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Brent M. Holl

E-Book

Sounds Abound!

**Harmony and Orchestration in the
Orff Instrumentarium**



BPP-BSA

In 1977, I began studying Orff Schulwerk at Memphis State University (now the University of Memphis). Each summer until 1995, I studied with master Orff teachers including Jos Wuytack, Konnie Saliba, Shirley McRae, Carol King, Lynn Johnson, and Nancy Ferguson. I also studied for two summers with Richard Gill at Hamline University in Minneapolis. This is how I learned Orff Schulwerk. Through my years of teaching elementary music, middle school choir and general music, and presenting workshops, conference sessions, and teaching Orff levels courses, the work of Orff and Keetman in *Music for Children*¹ continues to come alive for me.

Sounds Abound addresses the usage of functional and non-functional harmony in the context of Orff Schulwerk and the techniques of orchestration specifically for the Orff instrumentarium coupled with ethnic, pop and folk instruments.² This discussion of orchestration coupled with the application of harmony enriches the ability of teachers to create child-friendly, culturally responsive materials for young students with authenticity, using the music I love, and humility, using the music they love.

Presenting functional harmony to young students advancing from pentatonic with its reliance on drones to diatonic songs and instrumentals—while staying true to Orff’s elemental music approach—is essential to a child’s comprehensive aesthetic musical education. Students of all ages experience multiple musical genres. By age 10, most students hear and internalize music containing chord changes falling outside the pentatonic. Practitioners of Orff Schulwerk, importantly, must give equal attention to repertoire in diverse genres containing varied tone sets, tonalities, and modalities. As pentatonic gives way to diatonic becoming enmeshed with chromaticism as needed, students are encouraged to listen, sing, move, and play in styles appropriate and respectful to the discrete genres.

Carl Orff said (in 1962): "The real Orff-Schulwerk is not playing out of the books. **The real Orff-Schulwerk is doing your own things in the local situation.**"³ [Emphasis mine]

In that spirit, this book shows modern concepts and techniques for orchestration, composition, and arranging learned at the Memphis Orff Institute, Hamline University, and in session with Brigitte Warner, as well as the adaptations and new techniques I discovered with my students at Stuarts Draft and Stewart Middle Schools in Virginia. All these examples and descriptions are expansions of Orff Schulwerk as adapted, interpreted, and expanded by Jos Wuytack.

I am confident all the techniques, concepts, and ideas presented in this book accurately reflect historical models and can be adapted to students of any age. Learning the “tools of the trade,” including harmony and orchestration, send us as music teachers to our students with confidence and inspiration.



¹Keetman, Gunild, and Carl Orff. *Music for Children*. All mentions of *Music for Children* in this book refer to the Murray editions.

²In my classroom, we regularly used instruments, such as guitar, banjo, dulcimer, spoons, washboard as well as electric guitar, drum set, electric keyboard, and electric bass, all representing the varied cultural experiences of the children in my schools.

³Jos Wuytack in the 1978 Teachers Class (Level 3 notes) at the Memphis Orff Institute referencing Carl Orff from the first Summer Course at the Orff Institute in Salzburg in 1962.

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The Beginnings

What then is elemental music? Elemental 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. Elemental Music is near the earth, natural, physical, within the range of everyone to learn it and experience it and suitable for the child...

Elemental Music, word and movement, play, everything that awakens and develops the powers of the spirit, this is the 'humus' of the spirit, the humus without which we face the danger of a spiritual erosion.¹

Ensemble music making defines the original Orff Schulwerk. Students at the *Guntherschule* integrated instrumental technique with improvisation and composition to accompany singing, playing, and creative movement. Because the school focused on dance and music in the elemental style, student creativity and performance was the *raison d'être*. This gave rise to the Orff instrumentarium.

The Orff instrumentarium was explicitly developed to give instant accessibility for students to create accompaniments to dances and songs. Having students improvise and compose accompaniments for dancing necessitated the use of instruments that could be played universally with little preparation or practice. Later the instrumental activities included conducting as well. The instruments also lent themselves easily to the style of music invented by Carl Orff around 1924 for the piano, which he called Elemental Music.

