

Section 4:

AOSA Teacher Education Curriculum Standards

Introduction

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This document had its intentional beginnings as a revision of the 1997 Guidelines for Orff Schulwerk Teacher Training. During the course of the work of the Steering Committee, significant changes began to emerge. Those suggest that this document is less a revision and more a rethinking of how best to convey Schulwerk concepts and practices, as they play out differently when adult teachers, rather than children, are the learners.

The first change is the title of the document. The phrase teacher education has replaced teacher training. This reflects a general practice in the education world, as well as an AOSA practice of several years, of referring to the professional development of teachers as teacher education rather than teacher training. The word training has a pejorative mindlessness about it that does not reflect the hard work and deep thinking that teachers everywhere must do. In contrast, the word education implies an ongoing kind of learning and reflecting. Teachers of Orff Schulwerk must become dancers, singers, and instrumentalists, finding artistic expression in unfamiliar instruments (e.g., pitched and unpitched percussion and recorder) and finding new ways to express artistic ideas with their bodies and voices.

A second change in the title is the substitution of the word curriculum for the word guidelines. AOSA offers certification status to those who have finished Level III. As a matter of fundamental fairness, AOSA should have the confidence that all certified Orff Schulwerk teachers have had similar coursework and have shown competence in the designated areas of study. The concepts and skills described in the curriculum can be taught through whatever means course instructors find work best in their locations. In the sense that a curriculum represents that which must be taught, at the same time it does not represent all that should be taught; courses are always encouraged to craft their own curricular additions.

The curriculum is AOSA's intellectual property and is only to be used in AOSA approved courses.

The Melodic and Harmonic Sequence

The Curriculum Guidelines Steering Committee spent extensive time in research and consultation before drafting the melodic and harmonic sequence outlined in this document. In addition to the assistance received from the Curriculum Guidelines Task Force and other distinguished members of AOSA, the Steering Committee's work was informed by Recommendations and Guidelines for Level Courses from the Orff-Schulwerk Forum in Salzburg, 2010. The Committee received additional international input from Margaret Murray, Editor of the English Edition of Orff and Keetman's *Music for Children*, and Jos Wuytack, distinguished professor, composer, and longtime Schulwerk teacher in the United States.

In past versions of this document, the issue of the melodic and harmonic sequence following pentatonic in Level I had been left unspecified, allowing each course location to determine what harmonic sequence it would follow. This variance among courses throughout the U.S. has led to problems when students take the three levels at different locations that follow different sequences. Further, it may be assumed by the larger music education world that AOSA is either so contentious within its organization or so lackadaisical that it cannot agree on an important element and major tenet of its working teacher education curriculum.

The Steering Committee, originally not of like mind in regard to the harmonic sequence, has studied this issue longer and more deeply than any other problem presented by the task of revision. We have had discussions and correspondence with international Orff Schulwerk experts. We have spoken to and corresponded with many AOSA members who feel deeply about this matter. We have concluded that it makes the most sense to have a melodic and harmonic sequence that best supports improvisation. Improvisation is that element of the Schulwerk so fundamental to its core principals; yet, at the same time, it represents experiences for which many music teachers have had little formal preparation.

The melodic and harmonic sequence is:

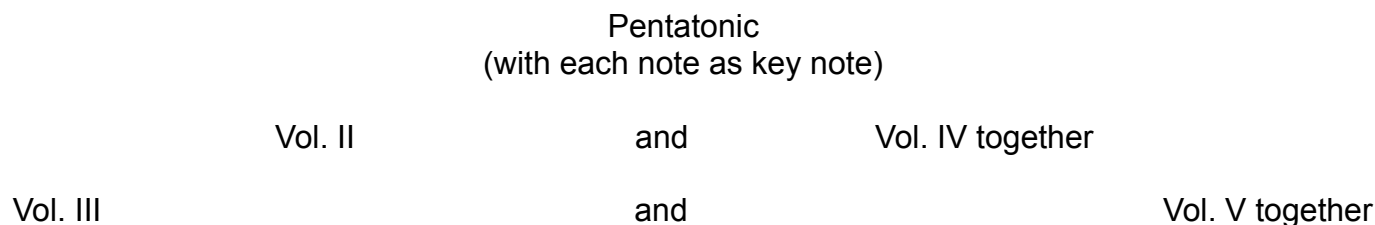
Level I - Pentatonic Modes (do and la) / Unison and Bordun (Drone) Accompaniment

Level II - Other Pentatonics, Hexatonic and Diatonic Modes / Bordun and Moving (Shifting) Bordun Accompaniment

Level III - Major and Minor / Functional Harmony

Movement teachers, in particular, have noted that improvisatory movement appears more free and less trite when supported by modal accompaniment, as opposed to familiar chord progressions. Following the pentatonic mode with the diatonic modes represents a logical filling-in of melodic gaps, where motion and thought are still horizontal. In Level III, with two previous levels of improvising freely, course participants are ready for the structure of improvisation within harmonic constraints. Improvisation with modal accompaniment following the pentatonic puts the adult learner in the position of discovering music as the child does. In addition, there is historical consistency in having diatonic modes follow pentatonic modes.

