

PLAYNOTES

Summer Reading List

Catch up on your reading this summer with these titles:

Musicophilia

by Oliver Sacks

Find the extensive New York Review of Books review at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/21059>

Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy

by Barbara Ehrenreich

Read a variety of reviews here: <http://www.metacritic.com/books/authors/ehrenreichbarbara/dancinginthestreets>

Orff Schulwerk Today – Nurturing Musical Expression and Understanding

by Jane Frazee

The photos of children in this already over one-year-old book were taken in Doug Goodkin's and Liz Keefe's music classrooms. See information and excerpts: http://www.vosa.org/paul/sales_folder/OS_Today.htm

Teaching Kids to Sing

by Kenneth H. Phillips

Reviewed in the Winter 2008 Issue of AOSA's The Orff Echo

P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

Here we are at that crazy time of the year when we find ourselves so busy with spring concerts and celebrations! It can be a time for great creativity or a time when we are close to tears at any moment or, usually, both!

My suggestion for when we teachers are dangerously close to losing it: Find time to dance with your friends!

Some of my happiest memories from levels training or national conferences are framed in a dance. Whether it's a bransle, a line, a square, a set, a contra, a Sicilian circle, or rock and roll freak-out, I love it all!

I recently held a dance for all our Orff friends on my fortieth birthday. I wanted to recreate some of that delicious and crazy dance-party vibe we have enjoyed so much at the national conferences' banquets. I find that a good dance can be the solution to most of life's little problems, especially those teacher challenges such as meetings, concerts, and writing reports.

Yes, we are teachers AND we are creative artists AND we are social beings! So when we feel the stress of our myriad responsibilities begin to tap the energy of our teaching fire, it is imperative that we continue to connect as community – and dance!

Happy Spring!

Gina Graziano
Gina Graziano



www.NCAOSA.org

NCAOSA Member Forum

What can we do for you?

The Member Forum area of the NCAOSA website was created with the chapter in mind. It is a place for members to share information, publicize events, ask questions, and even arrange ride shares to workshops. To date, very few members have signed on to the forum. In signing up, you are protected from spam and are given the opportunity to unsubscribe or re-subscribe any time.

Knowing that it is this easy, please help us understand how we can make the forum more attractive to you. Are teachers too busy to look at the forum once a week or so? Is it too confusing? Do you not have regular access to a computer? Are there other topics you would like to see?

Please let us know, sending your comments to webmaster@ncaosa.org. The board takes comments to heart and will do everything possible to make the entire chapter and its member forum the best it can be for everyone.

Topica.com

It is NCAOSA's policy to keep the chapter email list private. Occasionally, the board will receive a request for the chapter email list, but we will not give out the entire list for mass mailings, even to our members. Our intent is to protect all members, to the extent that we are able, from junk mail, spam, and other unsolicited mail. The chapter email list that was distributed at the February workshop is intended for member-to-member communication, not bulk emailing. A chapter-related activity or announcement can be publicized, though, by sending the pertinent information to webmaster@ncaosa.org, at which time it will be approved and sent out through Topica. The member forum is the venue for sharing other information with a large audience. Any questions regarding these policies can be directed to president@ncaosa.org or webmaster@ncaosa.org.

PlayNotes (Orffion Var. 3.08)
Amanda Hahn, Editor
SF Art Department, Design

Dear Readers,

Are we really wrapping up the school year already? Through a whirlwind year of new experiences, it has become clear to me how much we learn about ourselves through teaching. It seems that the more we experience teaching in a variety of settings with a variety of students, and work through challenging situations, the more we can discover how we best thrive.

As I prepare to close my first year as editor of *The Orffion/PlayNotes*, I am excited about how I might help this journal thrive, continuing our playful theme while providing articles of genuine interest that encourage us to reflect on the work we do. I've enjoyed collecting writings on a common theme this season, and I'd like to pursue this concept for future issues. I have a growing collection of popular topics to present; keep sending ideas to me at orffion@ncaosa.org – even if you aren't ready to provide an article!

In this issue, you will find a few thoughtful articles about working with students of all kinds, and finding the inspiration, the tools, the magic, and the patience to reach everyone. Particularly playful, though still within the framework of adapting our teaching to meet the needs of every individual, is an anecdote about freeing up tradition just enough to have a rocking good time. Thanks for reading!



