

Interview with Prof. Em. Barbara Haselbach, presiding officer of the Orff Schulwerk Forum Salzburg

by Güher & Süher Pekinel



Prof. Em. Barbara Haselbach began her higher education in German studies in Vienna along with musicology and gymnastics. She was also an auditor in piano studies. During a summer course with the dancer Harald Kreuzberg, she changed her plans entirely and studied in Bern at the School for Dance and Dance pedagogy. In 1960 she was introduced to Gunild Keetman who in turn introduced her to Carl Orff. Because the founding of the Orff Institute was imminent and Orff and Keetman were looking for young teachers, Haselbach had the chance to receive training and an apprenticeship with Gunild Keetman and soon became a teacher in her own

right. Haselbach formed and furthered the specific character and special quality of elemental dance pedagogy at the Orff Institute until her retirement in 2004. Many publications are witness to her versatility in this area. For many years Barbara Haselbach directed the Orff Institute, organised two international symposia and is presently in demand the world over as a lecturer. She is the presiding officer of the Orff Schulwerk Forum Salzburg and has been the editor of "Orff Schulwerk Informationen".

A *title of one of your publications is "Orff-Schulwerk: An Interdisciplinary Experience." How should we understand this title? Is the Orff pedagogy a combination of different pedagogic forms or is the title based off of the connection of expressive forms that are seen as the basic elements of the Orff pedagogy?*

B. H.: Orff-Schulwerk is the idea and concept of an artist who is not a pedagogue or a didact, but feels a responsibility towards pedagogy. Though the effect of reform pedagogy could be felt during its emergence in the 20's of the previous century, a combination of pedagogic points of view would not properly reflect the contents of this education.

The essential distinction that needs to be made is that at its core, OSW elementarily contains and combines all "performance art;" meaning songs are sung, there are discussions and dancing, talking leads to melody, texts lead to stage-dance presentations, music brings out dance, and movement demands music.

When we observe children, we can see this connection in how they move of their own accord when they hear music, how they hum tunes while drawing, sing while jumping, and tell themselves stories through song.

In addition to this tight Music-Dance-Speech connection, the current increase in different forms of visual arts (painting, graphic design, sculpture, etc.) is being included in OSW exercises. The commonality between all artistic mediums is the need to express and the

desire to tell and communicate. Orff-Schulwerk develops individual creativity within a group, as well as inter-group communication, while also providing the opportunity to experience the commonalities (and differences) within the arts.

The concept of music pedagogy found life at Orff-Schulwerk in Munich. When taking the past and the cultural differences between these two countries into consideration, can it be possible to implement Orff's main idea, especially in the Eastern region of Turkey, where the level of education is lower and the worldview is more traditional. How can these problems be overcome or be taken more as an opportunity while implementing the Orff approach?

B. H.: Yes, Orff-Schulwerk was established for Bavarian children in the South. It was not the goal or intention of either Orff or Keetman that it spread to many places in Europe and America, and then to Australia and Asia before even a quarter century had passed. Foresighted pedagogues in many countries noticed the positive effects of Schulwerk in a short period of time and adapted it to their own countries. Naturally, the large differences in socio-cultural environments should have been accounted for. The material should have been developed anew for each language and culture, based on their own music and dance traditions. The original German print of Schulwerk only offers models, but is not a prescription for their implementation. Orff and Keetman, and, following them, Dr. Regner all place a lot of importance on implementation and would always collaborate as ready to help consultants.

When applying OSW, the main determinant is not the student's level of education, but, more so, the teacher's pedagogic talent and skill. Schulwerk builds on a child's natural talent rather than on accumulated knowledge, it utilizes "Children's Lore," meaning traditional songs, movement games, stories, and dances from their own regions. Based off of this, they can use the musical, linguistic, and movement material and turn them into their own presentations in both traditional and creative ways. They can also learn that music can be made with simple instruments. In addition to this, children embrace sensitivity, care, responsibility, and harmony. Schulwerk might not be the best way to educate prodigies, however it is the best method to foster young and old individuals – especially those with special needs or suffering from illnesses – mentally, physically, spiritually, socially, and artistically through play and creative, holistic methods. Schulwerk, by definition, is inclusive.

