

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

Impact and Influence

For over three decades, the Greater Cleveland Chapter AOSA has had a great impact on music education in northeast Ohio, and has maintained an extraordinary grassroots program to demonstrate the value of the Orff Schulwerk approach and promote its widespread use. Within the organization, this impact can in part be attributed to the efforts of Ruth Pollock Hamm and Betty Jane Lahman, both of whom shine brightly amongst a list of exceptional educators and leaders united by a belief that learning about music should be an active and joyful experience consisting of singing, saying, dancing, and playing.¹ Of the twenty-seven respondents to the survey issued in preparation for this study, over half collectively cited Lahman and/or Hamm as the individual(s) who most encouraged their membership, involvement and/or leadership, with nearly two dozen additional individuals getting a notable mention. As Barbara Lang suggests, “a chapter functions on the dedication, commitment and hard work of its board members, as well as their enthusiasm and creativity. ...A single individual can inspire others to meet [many] challenges.”² Both Hamm and Lahman have inspired countless numbers of chapter members, students, and professional educators alike, in northeast Ohio and across the nation.

¹ Both Ruth Hamm and B.J. Lahman have remained active with Chapter One and AOSA to the present day. Lahman continues to advise the chapter and serves on the assistance fund committee. She also continues to serve AOSA as the restricted funds advisory committee chairman, term to expire in 2006. Throughout the 1990's, Hamm continued to serve AOSA as a member of the teacher training guidelines task force and a member of *The Orff Echo* Editorial Board.

² Barbara Lang, survey interview by author, November 1, 2004.

Proliferation of Orff Schulwerk by the Greater Cleveland Chapter was accomplished not only by the leadership and membership of the organization, but by way of presenter and chapter sharing workshops of the highest quality.³ The impact such workshops had, and continue to have, on music education and music educators regionally can be attributed to the purpose of such workshops as a means to establish, maintain, and advance the training of each music educator through active learning experiences based on Orff process and contemporary music education trends.⁴ The knowledge gained by music educators via workshops was, and is, transferred to students, colleagues, and administrators across the region and state. Workshops quickly came to represent more than just a professional development opportunity. The joyful, participatory, and creative experiences at chapter workshops, both past and present, naturally drew many area educators to the Schulwerk approach.⁵ Past chapter president Patricia E. Koerner-Bailey recalls many members embracing “the unique opportunity for ongoing professional development within a supportive network of practicing music educators who were also impressive musicians.”⁶ Koerner-Bailey goes on to say that:

...In the Orff Schulwerk, I found sound teaching principles embodied in joyful learning for teacher and student. The teacher-learner paradigm was based on sequential, developmental learning within a disciplined, participatory process. In a music classroom with adolescents, that translates into active involvement that leads to achievement of competency and a high level of intrinsic reward.⁷

³ BethAnn Hepburn, survey interview by author, October 25, 2004.

⁴ Chris Folsom, survey interview by author, November 1, 2004.

⁵ Lucille Soulé, survey interview by author, November 1, 2004.

⁶ Patricia E. Koerner-Bailey, survey interview by author, November 10, 2004.

⁷ Ibid.

The impact of Chapter One on the music education profession regionally is recognized quickly when one examines the immediate collaborations established with OMEA/MENC representatives throughout state and within college/university music education programs. At the time Chapter One was established, OMEA/MENC represented an unvarying, if not stagnant approach to music teaching. The Greater Cleveland Chapter helped to revitalize the profession in the northeast Ohio area, as did the six other initial AOSA chapters within their regions. Arguably, such revitalization would have taken place in northeast Ohio eventually as is evident by the national and international spread of the Orff approach; however, the establishment of Chapter One helped bring this rejuvenation about early. Over time, numerous professional partnerships and associations were established by the chapter helping to unify the profession and open up a communication and dialogue in support of common music education goals.

Professional partnerships with music education and music industry organizations, along with personal relationships established by and with chapter members, attracted many new chapter members over the years.⁸ Chapter One routinely provided a safe and welcoming environment in which participants could be themselves.⁹ President at the time of this writing, BethAnn Hepburn, affirms:

A lot of the membership [believes] that it's not even about what you are learning that day. People make connections with other people in the chapter... and have made life long friends through this.... You can walk into a room where people know what you are going through on a daily basis. They're having the same exact

⁸ Beth Iafigliola, survey interview by author, November 1, 2004.

⁹ Ibid.

problems. They're trying to teach the same exact concepts. You build a network of people who are in the same boat as you...¹⁰

Personal and professional support for both novice and seasoned members routinely overshadowed any rare occasions when friction or competition were felt.¹¹ Patricia Koerner-Bailey recalls that:

B.J. continued to personally mentor me in my role as a practicing music specialist. She and other chapter members helped me work through pedagogical strategies, and introduced me to beautiful literature. B.J. was always available to me as a colleague, musician, and friend. Through the Orff Schulwerk, I was learning how to continually reinvent myself as a teacher and musician in the classroom. The professional support of B.J. and other AOSA chapter members was critical in maintaining focus and expanding my seedling skills. I will always be grateful for their inclusiveness and personal generosity in sharing their musicianship as well as their skills and knowledge of the Orff Schulwerk.¹²

The impact that the Greater Cleveland Chapter has had on music education can be illustrated further by the organization's establishment and promotion of Schulwerk teacher training courses throughout the region. Promotion of teacher training coursework has been a long standing objective of the chapter and has kept the organization alive by drawing in countless educators over the years.¹³ The *Orff at Orange* years brought tremendous growth and attention to the chapter that over time slowed and leveled out. The establishment of teacher training courses in the region, however, has led to the enrollment of many new members and students over the years, who in turn have helped rejuvenate the organization. Chapter member Mary Lou Lydecker recalls:

¹⁰ BethAnn Hepburn, survey.