Amanda Hahn
PlayNotes Editor (Orffion Var. 3.08)
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Save The Dates

SUMMER COURSES

July 21-25	Orff Schulwerk: Introduction and Classroom Applications Janet Greene
July 21-25	Master Class – Dance, Drama and Song Andrea Ostertag
July 21-26	The Jazz Course Doug Goodkin
July 28-Aug. 8	The San Francisco Orff Course – Levels I, II, III

Registration form:

www.douggoodkin.com/OrffWorkshops/pdf/SFORFF_ONLINE_08-FA2.pdf

AT SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY IN ROHNERT PARK

A FULL WEEK WITH JANET GREEN:

June 23-27 **Orff Music and Movement: Introduction and Classroom**

Information: 707-664-2394

A Special Session in San Jose

Jim Cummesky

We walked, rolled and stumbled into the workshop room – some on our feet, others with walkers and one in a wheelchair. I was guiding a group of a dozen adults with various physical and mental abilities to a magical workshop with Wolfgang Stange. Wolfgang immediately met us with excitement, focused personal attention and enthusiastic joy as he brought us into the center of the room. The music started and the movement began.

We danced in circles and with partners. In one exercise, we formed groups of two or three to create interesting forms with our bodies, hands and scarves. Another exercise involved moving to music and then freezing in a variety of poses. For another activity, we created living sculptures with partners. Wolfgang's fearless interactions with all the participants encouraged and guided the conference attendees to participate with less anxiety. His experience and skill as Director of AMICI Integrated Dance Theatre Company showed, as he gracefully led one and then another of the guests to more fully experience and embody the music.

Before each activity he would allow one of the guests to choose the music for the next exercise. Wolfgang offered a choice of two or three different tapes and then would play the one he or she chose. The repertoire encompassed a wide variety from Brahms and The Beatles to techno. The ability to choose the music allowed each participant a

special sense of ownership, pride and accomplishment.

Wolfgang was a magician as he stretched the limits of each one's ability to more fully participate, yet the transformation was most evident with the conference attendees; we slowly let go of our fears and interacted with our guests regardless of the other's ability. In activities with people of varied abilities, it is often those of us considered to be "normal" who grow the most. At first I was somewhat cautious in my own interactions. I slowly let down my inhibitions and began to dance more freely with others. I continued to hold back, though, not having Wolfgang's experience and willingness to bring someone beyond his or her apparent comfort level.

The session quickly passed and the participants from San Francisco's Janet Pomeroy Center were all smiles as they left the room. They were reluctant to leave after such a dynamic and supportive session. Wolfgang clearly expressed the beauty and need of working with people of all abilities in our Orff work. Even though I regularly volunteer in a varied-ability community in other ways, I have yet to bring my Orff talents to this work. This workshop inspired me to begin to seek opportunities to share Wolfgang's work in the North Bay. It also encouraged me to be more mindful of the wide variety of abilities I encounter in any of my regular classes, and to integrate students with special needs more freely and fluidly.

Jim Cummesky has been involved in the Northern California Orff community for 8 years, enjoying the levels training at Mills, workshops, and master classes. Currently Adolescent Program Director at St. Helena Montessori School, he has taught music and general education in Montessori schools for 28 years.

P.S. Heidi Tzortzis, Local Co-Chair for the 2007 AOSA National Conference where Jim hosted these participants, reported that she recently happened across a group of them while running errands. Heidi was greeted with smiles and hugs of appreciation. The Janet Pomeroy Center employee accompanying them told her that her charges are still talking about that experience with Wolfgang!

Web-Exclusive Content on www.NCAOSA.org

Find two great articles on our chapter's website written by chapter members highlighting some of NCAOSA's benefits.

Nicole Sumner writes about the learning experience she and her students enjoyed while borrowing the chapter's instrumentarium.

Mary Ellen Pense expresses gratitude for the one-day scholarship she received to attend the national conference.

Also posted on the website is an article reprinted from Positive Thinking Magazine. "A Gift of Song" is about a long time member of our Orff community, **Kate Munger**, and her group Threshold Choir.

Teaching Students with Special Needs

Elisabeth Crabtree

In my teaching career I've worked with students with various disabilities, including cerebral palsy, deafness, blindness, dyslexia, Tourette's, Asperger's, OCD, ADD, and ADHD. I also have had many students who speak very little or no English. When children with disabilities are mainstreamed into "regular" classes, teachers often end up teaching the material at a rate that is too fast or too slow for many of the students. Before we can address how to teach more inclusively so that we can try to reach every child in our classes, we need to ask the question, "What exactly are special needs?"

