

From Idea to Institution: The Development and Dissemination of the Orff-Schulwerk from Germany to the United States

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The discourse around elementary (K–5) music education in the United States is dominated by the intellectual legacies of three European men: Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865–1950), Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967), and Carl Orff (1895–1982). I was first introduced to the Dalcroze, Kodály, and Orff approaches as an undergraduate studying music education at New York University. But, as in many institutions, our coursework included little historical context for these practices—only practical training and the implicit expectation we implement the approaches effectively in the classroom. Thus, we teachers-in-training understood the three choices in a severely reductive manner: Dalcroze practice was based in movement, Kodály practice was based in singing, and Orff practice was based in instrumental music. Even before I had graduated with state teaching license in hand, I was encouraged by my professors and teacher mentors to pursue additional certifications in Dalcroze, Kodály, or Orff; one certification made you desirable to employers, and all three would make you irresistible. Though these three names loomed over primary school education almost like leading brands, we had little understanding of who these men had been and what ideologies had led them to develop their methods.

Embarrassingly enough, it was years later, as a graduate student at the University of Cambridge, that I learned that these “methods” were not quite so name-brand recognizable outside of the American educational establishment. It was largely after the pedagogical ideas of Dalcroze, Kodály, and Orff migrated to the United States from Europe beginning in the late 1960s that they were actively institutionalized for the practice of teaching elementary school music (Landis and Carder 1972, 2). Thus, I set out to understand how these ideas, which “were not presented as fully sufficient and independent methods, even by their creators” (*Ibid.*, 2), became not only deeply revered in the United States, but also institutionalized and, to an extent, commodified.¹ I chose to research the Orff-Schulwerk (translated literally as “Orff-Schoolwork”) for a number of reasons. In 2012, I had an early encounter with the Orff approach when I observed music courses at the United Nations International School in New York. Among the various music classes offered at the K–8 school, music educator Sharon Tan of-

ferred an “Orffestra” course: an intermediate-level percussion ensemble for students in grades 3 and 4.² Seeing this approach in action—a joyful, lively way of introducing students to instrumental playing—had a great impact on me and my own philosophy of (student-directed) music education. In addition, given that I play an orchestral instrument (flute), I chose the approach that seemed most pertinent to my own professional teaching path.

I will begin by contextualizing the successful composer Carl Orff’s turn toward pedagogy with a brief summary of the state of music education and the relevancy of the amateur in the Weimar Republic. I will then divide the history of the Orff-Schulwerk and its journey to the United States into three distinct phases: first, its origins in 1920s Munich at the Güntherschule; second, a return in the late 1940s via the Bavarian state radio and its subsequent publication as *Music for Children*; and third, its current iteration as an institutionalized practice in the United States. Broadly stated, the purpose of this literature review is to synthesize primary and secondary sources in such a way that one can become familiar with the gains and losses the Orff-Schulwerk experienced during each phase of its life, as well as gain an understanding of key issues surrounding its guiding philosophy, practice, and how these have shifted over time. It must be noted that my research toes the line between the disciplines of musicology and music education; while I strongly believe that pedagogical topics are underrepresented in the field of musicology, I also feel that research in music education would greatly benefit from more critical historical study. Therefore, I make a conscious effort in this review to focus on the available English-language documentation, since the modern music educator who wishes to discover the contexts of the Schulwerk for herself is quite a different audience than the professional music historian. This focus is also a reflection of gaps and issues that uniquely arise during the translation and international dissemination of a culturally specific method like the Schulwerk.

“Music for Use” and Music Education

It is not often that a noteworthy composer turns from making music for the concert hall to music for the classroom. However, the rise of amateur music-making in the German educational establishment during the Weimar Republic (1918–1933) helps explain Orff’s interest in music pedagogy.³ Originally coined in 1921, the term “Gebrauchsmusik,” or “music for use,” was used during the Weimar Republic to label works created for the amateur by composers such as Hindemith and Orff.⁴ Music critic Hanns Gutman described this transition from music created for aesthetic value to a new, modern concept of music written for a specific purpose, defending existing

music composed for specific reasons (for example, community-building or, more broadly, national pride) from attacks by prominent German musicians (Adorno, Schoenberg) less prepared to accept the changing role of art in society (Gutman [1929] 1994, 580).⁵ He was in the minority during his time in believing that the composition of *Gebrauchsmusik* was not only a positive musical movement, but also a natural shift as the politically unstable society of the Weimar Republic attempted to mend itself.⁶

In his essay “Thoughts about Music with Children and Non-professionals,” Orff begins by acknowledging the rise of *Gebrauchsmusik*, stating that “the problems of how the non-professional should be trained are everywhere under consideration at present, a proof of how much they are a focus of interest” (Orff 1932b, 66). His “Schulwerk did not develop from any pre-considered plan,” but from a recognized need (Orff 1963, 134). Though this need was humanistic rather than aesthetical, the result was *Gebrauchsmusik* nonetheless. The drive to make music education more humanistic was not new, of course; Orff was heavily influenced by Dalcroze, whose approach to the development of musicianship synthesized training in solfège, improvisation, and Eurhythmics—a pedagogy focused on rhythmic movement (Landis and Carder, 8). Like Dalcroze, Orff was not interested in training musical amateurs to become geniuses, nor was he interested in adhering to aesthetic ideals established by a given society.⁷ He believed that non-professional musicians required music that arose “from their own circumstances” (Orff 1932a, 66). Those circumstances would normally exclude “special knowledge that only inhibits the drive to make music” (Connor 1932, 197). Thus, Orff considered Hindemith’s efforts for amateurs to have neither character nor pedagogical value (Kater 2000, 32). While one of Hindemith’s goals in creating pedagogical works was to help the general public acclimate to his characteristically modern style, Orff desired a return to a more “organic” form of music-making that was less limited by notation and instead reliant on inherent human creativity.

Though musicologist Stephen Hinton argues that “*Gebrauchsmusik* as practiced by Weimar composers did not bring about changes of either radical or lasting consequence,” his claim ignores the amateur movement’s impact on the trajectory of music education, both in Germany and eventually abroad (Hinton 1989, 40). According to historian Arthur Hearnden, the three most significant changes in the Weimar movement to reform schools were the “revival of art as a school subject,” the “emphasis on the educative value of practical activity,” and “the preoccupation with the creation of a school community that would simulate the social situation of the adult world” (Hearnden 1974, 22–23). This spirit of educational reform and the aforementioned belief that the arts had the power to unify

meant that the Weimar Republic saw a number of significant reforms in music education—reforms which have managed to survive to this day in many countries that followed Germany’s example—thanks primarily to the work of Leo Kestenberg (1882–1962), a concert pianist and active Social Democrat who began working for the Prussian Ministry of Education as an official advisor for music in the pivotal year 1918 (Gruhn 2004). It is true that music produced by Weimar composers concerned with amateur performance had little lasting effect in the concert hall; why would it be otherwise? But the ideal of *Gebrauchsmusik* precipitated the reimagining of music education in Germany, both in the influence it had on composers like Orff and the concrete changes that occurred in German school music curricula.

The Güntherschule

The first iteration of the Orff-Schulwerk came into being at the Güntherschule (1924–1944), named for Orff’s primary philosophical collaborator and the director of the school, Dorothee Günther (1896–1975). Orff met Günther in 1923 in Munich, where she had recently decided to settle after having spent several years teaching a new form of physical education, Mensendieck Gymnastics, in several major cities throughout Germany (Orff [1976] 1978, 10; Toepfer 1997, 39–41). Günther became preoccupied with the idea of developing a new pedagogy focused on organic movement while taking art classes in Dessau and Hamburg, where she noted dissatisfaction with the limited movement capability of the naked bodies she was reproducing on paper (Toepfer 1997, 130).

The Güntherschule was a perfect junction between the shift toward the production of *Gebrauchsmusik* and the new Weimar preoccupation with body culture which produced the New Dance movement, among several other new approaches to gymnastics and/or dance. Orff’s awareness of the rising popularity of the New Dance movement, which was marked by “an attitude toward the body unprecedented in its modernity, intensity, and complexity” (*Ibid.*, 6), goes back to the first decades of the twentieth century (Orff [1976] 1978, 7); however, he felt that the music used in combination with these experimental works remained “tied to the style of one particular period of the past” (*Ibid.*, 12). In his autobiography, Orff describes the work of dancer and choreographer Mary Wigman (1886–1973), who was trained by Dalcroze and Rudolf von Laban (1879–1958). Orff admired Wigman’s emphasis on the group rather than the individual, and noted the “unprecedented musicality” of her choreography, despite some dances being set to a simple percussion ostinato (*Ibid.*, 8–9). While Wigman’s work came close to what he was seeking, he recalls that there was space to expand

musically. Instead of favoring musical material over choreography or the reverse, Orff wished to develop a more balanced approach. He hoped for a “regeneration of music through movement,” for he believed that rhythm was the great unifier of language, music, and movement (*Ibid.*, 17).

