

# MUSICWORKS



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CREATIVE MUSIC EDUCATION

Promoting teaching

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Through the Orff approach

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## MUSICWORKS

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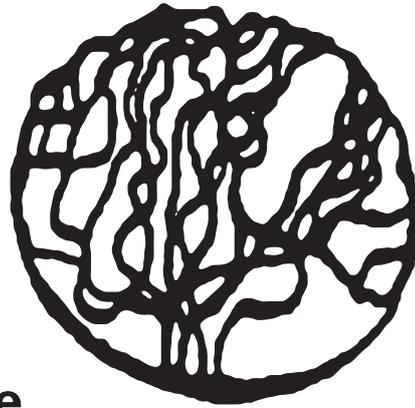
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## Editorial

Bronwyn Hendy's article is about the benefits of the development of music knowledge for lifelong building of music memories. She cites the research of Baumgartner (1992) and the neuro psychologists Jäncke (2008) and Wilson (2018). She also draws upon the study by El Haj, Fasotti and Allain (2011) about unlocking memories through the use of music, and on the observations she has made of her choir where some participants have Alzheimer's disease and others have dementia. Bronwyn argues for the importance of music in early childhood to build musical memories.

Virginia Esperraga talks about challenging herself in the Salzburg Special Course. Inspired by leading Orff practitioners, Virginia talks about unlocking her own creativity and of observing her classmates' journeys of discovery. She also has spent a lot of time reflecting on what she has learned and can share back in Australia. She has built a network of international contacts. We look forward to this next stage.

Robyn Staveley and Carol Richards are uniquely placed to write about the impact of the Levels Courses. In NSW, the Levels courses are aligned with the AITSL Professional Teacher Standards. This article focuses on analysis of the 2017 survey of the Levels participants. This survey gathered quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative data sought answers to why people enrolled in Levels courses. The answers were grouped in four themes: (1) to become better teachers (70% of respondents); (2) for professional advancement; (3) had an interest in the Orff Approach and (4) the recommendation of other professionals. There were responses about developing better musical skills. Almost unanimously (98% of respondents) said they found the Levels courses useful for their situation. This is a study that has provided data for what, as Orff practitioners, we might have instinctively felt.

However, it is data that convinces and it is the stated desire of the two authors that teachers would translate professional learning into their classroom practice. If you have completed a Levels course or have wanted to, you should read this article.

The panel discussing the future of music education raised some interesting issues, among them: meaningful professional learning, Australian Music Centre resources for teachers, and 'proper space and time' for the arts. In a climate where the K-6 syllabus is on hold while the Masters review of curriculum takes place, this is a discussion that is still ongoing.

Michele Ellis' book review on *Gunild Keetman: A life given to music and movement* is a wonderful series of memories about Carl Orff's companion on his journey. The book documents Keetman's compositions. Accompanying video footage shows Keetman in action teaching, a wonderful record of an inspiring educator.

Sarah Powell's article is drawn from a research project with Early Childhood teachers. Using two sites, a preschool and a primary school, Sarah worked with teachers as co-researchers. Two Orff presenters assisted in delivering the professional learning. Some previous experience for teachers helped to build confidence. Preschool teachers talked of singing instructions to the children and of their surprise that children would sing back in reply.

I'm grateful to all contributors. While the K-6 Syllabus is on hold there have been opportunities to have discussions about future directions in curriculum. We await these with interest and have sought every opportunity to contribute to discussions.

Anne Power  
Editor



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## Contributors

**Bronwyn Hendy** had a long career in journalism before retraining as a music teacher. She has conducted numerous choirs, including the Canberra Children's Choir and Canberra Community Voices, as well as being the founder and conductor of Good Life Chorus, a dementia-friendly community choir in Ryde, NSW. She teaches early childhood music classes and private students.

**Virginia Esparraga** is a valued member of the NSW Orff committee. She has been a state and national presenter at conferences. Last year was her first experience of the Salzburg Special Course and we look forward to the presentations that will grow from that.

**Robyn Staveley** is the co-ordinator of Levels Courses and an outstanding presenter at state, national and international courses. Her research on music and the brain has informed the creation of a new Orff course.

**Carol Richards** has continued, since her retirement from university, to present at Levels Courses where her influence is admired and loved. She continues to research and flies her plane.

**Michele Ellis** has broadened her experience of Orff process through work in Salzburg and the San Francisco School.

**Sarah Powell's** doctorate is in vocal music and she has presented at ASME and ISME conferences as well as Orff state conferences. Sarah lectures at Macquarie University.

# Some music sticks in our memories, often whether we like it or not

BRONWYN HENDY

The author teaches musicianship to young children and conducts the Good Life Chorus, a dementia-friendly community choir in the Sydney suburb of West Ryde. Every week I am amazed at how choristers who are living with dementia can still recall music, and the joy that it brings them is palpable. Can I use my teaching to help my young students collect music memories across their lifetimes, so they too have something to bring them joy far into the future?

The short answer is almost certainly “yes”. A sticking point when looking for transfer effects between music learning and the collection of music memories is that music memories often form part of our involuntary recall. However, this is where building domain-specific content and skills – in this case, learning music as a child – becomes important. Research has shown that studying domain content increases learning, recall and recognition within that domain by rendering content increasingly meaningful. Linhares and Chada (2013) refer to this as the Experience Recognition hypothesis. Development of music knowledge and skills would therefore assist superior memory, recognition and recall of music by creating relevant experiences.

So what makes people – musically trained or not – remember music for a lifetime? Music becomes entangled with events in people’s lives so that hearing a particular piece of music evokes vivid memories, often accompanied by imagery relating to the original episode (Baumgartner, 1992). For instance, the great Russian writer Nikolai Gogol (1847, transl. 1952, 46) wrote that Russian folk songs were a living history of the Russian people. Neuropsychologist Lutz Jäncke (2008) found that music memories were quite abstract, so the memory was triggered even if there were changes of timbre, tempo, volume or register. The music itself may not be “emotional” – so a sad piece of music can be associated with a happy memory, and vice versa. The mnemonic properties of music have been recognised for centuries. Jäncke wrote that music we find emotional is strongly tied to our autobiographical memories. It’s personal, and

that is why it’s such a powerful memory trigger.

Andrew Ford in his 2017 public address on “Music and Memory” in Sydney for Project 33: Anri Sala (<https://vimeo.com/255508133>), noted that pop, more than any other kind of music, “attaches itself to other memories”. He said the short, catchy and repetitious melodies, and the ubiquitous nature of pop music, meant it “gate-crashes our lives”; we hear the same songs repeatedly and they become learned and accidentally linked to emotional events. Ford suggested that repetition, brevity and tunefulness were important in forming memories. He pointed out that long pieces of art music were less likely to make it into our long-term memories by accident, simply because we had to “make an appointment” with longer works, and we were less likely to hear them repeatedly. Of course, there are exceptions. Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus” holds particularly strong, emotional memories for my 87-year-old father, who, one evening in late 1956, heard it on the car radio, then at Carols by Candlelight, then again on the car radio. After the third hearing, he was inspired to ask his date to marry him. So this author might not be here, but for art music!

To help unlock some of the reasons for music becoming memorable, I conducted interviews with two seniors who are living with dementia, about their musical memories. In the first interview, Norma, 85 (a former chorister in a choir I conducted), discussed her strong memory of the New Zealand song *Pokarekare Ana*. I asked Norma why she remembered this song from her childhood. She explained:

We did the dishes every night and [my sister] Julie did the washing up and I did the drying up, and we would sing [*Pokarekare Ana*] and the washing up was done in next to no time flat. It was a good thing! You know, it has happy connotations, I’ll put it that way.

Norma’s experience demonstrates the power of emotional connection and repetition/practice in embedding musical memories. In this instance, the text was in an unfamiliar

language (Maori), indicating that text meaning was not significant in creating Norma's connection with this song. Melbourne University Clinical Neuropsychologist Professor Sarah Wilson (2018) reported that singing triggered the release of the feel-good chemical dopamine, so the pleasure of singing and the emotional power of bonding with her sister made Norma's chore personally rewarding and memorable.

