

Orff Schulwerk Dissemination: Background and Commentary from the International Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg

10



BARBARA HASELBACH is emeritus professor at the Orff Institute, Mozarteum University, Salzburg, director of the Orff Institute and the former postgraduate university course, Advanced Studies in Music and Dance Education – Orff-Schulwerk, editor of the bilingual magazine *Orff-Schulwerk Heute*, chair of the International Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg, internationally recognized teacher, and author of numerous publications.

ABSTRACT

From the 1950s to the present Carl Orff and his successors in Salzburg have recognized the need for a center to guide the spread of the Schulwerk throughout the world. The Orff Institute in Salzburg, Austria was established as the center for Orff Schulwerk pedagogy, and the International Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg serves as the center for the large network of national Orff-Schulwerk Associations as well as Associated Schools and Institutions. In this article, the author explores the challenges associated with disseminating and adapting Orff Schulwerk outside its German roots.

By Barbara Haselbach

When Carl Orff founded the seminar for Orff-Schulwerk (later, the Orff Institute) and the “Zentralstelle für das Orff-Schulwerk” (Center for Orff-Schulwerk—today, the International Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg, IOSFS) at the Mozarteum Academy (today, the Mozarteum University) in 1961, he might have had a vague idea of the far-reaching dissemination of his pedagogical concept and the necessity for a center of coordination and communication with institutions and individuals working with his Schulwerk worldwide. Today the IOSFS is the center for this network of all national Orff-Schulwerk Associations (OSAs) as well as Associated Schools and Institutions (ASIs). Its mission includes (IOSFS, n.d.):

I. Contact and exchange

- with national Orff-Schulwerk Associations
- with Carl Orff schools and pedagogical institutions that have integrated Orff Schulwerk into their programs

- with graduates from all branches of study at the Orff Institute
- with interested teachers, scientists, artists, and institutions

II. Information

- about Orff Schulwerk in the past and present
- about projects and developments in different countries and Orff-Schulwerk Associations
- about relevant courses and publications
- about current themes with regard to contents and organizational questions

III. Publications

- Magazine: *Orff-Schulwerk Informationen* (OSI), as from 2014 *Orff-Schulwerk Heute* (OSH), including an index of all published articles (1961-2009)
- *Texts on Theory and Practice of Orff-Schulwerk* (original bilingual German/English edition; translations into Spanish, Farsi, and Chinese published; translations into Greek and Russian are in preparation)
- Reports about international activities concerning Orff Schulwerk
- Documentations of symposia (book/DVD)

IV. Advice

- on publications of new adaptations of the Schulwerk
- on academic work, publications, new editions
- on syllabi, curricula for lecturers in educational and social institutions
- on teacher training courses
- on future projects
- on the introduction of Orff Schulwerk in a specific institution or country
- on the founding of a new Orff-Schulwerk Association

V. Events

- Annual conventions with delegates from national Orff-Schulwerk Associations
- Meetings with editors of Orff-Schulwerk Association newsletters and magazines
- Meetings with directors and teachers of Carl Orff model schools and related institutions
- Planning, organization, and documentation of symposia and other events

- Introduction of new impulses and discussion of cooperative tasks and their implementation within the framework of these conferences

VI. Recommendations and guidelines of the International Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg

- Recommendations and guidelines for organizing Orff Schulwerk Teacher Training Courses (Levels Courses)
- Recommendation for the foundation of a national Orff-Schulwerk Association
- Recommendations for the founding of an Associated School or Institution