Thus, Günther and Orff brainstormed a school in which music and movement training would go hand in hand, and they presented a “holiday course with practical work, lectures and discussions” in August 1923 (Orff [1976] 1978, 14). They opened in Munich, at 21 Luisenstraße, a year later:

We opened the school in September 1924, starting with seventeen female students between the ages of 18 and 22. The training was designed to last from two to three years. Apart from this there were evening courses for over one hundred non-professional students. (Orff [1976] 1978, 15)

The three tracks students could pursue were therapy gymnastics, rhythmic-gymnastic training, and dance training (Kugler 2013b, 37). All movement, music, and theoretical subjects were taught in the group setting, except for private lessons on the recorder, piano, and timpani (*Ibid.*, 38). It is important to note that this iteration of the Schulwerk existed specifically for the young adult female amateur. Given that both Orff and Günther were heavily influenced by the new German interest in body culture, the establishment of the school could be viewed as an important and progressive feminist achievement in its own right (Frazee 2013a, 36–38). Unfortunately, the gender politics of the school and its original female focus seem to be absent from the literature on the Schulwerk.

It is the concept of “elemental music,” the improvisatory style Orff established during this time to go along with the music and movement activities of the school, that guides all future iterations of the Schulwerk, and provides us with the clearest link from past to present. Orff begins his own history of the school in Biblical style: “In the beginning was the drum” (Orff [1976] 1978, 17). This focus on rhythm provided the foundation for his definition of elemental music:

Elemental music is never music alone but forms a unity with movement, dance and speech. It is music that one makes oneself, in which one takes part not as a listener but as a participant. It is unsophisticated, employs no big forms and no big architectural structures, and it uses small sequence forms, ostinato and rondo. Elemental music is near the earth, natural, physical, within the range of everyone to learn it and to experience it, and suitable for the child. (Orff 1963, 144)

At its core, elemental music was an attempt to harness music-making as a form of active humanistic education, rather than as a path to technical

proficiency (or cultural indoctrination). He was adamant that “elemental music practice encompasses the wide field of *primitive music*” (Orff 1932/33, 158, italics original). As a modern reader, one might justifiably cringe at the implications of this term, especially given the direct influence of Indonesian Gamelan music on his choice of instruments and the elemental style itself (Orff [1976] 1978, 92). Orff did acknowledge that his consistent use of the term led to many “unbelievable misunderstandings,” and clarified his definition as music “that recognizes the unbroken unity of music and movement expression as a foundation” rather than music from non-European nations (Orff 1932/33, 158–159).

While contemporaries were quick to point out the obvious influence of Dalcroze on the Orff approach, they acknowledged with excitement the newness of the “instrumental group character of Orff’s rhythmic education” (Connor 1932, 198). This is a reference to the instruments chosen for the purpose of creating elemental music. Even today, we commonly refer to the xylophones, metallophones, and glockenspiels used in the elementary classroom as “Orff instruments.” In 1926, a pair of Swedish sisters introduced to Orff by his friend Oskar Lang mailed him “a large African xylophone, a marimba” (Orff 1930/31, 87–89). Orff credits this instrument with having initiated a new stage in his educational work (*Ibid.*, 94). Following the successful introduction of the marimba, Orff consulted with the director of the State Collection of Musical Instruments, Curt Sachs, and ordered a full set of recorders for the school (*Ibid.*, 97). The last significant melodic instrument sent to Orff was the xylophone; his friend and instrument restorer Karl Maendler reproduced it in alto and soprano versions before creating a chromatic one capable of producing 25 tones (*Ibid.*, 103–108). Orff chose these instruments in accordance with the elemental music ideal, to move away from “the exclusively harmonic to the rhythmic” (Orff 1963, 136). In another nod to organicism, Orff called for his instruments to be made by hand from “organically grown material” (Velásquez 1990, 97). The students of the school began their training with body percussion in the form of “hand-clapping, finger-clapping and stamping” before moving onto pitched instruments (Orff [1976] 1978, 17). In the ensemble setting, Orff insisted that the instruments be “grouped according to their tone color and, equally important, they should be set up so that the different ways of striking the instruments are taken into account” (Orff 1930/31, 148). Not only did Orff want the students to experiment with playing techniques, but also with range of motion while playing. The instruments were always to be understood as an extension of the body (Orff 1932b, 100).

As there are no recordings of Schulwerk exercises from the

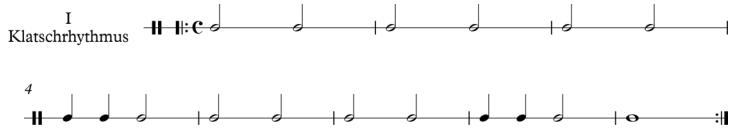
Güntherschule period, the accounts of students prove the most valuable source for learning about the Schulwerk as it was originally imagined and subsequently practiced. One of the first Güntherschule students, Gunild Keetman (1904–1990), was a classically trained musician who admitted that the elemental style was strange to those with ears “used as they were to Baroque or classical [sic] music” (Keetman 1978, 50). According to Keetman, the music that Orff improvised in music classes was

often a vigorous, attractive music in fifths and fourths, seconds were also prevalent, in which there were no cadences, seldom simple triads, but long free lines of melody that mostly eluded all the rules of symmetry and proportion, creating their own new, wide spaces. (*Ibid.*, 50)

It was through their own improvisations, Keetman noted, that the students’ ears became used to the elemental style (*Ibid.*, 52). They became comfortable with improvisation by beginning with simple ostinati and limiting themselves to the use of the pentatonic scale when it came to devising new melodies. As all music at the school was born of improvisation, notation was always the last step and reserved for activities that had achieved a particular level of success (Orff 1932b, 74).

Between 1930 and 1934, Orff worked to publish the first notated Schulwerk exercises in a collection called *Orff-Schulwerk – Elementare Musikübung*, or “*Elemental Music Exercises*” (Orff [1976] 1978, 115).⁸ The first published volume, *Rhythmisch-melodische Übung* (translated as “*Rhythmic-melodic Exercises*”) contained over 250 exercises (Orff 1933). In the “Forward to the Music Educator,” Orff’s friend and music educator Fritz Reusch noted a few basic characteristics of the “elemental form,” including melodies that feature one or two central tones and move by interval in such a way that they recall the overtone series, and the creation of “sound complexes which are not to be understood in the sense of a functional harmony” through the layering of multiple supporting voices (Orff 1933, 4).⁹ He noted the common use of the “bordun” in elemental music-making—a term heavily associated with the Schulwerk that refers to an ostinato in which the tonic and dominant are played together or one after the other. In particular, Reusch encouraged “‘schweifende’ Bordune,” which are drones in which the droning bordun moves the fifth to the upper and lower neighboring tones, and that the student eventually expands from ostinati into “freer forms of accompaniment.” In terms of movement, he acknowledged that certain common folk music characteristics, such as circle group formations and call-and-response singing, were suitable for the Schulwerk.

Rhythmisch-melodische Übung is divided into two parts. The first,



Example 1. The first exercise in Part 1 of *Rhythmisch-melodische Übung* (Orff 1933, 5). It is meant to be clapped.

consisting of rhythmic exercises, is split up into six sections that become increasingly more complex. They are meant to be performed via body percussion (clapping hands, stamping feet, speech syllables, or on unpitched percussion instruments). The very first example features simple half-note, quarter-note, and whole-note rhythms in common time, meant to be clapped (Example 1); the third section introduces two lines of clapping (Orff 1933, 10); the sixth introduces two lines, one clapped and one stamped (*Ibid.*, 16). According to Orff, these preliminary exercises were meant to be “carried out in a relaxed manner and involve the whole body” (Orff 1933, 51). The second part of the volume consists of melodic exercises meant to be hummed or sung on different consonants (*Ibid.*, 52). The first few begin with simple lines consisting of only two pitches. However, perhaps surprisingly, the meter is varied; for instance, the first exercise begins with a section in quadruple meter and then switches to triple meter (Example 2). The melodic exercises then get increasingly more complex, eventually utilizing three disparate lines of melodic-harmonic material that span the full range of a diatonic scale.

In his forward, Reusch states that “it will be the task of the music educator to be productive beyond notation and instruction in order to awaken the imagination and the creativity of the student” (Orff 1933, 3). Unfortunately, however, Orff noted with dismay that the exercises in his text were “widely misunderstood, since it is possible to practice and perform each piece as it stands” (Orff [1976] 1978, 131). He considered his exercises as *models*, and disliked that they were being performed as written, as if they were concert repertoire to be learned. This result is perhaps unsurprising, though, given that Orff only included a few pages of (somewhat vague) directions in *Rhythmisch-melodische Übung*. Moreover, he does not comment at all on best practices for teaching improvisation, choosing instead to make the assumption that those encountering this text are familiar and comfortable with leading this type of activity before diving into the models he has provided. This is perhaps where it becomes most clear that the *Schulwerk* was intended to be taught to instructors via active



Example 2. The first exercise in Part 2 of *Rhythmisch-melodische Übung*, featuring a simple quarter- and half-note rhythm outlining a minor third (Orff 1933, 21).

participation in activities, rather than by reading. The asset of this volume as well as the later publications of Schulwerk exercises—all intended as examples in the literal sense—is that they clearly show us the basic characteristics of the elemental style. The rhythms are repetitive and thus easy to remember, which makes sense given that students also had to memorize and perform choreography. The melodies Orff wrote, as complex as they become rhythmically, usually move in small, easy-to-sing intervals, and are extremely repetitive.

