

# “It all begins with the beat of a drum”: Early Australian encounters with Orff Schulwerk

Jane Southcott, Wei Cosaitis

*Monash University*

## Abstract

The introduction of the influential Orff Schulwerk approach to music education in Australia is generally reported as occurring in the late 1960s. However, this was not the earliest encounters with the pedagogy in Australia. Patricia L. Holmes included Orff materials in teacher inservices in the late 1950s, before she travelled overseas to work with Doreen Hall, Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman. Historical research is lacking in many aspects of music education in Australia and this article attempts to chronicle early efforts and add to our understanding of what has been done in the past and shapes our present practices.

**Key words:** Orff Schulwerk; Australian music education; Patricia L. Holmes; history of music education.

*Australian Journal of Music Education* 2012:2,20-32

## Introduction

Orff Schulwerk is an internationally recognized creative music pedagogy developed by German composer Carl Orff and his colleague Gunild Keetman (Orff, 1978; Frazee, 1987; Goodkin, 2001). Since its re-emergence in the 1950s the Orff approach has made a significant impact on music education worldwide (Taylor, 2000; International Herald Tribune, 1982). Having spread to many countries around the world, the approach has also been developed and adapted by Australian music educators for our varying educational programs and cultural contexts. Just how the Orff approach first reached Australia remains contested, but the influence of the approach is undeniable. In *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music* Stevens (1997) carefully states that, “it was not until the 1960s that classroom instrumental music and creative

music-making became firmly established with the Orff-Schulwerk approach. Keith Smith introduced Orff-Schulwerk to Queensland schools, from where it spread to other states. John Morriss also promoted the method, initially in Victoria and later in Tasmania. There were Orff-Schulwerk associations in most states” (Stevens, 1997, p. 399). Hogg (2003) is more specific and offers helpful details concerning Smith’s early experience in Orff Schulwerk asserting that he was “the first Orff Schulwerk teacher in Australia” (p. 485). No dates for the specific introductions in Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania are given and no other states are mentioned. It is frequently stated that Keith H. Smith, a tertiary music education lecturer in Australia and internationally, founded the first state Orff Association in Australia in Queensland in the late 1960s. Smith was “one of the first

Australians to study in Salzburg and introduced the Orff process to many Australians through his workshops and Summer Schools in Armidale" (Gerozisis, 2002, p. 22). He was also the first President of the national body, Australian National Council of Orff Schulwerk Associations (ANCOSA), established in 1976 (Australian National Council of Orff Schulwerk, 2005). Smith was a most engaging teacher who inspired others to become immersed in the method, such as Lorna Parker and Diana Humphries. During January 1971, Parker and Humphries attended a two-week Summer School in Orff Schulwerk, run by Smith in Armidale (Gerozisis, 2002). Following the model of Queensland, other states founded their own Orff Schulwerk Associations, for example, New South Wales in 1972 and Victoria in 1977. Since 1991 ANCOSA has included all states (Maubach, 2006). The contributions of Smith and other acknowledged Australian pioneers of Orff Schulwerk are not in question (Haselbach, 2006). This article intends to add to our understanding of our music education history by acknowledging the work of another Australian music educator, Patricia L. Holmes, in bringing Orff Schulwerk to Australia in the early 1960s. First there will be a brief overview of the Orff approach.

### **The Orff approach**

Orff's ideas about teaching music to children arose from his personal belief that any child has the capability of learning, transforming, reasoning and expressing creatively. His curiosity about the application of his ideas concerning music education for children dated back to 1932, but it was not until sixteen years later that he commenced his book entitled *Orff-Schulwerk* which was eventually translated and later modified into English under the title *Music for Children* (Victorian Orff Schulwerk Association, 2010; Goodkin, 2001; Landis & Carder, 1972). Orff believed that music education for young children should start as early as possible and that such education should not be delivered through mere

singing or instrument playing but through the involvement of the whole body (Frank, 1964). The Orff pedagogical strategies enable children to learn music through constantly integrated mental, physical and sensory engagement through the experiences of moving, singing, chanting and playing instruments (Davies-Splitter & Splitter, 2006; Maubach, 2006; Pritikin, 2010).

The Orff approach employs elemental and improvisatory techniques such as imitation, echo, ostinato and canon to create sound and experiential teaching episodes and programs which can be developed to considerable depth and complexity. The approach also uses the instruments of the 'Orff instrumentarium' which includes xylophones, metallophones, glockenspiels, and a range of untuned percussion (Hall, 1960; Holmes, 1966; Taylor, 2000). Orff, in collaboration with musical instrument builders, designed and developed these easily manipulable percussion instruments (Orff, 1978). Orff also included recorders in his instrumentarium from the outset. The pianoforte was not recommended as it was contrary to Orff's child-centred educational principles because the teacher plays the piano rather than the students (Landis & Carder, 1972; Holmes, 1966).

