

CHAPTER III

THE FORMATION OF AOSA AND THE GREATER CLEVELAND CHAPTER, 1968-1970

May 11, 1968

Even though Orff Schulwerk first gained national exposure in 1956 at the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) in St. Louis, Missouri, it wasn't until the summer of 1961 that the first training course in the United States was held at the Music School Settlement of the North Shore in Winnetka, Illinois. Within two years training courses were being offered at this location plus at Syracuse University in New York and at Ball State University (BSU) in Muncie, Indiana, with course instructors Lotte Flach, Dagmar Bauz, Miriam Samuelson, and Isabel Carley.¹ Department Head Gerald Crawford managed and coordinated the first BSU training course, held July 22 to July 31, 1963. The training courses at BSU would continue for many years and attract participants repeatedly from across the country, including a group from Ohio.²

In December of 1967, Arnold E. Burkart, newly appointed music education professor at BSU, sent a letter to several Midwest educators involved with the Orff Schulwerk movement. His purpose was to invite them to an idea sharing meeting and to also gauge potential interest in organizing a national group dedicated to the Schulwerk

¹ B.J. Lahman, survey interview by author, November 1, 2004. During this time, Lotte Flach was chief teacher of the Orff Schulwerk approach at the Orff Institute in Salzburg, Austria, and worked directly with Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman.

² Ibid.

approach.³ Response to the letter demonstrated the vitality and strength of the Orff Schulwerk movement, small as it was at the time.⁴ An all-day planning session was arranged for May 11, 1968, at Burkart's home in Muncie. At the meeting the newly selected steering committee unanimously decided that a professional organization would add strength to the movement, and the Orff-Schulwerk Association (OSA) was officially founded that day.⁵ Ruth Pollock Hamm was invited to attend this historic meeting but a Schulwerk workshop she was presenting that same weekend prevented her from attending.⁶ Despite this absence, Hamm was elected to the OSA board of directors and eventually assigned to the membership and publicity committees.⁷ Ruth continued to serve national AOSA as vice-president and conference chairperson (1970-1972),

³ Initial discussion of a national organization began at the First International Symposium on Orff Schulwerk in the United States. The first Bellflower Symposium, as it was called, took place in Bellflower, California from April 30 to May 5, 1967. Ruth Pollock Hamm was one of the many participants from Ohio who had attended the first and second symposiums. Hamm was a panelist and session presenter at the second symposium in May 1968.

⁴ Arnold E. Burkart, "The American Orff-Schulwerk Association: The First Five Years," (Supplement No. 2, American Orff-Schulwerk Association, 1973): 3.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ruth Pollock Hamm, interview by Cindi Wobig, "Founders Interview with Ruth Pollock Hamm: AOSA National Conference, Rochester, New York," (American Orff-Schulwerk Association, 2000), video 23RH.

⁷ The second executive meeting took place on June 16, 1968 at the home of Jacobeth Postl in Evanston, Illinois. The subsequent third meeting was held at Ruth Pollock Hamm's home in Cleveland Heights on October 6, 1968. It was at the third meeting that the OSA constitution and by-laws were adopted. Future national board meetings would take place in northeast Ohio on May 29, 1971, again at Hamm's residence with co-founding Cleveland Chapter member Elaine Shakley in attendance, and February 2-3, 1972 at the Sheraton Inn Hotel in Cleveland with co-founding Cleveland Chapter member Grace Benes in attendance.

president (1972-1974), and executive secretary [director] (1974-1980).⁸ At the time Ruth became AOSA executive secretary, she was an adjunct associate professor at Cleveland State University (CSU), which provided her with an office, mail service, and most importantly, a university address for the professional organization.⁹

April 17-19, 1969

Prior to CSU, the needs of the fledgling OSA were met with support and commitment from faculty and administration at Ball State University, where the first national conference of the Orff-Schulwerk Association took place, April 17-19, 1969. Among those present were fifteen participants from Ohio including Grace L. Benes, Ruthana (Rudi) B. Dreisbach, Ruth Pollock Hamm, Betty Jane (B.J.) Lahman, Estelle Smith, and Avonelle Webster from Cleveland.¹⁰ The conference provided many from the Cleveland area the opportunity to renew friendships with colleagues from across the country.¹¹

On the first day of the conference, Ruth Hamm presented a demonstration-participation session titled “Canon: New Twist for an Old Form.” She additionally sat on

⁸ As explained on pages 31 and 32 of this study, the Orff-Schulwerk Association (OSA) became the American Orff-Schulwerk Association (AOSA) at the May 16-17, 1970 executive board meeting. The title of executive secretary would also over time change to executive director.