These models provide a stimulus for musical invention, whether that invention is entirely new music or something grown from the motivic seeds of the *Rhythmisch-melodische Übung*. In Example 3, for instance, I have taken the above rhythmic and melodic exercises and used them as the basis for an original passage, featuring two additional lines of body percussion and a melodic part (here, scored for recorder). With direction, this is the sort of elemental music that can emerge from a classroom improvisation. Modern students of this early material in the *Rhythmisch-melodische Übung*—assuming children, rather than the young adults of the Güntherschule—would likely need several class sessions for this built-up passage. As practiced at the Güntherschule, elemental music involved movement and the body, beginning with the rhythmic element. (This type of exercise would of course need to be incredibly student-directed, so what I describe below is purely hypothetical—a model.) I would begin the first lesson by having all students move in a circle to a steady, quarter-note beat in common time (“Stamping” in Example 3). This is so that they can feel the beat in their body, and it serves as a precursor to any additional choreography/movement elements. Next, we clap and intone the half-note clapping line as we march; when this is steady and comfortable, students take turns improvising one-measure ostinati (such as that shown in Example 3). Once students give ideas, I would have them agree on one, perhaps

Recorder

Clapping (ostinato)

Clapping

Stamping

Xylophone

The score consists of five staves. The Recorder staff (top) is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It contains a melodic line: C4-D4-E4-F4-G4-A4-B4, followed by a quarter rest, then G4-F4-E4-D4, followed by a quarter rest, then C4-B3-A3-G3, followed by a quarter rest, then F3-E3-D3-C3. The Clapping (ostinato) staff is in alto clef with a common time signature (C). It contains a rhythmic pattern: quarter note G4, eighth note G4, eighth rest, quarter note G4, quarter note G4, quarter note G4. The Clapping staff is in alto clef with a common time signature (C). It contains a rhythmic pattern: quarter note G4, quarter note G4, quarter note G4, quarter note G4. The Stamping staff is in alto clef with a common time signature (C). It contains a rhythmic pattern: quarter note G4, quarter note G4, quarter note G4, quarter note G4. The Xylophone staff is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It contains a rhythmic pattern: quarter note G4, quarter note G4, quarter note G4, quarter note G4.

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The score continues from measure 5. The Recorder staff (top) is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It contains a melodic line: C4-D4-E4-F4-G4-A4-B4, followed by a quarter rest, then G4-F4-E4-D4, followed by a quarter rest, then C4-B3-A3-G3, followed by a quarter rest, then F3-E3-D3-C3. The Clapping (ostinato) staff is in alto clef with a common time signature (C). It contains a rhythmic pattern: quarter note G4, eighth note G4, eighth rest, quarter note G4, quarter note G4, quarter note G4. The Clapping staff is in alto clef with a common time signature (C). It contains a rhythmic pattern: quarter note G4, quarter note G4, quarter note G4, quarter note G4. The Stamping staff is in alto clef with a common time signature (C). It contains a rhythmic pattern: quarter note G4, quarter note G4, quarter note G4, quarter note G4. The Xylophone staff is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It contains a rhythmic pattern: quarter note G4, quarter note G4, quarter note G4, quarter note G4.

Example 3. Orff-inspired passage based on Examples 1 and 2 and adding: a clapped ostinato, a simple quarter-note line to be stamped, and a melodic line for the recorder (Orff 1933, 5, 21).

incorporating rhythmic elements from several students. Then half would march and clap the new ostinato while the other half kept up the half-note pulse. (Having them switch back and forth a few times is useful here.) In the next class, such a texture can be built up faster, and melodic elements can be added—for example, teaching a few students the two-pitch melody from the *Rhythmisch-melodische Übung* (the xylophone line in Example 3).

Of course, these exercises are not exclusively for children, as the women of the Güntherschule attest. Having students revisit such an early exercise after they have “graduated” to later material can produce more fruitful results, especially melodically. Example 3’s recorder line is based on the pentatonic scale, in keeping with the simpler improvisations at the Güntherschule (Keetman 1978, 52), and adds a counterpoint to Orff’s melody. It also meets the criteria Keetman outlines in her guide to the Schulwerk:

As always, clear forms are necessary: easily remembered melodies that repeat exactly or nearly exactly, clear melodic cadences, frequent changes of pitch register (the lower register of the recorder should not be used too often) and always a lively delivery. (Keetman [1970] 1974, 168)

Students who are strong recorder players can take turns improvising different melodies, and elements of several of them can be incorporated into a “final” one. The one I have included in Example 3 is rather complex; most likely, this would be something improvised by older students, perhaps in sixth grade. Younger students tend to stick to less complex rhythmic “building blocks” as they improvise a melody, such as quarter notes and half notes. In fact, the true beauty of this exercise is that it can and should be adapted for different age groups, revisited and made more complex for a group of students as they develop their skills, or even can be used in a group of students with diverse levels of musicianship.

Recent views of Orff-Schulwerk—including the above-outlined lesson—tend to emphasize its musical aspects while downplaying its incorporation of dance. This loss of the movement aspects of the approach started early and worsened over time. Looking at the available literature, we can make a few assumptions about how it happened. First, there are no notated publications of the movement aspects from that time to supplement the published musical materials, and none of the literature suggests that Günther or her students utilized Labanotation (Rudolf Laban’s system for notating human movement). No in-depth directions are included in the *Rhythmisch-melodische Übung* beyond basic differentiation between types of body percussion (Orff 1933, 51–52). Next, there was no sound film to capture the students of the school in action (Keetman 1978, 60).

And finally, the personal notes and reflections of the movement experts at the school were not given as much attention as those of the musicians (Orff and Keetman); most of them remain unpublished in their original German (Pruett 2003, 194). According to Barbara Haselbach, a musicologist and Orff-Schulwerk expert, very few of Günther's personal records have survived, and most scholarship detailing her contributions to the Schulwerk relies entirely on secondary sources (Haselbach 2013, 42).

The few writings we do have from Günther are valuable in helping us understand how the elemental was defined in regard to movement. Günther describes tribal dances as encompassing the ideal range of movements represented by the elemental style:

The dances of primitive peoples—and we may still include those of peasant peoples living close to the soil—are basically games of movement arranged rhythmically and dynamically into intervals, and consisting of a series of diverse steps taken walking or running, of chain or round dance forms requiring leaning, bending, and turning of the trunk, and where the dancers are free or joined together. (Günther 1962, 112)

Günther hypothesizes that the “child of civilization” can reach this ideal through “play with the movement, variation and improvisation of all the elements of motion that are suited to its particular age” (*Ibid.*, 114). Another significant purveyor of elemental dance was Güntherschule student (and later, teacher) Maja Lex, who founded the Munich Chamber Dance Theatre (later renamed the Günther Dance Group) in 1930 (Keetman 1978, 56). That same year, she performed a five-part cycle titled *Barbaric Suite* at the Third German Dance Congress in Munich, which greatly enhanced the reputation of the Güntherschule, both in Germany and abroad (Padilla 2013, 71–73). Unfortunately, her work remains little explored, which is most likely a product of the repression of movement in subsequent iterations of the Schulwerk.

An Experiment Ended

The Weimar period provided Orff and his collaborators with the perfect grounds for experimentation in the arts, but the rising political turmoil that eventually led to World War II also brought about the downfall of the Güntherschule—though it did outlive other prominent progressive educational institutions such as the Bauhaus. Excavating Orff's and Günther's political associations is a necessary preface to evaluating their school's relative longevity during the interwar period, and casts their legacy in a considerably more complex light. As an intensely private man, Orff allowed few biographers to write about him; given his desire to keep his personal

politics to himself, this was most likely intentional. In his autobiography, the only time he mentions anything mildly political is when writing of his hesitation to provide music for the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, as he did not want to be perceived as having any sort of political bias (Orff [1976] 1978, 205).

However, it is not clear that this elision of the political was due to a dissatisfaction with the political environment of the Weimar Republic. It was, perhaps, because both he and the school benefitted from being in favor with the National Socialists. The style of composition Orff was known for was accepted and celebrated by the Nazis—a fact that kept him safe from persecution during the Third Reich (Kater 1997, 192). This may seem contradictory, given that Orff was heavily influenced by music from non-Aryan countries; however, as Richard Taruskin has noted, his music was also praised for being disciplined and full of strength, an obvious product of its driving rhythms and repetitive structures (Taruskin 2001). Orff would go on to lie in 1946 about being a member of the White Rose, a non-violent resistance group, in order to burnish his image in the postwar environment (Pruett 2003, 191). He was never a member of the group and, as the wife of his close friend Kurt Huber further noted, “he was not known as an enemy of Hitler” (Palmer 1995, 59:51).

