

ORCHESTRATION

The term "elemental" style is often used to describe music making using Orff Schulwerk resources: speech, singing, recorder, and percussion instruments, both pitched and non-pitched. Orff described the intent of this term:

What is elementary? The word in its Latin form 'elementarius' means 'pertaining to the elements, primeval, rudimentary, treating of first principles.' What then is elementary music? Elementary music is never music alone but forms a unity with movement, dance, and speech. It is music that one makes oneself in which one takes part not as a listener but as a participant. It is unsophisticated, employs no big forms and no big architectural structures, and it uses small sequence forms, ostinato and rondo. Elementary music is near the earth, natural, physical, within the range of everyone to learn it and to experience it, and suitable for the child.¹

In the development of the Orff Schulwerk prototype materials (see Murray I-V), the concept of elemental style resulted in music constructed simply from very basic materials. Among its identifying characteristics are the following:

- Optimum use of the unique timbres provided by the Orff instrumentarium and other resources frequently used, with balance and contrast developed among the various possibilities and the typical texture being transparent, with all parts clear and well-defined
- Exploration of all common meters, plus simple changing metric patterns
- Rhythmic energy created through complementarity between patterns
- Rhythmic and/or melodic patterns layered as ostinati, often as accompaniment to a more extended rhythmic or melodic theme
- Clearly tonal melodies primarily using conjunct movement, with a readily "singable" quality
- A simple tonal texture involving one of the following:
 - a. a drone defining an unchanging tonal center for a layered texture
 - b. a continuing shift back and forth between two chord structures functioning as a decorated drone accompaniment
 - c. use of two or three chords in simple changes according to the principles of functional harmony

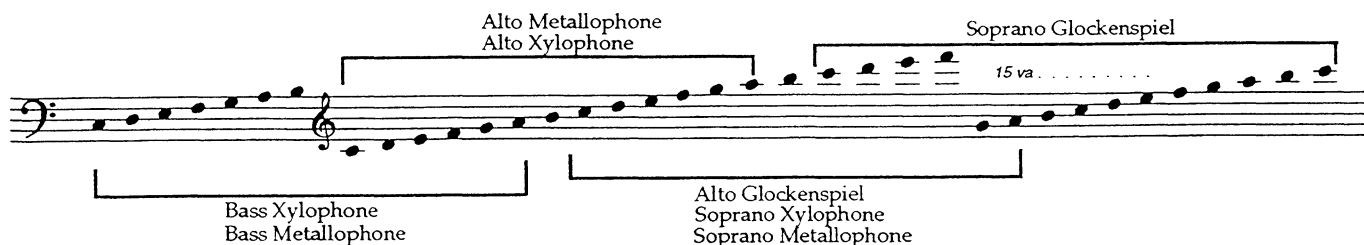
In the Orff Schulwerk context, group and individual orchestration exercises can provide opportunities for exploration of the possibilities of sound combinations before concentrating on producing written orchestrations that follow "rules." Through this kind of experimentation with the sound palette, students become familiar with appropriate combinations and will have experiential understanding of principles of orchestration in the elemental style. Familiarity with well-wrought examples is very useful as preparation and for comparison purposes. General principles for arranging in elemental style include the following:

¹Carl Orff, "Orff Schulwerk: Past and Future," in *Orff Re-Echoes*, ed. Isabel McNeill Carley (Cleveland, OH: American Orff-Schulwerk Association, 1977), 6.