In 1949, Orff was asked to provide music lessons for children based on the Schulwerk for broadcasts over Bavarian Radio, thus the Orff Schulwerk developed and evolved, culminating with the collaboration with Gunild Keetman in the five volumes of *Musik für Kinder*. Emerging from the devastation of World War II, these lessons were the first formal music instruction many children had received since the war's end. Here, the emphasis in the Schulwerk shifted as dance was not possible in a radio program. At the time, Orff was completing his opera *Antigone* and had been experimenting with the use of speech as a musical entity which he then incorporated into the Schulwerk. The role of body percussion adapted from Bavarian folk dances in the *Guntherschule* was expanded for use on radio and incorporated into the Schulwerk.



The Orff instrumentarium origins are well documented in Hans Schneider's excellent description of the developing Schulwerk in his book, *Carl Orff - The Schulwerk*.² The new instrumentarium supported Orff and Gunild Keetman's pedagogical precepts: creativity, ensemble play, active participation in the music making, and instant success in playing sophisticated sounding instrumental pieces. Also quickly discovered, the new timbres being developed were highly motivating and inspirational to students and teachers.

¹Orff, Carl. *Orff Re-Echoes*, Volume 1, Isabel McNeil Carley, ed., *Orff-Schulwerk: Past & Future*, American Orff Schulwerk Association, 1993, page 6.

²Schneider, Hans. *Carl Orff - The Schulwerk*.

In Harmony

When considering accompaniment, we touch the original intent of Orff Schulwerk. Initially at the Guntherschule, students (girls ages 13-22) were trained in playing technique and improvisation on the instruments. The Orff instrumentarium was developed specifically because the instruments chosen were playable by students as they accompanied their own dances and songs. The instruments lent themselves easily to the original style of Orff's Elemental Music.

In light of new Bavarian Radio broadcasts in 1949, the instrumentarium took on a new significance. The broadcasts and the materials developed there were adapted and published in *Musik für Kinder (1950-1954)*. In *Musik für Kinder* and continued in later adaptations, the drone and ostinato combined to create a unique accompaniment style that evolved into the modern bordun. Keetman described these accompaniments in *Elementaria*, published in English in 1974.

It is best at first to use neutral accompaniments (main notes: tonic or key note, fifth or octave above, with even, continuous rhythms) that can be varied later through the inclusion of other notes.¹

In many ways, these arrangements in the first volumes are pre-harmonic emphasizing contrapuntal relationships between melodies and accompaniments while emphasizing complementary rhythmic patterns in speech, melodic, and instrumental parts. In later volumes we find the introduction of chordal harmony. These original writings, including *Musik für Kinder*, left out any further detailed explanations of elemental harmony. In *Elementaria*, Keetman provides pre-harmonic accompaniment style examples along with details about instrument technique and performance, but little information about Elemental Harmony. This pattern continues through the Murray Edition Volumes as well as *Elementaria*.

In 1991, Wuytack wrote an essay titled *Updating Carl Orff's Educational Ideas* outlining the importance of the Schulwerk by describing its "timeless character."

The timeless character of the Schulwerk lies in its quality of being elemental and pre-artistic. For Carl Orff the models in his five volumes make an inexhaustible arsenal of elementary musical and speech forms. But this timeless power does not exclude the possibility of a free and creative adaptation for the present day. Exactly the opposite is true. The model character of the Schulwerk demands as a principle that the examples be constantly reworked in improvisation and in re-creation.²

Later in the essay, Wuytack makes the point that not every teacher takes the time to understand or analyze elemental harmony just by score study and playing through the published models with their students. He thought it essential to expand and codify precisely what was happening in the *Musik für Kinder* volumes, breaking out the components and providing much more detailed explanations of each aspect of elemental harmony. Wuytack felt a strong connection should be kept between his work and the original work of Carl Orff, but in order to be a growing and viable educational practice, Wuytack expanded Orff's principles to include extensions to jazz, rock, pop, serial music, electronic, and aleatoric music, creating new models for teaching and learning. When he expanded on Orff's basic tenets of Elemental Music to include models in the cultural styles of music making throughout the world, Wuytack was following Orff's strong advice.

