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Quarterly Journal of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association

Vol. 44, No. 2 • WINTER 2012



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## FEATURES

- 8 **Embracing the Modes**  
By Cyndee Giebler
- 12 **Elemental Origins: The Güntherschule in the Context  
of the German Body Culture**  
By Beth Ann Hepburn
- 15 **Extending the Modes**  
By Steven Calantropio
- 22 **An Elemental Approach to Composition:  
Guiding Student Composers**  
By Susanne Burgess
- 27 **Is It Elemental?**  
By Tim Purdum
- 31 **Learning Pieces or Opening Doors? Recorder in the Schulwerk**  
By Jo Ella Hug
- 34 **Making the Most of Folk Songs: Analysis within the Schulwerk**  
By Crystal Schlieker

## COLUMNS AND DEPARTMENTS

### President's Message

- 6 **Different Paths toward a Common Goal**  
By Karen Benson

### Orff Schulwerk: Contemporary Applications

- 37 **Using Orff Schulwerk Elemental Principles  
in a High School Ensemble Setting**  
By Bob Gold

### From the Classroom

- 39 **Teaching Folk Dancing in Middle School**  
By Tara Finne

### In Review

- 41 **Professional Book Review**  
*The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything*  
Reviewed by Judith Thomas
- 42 **Children's Book Review**  
*God Bless the Child*  
Reviewed by Holly Deuel Gilster
- 43 **Media Review**  
*Biophilia*  
Reviewed by David Thaxton
- 44 **AOSA AV Library Video Preview**  
*Merging the Streams: Processing Instrumental Pieces  
Starting with Movement*  
Previewed by Beth Iafigliola

# American Orff-Schulwerk Association

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## Mission Statement

The American Orff-Schulwerk Association is a professional organization of educators dedicated to the creative music and movement approach developed by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman.

### Our mission is:

- To demonstrate the value of Orff Schulwerk and promote its widespread use;
- To support the professional development of our members; and
- To inspire and advocate for the creative potential of all learners.

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## The Orff Echo Mission Statement

*The Orff Echo* is the national peer-reviewed quarterly journal and philosophical voice of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association.

## Editorial Calendar

Issue	Topic	Coordinator(s)	Contributor's Deadline
Fall 2012	Interdisciplinary Instruction	Patty Reed Nick Wild	March 15, 2012
Winter 2013	Complementary Approaches to Active Music Making	TBD	July 15, 2012
Spring 2013	Open Submission	TBD	Sept. 15, 2012

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.

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## Different Paths toward a Common Goal



**“Y**ou make spaghetti sauce.

I make spaghetti sauce.” This is how a friend of mine describes situations when two or more

factions are working toward a common goal yet having distinct variations on how that goal is approached. Basic elements appear in each version, but the flavor, style, and appearance are formed through the unique characteristics of the people involved, the ingredients at hand, and the experience and background of the producers.

To continue this analogy a bit, I pondered the comparison of making spaghetti sauce and being an Orff Schulwerk teacher. What is elemental to each of these ideas? To begin, some consumers buy a jar of sauce, others follow a recipe, still others cook using what’s in season or available in the pantry.

Just as there are many brands and flavors of spaghetti sauce, in music education, there are many ready-made products available and books that provide directions for replicating lessons. When choosing a sauce, some go for economical and thin, others go for rich and thick. As educators, what are we offering our students? It’s a matter of taste, and there are many different tastes for various appetites and stages in life.

Some teachers work best when developing their own lessons based on the needs and characteristics of

Students of any age need to enjoy and like what they are doing in our classrooms. Our charge is to facilitate this without lessening integrity or quality in our teaching.



the students and resources available to them. In comparison, some cooks like to develop their own recipes or create gourmet sauces that offer unique combinations and fusions of flavors. Ironically, a basic marinara sauce is often chosen and favored by those at the table.

Music teachers may provide well-loved movement and music experiences that are based in the purest forms of the Orff media: speaking, singing, moving and dancing, body percussion, and instrument playing. However, occasionally blending these experiences with a new or special ingredient may enhance the experience for both children and teacher, thus broadening the musical perspective. We each have our personal preferences, but diversity

provides interest and growth.

What is really important to remember is that if you want them to eat, you must make it taste good! Students of any age need to enjoy and like what they are doing in our classrooms. Our charge is to facilitate this without lessening integrity or quality in our teaching. Give the students the best musical nutrition possible!

In this issue of *The Orff Echo*, take an in-depth look at elemental music theory. The concept and definition of what makes music elemental has been considered for many years. A standard explanation may be as elusive as choosing the best spaghetti sauce. However, in a collection of essays recently published by the Orff-Schulwerk Forum, Wilhelm Keller summarized elemental music as “an instance of time, fulfilled without constraint and thus lived to the full. This music had to be discovered, not composed.”<sup>1</sup> As you read the feature articles, consider your personal definition of what is elemental, both musically and educationally. ■

*Karen Benson is the president of AOSA. She teaches prekindergarten through fifth grade for the Millard Public Schools in Omaha, Nebraska. Karen was local conference co-chair for the 2006 AOSA Professional Development Conference and previously served on the AOSA National Board of Trustees as a regional representative. She teaches several AOSA teacher education courses and serves as a clinician at numerous conferences and workshops. In addition, Karen is a member of Sing Omaha’s adult professional choir, Canticum.*

1. Wilhelm Keller, “Elemental Music: An Attempt to Define It” in *Texts on Theory and Practice of Orff-Schulwerk, Basic Texts from the Years 1932-2010*, ed. Barbara Haselbach, trans. Margaret Murray (Mainz: Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, 2011), 118.

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# Embracing the Modes

BY CYNDEE GIEBLER

**W**hat exactly is a “mode”? Anyone who recognizes a major or minor scale is already familiar with modes. Listening to and making music in the modes is an acoustic rendering of music history. Virtually none of the contemporary music we have today would exist without modes.

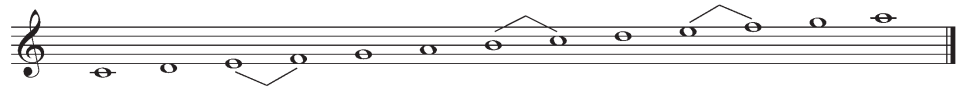
Modes can be traced all the way back to ancient Greece. A Greek mode was made up of two tetrachords connected by a whole step. Each tetrachord contained two whole steps and one half step, but the way the whole and half steps were grouped varied from one mode to another. The modes were named for different peoples that lived in the region, and each mode was assigned its own moral value or inner meaning. Plato suggested that male students play and hear music in only the Dorian mode, which was “manly and warlike.” The Lydian mode was considered suitable only for girls. We really don’t know how these modes sounded or were used. It’s a bit like an archeological dig—there are artifacts and skeletons, and it is up to us to imagine the complete image.

Since the chant of the medieval church originated in the eastern Mediterranean, it, too, was organized in modes. These modes gathered their own traditions around them, and the Greek interpretations were soon lost. Although the Greek names were adopted, they were not used for the same scale designations. In the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance, the modes used most often in church music were the Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, and Mixolydian. Because these modes were used in the church until the 1960s, we have a very good idea of how they sounded. In the songs and the dances of the people outside of church, the Ionian and Aeolian modes were the fa-

vorites, and around 1600 these began to be used more and more for all types of music. The Ionian mode became the major scale and Aeolian the natural minor scale. A revival of interest in folk music by composers in the 1800s led to the renewed use of modes. Champions of folk music in the twentieth century include Zoltán Kodály, Bela Bartok, and of course, Carl Orff.

Modes are an important part of Orff Schulwerk. Volume IV of *Music for Children* (Murray edition) is dedicated exclusively to Aeolian, Dorian, and Phrygian modes. The second part of Volume II has many pieces in Ionian mode. These pieces are meant to be user-friendly, and indeed they are! The Orff instruments are ideally suited for modal work, as we shall see.

A typical alto xylophone encompasses the following pitches:



The alto xylophone conveniently outlines the C-major diatonic scale. There are no sharps or flats. In the above example, half steps are indicated by a bracket.

Seven modes can be derived from the same series of diatonic notes simply by changing the tonic. Although all seven modes share the same notes and intervals, each uses them in a different order, and it is this arrangement of whole and half steps that creates the distinctive character by which each is known.

**IONIAN**—what we recognize today as the major scale:



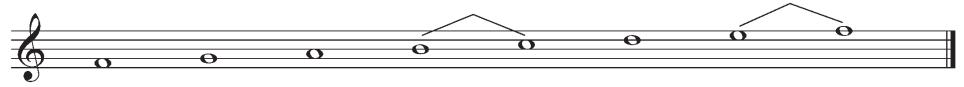
**DORIAN**—a minor scale with a major 6th:



**PHRYGIAN**—a minor scale with a minor 2nd:



**LYDIAN**—a major scale with an augmented 4th:



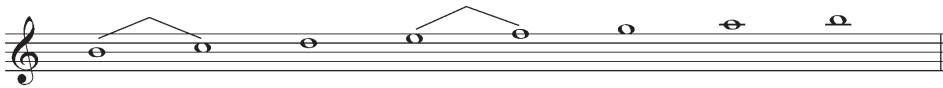
**MIXOLYDIAN**—a major scale with a minor 7th:



**AEOLIAN**—the natural minor scale:



**LOCRIAN**—a minor scale with a diminished 5th:



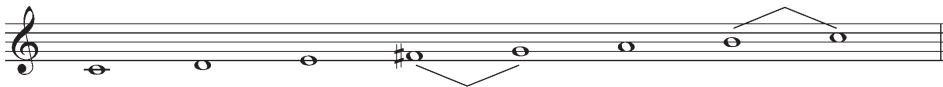
Because there are very few extant musical examples in Locrian mode, it is not included in the content of the Schulwerk.

We are left with six modes: three major and three minor. The determining factor in whether a mode is major or minor is the relationship between the tonic and third scale degree. Looking at the above examples, we see that the three major modes are Ionian, Lydian, and Mixolydian.

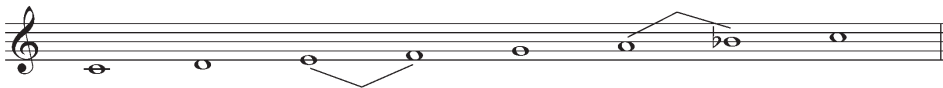
Lydian and Mixolydian modes can be derived easily from Ionian mode by employing accidentals. Using Ionian mode based on C as a starting point:



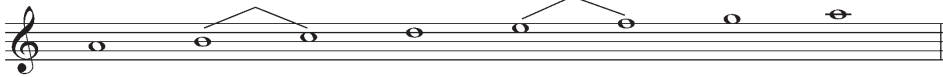
Replace the F with F# to get the raised 4th of Lydian mode.



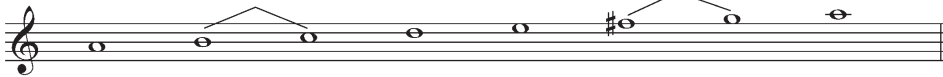
Replace the B with Bb for the lowered 7th of Mixolydian mode.



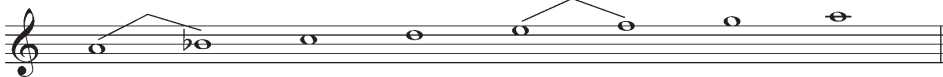
In a similar fashion, and using the same accidentals, Dorian and Phrygian modes can be distinguished easily from Aeolian by the same process. Beginning with Aeolian mode based on A...



...adding an F# will change the mode from Aeolian to Dorian.

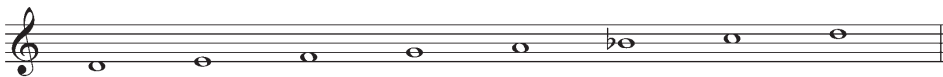


...and adding a Bb will change the mode from Aeolian to Phrygian.

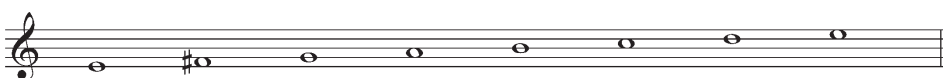


While it is a bit of an oversimplification to say that “Dorian mode goes from D – d, Phrygian goes from E – e, and Aeolian from A – a,” this is for the most part exactly how these modes appear in most of the instrumental pieces in Volume IV. This is fine for instrumental pieces, but “Aeolian from A – a” is not always within childrens’ vocal ranges. Once again the F# and Bb come to the rescue.

Aeolian based on D:



Aeolian based on E:



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Here are some enjoyable challenges using an alto xylophone and F# and Bb:

- Find three possible Ionian modes on the alto xylophone.
- How many Dorian modes are possible?
- How many Phrygian?
- Lydian? Mixolydian? (We've already talked about Aeolian.)
- And for those who really enjoy a challenge, there are two possible Locrian modes. For some real fun, encourage your students to improvise and/or compose in Locrian mode.

In the past, modes were said to embody a certain ethos or moral character. How might the ethos of a melody change as it is transposed? Is Dorian warlike, as Plato suggested? Is Lydian mode really just for girls? Phrygian has been described in the past as mystical or vehement, and Mixolydian as angelic and youthful.

In *Music for Children Volume IV*, page 47, #4 is an excellent Dorian piece to use for experimentation. It is easy to teach and play and has the added benefit of being singable. Lyrics for this piece can be invented that cover a wide variety of subject matter. Some favorite topics have been bicycle riding, Halloween, and, of all things, squid.

To make teaching the piece a bit easier, and for easy transposition later, remove the high E from the barred instrument. Process the piece in a way that makes sense for your students. Challenge them to keep track of how the tune looks physically on the instrument. How many bars will you skip for the bigger intervals? Which phrases have notes next to each other? When the melody is secure, replace the high E. Now remove the low C and the high F and transpose the melody up a step. Now, the piece will be in Phrygian mode. Play the piece again and see how the character changes. This usually elicits a strong response from students! Continuing in the same vein as before, replace the high F and remove the high G. Remove the low D. (Keep the low C in a safe place out of the way!) The piece is now in Lydian mode. Switch the B to a Bb to hear the piece in Ionian mode. At this point, Ionian will

sound quite strange! Keep moving higher on the instrument, replacing and removing bars as necessary, ending with Mixolydian and Aeolian.

The exercise wouldn't be complete without Locrian mode. Here is a possible scale:



music can be used as an interlude for *The Snowy Day* by Jack Ezra Keats. The piece is lovely played on glockenspiels but is elegantly simple sung on “loo.” Sleighbells add to the overall effect.

The pieces in Part Two—Triads are more suitable for older students. There are technical and musical challenges, and more independence is required. “Dance” on page 102 is an example of a bigger piece that has broad appeal for older students. Each of the musical sections provides extensive opportunities for choreography and improvisation in a variety of media. There is truly something for everybody! Like some of the pieces mentioned earlier, this piece lends itself to work with props. Some of the props that could be incorporated into choreography include large bamboo sticks (available at home-improvement centers) and brooms or lightweight garden utensils. A “time-space-energy” exercise also can be made out of the body percussion interlude at the bottom of page 69.

Each of the musical sections provides extensive opportunities for choreography and improvisation in a variety of media. There is truly something for everybody!



Set up several drums in a large space. The children can keep the beat with their feet in place and play the clapping pattern on the nearest available drum. When this is secure, the children may

move between the drums. For an interesting challenge, the children may not play any drum twice.

There are many other ways to incorporate modes into classroom teaching. Rock music often features modal bass lines, and jazz players improvise freely in all the modes. Just imagine! Today, we enjoy a musical idiom that stretches back over the centuries. Have fun with your new modal adventures! ■



*Cyndee Giebler lives and teaches in northeast Wisconsin. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and received her master's degree from the University of St. Thomas. In addition to teaching, she enjoys composing and arranging music for classroom use, children's chorus, elementary strings, and beginning band. A certified Orff Schulwerk teacher trainer, she teaches summer graduate classes at both Anderson University and DePaul University.*

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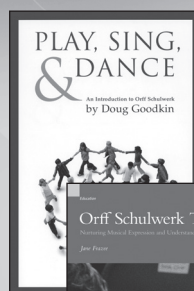
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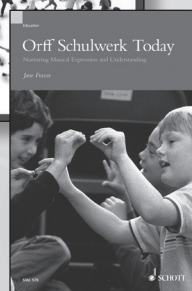
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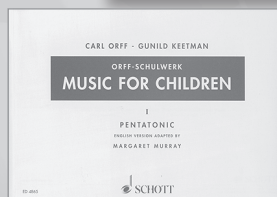
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# Elemental Origins: The Güntherschule in the Context of the German Body Culture

BY BETH ANN HEPBURN

The Schulwerk was not my discovery. It had been with us—in the air, so to speak—all along.