VII. Network of Associated Schools

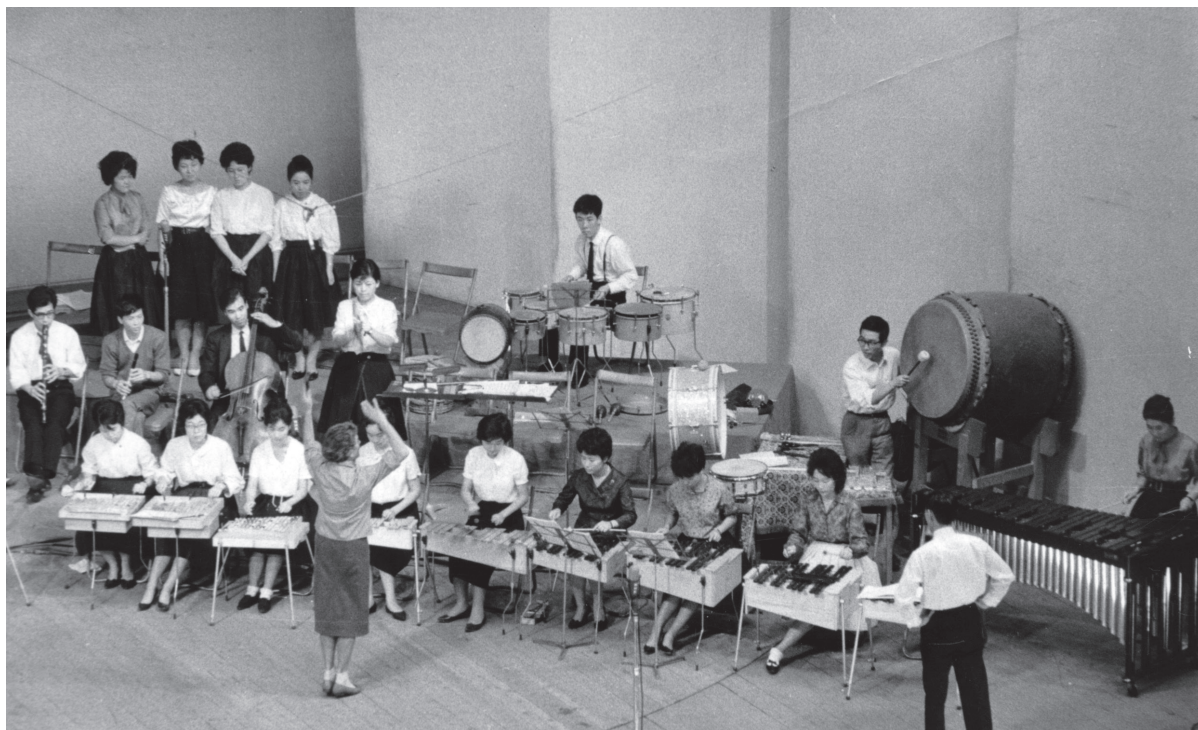
- Furthering international cooperation and exchange between the schools
- Furthering annual projects

The IOSFS fulfills its function in close collaboration with the Orff Institute Salzburg, the Carl Orff Stiftung (Carl Orff Foundation) Diessen, and the Orff-Zentrum München (Orff-Center Munich), along with the national OSAs and ASIs. It is supported financially by the Carl Orff Foundation in Diessen, Germany (Haselbach, 2011).

A Short History of the Dissemination of Orff Schulwerk

The five volumes of the German edition of *Orff-Schulwerk: Music für Kinder* (Music for Children) were in the process of being published by Schott (1950-1954) when in 1953 an international conference took place at the Mozarteum Academy in Salzburg, Austria. Subsequently, music teachers from Canada, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and Austria began to study at the Mozarteum with Gunild Keetman, Orff's collaborator and co-author of the Schulwerk. Not only did international interest in an authentic training program become stronger, but also Orff's concern increased regarding a growing and broadening unendorsed use of the Schulwerk and of the so-called "Orff instruments" (a term he never used). By 1961 the time had finally come, and the seminar and the center were founded in Salzburg. During the following decades the concept of Orff Schulwerk spread worldwide, and Orff-Schulwerk Associations have been founded in many parts of the world.

Figure 1. Gunild Keetman Directing Japanese Music Students for a Broadcast Recording in 1962.



SOURCE: ORFF ZENTRUM, MÜNCHEN, COPYRIGHT CARL ORFF FOUNDATION (PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN).

