

Symposion 2016

Laudatio for Carolee Stewart receiving the Medaille of the International Orff-Schulwerk Forum

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What is the medaillon of the International Orff-Schulwerk Forum?

There was a long tradition, started by Hermann Regner when he was in charge of the Carl Orff Foundation, to honor outstanding pedagogues with the „Pro Merito“ award for their lifelong intensive and exemplary work for the Orff-Schulwerk. When this tradition came to an end the Orff-Schulwerk Forum thought it would be very sad to stop with this recognition of highly meritorious pedagogical examples and also with the ritual of giving the award which mostly took place during a Symposion. So we decided some years ago to continue, even if in a changed and more modest form than before with the award of the Medaillon of the Orff-Schulwerk Forum. Of course there are quite a number of wonderful teachers, deeply engaged and successful in their work with Orff-Schulwerk, unfortunately we can not give all of them an award. Therefore we would like to thank and honor today

Dr. Carolee Stewart

personally as well as representing all those who would equally merit the award.

Who is Carolee Stewart?

She herself once described her professional career as in three periods: teacher, teacher's teacher and leading director of teaching institutions.

She received her B.A. in music education from Westfield State College, USA; her Masters of Music in music education from the New England Conservatory of Music, and her Ph.D. in music education from the University of Michigan. She started teaching music in 1972 and taught in primary as well as in secondary schools. For 10 years she taught at the Peabody Institute of the John Hopkins University in Baltimore, before she became dean of the Peabody Institute's Preparatory Division, where she was responsible for the pre-college and adult studies programs until her retirement three years ago.

Carolee's connections with Orff-Schulwerk

started early in the 70s when she participated in some Orff-Schulwerk workshops she took as an undergraduate in Massachusetts which influenced her very much. Let me quote Carolee's own words:

„The philosophy and teaching approach of the Orff-Schulwerk, along with the remarkable teachers and colleagues I met, resonated profoundly with me. My experiences as a student and a teacher of Orff-Schulwerk

have guided major life and career decisions. It is hard to imagine what my story (both my career and my personal life) would have been like had I not been in those first compelling workshops or known those particular inspiring teachers.“

Later she decided to deepen her experience and came to study in the „Postgraduate University Course „Advanced Studies in Elemental Music and Dance Pedagogy – Orff-Schulwerk“, popularly known as „The Special Course“ at the Orff-Institute, she taught on several summer courses at the Institute and also in the Special Course itself. As a member of the American Orff-Schulwerk association she served in many different functions and was president of the AOSA from 1995 – 1997. In this time she participated as representative of the AOSA at the first international meeting of the Forum in Salzburg.

Carolee has been and still is editor of the American Edition „Orff-Schulwerk - Music for Children“ since 1994.

These are some of the facts of a very successful music teacher's career but what characterizes the personality behind these facts?

The more you start thinking about a person, the more difficult it becomes to describe such a versatile human being as Carolee. Perhaps I can choose just a few examples which impressed me personally and may describe her.

Carolee started her doctoral studies after 14 years of classroom music teaching because she wanted to have more theoretical

background and wrote her doctoral thesis about „Who is taking music in highschool?“. Her research confirmed her strong suspicion, that (*in her own words*)

„for the most part the smarter and economically more advantaged students enroll in music lessons, ensembles and classes and that for most children, lifelong involvement in music is pre-determined by their academic success and their socio-economic status“.

That was something she did not want to accept and tried hard to change. In her time as dean she was trying to find sponsors and was successful in doing so. Together with her staff she developed a program that offered free lessons and ensembles to children and young people who seriously wanted to study music and dance but whose parents were unable to pay for them. We admire her for her social responsibility and for her fighting for equal chances to all talented children.

A few years ago I had the chance to visit her at Peabody's and was deeply impressed by her skills of leadership, warm and friendly and on eye level with the students from preschool age to heavy teenies and reluctant adults on the one side, but sharp as a razor and precise in her decisions within organization and administration on the other. This modest and quiet person can explode with analytic energy. She is a quiet fighter, but a fighter nevertheless.

Her deep love for music, for making music herself in vocal and recorder ensembles, and most of all for teaching music, her

kindness and faithfulness to her colleagues and friends (and I assume the children she taught for so many years really were her friends too), her scientific thinking ahead, her dedication as an editor, her analytic planning and evaluating and last but not least her incredible working energy and acceptance of responsibility made her into a leading figure in the Orff-Schulwerk scene and around and she well deserves our official and warmly felt thanks and the award of the International Orff-Schulwerk Forum.