

Introduction

"Doing what's best for students in the middle" states the school motto of S. G. Stewart Middle School. Ironically, doing is best for students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. Children in the middle are ready to DO things: play instruments, sing, dance, create, and learn. By using a variety of learning activities and musical styles that keep them active and involved, students in the middle can amaze and astound audiences of parents and friends.

Using the Orff approach with an appropriate grouping of instruments is one of the best ways to teach music at this level. I am often asked, "What is an appropriate grouping of instruments for middle school?" Students of this size and age want to stand up to play! Using tables or instruments with built-in legs is strongly recommended. Chromatic instruments will become increasingly necessary at this level as the students progress through scales and keys with more than one sharp or flat. All of the pieces in this volume except "The Spinning Song" can be played easily on diatonic Orff instruments.

The pieces in this book reflect the influence of Professor Jos Wuytack, composer and teacher of the Level 3 and Master Classes in Orff Schulwerk at the University of Memphis since 1970. After studying with Professor Wuytack for 17 summers, the teaching process, the use of instruments, the style of harmonization, and the love for music expressed in those classes have given sound and substance to these instrumental songs. In the most hallowed tradition of Orff Schulwerk, music is created by students, based on models shown by their teachers. As Carl Orff said, and as my students often remind me, "Let the children be their own composers." The pieces in this book were developed with middle school students who used their own creativity and enthusiasm for composition. I encourage you to study and analyze these models; then adapt them, expand them, and let them be seeds for your own new music!

Brent M. Holl - 2002