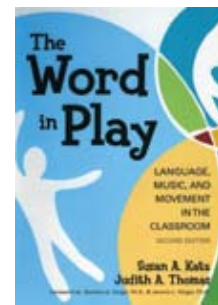
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## The Word in Play

By Susan A. Katz and Judith Thomas

Brookes Publishing, 2003



Perhaps one of the most profound strengths of the Schulwerk is that it draws from so many diverse elements to awaken the forces of creativity. Yet, while domains such as movement, dance, language, and art clearly shape the Orff process, the process can also exert a reciprocal influence. Such interplay can readily be seen in the realm of language. The power of the word invites connections and collaborations that stretch beyond the walls of the music room, classroom, and school. Just such a collaborative effort can be seen in *The Word in Play*, written by poet and language arts specialist Susan Katz and Judith Thomas, an Orff Schulwerk teacher who has long been a cornerstone of the AOSA community.

The opening chapters begin with a process for drawing out creative and imagistic writing. If one considers a parallel to elemental music in language, it would most likely be poetry. Appropriately, Susan Katz approaches the teaching of poetry as an Orff Schulwerk teacher teaches music—by drawing from elements of the child’s nature to create elemental language. By using color, the senses, emotions, fantasies, and dreams, she shows how the child’s imagination can be gently stirred to produce vivid images and ideas. These are further connected with elements of alliteration, onomatopoeia, personification, adjective, metaphor, and simile and distilled into poetry.

It is at this point that the student-created works are ripe for musical expansion and exploration. As the poetry is largely non-metered, non-rhyming free verse, the music and movement that springs from it is,

likewise, naturally free. Judith Thomas provides marvelous examples of how to facilitate this exploration. By starting first with creative movement, and moving to body percussion, she establishes a foundation of creation that lies within the body, while also taking special note to create an accepting environment that is safe for creative risk-taking. As she moves into the realm of rhythm and melody, Thomas uses well-crafted layered ostinati to punctuate the poetry, and provide a contrast for emerging melodies. The process for developing melody relies on letting lines arise from a recitative treatment, thereby maintaining the rhythm and inflection of the original words and phrases. The techniques for orchestrating and developing form further give structure and balance to the free poetic seed.

This book is about interdisciplinary arts education in which language, music, and movement are combined in ways that not only meet goals within each area, but also move beyond them as well.<sup>1</sup> The second section reaches beyond the traditional boundaries of music and poetry to draw inspiration, structure, and understanding from art, science, nature, and current events. The example in the final chapter of the section outlines a school-wide project in which not only musical and linguistic processes are layered together, but aspects from across the entire curriculum as well. By cross-pollinating subjects, the entire school environment is energized and enriched; students and teachers are free to find the ways in which the word moves them individually and collectively.

Finally, the closing section outlines something that anyone who has been

to an Orff-based class, workshop, or training will be well familiar with: “Teachers As Participants,” or as the authors call it, “TAPS.” While many in the world of the Schulwerk are accustomed to the idea of learning a concept or process by participating in the same way students would, it is a relatively radical idea in the world at large. In their outlines of several workshops and classes for adults they have presented, the authors show that having teachers participate in the process of creating their own poetry, music, and movement not only familiarizes them with the teaching processes, but also inspires and energizes them to make the processes their own.

Each author speaks masterfully to colleagues in their own subjects of language arts and music, yet the lesson design is clear and solid enough to invite teachers to step out of their respective domains and reach across the curriculum. While *The Word in Play* contains many sample lessons and scripted lessons, it is far from being a “cookbook.” The examples of classroom conversation combined with the running annotations of the thought processes behind them give marvelous starting points and guiding structure for the unfolding of playful student creations. For both classroom and music teachers, *The Word in Play* is a stirring invitation to connect with the imaginative realm of children as they explore the language, music, movement, and world around them. ■

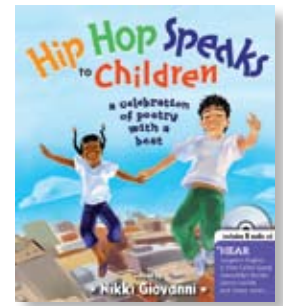
*David Thaxton* is music teacher at Donner Springs Elementary School in Reno, Nevada, and a member of The Orff Echo Editorial Board.

<sup>1</sup> Roxanne Dixon. “Orff Schulwerk as Interdisciplinary Education: A Goldilocks Approach,” *The Orff Echo* 40.2 (2008), 15.

