

Orff Society Newsletter

Autumn 2020

Edited by Sarah Hennessy

Dear Members

We hope you are managing to cope with the continuing uncertainties and restrictions of these pandemic times. Musicians and music educators in all contexts have been hard hit but have also been amazingly inventive in finding ways to perform and teach online. Music has proved to be an essential ingredient to weathering the lockdown providing joy, fun, comfort, challenge; and through sharing, listening and learning many have found ways to reconnect with or learn musical skills.

Schools are back but Music especially is constrained by Covid 19 guidance on social distancing and minimising aerosol spread: singing and chanting/speaking (especially loudly), touching (handholding) and playing blown instruments are all discouraged - and yet all these form the basis of good practical music making with children (perhaps blowing instruments being easier to avoid). Teachers are learning to adapt for both face to face lessons as well as preparing for online learning when necessary.

For the Orff Approach online learning has special challenges, many of the things that make the Orff Approach so valuable are what are lost when people cannot be together in the same space and time.

The International Orff Schulwerk Forum Salzburg (IOSFS) held a conference (online of course) in July and one of the discussion themes was online teaching: challenges and successes. Many participants were enthusiastic about how one to one instrumental teaching benefited from being online - seeing children in their home setting, especially for the piano (quality of the instrument, conditions in which children were playing, their posture etc) and being able to involve parents. While interactive music making of the kind normally taught in groups is much more difficult, adaptations are being found. Many examples and models can be found on the IOSFS website <https://www.orff-schulwerk-forum-salzburg.org/online-ideas>

We are launching some online workshops this Autumn and plan to offer more next year. The 3 workshops planned for this term have been advertised to members and are free for you as we have been aware that you haven't been able to take advantage of the usual face to face workshops and courses. The first was on the 17th October with Elisa Seppanen and Soili Perkio, followed by Kate Buchanan, Steve Grocott and myself 28th October and Caroline McCluskey on the 7th November. We are hoping to learn a lot about how to make online workshops work!

If you want to join the November session please contact sarahennessy@orff.org.uk

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Free Online Resources

During lockdown many organisations launched programmes of musical activities for adults and children. Here are some of the best:

- Birmingham City Music Group offer excellent composing projects and ideas <http://resources.bcmg.org.uk/creating-music-at-home/doodling-varese> and <http://resources.bcmg.org.uk/creating-music-at-home-instrumentalists/clouds>
- Rob Amchin is a prolific contributor to Youtube with recordings of workshops with students and teachers. He also offers simple ideas for working with songs and rhythmic material at home www.rob.amchin
- Voces 8 the professional vocal group, offered regular activities online for adults - supporting singing and other musical skills. And they have projects for schools too. Well worth a look <https://voces8.foundation/resources>
- The BBC created some new teaching resources and also gathered together existing programmes to support teachers during the initial lockdown. Rather hit and miss in terms of quality and usefulness, but worth a look especially if you are supporting generalists or working with primary student teachers <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/bring-the-noise>
- BBC Ten Pieces Project is now well established and can provide some valuable stimulus for specialists and generalists. Andrew Maud comments below.
- <https://www.minuteoflistening.org/> a wonderful resource for engaging children in focused listening (currently free)
- <https://www.teachingwithorff.com> a wide variety of ideas and activities e.g Body Percussion Lesson by Ollie Tunmer
- Music and the Deaf are currently developing free online resources <https://www.matd.org.uk/>
- I'm sure you have found useful (and not so useful!) resources online. Please share the good stuff through our Facebook page or by email to: sarahennessy@orff.org.uk

Some Comments from Members on Current Experiences

Andrew Maud - Planning for Online Teaching

I set weekly tasks for all year groups in our school. Chrome Music Lab was a favourite and offers a fairly unstructured but creative exploration of sound. Sing Up, Out of the Ark and NYCOS offered excellent free resources for singing at home with some very engaging presenters (e.g. Sing Up's Beccy Owen). There were also some wonderful individual music teachers presenting well thought out lessons from their kitchen tables. Listening and responding to music tasks using BBC 10 pieces (e.g. The Firebird) produced thoughtful responses from the children. I know that many parents were infinitely grateful for the way that music-related tasks managed to break up the ceaseless grind of home schooling!