—Carl Orff, *Das Schulwerk*

The Günther School, where Orff first collaborated and brought his elemental music ideas to fruition, belongs to the cultural–historical field of the German Body Culture Movement, placed between 1880 and 1930.<sup>1</sup> At that time, experimental development in the arts inspired by a reaction to industrialization gave rise to new subcultures that supported a healthy lifestyle through active participation. The operation of the Güntherschule was concurrent with the Youth Movement, *Freikörperkultur* (Nude Body Culture Movement), the Educational Reform Movement, and the Rhythm and Dance Movement. These movements had in common the notion of “movement” as “experience” by nurturing the human spirit through an immediate participation, and they had different longitudinal goals.

At the turn of the twentieth century, dance schools, rhythmic movement schools, and gymnastics schools were founded to create the organizational framework and conditions for an ordered sequence of teaching specific to one pedagogical method or goal. The founding of the Günther School goes back to the initiative of Dorothee Günther, well studied in multiple theories of bodily movement, including Bess Mensendieck gymnastics, eurhythmics at the Institute for Applied Rhythm Jacques-Dalcroze,<sup>2</sup> and Expressive movement with Rudolph Laban.<sup>3</sup> Günther’s perspectives of movement principles offered a broad range of experiences: three branches of movement study, the synthesis of gymnastics and dance, and the synthesis of music and dance.

Günther’s perspectives of movement principles offered a broad range of experiences: three branches of movement study, the synthesis of gymnastics and dance, and the synthesis of music and dance.



The commonality among these movement approaches was the teaching approach—all were taught in a practical application manner, and all three were a requirement in the basic curriculum, although the three movement theories also contradicted one another. The first movement practice, the applied gymnastics of Mensendieck, focused on a healthy, well-poised, and balanced body through repetitive muscular and skeletal exercises. The second practice, the applied rhythmic exercises of the eurhythmics pedagogy, included the individual reacting to external musical influences with variations by drilling functional and specially designed movement exercises. (Although Dalcroze’s Eurhythmics was too subservient to music to become a viable dance expression in its own right, his break from theatrical as-

sociation and his development of a more abstract approach to movement was a major influence in the German dance, particularly through his many students who later emerged as forces in *Ausdruckstanz*.)<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, it was Günther’s teacher, Rudolph von Laban, whose movement theories were brought to another plane by his pupil Mary Wigman, who would provide the seed for not only modern dance, but Dorothee’s dance philosophy and ultimately Orff’s Schulwerk.

Together with Carl Orff, Günther presented an innovative idea for a School of Gymnastics at a summer course in 1923 for the members of the German Mensendieck Society. The school would be experience-based through the hands-on discovery model of learning, and it would blend teaching methods and offer a list of academic subjects. Günther’s presentation for her new school model was well received for its innovation: blending dance pedagogy ideas, music pedagogy for dancers, and the daring attempt to blend the Free and Applied Movement ideologies in one institution.

In September 1924, the new school opened:

*Günther School Munich  
Training Center of the Association  
for Free and Applied Movement  
(Registered)*<sup>5</sup>

This places the school in the epoch of the Life Reform Movement (*Lebensreformbewegung*), which developed in reaction to the rapidly changing industrial society. Life Reformers believed modern civilization, urbanization, and industrialization had alienated human beings from their “natural” living conditions and dehumanized the individual and that the path of progressive de-

generation could be reversed by living in accordance with man's and woman's nature.<sup>6</sup> The Life Reformers believed physicality was needed to offset the sedentary routine of the industrial worker and reawaken the human soul. The Life Reform Movement gave rise to an era known as the German Body Culture Movement (*körperkultur*).

The purpose of this movement was twofold. One strand of the practices (*körper*) had embraced the ideal of developing healthier bodies and the second (*leib*) of freeing the individual through nurturing the human spirit and developing the creative individual through self-expression, nurturing the elemental. The *körper* philosophical strand concentrated on the "object-body" and applied movement, eurhythmics, or gymnastics.

This Free Body Movement strand encouraged a healthy lifestyle on the "subject-body" to reawaken the individual by tapping into their inner soul through a physical, creative process improvisatory in nature, defined as "elemental." The Free Body Movement is the source for the fundamental ideal of "elemental," embodied in the core of the Schulwerk philosophy. The Güntherschule set out to blend both strands, but the pedagogical foundations of the Schulwerk emerged in the Free Movement dance studies and the music lessons with Carl Orff, not the functional gymnastics classes based on Mensendieck practice that were taught by Günther.

It can be affirmed that Orff's Schulwerk lies on the line of experiential learning as far back as Pestalozzi to Froebel to the New Schools and the active pedagogy of the beginning of the twentieth century, with special emphasis on an elemental learning style: learning by doing and self-discovery. Günther echoes the ultimate aim of an "elemental" education to contribute to the formation of identity and personality through sensory stimulation (sharpening auditory, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic perception as the base for every further conceptualization), cognitive activation, and emotional involvement (promoting a subjectively meaningful learning that is deeply

rooted in each student's need for growth and self-fulfillment).<sup>7</sup> Elemental music seeks to be a human experience, as Barbara Haselbach writes:

Orff Schulwerk aims to address the whole person so as to stimulate and foster body, soul, and mind through a creative process in which experience, action, and comprehension condition each other.<sup>8</sup>

Haselbach identifies the fundamental core of the Schulwerk that places it in the most experimental style of learning and highlights why it is linked to the Rhythm and Dance Movement, specifically rooted in *Ausdruckstanz* (Expressionist Dance Movement) philosophical ideals. This was the most radical movement in its attitude, and this new physicality of the artistic expression originally intrigued Orff and Günther and contributed to their discussions of the "elemental" in music and dance.

Orff's idea of the elemental is not educational but intuitively artistic. It arises from Expressionism, more precisely from Orff's encounter with Expressionism in Mary Wigman's dancing.<sup>9</sup> The *Ausdruckstanz* would directly influence the improvisatory nature at the core of the Schulwerk pedagogy through the merging of elemental dance with elemental music at the school, the use of percussion instruments from primitive cultures, and the focus on creativity through individual expression. Mary Wigman's authentic integration of music and dance, with both arts equally serving each other, was brought to the Güntherschule. In 1931, Hans Redlich wrote of "The Function of Music in the Context of the Gunther School":

I feel drawn to make an explicit reference to an organization working at the present time, in which music is assigned a role that is thoroughly independent, indigenous, and usable. [T]he main contribution of this School is to have done away with the old concept of "Music for Dance," as being an arbitrary musical episode, which was involved to a

certain extent in the content-related associations of gestures and sound. Simultaneously the school has newly questioned the interpretability of music and content by gesture and rhythm.<sup>10</sup>

He continues, acknowledging that the idea of blending music and dance had been seen before, but not in the manner at the Güntherschule:

I realize other dance/pedagogic pioneers have also taken part in this contribution, and that much of what the Güntherschule has created as regards to the newly stated connection between sound and gesture, music and dance anticipated by others. Nevertheless, I venture to assert: never before has music been presented in this organically formed unity, in the service of the rhythmic/dance elements.<sup>11</sup>

Orff and Günther continued the radical new practice of music not being subservient to the dance, and sound arising with the elemental movement, by adding their own thoughts and ideas to the new movement ideals. Laban's pedagogical practice of unleashing the individual's expressivity through improvisatory movement experiences would be developed for the Güntherschule students by Carl Orff and Dorothee Günther through their innovative use of instruments, applying Laban's and Wigman's tradition of creative artistry realized through improvisation in a new context.

Laban was masterful at creating a learning environment that fostered discovery learning, in which students would experience movement and then label their learning with the new vocabulary he created to relate to his applied theories of movement. Günther describes Laban's role as a facilitator who created an exposure to the unconscious by freeing primeval powers through the vocabulary and the grammar of a new language for movement.<sup>12</sup> His informational teaching skills were developed through a balance of skill development and structured improvisational movement lessons.

Günther writes about this phenomenon with Wigman:

This breakthrough of the self-creative person arises out of the self-confidence and the ability of the person to surrender to the intuitive powers of the unconscious. The great dancers of the time speak in their movement about that which they recognize as life determining for everyone, but which is not comprehensible in words. Wigman, abandoning herself to the ecstasy of the dance, discovers the music of the dance, its lines, rhythms, and poetic composition.<sup>13</sup>

It is Mary Wigman's approach to music accompaniment combined with her elemental "inner attitude" cultivated by Laban that would make an impact on Carl Orff. Her expressive dance was based on natural, basic movement, through which the dancer was able to express a broad range of feeling to communicate emotional experiences, intuitive perceptions, and elusive truths.<sup>14</sup> Primitive instruments were used to increase the effect: rumbling timpani for thunder or fear or an introspective gong that fades as the body moves a decrescendo. Wigman often used ethereal sounds to inspire the body to motion or a simple rhythmic ostinato to accompany her dance.

Laban and Wigman's work would prove to be an inspirational precursor to the Schulwerk. Wigman's philosophical writings are rooted in her belief that the body is a vehicle for elemental expression, in an effort to unleash the creative potential of man. Wigman reflects:

The dance is a living language which speaks of man, because its bearer and intermediary is man himself, and because his instrument of expression is the human body, whose natural movement forms the material for the dance, the only material which is his own and his own to use. This is why the dance and its expression are so exclusively bound to man and his ability to move. Where this ability ceases to be, the dance faces the limitations of its creative and performing possibilities. Certainly, bodily movement alone is not yet dance. But it is the elemental and incontestable basis without which there would be no dance.<sup>15</sup>

It was in the dance of Mary Wigman that Orff first discovered the concept of "elemental." Carl Orff writes in his autobiography:

The art of Mary Wigman was very significant for me and my later work. All her dances were animated

by an unprecedented musicality, even the "musicless" witches' dance. She could make music with her body and transform music into corporeality. I felt that her dancing was elemental. I, too, was searching for the elemental, elemental music.<sup>16</sup>

Through this description, Orff reinforces his definition of the "elemental." To Orff, it is the process of transforming a physical embodiment of an expression into a tangible outcome, like a dance gesture or music. Her innovative philosophy of using "exotic instruments" in dances created from elemental improvisations would be the catalyst for Orff's elemental music and ultimately the approach to teaching movement and music we now know as Orff Schulwerk. ■



**Beth Ann Hepburn** teaches movement and basic Orff Schulwerk for AOSA endorsed courses. She is a former professional development chair for the Ohio MEA and AOSA. She served on the AOSA National Board of Trustees. She is the general music consultant for Music Is Elementary. Beth Ann teaches for the Streetsboro City Schools in Ohio.

1. Michael Kugler, *Elementarer Tanz-Elementare Musik: Die Güther-Schule München 1924 bis 1944* (Mainz: Schott Musik International), trans. Margaret Murray, 14.

2. Eurhythmics in the form of Eurhythmie were the original innovation of Rudolph Steiner in 1911.

3. Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 130.

4. Susan Kennedy, "Roots Entwined: Orff Schulwerk and the German Modern Dance," *The Orff Echo* 31, No. 2: 7-12.

5. *Ibid.*, 42.

6. Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890-1930* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 2.

7. Andrea Sangiorgio, *Orff-Schulwerk as Anthropology of Music*, 11.

8. Barbara Haselbach, *Orff-Schulwerk: Elementare Musik- und Bewegungserziehung*, 191.

9. Carl Orff, *Das Schulwerk*, 9.

10. Hans F. Redlich, "The Function of Music in the Context of the Günther School," *Schriftanz* 4, No. 2, October 1931, trans. Valerie Preston-Dunlap and Susan Lahusen (New Jersey: Princeton Book Co., 1990), 75.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Michael Kugler, *Elementarer Tanz-Elementare Musik: Die Güther-Schule München 1924 bis 1944*. Unpublished translation by Margaret Murray (Mainz: Schott Musik International, 2002), 57.

13. Kugler, *Elementarer Tanz-Elementare Musik: Die Güther-Schule München 1924 bis 1944*, 57.

14. Richard Kraus and Sarah Chapman, *History of the Dance in Art and Education, 2nd Ed.* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1981), 121.

15. Mary Wigman, *The Language of Dance* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), 10.

16. Carl Orff, *Orff/Documentation, His Life and His Works Das Schulwerk, Vol. 3, The Schulwerk*. trans. Margaret Murray (New York: Schott Music Corp., 1978), 8-9.

# Extending the Modes

BY STEVEN CALANTROPIO

**M**y interest in elemental music theory can be traced back to two key experiences spanning many years that awakened my desire to better understand the foundations of the Orff Schulwerk approach. The first was in 1981, when I was a student in the Special Course in English at the Orff Institute in Salzburg. Students were treated to a series of lectures by Professor Wilhelm Keller, who at the time had just finished his service as a full-time teacher at the Institute. In his somewhat abstract and non-linear lectures, Keller was the first person I had encountered who proposed that there actually was a separate theory of elemental music with its own set of rules and considerations that often ran counter to traditional music theory. His lectures on the vast possibilities of pentatonic music, along with discussions about the modes, extended modes, and synthetic scales, sketched broad possibilities for composition and musical expression, moving beyond the limitations of the materials found in the Schulwerk Volumes themselves.

Some eleven years later, I attended a workshop presented by one of my primary Orff teachers, Brigitte Warner, at the 1992 national conference of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association. During the session titled “New Melodic Possibilities: A Bend in the River,” Warner, in her own precise manner, outlined every seven-note mode that was theoretically possible using various combinations of whole and half steps. Workshop participants were then called upon to improvise and create compositions based on modern art examples using one of these “extended modes.”

I have always been interested in using the materials and processes of the traditional Orff Schulwerk approach to create new works by stretching one musical element a little further. In the examples that follow, the elements of scale or mode (names that are used interchangeably in this article) are extended beyond our traditional understanding of the terms. From new scales come new melodic patterns and inevitably new harmonies. They are fresh

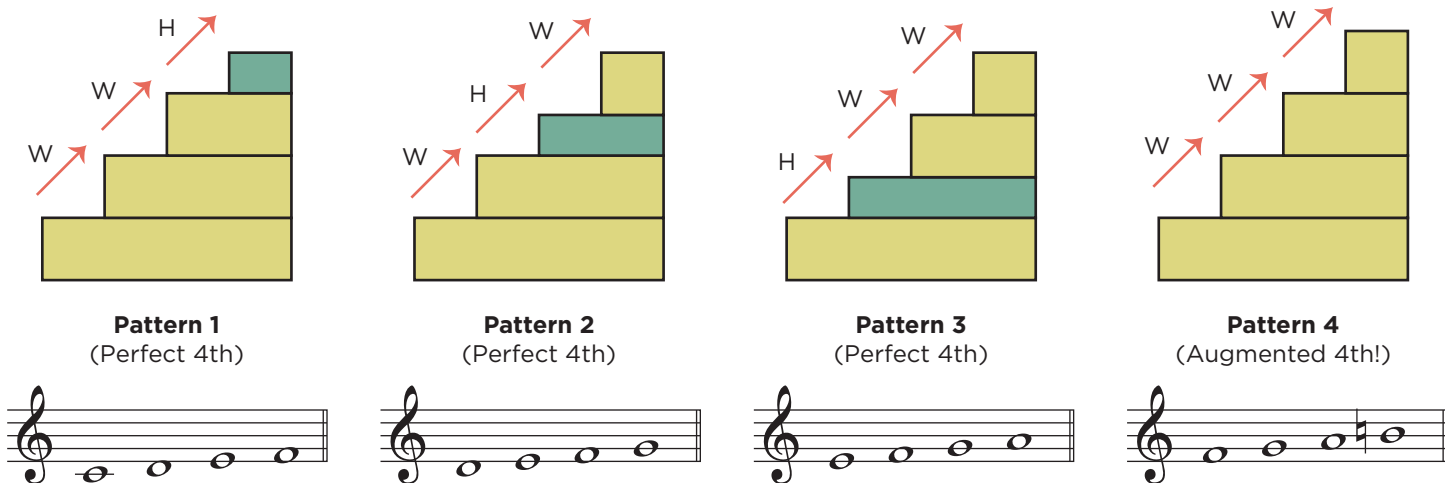
to the ear and offer both the adult and student elemental musician the chance to go “outside the box” melodically and harmonically, something which I believe the creators of the Schulwerk would approve.

