

# Specific Application of Orff Teaching Method in China

**Wu Di and Supot Yukolthonwong**

Bangkokthonburi University, Thailand

Corresponding Author, E-mail: nicha.musiced@gmail.com

\*\*\*\*\*

## Abstract

In order to understand the full scope of this exploration, an in-depth knowledge of the Orff Method of music teaching is necessary. The Orff Method was created by German composer and music educator Carl Orff, who sought to embrace the innate musicality of every child, emphasizing creative expression, rhythmic and melodic exploration, and the incorporation of movement and drama into music learning. His approach, often referred to as the "Orff-Schulwerk" or simply the "Orff Method," is a testament to his belief that music is not only to be taught, but also to be experienced and lived. This approach places children at the center of their own musical learning journey and fosters a deep sense of ownership and passion for music. It encourages students to explore their creative impulses, to improvise and compose, and to connect with the elemental aspects of music through instruments and voice. The method is characterized by its reliance on instruments specifically designed for children, such as xylophones, metallophones and other percussion instruments. Students develop their musicality and gain a deeper understanding of the language of music through the Orff method. This model of education is one of the most respected systems of music education today. The educational process is quite helpful to the student's personality and mind as well as to the level of professional skills and creative activity, which is why this educational philosophy is so highly respected by music educators and learners, and loved by children as well. After its introduction, Orff music education has been widely used in early childhood education around the world, and has achieved remarkable results.

**Keywords:** Specific; Application; Orff; Teaching Method; China

## Introduction

In Orff music teaching, the teacher and the student are always in partnership, and the students learn both from the teacher and from others. Music and joy belong to everyone, exploration in play is always the starting point, improvisation runs throughout the teaching, where creativity is never enough and never ends, where the group performs not for the sake of others but for the release and fulfillment of their own emotions, a release and fulfillment that brings balance to human beings themselves and allows them to be in harmony with each other as well.

Synthesis is a distinctive feature of Orff teaching. Synthesis here is not only the synthesis of music, but also the synthesis of music with other artistic disciplines, as well as the synthesis of music with other disciplines, and more importantly, the emphasis is on the perfection of the personality and the promotion of the all-round development of human beings through comprehensive teaching.

Orff emphasized: "Music is never just music, but is integrated with language, movement and dance." Therefore, Orff music teaching usually adopts a comprehensive way of acquisition that integrates language, singing, playing, movement, dance, visual arts, drama, etc. The content of its teaching is not a "platter" that is simply put together, but is often started from language, movement and other behavioral ways, and then expanded in different ways, and all the contents are integrated together through students' creative musical activities, which reflects a kind of constructive teaching. Students' creative musical activities integrate all the contents together, and their teaching reflects a constructive curriculum model (He, 2009).

Creativity is both the main purpose and the main method of Orff teaching, mainly in exploration, improvisation and creation.

Exploration is a human instinct, especially for young children who are full of curiosity and desire to know, exploration becomes the best way for them to know things. Orff teaching often starts with exploration, encouraging students to explore and seek different interpretations of the same thing in different ways. The process of exploration is the process of feeling and experiencing, discovering and learning.

Improvisation is the foundation and core of Orff's music education and is woven throughout the teaching. Orff once said, "The freedom to teach entirely from improvisation is always a starting point for excellence." Improvisation and performance not only develops one's imagination, creativity, expressiveness and performance ability, but also exercises one's ability of expression, reaction, emergency response and so on.

If the process of Orff teaching is a creative model that is constantly generating, the result is often a work that is created by the students themselves, a work that is not the result of careful rehearsal, but rather one that is constantly being created and developed on the basis of improvisation.

Practicality is a prominent feature of Orff's teaching process, which is a whole-person education that is humanized, lived and socialized entirely through practical activities. It is manifested in a sensual approach, personal participation, and a subjective mode of interaction.

Orff music education arose in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century, a country that prized reason and had very brilliant philosophical and artistic achievements. However, Orff found that the only way to save the soul of human beings in the modern society is through the emanation of sensibility. Therefore, Orff brought the inherent and primitive way of acquisition of human beings into the classroom, hoping to seek the liberation and perfection of human nature in a natural state.

Orff emphasizes the necessity of cognitive, aesthetic, and human sublimation through the personal involvement of the student, and his teaching is grounded in a practical philosophy. As Elliott suggests, "Music is a practical activity of human diversity." (DAVID J, 1995) That is to say, music is a certain way of musical behavior of human beings in a certain cultural context, and behavior is the core of human beings to carry out the practical activities of music, and Orff's emphasis on personal participation is the main way of behavior in his teaching. "In a sense, it is not a performance, not stage art, but an integral part of human life. It is the need for self-flow and mutual communication, although it is primarily realized through the means of education" (Liao, 2002).