Supporting Materials—Orchestration

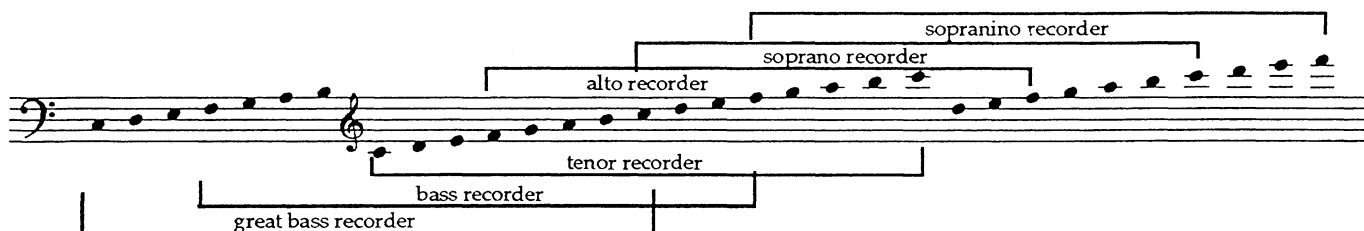
1. Awareness of the range of each instrument, so that instruments may be used effectively alone and in combination.

The ranges of barred percussion are as follows:



Individual contra-bass bars sound in the octave below the bass xylophone.

The ranges for recorders are as follows:



All instruments, including bass xylophone and bass metallophone, are notated in the treble clef with middle C as the lowest pitch. Bass clef is used for timpani.

2. Awareness of the timbre of individual instruments and families of instruments, so that they may be utilized to best advantage. The following considerations apply to the Orff instruments:
 - a. xylophones: almost immediate sound decay, ideal for rapid rhythmic or melodic parts
 - b. metallophones: long resonance time, excellent for sustained background sound, or slow, bell-like patterns
 - c. glockenspiels: medium resonance time, dominant timbre quality, effective for slow to medium rhythmic density and foreground patterns
3. Rhythmic balance and contrast can be provided through use of complementary rhythms in the various ostinato layers.
4. Pitch balance and contrast can be provided by constructing melodic ostinati moving in contrary motion.
5. Clarity and independence among parts is maintained by avoiding parallel octaves between any accompaniment part and the melody, and between the accompaniment parts themselves (does not apply to doubling of the melody throughout).
6. In structuring accompaniments for song texts, the text and melody are to be considered primary, with the accompaniment acting as a support structure. The texture is characterized as open and uncluttered, with few, rather than many instrumental colors.

The following is a score order guideline, with abbreviations commonly used in Orff Schulwerk literature, for notating compositions and arrangements:

S	Voice: –Soprano				
A	–Alto				
T	–Tenor				
B	–Bass				
SiR	Sopranino Recorder				
SR	Soprano Recorder				
AR	Alto Recorder				
TR	Tenor Recorder				
BR	Bass Recorder				
SG	Soprano Glockenspiel				
AG	Alto Glockenspiel				
SX	Soprano Xylophone				
AX	Alto Xylophone				
SM	Soprano Metallophone				
AM	Alto Metallophone				
	Percussion: Metals	TR	Triangle	FC	Finger Cymbals
		SB	Sleigh Bells	Chm Tree	Chime Tree
		Agogo	Agogo Bells	CB	Cow Bell
		Cym	Cymbals	SW	Slide Whistle
		Sistre	Sistre	Flex	Flexi-tone
	Percussion: Woods	WB	Wood Block	TtB	Tic-toc Block
		Cast	Castanets	Shakers	Shakers
		Mar	Maracas	Cbsa	Cabasa
		Ratchet	Ratchet	Rattles	Rattles
		TB	Temple Blocks	VS	Vibra Slap
		Cl	Claves	G	Guiro
		LogDr	Log Drum	SB	Sand Blocks
	Percussion: Membranes	HD	Hand Drum	Tamb	Tambourine
		Bongo	Bongo Drums	Conga	Conga Drums
		SD	Snare Drum		
	Large Percussion:	SusCym	Suspended Cymbal		
		Gong	Gong		
		BD	Bass Drum		
G	Guitar				
BX	Bass Xylophone				
BM	Bass Metallophone				
CbB	Contrabass Bars				
Timp	Timpani				
Piano	Piano				
Bass	Gamba, 'Cello, Double Bass				