

WHAT IS ORFF-SCHULWERK?

(As described by the American Orff-Schulwerk website)

<http://www.aosa.org/about/orff-schulwerk/default.asp>

Orff Schulwerk is a way to teach and learn music. It is based on things children like to do: sing, chant rhymes, clap, dance, and keep a beat on anything near at hand. These instincts are directed into learning music by hearing and making music first, then reading and writing it later. This is the same way we all learned our language.

Orff Schulwerk happens in a non-competitive atmosphere where one of the rewards is the pleasure of making good music with others. When the children want to write down what they have composed, reading and writing find their moment.

Orff Schulwerk uses poems, rhymes, games, songs, and dances as examples and basic materials. These may be traditional or original. Spoken or sung, they may be accompanied by clapping and stamping or by drums, sticks, and bells.

The special Orff melody instruments include wooden xylophones and metal glockenspiels that offer good sound immediately. Played together as in a small orchestra, their use helps children become sensitive listeners and considerate participants.

With Orff Schulwerk, improvisation and composition start students on a lifetime of knowledge and pleasure through personal musical experience. Learning is meaningful only if it brings satisfaction to the learner, and satisfaction arises from the ability to use acquired knowledge for the purpose of creating. For both teacher and student, Orff Schulwerk is a theme with endless variation.

The title "Schulwerk" is an indication of the educational process taking place: Schulwerk is schooling (in music) through working, that is through being active and creative.

Composer Carl Orff and his associate Gunild Keetman evolved the basic texts for the Schulwerk as models for teachers worldwide. Now translated into eighteen languages, Orff Schulwerk is based on the traditional music and folklore of each country in which it is used. At present more than 10,000 teachers in the United States have found the Schulwerk the ideal way to present the magic of music to their students.