Every phase of Schulwerk will always provide stimulation for new independent growth; therefore it is never conclusive and settled, but always developing, always growing, always flowing.³

¹Keetman, Gunild. *Elementaria*, page 63.

²Wuytack, Jos. *Updating Carl Orff's Educational Ideas*. Carl Orff Canada Journal, 1993.

³Orff, Carl. *Orff Re-Echoes*, Volume 1, Isabel McNeil Carley, ed., *Orff-Schulwerk: Past & Future*, American Orff Schulwerk Association, 1993, page 6.

Black-Eyed Susie - Example 1

Traditional Appalachian Folk
Arr. Brent Holl

(A)

Voice

Love my wife, and I love my ba - by, Love my bis-cuits sopped in gra - vy.

AX

BX

D:

(B)

V

5

Hey, hey, black-eyed Su - sie! Hey, hey, black-eyed Su - sie!

AX

BX

Love my wife, and I love my baby,
Love my biscuits sopped in gravy.

Chorus
Hey, hey, black-eyed Susie!
Hey, hey, black-eyed Susie!

All I want in God's creation
Is a pretty little wife with a big plantation.

Chorus
All I need to make me happy
Is a little bitty baby to call me pappy.

Chorus
One named Sam and the other one Davy,
One liked ham and the other one gravy.

Chorus

In Example 1, the alto and bass xylophones play complementary two-measure ostinatos using only the tonic note. The use of cut time makes the score more readable and gives the option of customizing tempo to skill level. Be sure to keep the two-beat feel throughout. Harmonic considerations are ignored as the drone accompaniment persists throughout, consistent with the drone use in traditional folk instruments.

The Simple Bordun

Simple Bordun - A harmony of the fifth interval based upon the first (tonic) and fifth degree, so that there is only one harmony, the harmony of the first degree chord.¹

That Simple Bordun accompaniments can always (but not only) be used with pentatonic melodies follows the best practice set forth in Volume 1 of *Music for Children* as well as Keetman's descriptions in *Elementaria*. The accompaniments in Volume 1 are oriented primarily around rhythm and the use of ostinatos. Some instrumental activities used this two-note drone, now named Simple Bordun. Keetman called these "Ostinato exercises for tuned percussion instruments." In Volume 1, examples 1-8, page 82, exemplify what Wuytack called the Simple Chord Bordun. Many other pieces have single note drones and Broken Chord Borduns as well.

Wuytack built on this historical background, suggesting it possible to use the Simple Bordun when melodies are hexatonic (*do re me fa sol la do*¹) or diatonic (*do re mi fa sol la ti do*¹). With hexatonic and diatonic melodies take care that tonic harmony presents throughout. In folk music, if the predominant harmony outlined in the melody never changes, the tonic chord harmony provides a satisfactory accompaniment.

Using a bordun with an interesting, repeating rhythm creates sweet sounding, sparkling arrangements. These repeating rhythmic formulas are developmentally essential for child-centered instrumental accompaniments. When combined with the magical Orff instrumentarium timbres, a bordun or drone accompaniment can be a simple yet charming accompaniment.

In these examples, you'll see versions of Simple Borduns as repeating patterns, often causing confusion with the ostinato. The essential bordun function provides a strong bass which strengthens the tonic harmony. A bordun only shares the common characteristic of repetition with an ostinato. It differs from an ostinato when breaking the repetitive pattern by ending the bordun on the last strong beat making a perfect final cadence. An unbounded ostinato wanders freely, manifesting creatively as an unchanging pattern of rhythm, melody, or harmony.