French researchers El Haj, Fasotti and Allain (2011) conducted research on music and memory with young adults, older adults, and patients with a clinical diagnosis of probable Alzheimer's Disease, comparing their ability to remember autobiographical events after being exposed to music of their own choosing, and after being exposed to silence. They reported: "Compared to memories evoked in silence, memories evoked in the 'music' condition were found to be more specific, accompanied by more emotional content and impact on mood, and retrieved faster" (p. 238). Their work pointed to the phenomenon of music being able to temporarily unlock memories and some cognitive functions that people living with dementia find are otherwise inaccessible.

My second interview was with Michael, a retired Professor of Education, now 83 and living with Alzheimer's Disease. (Michael sings in Good Life Chorus.) When I first asked Michael about his interest in classical music, he could not remember. However, with the findings of El Haj, Fasotti and Allain in mind, I had prepared for the interview by asking Michael's wife about songs which may have emotional connections for him. Thus, when I started to sing the jazz standard *Fly me to the moon*, Michael picked up the melody within a few bars and started to sing the tune. Almost immediately, his previous vagueness disappeared, and he was able to access detailed autobiographical memories. Michael was then able to relate how his attraction to classical music came about when, as a child, he bonded with a Conservatorium student classical pianist who boarded with his family. Like Norma, Michael experienced an emotional connection with the music. The ability of singing to facilitate (albeit temporarily) access to memories cannot be underestimated as a means of improving the sense of self and wellbeing in people who are living with dementia.

So what do we know about music and memory in children? Dege, Kubicek and Schwarzer (2015) in a study of 55 pre-schoolers in Germany, found that music learning influenced

children's working memory, rapid retrieval from long-term memory and phonological awareness, an important building block for language. Additionally, German researchers Roden, Grube, Bongard and Kreutz (2013), found that children aged seven and eight studying music performed better with regard to working memory and cognitive performance than did a control group studying science. So we know that music learning has a positive impact on working memory, and that working memory clusters with a range of other strong predictors of academic success, such as IQ and executive function. While these traits are strongly genetically determined, studies also show that music training plays a role.

The impacts of music may vary across different age groups, but there are common threads. Forrai (1988) wrote:

One effect of music is that the child becomes emotionally balanced. Songs and games have a positive effect on [the child's] emotions, they relieve tension. Listening to music ... can have a calming or stimulating effect. A song can generate different moods, through which the child's emotional world becomes richer, more varied, deeper (p. 6).

Forrai also pointed out the benefits of self-expression for children's confidence; the social benefits of learning to sing and play musical games with other children; the development of children's memories through learning songs and actions; and the development of children's imaginations. Daykin and colleagues (2017) linked music with reduced anxiety in young adults, enhanced mood and purpose in adults, and improvements in mental wellbeing, quality of life and coping ability in people with serious health conditions. They also found that in older people, music was effective in enhancing morale and reducing the risk of depression. The British Psychological Society (2013) reported a study by University of West London researchers Davies, Ohl and Manyande showing that four-year-olds who made music together were more than 30 times more likely to help others than their 'no music' peers, and showed improved cooperation and problem solving. For people living with dementia, Beilharz (2017) wrote that music was not a cure, but "an inexpensive, chemical-free and dignified way of experiencing far-reaching results" (p. 115). From cradle to grave, singing and making music can play a strongly positive role in improving people's mental health and quality of life.

Teaching music through active music-making and skill-building provides teachers with the opportunity to exercise every part of their students' brains. Learning music in childhood is linked to improvements in working memory, rapid retrieval from long-term memory, improved ability to learn language and more effective information processing. Singing and playing musical games has been shown to create greater empathy, social skills, cooperation, helpfulness and problem-solving in children, while the process of singing triggers the release of dopamine, bringing potential health benefits in all age groups. In people living with dementia, singing and making music has been shown to improve short-term ability to access brain functions, including memory and speech, and improve wellbeing. Music is a strong memory trigger, often linked with emotion, and stored in parts of the brain that still function long after most memories have vanished.

Teaching children music and equipping them with lifelong skills such as discerning listening, singing and putting their surplus attention to work with progressively more complex musical activities, has the potential to boost their propensity for collecting music memories and improve their sense of wellbeing many years in the future.

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# Life at the Orff Institute in the Special Course

VIRGINA ESPARRAGA

It is difficult to find the words to describe a shared experience which is shaping up to be one of the most transformative of your life so far. Getting up each day and immersing myself in life at the Orff Institute with my Special Course classmates is food for my soul and is awakening and fulfilling a part of me I never knew existed.

We recently spent two uplifting and motivating weeks with Doug Goodkin at the end of March and he told us a story of a pre-schooler who was taken to Music class as it was part of their daily schedule. The pre-schooler asked, "why are we here?". I have asked myself this question many times over the last 7 months, not because I have doubted why I am here, but as a point of reflection and as a way of reaffirming my initial impulse. "Why am I here?". Well, "why *not*?". I am here to challenge myself, to broaden my knowledge of The Schulwerk, to ask questions, to receive answers, to take risks, to reflect, to further myself as a pedagogue, to grow. I could keep going. The reasons I have chosen to be here are endless and I cannot find a single reason *not* to be here.

For me, the Special Course has been far more than simply turning up for classes and leaving each day. It has been an experience which has allowed me to gain knowledge and skills from doing, seeing and feeling. It is something that has happened to me that has affected how I feel.

This experience has been a way of life that has encompassed complete immersion, reflection, realisations, exposure, courage, relationships, close bonding, critical thinking, pedagogical growth, physical exertion, opinions, respect, trust, the pushing of limits, risk taking and change. These aspects are just the tip of the iceberg. Not only does this experience encompass everything at the Orff Institute and within the Special Course, but also embracing living in a new country and everything that it has on offer for me.

None of the above would have occurred in my experience without the people involved and the relationships I have formed with them. I am

lucky enough to be studying with sixteen other music teachers from all over the world; Brazil, Spain, USA, China, Ukraine, Russia, Korea, Slovakia, Greece, Turkey and Australia. It is a joy to share each day with these friends. We have so much fun together and we are constantly sharing ideas and learning from each other. We have become a close-knit group and we all share a very special bond which is irreplaceable.

I am being taught and inspired by leading Orff Schulwerk practitioners including Barbara Haselbach, Shirley Salmon, Andrea Ostertag, Ari Glage, Sofia Lopez-Ibor, Doug Goodkin, Soili Perkio, Reinhold Wirsching, Susanne Rebholz and Doris Valtiner. Each teacher has their own flair and energy in their teaching, their own way of motivating and encouraging you, and their own way of challenging yet supporting you, which every time leaves you wishing that the class was not over. I am so very grateful for their valuable insights and the moments we have shared, which I hold so closely.

Put all of these people together; my classmates and teachers; they are what form the heart and core of this experience.

I immerse myself in movement, dance, instrumental performance, composition, improvisation and vocal experiences and every day I look forward to all of it, with the people who I share it with. I am unlocking my own creativity and I am growing confidence in myself as a pedagogue. Sometimes my ideas are challenged, some days I am physically challenged and at times I have to throw myself in the deep end and take a risk, but for every experience there is something to reflect on and something I take away. Whether it is an idea to take back to my classroom, the application of a technique, further knowledge, something I can change, or even an experience which I will keep for myself, there is always something new to be learnt.

Each of my classmates seems to have found their feet in different areas of this whole experience and it has been a joy to witness this. For me, I have literally found my feet in

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movement and dance. In the past, I always enjoyed it, but never in my adult life got the opportunity to experience it at this intensity. Moving and dancing for at least one and a half hours a day, sometimes up to six hours, made me realise how much I loved it very early on in the course. It has become one of my main creative outlets and releases. It has grounded me. Moving and dancing daily has been a gift for my body, heart and mind and I have Andrea Ostertag, Doris Valtiner and Susanne Rebholz to thank for instilling this love for me.

I have reflected a lot on how my time here relates to my teaching in Australia and what I can take back with me. The new pedagogical ideas, the discoveries made, the knowledge and insights I have been gifted; these are elements I can take back to Australia to share. The foundation I had seven months ago has been built on and I am inspired to take my teaching in new directions. I want to have the influence on my students that my teachers here have had on me; to be able to create an experience that sparks a joy in them, allows them to feel and which nurtures their personal growth.