In the 1960s, it was recognised that, compared to most of the traditionally conservative music teaching styles, the Orff approach allowed more space for individual development (Silsbury, 1968). Holmes (1966) asserted that the dominant characteristic of the Orff approach is the learner's freedom to choose and create within the domain of pulse, metre, phrase, structure or musical form. The learner's music vocabulary is built through explorations of different instruments, sounds, and the way the sounds are produced. This freedom extended to the teacher who was expected to create an individual curriculum when adapting and implementing Orff's pedagogical ideas (Goodkin, 2001). The teacher's imagination determines the success of music learning and engagement through

Orff Schulwerk (Frank, 1964; Bacon, 1969). The curriculum must be “cumulative, sequential, integrated and progressive...moving from simple to the complex, from the part to the whole” (Stavely, 1999, p. 14). Goodkin (2001) explains that what separates the Orff approach from other music teaching disciplines is, “the experience of improvisation at the heart of the matter” (p. 19). Developing children’s abilities of improvisation and composition using musical elements such as rhythm, melody, harmony, texture and so forth are core principles in an Orff approach (Davies-Splitter & Splitter, 2006; Liess, 1966).

### **Bringing Orff Schulwerk to Australia**

Patricia Langley Holmes (1925-1998) was a dedicated and effective music educator. In 1949 she was appointed as one of four demonstration

*Figure 1: Early Advertisement in an Australian journal for Orff instruments, Australian Journal of Music Education (1968), 2, p. 2.*



primary music teachers in the South Australian Education Department to work under the supervision of Alva I. Penrose, the Supervisor of Music for the Education Department, South Australia. As a demonstration teacher Holmes was expected to visit a number of primary schools and demonstrate good teaching of music to classroom teachers (Southcott, 2004). In 1954 she was seconded as a part-time lecturer at the Adelaide Teachers College. Whilst holding this position she presented a paper at the important United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Seminar on Music Education held in Melbourne, Victoria in 1956 and that same year she commenced lecturing at the University of Adelaide. Holmes attended the conference in place of Penrose who had suddenly been taken ill. At the Melbourne conference Holmes would have met music education luminaries from across Australia, including Frank Callaway from Western Australia and John Bishop from South Australia who was already known to Holmes. There was no mention of the Orff Schulwerk approach in Melbourne in 1956 (Werden, 1957; Southcott, 2009).

Prior to the Melbourne seminar, UNESCO had held an International Conference on the role of music in the education of youth and adults in Brussels, 29 June to 9 July 1953. This was the first international seminar on music education and thirty-nine countries from around the world were represented. On the last day of the meeting in Brussels, provisional statutes were adopted for an International Society for Music Education (ISME) (Lawler, 1955). The new association planned meetings that coincided with other scheduled music education events in Europe such as the Institute for New Music in Lindau where seven hundred music educators from across Germany met to hear contemporary music performed by school and other amateur groups. Orff was present at this meeting, not only as a composer, but also as a music educator whose Orff Schulwerk was recognised as “one of the widely

used methods of music education in Germany" (Lawler, 1955, p. 22). These reports were amongst the earliest references to Orff's approach in the international Music Educators Journal. The writer was Vanett Lawler (1903-1972) who was herself one of the founders of ISME. She served as secretary-general from 1953 to 1955 and as treasurer from 1955 to 1970 (Obituary, 1972). Holmes would have read these reports and been intrigued. Later she was to meet Lawler on several occasions.

In 1953 Australia was represented at the Brussels conference by Sir Bernard Heinze. At this conference, papers were presented by Arnold Walter, Director of the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto and Eberhard Preussner, the Director of the Salzburg Mozarteum. A photograph accompanied the report and showed Carl Orff, "one of Germany's well-known exponents in the development of rhythmic teaching techniques, is shown in his lecture-demonstration" (Lawler, 1953, p. 26). There was a further opportunity for international music school directors to become familiar with the Orff Schulwerk approach in 1953. At the Mozarteum Academy, "demonstration lessons given by Keetman with children of different ages were seen by Dr. Arnold Walter" (Orff, 1978, p. 239). In 1954-1955 Walter sent one of his students, Doreen Hall to study with Orff and Keetman in Salzburg. On her return home, Hall joined the University of Toronto and, in 1957, offered university-based summer courses in Orff Schulwerk in Canada (Hale, 2011). Hall and Walter published the first English language version of the approach. Also at this time there was interest in Schulwerk in Salzburg amongst the students at the Mozarteum so, from 1953, Preussner arranged courses for them that could also be taken by other interested music educators (Orff, 1978).