# *Hip-Hop Speaks to Children: A Celebration of Poetry with a Beat*

By Nikki Giovanni

Sourcebooks, 2008 (CD included)



Most music teachers are ill-equipped to educate others in the intricacies of hip-hop, which has been the dominant popular music in the world for nearly a decade. Like jazz, hip-hop is an American invention, but has received perhaps less respect and appreciation close to home. Luckily for our profession, Nikki Giovanni has edited a rich, beautifully illustrated resource that has the potential to educate students and teachers, and elevate the status of hip-hop music.

This book outshines many similar offerings through the inclusion of an audio CD filled with high quality material. The CD contains poetry readings, excerpts from hip-hop recordings, and explanatory tracks where authors talk about works or larger contexts within which certain works were created. Each track is referenced clearly within the book, and the recording quality throughout is high. Songs range from the Sugarhill Gang's classic "Rapper's Delight" to the feminist anthem "Ladies First" by Queen Latifah and Oscar Brown Jr.'s recording of "Dat Dere." Most of the songs are presented as excerpts (likely for copyright reasons). However, poems are read in their entirety, and the forty-one total tracks are a deeply satisfying listening experience.

Even teachers who are open to presenting hip-hop in their classrooms inevitably wonder how best to approach the subject. *Hip-Hop Speaks to Children* offers one possibility, making comparisons and putting hip-hop within a larger African American context. The opening essay draws a corollary between hip-hop and opera, each a dominant musical style in the everyday lives of their respective audiences. The

author also presents hip-hop as part of the glorious tradition of twentieth-century African American poetry. The book convincingly presents and effectively pairs Young MC's "The Principal" with Pedro Pietri's "Love Poem for My People." This pairing helps encourage students to think deeply and critically about text in the songs they enjoy. This could also encourage more attention to the musical cadence and rhetorical style of writers such as Langston Hughes, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Maya Angelou. In conceiving of hip-hop as a descendent of the Harlem Renaissance, the book presents hip-hop as a music to which teachers not only can relate, but should feel a responsibility to understand and promote.

In addition to great music and poetry, a positive vision of children exists throughout the book. Children are depicted as music makers, creators, and activists in several poems, particularly in the opening selections. This volume also captures the multimedia nature of hip-hop, which is best described as a culture involving visual, textual, musical, and dance styles. In addition to the poetic texts and included CD, the book brims with vivid, powerful illustrations from five illustrators.

If one area is neglected in *Hip-Hop Speaks to Children*, it is better attention to the music that accompanies the rhymes. Here, interested teachers could benefit from reading outside sources such as Jeff Chang's *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*, or Susan McClary's wonderful essay, "Rap, Minimalism, and Structures of Time in Twentieth Century Music." They might also benefit from showing students excerpts from

the 2002 movie *Scratch*, or by listening to the wonderful series of interviews with hip-hop stars by Terry Gross on NPR's *Fresh Air*.

*Hip-Hop Speaks to Children* is a wonderful book for any classroom library, and many music teachers will find wonderful examples to present within their classrooms. ■

*Matthew D. Thibeault* is an assistant professor of music education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He can be reached at [mdtib@illinois.edu](mailto:mdtib@illinois.edu).

## Focus on Research Series

*The Orff Echo* will publish research reports that expand and enhance our knowledge of music teaching and learning. Articles can report on an original research study or synthesize an area of the research literature in ways that are relevant and meaningful to music educators. These articles must be research-based and include a discussion of the ways the knowledge can be applied in the classroom. Papers should be double-spaced using type no smaller than a 12-point font and should be between 2,000-3,000 words. Submissions should be sent electronically as a MS Word or PDF document to Carlos Abril, Ph.D., at [c-abril@northwestern.edu](mailto:c-abril@northwestern.edu).