Margaret Murray wrote in her letter to the committee, “. . . I heard Orff talking on many occasions about the application of his Schulwerk idea and I know that he felt very much that conventional harmony, when introduced too early, shackled melodic invention. He wanted us to explore unfamiliar territory first so that we would be forced to gain a melodic freedom that would help us not to fall into clichés when we came to making up melodies to conventional harmonies. For this reason he very much approved of the use of the minor modal form of the pentatonic based on ‘la’ as well as those based on ‘re’, ‘mi’, and ‘so’ at the pentatonic stage. He had to classify the material in some way and he chose major/minor. After the pentatonic, he dealt with major first and then minor. In each case, the conventional harmony comes after the exploration of a full seven-note scale on a simple alternating harmonic bass. I have always thought of the Volumes in pyramid form:



“Of course this doesn’t mean that in the classroom one can’t sing and accompany a song in a major key that requires a conventional I-V or I-IV-V treatment until the children have thoroughly explored the modes!! The sequence you follow in the Levels courses does not have to be adhered to rigidly in the classroom. But in your Levels courses you are helping teachers to discover and practice their own melodic and rhythmic creative potential so that they can help the children they teach to discover theirs.

“You are rarely going to have the time to deal in such detail (or necessarily in this order) with the Schulwerk with children you teach, but you yourselves should have had the experience. If we have learned how to, we can open doors for the children into an unexplored land, and should try to do this as far as the time and conditions in which we work allow us.”

In our classrooms, we strive to do what is best for the child-learner. In Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education Courses, we must likewise strive to do what is best for the adult-learner. We have not given much consideration to the utilitarian argument that because not every teacher takes all three levels the courses should therefore teach the most useful parts first. Orchestration in the Schulwerk style could conceivably be self-taught through study of exemplars. One cannot, however, learn about classroom improvisation in any other way but through experience. Children deserve to be taught by teachers who have gone through rigorous, in-depth preparation. Teachers deserve to be taught in a way that provides a growing medium for their own creative expression first, and then proceeds outward to address more practical concerns.

A final point on this matter: the harmonic sequence outlined above is not presented here as a definitive sequence that must be followed for children. Many other factors—local curriculum, frequency of instruction, class size, available instrumentarium, previous musical experiences of the children, diversity of the student population—will determine how the Schulwerk can inform curricular choices.

Musiké

Throughout this document the Greek word musiké can be found. We have borrowed this practice from the International Standards for Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education, recently published by the Orff Forum. The meaning of the word musiké is the unity of music, dance, and speech. Throughout the Forum’s document the word is followed by this sentence: “Orff Schulwerk is built on the natural connection between music, speech and dance.” Growing from shared roots in rhythm, these elements are intertwined in all levels of work and should be an integral part of the teaching process and student experience.

Format

The format of the revised curriculum is a grid that places everything that belongs to a particular level in the same place. There is no longer a need to search the entire document to find all of the elements that belong to that level. Many of the supporting documents found in the 1997 Guidelines are unchanged.

The final change in this revision is that the Teacher Education Curriculum will be available on the AOSA website, where it can be accessed by all who search for it. This easy accessibility will allow for the addition of new resources and supporting materials.

Content and Goals of Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education Courses

The intent of Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education Courses is to prepare participants to use the materials and procedures that are a part of the Orff Schulwerk instructional model in public and private school classrooms and other educational settings. Although these courses do not deal specifically with special applications, the courses have been found valuable for music therapists, church musicians, and specialists in certain aspects of physical education and recreation.

The first task of Teacher Education Courses is to familiarize students within the active, experience-based learning model. Most music teachers have been educated in conservatories and university music departments in a highly literacy-based model and tend to replicate this experience in their own classroom teaching. Substantial experience-based learning is necessary to familiarize and acclimate course participants to the learning style they will be seeking to foster in their own teaching situations. They need to experience music learning from the perspective of children. Of equal importance is the experience and development of basic skills in movement, since few music teachers have background in this area. Because Orff Schulwerk represents a synthesis of music and movement, it is crucial that the latter be addressed substantively in Teacher Education Courses.

Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education Courses consist of three components: the experiential, the conceptual, and the pedagogical. Each is developed in parallel and interrelated with the other two. The main thrust of experiential learning is normally established in Level I. In order to take full advantage of this learning style during Level I course work, it is recommended that students have previous contact with Orff Schulwerk through workshops or introductory courses. Concentration on content and sequence during this phase is secondary to joyous and interactive participation in music and movement activities, and to the development and application of basic skills in movement, speech, singing, and playing instruments. The facilitative teaching style is modeled by the instructors but analyzed only after experience has taken place.

The following diagram illustrates the interrelationship of the three components in Teacher Education Courses. Each must contain elements of the other two.

The curriculum section in this document outlines the content considered basic in a three-level Teacher Education Course sequence. Explanatory and supporting material follow. The components and their sequence of presentation in the curriculum are not to be interpreted as the guideline for classroom presentation, for that will depend on the situation at hand. Topics beyond original Orff Schulwerk model materials (e.g., exploration of contemporary composition techniques and forms; jazz idioms; ethnic styles; application to active music listening; etc.) are mentioned briefly but are not developed. In the minimal time available in the Teacher Education Course format, students should become well grounded in the elemental concepts illustrated by the musical material in Orff-Schulwerk: *Music for Children, Volumes I-V* (Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman, English version adapted by Margaret Murray, London: Schott and Co., Ltd., 1958–66, Throughout this document these volumes are referred to as “Murray.”) and in other international *Music for Children* adaptations.

Lifetime Learning

An Orff Schulwerk teacher is never finished learning. It is expected that these three levels are the beginning of a lifelong process of discovery and learning. Orff teachers with a wide variety of experience can be found in chapter workshops and summer courses all across the country, learning and developing teacher musicianship with the spirit of exploration and possibility. Course teachers should model and promulgate the expectation of ongoing, career-long professional development. A mentor’s passion for learning is what inspires new generations to pursue this work. The global dispersal of Orff’s ideas and vision also speaks to his mandate that each teacher foster the growth of music education.