The international networks formed by ISME and UNESCO may have been the conduit through which Holmes became acquainted with Orff Schulwerk. In 1955, at the First General

Assembly, the elected office bearers included vice-presidents Walter from Toronto, Canada and Preussner from Salzburg, Austria. The Members-at-large included John Bishop, Elder Professor of Music at the Conservatorium, University of Adelaide. Holmes was well acquainted with Bishop. It is very likely that Bishop would have passed information and contacts to Holmes.

Concluding in an enthusiastic mood the final recommendations of the Brussels conference included "To organize a seminar or pilot project on music education in a Member State of Unesco [sic]" (Walter, 1953, p. 8). The newly formed Australian National Advisory Committee for UNESCO considered itself fortunate that Heinze, their Chairman, had attended the Brussels conference. On his return to Australia, Heinze proposed that a seminar on the Role of Music in Education should be held. The working party for this event comprised John Bishop, Dorothy Helmrich and Margaret Sutherland (Weeden, 1957). Attending this seminar were at least 250 "distinguished educators and musicians from all parts of Australia and also from the Dominion of New Zealand" and two overseas visitors were present, both of whom had attended the earlier conference in Brussels – Bernard Shore and Jack Bornoff (Weeden, 1957). Shore was, at that time, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Music in Schools and his attendance was supported by the British Council. Bornoff was the Executive Secretary of the International Music Council (UNESCO) based in Paris and it was UNESCO that supported his trip to Australia. At this conference Holmes made useful contacts, including the international guests Bernard Shore and Jack Bornoff. When Shore visited South Australia, Holmes escorted him when he visited schools (Holmes, 1960).

It is not clear exactly how, but within the next three years, Holmes had become aware of Orff Schulwerk. By 1959 she "had acquired the Orff records and handbooks and made contact with Doreen Hall in Canada" and she organised a statewide conference at which "two

infant teachers from each state school brought to Adelaide Teachers College for a one week inservice – Orff and Dalcroze”. Holmes recalled that, “Penrose died in 1959. The day he died he actually gave a demonstration lesson and I had an argument with him in the afternoon. I apologised but he started laying down the law about what I should be doing in lectures ... and I said things had to go new ways, and I think I was talking Orff because I had discovered the Orff recording and the Doreen Hall book” (Interview with Holmes, 3 July 1991). The first records of the *Schulwerk Musik für Kinder*, a two record set that corresponds to the first two published German volumes were made in 1956 and 1957 by Columbia/Electrola (Francis, 2011). Holmes recalled repeatedly playing the records and transcribing the music (Interview with Holmes, 3 July 1991). This must have been before she gained access to the published materials. Presumably the ‘Doreen Hall book’ was Hall’s *Orff-Schulwerk Music for Children Teacher’s Manual* (1960).

Holmes was tireless in her pursuit of effective and innovative approaches to school music education. In 1960 she prepared her application for a Carnegie Scholarship. In this document Holmes stated that the UNESCO Seminar on Music in Education had revealed little or no research in this field in Australia. She hoped to research different music education approaches internationally and proposed an itinerary that included the United States of America and Canada, the United Kingdom, and attendance at the International Society of Music Educators Seminar in Vienna (25 June – 2 July, 1961). Holmes listed Jack Bornhoff, Secretary of the UNESCO Music Committee as one of her contacts. Whilst in Europe, Holmes hoped to visit selected schools in Germany “to observe music education, particularly instrumental tuition (Carl Orff method)” (Holmes, 1960). Holmes was successful in gaining the scholarship and, by the time she set off on her overseas trip, had added the University of Toronto to work with Doreen Hall and the Orff Institute where she did a course with

*Figure 2: Members of the delegation from the United States with participants from various parts of the British Commonwealth. Left to right: Theodore Normann, Seattle, Washington; John Horton, Inspector of Music, Ministry of Education, London; Hazel Morgan, Evanston, Illinois; Wiley Housewright, Tallahassee, Florida; Ernest T. Ferand, New York City; Karl D. Ernst, Hayward, California; Vanett Lawler, Washington, D.C.; Gerald Abraham, President, ISME, Liverpool; Evan Davis, Vancouver, British Columbia; Frank Callaway, Perth, Australia; Edmund Cykler, Eugene, Oregon; Patricia Holmes, Adelaide, Australia (Housewright, 1961, p. 46).*



Keetman and Orff" (Interview with P. L. Holmes, 27 September 1990). In 1961 Holmes was also amongst the four hundred participants from thirty-six countries who attended the Fourth International Conference in Vienna on the 'Role and Place of Music in the Education of Youth and Adults'. There were a number of photographs of this event accompanying a report in the *Music Educators Journal* and Holmes was in one with Frank Callaway and other participants from various parts of the British Commonwealth (Housewright, 1961).