## TRADITIONAL MODES

We can begin by reviewing the traditional ecclesiastical or “church” modes of the medieval and Renaissance periods that are part of elemental style. These are scale patterns of seven discreet pitches organized in different sequences of whole and half steps, with the eighth step the distance of an octave from the first step. The location of each whole or half step dictates the characteristic sound of each mode, along with its resulting harmonies and unique melodic patterns. Three of the modes are major in quality as dictated by the major third degree and the resulting major tonic triad—Ionian, Lydian, and Mixolydian. Three modes are minor in quality, again dictated by the minor third degree and resulting minor tonic triad—Aeolian,

FIGURE 1. SIX TRADITIONAL MODES IN THREE ELEMENTAL KEYS

**FIGURE 2. MODE STRUCTURES**



Dorian, and Phrygian. The Locrian mode, which has a minor third degree and a diminished fifth degree, is not considered part of the elemental modal system because of its inherent instability. There are three possible key signatures for each mode—the “white key” or untransposed modes created on the natural (white key) notes of keyboards. In elemental style, each particular mode also occurs in two transposed versions; one with 1 sharp (F#) in the key signature and one with one flat (Bb) in the key signature. Consequently, the traditional modes found in elemental style include three Ionian modes (one with no sharps and flats with the tonic pitch of C; a second with one flat that begins on F and then one with one sharp that begins on G). The same is true for the remaining five modes. Figure 1 outlines the scope of

traditional modes available in elemental music using the included Bb and F# accidentals.

**MODE STRUCTURE**

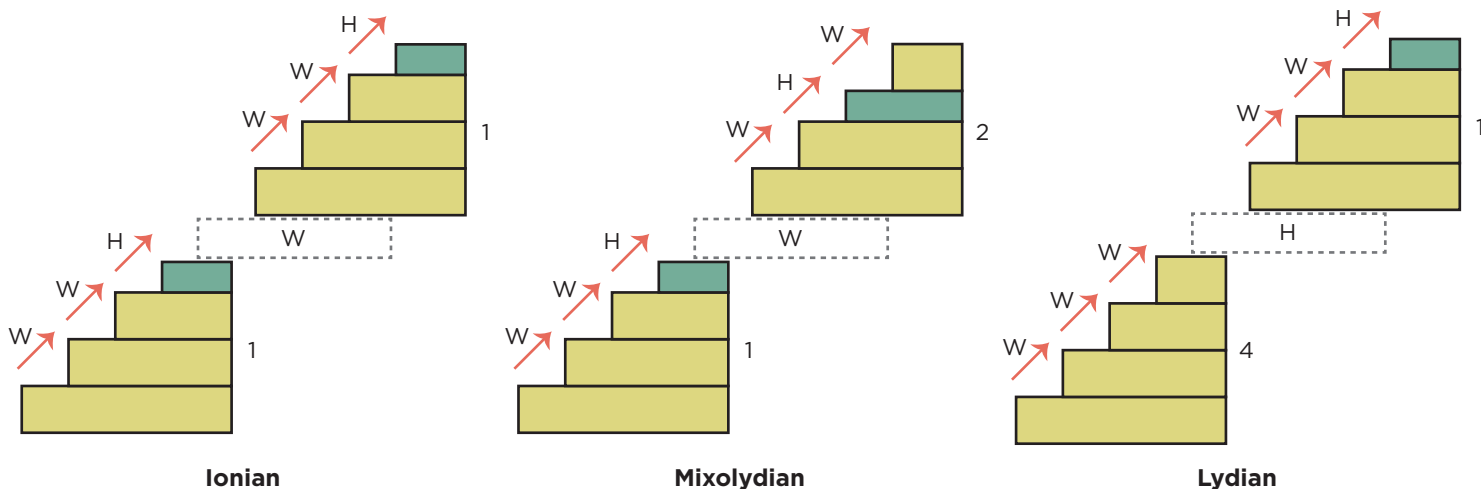
Let’s examine the various structures of the traditional diatonic modes. You might consider any given scale as a complete unit, but it is more accurate to think of them as two tetrachords stacked on top of each other, separated in most cases by a whole step or, in the case of the Lydian mode, by a half step. Each tetrachord covers the vertical distance of either a perfect or augmented fourth. There are four pitches in each tetrachord, which, when stacked, covers eight pitches—the distance of an octave. These four pitches are separated by two whole steps and one half step or again, in the case of the very exotic Lydian mode, by three whole steps.

The graphic representation of these tetrachords may help us to visualize mode construction (see fig. 2).

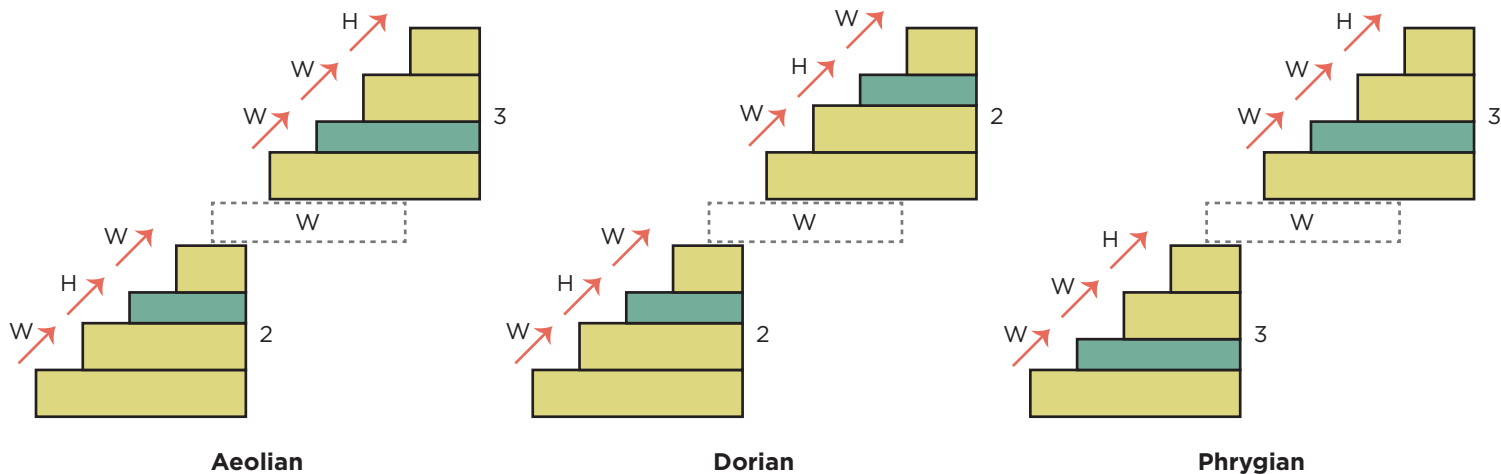
Stacking two “1” patterns on top of each other, separated by a whole step, yields the familiar Ionian mode. A “1” pattern topped with a “2” pattern is the Mixolydian mode, while a “4” pattern, three whole steps, is topped with a “1” pattern with the two separated by a half step, giving us the rather unique Lydian mode. This completes the three major modes (see fig. 3).

All minor mode lower and upper tetrachords are separated by whole steps. A “2” pattern topped by a “3” pattern creates the Aeolian mode, while two “2” patterns connect to form the Dorian mode. Two “3” patterns stacked together yield the Phrygian mode, completing all minor modes (see fig. 4).

**FIGURE 3. THE MAJOR MODES**



**FIGURE 4. THE MINOR MODES**

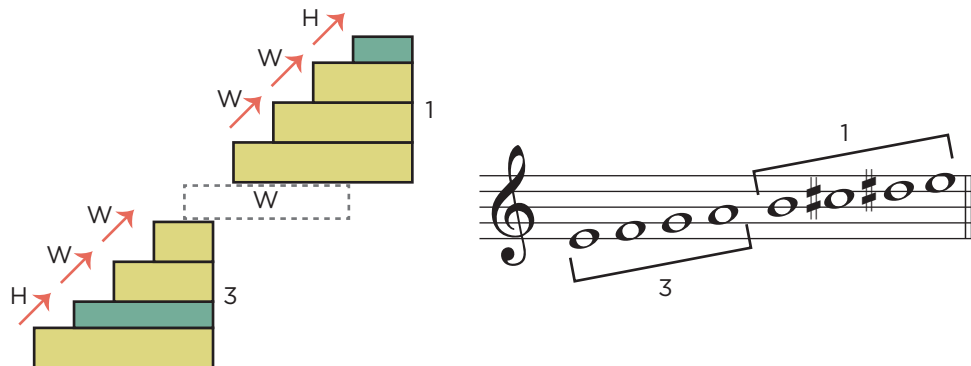


**EXTENDING THE MODES**

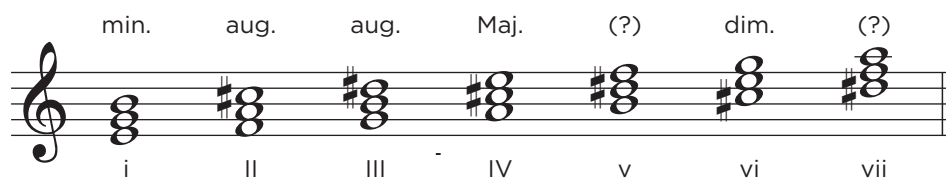
Pursuing the idea of stacking tetrachords to create modes, we can begin to splice other combinations of tetrachords together in different combinations to create new mode patterns; I call these new models extended modes. They are constructed similarly to existing historical modes but were not part of the ecclesiastical modes of the medieval and Renaissance periods. For instance, if we take the lower tetrachord of the Phrygian mode based on a tonic pitch of E (a “3” pattern) and connect it with a “1” pattern upper tetrachord, we have a new scale that has no historical root (see fig. 5).

Melodic patterns using this extended scale will inevitably have an interesting flow due to the new configuration of whole and half steps. Of course, the previously mentioned scale would need the pitches C# and D# to play such a pattern on the barred instruments, and as we know, these bars are not generally found in the basic elemental pitch set that is included with each barred instrument. However, melodies that are sung or played on recorders can access these pitches, while accompanying drones and ostinato patterns can be constructed from the available pitches. Triads built on the various steps of this mode would yield only one major and one minor triad, the rest being two augmented and one diminished triad, along with two unrecognizable patterns (B-D#-F) (D#-F-A) (see fig. 6).

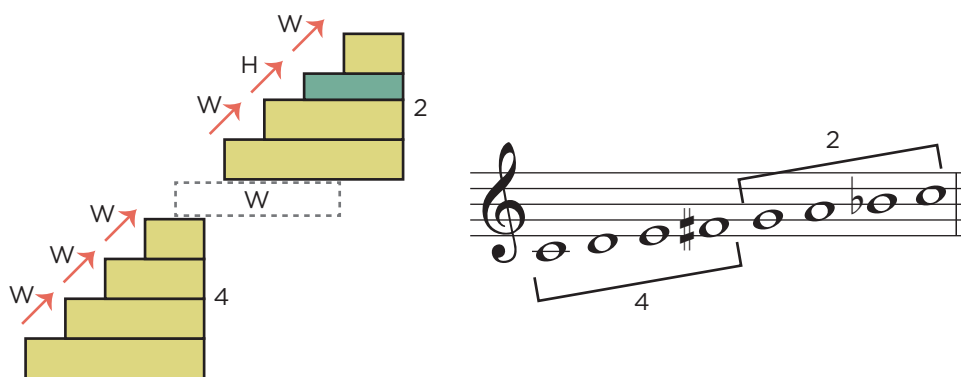
**FIGURE 5. EXTENDED MODE**



**FIGURE 6. EXTENDED MELODIC PATTERN**



**FIGURE 7. EXTENDED MODE**



Let’s look at another new scale, one that is more playable on our barred instruments. The available chromatic notes in elemental style, limited to F#

and Bb, allow for a new mode that is not found historically. This would be a scale that includes both an F# and Bb; it would look like figure 7.

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 ENGLISH EDITION ADAPTED BY MARGARET  
 MURRAY  
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FIGURE 9. MELODIC PATTERN

Resulting harmonies based on each step of this “new mode” would be a mixture of two major, one minor, two diminished, and one augmented triad. Because of their prevalence, the door would now be opened to using both diminished and augmented triads, which up to this point had not yet been part of elemental harmonic vocabulary.

We should also keep in mind that this new scale containing both F# and Bb can be treated as any other diatonic pattern in that any step of the scale can be treated as a tonic pitch. We see the creation of seven new modes whose resulting harmonies and melodic patterns will bring the listener to sounds he or she has not yet experienced in elemental style.

The question arises: Are these modes only theoretical in nature? To be “real,” functional musical possibilities, we would need to find examples of composed music or, even better, some folk song or instrumental piece that employs this “new mode.” Although world folk music idioms are often based on scale patterns outside of Western musical thinking, the possibility of finding an example in one of these synthetic modes seems remote.

My own interest in the subject was piqued while exploring a rather obscure and rarely used supplement to the *Music for Children* volumes, the *Spielstücke Für Blockflöten 1b* (Pieces for Recorder; Schott #3557b) by Gunild Keetman (see fig. 8). On page 26 of this collection, we find a recorder trio, #19, which apparently represents one of Keetman’s attempts at writing in this new mode.

The one sharp—one flat key signature is employed, and the very complex piece seems to cadence on a tonic pitch of A. This scale uses the same key signature as example #7 (above) but if we consider A as the tonic pitch instead of C, the whole- and half-step patterns are reordered so they now can be represented by a “3” pattern topped by a “2” pattern (see fig. 9).

The lack of any other accidentals throughout the work convinces me of the intentional exploration of this new mode. The interweaving melodic lines, shifting harmonies, and complex

rhythmic interplay make this a piece not for the musical faint of heart!

While one composition cannot be considered a musical style, I personally was excited at the possibilities of creating, composing, and improvising in this new modality. One of my first efforts appears in my book *Pieces and Processes* (Schott #569) and is called “Jeremiah,” a name extracted from the simple children’s rhyme that begins the teaching process of this lesson (see fig. 10). In “Jeremiah,” I adapted the “new mode” model by removing both the G and A pitches from the scale, moving from a seven-note diatonic pattern to a five-note pentatonic pattern based on the pitch C. The BX part functions as a ground bass, while a dissonant AX ostinato accompanies the melody drawn from the rhythm of the text. I’ve taught this exercise to both children and adults, and all are captivated by the exotic sonorities created by this scale. Improvisation over the ostinato

**FIGURE 10. JEREMIAH FROM PIECES AND PROCESSES**

Steven Calantropio

(hard mallets)

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and ground bass often gets extremely interesting!

I teach a class every few summers titled “Composition and Arranging in Elemental Style.” An assignment to compose a work using an extended mode yielded the following example,

“Two Gardeners,” by Wendy Peterson of Fairfax, Virginia, and me (see fig. 11). It is based on a poem of the same name by Douglas Florian in his book *Bing, Bang, Boing*. “Two Gardeners” was composed using the “new mode” once again, this time based on C. The

accompaniment employs a tonic-supertonic triad harmony change, similar to the movement found in Volume II of the Schulwerk editions, but in this mode, both triads are major!

I suspect that the creative possibilities of these new modes would have

**FIGURE 11. TWO GARDENERS**

FIGURE 12. FROLIC FOR JENNY

Steven Calantropio

$\text{♩} = 100$

Soprano Recorder  
Tenor Recorder

Soprano Recorder  
Tenor Recorder

Soprano Recorder  
Tenor Recorder

S Rec  
T Rec  
T Rec

S Rec  
T Rec  
T Rec

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appealed to Keetman in her efforts to understand both the traditional and nontraditional ways that elemental music could be organized.

As we have seen, one of many possible new modes can be created by using the lower tetrachord of the Lydian mode, which we have previously termed as the “4” pattern and connecting it with the upper tetrachord of the Mixolydian mode, which we have called the “2” pattern. The use of the “4” pattern allows only for a half step between the lower and upper tetrachords; all other combinations use a whole step between the component tetrachords. If we transpose this mode to G, the resulting scale is particularly playable on recorders. This mode has a rather playful “wrong note” feel to it; my own composition is modeled on Keetman’s example from the *Spielstücke Für Blockflöte*. I created “Frolic for Jenny” as a recorder trio named for one of my favorite recorder teachers (see fig. 12).

These experiments should be done instrumentally at first, as the new intervals formed by adding or taking away key elements will be very challenging to hear and reproduce.