I have had many realisations, moments that have challenged me and moments that have touched me. I have the most beautiful memories. I have reached a point where I want this time in my life to continue as it is, but know that is not possible. This amazing experience itself is something I cannot take back to Australia with me, but I can take every single memory I have made here and hold it closely.

My ideas and insights on pedagogy and The Schulwerk are expanding, reshaping and evolving each day, and so too am I as a person. The incredible people I have the absolute gift of studying with and being taught by are what truly make this experience. Without them, it would not be what it is. We have seen each other laugh, cry, feel frustrated, put ourselves out there, pour our hearts out and grow as people. I have lifelong friends with whom I have a shared experience and that is what makes it so special.

# Australian National Council of Orff Schulwerk Levels Courses: Relevance and Impact

ROBYN STAVELEY and CAROL RICHARDS

## Background

Carl Orff, a German composer, along with a gymnastic specialist Gunild Keetman, pioneered an approach to music education in Germany in the 1920s. The foundation of this approach was centered around the child, his needs and his musicality. The way to nourish the artistry in every child was to engage the child in elementary activities-primarily music and movement.

In 1963, the Orff-Institut in Salzburg was opened to provide training in the Orff Schulwerk approach. Teachers from all over the world began to attend courses in order to learn more about the elemental techniques of the approach.

The demand for training resulted in many countries devising their own courses for teachers. The American Orff Schulwerk Association, and Carl Orff Canada were two of the first to offer “Level Courses” in the training of the pedagogy, media, movement and recorder aspects of Orff Schulwerk to teachers. Australia, in the 1980s, began to offer Level-type workshops to teachers interested in this approach.

In the year 2000, The Australian National Council of Orff Schulwerk (ANCOS) adopted a set of guidelines for Level Courses that aimed to help teachers and trainers to understand the approach and use it in their learning environments. For the next 19 years, Level Courses have been offered every year in most Australian states.

A key factor that has increased the numbers of teachers seeking the ANCOS Teacher Training Levels Courses, apart from the value of the courses, has been their endorsement and registration by NESAs, the NSW National Education Standards Authority. All teachers in NSW, in order to maintain their registration, must complete at least 100 hours of professional development over a 5 year period (NESA, 2016). “Completing PD helps teachers keep up-to-date with relevant content, skills and pedagogy and supports their

professional growth.” (NESA, 2016, p. para 2). These courses are measured against the Professional Teaching Standards (AITSL, 2014).

In Australia, from 2013, all states and territories implemented the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2014). These standards ensure a nationally consistent approach to teacher registration. The framework, endorsed by all Australian ministers for Education, underpins not only accreditation of initial teacher education programs, but also registration of teachers and formal recognition of teacher professional development. In order for a course to be endorsed, there is a rigorous process whereby the activities and experiences must be shown to extend teachers’ proficiencies against the Professional Teaching Standards. All four levels of the ANCOS levels courses are accredited by NESA, in line with these teaching standards.

In 2017, ANCOS conducted a survey to get a snapshot of the people who do the Level Courses, determine why they do them, how relevant they felt the courses were, and more importantly, determine if the courses were achieving the goals they were meant to achieve. Are the courses staying true to the Schulwerk aspect of child-centered and child-nurtured music and movement education, while meeting the state learning requirements?

## Methodology and Analysis

All participants involved in an ANCOS Level Course in 2017 were invited to complete a survey. Most (93%) of the participants were involved. The survey was conducted during the last day of each 5-day Level Course.

Section I of the survey gathered demographic data about the participants, including gender, age, job, years of teaching experience, state or country of residence, and musical training. Responses were coded by number and entered into an excel spreadsheet.

In section two, qualitative data were collected. The methodology chosen to collect and analyse the data was the grounded theory qualitative methodology developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Responses were operationalized and coded into categories which emerged from the data.

The questions that participants responded to were:

1. Why did you enroll in this Level Course?
2. What do you hope to achieve from your Levels training?
3. The Level Courses are designed to train teachers in the teaching strategies, tools and philosophy of the Orff Approach. Have you found the course useful for your situation.?
4. Are you interested in training overseas and in Australia? If so, what kind of training?

The final statement asked participants to give any other comments about their level course experience.

## Results

### Section I

A simple frequency analysis was run on the questions in this section.

The total number of participants surveyed was 451. Participants in the Australian Level courses numbered 47%. A larger number (53%) were enrolled in the ANCOS Level Courses overseas in Hong Kong, China, and Singapore. Reflecting the demographics of the teaching profession, most of the participants were female (89%) and only 11% male.

The age of participants was spread between 18 and 60, indicating that not only beginning teachers, but experienced teachers were coming for training. The largest group of participants were those in the 30-39 age range (40%).

The participants in Level Courses proved to be a diverse group from a variety of educational sections. Primary Specialist Music Teachers made up 28% of the total group, followed by Early Childhood teachers (18%), Secondary teachers (9%), and Primary General Teachers (5%). The largest group, (40%) however indicated the educational category "other". An examination of this category revealed these

areas. Most participants in the "other" category were studio piano teachers (69%). Private training organization teachers (13%), other private studio and miscellaneous teachers (14%) and university students (2%) completed the 'other' category. The Level Courses in Hong Kong and China were responsible for the large number of studio and training organization teachers.

The largest group of participants were those enrolled in Level One (64%). The next largest group was Level Two at 20%, then Level Three (12%) and finally Level Four (4%).

Most of the participants (66%) reported that they had paid for the Level Course themselves. Only 34% were funded by their employer. The participants indicated that the most important consideration in deciding whether or not to attend a Level course was Professional Advancement (43%). Other important issues were; the cost of the course (22%), family responsibilities (13%), the length of the course (8%) and other factors such as venue, course presenters and child care arrangements (14%).

In addition to having teaching qualifications, participants also had qualifications and training in music (90%). The other participants were teachers who had an interest in music (instrumentalists, music therapist or language teachers) or had been asked to teach music in their primary school or early childhood setting (10%).

### Section II: Qualitative responses

In this section, reasons for teachers enrolling in the course were sought to determine whether the course was meeting its objectives. The first objective was to help teachers develop skills and knowledge of the Orff Approach. The second and related objective was to show teachers how to use the skills and strategies to engage children in learning music and growing artistically.

#### 1. Why did you enroll in this Level Course? N=279 Responses

Four categories emerged from the data; (1) to become better teachers; (2) for professional advancement; (3) had an interest in the Orff Approach and (4) the recommendation of other professionals. Many participants wrote a number of reasons for enrolling and their responses were in different categories.

### A. Become Better Teachers

The largest group of responses was in this category (70%). Teachers were keen to improve their skills and gain new ideas. Some teachers had been given new responsibilities and felt the need to upskill for that role. P1 said, “I have been asked to be music educator for my long day care centre, bringing music classes in every room”. P17 stated that she “needed further direction and ideas for older years. “P43 shared that she “needs to teach many children.”

Others identified the need to develop more professional skills, in music knowledge and in teaching to enrich student learning and classroom experiences. “I wanted to extend my skills, increase my Orff understanding and challenge myself both as a musician, teacher and person” (P12). “To better my teaching.” (P21). “I want to teach little ones music in another way, better than the way I learned (P53)”.

Some mentioned specific skills and knowledge they wanted to acquire, “master various skills like how to lead children to sing, acquiring skills for ensemble and choir. And “Orchestration for children with different abilities (35). Enlarging their repertoire of teaching skills was also high on the list, “Learning teaching skills in Orff (38).

Many teachers admitted they wanted new teaching ideas for everything, “to bring in new ideas, to enrich my piano learning so that students can leave with interest and with musical vocabularies “ (73) and “To complete Orff training to enrich student learning and classroom program’ (P14). To increase my repertoire of strategies. To more formally structure my programming. To improve my music teaching” (P146).

### B. Professional Advancement

Another group of responses was in the category of Professional Advancement (24%). “I want to know more in Orff for future studies, for future working” (p31). “Professional advancement, applied to the teaching immediately “(P81). “Professional Development. “Career advancement” (P56). A majority of participants in all the Level Courses (70%) indicated that one or more of these were the reasons they enrolled in a Level Course in 2017.

NESA requires that those teachers who wish to advance their careers are required to demonstrate that they have acquired a wide variety of teaching skills and broad range of strategies in their teaching area, as well as having continuously improved their own teaching practice. At higher levels, this extends to “sharing, supporting and model[ing] this with and for colleagues” (NESA, 2016, Teaching Practice Table, Highly Accomplished).