On her return to Australia, Holmes continued to spread the word about Orff Schulwerk. In 1965 Holmes and Callaway were amongst the attendees at the Australian UNESCO Seminar on School Music held in Sydney. At the seminar Patricia Quin, a teacher at the North Sydney Girls' High School, presented a seminar and demonstration of Orff Schulwerk. Holmes gave a report on primary teacher education in which she mentioned small group practical lessons and Orff tuned percussion instruments (Australian National Advisory Committee for UNESCO 1965). That same year, as part of a display of creative arts work at the Western Teachers' College, the pupils from Lockleys Demonstration School "took part in a Carl Orff demonstration and children's opera 'The Midnight Thief'. Based on a Mexican tale, only the melodies for the 5 songs are written down, but the accompaniments to these, for the repetitive spoken chorus and the 'liet motif' for each of the characters in the story, were created by the children" (Holmes, 1966). The *Midnight Thief* had words by Ian Serrailier and music by Richard Rodney Bennett and was specially commissioned for the British Broadcasting Commission's *Making Music* series for children between the ages of 8 and 10. The work was produced for television by John Hosier and presented during Summer Term, 1963 in England (Serrailier & Bennett, 1963).

It was always intended that the children would provide their own accompaniment. Holmes described the experience:

It was interesting to work with two different casts – one of Grade VII mixed classes, and one of Grades V and VI children. The two end products were completely different as were the interpretations of the actors. All this creation happened quite spontaneously, entirely shaped by aural judgements, and notated by children and staff so that it could be repeated when memory failed – but the repetition was not important – only the appropriateness of the music. Setting stories and poems to movement and percussion is an exciting exercise and children achieve surprising clarity and certainty. (Holmes, 1966, p. 7)

In 1966 Holmes published a description of the Orff approach in a supplement to the *South Australian Education Gazette*. Holmes, by then a Senior Lecturer in Music at Western Teachers College and Lecturer in School Music at the University of Adelaide, was somewhat belatedly reporting on her twelve months overseas Carnegie Scholarship studies. Her report focused primarily on instrumental music in schools and mentioned that she had

attended a Summer Course at the Salzburg Mozarteum in 'Schulwerk' on Music for Children directed by Carl Orff. In North America and Canada, where Carl Orff's methods are being widely used – she saw work in the Scarborough County Schools and at the Toronto Conservatory Children's Classes directed by Doreen Hall. (Holmes, 1966, p. 6)

Holmes began with an exposition of the Orff approach:

It all begins with the beat of a drum – and who could deny the joy and enthusiasm with which most children (and many adults too) perform this operation? Motivation is present immediately, for the child is encouraged to express his own word sequence, physical idea or emotional stimulation. This new approach to school music (which one observes in many parts of Europe, Canada, the United States, New Zealand and Australia) may be attributed to German composer, writer and teacher Carl Orff and his assistant Gunild Keetman. (Holmes,



1966, p. 6)

Holmes explained that Orff believed that the natural progression was

speech, rhythm and movement which are applied to melody through the use of voice and percussion instruments. The creation of ensemble music leads naturally to the development of music appreciation and rhythmic independence ... the child's freedom of choice and creativity within the limitations of pulse, metre, phrase structure or musical form should remain the dominant feature. The child builds his own vocabulary by exploring

the instruments – how they sound, how they may be played to produce different effects, discovers their limitations, and learns how they may be combined, (Holmes, 1966, p. 6)

This was very different from the teacher-directed percussion band ensembles that were the norm in Australian elementary schools at that time (Southcott, 1992, 1993).

In some ways the classroom percussion band method had paved the way for the introduction of the Orff approach in Australia (Southcott, 1993). In Melbourne at the UNESCO Seminar in 1957 Keith Newson, a lecturer in music from the

Figure 3: Excerpt from *The Midnight Thief* (Serraillier & Bennett, 1963, pp. 10-11).

## AUGUSTO'S SONG

In march time

1. Au - gus - to, proud - est in the land,  
2. am - ble past. Re - spect - ing pride The

Loathes to walk in dust and sand. He al - ways rides, the road's tip - top, He  
grey - green cac - tus leaps a - side, And Po - po - ca - te - pe - ti shoots Cas -

hears Pan - chi - to's heels clip - clop. *Clip - clop, clip - clop, clip - clop.* 2. They  
cades of fire, his grand sa - lutes. *Clip - clop, clip - clop, clip - clop, clip - clop.* 2. They

Fine  
last time

3. The hornbill curtsies – jailed within,  
He can't see her, she can't see him;  
The toucan in her red - white blouse  
Pays homage from her nest and bows.  
*Clip - clop, etc.*

Teachers' College, Christchurch New Zealand, spoke about musical development through the use of percussion instruments. He noted that percussion instruments had been used in schools since the nineteenth century but had become particularly popular since the First World War. The percussion band provided an active way for children to play music, develop a sense of pulse and rhythm, work together in a musical ensemble, and develop music notation reading ability (Newson, 1957, p. 40).