Orff's music teaching activity is an equal, mutual subject interaction model, rather than the traditional subject-to-object education model. In Orff teaching everyone can become the subject of education, often through the role of the swap to realize the subjectivity of the teaching. For example: in the teaching of "looking in the mirror", often two people in a group, the person who looks in the mirror is the leader of the action, the role of the leader, "in the mirror" is the follower and imitator of the action, the role of the leader, and then swap roles, from which we can learn to work together with others, as well as the leader and the ability to be led. Leadership skills (He, 2009).

## **Specific application of Orff teaching method**

### **Specific teaching styles of Orff methodology**

#### **(1) How to rehearse prepared songs and instrumental pieces**

First, as far as possible, memorize and have the whole group practice the melody as well as the accompanying motifs together before distinguishing the roles of the individual instruments as specified by the composer, with only the players of the two percussion instruments that do not have a fixed pitch, singing or humming melodic motifs, or limiting themselves to practicing rhythmic elements together. It is also possible to practice with the hands and feet (clapping, leg slapping, stomping, finger twiddling) or to participate in practicing percussive patterns together before moving these patterns to one instrument. When playing, make sure that the tempo is steady and pay attention to the intensity (not only the presence of medium and strong, but also weak and very weak, strong and very strong . Crescendo, Crescendo, and all possible levels of intensity, with a measured application of strong and very strong), where all percussion instruments are used as tone generators, not noise generators. During choreographic practice, students should be allowed to rotate through the different instrumental roles so that all players can become familiar with all instruments over time, rather than being fixedly confined to a particular instrument, and sometimes a recording of the practiced piece can be made and played to the group to critically examine the acoustic results of the ensemble. In addition, each player should also act as a conductor, with the conductor assuming the central role of a percussionist, rather than acting as a conductor of the performance, and each piece, when practiced, should be played without a conductor, with only a brief indication of what is to be done at the beginning of the entry (Liu, 2000).

#### **(2) How to orchestrate or reorganize a piece of music that has already been composed.**

If the composer does not specify the instrumentation, or if he has to make necessary changes to it because of technical difficulties in playing, or because of the lack of certain instruments, attention should be paid to the fact that the instrumentation should be adapted to the characteristics of the instrument and the way it is played. The instruments with intense sound (rattles, rattles, bells, etc.) should be used in moderation, and the monotony of the acoustic image can be avoided by changing the configuration of the instruments according to the sections of the song. Not all the ready-made instruments must be used in every piece of music. For example, by omitting some tones (only unnecessary repetitions) and adding rests to individual voices, the acoustic image can be loosened and clarified. The ultimate arbiter of orchestration control should, of course, be vested in critical listening.

### **(3) How to improvise, perform and adapt songs with instrumental accompaniment**

Improvisational arrangements begin with a melody in the key (i.e., non-terminating, chromatic-free pentatonic, hexatonic and heptatonic, ecclesiastical modal or free tonal), which can be grounded in sustained tones, poles (basses of fifths), and fixed patterns (motifs that remain unchanged) or can be made acoustically rich through parallel voicing additions (ornamental, "branched voices" from the same degree of tessitura " processing) to give the melody acoustically rich, sustained tones. Diatonic and polyphonic tones, which can be applied in all registers (i.e. below, above, or in the same register of the melody). The choice of instrumentation and form of accompaniment depends not only on the character of the melody, but also on the content of the lyrics, but at the same time overly elaborate symbolism is to be avoided. Any motive may exist on the basis of pure form and pure musicality, for which there is no doctrine or advice that can take the place of a good demonstration. For terminating melodies, i.e., song tunes of the major and minor eras that are clearly based on the major (I), the genus (V) and the subordinate (IV, which does not occur in some songs), it is important to play those major triads and chords on the instrument first. First of all, the instruments play the roots of those major triads to accompany them, and then they can be rhythmized, developed into two- or three-note chords, tonalized, and finally unfolded on the existing tune to become a new melody. Harmonization limited to the form of the dominant triad, combined with rhythmic variation and acoustic refinement (through the relaxation of the harmonic structure), and a style close to a fixed pattern (utilizing common tones of different harmonic levels), so that it is suitable for the original style of scherzo (Ding, 2007).

### **Teaching styles appropriate for pre-school students**

Vocal gesture is a means of using the body as a musical instrument and making sounds through body movements. It is the most primitive and direct way for human beings to vent, realize and communicate their emotions. It was created before language and music, and is still used by people today. People express their emotions by clapping their hands and stamping their feet during the performance of large-scale sports activities; people clap rhythmically at the end of a concert to express their warm emotions, all of which are adopted in this way.

The use of sound gestures, without abstract concepts, complex logical thinking, difficult skills and techniques, not to mention the need for any teaching aids, musical instruments, everyone will naturally use, without any burden, and therefore will be interested. And vocal training is a good way to develop students' sense of rhythm, ability to hear and recognize, ability to react, ability to memorize and creativity, and it is also one of the most important training methods for introductory basic training. Therefore, it is a low-input, high-efficiency teaching tool (Xiu, 1997).