Many people think of special needs students as being those who are physically or mentally challenged in some way, but really the term includes a much broader spectrum of the population. All of us have special needs of some sort, and we all learn in different ways. Students who take private music lessons, exceptionally fast learners, elderly people, infants, and people of every age with any kind of background can have special needs as a result of our many multiple intelligences. Wilhelm Keller, who was one of the pioneers in using Orff Schulwerk to work with special needs students, said, "There are no absolutely talented or absolutely disabled people" (Lecture, 1974). How many teachers out there have had the experience of watching a student who is emotionally or physically disabled play an incredibly

challenging melody on the xylophone? When we stop to think about it, some of the most famous and successful composers from history would probably have qualified as being special needs cases too. As an Orff teacher, we can learn to highlight students' strengths and help them reach their full potential by creating lesson plans that support many different kinds of learners.

One way that I help my students is by allowing them to explore the instruments and try as many different parts as they can. This gives them the chance to find a part that suits them, that they enjoy, and that isn't too technically challenging for them to play. It is important to make sure that each student knows that their role in the music class is valued regardless of whether they are playing a simple drone or a complex melody. Giving the students who have easier parts a small solo can help to achieve this goal, whether it is striking the gong, counting off a four-beat introduction on the big bass drum, or turning over the rain stick at the end of the song.

What about my exceptionally fast learners who have the melody figured out before I've even played it for them twice through? I can challenge them to play it with their eyes closed, turn the xylophone around backwards, trade off measures or hocket the melody with another quick learner, or even transpose the song and play it in a different mode or key. They could also help teach other students or

compose a B section for the piece. The possibilities are infinite, and I am only limited by my own creativity and imagination as a teacher. All of these ideas are moving the students deeper into the work we are doing, which is far better than sending them away into the corner to do a worksheet or color a picture of a cello, or just letting them chat with their friends for 5 minutes until the rest of the class catches up. If all else fails, Doug Goodkin humorously suggested to the Orff Institute's Special Course, have the student play the melody standing up with their eyes closed while stomping an ostinato in their feet, while singing a harmony line at the same time. Of course this was tongue-in-cheek, but the point is to keep the children engaged, activated, and experimenting with the material while still having fun, challenging themselves, and learning at the same time.

In order to design a lesson that supports all kinds of learners we must first analyze the teaching material so that we can adapt it for our students. Gunild Keetman, in *Elementaria*, said that before teaching, "the teacher should have gained an overall picture of the whole range of activity." When we have a deep understanding of the music, we can reduce it to its simplest form, or add layers to create more complexity and depth. To paraphrase Wilhelm Keller, we should change the music to make it suitable for groups of any age or ability, instead of having

Making the simple complicated is commonplace

the students try to adapt themselves and their way of learning to the piece of music. A great way to analyze the music is through a didactic reduction.

There are two different kinds of didactic reductions – quantitative and qualitative. A quantitative reduction eliminates nonessential rhythmic beats, melodic tones, or harmonic chord changes until you are left with the basic skeleton or outline of the original music (thereby reducing the quantity of what is played). A fabulous example of a quantitative reduction is found in Balinese Gamelan Angklung music, where smaller metallophones have fast hocketing melodies, larger ones play the first note of the melody every 4 beats, a gong may strike every 16 beats, and one person keeps a steady beat like a metronome. In a quantitative reduction you should determine if there are melodic or rhythmic complexities that might be a source of difficulty for the students, reduce them to their simplest form, and then decide in what order to teach these elements to make it a logical stepwise learning process for your students. The benefit of using a quantitative reduction is that students can always go back and play the easier parts they already know if they feel they are being over-challenged by new material. Orff and Keetman touch upon this in the introduction to Volume I of *Music for Children* when they say, “The demand on the children’s faculties is graded to suit

individual capabilities. Thus an exceptionally gifted child can invent a melody . . . while the others can be occupied to the same extent of their ability keeping a simple accompaniment going.”