## Mamady Keita & Sewa Kan Live @ Couleur Café

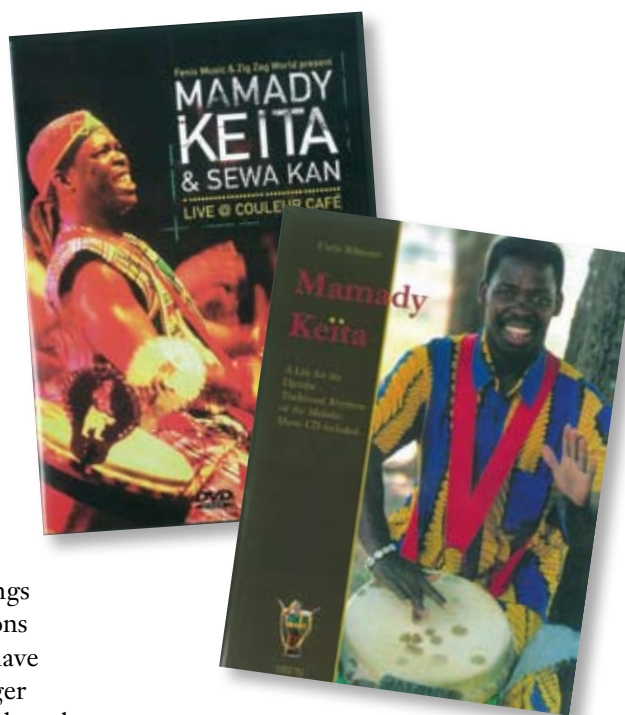
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### Mamady Keita: A Life for the Djembe— Traditional Rhythms of the Malinke

If you are a fan of djembe drumming or want to teach West African drumming in your classroom, this DVD and book are for you. Mamady Keita is a master drummer who has performed and taught internationally; Sewa Kan is his troupe of performers.

The DVD is a quality production of a live concert in Brussels, more than sixty-five minutes of high-energy entertainment with additional bonus material. Concert repertoire includes traditional rhythms/songs handed down through generations as well as festival rhythms that have become popular and are no longer directly linked to a tradition. Although Mamady performs modern rhythms, he does not mix the traditional and modern; he believes in preserving the traditional rhythms and protecting them from modern influences.

The ensemble is made of *sangban*, *kenkeni*, and *dununba* players, including bell parts as well as multiple *djembe* parts, two female dancers, and guests soloists playing the *djembe*, *kora*, *balofone*, *n'goni*, and *tama*. The *sangban*, *kenkeni*, and *dununba* drums are three different sized bass drums collectively called *dunun*. The *kora* and *n'goni* are both gourd/string instruments, while the *balofone* is close to a xylophone and the *tama* is a small “talking” drum. Performers wear colorful African garb made of updated versions of indinkra cloth. The performances are brilliant and reveal how traditional instruments can sound in the hands of master performers.



French is the spoken language of the concert and bonus footage is with English or Japanese subtitles available. Songs are performed in their language of origin, most from the Malinke tribe of Guinea. There are ten song selections in the concert accessible through the menu, a great feature if you are studying a particular rhythm and want to practice playing along.

Bonus footage includes a photo gallery of the concert in slide-show format, interviews, and a glimpse of a rehearsal in a studio. Interviews include guest artists Baba Sissoko (*griot*, *tama*, *n'goni*) and Bruno Genero (*djembe*), who is the only non-African player. Most of the performers were born and raised in West Africa. The interview with Mamady covers the history, construction, rhythms, and technique of the *djembe* as well as mentioning some great *djembe* players.

While the book is not meant to accompany the DVD, it can be used as an excellent teaching tool. With Uschi Billmeier, Mamady has created a book of the rhythms and traditions of the Malinke. It includes a brief history of the Malinke people and region, an explanation of the instruments, and a short musical biography of Mamady.

Sixty-two rhythms are selected for this project with background and origins of all rhythms included. Simple notation is used that non-musicians can understand after reading the chapter on technical musical terms and how they are used in the book to facilitate teaching. The book includes a CD that uses multiple tracks to teach each instrument for twenty-one of the rhythms. The DVD performances include five rhythms from the book. I chose to use a rhythm from the book with my students based on the background and inclusion on the CD. Students were able to echo the rhythms on the CD quite easily; rehearsal was used for technique and performance form. Playing along with the DVD was great fun.

Both the DVD and the book are valuable resources for anyone wishing to increase their knowledge of West African drumming and culture. Mamady Keita and Sewa Kan honor past traditions and culture while remaining a popular and contemporary group. ■

*Note: These items are available from [www.djembedirect.com](http://www.djembedirect.com).*

*Deborah Bunnell has taught music for twenty years. For the last twelve years, she has taught preschool through eighth grade for the Cleveland Municipal School District.*

# Whack and Stack with Unpitched Percussion

**Presenter:** Deborah A. Imiolo-Schrivier ■ **AOSA AV Library:** 170DIS (DVD only)

As the music of *Night on Bald Mountain* begins, the wild-eyed teacher rips a continuous stream of masking tape from the roll, delineating a circle on the classroom floor. The teacher's blue skirt swirls with the uneasy sounds of the dramatic play in this 2008 AOSA Conference session as she dissects the circle into four quadrants. With rising tension and anticipation, she brings a box to the corner of one of the quadrants and offers up the first of many rhythmic instruments. Using the dynamic level as a backdrop, Deborah A. Imiolo-Schrivier playfully unveils the sweet spot and correct technique for over one hundred unpitched percussion instruments.