The introduction of the Orff instruments into primary school music teaching resolved the lack of pitched instruments although some teachers merely used the new instruments in the older, teacher directed manner (Southcott, 1993). The class percussion bands performed notated arrangements, often of folk tunes and simplified orchestral works. Holmes was quick to point out that Orff's use of percussion should not "conjure up the idea of children 'bashing their way through Beethoven' or providing a so called 'accompaniment' to the classics" (Holmes, 1966, p. 6). She explained that the Orff instruments were not orchestral instruments nor were they toys.

Some were pitched, some were not, but all were within the scope of all children to play always with the "invariable criterion is that the sounds must be musical!" (Holmes, 1966, p. 6).

Holmes mentioned the elemental components of the Orff approach and that the child should become aware of the expressive qualities of the music they created. She stated that "Children are encouraged not only to become familiar with each instrument, but to be aware of the effect on the listener which it may produce by being manipulated in a certain manner, e.g., how to rouse, placate, cajole, by means of a drum" (Holmes, 1966, p. 7). Holmes was clearly trying to convince teachers of the efficacy of this more child-centred and creative approach, in which the process was more important than the product. She explained that:

The result is not necessarily your kind of music or mine, but music for children, which flows from the feelings and hands of the participating group. The inventive power and imagination of young people, guided but not directed is inexhaustible when nurtured in a permissive environment. This change in basic principle from 'teaching' to making

*Figure 4: An example of a percussion band in a South Australian school prior to the introduction of the Orff approach (Prince Alfred College Chronicle, January, 1939, no. 183, opp. p. 359).*





music is most important but hard for some to grasp. Teachers generally have studied music individually and do not accept that music education to a group requires a completely different approach, for the immediate application of a fact or symbol presented intellectually is not possible, nor the same evaluation or re-inforcement. The value of Orff's contribution is that for half the price of a piano, the classroom can be equipped with sufficient instruments for the children working in pairs actually to make music, match sounds and create a musical ensemble. Again, many teachers seem concerned by the apparent lack of discipline, the level of noise, and the aimlessness of this experimentation, but the progression and focus of attention need to be thoroughly understood if the activity is to achieve the desired end: feeling for – and appreciation of – music, gained through participation. (Holmes, 1966, p. 7)

Holmes described the new instruments that could be used in music classrooms:

In addition to adjustable tambours, wood blocks, gongs, cymbals, rattles, triangles, there is a range of instruments similar to the xylophones and chimes found in many folk orchestras. Equipped with removable metal bars for convenience, the glockenspiels and metallophones have a clear ringing tone.

*Figure 5: Photograph of children playing a Sonor brand chromatic alto xylophone (Holmes, 1966, p. 6).*



Each instrument has a range of approximately two octaves and covers a soprano or alto range commencing with middle C (alto). For the diatonic instruments the notes F# and Bb are included as additional bars, while the chromatic xylophones differ only in that the hardwood bars produce a dull, hollow tone. To the soprano and alto xylophone, a bass (an octave below middle C) has been added. The complete range of instruments is not at all necessary, but it is an advantage to select some at soprano and some at alto pitch to give a wider tonal spectrum. The tone blends very well with the larger stringed instruments, harpsichord, cello, lute or guitar. (Holmes, 1966, p. 7)

To illustrate this a photograph of children using a German built Sonor brand chromatic alto xylophone at a demonstration presumably held at Western Teachers' College in Adelaide. Sonor was the first instrument manufacturer to produce the new Orff instruments.

Holmes (1966) then continued to explain the importance of rhythm in the Orff approach. It should be remembered that, as one of the first to write about this approach for Australian teachers, Holmes felt it necessary to explain what we might now take for common knowledge. Her explanations also demonstrated what she had learnt while studying with Hall, Orff and Keetman. Holmes carefully explained that rhythm should be the predominant feature and that rhythmic perception should be developed through speech, rhythm and movement. To begin:

short speech patterns [are] repeated frequently – contrasted, extended, accelerated – [to] create a tapestry or rhythmic patterns while each thread maintains its own independence within the overall structure. These rhythmic patterns or Ostinati may become note patterns – or melodic motifs with a range of 2, 3, 4 or 5 notes. The pentatonic or 5 note scale which is common in folk tunes, provides a useful series of notes for much of the early music making. Consisting of 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 (or doh, ray, me, soh, lah) of any scale, together with the octave of any of these notes, it has an advantage,

that when any of these notes are combined, an harmonious effect is obtained. Contrary to misconception, Orff's Schulwerk progresses from pentatonic to the seven note major and minor scales. (Holmes, 1966, p. 7)