#### **Basic forms and methods of vocalization**

(1) Clapping: both shoulders and arms relaxed, hands in front of the chest and waist clapping, generally using the right thumb outside the four fingers to clap the left hand palm, the left hand is generally not moving, mainly the right hand high five, the volume is also controlled by the right hand. Do not clap with both hands, the clap will affect the speed, but also easy to cause tension in both arms. Clapping can also include patting the back of the hand, the back of the hand to the back of the hand, fingertip to fingertip and so on, to explore clapping can be a variety of ways to cultivate the students' observation ability, creativity creative thinking and the different patting methods produced by the experience of the characteristics of the tone of the teaching method, but also to improve the students' interest in learning. Clapping

sound bright, crisp, in the vocal ensemble, easy to shoot distinct, rhythmic, more complex rhythmic voice.

(2) Stomping: There are two types of stances: standing and sitting. Generally, the foot stomps the ground, both right and left feet, and encourages both right and left feet to be used. Special use is the heel or forefoot on the ground, with the foot to draw arcs, circles and so on. Stomping also varies in volume and tone, the finer the feel the better. Stomping sound is relatively low, in the ensemble is appropriate to serve as the beat accent voice, stomping rhythm should not be too dense and complex.

(3) Leg patting: Hands are naturally placed on the thighs against the knees, arms are relaxed, and both hands are patted. You can also clap with one hand, due to the natural movement, so it is the easiest to do in the four kinds of gestures, and it is easier and less tense to do it quickly than to clap the hands. Clapping the legs can be tapped to create a richer rhythmic pattern, and can be done as a diatonic exercise in itself, making it the best preparatory exercise before learning percussion, bar music and keyboard instruments. In addition to the development of a sense of rhythm, this method is a good preparatory exercise for the coordination and relaxation of the left and right hands. The sound of the leg beat is not distinct enough to be used alone on the heavy beat in an ensemble, and will make the beat accents less prominent. It is easier to train sixteenth note rhythms than other sounds (Zhang, 2010).

(4) Twisting fingers: the middle finger and thumb twisting sound, many people, especially children, it is difficult to do, can also be used to flick the tongue pronunciation instead of twisting the finger sound, twisting the finger can be used in different postures, heights to do it, it is in the four kinds of sound in the very few separate training, mostly combined with the practice of the other sound. Finger twiddling has the lowest volume, but the sound is higher, and can sometimes produce a sharp and bright ringing sound. It is generally not suitable to be used in heavy beat and complex and fast rhythm.

In addition to the above four basic forms of sound, now develop more forms of sound, such as from the head, face to the whole body parts of the beat to get extremely rich rhythm and timbre changes. In actual classroom teaching, students can also be allowed to design their own tapping movements and parts in order to increase students' interest in learning, but also to develop students' creative ability, which can also produce unexpected teaching effects in the classroom (Li et. al, 2000).

## **Application Strategies of Orff Teaching Method in Higher Vocational Pre-school Music Education**

### **(1) Teacher-driven and student-oriented**

Most of the students majoring in higher vocational preschool education have not received formal music education, but they love art and are eager to express themselves, but due to the lack of knowledge and skills, it is difficult to express their true ideas. As an early childhood teacher majoring in preschool education, we must learn the essence of Orff education, truly "people-oriented, human development-oriented" to understand the characteristics of each student's musical practice, develop effective teaching objectives and teaching content, adapt to the students' musical qualities and abilities, through the analysis of preschool children's special physiological and psychological characteristics, understand their starting point, pay attention to them. By analyzing the special physiological and psychological characteristics of pre-school children, understanding their starting point and paying attention to their psychological needs, we can achieve the purpose of soothing the inner emotions of pre-

school children, create a relatively relaxed musical atmosphere, and allow students to learn with a natural and open mind. For example, in actual teaching, some students' pitch mastery is not good enough, their tuning is unstable and often out of tune, but their sense of rhythm is relatively strong, teachers should strengthen the practice of percussion, body rhythm and other beats to strengthen students' sense of rhythm and body, and at the same time, encourage them to give full play to their own talent in this field, if some students' voice conditions are not good but they are interested in instrumental music, teachers should teach more musical instruments, such as the piano, the electronic organ, the accordion, the percussion instrument, the musical instrument, and the piano. electronic piano, accordion, percussion instruments, etc. Let the students learn with a natural and open mind. For example, in the actual teaching, some students have a bad grasp of pitch, some tunes are unstable, often out of tune, but have a good sense of rhythm, teachers should also tailor their teaching to let them play a greater role in learning, the courage to overcome learning difficulties, and improve their musical quality.