⁹ Hamm, interview by Wobig.

¹⁰ In an interview with AOSA executive director Cindi Wobig (previously cited), Ruth Hamm asserts that among those who attended the first Ball State conference were Eva Haskin, first Cleveland Chapter president, and Cleveland Municipal Schools music teacher Lois R. Mittleman. Haskin’s and Mittleman’s names do not appear on the original attendance roster reconstructed in Appendix B of this study. Hamm recall’s driving to the conference with Mittleman and others attending the conference. Greater Cleveland Chapter and OSA inaugural member, B.J. Lahman, confirms the attendance of Haskin, and asserts that chapter member Elaine Shakley, whose name is also absent from the original attendance roster, was also in attendance among the 127 participants present at the conference.

¹¹ B.J. Lahman, survey.

a clinician's panel titled "Cracker-Barrel Discussion" which offered an informal discussion of the day's activities and provided participants a chance to question the conference clinicians. Hamm presented a second workshop on Friday, April 18, titled "Relating Orff Techniques to Notation," and again sat on the days-end discussion panel. On the final day of the conference, Hamm sat on a wrap-up panel titled "Didactics, Dactyls, and Pterodactyls." Among the other wrap-up panelists were her old friends Joe Matthesius and Jacobeth Postl.¹²

Discussion regarding the subsequent national conference began as early as the May 25, 1969 OSA executive board meeting. Invitations to house the conference had been received from numerous institutions including the University of Cincinnati. By October 1969, the University of Cincinnati had been chosen officially to house the second national conference, and the decision to initiate local chapter affiliation was approved and announced by the board.¹³ A number of people from the Cleveland area gathered in a "flurry of activity" to declare themselves organized after the announcement came.¹⁴ Laurel School, a K-12 private independent day school for girls established in 1896 and located in Shaker Heights, Ohio, was already the gathering place for Orff Schulwerk meetings in northeast Ohio, thanks in part to the efforts of its music teacher

¹² As cited within De Lois Wimmer's, *"The Organization of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association from 1968-1980 and Its Influence upon Music Education in America,"* (Ed.D. diss., University of Houston, 1993), at the conclusion of the Ball State OSA conference, Ruth Hamm circulated an evaluation sheet to those in attendance so that reactions and suggestions could be carefully monitored, a procedure still in use today.

¹³ Burkart, 7.

¹⁴ B.J. Lahman, "History of the Cleveland Chapter," (Personal Notes, 2003).

and future Cleveland Chapter founding member, Avonelle Webster.¹⁵ Encouragement for chapter and regional organizations was publicized through advertisements published in the February, 1970 issue of *The Orff Echo; the Official Bulletin of the Orff-Schulwerk Association*.¹⁶

December 7, 1969

Prior to OSA's encouragement, local workshops at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), as well as regional OMEA and Cleveland Music School Settlement sessions, served area music educators by providing sporadic demonstrations of Orff, Kodály, and Dalcroze methodology.¹⁷ Dr. Donald Shetler, Professor of Music Education at CWRU, became acquainted with many area music educators, since most were working on graduate degrees at the time.¹⁸ Based on the enthusiasm and interest of many area teachers, Shetler became interested in and supportive of Orff Schulwerk, quickly considering it to be one of the several new approaches reforming modern music education.¹⁹ Shetler was also influential in providing places for demonstration meetings as well as arranging some of the first Orff workshops at OMEA meetings, both state and regional.²⁰ Chapter co-founder B.J. Lahman recalls; "His encouragement was important in our personal development as well as helping spread the word about this new music

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Arnold Burkart, "President's Message," *The Orff Echo* 2, no. 2 (February, 1970): 1.

¹⁷ B.J. Lahman, "History of the Cleveland Chapter."