### C. Interest in Orff Approach

A total of 24% of participants indicated they were enrolling in the course to better understand the Orff approach or finish their Orff Training. “Wanted to complete levels, great “immersion” (P26). “Orff aligns with my personal teaching philosophy “(p16). “I wanted to gain skills and understanding in the Orff Process” (P23). “I want to learn the whole pedagogy of Orff” (P33).

Most admitted they were learning about the Orff approach to become better teachers. “I had not completed sufficient PD hours for the year. I wanted to consolidate my prior knowledge and formalize it into a Level. I also wanted to broaden my knowledge and ability to integrate percussion and reorder more into the classroom successfully. Confirm what I already do in the classroom is on the right track” (P239). Another stated, “I want to increase my knowledge of the Schulwerk as it applies to my classroom and to build my own skills in improvisation and movement” (P250).

### D. Recommendation by other professionals

– a total of 6% of participants indicated that they had enrolled in the course because it was recommended by a friend, colleague or boss, and they could meet the Education Department professional development attendance requirements for promotion. “I enrolled because of friend’s recommendation (P31)”, “a work requirement “(P46), “the school asked me to enroll” (P113) and “another music teacher suggested the course” (P120).

The second open-ended question sought to determine what participants wanted to take away from the courses. The participant responses were similar to those in Question One i.e., *Wanting to upskill and become better teachers* was the largest category and *learn more about the Orff Approach* followed in importance.

## 2. What do you hope to achieve in your levels training? N=260 Responses

### A. Develop better musical skills, knowledge, teaching strategies, repertoire in order to improve their teaching and engage students in learning. (75% of responses)

Many participants mentioned skill development as a priority including pedagogical understanding (P16, P18, P19). Some were wanting to leave having learned specific skills such as; “musicianship skills” (P16), “body percussion and orchestration” (P48, P51), “improvisation” (P 49 and P50), “arrangement “(P53), “creative movement” (P 53), “learning the modes” (P07), and generally “to improve my teaching ability”(P01). “new ideas for teaching musicianship skills in small groups, understanding of process for vocal training. More well-rounded musical education for any piano students” (P275). “personal musical and teaching growth”(P9).

### B. Better understand the Orff approach and finish the levels. (17%)

Many reinforced the notion that leaning the Orff approach would enhance their teaching. “A deeper understanding of Orff that I can apply to my teaching philosophy and practice (P12). “be able to internalize “the Orff conventions and teach these to others” (P13). “to improve my teaching. To grow my Orff skills. To improve my own (musical) skills. To push me out of my comfort zone” (P15).

### C. Have fun, network with other professionals, and improve confidence in teaching using the approach. (6%)

Some of the participants admitted that they were keen to have an enjoyable experience, meet other professionals and feel more confident in using the approach in their teaching; “Increased skill and confidence in teaching music using Orff processes” (P23). “feel more confident – gain skills” (P3). “personal musical development and contacts”(P18). “confidence in myself as a musician and capable teacher” (P20). “make more new friends, want to know more about Orff” (P129). To become more confident teaching children” (P179).

Being able to organize lessons that are fun for students and the teacher was also an important achievement for some; “to make my piano lessons more fun” (P132); want to get more fun in my music lesson” (P134); “a well-

rounded, fun and holistic approach to teaching music” (P258).

### D. Become a presenter (2%)

A small group mentioned that they wanted to eventually teach at a Level Course and wanted to achieve the knowledge and skills they might need in that role: “one day to be mentored as a presenter in WA” (P14); “to teach an Orff level course in the future” (P59); and simply, “want to teach levels “(P7).

Teachers from different systems, primary, secondary, early childhood and studio teachers were in the courses together. But music teachers were not the only participants. Instrumentalists, music therapists and even a language teacher also enrolled. One language teacher reported that she employs Orff techniques in her teaching because they are, active, fun and good principles for any good quality teaching. ANCOS wanted to determine whether the content of the course was suitable for the diverse group. The third question tried to discover the suitability for different populations.

## 3. Have you found the course useful for your situation? N=255

A total of 98% of the responses stated that they had found the course useful for their situation. 2% said the course was ‘somewhat’ useful. A number of those who responded to this question were keen to give examples to support their view: “strategies, yes! Tools, Yes! Confidence in the Orff process” (P14); “yes, and it even feeds into instrumental teaching and playing” (p17);“ yes, I have. It has made such a positive impact on my teaching but more “very useful in lesson planning, activities” (29); “yes, it provides a lot of new ideas to teach children in an interesting and effective way” (P32); “Its incredible – extremely useful “ (P45).

## 4. The fourth question asked if participants were interested in further training and if so, what kind of training would they likely engage in. N=245 Responses

A total of 93 % of the group stated “yes” they would like more training. Family responsibilities and expense were the reason for “no” responses by 5% of the group. “Maybe” was the response of 2% of the group, “depending on time and family responsibilities.

### Desired Type of Training N=82 responses

The type of training participants wanted was in the category of 'hands-on' and useful skill development. Most responses (57%) wanted more Orff Level Courses. Some (15%) specified Orff approach for different groups, i.e. early childhood, special needs, high school and so on. Others were interested in some Dalcroze (movement) and Kodaly (vocal) training (11%), choir training (6%), movement and folk dance training (2%). Training in Jazz was also mentioned by 5% of the respondent group along with more recorder improvisation instruction (2%).

### 5. Any other comments about your level course experience. N=170 responses

This open-ended question produced some interesting results. By far, the largest number of responses were in the '*impact of the course*' category (51%). Many described the positive features of the course as "excellent, fantastic, magical, amazing, worthwhile, inspirational, valuable, stimulating, perfect, challenging, fun, good, and very good"

Participants (31%) praised the '*quality of the presenters*', describing them as "helpful, excellent, encouraging, supportive, professional and commented that they gave constructive feedback.

A number of responses (8%) dealt with participants' '*personal learning*' and described the experience as helping them to become, 'more confident, learned a lot, will be able to apply their learning', and their realization that the approach was 'good for them'.

The fourth category of responses dealt with the demands of the course in time, energy and involvement. Some commented on the rushed, intensive and exhaustive aspect of a 5 day 7 and ½ hour course (4%). For others it was difficult to absorb information and experiences and they longed for time to catch their breath.

The fifth group of responses dealt with the housekeeping and operational issues such as: as different registration procedure, having a rubric for assessment, providing prior reading, capping the course number and streaming the classes (3%).

The final group of responses were in the category of suggestions for future course content. For example, inclusions in the course like more jazz, an elective, an early childhood

course, offering levels more frequently and a closer connection to the curriculum were offered (3%).

### Summary and Discussion of Findings

ANCOS Level Courses were attended in 2017 by a large number of teachers from all sectors of education in Australia, Hong Kong, China and Singapore. Most were females over the age of 30, classroom teachers or music specialists or studio teachers. Level One had the most participants and 90% had musical training in their youth or in the education. A significant group had enrolled because of "personal advancement" and that is attributed to both their interest in becoming better teachers and the educational authorities mandating attendance at professional development courses for advancement.

Participants commented that the courses had a positive impact on their skills, knowledge, and confidence and that they enjoyed the course. They also commented on the quality of the presenters who, in the main, are experienced teachers and skilled Orff presenters. They commented that the courses were relevant for their situation in all school ages and in studio teaching (98%).

### Future Directions

This study has provided valuable data in identifying the impact of the ANCOS Orff Schulwerk Level Courses. However, just as ANCOS has done in the past, revision and refinement will continue to ensure the offerings provide quality professional development. Reflection, integration, and the online environment are significant components of consideration in order to ensure quality PD.

Reflection is identified as a vital aspect of quality professional learning, according to research on best practice in teacher professional development (Desimone & Garet, 2015) and the AITSL Australian Teacher Performance Framework (AITSL, 2012). The AITSL Framework states that "effective professional learning [is] relevant, collaborative and future focused" (AITSL, 2012, p. 8). Relevance occurs when teachers are able to *translate* professional learning, knowledge and strategies into daily lessons and classes (Desimone & Garet, 2015, p. 256). Collaboration ensures feedback and professional growth, and future focus supports innovation and continual evaluation. This develops through a cycle that involves applying, reflecting and refining (AITSL, 2017).