The participants sit spellbound, completely enthralled in the details of the demonstration. Imiolo-Schrivier began the session by defining the posture of a person who is listening. The drama and chameleon-like charades of the presenter keep the eyes focused on the nuances of each new sound producer. The variety of sound colors, shapes, and sizes bring the senses into play. The varying dynamics and reactionary facial expressions of the teacher stir interpersonal feelings, while the playful approach and experimentation with mallets and beaters invites the student to mentally explore the creative depths of each device.

At the end of the piece, to balance this intense absorption, Imiolo-Schrivier asks an open-ended question: Do these instruments look more like toys or tools?

The group buzzes with conversation as they divide into groups, including an "undecided" group. The question opens discussion about the presentation and debatable points supporting each conclusion. The teacher encourages individual choice and uses the

The drama and chameleon-like charades of the presenter keep the eyes focused on the nuances of each new sound producer.



activity to select participants for each manageable grouping needed for the next activity. In the end, each team chooses a quadrant of instruments, and under the suggestions of the teacher, explores the four sound types of unpitched percussion separately and in combination.

Music literacy is a strong goal, says Imiolo-Schrivier, as she directs the participants to look at a chart showing four rhythmic lines. The participants chant and clap the word phrases before transferring the patterns to the metals, shakers/scrapers, woods, and skins. Imiolo-Schrivier directs each group alone and in combination to ensure independent mastery of the part. Taking the sound to the next level, Imiolo-

Schrivier adds her own improvised bass metallophone part to the four layers of ostinati patterns, changing the dynamics and color by weaving a rondo of notated and improvised elements of sound.

The session ends with a poem that begins, "I am an alien." To create the dramatic vision for the lesson, Imiolo-Schrivier asks the participants to extend the new excitement for sound textures into contrasting movements. Imiolo-Schrivier plays various patterns on different instrument combinations so that the participants absorb into their bodies the rhythmic and contrasting colors of each pattern. Using dramatic speech examples, the participants read the poem and add movement, costumes, and unpitched percussion to the final presentation of the poem.

The fantasy fixes into each participant's mind a feel for the sound color, class, quality, and character of each unpitched percussion instrument—educational goal accomplished!

*Beth Iafigliola, a member of the Greater Cleveland Chapter of AOSA, teaches music in the North Royalton School District, with past experience in strings, choir, private piano, and preschool music. She has been promoting the AOSA AV Library since 1995.*

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## In Reverberations

**In the Winter Issue of *Reverberations*:**

- The official 2010 AOSA candidate ballot
- Photos from the 2009 National Professional Development Conference in Milwaukee
- Preview of the 2010 Conference in Spokane
- Live Music – Music in Life: World Village 2009 by LuAnn Hayes
- OPUS: *Let the Magic Begin*
- LESSON IDEAS: *Exploring Meter through Poetry and Folk Dance*


reverberations

## Editorial Board Member Applications Being Accepted

*The Orff Echo* is seeking applications for its Editorial Board.

To obtain application guidelines, please e-mail Elaina Loveland, editor, at [echoeditor@aosa.org](mailto:echoeditor@aosa.org).

**Completed applications must be received by March 10, 2009.**



*There is in souls a sympathy with sounds:  
And as the mind is pitch'd the ear is pleas'd  
With melting airs, or martial, brisk or grave;  
Some chord in unison with what we hear  
Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.*

**William Cowper**

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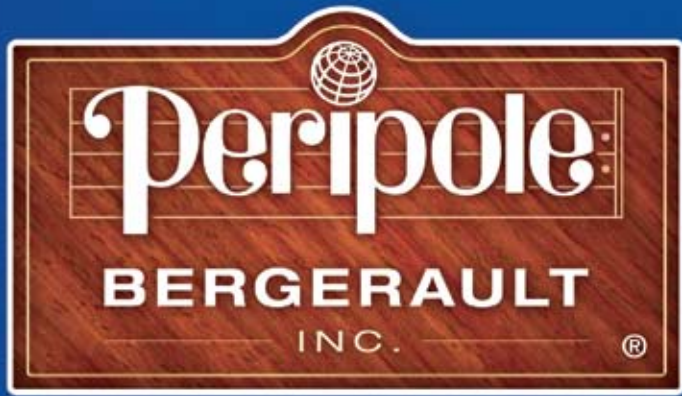
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