#### USE IN THE CLASSROOM

The theoretical musings found in this article so far have their place in a teacher’s comprehensive look at Orff Schulwerk. But what is the take-away for children in the music classroom?

I would begin by exploring melo-

dies that students already know well on recorder or barred instruments and adding an unexpected flat or sharp into the key signature while keeping the same tonic pitch. This action throws the piece into a new mode and at first students will hear the altered pitch as “wrong” or “weird sounding.” Try playing an Ionian piece from Volume II adding an F# (Lydian). Play “Happy Birthday” on a recorder with a tonic pitch on G, using an F natural instead of F# (Mixolydian).

These experiments should be done instrumentally at first, as the new intervals formed by adding or taking away key elements will be very challenging to hear and reproduce. Explain the concept of modes as different combinations of whole and half steps, using graphics and manipulatives such as wooden blocks of varying thickness or Lego stacks to illustrate the difference between patterns. In this way, students become aware of greater melodic possibilities outside of the standard major

(Ionian) and minor (Aeolian) realms. Children are much less invested in this traditional system and will be eager to try out new patterns. Label the modes with their correct names only when such a label is useful for categorizing their new creations.

At this point, experimenting with extended modal patterns and other synthetic scales is just a step away, and older students will enjoy the chance to create drone and ostinato patterns in these new modalities. As students create new melodies, encourage them to follow the same rules as traditional melody making; use stepwise motion most often, avoid frequent and large interval skips, employ a repeated pattern within the tune, start and end on a tonic pitch, etc. Using a rhythmic form such as A - B - A - B1 to structure the melody will give the resulting tune a sense of logic and completion.

In closing, I would ask that we see our involvement with Orff Schulwerk teaching in two ways. First, we have a responsibility to continue to learn about the traditional sources and approaches that are part of Schulwerk teaching, now more than sixty years old. Secondly, we have a duty to see beyond the end points defined in the printed materials of the Schulwerk and to explore related and derivative ideas drawn from the original work. In this way, Schulwerk teaching will stay alive and vital for many generations to come. ■



**Steven Calantropio** taught music and movement in River Edge, New Jersey, public schools for thirty-one years. Now retired, he serves as AOSA's education director. Steve continues to teach workshops and conference sessions on Orff Schulwerk both nationally and internationally. He lives in New Jersey's scenic Sussex County. More information is available at [www.scalantropio.com/orff](http://www.scalantropio.com/orff).

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# An Elemental Approach to Composition: Guiding Student Composers

BY SUSANNE BURGESS

A fundamental principle of Orff Schulwerk is the creative work of its students. The elemental exploration of body and voice gives way to imitation and improvisation through the playful investigation of the entire instrumentarium. This child-centered approach aligns with the constructivist philosophy espoused by Piaget and others (Bruner, Dewey, Montessori, and Vygotsky) and to the casual observer appears as nothing more than play. Those unfamiliar with Orff Schulwerk practice can be uneasy about the seemingly chaotic or unstructured exploratory environment, and without some key developmental markers or creative parameters, practitioners of this work often have difficulty getting their students beyond simple mimicry to thoughtful and original musical composition. I have found the hierarchical structure of Bloom's Taxonomy a helpful framework for the introduction, practice, and reflection critical to developmentally appropriate expressive music making and the elemental approach to meaningful composition for my students.

## BLOOM'S TAXONOMY AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK

In the 1950s, Benjamin Bloom and his colleagues at the University of Chicago were exploring how humans learn. The results of their research produced what is known today in the field of education as Bloom's Taxonomy. This hierarchy of learning behaviors was categorized into three interrelated and overlapping learning domains: cognitive (thinking), affective (feeling), and psychomotor (doing). Through six hierarchical levels, learners demonstrate deepening understandings through increasingly complex tasks (see image). Those behaviors at the top of the list are often referred to as "higher-order

## BLOOM'S TAXONOMY IN THE ARTS

### Evaluation

the ability to make a judgment about the value of something

### Synthesis

the ability to combine existing elements in order to create something original

### Analysis

the ability to identify parts, see relationships, and recognize organizational principles

### Application

the ability to use a learned skill in a new situation

### Comprehension

the ability to know what is being communicated in order to make use of the information

### Knowledge

includes both the acquisition of information and the ability to recall it.

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thinking skills" and are still considered benchmarks for achievement across the curriculum. Although others have followed with revisions and adaptations, this fundamental understanding of spiral-bound learning has become a benchmark for thorough and well-developed instruction.<sup>1</sup>

Now—think about the daily events, instructional procedures, and student engagement typical in an Orff Schulwerk classroom. Through the multiple media of barred instruments, unpitched percussion, movement, speech, and song, students experience musical learning through all three of those important learning domains addressed through the Taxonomy. Every time we ask students to explore elemental improvisation and composition, we have presented the opportunity for them to "synthesize" their musical understanding through the creation, arrangement,

and expression of new musical ideas.

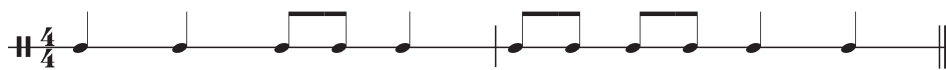
But if we view the improvisation and composition activities common to an Orff Schulwerk classroom through the lens of Bloom's Taxonomy, it's easy to see why fundamental Orff Schulwerk strategies like preliminary play, imitation, and exploration are the necessary predecessors for these higher-order skills. Guiding students to meaningful music composition is a logical extension of the playful approach of Orff Schulwerk pedagogy, but without sequential and explicit instruction along the way, students simply experience "creative activities" that lack purpose and never take them to the depth of understanding of which they are capable. The process from preliminary play into and through improvisation can provide scaffolded and sequential experiences students need to become fluent, expressive composers.

## PRELIMINARY PLAY

Informal experiences in the exploration of the media and materials of Orff Schulwerk offer students critical exposure to the language of music and a necessary foundation for this elemental approach to composition. This is where students become musically conversant and grow expressively with the tools and elements of music. Without this critical exploration, students don't experience the "babble" stage in music—their musical language development is stunted. This earliest step in the process of building expressive composers lays foundational experiences on which more specific instruction will be built later.

- Make music alone and together in many ways (sing, play, move).
- Encourage vocal and instrumental experimentation.
- Offer repeated opportunities for students to engage in all media.
- Celebrate the variety of many "versions" or interpretations of the same piece.

## FIGURE 1. IMITATION LESSON



"Can you create a melody for this rhythm using s-m-l?"

- Prompt students often to "make something up" or "do it differently."
- Model fundamental skills like steady beat and good intonation.

## IMITATION

Commonly, in the imitation stage of the Schulwerk, students are guided toward the accurate replication of musical ideas as a means through which they become familiar with the elements and processes of music. Building auditory skills through echo offers students the opportunity to develop a musical vocabulary: rhythmic and melodic motives, a variety of dynamic and tempo choices, and the wide range of musical timbres available through body percussion and instruments. Through imitation, they assimilate lots

of musical ideas and collect musical "building blocks" that will provide the fundamentals of their musical compositions. To use the language metaphor, imitation is the stage through which students gain vocabulary and learn to "speak" through it, much like a two-year-old acquiring language builds linguistic skills, understanding, and expression. In the elemental composition process of Schulwerk, imitation builds the musical "word bank."

- Offer multiple guided experiences with varied media in a given concept.
- Set criteria through which all examples will be analyzed.
- Begin simply with short phrases that include some repetition.
- Make each motive explicit through multiple engagements,

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varied media, and documentation (iconic representation or traditional notation), and post them in the “toolbox” on your walls for easy access and reference.

- Set small compositional tasks with specific criteria and only one variable (see fig. 1).

### EXPLORATION

Through exposure to the vocabulary of music, students gain the tools to become musically expressive. Exploration is the stage of musical development at which students can “play with the language,” experimenting with its syntax, expression, and fluency. This process is at the heart of elemental composition. Linguistically speaking, children learn to speak so that they can express their own thoughts, as well as to understand and communicate with others. Language teachers often refer to reading and writing as “two sides of the same coin,” implying that these processes are mutually beneficial. What if we never asked students to write down their own ideas and to simply copy the

### CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD MELODY

- Eight-beat phrases
- Step—skip—repeat
- Repetition and contrast
- Busiest in the third part
- Stepwise motion is easiest
- Directional balance
- Often ends on the “resting” tone

words of another? Where would that task fall in Bloom’s Taxonomy? Surely we don’t want our best students stuck in the comprehension stage of learning—linguistically or otherwise—and yet, in music class we often settle for the simple replication of the music of others, or the simplest form of music reading through the decoding of rhythmic or melodic flashcards.

Composition can take on a significant role during the exploration stage of musical development. As students try out new endings or compare and

choose between two instruments to express a melody, they are engaging in Bloom’s highest levels of cognitive understanding. With multiple opportunities to explore the media of Orff Schulwerk and the improvisatory atmosphere of the Orff classroom, students are able to become composers at the earliest stages of their musical lives and develop a depth of musical understanding that far surpasses performance-only experiences.

- Establish an exploratory environment that celebrates risk.
- Talk about the choices students make, and prompt their analysis of why examples do or don’t work.
- From your “toolbox” of explicit examples, offer students multiple opportunities to “fill in the blank” at the end of a familiar rhythmic or melodic phrase.
- Solicit new “tools” from your students as they tire of those available and as they build a broader repertoire of choices.
- Listen to music that exempli-



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fies the musical elements you're working with so students have authentic examples on which to draw.

- Introduce compositional strategies like variation, retrograde, or inversion to broaden students' "toolbox."

## IMPROVISATION

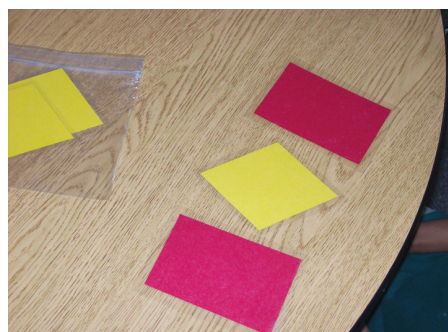
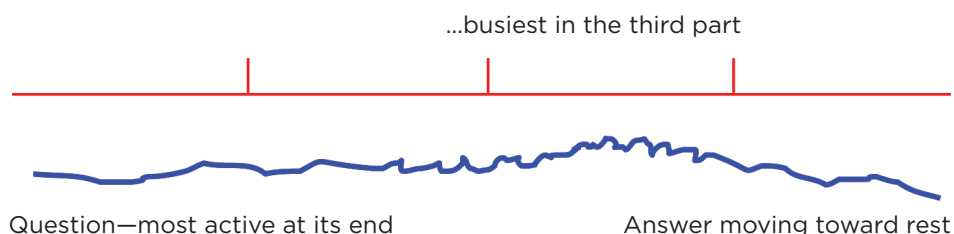
By its very definition, improvisation is an unrehearsed musical expression—an invention of original material. To do it well demands a thorough understanding of music theory, a high degree of auditory acuity, and the technical skill to deliver musical ideas with intention. If you just got an auditory flash of John Coltrane or Thelonius Monk, you know what I mean. Would it surprise you if I asked you to think about one of your first graders in this circumstance? Within the developmentally appropriate context of the elemental theory in the Schulwerk, students can improvise with amazing skill, and through those experiences they can construct compositions with real meaning.

Students in the improvisation stage of musical development continue to explore various musical choices, but at this point they have more experience from which to draw ideas and greater discernment regarding the placement and effectiveness of their musical ideas. To bring the literary metaphor forward, students are now writing their

### IDEAS FOR BEGINNING IMPROVISATION

- Simple question-and-answer examples
- Melodic questions usually ascend
- Melodic answers often end on the resting tone; sometimes they start on the last note of the question
- Phrases are busiest in the third part
- Variations maintain similarity
- Embellishments "make fancy"
- Contains both repetition and contrast

## FIGURE 2. IMPROVISATION LESSON



**Students created this iconic representation for ABA form.**

own letters and stories, applying what they know about sentence structure and syntax to express their own ideas. This work takes students to the application and synthesis levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, offering the opportunity for them to assert their musical independence. Now they have a command of the "toolbox" and enough practice to make intentional innovative and creative musical choices. At first, successful improvisation can be simply making a musical contribution that is the right length or is played at the right time. But very quickly, students enjoy the challenge and satisfaction of making unique contributions to the entire ensemble.

- Use language-based questions to introduce the process. ("What's your favorite color?" "My favorite color is blue.")
- Ask students to improvise an answer to your musical question, and then trade jobs.
- Use visuals or iconic representation to help students "see" their work (see fig. 2).

## COMPOSITION

Because the Orff philosophy is grounded in an experiential and elemental approach to music literacy, composi-

### CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD ACCOMPANIMENT

- Compliments but does not replicate
- the rhythm of the primary part
- Sparse, but effective
- Utilizes silence
- Predictable, sequential, or easily repeated
- Surprises are aptly placed
- Ostinato is a versatile choice

tion is accessible to students before they gain the abstract understanding of musical notation. Remember that we encode music simply because we want to remember what we heard or created—so the listening and creating must come first. Just as primary students in a literacy program are urged to create and tell stories that are dictated to their teachers, so students of the Orff Schulwerk philosophy are invited to become composers long before they can accurately notate their musical expressions. Composition is, however, an excellent way for students to experience music literacy in a personally relevant way. I often have students ask me how to write a rhythmic figure that they hear, and can play, but that is beyond their rhythmic reading level. Isn't that just like the student whose story needs a sophisticated word that she's heard but can't spell? Isn't the teacher delighted that she's developing such a broad listening vocabulary?

Composers write music because they have something important to say—not just because they know lots of notes. Authors have similar intentions: to communicate an important idea or point of view. When we ask

students to engage in musical composition, it's important to remember that this is not simply an exercise in the proper use of sixteenth notes or accurate melodic notation. Yes, those are important aspects of communicating accurately, but they represent only the sounds and ideas for which they are symbols. For students to truly experience Bloom's "synthesis" level of understanding in a musical context, they must engage in the creative exploration and innovative application of skills and knowledge taught along the way. Our goal for student composers is to build the necessary skills and knowledge through which they can accurately depict their musical ideas. Music is a language that communicates our deepest yearnings and celebrates our most exuberant joys. Students will embrace the challenge of composition with abandon when prompted to write for meaning. It's the equivalent of writing about your favorite Grandpa—or taking a spelling test. Which would you rather do?

- Establish clear criteria for each compositional task; open the door to a wide range of possible solutions or interpretations.
- Pose provoking questions that prompt students to compose with purpose.
- Listen to compositions packed with subtext and social context, and guide analytical discussions about how composers have depicted their ideas musically.

## REFLECTION

We read a lot about "reflective practice" these days and are often urged to engage our students in journaling as a tool for cultivating metacognition. As

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD RHYTHM

- Eight-beat phrases are common
- Begins simply—give it somewhere to go
- Uses repetition and contrast
- Busiest in the third part
- Often ends in a beat of silence
- Surprises are aptly placed

early as the 1930s, John Dewey was asserting the importance of reflection on the learning process: "We do not learn from experience ... we learn from reflecting on experience."<sup>2</sup> During the composition process, reflection becomes a vital tool for the revision and refinement of the final product. The creative process demands a fluid approach, and peer editing can be a fruitful strategy through which students consult fellow students to solve a musical problem or gain a wider palette of ideas. The evaluation stage of Bloom's Taxonomy prompts students to make informed decisions and assessments of their work based on the knowledge and skills they have cultivated. As teachers, we often usurp this stage of learning from students in the name of "assessment." It is far more fruitful for students to self-evaluate as a critical step in the "reflect-plan-act-observe-reflect" learning loop. With the purposeful guidance of the teacher, students can gain important insight through the reflective process. When we think of the elemental composition process as a learning tool or instructional goal, instead of a performance outcome,

students' long-term learning is a valuable result.

- Allow a "composition project" to unfold over time, embedding multiple revisions and editing opportunities.
- Prompt students to analyze and evaluate as a reflection on their work.
- Offer multiple opportunities for exploration of a particular concept or idea.
- Once students are old enough to work in collaborative groups, allow them to play their ideas for others and solicit feedback.
- Make the evaluative discussion about the work, not the worker.