Translating the learning into lessons in participants' own classrooms has been identified as a challenge and opportunity in effective PD (Desimone & Garet, 2015, p. 256). Presenters in Level Courses already provide valuable reflection time during each session; however, future courses could incorporate the increased impact of reflection by building in opportunities for *active* reflection by participants through integrated lesson development.

Integration, a current direction in Education and promoted by the Australian Institute of Teachers, links concepts, thinking strategies, skills and concepts between and through other domains. In Orff lessons, integration is achieved through fluid activities, linking all ways of artistic and musical behaviour, through imitation, exploration and improvisation. Opportunities for groups of participants to create and showcase their understanding through developing an integrated lesson would assist in translating the learning into practice.

Online environments are fast, efficient and strong ways of communicating and accessing a community of learners and learning. Opportunities could include sites that could offer sample lessons, blogs, videos, resources, scholarly literature and links to the wider Orff Schulwerk "world".

Online modules, linked to Level Courses, could be a further way of reflecting, developing and applying learning. Modules could involve reading/watching and considering topical aspects of Orff Schulwerk and other topics in music education and learning. At stages of their involvement in the Level Courses, participants could submit descriptions of the impact/implications of their experiences in the courses and their reading and practice applied in their teaching context. This would not only allow them to formally reflect themselves on their learning and deepening understanding of Orff Schulwerk, but also inform ANCOS on the effectiveness of the courses.

In terms of designing quality professional development in Orff Schulwerk, that satisfies the learning of needs of future and practising teachers, Australia has made significant and acknowledged contributions. A continuing pursuit of refinements, developments and innovations will increase our understanding and ensure we provide quality, future-directed training in Orff Schulwerk.

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## Panel discussion at Orff 2-day Conference: on the theme of 'The Future of Music Education'

ANNE POWER

The panel was introduced by Peta Harper, Vice President of NSW Orff. It consisted of John Montgomery and James Humberstone who lectures in music education at Sydney Conservatorium and who has presented regularly at Orff conferences making connection between Orff process on acoustic and on digital media; and Elizabeth a composer representing the Australian Music Centre (AMC). She has been working on 'Echo' which is an online learning process, developed by the Australian Music Centre offering new perspectives on their unique collection. When it is fully launched it will allow teachers and students to access items in the collection. There is a link to that. She has done many composition workshops in schools.

**Alice:** What do you think make a good music program and what do you expect to see when doing accreditation or registration.

**John:** There's limitations on what I can tell you about accreditation or registration. NESA provides syllabuses for courses that give a framework for teachers to use. Schools are encouraged to look to what the sector is requiring. Each school will have its own context. I personally think that good teaching breaks the dichotomy between theory and practice, where students are passionate about what they are learning. I have enjoyed seeing classrooms where there is a community of learning present. Music has power beyond any other to maximise that passion that is driven by practice and link it with reflection driven by theory.

**Peta:** I think that's a good segue to the next question.

**Katie:** There is a move in many independent primary schools to have a creative arts teacher. What do you think about this?

**James:** This relates to a question we have later on about generalist primary teachers. I think the hours in teacher training should be expanded. We know that teachers in generalist primary education don't get enough music.

However, there has been an increase in hours for primary teachers in other things. So we need to look at it from the other side. We need to try to increase the value of the specialist teachers when we talk about this. I've done some advocacy work with NSW government and when we start talking about music as nourishing our souls, that gets our brains working properly and that allows our bodies to move together with our brains, I think we can turn the conversation around. If we say 'We can do this. We can send experts into schools to mentor teachers.' So there is a message we can get out. I'm also trying to be a solutions person.

**Jennifer:** What do you think the focus of future music education should be? Are we providing what our students need for that future?

**Elizabeth:** I'll answer that from AMC and our thinking how we can support that future. Our primary goal on the website is to create resources for teachers. Currently we have a library of 12,000 scores available online. They also want to recognise teachers for the resources they create.

**James:** Even if you are new to the Orff Scene, you get it. But we have to throw the bathwater away. There is so much that has been researched, such as The 2005 Report. We've got to start with the kids. When I go into schools, there are a lot of kids colouring in pictures of instruments of the orchestra. That's not music education. That's the bathwater we have to throw away.

We have to accept that 12-, 13-, 14-year olds have very strong ideas about what good music is. It's not the same as teaching music in a primary school where they all are open to enjoying music the way we want them to enjoy music. I've made an intensive online course that you can do for free. It looks at all the different research and pedagogies around the world. It puts up a lot of different provocations out there. Kids 100% love music. It is such an important part of their

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developing adult identity. Reports from the UK confirm that 2/3 of the youth population are making music, but 3% are doing music in schools. In Australia we've dropped to about 7%. We know there are external factors like popular music and technology.

I think we can still have the baby without the bathwater. I think we can transform music education if we teach past the syllabus. The syllabus is the starting line.

**John:** The arts have to be given proper space and time. Now's the time to advocate for this.

**Gabi:** What is the status of the K-6 Syllabus in NSW?

**John:** It is yet to go to the Minister.

**Sue:** Is anyone lobbying the tertiary institutions that offer primary teaching to bring in music specialisations; and how can we get tertiary institutions to bring in Orff and Kodaly-based pedagogies.

**James:** We are close to bringing in the possibility of specialisations. But there isn't enough space unless we get students to pay themselves. The restrictions are government ones. I am planning to do both a Graduate

Certificate and a Graduate Diploma of Primary Teaching in music. I want to have people teaching a melody with no referring to a score. I'm pushing out through the Masters.

**Jennifer:** In support of Richard Gill's National Music Teacher initiative, how can we ensure that music and movement are embedded in all schools across the country, and that teachers have meaningful professional learning?

**Elizabeth:** At AMC we want to be an access point for the supports that exist for teachers – lesson plans, Youtube clips and so on.

**James:** Our degree has a primary professional practice leading to high school professional experiences. Our second years are co-mentor the teachers they meet in primary schools and are mentored by them.

**Kate:** What is your advice to teachers working in an area where there is a decrease in learning an instrument other than rock ban instruments.

**Elizabeth:** It's our job as teacher to draw connections between music that children listen to and the music they want to play.

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**GUNILD KEETMAN: A Life Given to  
Music and Movement (Memories,  
Encounter, Documentation)  
Regner, H and Ronnefeld M (2004).  
Gunild Keetman, 1904-1990. Mainz: Schott  
Book Review by MICHELE ELLIS**

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**The purpose of the book**

This commemorative book was the initiative of the Carl Orff Foundation and was published to celebrate what would have been Gunild

Keetman's one hundredth birthday in 2004. The editors Herman Regner and Minna Ronnefeld who were both colleagues and companions of Keetman assembled a selection of stories,

documents, works, photos, recordings and video footage which reveal the ongoing influence of a remarkable yet understated woman. This book is suited to those who have an interest in Orff Schulwerk; music and dance education; the foundations of the Orff Institute; and those seeking the purpose, formation and inspiration of the music found in the Schulwerk Volumes and related works. The book presents a personal connection with Keetman through recounts of family members, students, colleagues, companions and carers. The contributors reveal the truly humble, kind, inspirational, gifted musician and influential teacher that she remained all her life. As Carl Orff stated “I am not exaggerating when I say that without Keetman’s decisive contribution through her double talent, the Schulwerk could never have come into being.” (Orff 1978:67) Yet it is mainly the name Orff associated with this international approach of movement and music education. This book honours Gunild Keetman and is a recognition of all that she contributed to, and how she embodied the Schulwerk.

#### The authors

Minna Ronnefeld, the main contributor and co-author of this book met Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman by chance at the Mozarteum in 1954. After observing just one lesson given by Keetman she reflects “... I had never experienced a way of teaching so full of involvement, elan and a tireless appeal for attention to musical quality and craftsmanship. At the same time the sense of unity and the goal they were aiming for was always present.” (Regner 2004:26) This encounter set Ronnefeld on a professional pathway in a new country to study with Keetman. Overtime they produced 12 joint publications, travelled, presented internationally and maintained a friendship throughout Keetman’s life. Ronnefeld outlines Keetman’s life from childhood to the Günther Schule, the Bavarian Radio and Television programs, the Mozarteum and Orff Institute to international workshops, symposiums and sadly to her final days. This gives the reader a sense of how Keetman developed her skills and found her place alongside lifetime friend Carl Orff. The timeline provides the framework for the other contributors to place their personal account, gratitude and fond memories of their beloved Gunild.

