

Wir stellen vor ... We present ...

CDM – The Centro Didattico Musicale, Rome

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The CDM Centro Didattico Musicale (Centre for Music Didactics) is a music education agency in Rome, Italy, founded in 1993 and directed since 1999 by Andrea Sangiorgio, Valentina Iadeluca and Marco Iadeluca. The CDM provides music education services in a variety of ways: It serves as a private music school for individual and group instrumental lessons. It implements music and dance projects in nursery and primary schools. The CDM has organised different kinds of projects in collaboration with other public and private institutions, in particular interventions in which music and movement are used as tools to promote social inclusion and well-being for disadvantaged children. The CDM is also active in the field of teacher education: It realises an annual Orff-Schulwerk teacher education course in collaboration with Rome University Tor Vergata, and provides teacher education initiatives all over Italy. The CDM is increasingly building a network of international relationships and has recently become an associated institution of the Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg.

The mission of the CDM

- To create a milieu where music and movement/dance are means of expression, communication, social aggregation, creativity, self-actualization, and holistic well-being.
- To develop as a research centre, producing and disseminating new educational ideas, strategies and materials, in Italy as well as abroad.
- To create a working environment which nurtures professional as well as human growth.
- To be a cultural enterprise inspired by the highest standards.



OUR CONCEPT OF MUSIC EDUCATION

We are a group of music teachers who have been working for many years studying, researching and experimenting in the field of music education.

Strongly influenced by the pedagogical concept of the Orff-Schulwerk, we see children as competent, able and naturally inclined to build their own identity. We believe that educating – and especially educating through music – means communicating with children and teenagers, to enhance their natural attitude towards learning, seeking, understanding and expanding their horizons.

We think that teaching means finding a way to get into contact and developing an active collaboration with students. We aim to create such conditions so as to provide a meaningful experience for the students: exploring, practising, reflecting and comprehending music. We believe that motivation can be developed if students feel they are the protagonists of their own learning process, considered as persons who can think autonomously and unfold their personality.

Music and dance belong to the human being. They are means of self-expression and communication, a way to encounter others. Music and dance are body, thought, emotion, group, and culture. It is this multi-dimensionality that makes them such a powerful educational tool. Educating to and through music and dance means developing motor, perceptive, listening skills, attention and memory. It means strengthening analytic and synthetic skills, nurturing creativity and enhancing learning through the group. It means educating to the arts.

Our approach to music and movement education is holistic, addressing the whole person and his/her specific needs, aptitudes, interests, wishes.

We are professionals in the area of music education for children and adolescents. We also transmit to adults the same clarity, spontaneity and joy for music, letting everybody feel at ease, irrespective of age and initial skills.

The ultimate goal of our teaching is to offer an experience through which children, adolescents or adults can positively enrich their lives.

OUR METHODOLOGICAL REFERENCES

Our main reference for music education is the Orff-Schulwerk (OS) approach. Central tenets of our pedagogy which are derived from the OS are

- the integration of music, movement/dance and speech (holistic learning),
- the centrality of the body in music learning,
- the value of voice as a fundamental expressive and communicative tool,
- the use of Orff instruments,
- the attention to group processes and to relational learning in the group,
- the relevance of creative processes in contributing to a sense of ownership of and identification with the learning process.

Within the frame of the OS elemental music and dance education we have been integrating and further developing many theoretical and practical suggestions derived from a cognitive approach to the development of the musical mind: Edwin Gordon's Music Learning Theory. We value its coherent and systematic methodic-didactic vision and the planning of hierarchically ordered curricula for the development of music literacy. We are also interested in more general cognitive aspects of music making, in particular the role of metacognition in music learning.

Over the last years the CDM's pedagogical concept has gradually been shifting towards a wider music anthropological and socio-cultural approach to music education. We conceive of music learning in terms of a culturally situated phenomenon, in which processes of social construction of knowledge are adapted to meet the unique requirements of each context, in order to foster the active, motivated, and meaningful participation of all learners.