Guiding fluent and expressive student composers in the context of elemental music can be an Orff teacher's greatest joy, and with a little structure and scaffolded instruction, students can achieve beyond your wildest expectation! ■



*Susanne Burgess is an Orff Schulwerk practitioner and teacher educator who brings an integrated perspective to teaching and learning that merges instruction in music, dance, and drama. She has a BA in music education from California State University, Fullerton, and an MM from the University of Memphis, where she also completed Level IV Orff teacher education courses. She earned Level II certification in Kodály Methods at the University of Tennessee. She is a regional and national workshop presenter for AOSA and has presented nationally for MENC and ECMMA as well as internationally for ISME (Bologna, Italy, 2008) and GSME (Athens, Greece, 2009).*

1. For revisions, see L.W. Anderson & Krathwohl, eds., *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. (New York: Longman, 2001). For adaptations, see N.L. Webb, "Web Alignment Tool," July 24, 2005. (Wisconsin Center of Educational Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison), accessible online at <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/WAT/index.aspx>.

2. John Dewey, *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process* (1910), rev. ed. (Boston: Heath, 1933).

# Is It Elemental?

BY TIM PURDUM

**M**ost Orff Schulwerk teachers incorporate a mix of American and world folk music, Orff Schulwerk source materials, other composed materials, and original music in their classrooms. We normally choose a song or instrumental piece to achieve a particular curriculum objective: introduction of a specific pitch, rhythm, style, or culture and development of singing or playing technique. Regardless of the specific objective, we strive for high quality, easily accessible materials for our students, and enough flexibility to encourage creativity. “Elemental music” is an Orff Schulwerk term that describes precisely this type of music. Understanding the concept of elemental music helps us choose, arrange, and explore songs and instrumental pieces.

So what is elemental music? According to Carl Orff, it is “music that one makes oneself, in which one takes part not as a listener, but as a participant. It is unsophisticated, employs no big forms and no big architectural structures, and it uses small sequence forms, ostinato and rondo. Elemental music is near the earth, natural, physical, within the range of everyone to learn it and experience it, and suitable for the child ...”<sup>1</sup>

My own definition is simple; Elemental means “of the elements.” What are the elements of music? Melody, rhythm, harmony, and form are four easily identified elements common to most music curricula. (Other elements such as timbre and expression have been left out for simplicity of analysis.) Beginning with these four elements, we can analyze each piece of music to see if it qualifies as “elemental.”

*Melody*—Assuming the piece has a tune, it should be based on a single scale or mode, without key changes or

large numbers of accidentals. The scale should be singable (range, intervals) by the students. The shape of the melodic line should be simple, with small steps, repeated notes, and few large leaps.

*Rhythm and Meter*—These elements should be consistent throughout a section (although shifting/irregular meters work if they are in a pattern). Rhythms should be performable, not necessarily readable. Rhythmic vocabulary also should be consistent throughout.

*Form*—One of the best indicators of elemental music is repetition of patterns in recognizable forms. Short-phrase forms that students can remember are important. If there are larger, sectional forms, these should be used as guidelines.

*Harmony*—An elemental song should be pattern-based, both in form and harmony. Possibilities include single-note drone/bordun, open fifth drone/bordun, shifting chords (e.g., I–ii), or “functional” chords (e.g., I–IV–V) in a simple, recognizable pattern.

Why is this analysis important? Students should interact with the music, making it their own. The more complex any one element of the music is, the more challenging it becomes to play with the element in a creative way—to imitate, explore, arrange, and improvise.

Labeling a piece as “elemental” is not simply black and white, but a continuum from accessible, repetitive, and structural, challenging, complex, and through-composed. When I choose simple, elemental music for my students, *they* have the freedom to arrange the material into more complex forms, add harmonic and rhythmic complexity, and improvise new ideas based on the original work.

Identifying an elemental piece is only the beginning. To truly use the

material in a creative process, one must delve deeper in the analysis of each element.

*Pitch Set*—The pitch set is the collection of all pitches used within the piece. Begin analyzing by reading and playing the tune. Does it fit on a barred instrument (i.e., no accidentals)? Can you take off any of the bars and still play it? This is an easy way to identify the pitch set visually.

*The pentatonic, or five-tone scale*—This is very common across different cultures and styles. The most common form is *anhemitonic*; it contains no half steps. Without accidentals, the pitch set would be C–D–E G–A, F–G–A C–D, or G–A–B D–E. With accidentals, this could be transposed to other keys, maintaining the same intervals (i.e., Bb–C–D F–G or *do-re-mi-so-la, move-able do*). Any one of these five pitches can serve as the tonic or tonal center of a melody.

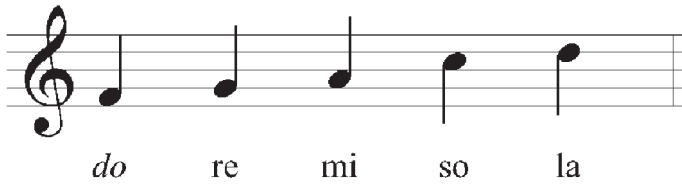
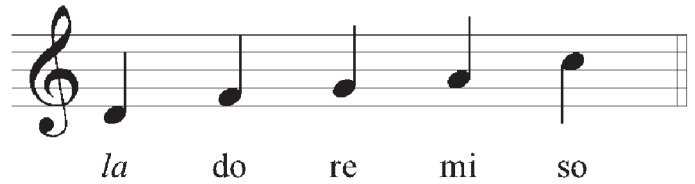
*Bitonic, tritonic, and tetratonic; two-, three-, and four-note scales, respectively*—The actual pitches are less consistent than in pentatonic and often are *mi-so* (bitonic), *mi-so-la* or *do-re-mi* (tritonic), and *do-re-mi-so* or *la-do-re-mi* (tetratonic).

*Hexatonic*—Six-tone scales include either *fa* or *ti*, but not both.

*Pentachord; five tones in a row*—This pitch set is related to hexatonic because it includes the half step around *mi-fa* or *ti-do*, but still has only five tones (i.e., *do-re-mi-fa-so*).

*Diatonic; seven-tone scale, with two half steps*—This is considered a “complete set,” at least on diatonic instruments such as the xylophone. It occurs when using all naturals (no accidentals). This is probably the most common pitch set known today.

*Other*—Anything that does not fall into one of these pitch sets is more

**FIGURE 1****do pentatonic on F****FIGURE 2****la pentatonic on D**

challenging, simply because it involves elaborate set-ups of the barred percussion, or performance on a different instrument. Other possibilities include blues scales, harmonic/melodic minor, and whole tone scales. While not as accessible, these materials indeed may be perfectly suited for older groups of students or for purely vocal exploration.

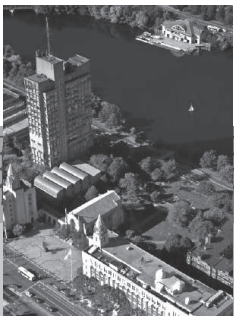
**Tonal Center**—The home tone, tonic, or tonal center of the song is the foundation upon which all harmonies are created. It is established by a holistic analysis of the melody. Some rules of thumb: *Starting note, ending note, most common note*; look for these three factors first. If they all point to the same tone, you have your tonic!

Sometimes the most common tone is actually the dominant, or fifth above the tonic, so check for a second most-common tone.

**Try it.** Not all songs work with a drone accompaniment; the correct tonic or tonic/fifth drone should feel like a resting place at the beginning and/or the end of the melody. It is possible, with a two- or three-note song, to have multiple possible tonic answers. In this case, go for the one that suits your ear the best.

**A note on nomenclature**—The best name for each pitch set/tonic combination is a debated topic; this is my preference. First, name the tonic *syllable*. Second, name the type of pitch set. These two together identify the

“mode” or scale. Finally, to set the range (specific fixed pitches), name the tonic pitch, or a letter name. Thus, “do pentatonic on F” (F-G-A C-D) and “la pentatonic on D” (D E-F-G A C) are the same pitch set (figs. 1 and 2), while “re pentatonic on D” (D-E G-A C) and “re pentatonic on G” (G-A C-D F) are transpositions of the same mode (figs. 3 and 4). To say “C pentatonic-centered on A” would be the equivalent of calling A minor “C Major, centered on A.” It doesn’t make sense to label the pitch set based on one tonic, so change the tonic. For hexatonic scales, *la* hexatonic mode normally includes *la-ti-do-re-mi-so*, while *do* hexatonic includes *do-re-mi-fa-so-la*. Diatonic scales have names derived from ancient Greece that are



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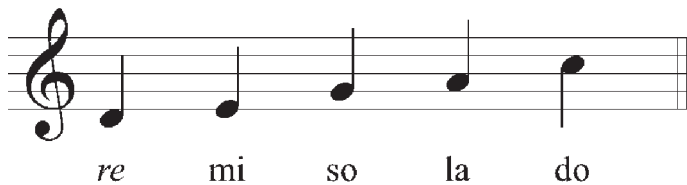
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**FIGURE 3***re* pentatonic on D

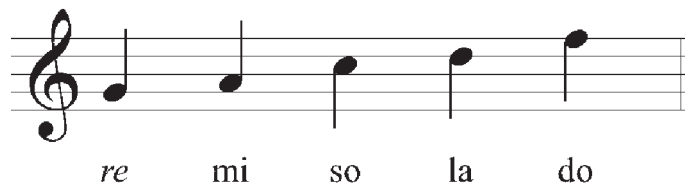
familiar to everyone with basic training in music theory: Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, and Aeolian, each with their own specific pattern of whole and half steps.

Once the scale or mode is determined, it is possible to create improvisatory melodic activities that fit with the music, possibly extending the form, or creating harmonic parts. It should be remembered that subsets of the pitch sets can always be used for exploration and still sound appropriate (such as *do-re-mi* in pentatonic).

*Rhythm and Form*—These elements are fundamental to exploration, improvisation, and composition. Rhythms can be broken down into component parts, often called rhythmic building blocks that can be rebuilt into new patterns. Students can explore parallel versus complementary rhythmic ostinati to accompany the song. The phrase form of the original piece (i.e., *aaba*) can assist students in deciding when to repeat material and when to create a contrasting phrase. The most common elemental phrase forms for improvisation are the two-lettered forms: *abab*, *aabb*, *aaba*, *abba*, and *aaab*. (Less common are *abaa* and *abbb*.)

*Harmony*—Creating an appropriate accompaniment for an elemental song is sometimes the most challenging step. It is important to lead your students to something that will work well, so you must know where you are going ahead of time. Decide whether you are going to stay true to a limited scale or broaden the pitch set for harmonic reasons. There are many examples of pentatonic melodies that sound best when harmonized with a full seven tones.

*Drone/Bordun*—This is a tonic note or tonic and fifth drone, sustained, played on the beat, or played to an ostinato rhythm. There are many va-

**FIGURE 4***re* pentatonic on G

rieties, some involving alternating the tonic and fifth (broken, arpeggiated) and some introducing neighbor tones on weak beats (moving). The key to a drone/bordun is that it *emphasizes the tonic on every strong beat*. This definition points to the most obvious reason not

to use a drone—if there is a dissonant tone (one step above or below the tonic) in the melody on these same strong beats. The most common example is a *do* pentatonic melody that lands on *re* on a downbeat, especially at the end of a phrase. To ears that are trained in nu-

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merous popular and art music based on chord progressions, continuing a drone underneath this accented *re* often feels forced and unnatural. This is the time we want to move away from the tonic and play or “imply” (by lack of the tonic) an alternate chord.

**Shifting Chords**—This is really an organic outgrowth of the moving bordun. The main difference is that now the shift happens on strong beats, and not always in a simple pattern. Common examples include I–ii in Ionian, i–VII in Dorian/Aeolian, and I–VII in Mixolydian. While these examples are in diatonic scales, hexatonic or pentatonic scales also can be harmonized appropriately with shifting chords.

**Dominant and Subdominant Progressions**—This is the familiar I–V or I–IV–V pattern that is common in modern popular music and some folk music. It should be used especially if the melody outlines the dominant chord at any point (i.e., *so-ti-re* in Io-

nian). At this point, most music begins falling into the major or minor keys, including harmonic or melodic minor (with accidentals). Dominant harmony is less common with modal melodies. The easiest way to approach I–V on a barred instrument is by playing a tonic-fifth drone on the I chord and simply removing the tonic and doubling the fifth for the V chord. While this does not give the entire dominant chord, it implies it well in the bass line. Other harmonic parts can fill in the rest of the chord.

As you and your students explore the rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and formal possibilities of an elemental tune, remember to keep the elemental ideals in mind. Often, the best arrangements are the simplest, with a focus on simple scales, layers of repetitive patterns, and recognizable forms, both large and small. Elemental music and arrangements represent the best way to involve *all* students in the creative and

performing process, and they break down the barriers that our society has created around being a musician. Music is an *elemental* part of the human experience and is too important to be reserved for a special few. As the old Zimbabwean saying goes, “If you can speak, you can sing. If you can walk, you can dance.” This is the essence of the elemental music experience. ■



**Tim Purdum** teaches pre-K–12 music at Malcolm Price Laboratory School in Cedar Falls, Iowa. He founded the Baldwin-Wallace Orff Schulwerk summer course in 2009, where he continues to teach Level I Basic. With a focus on composition, creative process, and sequence, he has presented at numerous chapter, state, and national events. He is a NBPTS certified teacher and newsletter editor, webmaster, and past president of the first Iowa Orff chapter of AOSA.

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# Learning Pieces or Opening Doors? Recorder in the Schulwerk

BY JO ELLA HUG

When given the opportunity to observe master teachers in the Orff Schulwerk world, I find myself evaluating their dedication to the principles of Keetman and Orff by their approach to recorder instruction. All too often, when the medium is recorder, I see fine teachers of the Schulwerk retreat into traditional music teaching based predominantly on note reading. Improvisation is the heart and soul of the Schulwerk, but too many people teach recorder as if it were a matter of learning fingerings and pieces instead of opening doors.

In a 1992 article, Isabel McNeill Carley clearly states that which should be obvious: “The logic of the Orff sequence itself is enormously clarified and reinforced in the students’ minds when we follow a parallel approach in teaching the recorder instead of treating it as an entirely separate discipline, as it is usually done.”<sup>1</sup> The focus on recorder instruction as a component of the elemental learning process dictates an Orff Schulwerk approach to recorder rather than one based solely on published resources.

Why do highly qualified Orff Schulwerk teachers abandon elemental learning for recorder instruction? Perhaps the abundance of published material gives a false sense of the attachment between music reading and recorder playing. Perhaps teachers are less secure in their own skills with the recorder than with a hand drum or xylophone. Regardless of the reason, it is of paramount importance for teachers to develop and model high-level skills, not only as recorder technicians but also as improvisers. Doreen Hall says it succinctly: “It is essential that the teacher be able to play and improvise freely on the recorder whether

It is of paramount importance for teachers to develop and model high-level skills, not only as recorder technicians but also as improvisers.



the children are doing rhythmic body movements or basic ostinati on the instruments.”<sup>2</sup> From the teacher’s example comes the students’ concept of tone, articulation, and style.

Recorder playing has many technical layers that must be addressed in order to arrive at aesthetically pleasing musical expression. The instrument requires little breath but much control—a learned response over time. Muscles learn slowly, and note fingerings must be automatic to achieve a musical response. Therefore, it makes a great deal of sense to approach recorder first through the ear, not through the eye, in connection with music reading. The teacher’s greatest challenge is to find, create, or bring forth from the children musically rewarding material that is technically simple enough for the student to engage without fear and that allows them to move to the next level of understanding.

In her book, *Orff-Schulwerk Applications for the Classroom*, Brigitte Warner postulates the need for extensive basic Schulwerk training before beginning the study of recorder. She states that recorder instruction is feasible

no earlier than third grade (age nine) and should follow years of basic Orff Schulwerk education.<sup>3</sup> She believes this previous experience will allow the student to engage quickly with a limited-note vocabulary using familiar structures such as echo-play, conversational pieces, and rhythmic variations. While opinion is divided about the best progression of notes, most teachers acknowledge the need to start with two notes and expand skills as students demonstrate preparedness to move forward. It is better to have students play musically in a limited range, using good tone and musical understanding, than to rush into new notes before the muscles and the mind are ready for additional challenge.

*Elemental Recorder Playing* by Gunild Keetman and Minna Ronnefeld, with English translation/adaptation by Mary Shamrock,<sup>4</sup> is a remarkable resource for the Orff Schulwerk teacher who wishes to address the recorder in a manner consistent with the elemental style in the *Music for Children* volumes. It would be expected that the first notes introduced would be sol and mi, the “call.” Notes C’ – A are sol and mi in F–do pentatonic, or do and la in A–la pentatonic. Experienced Schulwerk teachers will find a familiar progression with the use of speech and singing for the development of rhythm, an emphasis on movement to achieve musical flow, experimentation with form, and expansion of ideas in texture and timbre. The contribution of Gunild Keetman and Minna Ronnefeld to the understanding of the recorder in the Orff Schulwerk context cannot be overstated. Musical literacy is a natural outgrowth of the learning sequence—not a road block to beginning engagement with the recorder. *Elemental Recorder Playing* is an excellent model

for recorder application comparable to the *Music for Children* volumes in the learning progression of the other Schulwerk media.