How and Why Orff-Schulwerk Associations Have Been Founded

The roots of Orff-Schulwerk Associations lie in personal connections to the Orff Institute. Since the early 1960s students and pedagogues from around the world have participated in introductory seminars, further studies (bachelor's, master's, Special Course) or other professional development courses at the Orff Institute (see Figure 1). Following this training, many participants develop an interest in implementing and adapting Orff Schulwerk in their own countries. This leads to pioneer work in their respective cultures and languages.

Often a circle of interested colleagues will collaborate to organize courses with teachers from the Orff Institute or well-established Orff-Schulwerk Associations. Colleagues and students then begin intensive studies, and the group of trained experts grows. The need for organizing a working team and a structure arises. Contact with the Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg is established, and advice is given on how to establish a new Orff-Schulwerk Association. After extensive preparations, the development of

a working team, and the final approval by the IOSFS, a new Orff-Schulwerk Association is founded (Haselbach, 2011).

For the most part, the Orff Institute in cooperation with the International Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg directed this process (see Figure 2, p. 13). During the first decades, courses taught abroad by Orff Institute faculty were mainly supported by the Goethe-Institut. Later they were often sponsored by the Carl Orff Foundation. In both cases, Hermann Regner was instrumental in the planning and, together with his colleagues, the teaching of the courses as well as the advising of new associations. Some colleagues helped and counseled fledgling associations across the globe in the first years, and some of them still continue to do so.

These are only the officially known facts. In reality, the Schulwerk spread steadily even without knowledge of the Forum or the Orff Institute and in countries without Orff-Schulwerk Associations. For some time, a sort of “wild and confusing” founding of teacher training courses and unsanctioned Orff-Schulwerk Associations took place. Such

Figure 2. Forum Member Orff-Schulwerk Associations and Associated Schools/Institutions Throughout the World Today.

Forum Member Orff-Schulwerk Associations	Argentina, Australia (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, West Australia), Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Hong Kong, Iceland, Iran, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, Scotland, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States. Others are in preparation
Associated Schools/Institutions	Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Thailand, Turkey, and the United States. Others are in preparation

SOURCE: RETRIEVED FROM [HTTP://WWW.ORFF-SCHULWERK-FORUM-SALZBURG.ORG/ENGLISH/ORFF-SCHULWERK-ASSOCIATIONS.HTML](http://www.orff-schulwerk-forum-salzburg.org/english/orff-schulwerk-associations.html)
[HTTP://WWW.ORFF-SCHULWERK-FORUM-SALZBURG.ORG/ENGLISH/ASSOCIATED_SCHOOLS_AND_INSTITUTIONS.HTM](http://www.orff-schulwerk-forum-salzburg.org/english/associated_schools_and_institutions.htm)

developments clearly had to be redirected. The following questions emerged:

1. What interests from within a country inspire the invitation of foreign lecturers to teach Orff Schulwerk courses?
2. What reasons provoke Western music educators to teach in other parts and cultural areas of the world?
3. What content is taught and how carefully is adaptation to the culture of the inviting country being made?

1. What interests from within a country inspire the invitation of foreign lecturers to teach Orff Schulwerk courses?

As mentioned, pedagogues who studied Orff Schulwerk seriously at the Orff Institute or who completed one of the various teacher training programs might want to bring the concept of this holistic and interdisciplinary aesthetic education to their homelands because they are convinced of its value and adaptability. They often invite their own Western teachers to give workshops and lectures because they know the quality of their teaching.

Another reason may be an interest in modern educational approaches and some sort of unquestioned admiration of Western methods, a consequence of globalization.

A third cause is the increasing marketing of Orff Schulwerk. More and more business firms, especially in Asia, take advantage of the well-known name *Orff* in order to sell short Schulwerk courses for high fees to a large number of participants who, after

a mere three days of classes, are convinced they now know the Schulwerk—a misapprehension with serious consequences. Unfortunately there are cases where business firms invited lecturers they found on the Internet, without any guarantee regarding their preparation, training, and quality of teaching.