A BIT OF HISTORY

The CDM was founded in 1993 as a private non-profit cultural association by Gianni Biancotto, a music teacher and teacher educator who had

been working for about twenty years in a northern area of Rome. Gianni steadily collaborated with a team of young musicians and music teachers – among them Marco Iadeluca, a classical guitarist, Valentina Iadeluca, a jazz-pop singer, and myself. At that time I was studying classical piano at the Conservatoire and German and English literature at University. I joined the group just in 1992, when Gianni was about to start the CDM in a small apartment. Following his advice, Marco and I attended the first national Orff-Schulwerk course (Valentina did later on) organised by Giovanni Piazza, one of the pioneers of Orff-Schulwerk in Italy. Moved by the enthusiasm generated by the encounter with this new perspective on music learning, in the summer of 1993 I attended the Summer Course in Salzburg, which further reinforced my intention to pursue that path. From 1994 to 1997 I attended the B-Studium at the Orff Institute, where I immersed myself in a new and exciting world. When I came back to Rome in 1997, Gianni Biancotto invited me to become part of the directing board of the CDM and Giovanni Piazza included me in the national Orff-Schulwerk course as a teacher educator. My professional career started at this moment.

During the following years we experimented a lot in our practice. Working with Valentina, Marco and other the CDM teachers teamwork has always been an important learning strategy for our group – we developed our own teaching approach, and further elaborated many new ideas about how to teach voice, percussion instruments, groups, and make music with whole classes in nursery and primary schools. Gianni Biancotto died in 1999. Since then Valentina, Marco and I have had the direction of the school, which over the years grew steadily in a series of different but related directions. Across all our educational actions – projects and activities with children or adults, in the music school, in schools, or elsewhere – the Orff-Schulwerk attitude represented a unifying trait.

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CDM

Music courses at the music school

We have courses for children 0–3 with their parents and Music and Play and Music and Dance groups

for children 3–6. Then we begin with instrumental tuition. The CDM offers a range of collective courses, such as music and movement classes aimed at developing fundamental music skills, up to children's choir, percussion groups, improvisation groups, rock and jazz groups, and adults' choir. The Orff-Schulwerk principles permeate most of the group activities, especially those with children 3–14, but also significantly influences our approach with an individual child on an instrument. Over the years some of the CDM children's groups achieved such impressive results that they gained the honour of performing at international meetings about music education, such as the ISME Conferences (2002, Bergen, Norway, and 2004 Tenerife, Spain). We are particularly proud to have presented the performing group Alpha4 at the International Symposium Orff-Schulwerk 2006. One of our pieces is on the DVD in the book of the Symposium, "In Dialogue"¹. This group represents to the present time our best interpretation of how an Orff instruments orchestra can sound and what kind of learning processes lead to that.

Music projects in nursery and primary schools

The CDM sends external experts into many government schools, especially nursery and primary schools, where no music specialists are foreseen. We collaborate with the class teachers in projects ranging from a few to 25 weekly one-hour sessions, also prolonging the intervention over two or more school years. The activities are largely inspired by the Orff-Schulwerk criteria and include movement/dance, singing and vocal activities, instruments, fundamentals of music literacy, integrative and creative activities, group-building and relational activities, and development of interdisciplinary activities in which music is associated with other areas of the school curriculum. The main features of the Orff-Schulwerk-based projects in schools have been presented by Valentina Iadeluca and myself at a guest course at the Orff Institute in 2009 and in the context of the Orff-Schul-

1 Barbara Haselbach, Micaela Grüner, Shirley Salmon (Ed.): *Im Dialog / In Dialogue. Elemental Music and Dance Education in Interdisciplinary Contexts*, Mainz 2007





werk Symposium 2011 in Salzburg. In 2013 the CDM, among a selected group of private and public educational institutions, has signed a memorandum of understanding (a formal agreement protocol) with the Ministry of Education aimed at valuing the role of music education in the Italian school system.

Music projects to promote well-being and social inclusion

In 1999 Valentina Iadeluca designed and directed for the CDM an important project funded by the European Commission, "Bambini al Centro", a system of educational services in which music was used as a tool to foster the quality of life of psychologically or socially disadvantaged children. The experience was successfully presented at the 11th Community Music Activity International Seminar (hosted by the CDM itself), within the works of the 28th ISME World Conference in Italy. "Bambini al Centro" has been documented in a specific article in the *International Journal of Community Music* (2008) and is cited in *The Oxford Handbook of Music Education* (Vol. 2, 2012). The project lasted until April 2010.

