

Singing

In the Orff Schulwerk approach, singing is recognized as fundamental—an invaluable means of individual and group musical expression. Singing requires and develops the highest degree of pitch sensitivity and security, thus being essential in the development of total musicality. Through singing songs considered culturally representative, we develop firsthand familiarity with the musical vocabulary of the various components of our culture. Orff Schulwerk uses childhood chants and calls, singing games, child-appropriate folk songs, and suitable composed songs of both past and present as materials for musical development. Songs should be carefully chosen to expand musical repertoire and vocabulary. They should be pedagogically useful and of exemplary musical quality. The volumes of the *Orff-Schulwerk: Music for Children* series, folk music sources, and supplementary elemental music publications provide the basic repertoire.

Instructors should model appropriate vocal range and quality and develop habits of posture, relaxation, and breathing necessary for good singing. In teacher training courses and in classroom applications, singing activities are used as follows to develop musical concepts and skills:

1. Time/Rhythm

- a. rhythmically free structure
- b. steady beat, simple, and compound subdivisions
- c. rhythm patterns drawn from natural speech
 - (1) full spectrum of commonly-used note durations
 - (2) special features such as anacrusis and syncopation
- d. metric structures: duple and triple groupings, duple and triple combinations, irregular combinations
- e. tempo: control of slow, medium, fast, *accelerando*, *ritardando*

2. Pitch/Melody

- a. pentatonic tonal vocabulary, derived from and related to appropriate song material and improvisational practice, in order of presentation:
 - (1) pre-pentatonic patterns: *sol-mi*, *sol-mi-la*, *mi-re-do*, etc.
 - (2) complete pentatonic scales built on *do* and *la*
 - (3) pentatonic scales built on *re*, *sol*, and *mi*

Note: In training courses and classroom applications, initial pitch and literacy development in pentatonic scales does not preclude singing songs in other scales. These provide the necessary basis for expanding pitch vocabulary and literacy at the appropriate time.

- b. diatonic tonal vocabulary, derived from and related to appropriate song material and improvisation
 - (1) hexatonic

- (2) diatonic modes
 - (a) major
 - i. Ionian
 - ii. Lydian
 - iii. Mixolydian
 - (b) minor
 - i. Dorian
 - ii. Phrygian
 - iii. Aeolian
- (3) major and minor scales
- c. melodic enrichment
 - (1) melodic ostinati as accompaniments for songs
 - (2) composed or improvised countermelodies
 - (3) melodic paraphony
 - (a) root position
 - (b) inversions
 - (c) changing inversions
- 3. Form
 - a. motive, phrase, section
 - b. verse–refrain, ABA, AAB, and other simple song forms
 - c. recitative, cantata, opera, and other long forms
- 4. Texture
 - a. contrast in grouping (e.g., solo, unison, solo–chorus, antiphony)
 - b. independent part singing (e.g., canons, vocal borduns, ostinati)
 - c. klangostinati (sustained vocal sounds) as background for improvised or composed recitative settings in free meter
- 5. Expression
 - a. exploration of vocal timbre and voice placement
 - b. development and exploration of expressive singing and articulation
 - c. exploration of contrasting dynamics
- 6. Improvisation and composition: vocal improvisation in the tonal structures as described in the sections on "Pitch/Melody" and "Form" above.
 - a. imitation: repetition of patterns as preparation for improvisation
 - b. exploratory techniques
 - (1) improvising chant-like conversations and storytelling

- (2) vocal response to visual imagery and/or movement stimuli
- c. development of small forms through improvisation
 - (1) question–answer phrases
 - (2) combination of phrases into longer melodic structures
 - (3) rhythmically-free melodies (e.g., recitative, vocables)
- 7. Non-traditional contexts: exploration of serial, aleatoric, minimalist, and other composition techniques
- 8. Integration
 - a. use of vocalization in developing background and mood in dramatic contexts as well as set songs that complement or narrate dramatic action
 - b. use of songs and/or vocal improvisation as stimuli for movement compositions or improvisation
 - c. use of movement improvisations and compositions as stimuli for development of vocal compositions
 - d. combination of singing and instrumental resources, body percussion, recorder, pitched and non-pitched percussion