Günther joined the Nazi party in the 1930s, yet there is an ambivalence about the extent to which she actually believed in Nazi ideology. American music educator Jane Frazee states that “Günther’s support of the National Socialists,” coupled with Orff’s acclaim as a composer, provided the school with safety “from Nazi interference until a year before the war’s end” (Frazee 2013a, 32). Accounts from students of the school are mixed as to whether this support was tacit or not. One student, Annalisa Martens, who came to the school in 1942, wrote that

Frau Günther, who steered the school through these difficult times with discretion and skill, had sometimes to make unavoidable compromises. So she demanded that we should consistently make use of the Hitler-greeting, and used it herself of course. We tried in vain to get out of it. (Martens 2013, 245)

Another student, Ruth Opitz, was “convinced that National Socialism had had no influence on the workings of the Günther School,” and stated that Günther told the students that she “had joined the Party and had qualified her decision with the sentence: *for you, so that I can continue to run the school*” (Widmer 2013, 108, italics original). As scholars look at the changes in the school prospectus between the 1930 and 1936 versions alone, however, it becomes clear that the school at least ostensibly adhered to Nazi

beliefs and practices (Kugler 2013a, 213–232). To cite one case, the 1936 prospectus includes the addition of an examination in “Führungskunde: as a study of heredity and race” and a statement that students in the German Gymnastics Department “belong as a ‘Student Body’ to the National Socialist Student Body and enjoy their rights and duties” (*Ibid.*, 228–229).¹⁰

In 1944, the Güntherschule was forcibly closed so that the space could be repurposed for military needs, and on January 7, 1945, was reduced to ruins in an Allied bombing raid (Pruett 2003, 184; Orff [1976] 1978, 212). Although Orff had stepped away from the school by 1933, its loss marked the end of an era for his pedagogical work (*Ibid.*, 209). But, it was not long before the Orff-Schulwerk returned in a new form: as an approach to teaching young children.

Musik für Kinder / Music for Children

In 1948, Orff received a call from Annemarie Schambeck, who was the head of broadcasts aimed at schoolchildren at the Bavarian Radio (Orff [1976] 1978, 212). Though he had turned away from educational pursuits in the years following the destruction of the Güntherschule to focus on composing, Orff was excited by the prospect of a new beginning for the Schulwerk in the form of “a music exclusively for children that could be played, sung and danced by them but that could also in a similar way be invented by them—a world of their own” (*Ibid.*, 212). With this reimagining of the Schulwerk came a transformation of the repertoire from its early days at the private Güntherschule: wide publication, and eventually international dissemination into state educational curricula. For an in-depth focus on differences between the many translations of *Music for Children*, one can rely on the wide-ranging philological work of Hermann Regner, who took on the herculean task of exploring some of the international editions of the Schulwerk (Regner 1984). According to Regner, the foreign language editions can be seen as belonging to two generations: those published between 1956 and 1968, and those published thereafter. He implies that most editions published after 1968 use Orff’s philosophy of elemental music more as vague inspiration than clear guidance. As the endpoint of our journey is the United States, we’ll focus here on English-language versions and their major disseminators.

Codifying the Schulwerk

Despite the fact that the Schulwerk to this day is branded with Orff’s name, it was Keetman who actually solidified its popularity in the 1940s. In 1949, Keetman established the first Orff-Schulwerk classes for children

aged eight to ten at the Mozarteum in Salzburg (Orff [1976] 1978, 226). From these classes came the first publications of material specifically for children. These publications were aptly entitled *Musik für Kinder* (in the English-language versions, they share the title: *Music for Children*). The five volumes of *Musik für Kinder* were published between 1950 and 1954, and form what we might call the canonical Orff-Schulwerk repertoire.

The publication of *Musik für Kinder* represented a huge turning point in the history of the Schulwerk. First of all, Orff seems to have made peace with his fear that the repertoire could be misinterpreted without the presence of a teacher who understood deeply the concept of “elemental music” and how to implement the exercises in a classroom, and was now willing for the Schulwerk to be widely disseminated in written form (Orff [1976] 1978, 131). Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the codification of these exercises meant that Orff and Keetman had to make significant hierarchical decisions about their musical content. While the 1933 *Rhythmisch-melodische Übung* had reflected a gradual increase in rhythmic and melodic complexity over the course of the volume, these Schulwerk volumes were divided expressly by tonal elements. The subtitles of the volumes summarize their curriculum:

I. *Pentatonic*

II. *Major: Drone Bass and Triads*

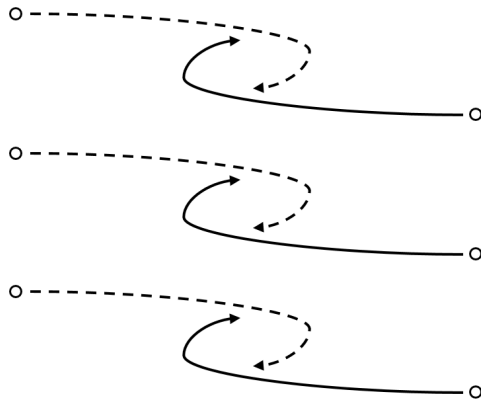
III. *Major: Dominant and Subdominant*

IV. *Minor: Drone Bass and Triads*

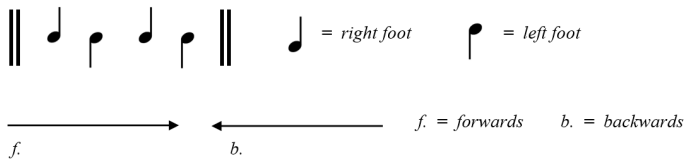
V. *Minor: Dominant and Subdominant* (Orff [1976] 1978, 233).

In the original German, the names of the volumes are sometimes more descriptive. For instance, the second volume is called *Dur: Bordun und Stufen*. The term “bordun” is quite a bit more specific than “drone bass.”

Orff began with pentatonic material because of the prevalence of the “two-note call” in childhood: playground taunts and nursery rhymes all depend on the falling minor third *sol-mi* (Orff and Keetman 1956–1961a). In an introduction to Keetman’s guide to teaching the Schulwerk, Werner Thomas reemphasizes the importance of beginning with pentatonic material, which keeps the early exercises free from the difficulties posed by tonality (Keetman [1970] 1974, 12). Since the pentatonic scale is akin to the major or natural minor scales minus the tritones, there are no minor-second dissonances and no leading tones to navigate, allowing students to acclimate to the act of improvisation in a simple tonal environment that builds their creative confidence. Major and minor scales, with their attendant qualities, arrive in the next four volumes, at which point students have a grasp of rhythmic fundamentals and have gained some confidence



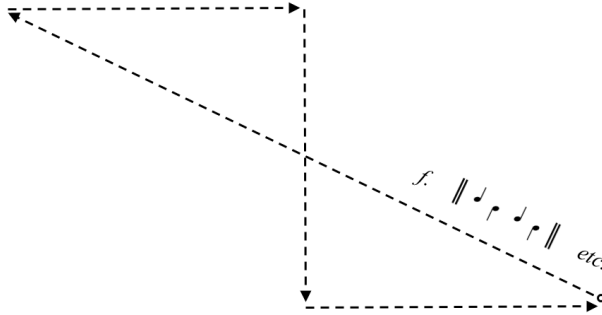
Example 4. One of the movement examples provided by Keetman ([1970] 1974, 116). The open circles represent starting points for different groups.



Example 5. Keetman's dictionary for movement notation (Keetman [1970] 1974, 116). Arrows can be drawn directly beneath music notation to indicate direction (forwards or backwards).

in improvising using the largely identical tonal material of the pentatonic scale. Arguably, the sequence of introducing musical concepts as it exists in *Music für Kinder* is deeply rooted in Western music theory and its diatonic structures; Orff introduced major tonalities first, and built upon the bordun and triad to introduce the dominant and subdominant—a “natural” progression of common-practice harmonic structures. While he stated that he wished to develop “the primitive creative urge in children” *before* being subjected to the rigorous physical training required to perform classical music at an aesthetically acceptable level, Orff’s prerogative as a composer in the Western tradition clearly influenced the structure of the first publications of the Schulwerk for children (Orff 1932/33, 161).

Notably, the most thorough-going engagement with the Orff-Schulwerk in print comes not from Orff himself, but from Keetman. Her



Example 6. A suggested movement to perform during Example 3.

Elementaria: First Acquaintance with Orff-Schulwerk ([1970] 1974) is a substantial guide that aims to help teachers understand how to creatively develop exercises out of the material presented in the five volumes of *Musik für Kinder*. Keetman presents ideas on how to introduce the elemental building blocks of melody and rhythm, and she includes a rare commodity in Schulwerk literature: a relatively fleshed-out section on movement training. Admittedly, this section on movement *is* more difficult to follow than the sections on musical elements for the same notational reasons that the movement elements of the Schulwerk developed at the Güntherschule were lost. (It does not feature Labanotation, which leads me to suspect it was indeed not used at the Güntherschule.)

