

# Introduction to Orff Schulwerk

## We Sing, We Move, We Play, We Create

with Kerri Lynn Nichols, Patrick Ware and Brent Holl

### Speech and Song In the Schulwerk

Kerri Lynn Nichols - Presenter

[www.kerri-oke.com](http://www.kerri-oke.com)

*“Choral singing was included in my plan for music education as an essential element.”*

*Carl Orff*

*from Carl Orff: The Schulwerk*

What is the place of the voice in Orff-Schulwerk and why is it important? Music-making begins with natural speech that provides a basis for rhythmic development. Nursery rhymes and chants find their place in the play of children and song emerges as a key element of expression and creativity.

Has anyone ever been told to “just mouth the words”? Most who have received this advice have taken it to heart and quit practicing at a young age. But the idea that those who “can”, do, and those who “can’t”, watch, is contrary to one of the core elements of the Orff approach: music-making is based on opportunity and all find their place in the process. Everyone is encouraged to improvise, improve technique and participate fully in the process; no one is excluded.

Many erroneously believe that the voice is secondary to the exploration of the instruments within the Schulwerk. However, the “Orff” instruments are uniquely designed to support the timbre of a child’s voice, as the perfect accompaniment. The qualities of speech: consonants, vowels and rhythms, set the stage for body percussion, pitched and unpitched instrument exploration.

The voice is a personal instrument, part of the body; there are no two exactly alike. If you are tired, sick, upset...you can hear it in the voice. The purpose of this session is to explore your voice in a nurturing setting, alone and in ensemble, apply some basic vocal techniques and discover ways to use speech and song creatively. Movement will inform vocal development.

Vocal Timbres:	speak, whisper, call/shout, sing, sounds
Vocabulary:	pitch, intonation, color, quality, diction, head voice
Technique:	breath, posture, balance, tone, projection, blend

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### BrainDance

*Eight fundamental movement patterns that wire the brain and central nervous system. We will use these movements to inform our vocal development and technique.*

**Breath:** Breathing deeply into the diaphragm. Resistance breathing. Single-double-triple hiss exercise.

**Tactile:** Strong, light, sharp, smooth. Vocal articulation and tone.

**Core Distal:** Small and big. Closed and open vowels. Crescendo and decrescendo.

**Head/Tail:** Spinal flexibility. Posture and alignment. High and low pitch, ascend and descend. Range.

**Upper/Lower:** Upper = expressive, lower = supportive. Head voice, chest voice. Rooting posture.

**Body Sides:** Right and left side independence. Horizontal eye tracking.

**Cross Lateral:** Right and left brain integration/coordination. Vertical eye tracking.

**Vestibular:** Proprioception and balance. Singing with eyes closed. Right side up, upside down.

### Vocal Play

**Names:** Echo first names using different vocal timbres and pitches. Chant four names in a row. *Hello, Sofia!* (Brazil) 8 count improvisation: body percussion or vocal (stop on beat 7)



- **ABC's:** Sing the alphabet using different melodic sequences. Sing in a round.  
Examples: 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1                      1-3-5-3-1                      1-3-5-7-5-3-1
- **Have A Ball!:** Begin with two people (one is so, the other mi) and one ball. Toss and sing back and forth. Add *la*, then *do*, *re*, *fa*, *ti* (for advanced students).

### Game

*Choco-la-te*                      *Choco = fist bump (do)*                      *la = palms (la)*                      *te = backs of hands (te)*

Teach the poem and game. Play with a partner. Change spoken words to pitches. Pairs join in a small group. Hand movements go to the sides (in a circle). Rotate the circle. Sing in a round.

