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Orff Schulwerk

Creative music and movement education

What is Orff Schulwerk?

Orff Schulwerk is an approach to music education. It was developed by German composer and music educator Carl Orff (1895-1982) and colleague Gunild Keetman (1904-1990).

How does it work?

The Orff approach integrates *Speech, Singing, Movement* and *Instruments* to teach the elements of music.

Students are immersed naturally, as in language-learning, into *Hearing* and *Imitating*, then *Making Music*, and, later, *Reading* and *Writing* music.

Techniques include *Imitation* (simultaneous imitating), *Echo*, *Ostinato*, *Canon*, *Question & Answer*.

Instruments and scale

The Orff approach uses percussion instruments specifically chosen or designed for children. Both untuned and tuned percussion instruments are utilised.

Untuned percussion: *tambourines*, *tambours*, *claves* (rhythm/tapping sticks), *woodblocks*, *triangles*, *castanets*, *guiros*, *triangles* etc.

Tuned percussion: *xylophones*, *glockenspiels*, *metallophones* etc.

A distinguishing feature in Orff Schulwerk is the use of the *pentatonic* (5 note) scale and the utilisation of tuned instruments with detachable bars. As all notes in a pentatonic scale will harmonise, fear of making a mistake is removed and students feel more comfortable to experiment.

The pentatonic scale used in *We're Orff!* is the C pentatonic. It uses the notes C D E G A. Removing the F and B bars on the instrument will instantly create this scale.

Improvisation

Students explore and create from the very beginning. As they learn more skills and techniques they draw upon these to explore, create and contribute to the musical experience.

Inclusion

The Orff approach is inclusive and each student contributes according to ability. Orff Schulwerk begins with simple tasks and develops to more complex activities, but the contributions of all students at all levels is easily incorporated into the musical experience, giving value both to individual creativity and group work – without the restrictions of technical ability.

Orff associations

Australian state organisations can be found at http://www.ancos.org.au/flash_index.htm
International organisations can be found at <http://www.orff-schulwerk-forum-salzburg.org/>