Candidate for Region III Representative: Christopher Giles

**BIOGRAPHY**

Christopher Giles teaches K-5 music at Mireles Elementary in Northside ISD and is adjunct professor at the University of the Incarnate Word. He completed his Orff certification and two master classes at Trinity University. Mr. Giles is immediate past president of Central Texas Orff and serves as elementary region chair for TMEA.

**CANDIDATE FORUM**

1. **What do you see as the role of Orff Schulwerk?**

   As tablet and phone screen time for students becomes more prevalent, peer interactions are falling short. An Orff centered classroom helps strengthen peer relationships by building community in the music room. Through this community, educators are able to use the Orff process to teach the whole child through instrument playing, singing, dancing, improvisation and so much more. These same active music making experiences help teachers meet the social and emotional needs of students through collaboration, problem solving and risk-taking. The Schulwerk allows the teacher to be the facilitator in the classroom who encourages innovative thinking and risk-taking as students work towards creating an aesthetic experience bigger than themselves. It focuses on where the child is developmentally and grows them how a child learns best, through the art of play. Orff Schulwerk not only teaches music but life skills to our students.

2. **What are your leadership strengths and how do you think they would contribute to the work of AOSA and promoting Orff Schulwerk?**

   As educators we must all be experts at time management, organizational skills, and multi-tasking. As a leader you must possess those attributes and so much more. A leader is someone who is able to have balance their work and home life, delegate responsibilities and tasks, and make those hard decisions when they are warranted. A leader is also able to listen to new ideas and concerns of both individuals and groups. They need to be able to view multiple perspectives and work through conflict. A leader also needs to be able to reflect on their own successes and failures while helping others celebrate their successes and work through their failures.
I believe that my roles as Orff chapter president, Region Chair for my state music education association, mentor teacher, cooperating teacher, team lead at my campus, and university professor have helped me sharpen each of these skills to make me a strong leader. I would love the opportunity to bring these skills to AOSA, an organization that has helped me grow tremendously as an educator and advocate for music education. Serving on NBT would help me have a further reach than I currently do in promoting the Orff Schulwerk process and all of the exceptional resources AOSA has to offer.

3. What is the role of the National Board of Trustees as it relates to the general membership and how would you fulfill this role?

The role of the National Board of Trustees is to help AOSA realize its’ mission while supporting local chapters in respective regions. As a region representative my responsibility is to be the point of contact or liaison between the local chapters in my region and the national board of AOSA. Regular communication would take place to relay information to chapters regarding rules and procedures, grant opportunities, and resources available to chapters and their members as well as share questions and concerns from the chapters to AOSA.

As a past chapter president I know what it is like to work with a region representative. I had a fantastic representative who helped with any and all questions our chapter had, and I want to serve as a similar resource like that for others.

4. What is your vision for AOSA and Orff Schulwerk in the future?

AOSA has proved to be a bastion of resources and advocacy tools for their membership. I believe this has been critical to the success and growth of the national organization. I hope that AOSA continues to expand efforts to support their members through their online resources.

As educators we know the benefits of the Orff Schulwerk and the impact it has on our students. A great deal of effort has gone into training teachers by certifying incredible instructors for levels courses. As a university professor, I would like to see what could be done by the organization to reach out to undergraduate students. I feel this is an untapped resource that can lead to a stronger and healthier membership for AOSA and stronger teachers for students as they start their careers.

In addition to promoting the Schulwerk, I would like to see AOSA be the beacon when it comes to bridging the gap between Orff Schulwerk and other approaches and methods. Building stronger relationships with other organizations can only strengthen our advocacy for music as a core tenant to a child’s education.