

Candidate for AOSA National Board of Trustees Region V:
Christine DeSantis Hoffman



BIOGRAPHY

Christine DeSantis Hoffman is an NBCT who teaches at Collegiate School and Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA. She earned her BM from VCU and her MM from Northwestern University. She's past president of JRV-AOSA and frequently conducts honors choirs and presents workshops. Christine enjoys cycling, kayaking, and traveling.

CANDIDATE FORUM

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

Orff Schulwerk is relevant and powerful in the field of music education because it is not prescriptive. It allows each teacher to use their strengths, talents, and knowledge of their students and their community to create engaging learning opportunities, scaffolded by the knowledge we gain when doing our levels. The power of play in Orff Schulwerk is important now more than ever during this time when children are playing less, creating less, and connecting less than ever before. Playing, singing, dancing, improvising, composing - these are all tools that the Schulwerk uses to build connections, whether in the classroom, the community, or the world at large. There is no "one way" to teach as an Orff Schulwerk teacher and the never-ending continuation of learning and growing as a music educator is why I keep coming back for more workshops, master classes, and conferences.

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

As a founding member, former secretary, former vice president, and former president of my local chapter, what I pride myself most on is having encouraged others to step up and take leadership positions. After many years of having the same people on our board, I brought in new members and helped prepare them for leadership roles. Being able to retire from the board was exciting for me because I believe it's important for our organization to have fresh voices and ideas to keep us relevant and continuing to grow as a chapter. I am an empathetic, organized, and passionate leader who enjoys connecting with people and learning what I can do to better support educators in my community and beyond. I love and appreciate AOSA and I am eager to learn how I can better serve this organization.

3. AOSA is committed to diversity and equity. What experiences and/or skills do you possess to strengthen our organization as we move forward?

I live and teach in Richmond, VA, which is the former capital of the Confederacy. I have lived here for most of my life and I have had (and continue to have) difficult conversations about race, diversity, equity, and inclusion with white people who do not understand why these conversations are so important. I taught for 10 years in a Title 1 school that was both rural and very diverse. I now teach in an independent school that is over 100 years old with traditions very much rooted in Southern Christian whiteness. In both schools I pushed to make changes to allow all students and families to feel welcome and see themselves reflected, respected, and supported. Additionally, I have served on diversity and inclusion committees and have led school-wide D&I conversations. As a white woman, I strive to be a better ally by reading, attending workshops, viewing webinars, and listening to BIPOC voices.

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

AOSA stands out head and shoulders above other music education professional development groups in regards to D&I and the current BLM movement. There is still work to be done, but I am proud of the strong stance that the organization has taken in regards to these matters and I believe AOSA will continue to lead by example. I hope that AOSA continues to seek out BIPOC leadership and ways to amplify those voices. I hope that we look for new ways to connect traditional music (such as folk) with more modern music in order to build stronger and more authentic connections with students. I am excited about the convergence of Orff and social emotional learning, as there are many possibilities to be explored there. In short, I believe that AOSA and Orff Schulwerk are well-positioned to adapt to any changes that the field of education (or the world in general) throws our way.