

About Orff Schulwerk

This approach developed originally in an adult education setting in the nineteen twenties in Munich. The German composer Carl Orff began to develop a new field of creative activities when he co-founded the Günther School in 1924 together with Dorothee Günther. This school became a centre for education in gymnastics, rhythm, music and dance. In association with his co-worker Gunild Keetman, Orff developed the Orff Schulwerk, a new model for teaching music and movement. Later on Gunild Keetmann extended the concept for the education of children and youth. It has always been, and still is an artistic concept that is based on the notion that children and adults learn about music best when they play, dance, create and improvise music. There has been an extensive proliferation of this concept worldwide especially since the opening of the Orff Institute at the University Mozarteum in 1961.

The following basic principles are fundamental for this approach:

- Music, speech and dance are seen as integrated domains
- Music, dance and speech complement each other and at the same time provide starting points for creative activities.
- Rhythm is the common origin to all of them.
- Singing, playing and dancing provide stimuli for the group.
- Communal music and dance making is an essential ingredient of this approach. It involves leadership and educates our abilities to listen and follow others.
- Music and dance models provide starting points for improvisations, creations and compositions.
- The Orff Schulwerk Approach includes singing and instrumental playing with percussion instruments, Recorder and Body Percussion. Instrumental playing is also integrated with movement, singing and speech.
- Theoretical aspects of music and dance are revealed through creative work, practice, and performance and then, based on the learning experience, discussed, recorded and written.
- Educational activities are always undertaken with the intention to create and present music and dance artistically. Therefore the degree of aesthetic responsibility is high and must be applied both to the chosen content and the proposed learning outcomes.

Excerpt taken from an article entitled:

“Introduction to the Orff Schulwerk Approach”

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