#### Who was Keetman?

Keetman’s home-life at the mill in Breitbrunn is explored and is revealed to be in stark contrast to the demands of her professional work. The mill was her sanctuary. The simplicity of her dwelling in which a large weaving loom was the centre piece of her bedroom come kitchen and

lounge room. A multipurpose space where several days and evenings were spent with students Barbara Haselbach, Minna Ronnefeld, Hermine Gebhardt-Seele improvising, analysing and devising lesson plans, sharing wine and past stories and being gifted with hand woven items. The three students refer to Gunild’s wise words and gentle hand, her occasional playfulness where past stories would emerge in her space of creative possibilities. Gunild’s home was a collage of weaving patterns, spun wool, carvings, baskets amongst myriad projects in various forms of completeness - a type of structured chaos as friend Catarina Carlsen (Regner 2004) explained. Regina and Esa Keetman share their experience with their sister-in-law and aunt respectively. From their recollections emerge the simplicity of farm life to which Keetman was drawn and the ways she expressed her deep dedication towards her family.

Professionally, many recounts applaud Keetman’s ability to create, teach and refine musical ideas which on the surface may appear elemental but are “never without a wink of humour” as Regner described. (Regner 2004:116) Wilhelm Keller outlines the division of intellectual ownership of the Schulwerk between Orff and Keetman and details their working methodology and influence on one another over several years. He suggests their relationship was as parents of the Schulwerk, meaning both had equal influence (Regner 2004:132). As Keetman’s work is well documented elsewhere including her own publication *Elementaria* it is not the focus of this book to retell this aspect of her career rather it is a series of personal encounters. The final story tells of a frail 84 year old emerging from her ailing body with the communion of a drum and her recorder. The meeting with Issam El-Mehhah, Jannis Kaimakis and accompanied by Liselotte Orff once again bears witness to the freedom and joy that music gave her. This video of this meeting was not included in this publication but was shared at the AOSA conference in 1989.

#### Moving pictures

The accompanying DVD contains recordings and their scores of a selection of works from *Music Poetica*. The eight tracks span 1929 *Dream Dance* written for the Günther Schule dance group to the *Procession and Round Dance* co-written with Orff for the 1936 Berlin Olympics as well as music of the Volumes. The accompanying music scores prompt the reader to follow the melodic shapes and their developments as well as the dance inspired “rhythmic peculiarities” (Regner 2004:168) achieved through accents so characteristic of her music.

The video and film excerpts show Keetman in action as teacher, musician and beloved mentor. One can witness her commanding stance when in front a group conducting with clear arm gestures while her mouth moves to the other lines of the music. In the Ecstatic Dance chapter, Keetman is attending the 1980 Symposium sitting alongside Carl and Lisotte Orff and Maja Lex all watching a vibrant performance of the Fünfers (the Fives). A brief scan of her work for television demonstrates the clarity, mastery and musicality which she brought to the classroom. Fond recollections of Verena Maschat shed light on the preparations required for the show and how as a young girl her musicianship was gently shaped by this master. The videos provide a living history, giving motion to words and reinforcing the elemental drive and sophistication of her music.

### Conclusion

The book successfully fulfils the aim of the authors and gives the reader a broad understanding of Keetman's personal musical journey, her professional career and her mastery as a teacher. The multimodal nature of the publication immerses the reader visually and aurally and seeing Gunild move, create, teach and observe gives the reader an insight into her character and phenomenal abilities. The style of writing, due to several contributors, is both factual and at times rather melancholic and moving. Funny anecdotes are sprinkled amongst

stories of the heart. Unfortunately Gunild's personal thoughts have remained just that, rather it is her actions when engaged in music that appears to release her true being.

Deep gratitude toward Keetman is expressed through all the contributors. It is difficult to comprehend her personal struggles which may today may be identified as anxiety or her ability to remain the overshadowed cornerstone of the Schulwerk. Perhaps her introverted nature did not need nor desire the spotlight and accolades but this book gives her due recognition. Not all of the book has been translated, or was able to be translated such as personal certificates, programs and such from pages 184-196 nor the conversations and teaching sessions on the DVD. For a non German speaker this may prove a minor irritation. Overall one gains a broader picture of the Keetmans's contribution to the Schulwerk and a shared gratitude for one so gracious and gifted. On another note, one also closes the book with tinge of sadness for those who lost their 'Dinja' or 'Du', their 'Mitropoula' and their 'Dini'.

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# Singing with young children: Empowering early childhood teachers to sing Orff-style

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## Abstract

This paper describes the initial stages of a research project, which seeks to support early childhood teachers in their professional practice in the implementation of regular music activities. The project focuses on singing with young children using an Orff Schulwerk approach. The paper reports on the first Professional Development Day that teacher-participants attended and it discusses the initial responses of these teachers, communicated via a short written survey.

## Introduction

Singing is a natural form of communication and self-expression for young children and has recognized benefits for well-being, impact on learning outcomes, communication, and brain development. Many early childhood teachers do not see themselves as having the capacity to adequately provide music experiences for the children in their care and most report having no formal music qualifications or experience. Subsequently, they lack confidence, which can mean they are often reticent about engaging in musical activities with the children. This project seeks to challenge this lack of confidence, proposing an Orff Schulwerk approach as an accessible, enjoyable, and effective way for early childhood teachers to engage in music and singing with children.

## Background

There is a growing body of research across a range of disciplines, showing the significance of music in children's development and learning capacity. Regular involvement in music activities, particularly group singing, promotes health and well-being (Creech, Hallam, Varvarigou, Gaunt, McQueen, & Pincas, 2014; Hallam, 2010; Powell, 2013; 2015); positively impacts development of social skills and the ability to participate constructively in a group (Hallam, 2010; Kirschner & Tomasello, 2010; Good & Russo, 2016); and improves educational outcomes across various developmental domains (e.g., An, Capraro & Tillman, 2013; Barrett, Flynn & Welch, 2018; Martin, 2017).

Additionally, research in neuroscience is increasingly discovering the benefits of musical activity and its impact on brain development and learning capacity (e.g., Rogenmoser, Kernbach, Schlaug, & Gaser, 2018; Woodruff Carr, Tierney, White-Schwoch, & Kraus, 2016).

Children naturally sing, engaging in vocal play and experimenting with their voice early in their development. From birth they use their voice to communicate needs and emotions, and are attuned to their mother's voice even before birth (Barrett, 2012; Welch, 2006). They sing while they play, they create songs and singing games in the playground, and they sing when they are afraid and when they are happy (Barrett, 2015; Marsh, 1995; 2017; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Welch & Preti, 2019). Young (2006) discusses the improvised singing of 2 and 3-year old children, observed in a long day care centre. She describes the different ways children experimented with words and syllables, attached particular vocal sounds to toys, changed the sound and intensity according to mood or emotion, and the way in which this 'singing' was always associated with action and movement. Except for a physical impairment, singing is accessible to all and 'is an essential aspect of our human identity: of who we are, how we feel, how we communicate, and how other people experience us' (Welch & Preti, 2019, p. 374). It is this trait that makes singing an important part of children's lives and when children are engaged in singing and music experience from an early age the benefits are significant and lasting (Barrett, 2015; Welch, 2006).

Orff Schulwerk integrates 'music, speech, and movement in a unified whole' (Johnson, 2017, p. 10) and is based on the fundamental understanding that music is innate; that children have natural musical capacity and inclination. Orff Schulwerk is an approach described as elemental and one that reflects the nature of children's play, fostering creativity and creative thinking through experimentation and imagination (Johnson, 2017). Children experience music through singing, moving,

playing instruments, improvising, and composing. As Goodkin (2001) says, only four things are required in this approach: 'a body, a voice, a mind, and a group of people' (p. 1), making it accessible to everyone. Most significantly, Orff Schulwerk promotes an active, participatory music learning experience, where children are physically and actively involved in the 'doing' of music. It begins in the body, using body percussion, movement, and singing, all of which come before the playing of instruments (Sarrazin, 2016). Orff Schulwerk uses language as the basis for learning, particularly using speech patterns, nursery rhymes, and poems to develop rhythmic understanding, but it is also a way of using the voice and body to internalize and experience the elements of music in a physical way (Sarrazin, 2016).