### The Shoemaker

*A shoemaker makes shoes without leather,*

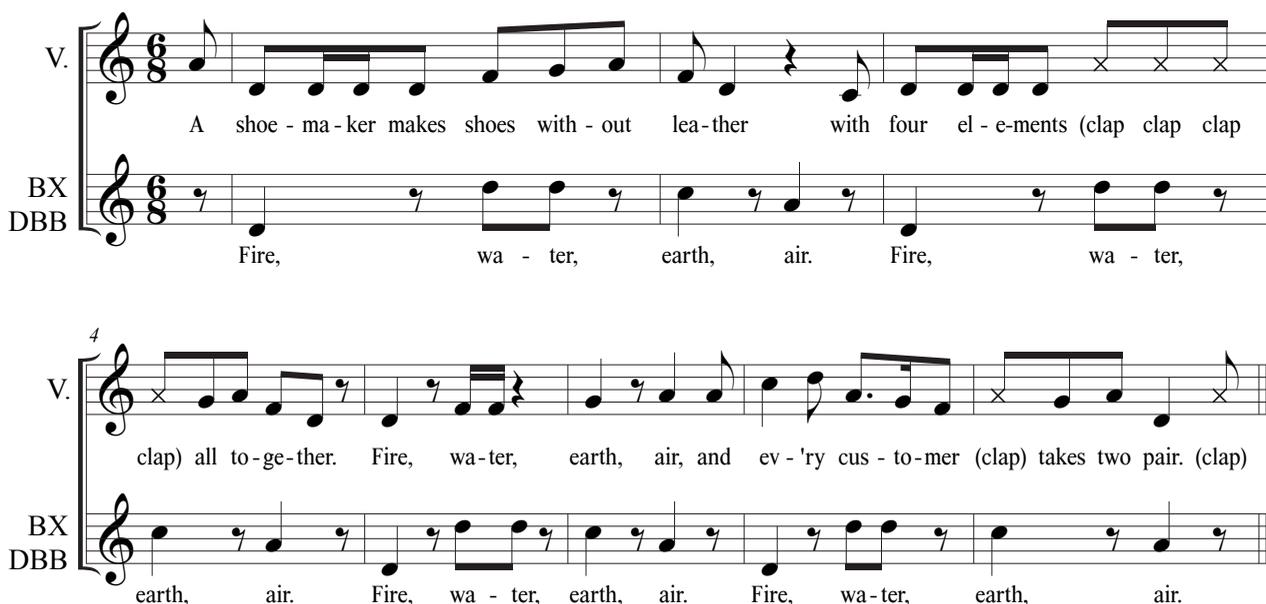
*With four elements all together,*

*Fire, Water, Earth, Air,*

*And every customer takes two pair.*

# The Shoemaker

Traditional Rhyme  
arr. Kerri Lynn Nichols



V. A shoe - ma - ker makes shoes with - out lea - ther with four el - e - ments (clap clap clap

BX DBB Fire, wa - ter, earth, air. Fire, wa - ter,

V. clap) all to - ge - ther. Fire, wa - ter, earth, air, and ev - 'ry cus - to - mer (clap) takes two pair. (clap

BX DBB earth, air. Fire, wa - ter, earth, air. Fire, wa - ter, earth, air.

## Process:

- Perform the song in totality. Group keeps the pulse.
- Teach the speech (rhythm) first, through echo process until they can say it independently. Do not perform with students. Likewise, teach the tune. Put the rhythm and melody together.
- Sing using different styles of singing: opera, country, etc.
- Sing in a round.

## Game:

- Remove shoes. Sit in a circle. Pass one shoe around the circle to the right to the strong pulse of the song: pick-pass-pick-pass. Add one shoe per person. Change directions. On the four claps, tap the bottom of the shoe you currently hold before passing it.

**Elements:** Fire = Call      Water = Sing      Earth = Speak      Air = Whisper

## Resource

Nichols, Kerri Lynn. Music for Dancers. Beatin' Path Publications LLC. 302 East College Street, Bridgewater, VA 22812. 1998. [Available March 1, 2016]

## The Orff Instruments: We Play

Brent Holl - presenter

<http://brentholl.com>

*“Orff instruments are not used as a magic formula to combat sterility in music and are not used as an end to themselves, but as a means of music teaching which is justified both educationally and artistically.”*

*Jos Wuytack*

- **At some point all children would like to play as well as sing.** “*Cantare and Sonare*” . Some will prefer to play, others to sing.
- The use of instruments leads to active participation. It puts control of the music in the hands of the students. **They are active participants in their own learning experiences.**
- **Playing the instruments is truly “play” for the children.** It is pedocentric (child-centered), encouraging a vital avenue for self expression with both joy and seriousness.
- Instrumental work is ensemble work. Working cooperatively is an essential life skill. **Every member of the ensemble is important, working to their level of competence.**
- Instruments encourage creativity because of the ease of improvisation. **It insures even reluctant students a path to success.**
- **The instruments enable immediate success.** At the same time, students are challenged by more practice and more and more difficult techniques.
- The timbre of the instruments is
- *“Extraordinary in its range of sounds”. “...(T)hey can delight, frighten, calm, or they can excite, exalt into regions of ecstasy and mystery...they have a magical character.”* -Jos Wuytack