### **(2) Cultivating interest in learning and stimulating musical talent**

The intonation, tone and voice of reading aloud have many similarities with singing in terms of physiology, principles of articulation, etc. Therefore, students often have to read out the lyrics of a song before they sing it, and subsequently experience the content. Orff's music teaching methods can combine language and music. In the vocal class, the teacher can list a representative type of rhythm and read it aloud, so that the students can better grasp the bite of the word, feel the mood, to achieve the effect of "the word is perfect", and then better grasp of the rhythmic mood, and faster into the state of singing. There are many kinds of curriculum in Orff teaching, including vocal and body movements, music, reading, drama and other arts. Teachers to clap, pound and other ways to let the body produce sound, so that the classroom atmosphere more intuitive and vivid, conducive to the development of students' interest in learning, improve students' thinking ability, observation ability, music literacy and music aesthetic ability. Orff's music education advocates the maximum development of children's expression, imagination and creativity. In the teaching of music class, music appreciation, music performance, improvisation and other forms of teaching activities stimulate the students' desire for expression and creativity, so that they can show their creativity and personality in the activities, cultivate students' self-confidence, and develop their expressiveness, imagination and creativity.

### **(3) Actively mobilizing and stimulating students' creative thinking in practice**

Orff's music teaching method requires an open and spacious teaching environment, in which students are more peaceful, and traditional knowledge teaching has changed from rational education to perceptual awareness and reflection, improving students' musical ability and cultivation through understanding and exploratory learning, and mobilizing and stimulating their creativity. Under the guidance of Orff, many "improvisational" teaching activities, a single music teaching into a more comprehensive teaching, students should do hands, feet, brain organic unity, to mobilize their own thoughts to express, experience music, so that in teaching activities to gradually cultivate the students' sense of creativity and creativity, students in the integrated music training, can achieve aural discernment and listening to music. Music training, can realize the auditory discrimination, rhythm. Coordination and other aspects of training, which is of great significance to improve the students' musical quality and pre-school education level. For example, students can be encouraged to make up their own music, fairy tales, dances and so on. The rich teaching content and flexible teaching methods

have reproduced the original style of music education and realized the cultivation of creative talents.

#### **(4) Emphasizing practical teaching in the process of teaching music courses**

According to Orff's theory of music education, in order to enable students to find pleasure in the process of learning music and to learn to create, it is necessary to emphasize the guidance of music creation and music practice for students. Orff's idea of "original" music teaching breaks through the traditional teaching methods of the past, and has been accepted by music cultures all over the world. As a music teacher specializing in preschool education, it is important to not only pass on the excellent musical arts and diverse cultures, but also to broaden the artistic horizons of preschool education. For example, in the teaching of musical instruments and related subjects, the teacher will organize students to perform different musical performances in groups, in the singing course, the teacher can guide students to perform choral performances in groups, and in the music accompaniment class and related courses, the teacher can guide and organize the learners to perform in multi-southern performances. In preschool music classes, teachers should combine music practice with classroom activities so that students can personally experience the beauty and fun of music and get a better musical experience (Shen, 2023).

### **Conclusion**

Orff music teaching method pays special attention to the gradual progress of teaching content, and the exploration and experience in the teaching process are very important. Students must use their brains, hands and feet to feel and express music wholeheartedly in the learning process. The Orff teaching method breaks the traditional single-sitting and immobile classroom mode, introduces "movement" into the classroom, and appears in a new classroom form in music teaching. Through hands-on participation and practice, students can feel the basic feelings of music more deeply. In the Orff music classroom, students can feel the music better and improve their cooperation and social skills through interaction. Through various forms of music activities, students can feel the music in a relaxing and enjoyable atmosphere. Students are active in the lessons, actively participate in practicing and asking questions, and their musical literacy and other abilities are improved.

### **References**

- Ding, X. (2007). *Talking about the concept of Orff music education system--Interview with Prof. Dana Li, President of China Orff Professional Committee.*
- He, L. (2009). *The localization practice of Orff teaching - Taking Dana Li's music teaching as an example.*
- Li, T., Xiu, H., & Yin, A. (2000). *Orff Music Education Thought and Practice.* Shanghai Education Press.
- Liao, N. (2002). On Music Education. *Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music*, 2002(1), 15-19.
- Liu, H. (2000). *Principles of education.* Changchun: Northeast Normal University Press.

- Shen, B. (2023). Exploration of Orff Music Teaching Method in Higher Vocational Pre-school Music Teaching. *Drama House*, 2023(3), (59-61).
- Xiu, H. (1997). Review of Orff's Music Education Thought. *Music Learning and Research*, 1997(1), 36-38.
- Zhang, S. (2010). Implications of Orff's music education pedagogy for the development of music education in China. *Private Science and Technology*, 2010(1), 68-70.