Many adult learners in the process of exploring Orff Schulwerk are privileged to experience the recorder compositions of Gunild Keetman. Much of her work is preserved through publications of music developed during the days of the Güntherschule in Munich, Germany. In a research thesis prepared for the University of St. Thomas,<sup>5</sup> Ann Sitzman used the following quotes to help the reader understand the landscape in which Keetman was composing: “By 1928 she was using xylophones and recorders to compose most of the music for the school’s dance group.”<sup>6</sup> “In 1930, Keetman and Maja Lex founded and directed the Güntherschule dance orchestra, a group of students who choreographed dances, composed music, and performed their creations across Europe. Performers played instruments such as recorders and small percussion instruments to accompany others.”<sup>7</sup> Wonderful resources from this rich experience, such as *Spielstücke für kleines Schlagwerk*, *Stücke für Flöte und Trommel*, and *Spielstücke für Blockflöten, 1a and 1b* demonstrate elemental composition applied to the world of the adult musician.

“Elemental music is never music alone but forms a unity with movement, dance, and speech.”<sup>8</sup> Keetman dedicated herself to developing a style of composition that reflected the principles of elemental music making as applied to the recorder. The

It is imperative that teachers of children view these resources as wonderful models rather than a standard of playing to be reached with children.



pieces from the Güntherschule era fairly burst with rhythms that suggest movement and captivate the performer and listener with the interaction of recorder, percussion, and movement. It is imperative that teachers of children view these resources as wonderful models rather than a standard of playing to be reached with children. Brigitte Warner stated, “They are as stylistically relevant to elemental music in our time as they were then, though for the most part too challenging for youngsters, since she worked only with young adults in those early years of Schulwerk.”<sup>9</sup>

As a recorder performer and a teacher of adult recorder students, I am grateful for the models provided and the gold mine of pieces we have from the musical genius of the composer Gunild Keetman. As a teacher of recorder to children, I am challenged to be true to the fundamental principles

of Orff Schulwerk while helping them develop a solid base of technical skill. Technical skill will give them access to the world of music available, but understanding of elemental music making will give them access to the world of music they can create.

Words from Isabel McNeill Carley capture the essence of the challenge: “Making music come alive requires a surprising number of related abilities: fine muscle control; aural awareness, memory, and imagination; concentration on technical details without losing sight of the whole; and musical understanding that permits genuine interpretation, no matter how basic the level of performance. This is a long-term undertaking which a skillful teacher can transform into a rewarding adventure for the students entrusted to us.”<sup>10</sup> Learning pieces or opening doors? I believe it is our responsibility to learn pieces *and* open doors. ■



*Jo Ella Hug is a past president of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association (AOSA) and teaches pedagogy and recorder in AOSA teacher education courses. She lives in Missoula, Montana, where she teaches young adolescent learners in an Orff Schulwerk/choral program in a large middle school.*

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# Making the Most of Folk Songs: Analysis within the Schulwerk

BY CRYSTAL SCHLIEKER

**F**olk music is an invaluable asset to children's music education across the world. Stories, history, emotions, and fun and games are all easily conveyed through the music and lyrics of folk and traditional songs. Carl Orff greatly honored and respected the folk music of all cultures and recognized the genre as a logical starting place for developing a child's musicianship. "The natural starting place for work with children is the children's rhyme, the whole riches of the old, appropriate children's songs."<sup>1</sup>

With thousands of folk songs available, how does a teacher make wise choices regarding this literature? In my experience, working through the folk-song-analysis process is a helpful tool. The entire process consists of two parts: a collection of songs that are analyzed for musical and historical content and a retrieval system to help the teacher group and cross-reference the songs. This process assists in selecting folk music and in analyzing and choosing elemental music. The end goal is to link the two genres, elemental and folk music, into a cohesive curriculum.

## WHY THE ANALYSIS PROCESS?

The analysis process allows the teacher to delve into the music and truly learn a folk song, not only for its lyrics but also for all of its musical nuances, as well as song history and background. At first thought, the purpose of transferring a song from a printed source might seem like a pointless task. However, the benefits of the process make taking the time to write out the song a valuable use of your time:

- It helps you thoroughly memorize the song, which is necessary for teaching the song to children. You learn songs through inner hearing.

The analysis process allows the teacher to delve into the music and truly learn a folk song, not only for its lyrics but also for all of its musical nuances



- It is necessary for writing quality instrumental arrangements of songs. The arranger must be keenly aware of all musical aspects of a song if additional written parts are to be implemented successfully.
- It requires you to analyze the song. Many of the best resources of authentic folk music simply contain the songs with verses and perhaps some dance or game instructions and do not highlight pedagogical or historical uses for the song. The individual teacher must do this work.

## Process for Analyzing Folk Music

The analysis process can be quite time consuming, but it is a learned activity, and the ease of the process increases over time and with practice. Approach the music systematically and carefully. As you use this process, you will learn what steps are useful for your teaching; you may choose to omit some steps or add others. See figure 1 for an analyzed example of *Great Big House in New Orleans*.<sup>2</sup>

## Step One: Transferring the Song According to Phrase Structure

When analyzing a song, the first step is to identify the phrases and structure of the song. This can be done by singing it and noting how the text and music interact. Note the time signature when identifying phrases. Careful consideration must be given to the way a child would sing or perceive the song. We must look at the song for the most natural phrase divisions and briefly put our musical training aside to hear the song for its simplicity and natural flow. Once phrases and structure are identified, transfer the song by writing it out on paper or with notation software according to that phrase structure, with one phrase for each line. I prefer to transfer my songs to a sheet that has spaces for me to record the analysis. This step is crucial if the natural phrase structure is different from the printed source.

## Step Two: Form

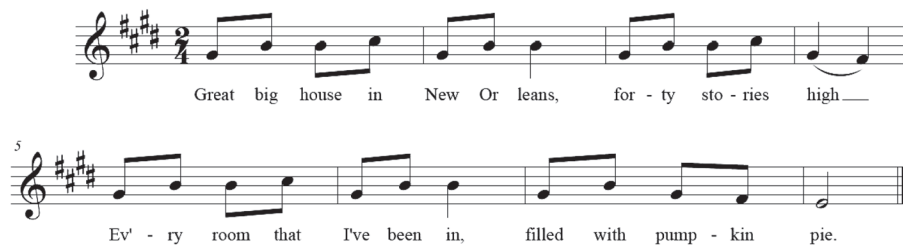
Once you have identified the phrases, notice the form. Form is of particular importance in the Schulwerk. Folk songs and elemental music have many similarities; therefore, the forms found in *Music for Children* and other examples will often appear in folk literature. Note the cadences of the phrases. This is especially helpful in arranging instrumental accompaniments and teaching chord progressions in the classroom.

## Step Three: Rhythmic Content

At this stage, you will clearly begin to identify the rhythmic structure of the song. Start by identifying common and musically complete patterns. Often these patterns will be four beats long. Because children hear music in collective patterns, focus on patterns and not

FIGURE 1

<b>Scale:</b> do pentatonic <b>Form:</b> A Av <b>Themes:</b> food travel <b>Style/Type:</b> play party <b>Ethnic:</b> Anglo-American <b>Geography:</b> Ohio		<b>Roles:</b>	
<b>Mood/Tempo:</b> energetic <b>Metronome:</b> 104 <b>Comfortable starting pitch:</b> G# <b>Difficulties:</b>		<b>Great Big House in New Orleans</b> Heath, Carol. <i>The Song Garden II</i> . Kodály Musical Training Institute. Pg. 22	
<b>Syllables:</b> do re mi sol la <b>Rhythmic Patterns:</b> □ □ J □ □ □   <b>Grade Level:</b> 2nd <b>Meter:</b> 2/4		<b>Range:</b> M6 <b>Melodic Patterns:</b> m s s l m s s m s m r d <b>Games:</b> circle <b>Other:</b>	
		<b>Classroom Use:</b> Half note add melodic ostinato for singing/recorder Re (change to key of G) Slur canon (2 beat) 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> endings	



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single-beat rhythms. List the rhythmic patterns individually.

#### Step Four: Melodic Content

Next, look at the song melodically. The first step is to identify the tone set of the song. The tone set consists of the scale degrees present in the song. Using solfège can help you identify the tone set, range, and mode of the song. Many folk-song books notate all songs with G as the tonal center for research purposes. This may or may not place the song in a singable key for children. You may need to choose a different, more suitable key when singing with children. Look for repetitive and complete melodic patterns, as well as motives. These patterns and intervals are useful in teaching the song and providing pedagogical focus. Take note of any difficult passages to sing.

#### Step Five: Thematic, Stylistic, and Historical Information

Folk music is truly a marriage of text and melody. This is evident in the

themes and roles in the song. Themes will vary from simple to deep and profound. Next, note the style of song (ballad, game song, play party, etc.), as well as its ethnicity and geography. Obtaining this information may require outside research.

#### Step Six: Classroom Use

All of this preparation work is merely the procedure needed for the most practical and useful part: listing its use in the classroom. This section will help you decide where the song should be placed in your scope and sequence. It may fit within a tone-set focus. You might find that the rhythmic patterns are similar to the rhythmic building blocks you are using for improvisation. Perhaps you want to focus on the form of the piece. The theme might fit seasonally or within the scheme of a program. The song may simply be a lovely ballad that you wish to sing aloud to the children at the end of a class, or it might fit with a picture book. Noting this information simply enables you to use the song fully.

#### Step Seven: Creating a Retrieval System for Your Collection

Finally, to have easy access to this information, enter the song into a song-retrieval system. This usually takes the form of a cross-referencing index. There are a variety of methods: making lists, using a spreadsheet such as Microsoft Excel, or using a specific program made for folk-song retrieval. Having your song information cross-referenced and located in one central place will help you find songs quickly for specific concepts in order to plan your lessons efficiently.

#### APPLICATION TO ELEMENTAL MUSIC

This exact process is extremely useful when I analyze and study music from the *Music for Children* volumes. Although the volumes are already organized and sequenced within themselves, this process can help you further organize specific pieces within your entire pedagogical collection.

The same type of repetition of melodic and rhythmic structure and form exist in elemental music as in folk music. Rhythmically, when analyzing elemental music, you look for complete phrases, especially as you consider adding phrases of text to fit the music. Melodically, using solfège with analyzing the pieces in the volumes is helpful. In the same way that many published folk songs are centered on G, *Music for Children* is notated with C do, which may or may not be the desired key for children, depending on the planned performance mode—xylophones, recorders, singing, etc. Even if you do not plan on teaching a piece using solfège with the students, it is a practical tool for your personal preparation. Take time to identify and note specific places that may be tricky to play on the xylophones or recorders. Then you can prepare the students with the necessary mallet technique or fingering practice to facilitate a smooth performance. See Figure 2 for an analyzed canon exercise from *Music for Children*, Volume I.<sup>3</sup> Note that many of the classroom uses for the *Canon and Great Big House in New Orleans* are the same. Therefore, these two pieces could easily be placed together in a scope and sequence.

## SUMMARY

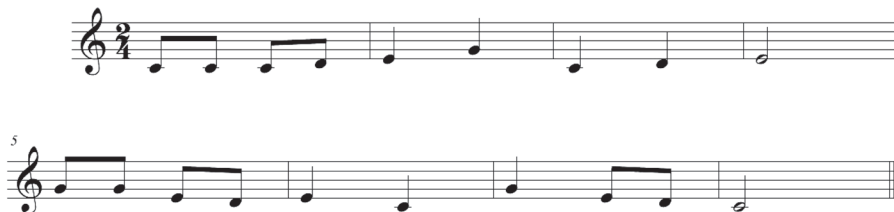
This analysis process has transformed my teaching. I keep a binder filled with my chosen versions of folk songs. They are indexed and cross-referenced. I have my songs classified in categories of folk songs, classical-music listening examples, art music, part work, and elemental music. Because all classes vary, it is helpful have many song options quickly accessible for ease of planning. It is important that your system fits your current needs but is flexible for the future. Though this whole process seems long, it gets easier and quicker with practice. Begin your collection by analyzing one song from your lesson plan for each class. Your collection will grow over time and will construct a woven tapestry of elemental music and folk songs to expand your students' repertoire and fuel their creativity. ■



**Crystal Schlieker** currently teaches lower-school general music at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools. Prior to coming to Chicago, she taught K-12 general and choral music at Shenyang International School in Shenyang, China. She holds a BS in music education from Asbury College, and a MEd and Kodály certification from Capital University. She has completed Levels I-III Orff Schulwerk teacher education courses from the University of Kentucky and Anderson University.

## FIGURE 2

<b>Scale:</b> do tetratonic <b>Form:</b> A B <b>Themes:</b> <b>Roles:</b>  <b>Style/Type:</b> canon <b>Ethnic:</b> <b>Geography:</b>	<b>Canon Exercise #2</b>  Orff and Keetman. <i>Music for Children Vol. I</i> Ed. Margaret Murray, Schott, 1958. Pg. 91
<b>Mood/Tempo:</b> Varies depending on performance mode <b>Metronome:</b> 92-126 <b>Comfortable starting pitch:</b> C (xyl.) D (voice) G (recorder) <b>Difficulties:</b>	<b>Syllables:</b> <i>do re mi sol</i> <b>Range:</b> P5 <b>Rhythmic Patterns:</b> □ □            d d d r m s    d r m       J      s s m r m d    s m r d   □ J <b>Grade Level:</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> <b>Games:</b> <b>Meter:</b> 2/4 <b>Other:</b>
	<b>Classroom Use:</b> Half note Re B A G D' on recorder (in key of G) Canon (2 beat)



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# Using Orff Schulwerk Elemental Principles in a High School Ensemble Setting

BY BOB GOLD

**B**eginning with the exploration of a simple musical idea seems like an obvious way to teach improvisation, especially to those who have been exposed to the Orff Schulwerk process. However, many teachers of middle- and high-school performance ensembles overlook the value of elemental concepts when teaching improvisation, if they teach it at all.

I place great value on the experience of students improvising together, yet I have found that otherwise well-trained instrumentalists can be more inhibited than “laymen” when it comes to the freedom of choosing notes in an improvisation. “What do I play?” asks the trained instrumentalist who has always been given a prescribed series of notes to play, often composed by great masters. I tell them that the idea is to play first—that you can’t begin without beginning—and get a bemused look in return.

I recently had this experience at a mid-sized urban high school, where I had the opportunity to work with a small number of exceptionally talented instrumentalists who had little or no prior experience in improvisation. With my background in Orff Schulwerk and prior experience teaching younger students, this was my chance to apply elemental concepts from Orff Schulwerk to broaden the experience of advanced high-school students and expand their ideas of improvisational freedom from the jazz-band context.

Elemental music, which could be considered the core concept of the Orff Schulwerk teaching process, is defined in many different but related ways. Carl Orff described its proportions as “unsophisticated, employs no big forms and no big architectural structures, and it uses small sequence forms, ostinato

**FIGURE 1. SCALE EXAMPLES FOR IMPROVISATION**



By constraining them to the fundamental paradiddle patterns used in teaching drums and gradually adding shifting accents, we explored the concept of “less is more.”



and rondo.”<sup>1</sup> Nick Wild speaks of it as “pattern-based music built on natural speech and body rhythms, familiar melodic patterns, and simple forms that can be learned, created, understood, and performed without extensive technical or theoretical musical training.”<sup>2</sup> Steve Calantropio highlights “an emphasis on creation and improvisation throughout teaching and learning.”<sup>3</sup> Finally, Brigitte Warner suggests that elemental music “is not usually premeditated or composed... it is ‘ensemble’ music in the sense that everyone participates.”<sup>4</sup>

Because rhythm is a unifying force in the assembly of our elemental structures, we began with rhythmic warm-

ups, challenging the rhythmic understanding of the students. When asked to create their own rhythms, however, what these advanced students produced was full of complexity, including odd meters and a noticeable lack of “feel.” They did not understand the value of simplification—a classic case of the cart being put before the horse.