The Simple Bordun artfully accompanies a pentatonic, bitonic, tritonic, or folkloric melody; a hexatonic or diatonic melody with only notes from the tonic chord on the strong beats; and a hexatonic or diatonic melody with notes from the related pentatonic scale on the strong beats. The four types of Simple Bordun are Chord, Broken Chord, Crossover, and Level.

The Harmonic Series and the Bordun

Doubling the tonic an octave lower to support the bordun and the arrangement always strengthens the arrangement. The pitch range of one octave plus a perfect fifth follows the musical harmonic series starting with the fundamental (the tonic), the first harmonic vibrating at a frequency twice the fundamental (octave), and the second harmonic (perfect fifth) vibrating three times the rate of the fundamental. The harmonic series scientifically confirms the widespread, child-friendly bordun use with doubled bass, so common in Orff instrument accompaniments. This makes the Simple Bordun the strongest and most supportive accompaniment for singing or playing. Simple and scientifically based, the Bordun allows for and encourages rhythmic and timbral creativity.

Two Simple Borduns in Succession

Keep arrangements simple, rather than overly dense and complicated. In simplicity is beauty. The temptation to *simultaneously* use more than one Simple Bordun should be resisted. A cleaner, clearer, more straightforward accompaniment sparkles when simple bordun patterns follow each other *successively*.

¹Wuytack, Jos. Master Class. University of Memphis, 1995.

El Dia Lluvioso (The Rainy Day)

Brent Holl
Fine

A *Mysterioso*

GL Voice

Rain she come and wash the flow - ers, Rain she come and soak the grain.
Rain she come and feed the gar - den, Rain she come and go a - gain.

AM

Gong

Hanging Cymbal

Wind Chimes

BM

8 d:

B *D.C. al Fine*

5

SG

AG SM

HC

BM

8

In *El Dia Lluvioso* (D minor/*la*-based pentatonic), the Level Bordun appears in one instrument and uncharacteristically plays in the same range as the voices. Making it a single half note sustained on the bass metallophone allows the voices to ring. The alto metallophone Tone Color played in the second and fourth measure along with the metal percussion provides a colorful two-measure split ostinato.

The B Section features the glockenspiels playing the descending parallel scale passages in F pentatonic. This technique is an elemental version of paraphony,¹ the parallel melodic movement of two or more voices. Along with the small percussion, the overall effect artistically portrays the musical metaphor for a gentle spring shower. The bass metallophone sustains the fundamental tone in a classic single note drone.

The universal use of ringing metallic timbres reflects the *mysterioso* designation and the gentle sound of falling rain. Playing the A Section melody on a tenor recorder as a variation adds even deeper character to the arrangement.

¹See paraphony, page 46.

Expanding the Bordun

Because a bordun has only the tonic chord function, having more "functions" rests outside the Simple Bordun realm. Historically, the drone has always been available to accompany songs and instrumental melodies. Developmentally, our youngest students don't have any problem with the simple bordun (drone) staying on the first and fifth degrees throughout, but as children grow and participate in popular and colloquial culture, a chord change becomes a pleasing option. Expand the bordun to introduce full functional harmony to elementary students by moving the tonic note to the dominant note when *re* or *fa* are on strong beats to create a satisfying performance.

Good News

Freely ♩ = 60 Arr. Brent Holl

Refrain: Good news, char - iot's com - in'. Good news, char - iot's com - in'.

Verses: There's a
There's a
There's a

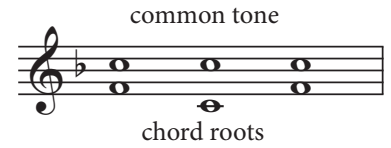
BM BX: F: 8

V: 5

V: Good news, char-iot's com-in' and I don't want it leav-in' me be-hind. 1 2

Tonic - Dominant (I-V)

To use functional harmony, first examine the dominant chord's (V) harmonic function. Children have heard the tonic and dominant throughout their early elementary years, and with the Broken Chord Bordun, they've heard the pre-functional use of tonic and dominant. In single drone accompaniments they've experienced the harmonic function of dissonance and tension. To build on this in the mid to upper elementary years, when folk songs contain an inherent move to the dominant chord, move one voice down to the tonic and back to the dominant as a simple and child-centered technique. The Common Tone (C) can stay in the same instrument with one player or can be split between two players. This example expands the bordun and can be used for a first experience with the I-V chord progression.



