



# LEADERSHIP

By Aaron Hansen, Cedar Falls, Iowa

## Nurturing Advocacy for the Schulwerk: Advocacy in Your Community

*Introduction By Jo Ella Hug, President*

*Advocacy for the work we do in the classroom is an ongoing challenge for each and every teacher. However, advocacy for the Schulwerk often crosses from the classroom to our communities, chapters and other related groups. Our ability to advocate for the Schulwerk influences the availability of time and resources for the ones we hold most dear – our students.*

*This is the first of four articles in our series, Nurturing Advocacy for the Schulwerk. I am very grateful for the spirit of sharing you will see as the series unfolds. Many thanks to:*

- Aaron Hansen** *Advocacy in Your Community*
- BethAnn Hepburn** *Advocacy in Your Chapter and State*
- Donna Staton** *Advocacy at the National Level*
- Jacque Schrader** *Advocating for Schulwerk in Other Countries and Cultures*

*The personal benefits of being a servant leader often provide unexpected opportunities for personal growth and enrichment. I hope you will find the thread that unites us all through advocacy for the Schulwerk.*

Being a servant-leader and an advocate through my Orff Schulwerk teaching has proven a rewarding journey. The journey started with Orff Schulwerk Teacher Training Courses at the University of St. Thomas in 2004 and led to a performance at the 2006 National Conference in Omaha. Along the way I have had the privilege of sharing the Schulwerk with my students, fellow teachers, administrators and community members. Integrating the Schulwerk into my curriculum has given me the opportunity to grow as an educator and a musician. The rewards have been many and I am excited to share some of these experiences with you.

Sharing the Schulwerk with my students has been an experience filled with wonderful discoveries for all of us. I encourage my students to have ownership in their work, ultimately leading to a higher level of musicianship. The students are responsible for their artistic choices and we discuss the outcomes of those choices. They are applying higher level thinking skills to particular projects as they manipulate musical concepts they have already experienced. They are discussing and manipulating dynamics, elemental phrase forms, meter, tempo, timbre and rhythm on a daily basis. They are making more artistic choices and their general creativity increases with every lesson. From a servant-leader perspective, my role changes from the leader to the facilitator in the classroom as the students are leading their own learning and music making.

In the Waverly-Shell Rock School District, the Orff Schulwerk approach was already in place, but sharing the components of Orff teaching and the importance of the Schulwerk became my challenge. I began inviting teachers into my classroom to experience pieces from the Schulwerk performed by their students. The role of servant-leader evolved as the students began to verbalize the creative process and the choices that were involved in a particular project. It was obvi-

ous to the teachers that a higher level of learning was taking place and the students were becoming advocates of their own work.

On the community level, I have worked to advocate for the important role the Schulwerk plays in my students' music education. Each spring my K-4 students present an "informance" for their families highlighting songs and dances from their daily work. One of the percussion ensembles I direct performed for the school board as our building spotlight, which provided an opportunity to share the Schulwerk in action with the board members. My students have had opportunities to perform in collaboration with high school events and to share the Schulwerk with an expanded public. Parents and administrators have begun to see the Schulwerk at work in students' daily lives and the difference it makes for them as artists and caretakers of their own work.

After my first national conference experience at the 2005 AOSA National Conference in Birmingham, I reflected on the work my students were doing daily in the classroom. The high level of artistry and musicianship they demonstrated prompted me to submit an audition tape to the 2006 Omaha Conference Committee. The preparation process leading up to our performance at the National Conference was another adventure with the Schulwerk. The students took an active role in the creative process generating ideas and implementing their ideas into the performance. From a servant-leader perspective, I could see that the students had grown into more informed musicians capable of being almost autonomous in their decision-making. As an Orff Schulwerk teacher, it was empowering and humbling to see this transformation in the students.

Advocating for the importance of the Schulwerk and working as a servant-leader to others has transformed my teaching style. There is power in articulating what you are teaching and the impact it has on your students. I have witnessed my students grow as musicians and become more independent in their musical work. I have had a significant growth in the support from faculty and administrators, as well as the community. I have grown as a musician myself and feel more passionate daily about what I am teaching and why.

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