By constraining them to the fundamental paradiddle patterns used in teaching drums and gradually adding shifting accents, we explored the concept of “less is more.”<sup>5</sup> In this way, we reinforced the elemental layer of rhythm with steadiness and musicality while still providing a new challenge for these more advanced players.

Our next step was applying the right and left strokes to different timbres—for example, two hand drums of different sizes or two different notes on the xylophone. In this way, the rhythmic exercise became melodic. Now, the students were better prepared for an elemental approach to improvisation on their primary instruments, but they were still hesitant to take their first steps.

To break the ice, I searched my laptop files and found several scales of different global affiliation.<sup>6</sup> I wrote them out on the chalkboard as optional sets of notes for use in the bass line, texture, and melody. The examples are shown above (see fig. 1).

Using these unfamiliar and colorful

tone sets over pattern-based I–V, I–IV, and/or I–VI accompaniments (already familiar to the students from theory class) provided a “safe” context for the students to improvise on their primary instruments.

Using an electric keyboard, I was able to call up wind-instrument timbres that added a more ethnic flavor to the students’ improvisations. With the Pelog and Kumoi pentatonic scales, each using half steps, Asian-sounding improvisations came easily. I was also able to demonstrate single note drones—for example, a low C under the Middle Eastern scale, using sounds closer to what the students might actually hear in the field. Within a few

minutes, we had begun to play off of each other, and a playful request for falafel and hummus was heard.

This type of opportunity to explore and improvise can be overlooked easily in the world of upper-school ensembles, where performance expectations often shape the direction of the entire music program. However, elemental experiences in improvisation can develop a sense of ownership and independence that will inform students’ musical experiences long after they graduate. Preliminary exercises, unfamiliar scales, and the use of technology all help create a safe environment for the more self-conscious and classically trained older learner. For that reason—

and I might add, for the fun of it—I encourage these experiences both in private lessons and in school settings. ■



**Bob Gold** studied piano privately with Irene Beck through high school.

Returning to music after college, Bob pursued improvised forms of music, including jazz and other idioms. After leading trios, recording, and performing solo in the Philadelphia area, he began to concentrate on teaching. He completed his Orff Schulwerk teacher education courses in 2010 at Villanova University. He has a master’s degree in teaching from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

1. Carl Orff, *Orff-Schulwerk: Past & Future*, from *Orff Re-Echoes Book 1*, ed. Isabel McNeill Carley (AOSA, 1977), 6.
2. Nick Wild, “Defining Elemental Music,” available online at <http://www.scalantropio.com/Orff/whatiselementalmusic.html>, accessed on July 25, 2011.
3. Steve Calantropio, “Process Teaching: Finding the Elements,” *The Orff Echo* (summer 2004): 28
4. Brigitte Warner, *Orff-Schulwerk Applications for the Classroom* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1991), 8.
5. “Drummer Rudiments, Including Paradiddles,” available online at <http://www.all-about-drum-set-drumming.com/paradiddle-drum-rudiments.html>, accessed on August 5, 2011.
6. William F. Lee, *Music Theory Dictionary: The Language and Mechanics of Music* (New York: C. Hansen Educational Music and Books, 1965), 84–85.

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# Teaching Folk Dancing in Middle School

BY TARA FINNE

**A**s I began my process of preparing for a new school year last fall, it dawned on me that I was about to embark on my fifteenth year as a professional music educator. It's interesting because I have always fancied myself a "young" teacher. Well, I suppose I'm not too young anymore; instead, I'm more experienced, settled, and happier. I also realized that in fifteen years I have continuously worked in urban populated areas with students from a wide variety of diverse backgrounds and that my passion lies in sharing the beauty and excitement of the Orff Schulwerk process with these amazing kids.

Personally, I have always loved to dance, and I developed a fascination and passion for folk dance through my Orff levels training. Sharing this beautiful music through classroom folk dance experiences is relatively easy with elementary students, as they are young enough to think anything is fun and not self-conscious enough to care how they look spinning their bodies around the classroom. My middle-school students however, grades six through eight, are quite a different story (I'm sure many who teach or have taught middle school can relate). Earlier in my career, this served as a source of frustration because while I knew many of the more complicated dances were quite achievable by older students, I struggled to engage them due to the dancing, which was highly unfamiliar to them as well as the music, which was completely foreign.

Middle-school students, in general, are naturally curious, but also naturally self-conscious and tend to "follow the leader" (i.e., the child with the strongest personality in the class). I discovered through great trial and error that by focusing on winning over the strong

personalities in my classes, and by introducing folk music in a silly and fun manner, the students became slowly willing to not only listen to a variety of original folk dance music, but also perform the dances. At this point, I have many classes with students in grades five through eight who ask repeatedly to perform a particular dance for fun or question inquire if I am going to teach them something more difficult as they are excited for the challenge.

How did I get to this point? It was not without a struggle, and it took determination. Believe me—my middle-school students still need encouragement daily, and I am always trying to find new techniques to motivate them. The following is an outline of a few simple steps I have taken and recommend to engage middle-school students, especially those in urban populations with folk dance music from a variety of cultures.

## STEP 1

For a first experience, select a dance and representative music that is upbeat and fun with a simple beat to follow. I recommend Bela Kawe found in the *Rhythmically Moving* CD collection (which accompanies the Phyllis S. Weikart's book, *Teaching Movement and Dance: A Sequential Approach to Rhythmic Movement*). Ask students to initially just listen to this music and make some comments as to what they heard, whether they liked or disliked the sounds and why.

## STEP 2

Engage students in the folk music by discussing its origin and how it is different from the music they listen to every day. You may also need to familiarize yourself with your students' favorite styles of music so you can find

similarities in the folk music and show these to your students. This comparison helps to open their minds to the idea of accepting a new kind of sound. Next, have the students accompany the recorded folk music with drums and non-pitched percussions instruments to further engage them in the enjoyment of the music as well as begin to interact musically with the rhythm and sound as a preparation for movement and dance. Interacting with the music in this way is far less threatening than moving directly to the dance.

## STEP 3

The next step is to introduce the dance in a non-threatening, silly way by selecting part or parts of the movement that are individually based (i.e., not partner work or dancing in which they need to touch another person). Do this by demonstrating the movement yourself. Do not be afraid to be vulnerable and silly in front of the kids. This is often a challenge with middle-school students because they love to laugh at everything! Use this energy and humor to get them to laugh at you through the movement. This should not be an experience in which you are "made fun of" negatively, rather it should feel positive. Showing your openness will help them to feel more comfortable dancing on their own, eventually. Students of this age often value attention from their classmates, especially those students who tend to be leaders in the group. Engage these students by asking them to volunteer to dance either alone or along with a few other students for the class. Offer extra credit and encourage them to be silly as well. These students are often the more self-assured and enjoy making their peers laugh and have a good time. The goal of this step is to show that

this kind of dancing is fun and enjoyable. If the leader students in the group initiate the dancing, other students are sure to follow.

#### STEP 4

At this point, invite—but don't force—about half of the class to attempt the dance movement while the other half remains playing along with the rhythm on non-pitched percussion instruments. If this goes well, try having the students switch places. Make sure that you create a relaxed and welcome atmosphere in the room for dancing. Select a day when there are no special visitors in your room for observations or any other reason. If the students ask if they will be performing this in front of others, say “no.” You may have every intention of having it performed, but the impetus for that should come from the students themselves. When they start to feel confident and love the dance, they will ask you if they can perform it. It is then when you can respond with saying something like: “What a great idea!” This helps them to feel even more ownership of their own musicianship.

#### STEP 5

Eventually, encourage all of the students to dance together. Remember that this may take several lessons, especially if your students are not accustomed to dancing in class. You can eventually attempt dances that involve partners, hand-holding, and even switching partners. The goal with middle-school students is to make them feel powerful and confident during one of the most painfully self-conscious points in their lives. Never worry about the dance looking perfect; feel free to change the steps to your

## Resources for Great Dances

### ***Teaching Movement and Dance: A Sequential Approach to Rhythmic Movement, 5th ed.***

By Phyllis S. Weikart (High Scope Press, 2003)

### ***Rhythmically Moving CD set of 9 Compact Disk recordings that accompany Weikart's book.***

(I purchased these after my Level I class and it was the best purchase I have ever made for my classroom. There are a wealth of dances on these disks; they can be used with all children and adults.)

### ***Folk Dance Music for Kids and Teachers (Syllabus)***

By Sanna Longden (West Music, 1997)

(This syllabus will come with an accompanying CD. It is also available on DVD for live viewing of her dances.)

### ***More Folk Dance Music for Kids and Teachers (Syllabus)***

By Sanna Longden (West Music, 1997)

(This syllabus will come with an accompanying CD. It is also available on DVD for live viewing of her dances.)

### ***Cultures and Styling in Folk Dance***

By Sanna Longden and Phyllis Weikart (High Scope Press, 1998)

(This is a great resource for learning the correct styling, dress, history, and nuances of various dances. This book accompanies the Weikart dance book quite well.)

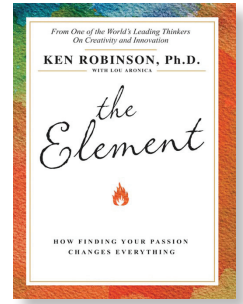
own individual needs. As Orff Schulwerk practitioners we are continuously changing, adapting, re-creating, and improvising our lessons and materials to best fit our own situations and students' interests. Most important of all, have fun with your students. Middle-school-age children have the sixth sense of knowing when you are happy, angry, frustrated, or elated—even if you think you aren't showing it. By being truly joyful yourself, you encourage them to be equally joyful, and dance, dance, dance! ■



**Tara Finne** teaches music to students in kindergarten through eighth grade at Risen Christ School in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She received her master's degree with a concentration in Orff Schulwerk from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. As a longtime educator of at-risk students, she believes in the power of the Orff Schulwerk approach to reach and inspire all children of any age.

# The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything

By Sir Kenneth Robinson, PhD, with Lou Aronica  
Viking, 2009



There is a place down deep that all imaginative humans seek when creating. It is fairly difficult to describe, but it is there that life takes on radiance and a soul-touching sweetness. People sometimes compare this place to what heaven might be like. In the moments we are allowed into this rarified domain, life is unspeakably good and all-consuming. We are unaware of time, and our eyes are opened to truths and all kinds of awakenings. To get there, we have to be in a state of complete comfort and satisfaction, doing what we do best from a place where life flows, and where it takes little effort to assign great intensity to any task.

The luminary English author Sir Kenneth Robinson has written a compelling book about the importance of *finding* this place. He calls it “The Element” and describes it as “the meeting point between natural aptitude and personal passion”—i.e., “I get it. I love it. I want it. Where is it?”<sup>1</sup> He feels we are all born with tremendous natural capacities but can lose touch with them as we spend time in the world. He also feels “too many people never connect with their true talents and don’t know what they’re capable of achieving of who they really are.” Their resources are therefore undiscovered, and often their lives are not fully lived.

Throughout the book, he has a fairly cautious attitude about schools and teaching in general and the mistakes made in assessing students. In one of many true examples, he writes about a young girl named Gillian who couldn’t sit still—the typical “move-all-the-time child.” It was so troubling to the teacher that she insisted the

girl be assessed by a psychiatrist, with the possibility of medicine looming in the distance to cope with what was perceived as a possible ADD condition. The wise doctor interviewed the girl (who later told him that she could think better when she was moving), and at the end of the meeting, he and her mother left the girl alone in the room for a minute with some music playing. Looking through the two-way mirror, they saw Gillian begin to move immediately, subsequently turning to all-out dance. He told the girl’s mother to get her dance lessons and that she was clearly *meant* to move! She turned out to be Gillian Lynne, who became a very famous English dancer and choreographer.

Robinson gives other compelling examples of how teachers often miss helping students find their “element”: In a commencement speech he once gave in Liverpool, Sir Paul McCartney spoke afterwards to the points Robinson had made. He shared that he’d never liked music at all in the schools, that he went through his entire education without anyone noticing that he had any musical talent at all. He was turned down at his tryout for the choir of Liverpool Cathedral, and ironically, this very choir ultimately staged two of his classical pieces. John Cleese from *Monty Python* admitted in an interview with Robinson that he did very well at school but not at comedy, the thing that actually shaped his life. He said that he went all the way from kindergarten to Cambridge, and none of his teachers noticed that he had any sense of humor at all!

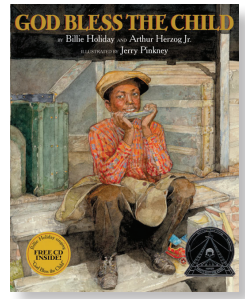
Robinson had me galvanized early in the book when he spoke of how we

hypothetically get into “The Element” by “leaving the city of our comfort and going into the wilderness of our intuitions.” I think Carl Orff would have lit up reading this description, for “in the wilderness of our intuitions” is certainly where Orff Schulwerk lives. The invitation to the candy store of Orff activities—singing, dancing, moving, creating, playing elemental instruments, rhythm, speech play, and glorious improvisation—is bound to captivate students *somewhere* and help them find where their “element” might be. And like Orff, Robinson recognizes that the pursuit of “The Element” should start early, as he speaks of the “wonderful confidence young children have in their own imaginations” and “never to underestimate the vital importance of finding early in life, the work that for you is play!”

*The Element* is a heavenly platform where human potential can be fully realized and where occasionally the world splits open, allowing us to “vibrate in the resonance of the moment and revel in epiphanies.” I believe the reader will agree with Robinson’s description of his book—that it is a “hymn to the breathtaking diversity of human talent and passion, and to our extraordinary potential for growth and development.” It should be required reading for Orff Schulwerk teachers and Boards of Education! ■

*Judith Thomas is an internationally known Orff Schulwerk educator, clinician, and author who has delighted in bringing children and teachers to Orff Schulwerk for the past four decades.*

1. Sir Kenneth Robinson, PhD, with Lou Aronica, *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* (New York: Viking, 2009), 2.



## God Bless the Child

By Billie Holiday and Arthur Herzog Jr.  
Harper Collins Publishers, 2004

**B**lack History Month is always a challenge for me—not because some would call me “white” and disregard the sliver of Native American and African American blood that runs through my veins. Nor is it difficult for me historically. I was living in Pascagula, Mississippi, during the years 1962 to 1964. They were tumultuous at best. My own family stories are about my parents fighting for the rights of African Americans.

No, Black History Month is difficult for me because it is so important to address as an educator and music teacher. Without jazz, blues, reggae, and spirituals, our musical landscape would be dull indeed.

The history of African Americans in this country is vast and varied. It is both tragic and triumphant. It spans such a long and tortured time that it can hardly be contained in a mere twenty-eight days.

So when I find a book I can use that accurately depicts African American life from that era without undue sentiment, I am thrilled. Jerry Pinkney's version of the Billie Holiday and Arthur Herzog Jr. ballad “God Bless the Child” is just such a book.

Most educators are familiar with his vast body of work. He has illustrated everything from *Three Little Kittens* to *Rikki Tikki Tavi* to *Aesop's Fables*. His retelling of Little Red Riding Hood gives permission to a new generation of young ladies to see themselves as heroines in the great fables of life.

What makes this particular book so special is the detail to historical accuracy on every page. Jerry Pinkney used his own vast collection of historical photographs for inspiration as he crafted a pictorial journey through this haunting song. In his “Afterword,” he addresses the hours of research spent on collecting, studying, and choosing images to illuminate this text.

I can hear the haunting melody of this song as he lets us glimpse the daily life of the sharecroppers in the deep South and their reliance on community. His pictures detail the despair and fear faced by the families that make it north in search of a fresh start and a new dream.

In every face, we see the tenacity and strength of people who have suffered yet survived. We feel the bone-breaking weariness of a long day working in the fields. And then we are rewarded to

see the joy of the community coming together, making music, and dancing in the dirt.

This book allows me to share a small part of African American history with my students, whether it is during the month of February or anytime I start my jazz and blues unit.

While the original Billie Holiday version of the song isn't published with the book, it is worth acquiring as an accompaniment to this beautiful publication. Gladys Knight has recorded a stronger, more powerful version of “God Bless the Child” that I use to explore the differences in singing styles and how the message can change with the artist.