Holmes was well aware that the teachers she was trying to convince were experienced in a more directed manner of teaching and, as part of this, valued the teaching of music literacy. She explained that, "the bridge between free improvisation and music reading or writing patterns comes when the children want to notate their patterns and reproduce these accurately. To the children's patterns, the teacher may add singing, recorder or additional melodic improvisations" (Holmes, 1966, p. 7). Holmes' audience was also familiar with a school music curriculum that was based on practical engagement with singing, sol-fa, music notation, and some listening. The contemporary South Australian Method in the Teaching of Music in Schools (Penrose, 1957) aimed to "foster real musical perception in the child... but it must come out of music making, and the technical side of the study should never be divorced from the aesthetic. Music making

*Figure 6: "Children of Norwood Demonstration School, Adelaide, South Australia, play Orff instruments (under the direction of Miss Patricia Holmes of Western Teachers' College, S.A.)" (Australian Journal of Music Education, 3, p. 42).*



involves reading music scores" (Penrose, p. 7). The hope was that, on leaving the primary school a child "should be able to read a score well enough to sing simple melodies fairly accurately" (Penrose, p. 7). Such aims for school music programs were effectively universal in the 1950s and early 1960s.

Given the understandings held by primary music teachers, Holmes included arguments and explanations that would resonate with expectations about class singing. Holmes explained that, when employing the Orff approach the "Ability to sing in tune by matching tones follows naturally when speech improvisations are transferred to pitch producing instruments – at first using a limited range of notes, then extending this" (Holmes, 1966, p. 7). Holmes then extended this to include the use of instruments. She explained that:

Tonal independence is increased, too, when children are encouraged to sing one part and improvise a counter-point on the xylophone or glockenspiel against this. At first one group of singers is contrasted against a group of players, but ultimately one finds that individual children are able to sing one pattern while playing another. These counter tunes similarly may consist of two notes played simultaneously or a moving pattern within a limited compass known as a Bordun, e.g., one part may sing C D E G while another plays C<sup>1</sup> A A G E. (Holmes, 1966, p. 7)

Once individual rhythmic and tonal independence had been attained, children were able to sing and play canons and rounds, improvise using ostinati and move, for example, move by saying one pattern while stepping and/or clapping another. Holmes concluded with an encouraging and all encompassing statement that all this was within the scope of all children and through "constant experimentation and improvisation [that] aim at the liberation of all the faculties and powers of the individual, at his [or her] own rate, and the discovery by each pupil of the joy of ... music" (Holmes, 1966).

This lengthy description of the Orff approach

served as both advocacy and introduction. Holmes continued to do this. In 1968, as Chair of the South Australian Chapter of the Australian Society for Music Education, Holmes arranged a program on 'New Approaches to Music in the Primary School, including Carl Orff method' for the September meeting. The program included practical demonstrations from teachers and children (Britton, 1969). A photograph of children playing Orff instruments under the direction of Holmes was used to illustrate an article by Elizabeth Silsbury entitled 'Learning to teach Orff' in the Australian Journal of Music Education in 1968.

Silsbury, at that time a Lecturer in Music at Bedford Park Teachers' College, was reporting on part of her Churchill Fellowship. She had attended a Summer School on Orff methods in music education organised by the Faculty of Music, Toronto University. Her detailed description of the event began with an assertion that this was the "first time the complete series of training courses in Carl Orff Schulwerk – Music for Children, was offered by the Royal Conservatory of Music of

*Figure 7: "June Epstein with some school musicians in Melbourne" published at the beginning of "Singing and Listening for Grades V and VI" (Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1967, p. 3).*



Toronto during its Summer School" (Silsbury, 1968, p. 40). Silsbury was part of an international group and at the conference. The program was supervised by Doreen Hall, the Director of Orff Studies at the Royal Conservatory. Silsbury offered a careful description of all that she had experienced and argued for the "necessity for detailed supplementary and refresher courses, and demand [for] the opportunity to attend them" (p.40). Silsbury (1968) praised Hall's "musicianship, enthusiasm and skill in teaching and performance" (p. 40) and directed her Australian readers to Hall's published materials. Other Australian music educators were beginning to use the Orff approach. For example, with no written explanation, the Australian Broadcasting Commission's school booklet for the program 'Singing and Listening for Grades V and VI shows June Epstein with a group of children, several of whom are playing tuned and untuned Orff percussion instruments. Epstein, an experienced early childhood music educator, composer and broadcaster, created such programs as Singing and Listening (1967-1975) (Southcott, 1997). These studies and applications of the Orff approach by Australians seems to be in advance of the assertions that it was not until the early 1970s that weekend courses for teachers and workshops for parents began to introduce the Schulwerk to Australian schools (Gerozisis, 2002).

