

Candidate for Region IV Representative



Jennifer Vannatta-Hall

Jennifer Vannatta-Hall teaches at Middle Tennessee State University.

She holds bachelors, masters and doctorate degrees in music education. She taught preK-8 general music and choir in two different public school systems.

She is certified through the master level of Orff Schulwerk.

She conducts the Ethos Children's Choir, an auditioned community choir for children in grades 2-6.

CANDIDATE FORUM

1. What do you see as the role of Orff Schulwerk?

The Orff Schulwerk approach plays an integral role in music education and dance. The 2014 National Core Arts Standards center on creating, performing, responding and connecting. The Orff approach addresses creating and performing in depth. Music educators can also easily use an Orff approach to facilitate responding and connecting. With the current high-stakes testing focus in most schools across the nation, children do lots of sitting and drilling. Therefore, another role of Orff Schulwerk in music education today is to facilitate active, engaging, and creative opportunities for children to learn, work together, and become more confident to perform, create, and move to music. The power of music is best experienced by being active participants in the process of music making, and the Orff approach is the most exciting way for children to engage in musicking and experience immediate success. Lastly, I believe that Orff Schulwerk can and should play a more prominent role in secondary music education. I expound on this in my response to question four below.

2. What are your leadership strengths and how do you think they would contribute to the work of AOSA and promoting Orff Schulwerk?

Dating all the way back to my high school years, I have been heavily involved in leadership roles and administrative positions. Currently, I am one of five faculty members on the Leadership Team for the

MTSU School of Music, a department that consists of 34 full time and 45 adjunct faculty. I also serve as the Collegiate Chair for the Tennessee Music Educators Association. I frequently find myself chairing committees in the School of Music and providing leadership with the Mountain Lake Colloquium for Teachers of General Music. I believe I possess several strengths that help me provide leadership to others with whom I collaborate. I am a good communicator. I reply in a timely manner to emails and phone messages. I am organized. I keep electronic files so they are readily accessible. I am tech-savvy. I use Doodle, Google docs, Dropbox, and other software and apps to stay organized and easily share and communicate with others. I am a good listener. I believe there is wisdom in listening more and talking less. Progress can be impeded when there is too much talking going on. It is so important to listen to others' ideas and opinions, then summarize and/or offer my ideas as needed. I am diligent and efficient. When something needs to be done, I attend to it and knock it out. I often hear it said, "When you want something done, ask a busy person." I am a busy person, but I prioritize and create timelines to ensure no responsibility falls through the cracks. I am diplomatic and personable. I want each person with whom I work to feel valued and important. I also have the ability to address conflict diplomatically. Conflict is never easy, but when conflicts arise, I am comfortable dealing with them in a proactive and caring manner.

3. What is the role of the National Board of Trustees as it relates to the general membership and how would you fulfill this role?

First and foremost, the National Board of Trustees should provide leadership to the general membership. Board members should be knowledgeable about the Orff approach and should be advocates for its inclusion in music education. Board members should be active and visible at state, regional and national AOSA workshops and conferences. Finally, board members should educate and recruit music educators in their own communities to pursue Orff training and to attend Orff professional development opportunities. I would fulfill the role as Region VI representative by educating and advocating Orff Schulwerk to our pre-service music educators at the collegiate level across the state of TN. I would also reach out to collegiate music teacher educators in IL, IN, KY, MI, OH, WI and WV to encourage them to do the same with their pre-service music teachers. I would communicate Orff Schulwerk professional development opportunities to in-service music educators across the region. I would also reach out to the numerous local AOSA chapters across the eight states of Region VI. I never hesitate to ask for advice and/or guidance. Since this would be a new position for me, I would seek guidance on how best I could fulfill the role of region representative. That being said, I believe communication and education should be at the forefront of any leadership role.

4. What is your vision for AOSA and Orff Schulwerk in the future?

It is my observation and perception that not too many collegiate music educators are active in AOSA. It always seemed to be a challenge to recruit folks for the AOSA Research Interest Group. I would like to see that change. One of the best ways I know to advocate the Orff Approach for music education is to train our future music educators in institutions of higher learning. I currently teach a course at MTSU entitled, "Instrumental Techniques for the Music Classroom." This is required two-credit course for vocal/general music education majors. Students are exposed to all facets of Orff Schulwerk, and my goal is to whet their appetite to pursue Orff Level I in the immediate future. Another prevailing perception is that Orff is mostly for elementary music. Through my personal experience of teaching middle school general music, I believe that Orff is the best way to engage middle schoolers in "musicking," that is doing music and actively engaging students through creating, performing, listening and moving. Some middle school music specialists seem to confuse the elemental Orff

approach with the belief that it is just for "elementary" students. Therefore, my vision for Orff in the future is to advocate Orff Schulwerk, especially among music teacher educators in higher education and secondary music educators.