

# *Orff Music in Iran*

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The teaching of music to children and adolescents and its relation to general education and conventional music education was first given attention in 1967 when a center for children's music was established at Tehran University's Department of Educational Sciences. At this center, students were made familiar with various philosophies of teaching music to children, including those of Kodaly, Suzuki and Orff. Two years later, the National Radio and Television Network (NIRT) sponsored a music workshop in Tehran. Similar workshops followed in ten provincial cities throughout the country. In these workshops, Orff instruments were utilized alongside traditional instruments.



The Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults was founded in 1971, starting with a number of instructors in Tehran, but soon established 20 centers in the provinces. These centers used the Orff Schulwerk process for teaching music to children. In 1977, a group of select students traveled to Canada to perform concerts using a combination of Orff and traditional Iranian instruments. By that time, 24 Orff classes in Tehran and 40 classes in the provinces were in existence.

That same year, a group of German composers of contemporary music, including Carl Orff's special representative, visited Iran to observe Orff music activities. They attended a concert performed by an orchestra



consisting of Orff and traditional Iranian instruments. I had the privilege of being a member of that orchestra.

The social upheavals that took place as the result of the Iranian Revolution of

1979 affected most aspects of life in my country. An entirely religious and revolutionary view of music and many imposed limitations worked against a coherent policy of music education and such activities were limited to private music centers. I started teaching music on a limited scale and trained music teachers in order to propagate this kind of education. The result has been the establishment of hundreds of privately run Orff music schools, most of which follow a unified method of teaching.



The social conditions that prevailed in the post revolutionary period necessitated a re-thinking in the choice of principles and adaptations to the new social atmosphere with very extensive and positive results. Most Iranian children and young adults interested in learning music are from the middle class and are familiar with recorder. Their parents are aware of the importance and usefulness of Orff Schulwerk in the general scheme of music education. Orff is a familiar name in such families and many of them know the composer's biography and works.

I have tried to adapt Orff Schulwerk to the conditions in Iran through composing pieces and writing textbooks for recorder and Orff instruments. We use puppet shows and animations to convey the ideas in relation to movement and music to children under the age of seven. At present, our music school is recognized as one of the most important Orff music centers in Iran. A considerable number of instructors, each specializing in a certain age group, teaching Orff instruments to children and young adults, have been trained by me. Every three months we organize a children's concert that is attended by parents and other interested people.

Upon completion of the Orff course and introduction of various classical and Iranian instruments to children, they are guided to choose an instrument. All the teachers are familiar with group methods in Orff Schulwerk and use it to encourage the pupils to tackle playing more difficult instruments. Some children

continue with Orff instruments at a more advanced level while others participate in choir. Another area of activity is participation in orchestras of classical music and traditional Iranian music.

Through close cooperation with international institutes and exchange of information, we hope to learn about teaching experiences in other parts of the world and to provide opportunities for performance by our groups in other countries and to have similar groups visiting Iran.

## Reference

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