As the last lines of the song fade out in my imagination—“God bless the child that's got his own!”—we are given the hope of a young man sitting in school, learning about Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable and claiming his right to a free and public education! ■

*Holly Deuel Gilster has been teaching music using an Orff Schulwerk approach for more than thirty years. She has published a book of listening maps for the elementary classroom teacher called Learning to Listen, Listening to Learn Vol. 1.*

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# Biophilia

By Björk

Released October 2011

It's an app for iPod, iPad, and iPhone. It's free (initially). It's by Icelandic performing artist Björk. But what is it? "Welcome to *Biophilia*—the love for nature in all her manifestations," begins the narration by David Attenborough to the newly released album/app hybrid. As Mr. Attenborough's mellifluous voice invites you to explore the connections between natural, musical, and technological realms, the screen drifts and spirals through a cosmos of fanciful constellations composed of stars with esoteric labels like crystalline, hollow, mutual core, dark matter, and virus. Swiping and pinching gestures on the touch screen allow you to navigate this cosmos, and as you fly through the three-dimensional constellations, you encounter an interactive soundscape peppered with snippets of music. Touching a star transports you directly to it and its corresponding app within an app. But again, what is it?

Thirty years ago, MTV made its debut and changed the way popular music was produced. For the last three decades, it has been unthinkable to release a hit single without following up with a video. With *Biophilia*, Björk has taken what is perhaps a similarly pioneering step. As she releases songs from the album, she is simultaneously releasing its corresponding app that fits into the existing *Biophilia* program. While the initial download of *Biophilia* is free, and includes the introductory song "Cosmogony," each subsequent app is priced at \$1.99, and includes the music, a short essay about the subject matter, a musical score of the piece, an animated score, and an interactive game or instrument. Befitting of Björk's career as a performance artist, the visual interactivity adds an intriguing element to the music.

To be clear, this music is created and performed by Björk. It is not music you will easily find over the airwaves or on the charts. Her vocals vacillate between liltedly lyrical and jarringly stilted. Her accompaniments, however, are strikingly Orff-like. Using instruments both real and imagined ranging from harp, pan drums, and xylophone to the electronic "gameleste" (a mix of gamelan and celeste timbres), she weaves ostinato-based harmonies that subtly evolve throughout the piece. While viewing the score as it scrolls with the music gives the exact notation, the animated score offers a combination of sequencer-like bar notation and non-standard graphic notation that is both artful and mesmerizing. Orff teachers and students will likely find inspiration to rediscover the similar non-standard and child-created notation that has been part of the Orff process for years.

Perhaps the most intriguing and mystifying element of each app is the interactive game. Those looking for a traditional arcade-style "game" with points and levels to be "won" will not find it here. In fact, the app does not label them specifically as games, but rather simply uses the word "play." "Playing" involves manipulating elements of the "game" to subtly change aspects of the song that plays and loops in the background. As of the writing of this review, only three songs/apps have been released: "Moon," "Crystalline," and "Virus." Playing with "Moon" allows you to rearrange the seventeen-note harp ostinato by rotating "pearls" that resemble the phases of the moon. "Crystalline" utilizes the device's accelerometer, allowing the player to tip and tilt the screen to guide a crystal down a series of tunnels, bumping into and collecting other crystals that

activate subtle elements of the song. Of the three releases, this one comes the closest to a traditional "game" in that crystals may be collected in specific sequences to "unlock" new tunnels. However, there is no winning or losing—altering the music itself within these claustrophobic tunnels is its own reward. "Virus" offers a strange metaphor of the virus/host relationship as a romantic infatuation. To play the game, one flicks, drags, and jiggles microscopic viruses away from the host cell they are attacking. Doing so successfully delays the verses of the song. Because the task is not terribly difficult, and the play unending, the inevitable outcome is that out of boredom and curiosity, the player allows the host cell to succumb to the virus. The infection of the host and life cycle of the virus beautifully unfolds, and the player's losing effort is rewarded by a free-play instrument where different cells can be played like pan drums. One will never look at the common cold the same.

While direct classroom applications of *Biophilia* may yet be unrealized, the potential for inspiration and exploration exists. *Biophilia* is a fascinating exploration of the connection of natural elements with elements of music as conceived through technology. An art teacher of mine once said, "Art is not something that is merely beautiful or ugly; it is something that makes you view the world and reality differently." So, what is it? It is art. ■

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

# Merging the Streams: Processing Instrumental Pieces Starting with Movement

Presented by Beth Ann Hepburn  
AOSA AV Library Listing: 172BH

“Let’s go for a walk.” This simple request invites fun. With a little positive persuasion, passive postures produce a Monday-morning droop as modeled by the presenter’s droning voice and dragging feet. With further suggestion, the scene flashes into a frenzied search for car keys on a wild Wednesday and culminates with a calming stroll through a park. Movement in middle school is no problem when choices begin with familiar activities that feel safe, says Beth Ann Hepburn in this 2010 AOSA Professional Development National Conference session videotaped in Spokane, Washington.

Hepburn creatively presents personal space, pacing, pulse, and pattern as part of the process. While participants explore ways to walk, Hepburn compliments safe behavior that demonstrates a respect for personal space and chooses the necessary tempo by pointing out a participant’s gait and matching her hand-drum pulse to that pace. Hepburn inserts word phrases that match the rhythmic phrases of the model—Rhythmic Rondo #1 from *Music for Children*, Volume I (Murray edition). As the group becomes more familiar with the chant, Hepburn adds contrasting phrases that challenge the mood and rhythmic accents of the first part. This lays the groundwork for working with partners.

Hepburn draws attention to the rubberized physical education markers scattered throughout the open floor space and asks participants to stand on a spot. Those participants standing on a spot recite the original part. Those who could not find a spot quickly choose a partner and provide the contrasting material. Hepburn solidifies the rhythms by removing the speech and transferring the sounds to clapping patterns

Hepburn solidifies the rhythms by removing the speech and transferring the sounds to clapping patterns and body percussion.



and body percussion. Throughout this practice, Hepburn emphasizes expressive elements and eye contact with a partner. These suggestions for classroom management and musicality come through teachable moments in the process. The lesson is quick, clear, and comfortable.

With the A section of the piece in place, Hepburn introduces the concept of question-and-answer improvisation. Hepburn taps the hand drum while partners take turns using non-locomotor movements with the eight-beat phrase. The length and sequence of partner movement establishes the form, creative movement, and sound timbres needed as the foundation for improvisational choices in the B section. Hand drums replace the claps, pats, and snaps, and the participants perform the A and B sections with assurance and creativity.

While a hand-drum piece formed the structure for the first activity, the second begins with literature. Hepburn introduces four books by author David Carter—*One Red Spot*, *600 Black Spots*, *White Noise*, and *Yellow Square* contain pop-up, abstract designs that stir the imagination. Hepburn points out three management preparations needed to produce a musical product: movement

experiences, suggestions for musical applications, and structure to put it all together.

Interesting vocabulary, such as “coiling curly Qs,” creates whimsical images for exploring high and low stretches. Partners practice the movements together using the eight-beat complimentary phrase structure from the last activity. Discussion, evaluation, and choices become part of the process as larger groups come together and create new group movements from past partner examples. Hepburn emphasizes that structure is the key to keeping cooperation, creative energy, and interest in the lesson.

Hepburn states that experienced students encourage new students and convey to their peers the freedom of choice and the safety of boundaries Hepburn builds into the experience. With age-appropriate materials and effective management, Hepburn masterfully demonstrates how the elemental components of the Orff Schulwerk process works for young adolescents with varying levels of past experience. ■

*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.*

For other listings, see the AOSA Web site ([www.aosa.org](http://www.aosa.org)), Publications/Resources, The AOSA AV Library pdf file. The annotated bibliography has an extensive list of materials under “Teaching Models: Young Adolescence.”

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## Index of Advertisers

American Drum . . . . .	42
Anderson University . . . . .	29
Backyard Music . . . . .	42
Beatin' Path Publications, Ltd. . . . .	36
Boston University . . . . .	28
Creative Motion Alliance . . . . .	36
Dalcroze Training at Carnegie Mellon University . . . . .	9
Dekalb County School . . . . .	9
Empire Music . . . . .	38
Heritage Music Press . . . . .	30
Lyons . . . . .	Inside back cover
Macmillan/McGraw-Hill. . . . .	1
MMB Music . . . . .	2
Music Is Elementary . . . . .	7
Music Together . . . . .	23
National Conference of Carl Orff Canada . . . . .	33
New England Dancing Masters . . . . .	23
Peripole-Bergerault, Inc. . . . .	back cover
Schott Music (Hal Leonard) . . . . .	11
SONOR . . . . .	Inside front cover
University of Memphis . . . . .	21
West Chester University School of Music . . . . .	21
West Music . . . . .	24
Yamaha Corporation of America . . . . .	5

## 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.

## Write a Letter

To submit a letter about a recent issue or article, e-mail [echoeditor@aosa.org](mailto:echoeditor@aosa.org). Select letters may be published. Letters may be edited for space.

# American Orff-Schulwerk Association Membership Form

**Associate member of the Music Educators National Conference**  
**Membership is active for 12 months upon receipt of payment**  
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# In Reverberations

**In the upcoming issue of *Reverberations*:**

- Photo Highlights from the Professional Development Conference in Pittsburgh
- Meet the Candidates for the National Board of Trustees
- A Travel Diary to the SONOR Plant in Germany
- Charlotte Kohnhorst, Carl Orff's Niece, Visits a Washington Music Class
- Grant Recipients Say Thanks

reverberations

## Call for Submissions

*The Orff Echo* Editorial Board is soliciting articles for an issue interdisciplinary instruction for publication in fall 2012.

The goal of interdisciplinary lessons is to improve student comprehension and retention of separate concepts from two or more subject areas by making meaningful connections between them. True interdisciplinary lessons provide a practical and engaging context for the simultaneous application of knowledge from multiple disciplines, so that each helps to reinforce the other. Music educators frequently incorporate materials and ideas from other subject areas into their curriculum, but in an interdisciplinary lesson neither subject plays a subordinate role or is subservient to the other.

The fall 2012 issue of *The Orff Echo* will explore effective use of interdisciplinary lessons within the context of the music curriculum. We hope to address the logistical challenges of collaboration with other specialists and classroom teachers and to include strategies for developing effective interdisciplinary lessons that reflect a wide range of subject areas, degrees of sophistication, and grade levels. If you are interested in contributing to this issue, please contact either Patty Reed (Pattyreedplmstr@aol.com) or Nick Wild (nick.wild@comcast.net) before March. Final submissions are due by March 15, 2012.

### FUTURE ISSUE DEADLINES

The Editorial Board seeks submissions year-round for various topic issues as well as submissions on any Orff Schulwerk topic for future open submission issues.

#### **Early Childhood** (summer 2012 issue)

Contact Editorial Board member Christopher Tranberg (ctranberg@comcast.net) or Carol McDowell (mcdowellcarolj@gmail.com)

Deadline for submissions: January 15, 2012

#### **Interdisciplinary Instruction** (fall 2012 issue)

Contact Editorial Board member Nick Wild (nick.wild@comcast.net) or Patty Reed (pattyreedplmstr@aol.com)

Deadline for submissions: March 15, 2012

#### **Complementary Approaches to Active Music Making** (winter 2013)

Contact editor (echoeditor@aosa.org); Editorial Board member coordinators TBD

Deadline for submissions: July 15, 2012

#### **Open Submission** (spring 2013)

Contact editor (echoeditor@aosa.org); Editorial Board member coordinators TBD

Deadline for submissions: September 15, 2012

*For submission guidelines or for general questions about The Orff Echo (not related to a specific issue listed), send an e-mail to echoeditor@aosa.org. Please note that The Orff Echo follows The Chicago Manual of Style for manuscript preparation.*

## The Orff Echo Editorial Board Seeks Applications

The Editorial Board may have a vacancy beginning in mid-2012. All applicants must have completed Level II Orff teacher education courses to be eligible to apply; completion of Level III is preferred. Most competitive applicants have past publications in journals or other publications and a demonstrated commitment to Orff Schulwerk. Application materials must be received no later than February 29, 2012. Please e-mail echoeditor@aosa.org to request an application.

**T**he Wildflower Legacy recognizes and honors those who include AOSA in their estate plans.

It gives us the opportunity to thank people who are planning for AOSA's future with these thoughtful and generous gifts.

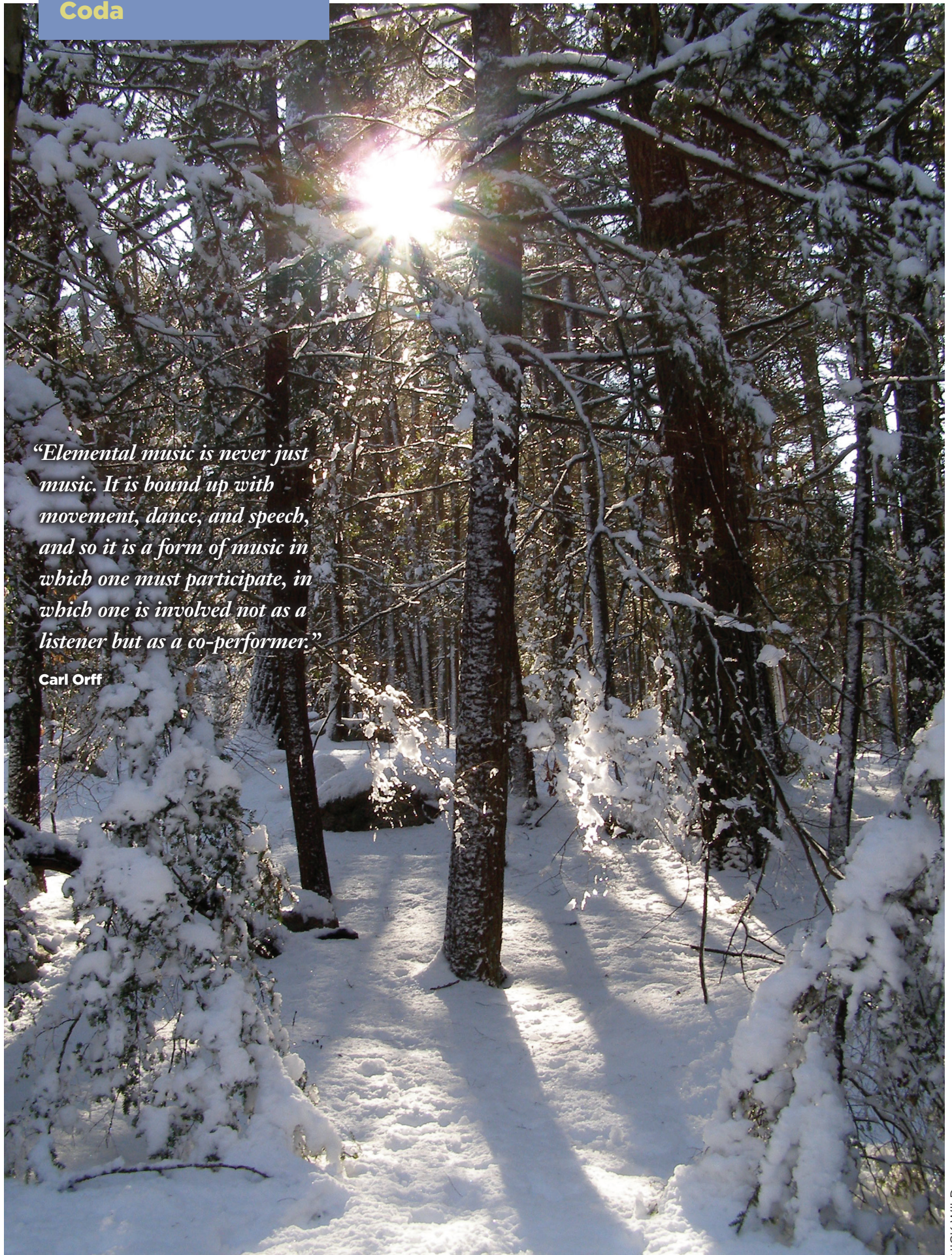
We ask that gifts to the Wildflower Legacy be designated to the AOSA Endowment. The endowment provides AOSA with both flexibility and stability by providing for AOSA's long-term financial health. Our needs in forty years will be different from our needs today, and an unrestricted endowment provides for today's priorities while allowing us to successfully realize new priorities in the future.

AOSA is currently welcoming inaugural members of the Wildflower Legacy. All planned gifts qualify for membership. Please let us know if we should include you in the Wildflower Legacy.



*“Elemental music is never just music. It is bound up with movement, dance, and speech, and so it is a form of music in which one must participate, in which one is involved not as a listener but as a co-performer.”*

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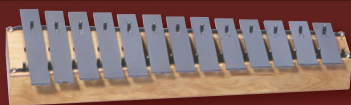
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