Keetman does not shy away from detail, however, using her own system of circles and lines to show overall form of movement exercises (Keetman [1970] 1974, 113–116). Example 4 shows a single movement meant to be performed by six groups of students simultaneously (*Ibid.*, 116). The circles represent starting points (and therefore a single group of students). The three groups on the left move along the path described by the dotted arrow, and the three groups on the right move along the solid arrow. To indicate the difference between left and right on each student's body in the score, Keetman utilizes different stem directions. As shown in Example 5, upward stems are right foot and downward stems are left foot (*Ibid.*, 116). Back in Example 3, therefore, the “Stamping” line indicates that students should begin on their right foot. Arrows could be added below the music to indicate movement (forwards or backwards). Thus, combining Example 3 with my Example 6 (based on Keetman's system of movement notation), we get

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a single marching band of students (there is only one circle in Example 6), beginning on their right foot and stamping in quarter notes, that traces an hourglass shape. As opposed to the more general recommendations we encountered above from Reusch, Keetman's notational system allows for more specific and complex movement patterns to be communicated.

The First English-Language Editions

The migration of *Musik für Kinder* to North America was incredibly quick. The first English-language editions were published in Canada between 1956 and 1961 (Orff and Keetman 1956–1961), adapted by Arnold Walter (1902–1973) and Doreen Hall (b. 1921). Walter was a Czech musicologist who had observed Orff's work at the Güntherschule in the 1930s (Hughes 1993, 74). He asked Hall, a graduate of the Royal Conservatory of Music, to go abroad to study the Orff-Schulwerk with Keetman and to adapt the existing *Musik für Kinder* for use in English (*Ibid.*, 77). This version sparked international interest when it was presented at the 1956 Music Educators National Conference.¹¹ Walter notes in the introduction to the first volume of *Music for Children* that “a work of this kind could not be just translated; it seemed necessary to find analogues for the German songs and singing games used by Orff, which in turn made it necessary, to re-fashion the melodic material” (Orff and Keetman 1956–1961a).

Music educator Patricia Hughes, in her examination of the differences between the original German volumes and the Canadian edition of *Music for Children*, notes this, pointing out how minor differences with Orff's original versions started to arise as a direct effect of international dissemination (Hughes 1993, 78–82). These differences are predominantly reflected in the overall organization and quantity of content, however, rather than the content itself. This is because “there was disagreement whether the Canadian edition would follow the same five-volume format as the original or whether it would appear in three volumes as Walter preferred” (*Ibid.*, 78); one reason the publisher decided against Walter's preferred format was that they wanted the editions to come out before the *Schulwerk* session at MENC in 1956. Hughes notes the divergences began with the second volume, as the Canadian version did not follow the two-part format of the German one, in which melody was presented in the first half and accompaniments in the second (*Ibid.*, 79). Of particular note is that the third volume of the Canadian version (Orff and Keetman 1956–1961c) is significantly reduced in relation to the third volume of the German original (Orff and Keetman 1950–1954c); the Canadian version includes just twelve pieces, while the German includes thirty-six. This is because Walter had “envisioned the combination of materials and sequences found in the

original second and third volumes into one new second volume entitled *The Road to Major*,” but the publisher did not agree with Walter’s decision (Hughes 1993, 80).

Accompanying the Canadian editions, Schott published a guide by Hall summarizing basic Orff procedures (Hall 1960). This was absolutely the product of a key belief shared by Orff, his collaborators, and subsequent adaptors of the *Schulwerk*: that the exercises should not be approached without understanding the way a teacher can creatively guide the learning process with the improvisation-driven philosophy of elemental music in mind. Unsurprisingly, the chapter on “The Body as an Instrument” is only one page long and, though Hall comments that “physical response to music is inherent in all people and we must learn to use this to full advantage in our work with children,” her text serves only to define the body percussion directions (“clapping,” “patschen,”¹² “stamping,” and “finger snapping”) given in the original *Schulwerk* texts (*Ibid.*, 12). Nevertheless, Hall’s guide (much like Keetman’s) is a useful companion to these first English-language editions, and though she presents examples from the exercises in her five volumes, she also reiterates that “*the teacher must use her own creative thoughts and those of the children in working out similar ideas*” (*Ibid.*, 17, italics original).

Margaret Murray (1921–2015) independently developed a British version of *Music for Children* (Orff and Keetman 1958–1966), and her adaptation became “the fundamental teaching resource for workshops and courses throughout the United States” (Frazee 2013b, 54). This is perhaps unsurprising because while there are a few significant differences between the German and Canadian editions, the British version stays extremely true to the source material and is, in most cases, a direct translation, barring a few differences in the inclusion of culturally-relevant folk songs. Perhaps due to this congruence with the original version, there is more material on Murray’s contributions to the development of the *Schulwerk* than there is for Walter and Hall. She translated Orff’s autobiography, as well as Keetman’s teaching guide for the *Schulwerk* (Haselbach 2013, 21), and organized the first summer course in 1963 for British teachers learning the Orff approach (Ayling 2013, 66). It is curious that Murray’s editions are more readily used by American educators than any other print version of the *Schulwerk*, given that Walter and Hall had already presented the approach—at an American conference, no less—prior to publication.¹³ But Keetman declined to lead the demonstration of the *Schulwerk* at the 1956 MENC conference in St. Louis, and the instructor who took up the task in her place had limited English skills and not much *Schulwerk* training (Hughes 1993, 78). This may have biased Americans toward Murray’s

The image shows a musical score for the song "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor, Rich Man, Poor Man, Beggar Man, Thief". At the top is a vocal line in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The lyrics are: "Tin - ker, tai - lor, sol - dier, sai - lor, rich man, poor man, beg - gar man, thief." Below the vocal line are several staves for rhythmic accompaniment. The first section is labeled "Clapping 1" and consists of four staves (numbered 1-4). The second section is labeled "Clapping Stamping" and consists of two staves (numbered 1-2). The accompaniment uses various rhythmic patterns, including quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests, to create a complex texture.

Example 7. The third example of the first volume of Margaret Murray's *British Music for Children* (Orff and Keetman 1958–1966a, 3).

materials.

While both the Canadian and British versions of *Music for Children* have their strengths, Murray's adaptation, as I said, strives to be the truer translation of the original *Musik für Kinder*. Several of her volumes also feature more content than what is available in the corresponding volumes of Hall and Walter, arguably preferable if, following Orff, the goal is for teachers to familiarize themselves with the elemental style and eventually develop their own exercises in the spirit of the ones provided in the five volumes. Example 7 shows how Murray began by providing a variety of rhythmic accompaniments to "Tinker, tailor," using the same two oscillating pitches as Orff's Example 1 above (Orff and Keetman 1958–1966a, 3). Immediately after these examples, she provides an orchestration for Orff instruments, which is reflective of the 1933 *Rhythmisch-melodische Übung* by featuring rhythmic models before introducing more complex melodic-harmonic elements.

The "Americanization" of the Orff-Schulwerk

An American edition of *Music for Children* was published in the late 1970s (Orff and Keetman 1977). According to publisher Schott, most of the material was "contributed by leading educators using material developed in American classrooms, that reflects the vast panorama of the cultural heritage of the United States" (Schott 2019). This edition of the Schulwerk represents a considerable departure from previous English-language edi-

tions. Firstly, as Arnold Walter had wanted for the Canadian version, this edition is in three volumes, diverging from previous English-language adaptations which followed the five-volume format. Further, in her guide to the Schulwerk, Keetman had claimed that “a classification of material according to age or grade, subject matter and curricula, as is so frequently attempted, is . . . as impossible as it is absurd,” but the American edition is divided in just this way into preschool (Pre-K to K), primary (grades 1–3), and upper elementary (grades 4–6) volumes (Keetman [1970] 1974, 11). This decision is explained away by editor Hermann Regner with the note that “many other aspects were considered, one being the age of the children” (Orff and Keetman 1977a, I). Given that the models are intended to be reused and made more complex as students grow more comfortable with the act of improvising, this decision is perhaps a disappointing one, at least insofar as it undercuts the way Orff wanted print Schulwerk exercises to be utilized by the music educator. It also takes the onus off the teacher to adapt material to the diverse range of skillsets they may have present in one class of many students.

In many respects, and especially by comparison with the others mentioned above, the later American edition is not so much an adaptation of *Musik für Kinder* so much as the strongest evidence of the significant influence of Dalcroze, Kodály, and Orff on American primary school music pedagogy. These volumes include folk music repertoire with short descriptions of how to structure a lesson around them. The accompanying activities are categorized as either a “sample lesson,” “game,” “listening activity,” or as a lesson that builds “notation skills” (*Ibid.*, V). A few of the musical examples overlap between adaptations, but the American edition provides much more detail on how to structure the activity in the classroom. For instance, “Cuckoo” is the second piece of repertoire introduced in the first (preschool) volume of the American Orff-Schulwerk; it is also the first introduced in both the Murray and Walter/Hall volumes. Unlike these earlier versions, however, the American volume includes a sample lesson and accompanying game (Orff and Keetman 1977a, 2). The class sits in a circle while two students remain in the center: one blindfolded and one with a finger cymbal (“Cuckoo”). Students sing the song thrice while the blindfolded child turns in a circle in place. The Cuckoo is meant to ring the cymbal as she moves to different points of the room. After the song is finished, the blindfolded student guesses where in the room the Cuckoo is. Though this lesson utilizes the same musical exercise present in the Canadian and English *Music for Children* volumes, it is incredibly teacher-directed and includes no opportunities for the students to improvise.