A qualitative reduction involves examining the quality of the piece, relating back to what might have been the original intent of the composer. When analyzing a piece this way we should ask the following questions: is the music legato or staccato; does the melody ascend or descend; what is the scale or mode; what are the dynamics in the various sections; what is the larger form; and what is the overall quality of this piece? For example, if the music has a sharp contrast in dynamics between the A and B section, then a qualitative reduction could lead to creating music using the same idea of changing dynamics. Perhaps the image of sunny weather followed by a storm could be used (regardless of whether or not it was the composer’s original intention). Parts of the original music can be used, or the students can compose an entirely new piece with the same qualities as the original composition. One benefit of improvising based on qualitative reductions is that the students will be creating music at a level that is appropriate for them; it is their own music. Also, discussing the quality of the music with the class teaches students how to describe the various elements of music, and the emotional

impact the music has on them (all while meeting those state and national standards).

Layering the material and keeping the children involved and engaged are important tools in addressing all the students’ needs, but the thing that has helped me the most is talking to my students, getting to know them, and finding out what works for them individually. If I know that they are spatial, kinesthetic, or linguistic learners I can use that to my advantage when introducing a new potential challenge. Talking to their other teachers about their strengths and weaknesses helps as well, and of course sharing ideas with other music teachers and colleagues is always a great way to keep adding to the ever-growing teacher tool bag. The more varied my lessons can be, the more hope I have of reaching every student. I know I’m doing my job when I see that look of accomplishment on their faces as they proudly play their part, contributing to the whole piece of music.

Elisabeth Crabtree has taught music to thousands of elementary and middle school children in the Santa Cruz area. She has trained in Orff through the San Francisco Mills course and the Orff Institute in Salzburg, Austria. She also plays piano, harpsichord, sings, and dances professionally. She can be contacted at elisabetra@hotmail.com

ace; making the complicated simple, that's creative.

Charles Mingus

A Lifeline for Elders

Greacian Goeke

Two basic tools of Orff Schulwerk – Echo and Call-and-Response – are magic tonics for the situation I often encounter when I arrive at a senior center to lead music and movement: The room is unnaturally quiet. I walk into a circle of wheelchair-bound adults whose wary faces frighten me a little. How can I reach across this great divide? My mission is to have everyone clapping and singing by the end of class. Often the participants barely know each others' names, and many have memory impairment from dementia or stroke.

Echo singing helps everyone get involved right away because there is no need to remember a whole song. Songs with vocables (tra-la-la, etc.) are easily echoed or learned by people who have difficulty verbalizing, as in "I Love the Mountains." The "Boom-de-a-da" chorus is a welcome place where all can join in. With groups of mixed abilities, I invite members to compose new, personalized verses to this song, which help us learn more about each other.

A simple echo game of sound and movement around the circle also includes everyone, particularly those who have lost the ability to form words and are the most socially isolated. I always frame this exercise by asking people to express what they are feeling right now (often eliciting lots of groans and sighs). It may take a while for the group to become comfortable doing this, but eventually some people will begin to play around with making sounds; their silliness is encouraged and can become infectious. The echo structure allows each person to "complain" or

What Do You Know About Me?

Greacian Goeke's version adapted from a gospel call and response learned from Kathy Bullock, Pinewoods, Summer 2006. (Please email your phone number if you'd like me to sing the melody for you: ggoeke@mac.com)

Verse 1:

What do you know about [fill in name]?
S/he's all right! (with claps throughout)
What do you know about [fill in name]?
S/he's all right!

Verse 2:

S/he's a mighty good _____ (knitter, cook, singer, etc.)
(You can also use the phrase, "S/he loves to _____" for a more open-ended addition)
S/he's all right!
S/he's a mighty good [fill in]
S/he's all right!



express emotions and feel supported by the group.

Two songs that have been the most energizing and fun to sing with my elder groups are "I'm So Glad I'm Here" (Bessie Jones) and "What Do You Know About Me?" (learned as a gospel call and response, "What Do You Know About Jesus?" from Kathy Bullock, Pinewoods, Summer 2006). The latter song has all the ingredients for bringing the group alive: It acknowledges each person by name; it has an irresistible affirming response ("S/he's all right!"); and it allows us to celebrate something specific about each individual – what they like to do or are good at. I usually ask others in the group or a staff member to suggest these elements (see song below), offering another opportunity for the group to

support each member. (This is also a wonderful song to do with kids.)

By the time we have gone around the entire circle singing "S/he's all right" many times, we are all definitely feeling all right! The dark cloud that hovered in the room when I arrived is gone. I see a change in everyone's eyes, their skin color, their posture. The circle feels like a festive family gathering, not a wheelchair parking lot. We are deeply alive in the community created through singing and moving together.