¹⁸ B.J. Lahman, survey.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

education philosophy.”²¹ The support of Shetler also proved to be significant during a time when many colleges, universities and professional music educators exhibited negativity toward what some considered a “gimmick” approach and a challenge to existing teaching practices.²²

On November 4, 1969, Ruth Hamm drafted a letter to area music teachers and professors inviting them to attend a December 7, 1969 meeting at Laurel School. The intent of the proposed meeting was to initiate a group to work together in creating a local OSA chapter. Hamm wrote:

There is plenty of interest and enthusiasm for Orff techniques in our area and my friends and I felt we would all benefit in an exchange of ideas and an opportunity to “read through” some of the advanced Orff material. Laurel School is well equipped so we have no problems with Instrumentarium.²³

Several from the Cleveland group that Hamm had corresponded with had already been meeting since the time of the Toronto Schulwerk Teachers’ Courses in the early sixties. Prior to being formally organized under the auspices of OSA, Cleveland educators had been meeting weekly on Sunday afternoons due to a united interest and a need for

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid. Dr. Shetler eventually accepted a position at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. and arranged for Orff Schulwerk training to be introduced there in the Music Education Department. Ruth Hamm, with whom Shetler had presented at CWRU, was among the first instructors at Eastman. The program continues today, though Dr. Shetler has since retired.

²³ Ruth Hamm, letter, November 4, 1969, Chapter Archives, The Greater Cleveland Chapter AOSA, Cleveland, Ohio. The area teachers and professors that were invited included many music specialists who had been meeting regularly and sharing ideas since as early as 1960.

pentatonic folk material and lesson sharing.²⁴

December 7 soon arrived and the first organizational meeting of teachers in the Greater Cleveland area got under way. The gathering consisted of eight music educators including Grace Benes, Rudi Dreisbach, Gretchen Garnett, Ruth Hamm, B.J. Lahman, Elfleda Seelbach, Elaine Shakley, and Avonelle Webster. Those in attendance represented five area schools/districts and three college/university music education departments – CSU, Hiram College and CWRU.²⁵ In addition to the sharing of ideas, a meeting schedule was drawn up and a constitution and by-laws drafted. The first chapter meeting of the Greater Cleveland Orff-Schulwerk Association was scheduled for February 8, 1970 Sunday afternoon at 2:00 p.m. at Laurel School in Shaker Heights.

February 8, 1970

Ruth Hamm called to order the first meeting of eighteen persons in the Greater Cleveland area interested in fostering the ideals of the Orff Schulwerk approach in the United States, as well as to organize a local OSA chapter.²⁶ Of the eighteen present, eight held membership in the national organization as required by the OSA constitution. Ruth Hamm accepted nominations for a slate of officers to serve until June 1970.

²⁴ B.J. Lahman, survey. A need for instruments resulted in many meetings being held at Laurel School in Shaker Heights which contained a full Instrumentarium. B.J. Lahman, a hired music consultant in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools (1960-1966), had attempted to purchase a small number of instruments for that district only to be turned down. The school secretary refused to put through the requested order based on the German manufacturing of the instruments. Nearly twenty years after the end of WWII, anti-German sentiment continued to be a strong political and social issue throughout the country. Consequently, Lahman purchased the instruments herself.

²⁵ The five Ohio schools/districts represented included Aurora City School District (SD), Cleveland Heights-University Heights City SD, Orange City SD, Shaker Heights City SD, and Laurel School.

²⁶ Cleveland Chapter Orff-Schulwerk Association Minutes of First Meeting, February 8, 1970.

Officers elected included Eva Haskin (President), Ruth Hamm (Program Chairman), Grace Benes (Treasurer) and B.J. Lahman (Secretary). Three additional members, Rudi Dreisbach, Estelle Smith and Avonelle Webster, were appointed to the program committee. It was established that local dues would be \$0.50 to cover any incidental expenses and mailings, and a starting budget totaling \$8.00 was established for the chapter. Non-OSA chapter members, or “associate” members, were required to pay local dues but would have no voting privileges within the chapter. Meeting dates were scheduled for the first Sunday of each month from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and took place in the Laurel School music room.²⁷

Following the organizational part of the meeting, participants worked on Orff literature under the direction of Ruth Hamm and developed a dance with the music.²⁸ A discussion of the music that was presented followed, with attendees sharing their individual needs and ideas, a practice that continued with each subsequent Sunday workshop. B.J. Lahman recalls:

Each of those afternoons we shared our successes and problems with each other. The lessons we developed and the song and speech materials that we researched were shared along with lesson plans. Everyone took their turn at leading our little group during the afternoon. Much discussion and exchange helped all of us realize we frequently had similar problems, exchanges, and student response.²⁹

²⁷ A lack of elementary workshops offered in OMEA District VII, of which Laurel School was a part, would ultimately strengthen the Cleveland organization as the chapter itself began to fulfill that need.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Lahman, survey.