In other iterations, including the original, the Orff-Schulwerk

promoted what might be called “incidental” learning, rather than a disciplined knowledge of music theory or the ability to give a performance in the Western art music tradition (Walter 1977, 23). Modern materials, however, seem to favor the latter. There is at least one obvious explanation for why the American edition diverges so greatly from past English-language versions: it was published at the onset of the national standards movement. In the words of music educator Catherine Schmidt, the “Nation at Risk” rhetoric of the 1980s led to a movement toward national standards that possessed “the potential to set parameters and limit discourse for music education reforms” (Schmidt 1996, 71). Orff was reticent about committing the *Schulwerk* to print because the approach was intended to foster creative expression through music-making above more concrete learning objectives. Due to the fact that “music education has struggled for legitimacy as an integral part of the curriculum since it was first introduced into the Boston public schools in 1837 by Lowell Mason,” it is not surprising that music educators and national organizations for music education have embraced the standards as a sign of their validity while also losing sight of the humanistic value of the arts as a complement to more academic subject areas (*Ibid.*, 79).

As the *Schulwerk* becomes more structured in an attempt to conform to national standards, it becomes nearly indistinguishable from the other European pedagogies that shape primary school music education—namely, the above-mentioned Dalcroze and Kodály approaches. Take the heavy inclusion of games in the American edition of *Music for Children*, for example. While Kodály expert Lois Choksy states that Kodály instruction should include “songs for game playing,” this is not a feature of any *Schulwerk* material prepared by Orff or Keetman (Choksy [1974] 1999, 20). This is most likely because the games that feature in Kodály instruction have set accompanying music and movements, limiting students’ ability to improvise. The only game Keetman mentions in *Elementaria* is “rhythmic echo-play,” which involves the teacher clapping bars of rhythm and having children clap the same rhythm back with the intention of helping them develop “accurate listening, quick reaction, memory and feeling for form” (Keetman [1970] 1974, 27). This call-and-response “game” is a feature of many child-oriented pedagogies, notably in the work of Ella Jenkins and her *Call-and-Response Rhythmic Group Singing* (see Wald 2019 in this volume). It is not tied to melodic repertoire, and Keetman consistently notes how, as the game gets more complex, students should be given more opportunity to suggest new complexities and variations to feel more involved. Games as used in the Kodály approach are intended to build confidence in the sung repertoire; to use them in the same way as part of the Orff

approach is also to deny students opportunities to improvise beyond the constraints of the repertoire, which is the goal of the Schulwerk material presented in the original *Musik für Kinder* and the subsequent Canadian and English editions.

Institutionalizing Orff: the IOSFS and AOSA

Orff once analogized his Schulwerk to a “wildflower,” a Romantic, even self-indulgent image with clear organicist overtones (Orff 1963, 134). But if the Schulwerk was like a wildflower in 1963, today’s equivalent might be considered more of a walled garden. Orff and Eberhard Preußner founded the first Orff-Schulwerk institution, the International Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg (IOSFS), in 1961 (*Ibid.*, 150). The IOSFS currently recognizes Orff-Schulwerk Associations in thirty-eight countries (IOSFS 2019).¹⁴ In the United States, this institutionalization of the Orff-Schulwerk as a main track in American elementary school music education can be traced to the establishment of the IOSFS-approved American Orff-Schulwerk Association (AOSA) in 1968.

The AOSA began with ten founding members, all music educators who had heard about the Orff-Schulwerk either by engaging directly with it abroad or by participating in a workshop in the United States (AOSA 2019). Currently, there are ninety-six local chapters and around four thousand active national AOSA members.¹⁵ Their mission statement reads as follows:

to demonstrate the value of Orff Schulwerk and promote its widespread use; to support the professional development of our members; and, to inspire and advocate for the creative potential of all learners. (AOSA 2018a)

As of May 7, 2019, forty-eight U.S. institutions offer accredited certification programs. According to the Handbook for Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education Courses:

There are three levels to the AOSA Teacher Education Curriculum. Each AOSA approved level course must follow the outline established in the AOSA Teacher Education Curriculum. To receive the AOSA Certificate of Completion, participants must complete all three levels. (AOSA 2018b)

On their “What is Orff Schulwerk?” page, the AOSA describes the Schulwerk as follows: “Releasing creativity that extends far beyond the music classroom, Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman conceived an approach to building musicianship in every learner through the integration of music, movement, speech, and drama” (AOSA 2019a). A digital brochure of the

same name—with an unshakably corporate feel—plugs the Schulwerk as a “teaching model for optimal learning” without providing any data or evidence (AOSA 2019b).¹⁶ Nowhere on their website do they define what they mean by “musicianship,” or acknowledge the Schulwerk as a pedagogy that has clear connections to the National Core Arts Standards, the most recent iteration of which was published in 2014 (NCAS 2014). These are the standards that K–12 music teachers are held to when designing and implementing their curricula.¹⁷

On the one hand, this vague explanation of what, exactly, the Schulwerk *is* could be seen as an attempt not to contradict Orff by setting an explicit standards-based curriculum. Yet in this respect it is noticeable that the AOSA’s website shows a number of rehearsed performances as a demonstration of the Schulwerk. One video boasts a “recorder improvisation” in which “students create their own melodies as part of a performance of ‘Stitches’ by Shawn Mendes” (Park 2016); however, the students are playing from sheet music and the solo portions are just students playing the melody of the pop song. Other videos feature circle games similar to those detailed in the American edition of *Music for Children*. For instance, one such game called “La Oca Loca” is described as “one of many hand-clapping games from Mexican culture,” and the game is intended to reinforce “keeping a steady beat individually and as a group” (AOSA 2016). While these games typically feature movement, their music is not improvised.

Since such videos show end products, it is of course hard to critique them without seeing the process. Nonetheless, while those mentioned above might seem to diverge from strictly Orff-Schulwerk practices and philosophies, others are more familiar in this regard. “I Can See the Moon” shows a rehearsed musical and movement performance based off of a rhythm from Orff and Keetman’s *Music for Children* and a book by Christopher Carroll entitled *The Boy and the Moon* (Southard 2017). The classroom is split into two groups: there are students playing on barred Orff instruments and those partaking in movement activities, including the use of body percussion. The use of a dramatic text (the book) also speaks to Orff’s desire to use rhythm as a unifier of speech, movement, and music. The bass instruments, too, begin with a characteristic, repetitive bordun-based rhythm before the pentatonic melodies and harmonies join in. The level of engagement of the students in the movement activities is extremely high; they all look enthusiastic about what they are doing (admittedly difficult to achieve in a large classroom of young students). While there is no way of knowing from the video that the teacher had them improvise the movements before deciding on the final choreography, the important thing to note is that one can easily imagine that process, the movement

equivalent of that which I outlined in connection with Example 3, is what led to this end product—especially since the instrumental players are not reading from notation, potentially a product of the students having worked out material on their own before settling on a final product.

More-detailed pages like the “Classroom Resources” section—which includes lesson ideas, a “Tech Spot,” and more—are largely behind a paywall. This includes an Orff-Schulwerk-based journal, *The Orff Echo*, which includes articles that run the gamut from advocacy and instrument care to research and historical perspectives.¹⁸ As of July 1, 2012, Regular Membership in the AOSA costs \$85, and it is not uncommon for international Orff associations to require paid membership to access materials and events; for instance, Orff UK offers Standard Membership for £30 (Orff UK 2019). Although I expected some content on the curricula of the certification courses from the “best practices” section of the Handbook, it focuses entirely on logistics and administration and does not make mention of the program’s learning outcomes for Orff instructors. This is perhaps unsurprising given its puzzling opening statement, which oddly echoes the famous first rule of Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club* (1996): “The American Orff-Schulwerk Association strongly encourages members to be positive and discreet when discussing our organization, specific courses and/or teachers and the Orff movement” (AOSA 2018b).

The free “Classroom Resources” section includes one sample lesson idea and a few children’s book recommendations. The lesson is provided by David Birrow, a percussionist and music educator, and presents new ways of approaching Keetman’s 1970 *Rhythmische Übung* using bucket drums (Birrow 2015). Birrow breaks down the use of the exercises, by number, and gives an example of ways in which students can vary the use of the drums with body percussion. He also includes video clips, and though I missed an example of the exercise played straight from the book followed by a more complex variation, the use of bucket drums is a recognizable variant of the original exercise as published. He ends with a confirmation that “ultimately it is the students who will revel in the opportunity to find ways to play these classic gems” (*Ibid.*). While other lessons may not demonstrate such an explicit engagement with primary sources, the influence is often clear. In one such lesson plan, “AOSA Teacher Educator” Karen Medley provides a pentatonic melody in D (most vocal repertoire for children uses D because it is a comfortable singing range) along with a simple accompaniment featuring borduns (Medley 2018). She gives an example from her classroom, encouraging improvisation and the development of new material based on this flexible framework, similar to the material I introduced in Example 3 (though arguably far more detailed, including predetermined questions

to ask students throughout the lesson that guide their improvisation, such as “What directions can your melody move?”). Although Medley clearly believes in the creative authority of the student, this Schulwerk-inspired lesson lacks movement elements completely. It also spends considerable time on nonmusical elements, focusing on language acquisition through the text. However, it is notable that the subsequent musical portion of the lesson does include several opportunities for improvisation, and for students to make decisions about the form of the emerging piece.