¹¹ Patricia E. Koerner-Bailey, survey.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Alan Purdum, survey interview by author, October 9, 2004.

In the past couple of years I began to attend workshops through the Cleveland Chapter of AOSA. These workshops, clinicians and a dear friend helped me to realize that there was far more to Orff Schulwerk than just playing instruments. So I enrolled in Orff Schulwerk Level I this summer to discover just what this “more” was. What I found was an exciting philosophy that intertwines movement, singing, untuned and tuned barred percussion instrument playing, drama, arranging, improvisation, and much more.¹⁴

The growth of the chapter, however, served as both a celebrated goal and a challenge for the organization. Past chapter president and national AOSA executive director Wobig states that:

Everything was a challenge because we were growing and... ..we were constantly... ..making a super effort to reach people to become members and to get them actively involved. We never quit or backed off saying... “we’ve arrived.” You never had that attitude. You were always working hard to do more. There was no thought that this was a... ..challenge or a problem. This was just our mission. ...This was just one of our goals and we just worked very hard at it.¹⁵

Getting membership “actively involved” has been a relentless goal of the chapter since its inception. Modern trends in music education have resulted in greater demands on professional teaching schedules and have likewise fashioned new philosophies, attitudes, and values within a contemporary generation of educators not always willing or able to volunteer.¹⁶ Those who do step forward display remarkable passion and devotion of their time and “life energy” for the Orff Schulwerk cause.¹⁷ BethAnn Hepburn asserts that:

¹⁴ Mary Lou Lydecker, quoted in Roger W. Sams, “The Orff Schulwerk Approach,” *Triad: Official Publication of the Ohio Music Education Association* 66, no. 2 (November, 1998): 31.

¹⁵ Cindi Wobig, survey interview by author, October 25, 2004.

¹⁶ B.J. Lahman, survey interview by author, November 3, 2004.

¹⁷ Roger Sams, survey interview by author, October 13, 2004.

Our board is so good about nurturing you in a small way so that you feel confident enough that you could take the big leap. The board has always set up this safety net where you feel like you're going to be successful no matter what they ask you to do. It's not scary. You're not in it all by yourself.¹⁸

The generosity of countless chapter members, educators, and volunteers over the life of Chapter One is nothing short of amazing, and a characteristic worth celebrating.¹⁹

The impact and sustained success of the Greater Cleveland Chapter, exemplified within the pages of this study, can additionally be attributed to a history of responsible financial planning and scholarship assistance to members and college students. Such assistance is a unique and momentous achievement on the part of the chapter, as those assisted have historically, and will continue to become, the future leaders of the organization. Notably, college student exposure and enrollment has equaled that of the general membership during recent years. BethAnn Hepburn states:

I am a firm believer in [the college-student program] because that's how I got through the door... ...I know that [students] are our future leaders later down the road, and that you need to really take the time to invest in the colleges nearby.²⁰

The chapter investment in local area colleges and universities, has paid strong dividends in the form of a devoted and skilled membership representing all of northeast Ohio.

Ruth Hamm and others suggest that Orff Schulwerk is a philosophy and activity model that draws people together both musically and humanistically.²¹ The Greater

¹⁸ BethAnn Hepburn, survey.

¹⁹ Roger Sams, survey.

²⁰ BethAnn Hepburn, survey.

²¹ Ruth Pollock Hamm, interview by Cindi Wobig, "Founders Interview with Ruth Pollock Hamm: AOSA National Conference, Rochester, New York," (American Orff-Schulwerk Association, 2000), video 23RH.

Cleveland Chapter embarked on a journey over thirty-five years ago as a result of eight music educators drawing together with a common interest and enthusiasm. Few could have predicted the grassroots growth, expansion, development, and impact that Chapter One would have over the years, providing the organization with a rich history and an important place in the advancement of music education in northeast Ohio. The chapter continues to thrive, with many successful endeavors and accomplishments and some disappointments. It will continue to do so well into the 21st century.

Recommendations for Further Research

The Greater Cleveland Chapter plus six more – Greater Detroit, Rochester, Chicago, the Delaware Valley, St. Louis, and Cincinnati – were chartered on April 25, 1970 at the second annual OSA national conference. Research is recommended for the six other original AOSA chapters and their impact on music education regionally and nationally. An evaluation of the impact of Chapter One as well as the six other initial chapters may be accomplished by examining the number of Orff-Schulwerk certifications issued to music educators within these particular regions through various institutions of higher learning. A further evaluation of public and private school systems and their endorsement, adoption, and support of the approach is also recommended. Distinct and thorough biographical study is also needed for many pioneers and leaders of the North

American Orff Schulwerk movement, including Ruth Pollock Hamm, and is additionally recommended for future research.²²

²² Sue Orrell's, "The Work of Grace C. Nash in Music Education in the United States, 1960-1990, and Her Influence Upon Members of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association in the States of Arizona and Colorado," was until recently the only comprehensive study to focus on an AOSA affiliated individual and her involvement with Orff Schulwerk. The study provides a thorough account of Nash's career, a complete listing and analysis of her writings, and quantitative data regarding how her former students and select members of AOSA viewed her as a person and evaluated her work in music education. A subsequent study by Paul Cribari, "A Historical Study of Brigitte Warner and Her Contributions to Orff Schulwerk in the United States," was completed in May 2004 at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota.