

# The Volumes as a Documentation in Sound

BY MARK FRANCIS

*Author's Note: References to the published English volumes of Music for Children adapted by Margaret Murray will be indicated (MM) and, if applicable, followed by the volume and page numbers respectively. Similarly, references to the German edition of Musik für Kinder will be indicated (MK). Long play records (33rpm) will henceforth be referred to as "LP," extended play records (45rpm) as "EP," and compact discs as "CD."*

Orff Schulwerk documentation can be deceptive. The printed volumes do not represent instructions for an exact interpretation, but rather establish a musical design and structure. The same applies to the sound recordings of the Schulwerk that have been produced over the years. The audio recordings provide a model of the approach that both references the printed score, and demonstrates the creative possibilities beyond it. They have the ability to draw out desire by demonstrating a starting point for individual creativity and group adaptations. The recorded history of the Schulwerk provides a cross-section of the kaleidoscope variety that makes up the approach. In the words of Carl Orff, the recordings provide "an authentic documentation of Schulwerk in sound."

## **EINZUG UND REIGEN DER KINDER**

The recorded legacy of Orff Schulwerk dates back to 1936 to a 78rpm recording of the *Jugendorchester der Günther-Schule* (The Günther-School Youth Orchestra) under the direction of Gunild Keetman. Two years prior to this recording, Carl Orff received a letter inviting him to compose some of the music for the opening ceremonies of the 1936 Olympic Games to be

held in Berlin, Germany. The authorship of the music composed for the event is widely attributed to Gunild Keetman. However, a large number of drafts and final copies of scores in Orff's hand have led some researchers to believe that Orff may have orchestrated the music. Phonograph records of the Olympic compositions were made so that the approximately 6,000 Berlin school children involved in the opening ceremonies could learn the dances that would accompany the music. Orff charged Keetman with the responsibility of coordinating and directing the rehearsals and the performance in the stadium. The music included *Einzug und Reigen der Kinder und Mädchen* (Procession and Round Dance of the Children and Young Girls) and *Tänze und Spiele der Jugend* (Dances and Games of Youth). The "Procession" will later come to appear in Volume III of the English edition as "Festive procession" (MM, III, p. 70), and in the German edition as "Einzug" (MK, III, p. 78). This earliest, and quite rare, recording of the Schulwerk can be heard in its entirety at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVScN8FuW4c>.

## **GERMAN MUSIK FÜR KINDER RECORDINGS**

Over the next twenty years, the Schulwerk slowly evolved into the approach we are familiar with today. A series of broadcasts for Bavarian Radio occurred from 1948–1958, which led to the creation of the five German volumes published 1950–1954. The broadcasts and published volumes paved the way for the first Schulwerk recordings since the XI Olympiad. From 1956–1957 Columbia Records produced and released *Musik für Kinder*, a two-record set that corresponds to the first two published

volumes. The LPs under the Columbia label were each released separately. A later reissue under Columbia's EMI/Electrola label packaged the two records together. An army of choirs and ensembles were employed for the recording project including a children's speech choir and instrumental ensemble under the direction of Keetman and Orff, the Chor der Augsburger Singschule under the direction of Josef Lautenbacher, the *Kinderchor des Trapp'schen Konservatoriums, München* under the direction of Richard Boeck, and the *Münchner Chorbuben* under the direction of Fritz Rothsuh.

True to the developmental approach of the Schulwerk, the pieces featured on the recordings are often extended in terms of form and instrumentation. Orff states in his autobiography that the recordings "were important for the further dissemination of the Schulwerk idea." The accuracy of this statement is certain. Margaret Murray first became acquainted with Schulwerk thanks in part to the *Musik für Kinder* recordings. She would go on to adapt and translate the five German volumes to English, and she and her husband, Walter Jellinek, would work directly with Orff and Keetman on the English *Music for Children* recordings as well. In the spring of 1963, on the other side of the world, Arnold Burkart, a founding member of AOSA and the organization's first president, attended a regional MENC conference where he heard a recording of an Orff ensemble. His intrigue led him to attend the second North American Orff workshop that summer in Toronto. Undeniably, these early Schulwerk recordings came to influence individuals who in turn played a pivotal role in the worldwide spread of the approach.

## ENGLISH MUSIC FOR CHILDREN RECORDINGS

The same developmental treatment heard on the *Musik für Kinder* recordings can be heard on the *Music for Children* English edition recordings adapted by Margaret Murray and released in 1958. As with the examples in the volumes, the songs and pieces featured on the recordings were not to be considered parts of a blueprint, to be meticulously followed in every detail, but rather thought of as outline sketches that could be varied, modified or extended. The recordings, which again included material solely from the first two English volumes, were reviewed by *The Gramophone* magazine, once in 1958, and then again in 1972. The 1958 review approaches the recordings as if they were produced with children as the target audience. This is both unfortunate and short sighted as it leads to a less than flattering review.