Other AOSA-supported lesson plans, however, seem to diverge significantly from the recognizable tenets of the Schulwerk. “Living Things” by Jill DeVilbiss begins with a listing of the music and science standards it addresses (DeVilbiss 2017). The “Instructional Procedures” make no mention of improvisation or creative engagement with the musical material; instead, they focus on this act of playing a set melody and practicing for technical accuracy. The lesson only invites students “to make suggestions on tempo, dynamics, articulation, etc.” Another plan, entitled “Using Movement to Introduce a Masterwork” (Meek 2017) bypasses elemental and improvisatory music-making in favor of marrying hearings of canonical Western “masterpieces” with some music-directed movements. Interestingly, Meek’s lesson is one of few to feature movement elements, and she moves the aspect of student-directed choice into this domain. That said, Meek’s lesson is less focused on the act of improvising than it is on having students suggest choreography with the ultimate goal of creating a rehearsed, set performance. Ultimately, this is a decidedly teacher-directed lesson. Beginning with a quotation of Dalcroze, making the influence explicit, Meek quickly moves on a more alarming red flag when she says that “it is important to select music that has artistic, intellectual, cultural, or historical value” (*Op. cit.*). The repertoire chosen, of course, is the Western canon. In these respects, the lesson does not quite align neatly with the Orff primary sources, a stance perhaps made clear by the opening Dalcroze quotation.

In his 1986 article, “The Americanization of Heinrich Schenker,” William Rothstein writes that “it is one of the glories of American culture that it so readily absorbs foreign influences—at least, some foreign influences. But those foreign elements that it adopts, it adapts in the process, often changing them in essential ways. This is the country, after all, of the ham-and-cheese croissant and the pizza bagel” (Rothstein 1986, 6). The AOSA’s paywall-blocked lesson plans, provided by member teachers, exemplify this “melting pot effect.” Having never been taught the intricacies of the differences between the three approaches, I relied on generalizing about them; to this day, I struggle with explaining the differences between

them to non-teachers. This is certainly a product of the ahistorical approach in many institutions, noted at the beginning of this review; but it is also reflective of how interchangeable the three approaches I mentioned have become in America. Being certified in all three is not just a way to show evidence of expertise in multiple, disparate pedagogies; the implication seems to be that you are a teacher with the ability to intermix them effectively in your classroom.

Whatever your opinion on pizza bagels, however, the “Americanization” to which Rothstein refers is unfortunately a negative one: “Schenker had become so fashionable that he was being paid the ultimate American compliment: he was being vulgarized[;] . . . he had become a ‘flavor,’ a whiff of which would help to sell undergraduate textbooks” (*Ibid.*, 6). The focus, as Rothstein puts it elsewhere, “purely on the rationalist side of Schenker’s thought while jettisoning all ambiguities, all internal inconsistencies, all that arises from analysis rather than from theory, and all that is not narrowly technical” is all too similar to the shift away from the improvisatory roots of the Schulwerk (Rothstein 1990, 295). As Arnold Walter, who developed the Canadian *Music for Children*, writes:

Over the years, I found, to my chagrin, that some people had no clear conception what to do with the Schulwerk once they got it. They reached out for it—only to change it, to twist it, to mix it, to mechanize it, to treat it as a “method” in the cursed sense of the word. Last year, at an international music conference (I won’t tell you where it was), I attended an Orff demonstration where the children performed beautifully, drilled like Prussian soldiers in the time of Frederick the Great—and this in the name of improvisation, of fantasy and freedom! (Walter 1977, 14)

This was, it seems, the very fear felt by Orff when he wrote of “development in the wrong direction” (Orff 1963, 134). More recently, similar concerns about the way the Schulwerk has strayed from its spontaneous roots have been echoed by German music educator Rudolf Nykrin, who argues that the Schulwerk “has largely become an ‘unknown classic’ despite it being often mentioned by name” (Nykrin 2000/2010, 274). In this context, I am reminded of Mary Shamrock’s distinction between two kinds of Orff-Schulwerk: the original repertoire/source material written by Orff and his collaborators, on the one hand, and the pedagogy itself as developed by later followers, on the other (Shamrock 1986, 54). (This, incidentally, is also mirrored in Schenker’s “Americanization” in the difference between Schenker’s own work and the Neo-Schenkerians who came after him.) Perhaps Shamrock puts it best when she recalls the above-mentioned wild-flower image (Orff 1963, 134): “we need to differentiate between wild flowers [sic] and weeds” (Shamrock 1986, 41). There are, these commentators

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seem to imply, nonnegotiable aspects of the Schulwerk, with perhaps one of the most (if not *the* most) important being the improvisational elements that form its foundation.

The (New) American Canon

Like the ham-and-cheese croissant, however, Rothstein's "Americanization" sometimes results in a triumph! In *Play, Sing, & Dance*, Doug Goodkin offers his own experiences as a guide to developing an understanding of the Orff-Schulwerk, including the concept of elemental music and improvisation (Goodkin [2002] 2004, 9). Part 1 of Goodkin's guide includes chapters that break down each facet of Orff media: body percussion, the Orff instruments, the recorder, etc. Part 2, eschewing an over-arching framework, includes chapters that aim to give readers conceptual understanding of the broad musical principles introduced in *Music for Children* (rhythmic vocalization, the pentatonic scale, the drone, etc.).

Goodkin notes that "authentic education requires the teacher to notice and attend to the unique needs and gifts of every student" (*Ibid.*, 127). Rather than presenting full lesson plans, then, he offers examples and ideas that attempt to guide rather than dictate. In a chapter titled "The Drone—A Basic Foundation," Goodkin provides definitions and examples of ten different drone variations as a way of straightforwardly aiding teachers in building a repertoire of smaller rhythmic-harmonic building blocks that can be utilized in exercises they will implement with their students (*Ibid.*, 148–150). At the end of the chapter, he provides general guidelines for how to use them, urging the teacher to "keep it simple," and remarking that "nine times out of ten, a simple drone on a xylophone or a chordal one on a metallophone to a steady beat will suffice" (*Ibid.*, 152). His candid advice, rather than a prescribed curriculum or a sample lesson, empowers teachers to build a vocabulary that will aid them in gently guiding the classroom while still allowing the students to control the creative direction of the class. This framework, partially the product of Orff Certification Teacher Training Courses, is loose enough to allow space for an instructor to develop a personal style. Further, unlike many other guides, Goodkin shows a concern for Orff's primary material, pointing out that his book's use of solfège is a modern addition, for example (*Ibid.*, 135). His approach explicitly takes Orff as a starting point and adapts his work for contemporary pedagogy (*Ibid.*, 139).

Alongside Goodkin's work, Jane Frazee has published articles, exercise books, and teaching guides in the spirit of Orff since the 1980s. Her most extensive teaching guide is *Discovering Orff: A Curriculum for Music Teachers* (Frazee and Kreuter 1987). Part 1 of the book features histori-

cal and theoretical elements of the Schulwerk, with direct reference to the material in *Musik für Kinder*. One of its major strengths is a detailed explanation of what she considers to be the “four-stage learning process” involved with Orff pedagogy: “imitation, exploration, literacy and improvisation” (*Ibid.*, 26–32). It also features one of the most comprehensive breakdowns of the structure of the five volumes of *Musik für Kinder* seen in the English-language literature; in addition, a helpful chart clearly explains which types of melodies and accompaniment are the focus of each volume (*Ibid.*, 44).

Part 2 provides a sequential curriculum, organized by grade. Given Keetman’s above reservations regarding grade-based curricula, this portion of the teaching guide is somewhat less true to the original. In a review of the book, Patricia Shehan Campbell notes that

Fraze recognizes that teachers of music for children often seek a framework that addresses the questions of *which* music should be worked on, *when*, and by *what means*. To a person who has not had adequate training in and experience with Orff’s pedagogy, the Schulwerk might appear to be a maze of unassociated activities. To prevent teachers from having to proceed helter-skelter through this maze, the authors of *Discovering Orff* lay a course for developing both performance competencies and musical understanding. (Campbell 1990, 59)

This description greatly contrasts Fraze’s text with Goodkin’s, the latter of whom seems to warn against such approaches when he says that “without care, Orff’s active investigation of children’s musicality might congeal into an explainable method” (Goodkin [2002] 2004, vii). While both Fraze and Goodkin provide similar building blocks when it comes to understanding Orff pedagogy, the latter’s more personal take on how he has utilized the Schulwerk saves his guide from becoming a mandate. Depending on one’s perspective or, as Campbell suggests above, training, this difference can either be a boon or a drawback. Whereas Fraze provides a framework for those who have not had a great deal of training, she might be charged with Goodkin’s and Walter’s complaints of “method”; Goodkin’s guide, by contrast, requires the modern teacher to build a curriculum from scratch, albeit in a more organic way based on what they know their students are capable of and interested by.