However, in order to do this, as was emphasized earlier, there is a primary need for extraordinary teachers who can grab students' attention and support their self-confidence and enjoyment of play. The moment kids realize that they don't have to just imitate and memorize, that they can discover and shape things on their own, and that what they do is accepted and valued, the road is wide open.

There are 38 million active internet users who are online for approximately four hours a day in Turkey. Including television, how does this media consumption affect spiritual development? Within the context of Orff, can television programs support positive development, especially for children? How do you evaluate musical game applications that are developed for children?

B. H.: Many professional experts and scientists have written about this topic. As you have mentioned and as it is in every field, there are certainly good and bad sides to everything. I,

personally, see the primary danger as an imposition of fake communication in place of direct communication. Instead of actually being close to a friend, you have 500 friends on Facebook. But which one of them is beside you when you need someone? Who do you talk to? Who do you make music with? Who do you play with? Young people with media addiction in Japan are currently being treated with forms of therapy including music and dance. Some graduates of the Salzburg University Carl Orff Institute work in this field as well.

I don't know if it's possible to stop the development of the media. However, the reality is that distinct fields of interest (sports, music, language, or whatever it is) proved that the tendency for media addiction in children and teenagers is less. Pedagogically speaking, this means directing their attention from where they are at that moment and spark their interest for something else. Compositions can be made with cell phones as well (if the teacher is knowledgeable enough in this area) and then they can slowly be directed towards different tones. Instead of just watching plays or dances on YouTube, they can record themselves and show one another, evaluate it together, and gain self-confidence through the experience. Television, YouTube, etc. can of course be used to show different music and art forms, and broaden the horizons of children and teenagers. None of these are simple; the teacher must be able to command the world of the classroom and its techniques. Which higher educational institution providing pedagogy education teaches these things?

Creating live music together is a real and extremely satisfying unison, but someone who has not experienced it before would not show interest in it. Sometimes we need to learn how to be a unit.

The Turkish education system still demands high levels of memorization from students. Also the system is not geared towards developing personal strengths. How can teachers expand this practice and production focused class structure? What precautions could be taken in order to strengthen the individuality and special skills of children and teens?

B. H.: If a society wants responsible and open individuals who can speak for themselves, meaning, if they want individuals who can notice problems and work on solutions, engage in social life, and value a happy and content life, they must organize their education system accordingly. There are, of course, many ways to do this.

In the hands of a good teacher, Orff-Schulwerk could make valuable contributions in this regard. It teaches us to enjoy art as something that adds meaning and depth to our lives, it teaches independence and togetherness, responsibility and order, the clarity of simplicity and the miracle of variety, and how to live together instead of against each other; it strengthens imagination and the desire to create, it relays skills and basic techniques in artistic mediums, it explains the value of your own tradition, and inspires bravery to find the new.

Your poet Nâzım Hikmet reflected these wonderful ideas in one of his poem: "To live! Like a tree alone and free like a forest in brotherhood, this yearning is ours." This is the effect that Orff-Schulwerk wants to create in the field of aesthetics education.

Pedagogy and psychology research shows that memorization, teacher-focused face to face classes, and other old methods don't teach how to think for yourself, solve a problem by

reconfiguring it, or engage in social life, etc. It is not enough for pedagogues to know this, it is extremely important for them to renew themselves with “development seminars” in order to enrich their experience in line with their students’ perceptual capacities.

Source: *Andante Magazine, June 2015 – “Türkiye’deki Müzik Eğitimi ve Orff Yaklaşımı”*
“Music Education in Turkey and Orff Approach”