2. What reasons provoke Western music educators to teach in other parts and cultural areas of the world?

There likely are many reasons, and each of us may have her or his own: curiosity and interest in foreign countries and cultures, desire to travel, or feeling a sort of connection and responsibility to former students who invite them, as well as a sense of pride and honor to be a type of ambassador in education. Others may think they are needed to help develop music and aesthetic education in “third world countries.”

From time to time we are questioned if what we do is a certain form of cultural colonization. Therefore we should consider this hidden critical reproach very carefully.

3. What content is taught and how carefully is adaptation to the culture of the inviting country being made?

Starting in the late 1960s and 1970s, many invitations from distant countries reached the Orff Institute and the Center for Orff-Schulwerk asking for specialists to give workshops and lectures at universities or pedagogical associations. Today this circle has been widened; now, teachers from various OSAs are also invited or offer courses.

Figure 3. First National Orff-Schulwerk Seminar in Bangkok, Thailand With Dr. Hermann Regner and Barbara Haselbach in 1974.



SOURCE: COPYRIGHT ORFF ZENTRUM, MÜNCHEN (PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN).

14

All of us who teach in foreign countries and cultures should have the same fundamental question in mind: How and what should we teach in a country that has a totally different culture, language, or pedagogical system, and where music and dance have meanings unlike those in our Western civilization, with different tonal systems and rhythms, instruments and games, texts and stories (see Figure 3)?

Orff once said, “When you work with the Schulwerk abroad, you must start all over again from the experience of the local children. And the experiences of children in Africa are different from those in Hamburg or Stralsund, and again from those in Paris or Tokyo” (Regner, 2011, p. 220). This statement clearly indicates that Orff never intended to export the musical material. He did not want us simply to teach our Western material to people in different parts of the world, but he did expect us to help them release their natural creative potential through the concept of the Schulwerk that could be adapted to the various music or dance systems and cultural traditions. Rather than avoid a missionary or “colonialist” approach, we are asked to learn as much as possible about the culture in question, convincing our colleagues in those countries to look for their own traditional treasures, to study their own children’s lore, their games and rhymes, songs and dances, stories and rites.

We certainly have to distinguish between:

- the “*material*” of the Orff Schulwerk, which has more or less the same format, and which uses a Western tonal system, Western scales, harmonies, texts, and so forth, that appears in Western Orff Schulwerk editions; and
- the “*concepts and principles*” of Orff Schulwerk (Hartmann and Haselbach, in press), which are universal but must be adapted in a knowledgeable and thorough way to the culture of the host country.

It may seem questionable to practice American or German songs with Southeast Asian children or teachers (except as an example of an intercultural approach), but doubtless their musical experience will be enriched by improvisation (in their respective musical tradition) and composition; the experience of the relationship between music, movement, text and song; creative group work; and all the other valuable tasks used in the Schulwerk. These music and movement/dance concepts and activities are basic to all cultures and are accepted without the feeling that one is being imposed upon by some missionaries of a Western system.

But the world has changed greatly in the last 50 years, and Western civilization has overrun many of the old cultures and their traditional arts. Therefore the trend to use Western education becomes more of a commercial interest; subsequently, the wish to bring Orff Schulwerk to new territories can lead to conflicts if competition between individual teachers or institutions arises.

Far too often we neglect to understand that Orff Schulwerk needs an organic process to grow. Orff Schulwerk is not a product one can simply take and use anywhere. It needs a process of growing pedagogic experience, especially for those who have studied only in short courses, and it also needs time for development among those who will eventually apply what they have learned.