### Introduction to the Orff Instruments

#### ***Aim***

- Learn the names of the instruments and get acquainted with the sounds.
- Transfer imitation to Pitched Percussion.
- Continue working with pulse.

#### ***Process***

- Move to the instruments by birthdays.
- Introduce the instruments by name.
- Show basic mallet technique, how to hold them, where to hit, etc.
- Explore the sounds of the instruments with imitation: (“Keetman Conducting”)
  - » Snaps: glockenspiels
  - » Claps: xylophones
  - » Patch: metallophones
  - » Stomp: unpitched

## The Bordun

**Simple Bordun** - “A harmony of the fifth interval based upon the first and fifth degree, so that there is only one harmony, the harmony of the first degree chord” (Wuytack ‘79).

“The drone is the most important and most widely found form of part singing and playing. While one voice provides the melody the other sustains one note, the key note or fundamental note, either above or below the melody. This is the prototype of our pedal note. This drone develops itself in two directions: firstly by sustaining a chord consisting of fundamental, fifth and octave, like bagpipes or hurdy-gurdy: secondly in that the drone moves between a limited number of notes like an ostinato, the so-called ‘wandering drone’ (after Curt Sachs)” (Schneider, p. 28).

### Experimenting with the drone.

- Set up in a pentatonic of choice.
- Find the fundamental tone, set a rhythm or sustain.
- Find a pattern that can be repeated and take turns improvising melodies over the drone.
- Add the fifth degree to the fundamental.
- Set a rhythm and experiment with different ways the drone can be performed.
- Discover chords, crossovers, and broken chords.
- Discover melodic ostinatos to be used as accompaniment for improvising melodies over each one using the C pentatonic scale.

### Some Typical Bordun Types



Chord Bordun      Broken Chord      Crossover Bordun



Level Bordun      Chord Bordun      Broken Chord



Crossover Bordun      Level Bordun      Broken Chord



Chord Bordun      Crossover Bordun      Level Bordun

# WIND IN THE BARREN TREES

SOUND ALL THE CHRISTMAS BELLS

MICHAEL R. NICHOLS

Wind in the bar-rentrees, (blow, wind, blow) Bend-ing gent-ly to and fro (blow, wind, blow)

SG  
SM  
AM  
Wind Chimes  
BM

This system of musical notation includes a vocal line at the top and five instrumental parts below. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are: "Wind in the bar-rentrees, (blow, wind, blow) Bend-ing gent-ly to and fro (blow, wind, blow)". The instrumental parts are: SG (Soprano), SM (Soprano/Midrange), AM (Alto/Midrange), Wind Chimes, and BM (Bass/Midrange). The SG, SM, and AM parts use a treble clef, while the BM part uses a bass clef. The Wind Chimes part uses a square symbol for notes. The BM part features a steady bass line with chords.

Wav-ing all the grace-ful limbs (blow, wind, blow) Mov-ing with the flow (blow, wind, blow)

SG  
SM  
AM  
WC  
BM

This system continues the musical notation from the first system. The vocal line lyrics are: "Wav-ing all the grace-ful limbs (blow, wind, blow) Mov-ing with the flow (blow, wind, blow)". The instrumental parts are: SG, SM, AM, WC (Wind Chimes), and BM. The notation follows the same format as the first system, with a vocal line and five instrumental parts in treble and bass clefs.

***Wind in the Barren Trees*** by Michael R. Nichols, Seasons and Holidays, p. 18.

### ***Aim***

- Learn and play an example of the Chord Bordun (and the Level Bordun as a colorful accompaniment).
- Introduce *La*-based pentatonic on E (relative to G)

### ***Process***

- Review hand signals and try it slowly from the overhead.
- Add the words and the harmony. (Try adding thirds too!)
- Add the chord bordun and special bordun effects (also known as a 'Level' bordun).
- Add some soprano or alto recorders to the song with voices, accompaniment, and harmony.