Conclusion: From Institution Back to Idea(s)

The most significant direction I was given as a teacher in training was to be self-reflective about my work. Through my studies in musicology, I have also learned to reflect historically on the pedigrees of the pedagogies

I model. The profound transformations the Orff-Schulwerk has undergone over the last century were inevitable, of course: society and culture do not remain static. The first iteration of the Schulwerk at the Güntherschule existed at a time of unprecedented progressivism—one which invariably affected the arts. Orff described feeling it as poignantly “as if a spring storm were sweeping through the city of Munich . . . [taking] with it, helter-skelter, enthusiastic young poets, writers, painters and musicians” (Orff [1976] 1978, 7). The war that followed shattered this moment in German history. When the Schulwerk returned, and was promptly disseminated to North America and other parts of Europe, it was adapted to the needs of its new contexts.

The dissemination of print Schulwerk materials and its institutionalization have helped it become accessible; the advances we have made in technology in just the past fifteen years have made it easier than ever to stumble upon Schulwerk content. However, being caught behind paywalls while simply trying to assess the current state of the approach may leave a bitter taste in one’s mouth when juxtaposed with Orff’s assurance that “everyone can learn elemental music” (Orff 1963, 154). Yet, the way Orff’s legacy is currently positioned in America is understandably reflective of current national policies and values that govern the realm of education. The late co-founder and president of the AOSA, Arnold E. Burkart, perhaps put it best when he commented on the controversy surrounding “the relative importance of content and process in education” (Burkart 1977, 37). Improvisation, at its core, is a process that is not intended to be deeply controlled. When music educators must adhere to content-driven standards, allowing sufficient time and space to “lead the students to a spontaneous, personal, musical expression” can prove difficult (Orff 1963, 140). Isabel Carley, another co-founder of the AOSA, commented in 1977 that “unless we music teachers muster our courage to tell our administrators time after time how vital to mental health and how basic to a new educational synthesis music is, they will never change their ways or their convictions that the arts are expendable” (Carley 1977, 82). Since it is unlikely America will undergo an anti-standards movement in the near future, I offer this review as a means to invite reflection: on what the Schulwerk was, what it is now, and what it can become if we release it from the structures which have been forcibly imposed upon it.

Notes

1. I go into more detail on the American Orff-Schulwerk Association later. However, also worth mentioning are the Organization of American Kodály Educators (abbreviated as OAKE, founded in 1975) and the Dalcroze Society of America (abbreviated as DSA, founded in 1969). At the time this article was written (May 2019), membership in OAKE cost \$85; regular membership in the DSA cost \$60. This information can be found on their respective websites (OAKE: <https://www.oake.org/>; DSA: <https://dalcrozeusa.org/>).
2. Here, I am referencing my personal notes, taken while observing Sharon Tan's courses in 2012. Unfortunately, Tan passed away in February 2016, while I was abroad completing my master's at the University of Cambridge. I credit much of my interest in the Orff-Schulwerk to watching her teach.
3. The preoccupation with creating an ideal society that fueled the production of Gebrauchsmusik was not born along with the Weimar Republic; the roots of the amateur movements that flourished during the Weimar Republic existed long before World War I. See Kertz-Welzel (2004) for more on pre-existing amateur groups like the Jugendbewegung, or "youth movement," which aimed to use the arts as a means of rejuvenating society (19).
4. Though many identify Paul Hindemith (1895–1963) as the first to coin the term Gebrauchsmusik, Stephen Hinton has traced the original notion of "music for use" to a 1921 article by Bohemian musicologist Paul Nettl (Hinton 1989, 4). The term was first used in the context of the Weimar Republic by noted German musicologist Heinrich Bessler, who published an essay in 1925 entitled "Grundfragen des musikalischen Hörens," or "Fundamental Issues of Musical Listening" (Bessler [1925] 2011).
5. Adorno ([1931] 2002) believed that Gebrauchsmusik held the potential to become a tool for ideological manipulation based on his belief that it was not directly linked to consumption, or what the people desire. Likewise, Schoenberg ([1937] 1975) considered Gebrauchsmusik little more than a single fleeting trend among many others that existed during the Weimar Republic and caught on due to what he believed was a corrupted view of art during this time.
6. See Potter (1998). Potter states "by the 1920s, amateur orchestras, chamber music, and especially choral singing had become immensely popular pastimes, crossing all political and class barriers. At a time when Germany seemed ever more politicized and disjointed, communal music-making promised to promote solidarity. Participation, it was hoped, would not only instill community spirit and goodwill but would also restore music's power to unify, which had been lost in the bourgeois era" (4–5).
7. Although Orff's insistence upon a certain style in the education of the musical amateur was indeed a reaction to Western classical music, he did not hate the European canon, nor did he wish to "cut classical music out of the non-professional's world of experience" (Orff 1932/33, 161). Instead, he recognized a need to reconnect with the human's natural propensity to be creative. Music historian and educator Michael Kugler offers a further clarification of why the Orff-Schulwerk was so readily accepted abroad, arguing that elemental music "does not restrict itself to its culture of origin, but opens up an intercultural dimension" (Kugler 2013c, 15).
8. Disappointingly, Orff's autobiographical documentation of the Schulwerk makes only minor mention of his collaborators, though their impact on these first publications was immense (Orff [1976] 1978, 131). Orff relied on the school's accompanist, Hans Bergese (1910–2000), and Gunild Keetman, to help him develop more than a dozen of the first *Elementare Musikübung*; Keetman even wrote eight of these volumes on her own (Pruett

2003, 183). Orff also relied on Keetman, who started at the school as a student in 1926, for tasks such as testing out new instruments or trying out his ideas in practice (Keetman 1978, 44–54). Since she came to the school with a strong classical music background, her documentation of the musical aspects of the Schulwerk and reactions to Orff's improvisations are extremely valuable in understanding the elemental style (*Ibid.*, 50). Keetman returns later in the history of the Schulwerk as a major contributor to the development of Schulwerk exercises for children. By 1933, Orff had begun to focus less on the school and more on composing for the concert setting; Keetman effectively stepped into his role and directed many of the school's musical activities (Howe 2013, 248). The question of why Orff's and not Keetman's name is on the many publications of Schulwerk exercises from the 1930s naturally arises in contemporary scholarship; researchers note that she was a shy and humble person, though the unfortunate specter of sexism—especially in such an overtly reactionary time—looms clearly over her legacy (Pruett 2003, 193–194).

9. See Tuchowski (2016). Reusch was “a professor of music education, who ostentatiously condemned all intellectual speculation on art and advocated a turn to the music whose racial purity and relation with the mythical *Volksgemeinschaft* was unquestionable: Prussian military marches and German folk music” (235). He was a member of the Nazi party (216).

10. Perhaps as a result of the ambiguity of Günther's loyalty to the Nazi party, her contributions to the Schulwerk are rarely acknowledged today. For instance, the American Orff-Schulwerk Association focuses instead on Orff and Keetman; in a section on their website entitled “Carl Orff & Gunild Keetman,” Günther is only named as a collaborator, and there is no language tying her to the development of the movement aspects of the Schulwerk. While Keetman did teach some movement courses at the Güntherschule, it was Günther who trained her in movement. And unfortunately, it is clear from the percentage of time Keetman's pedagogy devotes to the musical versus the movement aspects of the Schulwerk that she did not have Günther's interest or deep understanding of the latter. Keetman herself took little credit for work on expanding her knowledge of elemental dance beyond what was taught, instead choosing to acknowledge the primacy of Maja Lex, a choreographer and Günther's protégé, in developing the movement aspects of the Schulwerk (Keetman 1978, 56).

11. Music Educators National Conference (MENC) was rebranded as the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) in 2011. See their website (<https://nafme.org/>) for more information.

12. Keetman defines “patschen” as “knee-slapping” (1970, 20). She describes it as “a flat-handed slap with rebound on the thigh near to the knee” that “requires a relaxed posture and can be executed when standing with feet slightly apart, or when sitting.”

13. A former classmate of mine from NYU who is an active elementary school music teacher in Brooklyn, New York confirmed to me that Murray's editions are the only pieces of canonical Orff repertoire she has used in her level I and II certification courses.

14. See International Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg (2012) for more information on how Orff associations gain international accreditation.

15. “Re: American Orff-Schulwerk Association Contact: How Many Members?” Email to the author. May 9, 2019.

16. I feel the need to bring up the comparison between the establishment of the Orff-Schulwerk as a methodology in the United States and the more recent rise in popularity and brand-name recognition of El Sistema (translated literally as “The System”). Recent critical research into El Sistema has come from musicologists Geoffrey Baker and Robert

Fink. The Schulwerk arguably went through the same American mythologization that El Sistema has gone through in the past decade (Fink 2016). Baker notes that there is not enough unbiased evaluation of the effectiveness of El Sistema; the same can be said for the American Schulwerk, especially given the monopoly the AOSA has on the approach (Baker, Bull, and Taylor 2018).

17. See also National Association for Music Education (2014) for standards aimed specifically at music teachers.

18. See AOSA (2018c). The AOSA has listed all of the articles published in *The Orff Echo* from 1968–2006 by subject.

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