The first meeting of the Cleveland Chapter Orff-Schulwerk Association adjourned at 4:00 p.m., with members being encouraged to invite their colleagues and any other inquisitive music teachers to the next meeting.³⁰

March 1, 1970

The second chapter workshop, held March 1, 1970 at Laurel School, witnessed chapter president Eva Haskin calling a meeting to order for the first time. Ten members of the chapter were present. Grace Benes presented several original songs to which instrumental accompaniments were arranged by those in attendance. Ruth Hamm followed by presenting her ideas regarding abstract notation.

By the March 1 meeting, twelve charter OSA members and six associate non-OSA members formed the Cleveland group.³¹ There was unanimous approval of the motion to direct Eva Haskin and Ruth Hamm to contact OSA and make all the necessary arrangements to affiliate with the national organization.³² In a March 15, 1970 letter to Arnold Burkart, Haskin writes:

The purpose of the chapter includes an exchange of ideas, materials, resources and techniques on playing instruments, singing, movement, and speech. It is hoped to include in each meeting an opportunity for participation in the above activities with time for evaluation and discussion of individual members needs. Monthly meetings, two hours in length, are planned concurrent with the school year.

Programs at the first three meetings have included the performance of instrumental pieces from Orff "Music for Children," Book II. Orff literature using

³⁰ Lahman, "History of the Cleveland Chapter."

³¹ Cleveland Chapter Orff-Schulwerk Association Minutes of Second Meeting, March 1, 1970.

³² Ibid.

singing, movement, dance, and instruments has been explored, as well as other examples of children's literature treated similarly.³³

Cleveland was the first group nationally to submit its charter application for chapter affiliation.

April 5, 1970

In addition to chapter affiliation, the upcoming OSA conference in Cincinnati generated much discussion at the subsequent April 5, 1970 meeting. Several chapter members were planning to attend, and Ruth Hamm talked about what to expect on the conference program.³⁴ Hamm would not be leading any demonstration sessions at the upcoming conference, but would sit on a panel discussion to speak about "The Schulwerk's Emerging Role in the Curriculum."³⁵ Upon conclusion of the conference discussion, Elaine Shakley began the activities portion of the workshop with warm-up exercises and speech patterns for those in attendance, many of whom were newcomers. Shakley proceeded to introduce her "Pentatonic Mass" for high school age students to the enthusiastic group.

April 24-26, 1970

The second national conference of the Orff-Schulwerk Association was held April 24-26, 1970. On April 23, prior to the start of the convention, the OSA executive board

³³ Eva Haskin, letter to Dr. Arnold E. Burkart, March 15, 1970, Chapter Archives, The Greater Cleveland Chapter AOSA, Cleveland, Ohio.

³⁴ Cleveland Chapter Orff-Schulwerk Association Minutes of Third Meeting, April 5, 1970.

³⁵ As previously documented and cited, Hamm had considerable knowledge of the Schulwerk's role in the curriculum based on her involvement with the Memphis, Tennessee, City Schools ESEA Title III project *Developing and Innovative and Exemplary Music Curriculum for Memphis Elementary Schools*, and her co-development of the Shaker Heights City School District elementary music curriculum and guide.

met at the University of Cincinnati. Among the items discussed was Ruth Hamm's request to change the name of the Orff-Schulwerk Association (OSA) to the American Orff-Schulwerk Association (AOSA). Action on this proposal was postponed until the next executive board meeting, May 16-17, 1970.³⁶ Recognition of new chapters took place during the Saturday evening conference banquet.³⁷ On Saturday, April 25, 1970, it was certified that the Greater Cleveland Chapter of the Orff-Schulwerk Association was chartered.³⁸

May 3, 1970

The newly chartered Greater Cleveland Chapter met on May 3, 1970 for its fourth monthly meeting. A letter from Arnold Burkart officially recognizing the new group's charter was read. The possibility of having the third annual OSA national conference in Cleveland was brought up, and received an enthusiastic reaction from the twenty-five participants present.³⁹ After the business part of the meeting, Dalcroze principles and ideas were shared by members Louise Jones and Lona [LeZak]-Meister, both of whom

³⁶ Ibid. It was at this meeting that Ruth Pollock Hamm was also nominated and voted into office as OSA vice-president.

³⁷ De Lois Wimmer, *The Organization of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association from 1968-1980 and Its Influence upon Music Education in America*, (Ed.D. diss., University of Houston, 1993), 51.