### **Resources**

Nichols, Michael R. *Seasons and Holidays*. Beatin' Path Publications LLC. 302 East College Street, Bridgewater, VA 22812. 1998. [Available at [http://bpub.net/Seasons\\_and\\_Holidays](http://bpub.net/Seasons_and_Holidays)]

Schneider, Hans. *The Schulwerk*, Vol. 3 of Carl Orff/DOCUMENTATION, His Life and Works. The Schott Music Corporation, New York. 1976.

Wuytack, Jos. *Notes: Master Classes 1979-1995*. Memphis State University Summer Certification Courses in Orff Schulwerk.



## Movement in the Schulwerk

Dr. Patrick Ware - Presenter

<http://patrickware.biz>

The unity of music with movement, dance and speech that

*“is quite natural to many cultures and needs no special fostering, has, in most civilized lands been entirely lost, and only carried on in an unbroken line by children. To preserve and develop this unity for children is one of the main tasks that Orff-Schulwerk has set itself”*

Gunild Keetman. Elementaria p.107

For many the movement component of the lesson is an after thought. Students sing a song or perform an instrumental piece and then are tasked to “go make up a dance.” The attempt to create something meaningful is not often fruitful. Often students are unable to create something satisfactory due to a lack of vocabulary and/or a lack of direction. Neither student nor teacher knows what they want, and so in the end no one is completely happy with what they get.

Our goals here are to give this process more meaning. Instead of creating movement to go with a given melody or ostinato, we can create melody and ostinato to serve our movements. This does not mean that we will give up the practice of adding dances to existing melodies. Through our work we will be able to explore more meaningful ways to arrive at beautiful movement pieces that enhance our existing melodies.

Our goals here are to, grow our movement vocabulary, spark our intrinsic creativity and challenge ourselves to create movements first and then “go make up a melody.” How great is it to “dance as though no one is watching?” Here we will provide the soundtrack to that dance.

Our goals here are to explore the variety of movements our bodies will allow. Movement comes in many shapes and sizes. Whether we focus on individual body isolations or free-form-locomotor explorations of our shared space there is movement to be found everywhere.

Our goal here is to move with joy.

### Vocabulary is key

To move with purpose there must be some common understanding of the nature of our movements. These four non-locomotor (self-space, axial) movements along with the four locomotor (shared-space) movements are the basis for everything we will do.

