

AOSA Teacher Education Curriculum Standards

Recorder in Orff Teacher Education Courses

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When Carl Orff and his associates, notably Gunild Keetman, were waiting for Karl Maendler to build the first set of barred instruments, ethnomusicologist Curt Sachs suggested the use of recorders: “Then you will have what you most need, a melody instrument to your percussion, the pipe to the drum.”¹

When a set of recorders arrived at the Güntherschule, none of the musicians was familiar with them, but Keetman reportedly said, “Give me a recorder, and I will find out how it works.”² In doing so, she made the instrument her own. Thus, the recorder’s melodic voice came to be an integral part of the Orff Schulwerk philosophy and process. As such, it must occupy a prominent place in all levels of teacher education courses.

Recorder class is an extension of Orff Basic class with special emphasis on recorder-specific concepts and skills. Recorder is not an isolated area of study. The principles and pedagogical techniques mirror those taught in Basic and Movement. Recorder teachers must coordinate with Basic and Movement teachers regularly regarding specific materials and elemental music concepts covered in all three classes, as well as co-teaching the students. In that way, teachers model a holistic Orff-based music program through collaboration in process and content, and by incorporating recorder organically into the broader teacher education curriculum.

However, the recorder poses a unique challenge in teacher education courses. Like any other musical instrument, the recorder demands the discipline of practice and assimilation to develop the cumulative skills necessary for proficient playing. It is unrealistic to expect an accomplished recorder player to emerge from a two-week course—or even three two-week courses—and nothing more. Nevertheless, goals and expectations must be set high enough to challenge students to develop skills and musical excellence. The recorder teacher must encourage and inspire students to practice, improvise, and play in ensemble between teacher education courses.

¹ Carl Orff, *The Schulwerk*, trans. Margaret Murray (New York: Schott Music Corp., 1978), 96.

² *Ibid.*, 109.

Essential recorder elements are achieving playing skill, personal musical growth, and recorder pedagogy. The recorder teacher must present a clear model of pedagogical principles and procedures, illustrating not only how to play the recorder but also how to use the recorder as a teaching tool in the general music classroom, and how to teach others to play. All this must be within the context of Orff Schulwerk. To do that work, the recorder teacher must have already had teacher education training before teaching others. In addition, a recorder apprenticeship program is being designed to ensure understanding of process, sequence, repertoire, and improvisation in the elemental style with a range of students.

CONTENT AND GOALS:

The recorder content of the teacher education program proceeds developmentally and is reinforced and expanded at each level. Below are the main goals for each level of teacher education in recorder:

- Level I: Students learn to play soprano recorder from C1 to A2, improvise from the beginning of the first class, implement ideas learned in basic and movement, and prepare to play and teach recorder along with other media in their own Orff-based classroom.
- Level II: Students learn to play alto (F1 to F3), switch between alto and soprano with increasing fluency, demonstrate understanding of this level's concepts through improvisation, and use pedagogy of beginning alto as appropriate for upper elementary and Middle School age children.
- Level III: Students learn to use pedagogy (process and content), play with advanced technique, and improve their solo and ensemble musicianship.

At each level:

1. Recorder teaching parallels the sequence of Orff Schulwerk in process and content, and amplifies and confirms what is covered in Orff Basic classes.
2. Lessons are based on elemental pedagogical principles, with the instructor's teaching process serving as a model.
3. Improvisation is present in every lesson.

The most frequent and fervent requests made when we began the recorder component of this revision were:

1. Strong and specific emphasis on pedagogy throughout all levels.
2. Broader and more frequent experience with improvisation.
3. Integrating recorder into the Orff classroom alongside other Orff media.
4. Stepping up requirements for teachers of the recorder component.
5. Sharing elemental, folk, historical, and pedagogical resources.

While this means there is less concert playing from a book, concert opportunities are widely available outside of Orff courses. That cannot be said of Orff pedagogy or improvisational opportunities in elemental style.

N.B.: More specific outcomes are listed on the recorder guideline matrices for each level. Clearly, there are too many examples in the matrices for the time allotted for each course. The matrices are designed to provide examples and possibilities for what can be accomplished.