

Candidate for AOSA National Board of Trustees Region IV:  
Heather Klossner



**BIOGRAPHY**

*Heather Klossner is assistant professor of music education and Orff Levels Coordinator at University of Memphis. She completed her Orff Certification at Southern Methodist University and holds a PhD in music education from Eastman School of Music. Prior to teaching in higher education, Klossner taught music in Texas public schools.*

**CANDIDATE FORUM**

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

The brilliance of the Schulwerk lies in its adaptability to the people, place, and time in which it is situated. In describing the Schulwerk, Orff compared it to a wildflower—growing and prospering through adaptation to its surroundings, rather than through a carefully cultivated plan. As Orff Schulwerk educators, we adapt our teaching to our students’ needs: who and where they are, as positioned in a particular time. As we have experienced in past months, these contexts can change very abruptly. Our experience as Orff Educators allows us to adapt our instruction by drawing on a solid foundation grounded in Orff Schulwerk philosophy. This provides flexibility to innovate our teaching and respond to the changing needs of our students, the community in which they live, and the times in which they are living. The beauty of the Schulwerk lies in the process that leads children to create and innovate while making music. This allows for holistic learning in which students think critically, create collaboratively, and express themselves artistically through authentic musical experiences.

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

My leadership style is informed by my passion for teaching and love of scholarship. As an Orff Schulwerk educator, I believe in the power of music education to affect change in our students and the world. My decisions are shaped by the ethical obligation I feel for the children they will affect. I am just as passionate about research and getting to the “why” of an issue. I strive to learn differing perspectives that allows lively discussion and sharing of ideas. I believe that honest communication can lead to consensus.

**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 have taught in a wide variety of cultural and socioeconomic contexts: Title I schools, suburban settings, small towns, affluent communities, and inner city campuses. In each situation I gained experience by adapting my teaching to the needs of my students while broadening both my perspective and theirs. I continually educate myself about racism through study and by listening to people from marginalized populations. I reflect upon my own inherent biases and work toward overcoming the constructs of my upbringing to challenge my mindset and actions. Today more than ever it is critical that the AOSA address its commitment to diversity and equity by continuing to educate itself, listening to the voices and perspectives of people of color. As we examine and reflect upon our organization’s biases, we can take actions that dismantle barriers to justice and equity within ourselves, our classrooms, and our organization.

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

The past months of dealing with and adapting to the worldwide pandemic while coming face-to-face with the racial inequities which plague our nation have laid bare the need for change. AOSA can lead the way in that change by demonstrating innovative, culturally responsive approaches to teaching. We can also be a model of a music education organization that addresses and dismantles existing inequities of race, class, gender, and disability. This would provide opportunities to collaborate with other organizations representing other methods and approaches, such as Kodály, Music Learning Theory, and Dalcroze Eurhythmics. Efforts like this could both strengthen our common purpose of music as a core tenet of a child's education, while furthering steps toward justice and equity in music classrooms.