But then, what is this set of records really for? Is it to make you buy

the music and the instruments, and Do It Yourself? Perhaps it may do the trick with some families; not mine—they were adamant. Is it for children to listen to? Some school teachers may find it good for first music lessons in class: primary school, probably up to six years old, but musical children will find it too simple, and so dull. Is it for grown-ups? Parts are good to listen to, but only parts...

The review from 1972 approaches the recordings more accurately by realizing they are not for children to listen to but rather they are “a demonstration for adults of a course for children to take part in, which is an entirely different thing.” The reviewer confesses that he...

...expected a boring session—four sides of ‘teaching music’; but I was happily entertained by such a range of attractive sounds and settings. Everything is very short and items

succeed each other with the quick-fire precision of a well produced variety show. The children sing and play with such evident enjoyment that this in itself is infectious. Some of the song settings, too, are of real beauty, for all their simplicity—often indeed, because of it.

Once again, two LPs were released separately under the Columbia label, only to be packaged together when later reissued under the EMI and Angel labels respectively. Ensembles employed for the English edition recordings included the Chorus of the Children’s Opera Group under the direction of Margaret John, the Chorus of the Bancroft School for Boys under the direction of J.G. Wright, and the *Italia Conti* School Speech Ensemble. The instrumental ensemble was directed by Orff, Keetman, and Walter Jellinek.

There is a common misconception that the *Music for Children* three-CD set released by Schott (and currently



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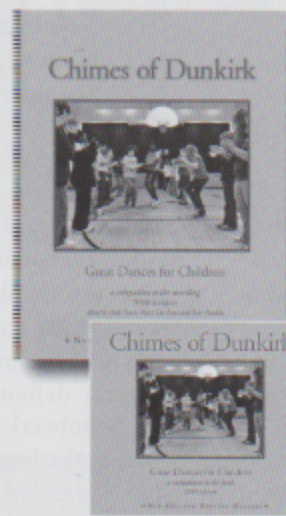
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still in print) is a reissue of the original Columbia English pressings. In fact, the recordings are uniquely different. The material featured on the Schott recordings is not restricted to Britain, but also includes songs from Canada and the United States. New ensembles, singers and speakers were also employed. The set includes new material, both in speech and song, that in some cases has not been published in either sound or book form. Comparatively, the Schott CDs feature only eight selections from Volume I (MM), whereas the Columbia recordings feature over thirty selections. Of the eight Volume I selections featured on the Schott CDs, six are re-workings of pieces that were featured on the Columbia pressings as well. They include “Little Tommy Tucker” (MM, I, p. 6); “Wee Willie Winkie” (MM, I, p. 7); “Ding, dong, diggidi-gong” (MM, I, p. 24); “Alleluja” (MM, I, p. 28); “Farewell to the Old Year” (MM, I, p. 32); “My little pony” (MM, I, p. 72); and instrumental piece #38 “Allegro (hi-ya)” (MM, I, p. 123). The two remaining Volume I pieces on the CD set that were never featured on the Columbia pressings include “Unk, unk, unk” (MM, I, p. 12) and instrumental piece #34 “Andante” (MM, I, p. 118).

### MUSICA POETICA RECORDINGS

While the *Musik für Kinder* and *Music for Children* recordings were an important milestone in the development and spread of Orff Schulwerk, they only represented a fraction of the vast body of literature that ultimately came into being. Orff was once again approached, this time by Alfred Krings and Rudolf Ruby from Harmonia Mundi Records. The outcome of this meeting resulted in ten records being produced in random order from 1963–1975. Each record contained a detailed commentary by Werner Thomas. Orff, again in his autobiography, states that “an internationally understandable title had to be found” for the recordings. “*Musica Poetica*,” he continues, “speaks for itself.” The title of the recorded series draws attention to the meaning of the word, language, and poetry as they are woven together with musical models

The set includes new material, both in speech and song, that in some cases has not been published in either sound or book form.



that invite the student to change and develop them into a personal form.