The Schulwerk – An Open Process

Because Orff Schulwerk is not a fixed and closed system, but an open, artistic-humanistic-pedagogical approach (Hartmann, 2012; Haselbach, 2012a, 2012b; Kugler, 2012; Salmon, 2012), interpretations vary, depending on where and when one is trained as well as individual abilities and interests. Some differences are:

- Movement and dance are still seen as a “decoration” in some countries. However,

it is important to remember that the Schulwerk originated in a dance school, the famous Güntherschule in Munich, Germany, and the explanatory notes in the *Music for Children* volumes speak clearly about the essential importance of movement/dance. Some teachers develop an openness to the other arts, but their interest in working in an interdisciplinary way is by no means accepted everywhere.

- Teachers who come from countries that were early multicultural melting pots have understandably an especially strong emphasis on “world music,” whereas others keep to their more limited perspective.
- There are also great differences concerning the material and curriculum between countries where Orff Schulwerk is mainly taught at schools and those where it is used with a greater variety of target groups.
- Some pedagogues keep strictly to the printed material and the sequential order of the *Music for Children* editions, whereas others handle this less systematically and more naturally. Others replace original pieces with what they believe are contemporary equivalents or simply with their own arrangements or compositions.

All of these differences can enrich or can lead to discussions about who represents the “real Orff Schulwerk” and who is a heretic. In order to learn from the first and avoid the latter attitude, the IOSFS sees one of its most important tasks as bringing different positions together in a “Think Tank.” These annual conventions organized by the IOSFS at the

Orff Institute are opportunities for discussions about an important “hot topic” each year with delegates from all national OSAs and ASIs. Themes of past conventions have been:

- 2012 The Artistic, the Humanistic, the Pedagogical Aspect of Orff-Schulwerk
- 2013 Orff-Schulwerk in School
- 2014 The Education of the Educators – International Convergence or Divergence
- 2015 Interculturality in Elemental Music and Dance Education
- 2016 Effective Forms of Assessment and Evaluation in Elemental Music and Dance Education
- 2017 The Encounter between Orff-Schulwerk and Modern Arts

Orff, a passionate gardener, frequently used images from nature to explain his ideas. He always emphasized the importance of an organic process, a natural and responsible growth, not a spreading at any cost. Uncontrolled dissemination over the years has left many plants growing in other gardens. In a number of countries Orff Schulwerk has influenced music and aesthetic education and been integrated into curricula, often without naming the source. It is our task to develop and adapt Orff Schulwerk in keeping with our times, but also to remember the origin and honor the approach Orff and Keetman created. ■

The author would like to thank Verena Maschat, Shirley Salmon, and Carolee Stewart for reading and making suggestions for this article.

REFERENCES

- Hartmann, W. (2012). Orff's Schulwerk. *Orff-Schulwerk Informationen*, 87, 12-13.
- Hartmann, W. & Haselbach, B. (in press). The principles of Orff-Schulwerk. *Orff-Schulwerk Heute*, 97.
- Haselbach, B. (2011). The Orff-Schulwerk Forum – Centre of the international network. *Orff-Schulwerk Informationen: 50 Years Orff-Institute*, 85, 271-273.
- Haselbach, B. (2012a). The artistic aspect of Orff-Schulwerk – an attempt at an interpretation. *Orff-Schulwerk Informationen*, 87, 27-30.
- Haselbach, B. (2012b). Three pillars of Orff-Schulwerk. *Orff-Schulwerk Informationen*, 87, 6-7.
- International Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg (IOSFS). (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.orff-schulwerk-forum-salzburg.org/index.html>
- Kugler, M. (2012). Orff-Schulwerk and the school. *Orff-Schulwerk Informationen*, 87, 36-37.
- Regner, H. (2011). Musik für Kinder – Music for Children – Musique pour Enfants. Comments on the adoption and adaptation of Orff-Schulwerk in other countries. In B. Haselbach (Ed.) & M. Murray (Trans.), *Texts on theory and practice of Orff-Schulwerk* (pp. 220-224). Mainz, Germany: Schott Music.
- Salmon, S. (2012). Musica Humana – Thoughts on humanistic aspects of Orff-Schulwerk. *Orff-Schulwerk Informationen*, 87, 13-19.