For many generalist teachers, the idea of doing music with their classes is daunting. They lack confidence, often basing this on their lack of experience, little or no training in this area, and a subsequent lack of understanding about how to implement effective musical activities. Biasutti, Hennessy and Vugt-Jansen (2015) discuss this as a phenomenon affecting generalist teachers across the world. In a study conducted with pre-service teachers, Hennessy (2000) found that their capacity or confidence to do music activities with a class was heavily influenced by their own musical experience, the training and support provided by the school, and the training they received during their university studies. A similar issue is discussed by Barrett, Zhukov, Brown and Welch (2018) in a project conducted in Australia with early childhood teachers. They argue that despite growing evidence regarding the positive impact of music education, there has been a continued decline in its provision. One attempt to address this has been the National Music Teacher Mentoring Program (NMTMP 2015-2018). Led by Sir Richard Gill AO, the scheme paired generalist primary school teachers with expert music educator mentors, who worked together to build music skills and confidence. The Creative Collaboratorium (2018) at The University of Queensland evaluated the program and found that it 'improved the confidence and competence of classroom teachers in teaching music (p. 2) and it demonstrated an improvement in student engagement and participation across a range of activities, an improvement in children's attitudes and well being, and an improvement in the achievement of music outcomes.

The current project takes up this work and extends it to the early childhood setting. It is based on the growing evidence that music, particularly singing, is a powerful educational

experience for children and has a large range of benefits. The project also advocates the importance of providing quality, targeted professional development and support for teachers.

### **Singing with young children: The project**

The research seeks to investigate the impact of singing with children (aged 3 – 6 years) on the specific learning outcomes identified by their teacher. It also examines the impact of professional development on teacher practice and confidence. The research design involves a mixed approach of practitioner-inquiry and case study. Practitioner-inquiry involves teachers as partner researchers and sees them take on a significant role as both teacher and researcher in collaboration with the primary researcher (Fleet, Patterson & Robertson, 2017). A case study approach has been employed to build a picture of the different sites and classes and to analyse whether similarities and differences across multiple sites can be meaningfully compared (Stake, 2014). The implementation process spans three terms, primarily focusing on Term 2, Term 3, and Term 4 of 2019. The data being collected includes teacher documentation, interview and focus group transcripts with teachers, and researcher observation notes.

There are two sites participating: a preschool and a primary school. The first site is a private preschool situated in the Blue Mountains, an hour west of Sydney, New South Wales. Two rooms are participating. Each room consists of 20 children, aged 3 – 5 years, one university-qualified early childhood teacher, who is leading the process, and one diploma-trained early childhood educator. In total, the preschool has 40 children and four teachers participating, with the preschool director supporting them.

The second site is a primary school in Western Sydney and there are four Kindergarten classes involved. Each class has up to 20 children, aged 5 – 6 years, and one class teacher. The Kindergarten supervising teacher and the Music teacher are providing support to the teachers as well as implementing the professional learning gained from the research and PD course in their own teaching context.

The teachers have been engaged as research partners reflecting a practitioner inquiry approach (Fleet, De Gioia & Patterson, 2016; Fleet, Patterson & Robertson, 2017). Teachers plan singing activities, regularly implement these with their class, and document the experiences across three school terms. Documentation incorporates the teacher's descriptions of activities and their

chosen learning focus (or outcome); observations about children's reactions to the activities and how this relates (or not) to the learning focus; and reflections about the impact on their own confidence and level of musical skill development. The teachers, therefore, play a key role in the research: in the implementation and documentation of singing activities, and in the recording of children's responses.

Professional learning is recognized as a powerful tool in the positive up-take of new learning and approaches to pedagogy and the National Music Teacher Mentoring Program has been highlighted above as an example of this, clearly demonstrating the impact of expert mentoring on teacher confidence and skill attainment (The Creative Collaboratorium, 2018). With this in mind, a Professional Development (PD) program was designed to support participating teachers. This PD had a specific focus on the Orff approach and singing.

The two-day program was led by two experienced music educators, who were also trained experts in the Orff Schulwerk approach and both have particular expertise in the areas of singing and early childhood. The presenters led teachers through a variety of active learning experiences, exemplifying an Orff approach, which they could then use in their classes. This included learning simple songs, suggested activity sequences, singing games, and movement ideas to accompany singing. They provided ideas around how to integrate music into other curriculum areas, such as Literacy and Numeracy, and teachers received resources to support implementation, including a classroom set of percussion instruments each, a book of well-known and traditional children's songs, slide whistles, and the presenter's session notes. The program was formally endorsed through the Professional teachers Council of NSW (PTC) and the Orff Schulwerk Association of NSW (OSANSW). This provided participants with 12 hours of endorsed PD, and several hours of teacher-identified PD, contributing to the teacher accreditation requirements of NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

The first professional development (PD) day took place at the preschool site and the second at the primary school site. The final session of each day was conducted as a focus group and was an opportunity for teachers to discuss thoughts, ideas, and concerns, and to ask questions. At the end of the first PD day, the participant teachers were invited to complete a short, written survey. The responses from this survey form the basis of this paper.

### **Teacher survey: Professional development day 1**

The first PD day consisted of three sessions. The first session was led by one presenter, the second was led by the next presenter, and the third was a focus group discussion, where teachers could discuss ideas and ask questions. Both presenters were part of this discussion as well. To close the third session, participants were invited to provide their responses to a short, written survey, and all 12 participants agreed to complete it. The survey consisted of the following questions:

1. Describe any musical experience and/or expertise you have.
2. What music and/or singing do you currently use in your teaching?
3. Before today's learning, how would you rate your confidence in doing music and singing with your students?
4. How has today's professional learning impacted your confidence and skills in this area?
5. Please make any other comments you feel are relevant.

### **Results**

The responses demonstrated a range of different levels of experience and confidence in singing and music learning. The differences between the preschool teachers and the kindergarten teachers also emerged as significant. Overall, there appeared to be a lot more musical activity being implemented by the preschool teachers than the kindergarten teachers, which was mirrored by the amount of experience reported.

#### *1. Describe any musical experience and/or expertise you have.*

Responses to the first question were analysed for similarities and accordingly divided into three main categories: little or no experience; some experience; significant experience. Seven of the twelve response indicated little or no experience. A couple stated that they had done dancing as a child but not music, and several suggested that their only experience had been singing and learning recorder or xylophone at school. Two participants said they had no experience: 'Not much at all. Close to 0'. Three participants suggested they could play guitar or piano (although very well), had been in a choir whilst studying at university, and did a lot of music with the children in the preschool. Only two participants indicated significant musical experience and one of these was the primary school music teacher, who had studied a music degree before becoming a generalist primary school teacher. The other participant reported

having had singing, piano, and trombone lessons, studied Year 11 music, and was involved in choirs and musicals throughout high school.

2. *What music and/or singing do you currently use in your teaching?*

Once again, the response to this question varied and a marked difference could be seen between the amount of music that preschool teachers integrated into their teaching in comparison to the amount reported by the kindergarten teachers. Three categories emerged: very little; some; significant amount. The first category discounted the music that children experienced outside the classroom. Five teachers from the primary school wrote that the children had a weekly 30-minute session of grade singing but acknowledged that they rarely incorporated singing or music into their daily classroom routine. There were three teachers who said they would occasionally sing an instruction and the music teacher taught kindergarten once a week during that term. Two kindergarten teachers indicated that, in addition to the above, they used counting songs in mathematics lessons, sang songs related to other specific subjects, and sometimes sang songs as a way to introduce a lesson. All five preschool teachers, including the director, described that music and singing played a strong role in the daily routines. They used songs for transitioning between activities and locations; they using recorded music to accompany movement and dance; they liked to incorporate simple percussion instruments and body percussion in some activities; and they used echo songs and singing games.