The *Musica Poetica* recordings began in May 1963, once again under the artistic direction of Gunild Keetman and Carl Orff. The wide array of choirs and ensembles employed this time included the *Tolzer Knabenchor* under the direction of Gerhard Schmidt-Gaden, the *Kammerchor der Staatlichen Hochschule für Musik, München* under the direction of Fritz Schieri, the *Kolner Kinderchor* under the direction of Hans-Gunter Lenders, and the *Stuttgarter Sprecherin* under the direction of Heinz Mende. The instrumental ensemble was prepared by Karl Peinkofer and directed by both Carl Orff and Herman Regner. Godela Orff-Buchtemann fulfilled the role of speaker. These ensembles and artists were involved with the recording process for many years. Their singing style, their expressive presentation of text and music, determined the sound quality of the record series to a great extent.

The contents of the ten records corresponds to the arrangement of select material in the five main Schulwerk volumes, but also includes material from the supplementary volumes and some newly composed vocal, speech, and instrumental pieces. They represent the definitive “documentation of the Schulwerk in sound” as quoted by Orff at the beginning of this article.

- *Pentatonik I / Spiellieder; Rufe; Reime* (Pentatonic I / Game Songs; Calls; and Rhymes)
- *Dur Bordon Stufen / Tanzlieder; Spiele; Sprüche* (Major Drone Levels

/ Dance Songs; Games; and Proverbs)

- *Dur Dominanten / Spiellieder und Tänze* (Major Dominants / Game Songs and Dances)
- *Dur Unterdominanten; Pentatonik II / Lieder; Balladen; Tanzstücke* (Major Subdominant; Pentatonic II / Songs; Ballads; and Dance Pieces)
- *Aolisch “Reines Moll” Bordon / Spielstücke; Lieder; Tänze* (Aeolian “Pure Minor” Drone / Games; Songs; and Dances)
- *Dorisch und Phrygisch Bordon / Tänze; Sprüche; Märchen* (Dorian and Phrygian Drone / Dances; Proverbs; and Tales)
- *Moll Stufen; Dominanten / Klangstücke; Lieder; Tänze* (Minor Levels and Dominants / Sound Pieces; Songs; and Dances)
- *Moll Unterdominanten; Lydisch; Mixolydisch* (Minor Subdominant; Lydian; and Mixolydian)
- *Tanzstücke für Bläser und Schlagwerk* (Dance Pieces for Winds and Percussion)
- *Sprechszenen; Laudi; Balladen* (Speech Pieces; Laments; and Ballads)

The *Musica Poetica* recordings over time were reissued with the music often getting reorganized to fit the theme of a new album. Themes included everything from nature and the seasons, to holidays and folktales. Some pressings are purely instrumental, while others have accompanying picture books. Many of these “reissues” were released again themselves resulting in what seems like an endless number of recordings all with different album cover art work, track listings, and notes. In 1994, the series underwent its first digital transfer with the release of a six-CD set by BMG/Sony containing most of the original music. The selection and compilation was carried out by Hermann Regner, taking into account the layout of the original documentation.

### CELESTIAL HARMONIES RECORDINGS

In 1995, Celestial Harmonies released *Orff-Schulwerk*, a three-volume collection containing another wide cross-section of examples from the approach.

All pieces were recorded new for the commemorative set, which features many world premieres. Collectively, CDs one and two of the set include thirty-three selections from the five published volumes. The remaining content on the first two compact discs includes selections from the vast array of supplemental Schulwerk publications. Volume three of the CD collection consists entirely of lesser known Schulwerk piano music. Wilfried Hiller, artistic director of the production, met Orff in 1968 and became his student until the composer's death in 1982. The Karl Peinkofer Percussion Ensemble was employed for the recording project along with a number of notable artists and ensembles including Carl Orff's only child, Godela Orff, as a speaker.

#### A WORLDWIDE RECORDED LEGACY

To date, over one hundred Orff Schulwerk recordings have been

identified and cataloged. While some of these releases are identical reissues of one another, the majority of them are unique and offer substantial evidence to the widespread growth of the Schulwerk. Many recordings represent the Schulwerk approach within different countries, while other recordings are private, small label, or special edition pressings. Records from Germany, England, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands are numerous, but releases coming from, or representing, Africa (Ghana), Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Japan, Taiwan, and the United States have also been identified and cataloged. The Schulwerk idea is one that transplants well, founded as it is on the basic elements of language, music, and dance. This proves true for both the published scores as well as the sound recordings. Collectively, these recordings from around the globe provide an important historical and pedagogical documentation of the Orff Schulwerk approach. ■

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**Mark Francis** teaches lower school music and choir at Seattle's Bush School. He holds a master of arts degree with a concentration in Orff Schulwerk from the University of St. Thomas, and in 2009 he earned NBPTS certification. Mark currently serves on the AOSA History Committee. He presented past research at the 2008 AOSA National Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina, and most recently was awarded a 2009 AOSA Research Grant for his work with the recorded legacy of Orff Schulwerk.

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