## Conclusion

Many Australians have followed the example of Holmes knowingly or unknowingly and have made the journey to attend international Orff Schulwerk courses in Canada, Salzburg and elsewhere (Haselbach, 2006). Many, like Holmes, have worked tirelessly and enthusiastically to introduce and develop the approach in Australian schools. Holmes continued to pursue new ideas in music education, for example she attended four UNESCO and ISME conferences in the 1960s. This determined and dedicated engagement was a feature of her work as a music

educator. She retired in 1985 as Senior Lecturer and coordinator of the Bachelor of Education (Music) program at the South Australian College of Advanced Education. The Orff approach has become pervasive in Australian primary school music. The once revolutionary instruments became almost a given and it is hoped that child-centred, improvisatory active music engagement by children has become equally pervasive. Richards (1995) asserted that the Orff pedagogical philosophy was strongly reflected in late twentieth century secondary music curricula in Australia, especially in the areas of developing students' creativity and aesthetic sensitivity. An Orff approach can be recognised in the Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2011) when it is suggested that in years Foundation to 2 children will "explore and experiment with voice, instruments and sound to create their own music. They will sing, play instruments and found sound sources, and move to a range of music. They will develop a repertoire of chants, songs, rhythms, rhymes and melodies" (p. 14). In years 3 and 4 children will build on this knowledge "as they use and select elements of music to structure simple musical compositions" and in years 5 and 6 students will "arrange, compose improvise and perform music" (ACARA, 2011, p. 14). These aims resonate with the descriptions of the Orff approach articulated by Holmes forty-five years earlier. Her pioneering work in introducing the Schulwerk to Australia should be recognised, along with the others in different states who followed different paths to similar outcomes. The past and present contribution of the advocates and practitioners of the Orff approach to the development of Australian school music is undeniable and worthy of note.

## References

- Australian Broadcasting Commission (1967). ABC Schools Broadcasts Music. Melbourne: ABC.
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) (2011). Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts. Sydney: ACARA.
- Australian National Advisory Committee for UNESCO (1965). Australian UNESCO Seminar on School Music, Sydney Teachers' College and University of Sydney.
- Australian National Council of Orff Schulwerk (2005). What is Orff Schulwerk? <http://www.ancos.org.au/main/index2.php> (retrieved 24 May 2010).
- Bacon, D. (1969). Kodály and Orff/ Report from Europe. *Music Educators Journal*, 55(8), 53-56.
- Britton, P. (1969). South Australian report. *Australian Journal of Music Education*, 4, 95.
- Davies-Splitter, S. & Splitter, P. (2006). Get Orff on Singing. <http://www.vosa.org/includes/attach> (retrieved 6 January 2010).
- Francis, M. A. (2011). The Volumes as Documentation in Sound. [www.osdiscography.com/OSD1.pdf](http://www.osdiscography.com/OSD1.pdf) (retrieved 22 September 2011).
- Frank, P. L. (1964). Orff and Bresgen as Music Educators. *Music Educators Journal*, 50(4), 58-60, 62, 64.
- Fraze, J. (1987). Discovering Orff. Mainz: Schott.
- Gerozisis, S. (2002). A Tribute to Diana Humphries and Lorna Parker. *Musicworks*, 7, 22-23.
- Goodkin, D. (2001). Orff-Schulwerk in the New Millennium. *Music Educators Journal*, 88(3), 17-23.
- Hale, M. (2011). Doreen Hall. In *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com> (retrieved 19 July 2011).
- Hall, D. (1960). Orff-Schulwerk Music for Children Teacher's Manual, Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne.
- Haselbach, B. (2006). Orff Schulwerk Back and Forth. *Musicworks: Journal of the Australian Council of Orff Schulwerk*, 11(1), 5-10.
- Hogg, N. (2003). Orff Schulwerk. In J. Whiteoak & A. Scott-Maxwell (Eds.) *Currency Companion to Music & Dance in Australia* (p. 485). Sydney: Currency House.
- Holmes, P. L. (1960). Autobiographical details. Unpublished draft of application for Carnegie Scholarship.
- Holmes, P. L. (1966). Music making for children. *Education Gazette*, South Australia, Supplement, April, 6-7.
- Housewright, W.L. (1961). The ISME Meeting in Vienna. *Music Educators Journal*, 48(2), 43-48.
- International Herald Tribune. (1982). Carl Orff Dies at 86: W. German Composer and Music Educator. *International Herald Tribune*, March, 6.
- Landis, B. & Carder, P. (1972). The Eclectic Curriculum in American Music Education: Contributions of Dalcroze, Kodály, and Orff. Virginia: Music Educators National Conference.