3. *Before today's learning, how would you rate your confidence in doing music and singing with your students?*

The responses to this question have been divided into two categories – low and average – to reflect the level of confidence reported by participants. Four participants described their level of confidence as low, and one of these suggested this was largely because she 'knew nothing about what was really involved'. These four participants were all primary school teachers. In contrast, those who reported average confidence described how they worked with others teachers who were confident to do music with children and whilst this had developed their confidence to a degree, the process had taken a very long time. One participant stated she had not been confident when she started teaching, but now 'I am more confident singing/moving with the class than I was 20 years ago'. Others in this category were encouraged to have learned new ways to implement music, describing their level of confidence as 'okay', 'middle ground' or

'average'. One said, 'OK if no one watching.' Only one teacher responded with what could be considered a high level of confidence, saying, 'Before 8/10. After 10/10'.

4. *How has today's professional learning impacted your confidence and skills in this area?*

Participant responses to this question were divided into two main themes: Confidence and Understanding; and Ideas and Resources. All responses were positive. Responses in the first category (n = 5) clearly indicated an increased sense of confidence and understanding. Participants wrote, that having done this PD, they felt more 'willing to sing more and try to incorporate' what they had learned. For other teachers it was the information they had learned about Pitch and the musical elements that was particularly helpful, and another simply said, 'it was interesting and really insightful – makes sense'. The final response in this category stated, 'I have confidence in what I do'. Again, the responses in this category showed that teachers felt more confident about what they would be doing having completed the PD and that their level of understanding had improved.

The second theme, Ideas and Resources, demonstrated that the teachers were more confident after the PD because they had gained ideas, learned a range of songs and activities, and had learned practical ways to implement different singing strategies. Responses in this category (n = 6) included statements such as, 'I like getting new ideas and different ways of doing things', and 'Gaining new songs as part of our program has helped'.

The final response (n = 1) simply stated that their confidence and skills had been 'highly' impacted having completed this day of professional learning.

5. *Please make any other comments you feel are relevant.*

Seven teachers chose to add a comment and their responses reflect two themes: Positive comment about the PD; and Application of the PD. In the first theme there were two comments, where each teacher expressed their enjoyment of the day and thanked the presenters. Responses in second category (n = 5) indicated that the teachers were motivated to apply their learning, were looking forward to trying things, and expected the children to enjoy it. One teacher commented that whilst she was more confident about 'what it should look like', she was 'more daunted about applying it'. Another teacher 'loved the hands-on approach' and felt that she could 'take this back

to the classroom... and put it into practise'. All comments were positive and generally indicated a stronger sense of competence and willingness to apply their learning.

### Discussion

Whilst it is increasingly acknowledged that music education is an important component of a child's educational experience, Hennessey (2018) points out that despite official education documents in European countries 'espous[ing] the importance of music education for all children' (p. 268) is as far as it seems to go. She argues that if generalist primary school teachers are required to teach music in their classrooms then they must receive a level of initial education and training, as well as 'ongoing professional development' (p. 268), that provides them with sufficient confidence, understanding, and skill to teach it effectively. Similarly, Barrett, Zhukov, Brown, and Welch (2018) acknowledge that, in Australia, the provision of quality music education is varied and remains in decline, despite 'research evidencing the multiple benefits of quality music education, and singing in particular', and in spite of 'repeated calls for increased provision' (p. 3). In Australia as well, Letts (2015) provides a summary outline of the university music training available for teachers and concludes that the early childhood and primary generalist pre-service teacher receives very limited music education training. On top of this, according to his research, nothing exists specifically for early childhood or primary school music specialist teachers.

The current study demonstrates that teachers are willing to deliver music experiences to the children in their care. It has already highlighted that there is a lack of confidence and an anxiety about skill level, which hinders teachers in the implementation of regular singing (and music) activities in their classrooms. It demonstrates that teachers are worried about their lack of expertise and will, therefore, choose not to do music with their class. It also shows that teachers are willing to participate in professional development and when they do, it has a significant effect on their confidence and skill in implementing quality music experiences.

It is interesting to note that the preschool teachers reported significant implementation of singing in their daily preschool routine before the PD, whereas the kindergarten teachers (from a primary school) reported that they did very little music in a day. Children in their care did music once each week with the music teacher (40 minutes) and grade singing one per week (40 mins). It seemed much more difficult for the

primary school kindergarten teachers to implement regular singing activities than it was for the preschool teachers. The preschool teachers reported that this was something they tended to do anyway.

This early section of the study clearly shows that targeted professional development in the area of music (specifically implementing an Orff Schulwerk approach to singing) has a significant effect on the teachers (and the students). Undertaking the professional development gave teachers confidence. It allowed them to apply their own learning in the context of their classroom and adjust as needed. Teachers who were not confident to begin with communicated that they were much more confident to go ahead and try the activities they had learned. Additionally, their understanding of music and its elements had improved so that they felt more capable of choosing songs/activities, and they understood a lot more about the process of learning in the musical context. In a study conducted by Biasutti, Hennessey, and de Vugt-Jansen (2015) it was expected that participating teachers would experience an improvement in confidence and competence in teaching music as a result of professional development, which, in this case was described as an Intensive Program (IP). The study showed that trainee teachers went on to use the material and the teaching styles, especially learner-centred approaches, experienced in the intensive program regardless of the fact that they were not specialist music teachers.

In the current research, the early childhood teachers had varied musical experience and varied music education training. They had different levels of confidence, which some research connects to musical identity and different levels of skill (Chua & Welch, 2019). It is clear from the first stage of this of this project that providing quality professional development, in the area of music education, has a positive and significant effect on the teachers, both in terms of confidence in implementing activities, and understanding of musical concepts.

Likewise, Costes-Onishi and Caleon (2016) suggest that generalist teachers need specialist professional development to successfully implement effective pedagogical practice specifically aligned with music and the arts.

It is significant that the majority of responses indicated a positive change in perception of confidence from before the PD compared to after experiencing the PD. Similarly, it can be seen that the level of understanding reported both

before and after the PD had also improved. After only one day of professional development, participants felt more confident to implement what they had learned with their classes and they had a greater understanding of what they were doing and why they were doing it, and this was specifically related to singing with young children.

It may not be surprising to learn that the participating teachers who reported a higher level of previous musical experience, also reported a reasonable to high level of confidence in implementing the singing activities learned as part of the professional development. Chua and Welch (2019) suggest that this is related to teacher identity (including music teacher identity) and is dependent on prior music and non-music experiences. These experiences shape teacher identity, which encompasses what a teacher feels able or unable to enact in their professional practice. It is also worth noting that even those teachers who reported having little or no prior musical experience also reported having a positive experience of the PD and a positive outlook on implementing their learning with their class/es. The professional development provided teachers with the opportunity to learn new approaches and strategies for integrating music into their classroom/s. It gave them the opportunity to learn new songs and activities, build their repertoire of resources, and it allowed them to recognize their own potential for implementing music into their daily routine regardless of their level of expertise, which is perhaps the biggest hurdle when presenting generalist early childhood and primary school teachers with this challenge. At this stage the research has demonstrated that given the opportunity and resources and training, early childhood teachers (including kindergarten teachers) are willing to engage in music with their children. They are also prepared to acknowledge their shortcomings and simultaneously embrace the opportunity to upskill, learn new methods, and acquire new skills. The professional development also motivated many of the teachers to put into practice what they had learned, and, once again, their level of confidence in what they needed to do, and their level of skill and understanding of what was required, improved significantly as a result of this professional development.

It should be reinforced here that the new strategies and new thinking that teachers experienced during this professional development was primarily connected to the Orff Schulwerk approach, particularly as it relates to singing with young children. This approach was new to the

participating teachers but it made sense to them. The next stage of the research will see these teachers comment on how the children responded to the activities and how the learning outcome identified by each teacher was addressed (or not) through the planned singing activities. Orff Schulwerk, it should be remembered, offers a student-centred, active and integrated approach to learning, both in the music classroom and across curriculum areas.

### Conclusion

In spite of growing research that says music education has a range of benefits for learning across a diversity of areas, there seems to be a decrease in its implementation and application. One reason cited for this is the state of generalist early childhood and primary school teacher training, or more specifically, the limited opportunity provided for pre-service teachers to develop music teaching skills. It becomes particularly important, therefore, to provide opportunities for teachers to undergo professional development in music. It is clear from the early stages of the current project that such a provision has already had a positive impact on both the confidence of teachers and the development of their musical understanding and skill. This has a significant impact on the learning of our children not only in music but across curriculum areas.

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