A similar approach to music as a tool to integrate diverse abilities and identities has been adopted in a number of projects which the CDM has realized in schools in with disabled or children at risk, or with children of non-Italian citizenship. This is a whole area of work in which the Orff-Schulwerk goal of inclusion and active participation of all members of the group provides a powerful organizing guideline for the activities.

Teacher education initiatives

The CDM is very active in the field of teacher education: In the last fifteen years we have offered many courses for class and music teachers in Italy and abroad, based on the experience we have gained through our work with children. Our main concern is to offer to teachers feasible, interesting, and original materials that we have created and refined through our own work with children, along with a structured methodological approach to teaching and a particular way of conceiving music education. In 2002/03 the CDM started its first structured teacher education course (270 hours in a year), and

there also began a tighter collaboration with lecturers of the Orff Institute, which reaches the present day. In 2006 the CDM received the official acknowledgement as a teacher education agency from the Ministry of Education. In the following year we started to collaborate with Rome University Tor Vergata in running an annual Orff-Schulwerk teacher education course (120 hours). Moreover, we have been giving workshops and courses for school teachers and music teachers in Rome as well as all over Italy. Thanks to the connection with Salzburg we have developed strong ties with other countries as well: Through our engagement as teacher educators the ideas that have germinated at the CDM have been shared with practitioners of many countries (Austria, Germany, Spain, Finland, France, Russia, Lebanon, United Kingdom, Ireland, South Korea, Czech Republic, China, Taiwan, Switzerland, Iran, Turkey, and Australia).

Cross-institutional collaborations around music

The versatility of our approach, both at the organization and at the content level, enabled us to fruitfully collaborate with diverse institutions in realizing different kinds of projects.

From 2005 the CDM began a steady collaboration with the Education Department of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (based in the Auditorium della Musica, the major concert house in Rome) in realizing concerts and events with and for children around and beyond classical music. For example, we organized 'participated concerts' for families, theatre-music stories to be performed for young children, performances with groups of 300 3–5 year-olds actively on a huge stage (using picture books), or concerts for 500 middle-school children with recycling materials and Mozart (a strange but possible adventure).

In a very different socio-cultural context, we have also worked with groups of managers (Enel, Enel Green Power, Fondazione con il Sud), this time using music as a metaphor of the problem-solving and creative processes which take place within the organization, with the aim of facilitating intra- and inter-group communication and cooperation.

In these quite distinct settings the flexibility and

openness of the Orff-Schulwerk approach are precious characteristics which help us connect to the situation, co-construct a shared understanding with organizers and participants, and possibly give birth to meaningful learning events.

CONCLUSION: INTO THE FUTURE

So, this is where we are now (March 2014), no longer a small private music school, but a mature education agency which is able to create significant experiences through music in a variety of different contexts and in partnership with diverse organizations. We see both challenges and opportunities in our future. As a first critical point, the present economic and cultural situation of Italy cannot be considered as conducive to a flourishing life for private cultural enterprises like the CDM (“music? an unnecessary luxury ...”). We may have to renew ourselves and change in unpredicted ways in order to survive with dignity in an increasingly deprived context. Nonetheless, we do have opportunities and visions before us. There is still much place for further innovation and expansion. Research is one of the new horizons we have (I am presently doing a PhD on children’s musical creativity). As a consequence of that, my ways of teaching and of conceptualizing music education are evolving. Another possibility lies in a closer collaboration with other European music institutions. The time is also mature to begin to write a book or further articles about our practice.

Looking retrospectively at the CDM’s experience in the last 20 years, I would say that Orff-Schulwerk has functioned as the background, the orienting framework, the spine, the underlying scaffold, or the mindset which has informed our professional practice – sufficiently structured and consistent in order to serve as a guidance and sufficiently open and adaptable for us to develop it in our own context and in our own ways.

I feel grateful.



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