NCAOSA Vice President **Greacian Goeke** loves to sing, dance and play with all ages. She teaches preK through 5th grade in several East Bay schools and works with elders through CEYA/Institute on Aging, San Francisco. ggoeke@mac.com

What a Hoot!

Barbara Martin



It was a glorious day in Omaha, Nebraska, in 2006 and the AOSA conference was in full swing. Gina and I were hanging out in the college credit booth (I was shadowing that LCCC position) and we were dreaming out loud: “Wouldn’t it be fun to lead a folk dance session at our conference?” “Wouldn’t it be cool to lead traditional dances and tweak them just enough (if at all) so they could be danced to rock tunes?” The brainstorming began and the list of possibilities was tremendous! Though the fantasy of having an evening session in San Jose was exciting, the real questions were WHERE? and WHEN?

Time marched on . . .

Gina was planning a big birthday party for herself. I play in a rock band. Hmmm. Gina wanted to begin her party with folk dancing and had several dances already selected; that is when we decided to go for our idea of the rock tunes.

Here is what we came up with:

Chimes of Dunkirk – from the New England Masters’ Chimes of Dunkirk

Gina told me she did this dance with her students using the traditional tune “Chimes of Dunkirk” and then altered the simple moves just a little bit to match “Shake, Shake, Shake” by KC and the Sunshine Band. I tried it with my K-3 students and found that the whole nature of the dance changes with all kinds of wiggles and gyrations. Of course, we had to try this with the adults at Gina’s party (my band, 256, learned it and was surprised how much fun it is to play)

and it brought out the disco duck in all of us. We transformed the whole aesthetic of the dance in a new and fresh way.

Bridge of Athlone – from the New England Masters’ Listen to the Mockingbird

This dance is one of our favorites where I teach at St. Raymond School. We traditionally use “The Blarney Pilgrim” for this dance in ABC form. My dream was to use Steppenwolf’s “Born to be Wild” because it, too, has three distinct sections, although we had to tweak the order of those sections in order to fit the dance. The actual Steppenwolf recording has an ABABC form (A=verse, B=bridge, C=Chorus) with a few changes within there. We tweaked it to go ABC, repeating at least six times, either singing the verse or soloing over it, but always singing the bridge and the chorus. Can you imagine the change of aesthetic on this heavy rockin’ piece? Imagine the lead couple taking turns going down or up through the tunnel during the chorus “BOOORN TO BE WAAAHLD...” It was SO MUCH FUN!

Haste to the Wedding – from the New England Masters’ Chimes of Dunkirk

This dance can be done as a contra dance or a Sicilian circle. I was determined to make it work for Billy Idol’s “White Wedding.” I really needed to experiment with this one, so I used my 4th, 5th, and 6th graders. We had to tweak the dance in spots, but the basic moves remained, and the students loved dancing to Billy Idol. We had not yet done any

contra dancing in class, nor had I ever taught one, so they really enjoyed this challenge. It was so rewarding to let my students help me (“Mrs. Martin, this isn’t working!”), and to see their satisfaction in discovering how each figure worked. With this one, the timing worked out to change couples on the words “start again”, which was very cool. The do-si-dos were a little crazy and fast, but that, too, made it exciting and fun.

It’s important to find opportunities to apply what we do with our students into our adult lives. I’ve realized there is more opportunity for crossover than I might have thought. Just think of our Orff training: often what’s fun for kids is fun for grown ups, and vice versa! As much as my students enjoy the traditional dances, and studying musical form, they ate up this new spin on something old. My students got a big kick out of the fact that I worked out new versions of these dances that they enjoy, and after all their help, taught their dances to grown-ups. Of course they wanted to know how “White Wedding” turned out; I was glad to report that it ROCKED! They are dying to dance to “Born to be Wild”, but I’ll need to record my band playing the tweaked version before we can try it. I will make this happen, of course, and they will love it.

Barbara Martin teaches music to K-8th grade at St. Raymond’s Catholic School in Dublin. An active member of NCAOSA, she has been the treasurer of the board for the past 10 years.

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Contribute to PlayNotes!

Send essays
reflections, poems
songs, photos
lesson plans,
book reviews to
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www.ncaosa.org



Longways set: Accompanied by Barbara's rock band, Gina's party guests enjoy a new version of a popular folk dance.