- Lawler, V. (1953). For World Friendship through Music. *Music Educators Journal*, 40(2), 25-31.
- Lawler, V. (1955). Music Education in the Wide World. *Music Educators Journal*, 42(2), 20-23.
- Liess, A. (1966). Carl Orff. London: Calder & Boyers.
- Maubach, C. (2006). Introduction to the Orff Schulwerk Approach. <http://www.vosa.org/aboutorff> (retrieved 6 January 2011).
- Newson, K. (1957). Musical Development through the use of Percussion Instruments. In W.J. Weeden, *Music in Education. Report of the Australian Unesco Seminar held in Melbourne May-June 1956*. Melbourne: Commonwealth Office of Education, 40-41.
- Obituary Vanett Lawler (1903-1972) (1972). *Australian Journal of Music Education*, 10, 57.
- Orff, C. (1978). *The Schulwerk*. W. Germany: Schott, translated by Margaret Murray.
- Penrose, A. I. (1957). *Method in the Teaching of Music in Schools*. Adelaide: Education Department South Australia.
- Pritikin, L. (2010). It's Music to My Ears: Using Orff-Schulwerk Principles in the Foreign Language Classroom. <http://www.france-synergies.org> (retrieved 20 May 2010).
- Richards, C. (1995). The Contribution of Orff's Philosophy and Practices to Post-Primary Education in Australia. *Australian Journal of Music Education*, 1, 13-20.
- Serrallier, I. & Bennett, R.R. (1963). *The Midnight Thief*. Croydon: Belwin-Mills.
- Silsbury, E. A. (1968). Reports from Churchill Fellows (i) Learning to teach Orff. *Australian Journal of Music Education*, 2, 40-43.
- Southcott, J. (1992). The Percussion Band – Mere Noise or Music? *British Journal of Music Education*, 9(2), 111-122.
- Southcott, J. (1993). *The Classroom Percussion Band-Osaurus*. Perth July 93 – IXth ASME National Conference Proceedings, 202-210.
- Southcott, J. E. (1997). June Sadie Epstein. In W. Bebbington, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 203-204.
- Southcott, J. E. (2004). Essential Learning in Music Education: Teaching Music in Schools in South Australia During the 1950s. Proceedings of the XXVth Annual Conference 25-28 September, Australian Association for Research in Music Education, 292-300.
- Southcott, J. E. (2009). The Melbourne UNESCO Seminar, 1956: A watershed in Australian music education. In Martin Comte (Ed.) *Musical dimensions A Festschrift for Doreen Bridges*, North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 80-98.
- Stavely, R. (1999). The Orff approach and learning research. *Musicworks*, 4(1), 12-14.
- Stevens, R. S. (1997). Music Education. In W. Bebbington (Ed.) *The Oxford Companion to Music in Australia* (pp. 396-399). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Taylor, D. (2000). Great oaks from little acorns grow: The Carl Orff legacy in English primary schools. In A. de Quadros (Ed.). *Many seeds, different flowers: The musical legacy of Carl Orff*. Perth: CIRCME, 212-221.
- The Australian National Advisory Committee for UNESCO (1965). *Australian UNESCO Seminar on School Music*, Sydney Teachers' College and University of Sydney.
- Victorian Orff Schulwerk Association. (2010). What is Orff Schulwerk? <http://www.vosa.org/aboutorff> (retrieved 6 July 2010).
- Walter, A. (1953). United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization Report on the International conference on the role and place of music in the education of youth and adults, Brussels 29 June – 9 July 1953. [unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001272/127234EB.pdf](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001272/127234EB.pdf) (retrieved 1 April 2009).
- Weeden, W. J. (1957). *Music in Education. Report of the Australian UNESCO Seminar held in Melbourne May-June 1956*. Melbourne: Commonwealth Office of Education.

**Dr Jane Southcott** is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia. Her main research focus is the history of the music curriculum in Australia, America and Europe. She is a narrative historian and much of her research is biographical. Dr Southcott also researches community engagement with music, multicultural music education, cultural identity and performance anxiety. She teaches in postgraduate and pre-service programmes and supervises many postgraduate research students. Dr Southcott is a member of the editorial boards of international and national refereed journals.

**Dr Wei Cosaitis** is a musician, music educator and researcher. She has recently completed her doctorate entitled "An Investigation of Primary Music Education in Victorian Schools: A Single Case Study" at Monash University. Her thesis investigated highly successful primary school music education and found the role of the skilled and experienced teacher to be crucial to the success of the program.