

## Candidate for Region V Representative



### **Nick Wild**

*Nick teaches PreK-5 general music in MA.*

*He is a Juilliard graduate, Past President of the New England chapter, served eight years on The Orff Echo Editorial Board, and contributed to AOSA's Teacher Education Curriculum Standards.*

*Nick teaches recorder for Orff Levels and presents workshops at the local and national level.*

## **CANDIDATE FORUM**

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

Many recent reforms in education, including Common Core, Universal Design for Learning, and 21st Century Skills, represent a long-overdue paradigm shift in core academic subjects from product-based to process-based learning – yet Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman recognized the value of process-based education more than sixty years ago! Today more than ever, as other subject areas finally catch up to our core values and approach, Orff Schulwerk is ideally positioned to support both our students and our colleagues.

For decades, Orff teachers have modeled a unique way of teaching that supports creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. Students in Orff classrooms learn musical concepts from the inside out, through active participation in non-competitive, inclusive, and goal-oriented creative play. Child-centered activities, drawn from students' own experiences and interests, not only allow every student to contribute to a greater whole, but also allow each individual to develop creative independence at their own pace. Most importantly, students' imaginations are activated and exercised as they deconstruct, explore, manipulate, and reassemble musical building blocks to create their own music for specific expressive purposes. Children in Orff classrooms learn more than just music, they learn to think and act like musicians. Orff Schulwerk is a celebration of the journey, of thinking outside the box, of improvisation, risk-taking, joyful play, and personal expression – and of

course the process itself. It is a state of mind. As Avon Gillespie said, “In Orff we are not involved in problem solving but in possibility seeking.” Regardless of the paths our students choose, no other approach is better equipped to help them make thoughtful aesthetic decisions or prepare them for lifelong learning and adaptability.

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

I have had the privilege of serving multiple leadership roles in AOSA, both behind the scenes and in public. In all of these roles, I have advocated passionately for changes I feel are important, while also listening carefully to other points of view and accepting consensus decisions.

As a member of The *Orff Echo* Editorial Board, I shared the responsibility of supporting and disseminating AOSA’s core mission, working closely with a rotating team of board members and many contributing authors, as well as three Editors-in-Chief. Successful and balanced publications depend not only on collaboration and respectful debate within the Editorial Board (both in person and digitally), but also on substantial organizational skills and institutional knowledge, communication with NBT committees and AOSA leadership, gentle diplomacy with authors, and ongoing mentoring of new Board members.

In addition to *Echo*, I served on the AOSA Teacher Education Guidelines Review Task Force Committee and Curriculum Oversight and Review Subcommittee, and contributed to AOSA’s updated Teacher Education Curriculum Standards, working closely with other AOSA teacher educators to help standardize the curriculum for AOSA teacher education courses.

At the local level, I served in an Advisory Board position as President of the New England Chapter, where my responsibilities included the logistics of organizing and hosting workshops, leading board meetings, and communicating with presenters to support them and provide for their individual needs.

I am also a Recorder Teacher Educator for all three Levels and have presented chapter workshops in every AOSA Region, as well as multiple AOSA national conference sessions. As a teacher educator, my number one goal has always been to promote Orff Schulwerk. I have thought long and hard about how best to do this and have developed many advocacy resources for my Levels students and workshop participants.

These experiences have allowed me to become familiar with the inner workings of AOSA on both the local and national level while developing personal and professional relationships with many servant leaders in the organization. I have also had the opportunity to gather and consider the needs and interests of the membership at large, as well as local chapters of varying sizes. If elected to the NBT, I would bring these experiences with me as I continue to serve AOSA and promote Orff Schulwerk.

## 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?

As elected representatives, the Trustees’ primary role is to serve the interests and needs of the general membership and local chapters by strengthening AOSA through outreach, leadership, and committee work.

In terms of outreach, I feel it is especially important for Region Reps to serve as liaisons between

AOSA and regional chapters, and to maintain active and regular communication with chapter leadership. Having served as a chapter President, I know that any support the NBT can provide to help educate local members is greatly appreciated, including the role AOSA plays in promoting Orff Schulwerk and providing professional development, the value of AOSA membership, the internal structure of AOSA, recent NBT activity and news, and the interdependency of AOSA and local chapters. If elected, I would make myself available as a resource to all Region V chapters to help support their members and facilitate collaboration and sharing of best practices.

In terms of leadership and committee work, I would draw on the knowledge and experience described in my answer to question #2 to advocate for decisions and promote actions that I feel best serve the organization and Orff Schulwerk in general. In particular, I hope to contribute to AOSA's long-term growth and health by providing as much clarity and transparency as possible to our members, and by continuing to refine the teacher education guidelines and professional development opportunities offered by AOSA.

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

While it is both important and beneficial to take advantage of new technologies, new resources, and fresh ideas drawn from educational reforms and other approaches, AOSA must continue to preserve the integrity of the underlying principles of Orff Schulwerk – including authentic, acoustic, live music-making and movement in ensemble settings, and of course child-centered creative activities! In the enduring spirit of improvisation and possibility-seeking, we must challenge ourselves to explore new applications of Orff Schulwerk and seek inspiration from new and unexpected sources, while always maintaining the fundamental essence of the approach. As discussed in my answer to question #1, the pendulum is finally swinging our way. The next few years may offer our best opportunity yet to advocate successfully for Orff Schulwerk as a unique way of providing meaningful skills in a rapidly changing society.