Alouette - Example 1 (I-V)

Canada Traditional
Arr. Brent Holl
Fine

The melody follows the harmonic progression and the harmonic progression follows the melody. For example, in measures 2 and 4 of the melody, G (*re*) occurs on the strong beat. In the dominant (C) chord, the fifth degree (G) fits the harmony. A child-friendly Simple Bordun provides a satisfactory sound for the youngest children in initial folk-style instrumental activities, while a chord change here pleases older children who have been immersed culturally in changing harmony.

The bass part uses only the chord roots. Single note bass parts with the tonic always being the bass note are consistent with early elementary. The common tone, C, in the alto xylophone connects both the tonic and dominant chords, thus functioning as a unifying harmonic factor. A child-friendly approach puts the common tone in one instrument and the tonic in another. We can preserve the interval of a fifth by using the alto xylophone for the common tone and the bass xylophone for the chord roots.

Alouette - Example 2 (I-V)

Canada Traditional
Arr. Brent Holl

In Example 2, the common tone (tonic chord 5th degree) sounds on all strong beats with the tonic in root position and the dominant an octave and a fifth above the tonic. When the chords change, the common tone

The Blues

One joyful wildflower seed of Orff Schulwerk planted in the fertile ground of American culture is studying and playing the blues in the classroom with children, always a highlight in my classes. We would listen to artists, John Lee Hooker, R. L. Burnside, Howlin' Wolf, and Bo Diddley. Children readily recognize the swing rhythm, the iconic I-IV-V chord progression, and the familiar phrasing. A unique and engaging form of dominant and subdominant harmony, evolving in the American "Melting Pot," the blues can be complex both in form, origin, and style ranging from W. C. Handy to Muddy Waters to Stevie Ray Vaughn and has captured the imagination of music lovers around the world.

The Daniel Blues

Dee Dee Sullivan
Arr. Brent Holl

Swing

Voice

Dan - iel, down in that den, tried to warn the Pha-roah a - gain and a - gain. He had the

SX SM
GL

AX
AM

BX

8 e:

V

cour - age, cour-age of a li-on, with the Lord right there be - side him and he knew he would win!

SX SM
GL

AX
AM

BX

8

9

V

Bop, ba-ba - doo, wa! ³ Bop, ba-ba - doo, wa! ³

SX SM
GL

AX
AM

BX

8

The musical score is arranged in three systems. Each system includes a vocal line with lyrics and four instrumental staves: Saxophone (Saxophone Alto/Mezzo), Saxophone (Saxophone Soprano/Alto), Saxophone (Saxophone Tenor/Baritone), and Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo/style is marked 'Swing'. The score includes lyrics for the vocal line and musical notation for all instruments, including triplets and a fermata.

Beyond Primary Triads

Carl Orff's challenge to "*Let the students be their own composers*" encourages practitioners to inspire creativity, musicianship, and the entire host of musical and artistic conceptual growth in students. Orff's challenge assumes the corollary of arranging. Child-friendly, elemental styles of accompaniment are creative and motivating throughout the elementary years. At the beginning, the idealized world of pentatonic encourages children to freely experiment with melody, rhythm, and static harmony without fear of dissonance. In pentatonic scales without semitones, abundant consonance coexists alongside the dissonance of whole tones. Jos Wuytack recognized the need to find a middle ground within this coexistence he called "personance."

