

International Outreach

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Introduction

by *Jacque Schrader, International Outreach Committee Chair*

The International Outreach Committee was established in 2001 with a gift from Frau Orff and the Orff Foundation. Its purpose is to support international classes by partially funding the travel of an AOSA teacher trainer to teach at a developing program overseas. Although this fund is still in its infancy, AOSA has already positively affected the lives of well over two hundred music teachers! In 2001, Jacque Schrader taught in Nitra, Slovakia. Attended by teachers from nine countries, many were experiencing Orff Schulwerk for the very first time. In 2003 Doug Goodkin taught two classes in Russia, with both novice and experienced students coming from all regions of that enormous country. Most recently, Rob Amchin taught in Poland, where he worked with children, college students and music teachers alike.

In 2001, as the fund was established, Dr. Hermann Regner, longtime Director of the Orff Institute and Head of the Orff Foundation, wrote that he "hoped that this fund would enable a start to be made in making the exemplary work and the rich experiences with Schulwerk in the USA known beyond the boundaries of America." AOSA has the opportunity to make a real difference in many countries where teachers do not have the resources to travel to receive training. The investment of a little money goes a long way for the future of musical growth of children around the world. Please consider contributing to this important fund and helping to develop our International Orff Community.

A Heartwarming Visit Brings the Schulwerk to Poland By Rob Amchin, Louisville, KY

I had the honor of representing AOSA and its international teacher corps in Katowice, Poland this past May. Katowice is a small working-class city of Krakow and boasts its own orchestra, jazz clubs, composers and artistic life. It is in the Silesian mountains of Europe. Residents consist of middle class workers and employees of the nearby coal and salt mines. Despite closures of many of these mines in recent years, the city has begun a slow revitalization plan to invigorate the city and region. The ongoing work of the Akademia Muzyczna is part of that rebirth.

My host was music educator Anna Waluga, an Orff Institute-trained teacher and Kodály specialist. She organized my class schedule. Each day I spent four hours whirling and weaving musical moods with local students, teachers and children. Professors and teachers from the city joined the classes, participating and discussing the school systems, identifying needs of children and training future teachers, while actively making music each day with me. Anna and her colleagues shared their love of music training, Eurhythmics, classical and contemporary music and movement training throughout my stay.

We shared the joy of music. For the first two days, I taught movement activities, improvisations, and songs to Akademia students who shared their local favorites (and sometimes a Hebrew canon or two!) with me. On my third day, I was taken to the teacher's college in nearby Bytom where I worked with future classroom and music teachers.

Thursday's schedule included a visit to a local elementary school. Instruments were scarce, but the children used homemade instruments and were engaged in process-filled lessons taught by Patrycia Gamza, the local music teacher, a graduate of the Orff institute. The children shared their favorite songs with me, including Polish versions of *We Will Rock You*, and *Henay Ma Tov*. That evening, a special session was organized for the school's classroom teachers. With these non-music teachers, we explored rhythmic improvisations using local poetry and texts. The international flavor of the experience was intensified by the many languages we spoke during that Thursday afternoon class. Collectively we spoke five different languages: Polish, English, French, Italian, and German.

My final day in Katowice offered practical applications of my adult classes by sharing language, art, and pedagogy with children. Tables were cleared away as we warmed up our voices and brought in homemade instruments. We improvised, sang rounds and explored movement with visual art. Three different groups of mixed-age students arrived in succession throughout the morning. Groups of up to 70 children arrived eager to play, sing, move and improvise. The school children, who we would consider "at-risk," were delightful, hoping that "Herr Professor" would stay the rest of year. I saw some of these children playing in the city streets later that afternoon.

My evenings were filled with music and musings as each moment became a new vibrant memory. I attended an orchestral concert that included a marvelous performance of Bartok's *Concerto for Orchestra*, attended rehearsals of chamber groups at the Akademia, heard local folk musicians, watched Eurhythmics classes, and visited with students and faculty to

discuss pedagogy, philosophy, and sometimes theology, often in Polish, English and German simultaneously!

The visit had poignant moments. I spent my week observing Passover in a community whose Jewish population had been decimated by the Second World War. The remaining Jews of the city welcomed me to a Seder and supplied me with matzo for the week. My Akademia hosts took me to Auschwitz, which was only 30 minutes from the city. They shared their grief with me during this visit.

I have been invited to return next spring to Katowice and reap some of the seeds I planted this past year. Contacts with the Orff Association of Poland were memories I hope to continue for a lifetime. The children of the school promised to communicate with me via and invited me to return next May. I hope my Polish is better by then. The children will be better at English too, I suspect. Because of support from the International Outreach Committee and the University of Louisville, I had an opportunity that deepened my love of music and the universality of Orff Schulwerk. Thank you, AOSA!