#### Non-locomotor

Bend, Stretch, Twist, Swing

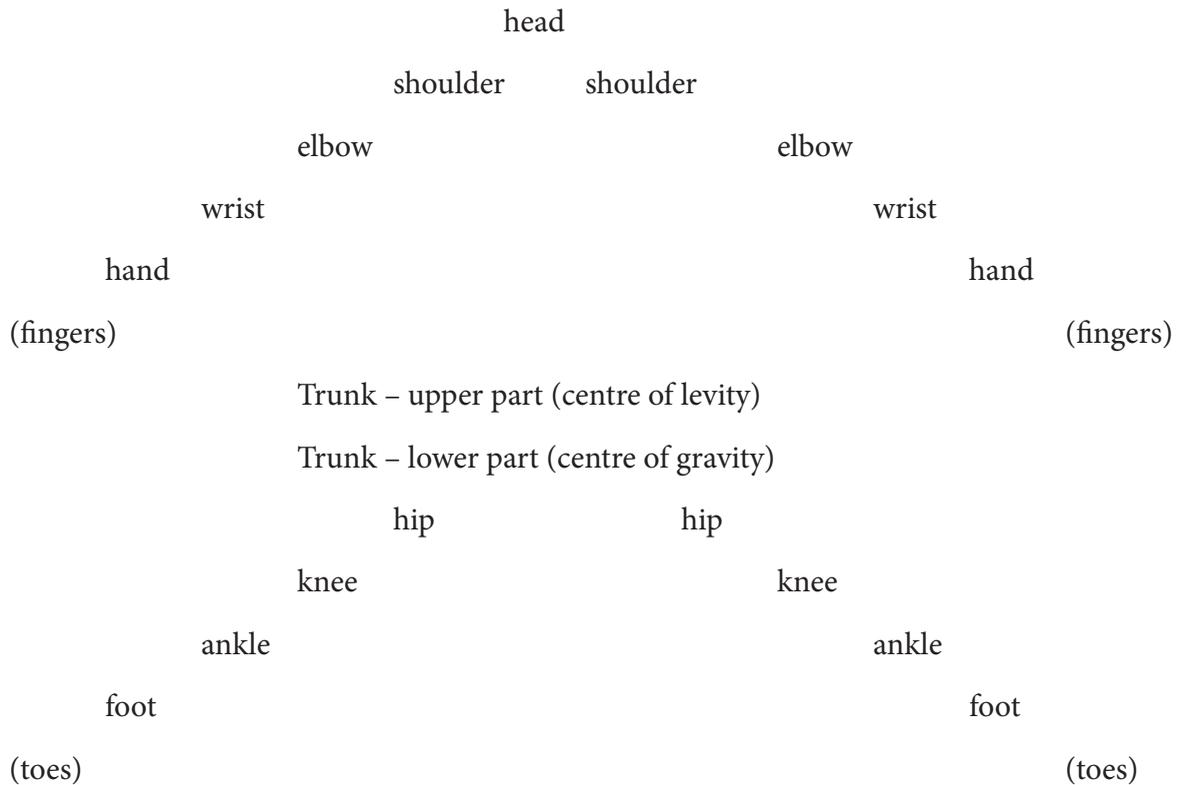
#### Loco-motor

Walk, Jump, Leap, Hop

### Not the what but the how

Laban Effort Action Drives have a special place in the Schulwerk. It is important to distinguish the difference between the way the movement is expressed and the movement itself.

## The Body



### No means No?

To better understand the role of the Effort Action, say the word “no” using each of the basic actions. Through vocal practice you become able to prepare your mind to transform your movements through the use of the effort action.

“No” with Dabbing Action – gentle, sudden, direct

“No” with Flicking Action – gentle, sudden, flexible

“No” with Floating Action – gentle, sustained, flexible

“No” with Gliding Action – gentle, sustained, direct

“No” with Pressing Action – firm, sustained, direct

“No” with Slashing Action – firm, sudden, flexible

“No” with Thrusting Action – firm, sudden, direct

“No” with Wringing Action – firm, sustained, flexible

Choreographed (patterned) dance can take place in a number of formations – Circle, Set, Line and Scattered

# Cross Patch

**Cross Patch, draw the latch**

**Sit by the fire and spin,**

**Take a cup and drink it up,**

**Then call your neighbors in**

## *Where we're going*

- Participants will be able to create a movement study that includes choreographed and improvised movement
- Participants will combine movement speech and unpitched percussion

## *How we get there*

- Participants will explore creative and choreographed movement
  - » Literal
  - » Figurative
  - » Emotive
- Participants will collectively create an A section for a Cross Patch Rondo using elements of the nursery rhyme
- Participants will work in small groups to complete an eight measure section of the rondo
- Participants will come back together to share and perform.

## Schedule for the Day

8:00 AM - Gather, Greet, and Group

Group A Schedule:	8:10 AM Kerri Lynn,	9:45 AM Brent,	12:30 PM Patrick.
Group B Schedule:	8:10 AM Brent,	9:45 AM Patrick,	12:30 PM Kerri Lynn.
Group C Schedule:	8:10 AM Patrick,	9:45 AM Kerri Lynn,	12:30 Brent

All together at 2:15 for the final session.

The final session:

Create a version of *The Shoemaker* with drama, movement, instruments and voice.

### Contact the Clinicians

Kerri Lynn Nichols - <http://kerri-oke.com> - [singforpeacebaby@gmail.com](mailto:singforpeacebaby@gmail.com)

Dr. Patrick Ware - <http://patrickware.biz> - [patrickware@verizon.net](mailto:patrickware@verizon.net)

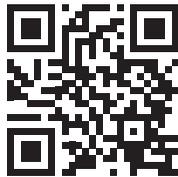
Brent Holl - <http://brentholl.com> - [brentholl@mac.com](mailto:brentholl@mac.com)

### Note to workshop participants:

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