Andrew is the specialist music teacher at a large West London primary school and a clarinetist.



Jacinda Vincent - New Instruments!

September brought a return to school ... and conkers! My students and I are finding the joy in collective music-making after our period of isolation (which has also included conkers this time, as many instruments have to go through a quarantine period before another class can use them.)

There are many challenges to distancing students, whether in class bubbles or larger groups, but teachers are again finding creative solutions in their teaching and learning. My students and I are focussing on the positive aspects of what we can do, achieve and celebrate in person and online during this strange year.



Jacinda Vincent has over 20 years music teaching experience and had taught in Australia, Japan and the UK. She has been working with the Orff Schulwerk approach for just as long. She currently works at Southbank International School in London.

David Wheway - Creative Use of Online Resources

My teaching involves face to face and online sessions. The maximum f2f group size is normally around 12 or 13 students (less than half a normal group size). During these sessions we're still managing group composition and presentation (graphic score writing, rhythm grid work, tuned percussion work, story trails and journeys, improvising), although everything we touch has to be cleaned before and after use (including paper and pens). I ask groups to assign a scribe for recording compositions (e.g. graphic scores). On the whole, everyone appears slightly more lively and 'up for it' than usual - perhaps a relief after 6 months of lock-down. I save active listening to recorded music, music technology, singing and vocal care, and lectures for on-line sessions

During lock-down I put up some very simple composing videos for children on YouTube (another technology learning curve for me), which I intended children to be able to follow without adult support or guidance. I now find these are useful as suggested starters for lessons for my students who on placement could show one of these one to three-minute videos and immediately start composing with their class. If interested these videos can be found by simply typing my name on YouTube – a benefit of an unusual name!

So - I feel we're getting along fine, and students are enthusiastic and keen in the sessions. No doubt, each student will face a range of situations and challenges once in schools. I do hope they receive the support and encouragement of their respective schools. For children, 'catch-up' needs to be about social, creative, emotional and building self-esteem ... but I'm not sure that is what the Government means.

David Wheway teaches on Primary teacher training programmes at Canterbury Christ Church University and is Treasurer for the Orff Society UK.

Orff UK International Summer School

We have decided not to run the Summer School next year due to ongoing uncertainties especially regarding booking a venue.

While we struggle with the online medium for many aspects of teaching there are definitely advantages for meetings and staying in touch, and we are keen to take advantage of the online world to offer more ways for you to interact with each other and share practice. We will plan for this and hope that you will join us. Look out for invitations to contribute but don't hold back if you have ideas and topics!

IOSFS

The International Orff Schulwerk Forum Salzburg held a mini online convention on the 11th October to build on the success of the July event (mentioned on front page). The presentations from both are uploaded to their website <https://www.orff-schulwerk-forum-salzburg.org>. You will find some informative material on the history of the approach: talks and video footage, as well as summaries of discussions on a variety of topics amongst members from all over the world. It is hoped to make these short online meetings a regular feature. We will circulate dates and information.

News of Other Orff Related Events and Courses

November 13th and 14th 2020

AOSA Convention (online) - non-members welcome.

<https://member.aosa.org/member/professional-development/symposium-2020>

Summer 2021

Finland International Music Village

<http://jasesoi.com/koulutus/international-music-village/?lang=en>

Other News

We are corporate members of the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) who, alongside a range of advice, support and campaigning on behalf of the Musicians and Music Educators, are very active in lobbying for the livelihoods of professional musicians in the UK during the pandemic. Their website has a wealth of information, advice and news. www.ism.org

You might also find useful information at the Arts Council England website

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/faster-recovery-arts-and-culture>

Not much to report on developments in music education more generally given the situation but some of you might have seen this report on the state of the Arts in primary schools conducted a couple of years ago. It is still very relevant.

<https://fabians.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/FS-Primary-Colours-Report-WEB-FINAL.pdf>

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