³⁸ B.J. Lahman lightheartedly recalls that Cleveland members present at the conference determined she should sit closest to the podium due in part to her long legs. Because the northeast Ohio-based group submitted their charter application first, they knew it was likely that Cleveland would be announced first. When the announcement came, Lahman quickly walked to the podium to receive the first charter. Stanley Rowland, founding member of the Greater Cincinnati Chapter, jokingly recalled the same story to Ruth Hamm, stating that the Cleveland group "moved faster to the platform," therefore receiving number one as the designated chapter number. Hamm recalls Rowland's humorous account in an interview with AOSA executive director Cindi Wobig (previously cited). Lahman has recalled this anecdote in many personal conversations with chapter members.

³⁹ Cleveland Chapter Orff-Schulwerk Association Minutes of Fourth Meeting, May 3, 1970.

would serve as chapter president in the years to come.⁴⁰ Prior to the adjournment of the last meeting of the year, Eva Haskin, along with members Dr. Margaret Stone and Elaine Shakley, presented several conference highlights from sessions conducted by master teachers Jos Wuytack and Isabel Schack.⁴¹

Summary

For the first time, the June 1970 publication of *The Orff Echo* published a segment titled “Chapter and Local News.” Cleveland Chapter president Eva Haskin summarized within her submission that:

Original prose and poetry set with instruments, movement and melody have been presented at each meeting. A pentatonic mass for high school age written by one of our members was performed at the April meeting. The score calls for improvisational accompaniment.⁴²

Then chapter secretary B.J. Lahman, in her personal notes on the “History of the Cleveland Chapter” recalls:

Among those who formed the nucleus from the Cleveland area were Grace Benes, Rudi Dreisbach, Gretchen Garnett, Ruth Hamm, Eva Haskin, Claire Homburg, B.J. Lahman, Elaine Shakley, Avonelle Webster, Louise Jones, Elfleda Seelbach, [Lona LeZak], and Martha Gibson.

In 1968 and 69, these music specialists were returning to Cleveland from various music seminars such as ISME, Salzburg, Toronto, and Ball State University to share their excitement about the ideas of Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman, Margaret Murray, and Doreen Hall. They found a common bond as they were searching for music education in the classroom. Several times get-

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Second OSA national conference headliner Jos Wuytack is one of the world's foremost authorities on the Orff philosophy of music education. Wuytack taught music pedagogy at the Conservatory of Tilburg (Holland), l'Institut de Methodes actives de Lyon (France), and the Institute of Church Music and Pedagogy (Belgium). Also in Belgium, Wuytack was professor of sacred music at the Seminary of Ghent, and held a position of music pedagogy at the Lemmens Institute in Leuven. Isabel Schack was a teacher at the Dalton School in New York City, and presented a movement workshop at the conference.

⁴² Eva Haskin, “Chapter and Local News: Cleveland Chapter,” *The Orff Echo* 2, no. 3 (June, 1970): 4.

togethers provided stimulating exercises in how to apply the principles of the Schulwerk in American music classrooms.⁴³

The “get-togethers” and sharing of ideas and resources cited by Lahman lies at the heart of the Greater Cleveland Chapter’s purpose, as with other AOSA chapters. Such chapter sharing emerged from necessity, due to a lack of resources for guest presenters, and a time-honored energy for spreading the philosophy of Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman.⁴⁴ Creative bonds of friendship and fellowship developed, based on the excitement and dedication of the group and the energy surrounding workshops.⁴⁵ The dynamism before, during, and after workshops produced a “must-attend” frame of mind among those involved in the Schulwerk movement.⁴⁶ In the years to follow, the leadership’s foresight and planning within the Greater Cleveland Chapter would lead to tremendous growth and many noteworthy accomplishments that ultimately came to impact countless music educators and helped put a “joy of life” back into music teaching.⁴⁷

⁴³ Lahman, “History of the Cleveland Chapter.”

⁴⁴ Resources were initially limited to the Doreen Hall and Margaret Murray *Music for Children* volumes. Publications and films by Grace Nash would enter the arena soon afterward. Grace’s style and process, illustrated within her prolific output of published materials, differed slightly from the original German school approach. Her materials acted as an introduction to Orff Schulwerk for the classroom or music teacher with little to no training or knowledge about the approach.

⁴⁵ Lahman, “History of the Cleveland Chapter.”

⁴⁶ Marty Springer, survey interview by author, November 1, 2004.

⁴⁷ Ibid.