Because of the absence of semitones, all the notes can ring together. These sounds are called "personances," the middle between consonance and dissonance, thus enabling group improvisation.¹

The key concept here, the absence of semi-tones, drives the incredible utility of the gapped (pentatonic) scale in the teaching of music to children. Because of this consonance, or now personance, harmonic rhythm for any pentatonic piece can include just one harmony, the harmony the first degree chord. When children begin to explore hexatonic and diatonic scales, the stage has been set for changing chords. These changing chords are built on patterns first experienced in the Broken Chord, the Crossover (Arpeggiated), Level, and Chord Borduns children learned when working in the world of pentatonic.

Children and teachers are now ready to enter the world of diatonic tonality and modality by incorporating functional harmony enabling them to play music they love, discovering along the way how to arrange, compose, and accompany their own creations. As Wuytack wrote,

Not only do I incorporate the "old gold" of the folk rhymes, the basic motifs of human existence, ballads, and fairy-tales, but also the humorous, naive versifying of action-songs, exploration of universal topics of concern (ecology, world peace, racial injustice) and poetry, songs, drama of the world of today (muppets, teen-aged turtles, computers). While remaining loyal to Orff's elemental style, I elaborated his principles to include an extension to jazz music, rock, pop music, serial structures, electronic creations, and repetitive music. For more than 30 years, I used the typical Orff techniques, such as ostinato, canon, and ritual rhythms, in order to create new "models."²

It only remains to discover what can happen in a music classroom when students become ready to explore new combinations of chords and harmony. Building on previous experience with bordun and primary chords, adding secondary chords broadens students' involvement in their own world of music and enables exploration into new frontiers of music.

Applications to Orff Schulwerk

Dominant and subdominant harmony are the bedrock of American musical culture. Returning to the discussion of Dominant Harmony,

The tonic chord is a resting point, the end of a cadence, the beginning and the end of a melody. The remaining chords available to us in the diatonic scale are simply means to arrive at the tonic over time. Each chord, starting with the dominant, provides a basis in harmony for each note of the melody not a part of the tonic triad. Other chords (supertonic, mediant, subdominant, submediant, subtonic) have the function of either leading to the dominant or the subdominant or directly back to the tonic.³

¹Wuytack, Jos. *Musica Activa - Melodic Expression*, page 44.

²Wuytack, Jos. *Updating Carl Orff's Educational Ideas*.

³See page 42.

*A la puerta del cielo - Example 2 (I-ii-V)*Augustus D. Zanzig
Arr. Brent Holl

The musical score is arranged in systems. The first system includes Voice, AM, and BM parts. The second system includes V, GL, AM, BM, and CBX parts. The third system includes V, AM, and BM parts. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). Chord symbols (I, ii, V) are placed below the BM and AM staves. A large watermark 'Beating Path Publications' is visible across the score.

System 1:

- Voice:** A la puer - ta del cie - lo ven - den za - pa - tos, Pa - ra los an - gel - i - tos que
A los ni - ños que duer - man Dios be - ne - di - ce A las ma - dres que ve - lan
- AM:** I ii I ii I ii
- BM:** 8 F:

System 2:

- V:** 7
and - an de - scal - zos. Duer - me - te, ni - ño, Duer - me - te, ni - ño,
Dios las a - sis - te.
- GL:**
- AM:**
- BM:** 8 I ii I ii I V
- CBX:**

System 3:

- V:** 13
Duer - me - te, ni - ño, ar - ru, ar - ru.
- AM:** I ii I V I
- BM:** 8

In this version of the lullaby, the ii substituting for the IV sets up the I-ii harmonization. The melodic ostinato in the alto metallophone has the dual purpose of filling in the thirds and providing paraphony. The orchestration changes in the refrain by adding the drone in the contrabass xylophone and double-stop paraphony in the glockenspiel. This style of harmonization reflects the modal style rather than the more traditional tonal version on the previous page. Both renditions reflect the style and song's mood.

Buy the Book!

E-Book



This book addresses the role of functional and non-functional harmony combined with the palate of timbre in the Orff instrumentarium in developing child-friendly, culturally relevant materials for young students with authenticity, using the music that I love, and humility, using the music they love.

