

A Tribute to Margaret Murray

11 March 1921 – 31 January 2015

Marjorie Ayling¹, Francine Watson Coleman², David Coleman³,
Barbara Haselbach⁴, Kate Buchanan⁵ & Shirley Salmon⁶

¹ President of the Orff Society UK; Former Principal of Blackheath Conservatoire of Music and the Arts; ² Movement Director and Choreographer; Senior Movement Director, Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London; ³ International Conductor; Composer; ⁴ President of the Orff-Schulwerk Forum, Salzburg; Prof. em Orff Institute, Mozarteum University, Salzburg; ⁵ Head of Creative & Professional Practice, Royal Northern College of Music, England; Editor of the Orff Times; ⁶ Lecturer and Director of the postgraduate course 'Advanced Studies in Music and Dance Education – Orff-Schulwerk' at the Orff Institute, Mozarteum University, Salzburg.



Photo 1: Margaret in her garden

MARJORIE AYLING

I knew Margaret for more than 50 years both as a colleague and as a close friend. Her recent death has in some ways left a great vacuum in both my personal and my professional life.

Margaret's extraordinary expertise and unstinting practical support made a significant contribution to the teaching and training of teachers worldwide and to children's musical experiences at all levels. Her achievements contributed to national thinking about music education policy throughout the 1960s and also in later years to the development of the national curriculum in the UK. The seeds of the creative approach to music education, now so well-established at all levels from the earliest years to A Level and beyond, lay in Margaret's introduction of Orff's approach

nationwide which has continued to underpin and influence many of the developments which have evolved and flowered right up to the present time.

In addition to her extensive programme of workshops and lecturing across the UK, Margaret committed herself to regular specialist music teaching in a local primary school whose children were drawn from the most deprived areas of her home area. She had the highest ambitions for the children and made an unforgettable impression on many. She provided training for all the teachers in the school and even engaged the parents in hands-on workshops. Children from the school attended productions at both the Royal Opera House and the English National Opera.

Margaret's vision was an inclusive one; she was adamant that children with special needs should be embraced in her work, researching this area and working alongside teachers in special education, a very innovative decision in those days (the early 60s), and rare among professional musicians. Indeed, for several years during the 60s and 70s, she worked on a weekly basis with severely autistic children in the special unit at St Thomas's Children's Day Hospital in London.

Margaret had an incisive mind, which was combined with clarity of exposition when teaching children and adults. In addition to training a veritable army of music education experts to provide access to these new ideas, Margaret herself worked tirelessly in schools and colleges across the UK for some 40 years. Her commitment,

combined with a boundless energy, was unparalleled and phenomenal. Even in her nineties, she regularly worked with a school music specialist needing advice; she was still capable of inspiring and stimulating people of all ages and abilities.

Generations of children and young people owe so much to Margaret both directly and indirectly. In her own hands-on work in music with children, her vitality and imagination helped them to open new doors, to question assumptions and to develop their individuality. Moreover, she was always interested in their ideas and could relate to them in every possible situation, whether it was in downtown city schools, in rural village schools or in middle class suburbia.

For her, the child ruled supreme and she saw her role as a facilitator and a channel through which the children could access real, first-hand, musical experience. What is equally remarkable is that she was also able to inspire teachers and those working in teacher education to grasp the opportunities offered by the Orff approach and to encourage them to share these opportunities with their pupils and their students.



Photo 2: At the 2007 Annual General Meeting of the Orff Society UK (from left: Sarah Hennessy, Margaret Murray, Kate Buchanan and Marjorie Ayling)

For more than half a century the name of Margaret Murray was synonymous with the Orff approach both in the UK and internationally. She was loved and respected in equal measure by all who worked with her. She possessed a singular generosity of spirit which transcended normal bounds, and would go to great lengths quietly to aid those who needed her help and was a loyal, perceptive and generous friend and a distinguished musician. She was a major influence for me throughout my career, meeting her as I did initially in 1963 at the first English-speaking Orff course in the UK. Her passing now leaves us sad and bereft but also grateful for a wonderful life and for the beacon of

hope and inspiration which she provided for all who shared her dedication to creative and imaginative music-making as the birthright of every individual.

FRANCINE WATSON COLEMAN & DAVID COLEMAN

We first met Margaret in 1972 at a music course and thus began our long professional and progressively deep personal relationship. She possessed many gifts having, in particular, that rare blend of passion with practical enterprise.

Orphaned in August 1931 at the age of 10 (her father was a member of HM Diplomatic Service, her mother of an eminent American legal family), she won a place at the Royal College of Music in London, having overcome resistance from both her Scottish and American families! Here she was part of the music tradition which sustained training and performances in the difficult circumstances of World War II, and then embarked upon her first career as a professional cellist and accomplished pianist.

Margaret took up the challenge of translating and adapting Carl Orff's *'Music for Children'* into English with her customary enthusiasm, integrity and expertise; the 'Murray edition' is now used throughout the English-speaking world.

At once convinced of the immense value of this approach to music education through practical experience, and particularly its embrace of dance, movement, speech and drama, she set out to share this work as richly and widely as she could. Thereafter she gave over much of her musical life to all forms of sharing music that could give fulfilment to anyone. Such innovative action was rare among professional musicians and a very courageous decision in those days. In the early years she undertook a huge amount of work, largely on her own, with consummate musicianship, total dedication and enormous drive.

Her inspired personal vision and inspiring teaching attracted more and more musicians, teachers and educationalists. Her ability to generate landmark publications and recordings gave additional testament to her educational cause. By the early 1970s the seeds Margaret had sown were beginning to bear fruit. Now many of the features of this approach have become common place in music education – they have proved to be nonetheless valuable beyond price.

She often quoted Albert Schweitzer:

No ray of sunshine is ever lost
but the green it wakes into existence
needs time to sprout;

and it is not always granted to the sower
to live and see the harvest.
All work that is worth anything
is done in faith.

Right up to the last days that she lived, Margaret worked generously and selflessly as teacher, organiser, mentor, writer, translator, curator and singer.

We never knew her turn away when she identified a child, an adult, a professional musician, a group of amateur artists, an organisation or enterprise which disseminates musical opportunities or materials. On the contrary, she used her own resources of time, experience and very often of finance to support ventures which could make a difference through music to people's lives, whoever or wherever they are.

It was a wonderful acknowledgement when HM the Queen awarded her an MBE at Windsor Castle in 2014. Naturally modest and unassuming, Margaret was astonished and touched by the many wonderful things that were said in support of her award. They showed most clearly how she was respected and honoured among her peers both locally, nationally and internationally and how profound her life's work has been.



Photo 3: Margaret Murray receiving her MBE

One submission to Her Majesty's government Cabinet office described her contribution to music education thus, "some people are ahead of their time and shine like bright headlights, showing us where we need to go. Margaret Murray is one such, we have not yet caught up..."

Margaret was brilliant, funny, passionate and visionary. She was our loyal and most treasured, beloved friend. Margaret kept at her desk a small collection of words from great thinkers which helped form and inspire her attitude to life. These from Plato best reflect her work in music that she bequeathed to us.

"Nourish then your imagination, strengthen your will and purify your love; for what imagination anticipates shall be achieved, what will pursues shall be done and what love seeks shall be revealed".



Photo 4: Margaret Murray 2011

BARBARA HASELBACH

Did Margaret have an intuitive vision of what might happen to her life when she met Gunild Keetman and Carl Orff on a lovely day in 1956? I wonder whether she would have turned around and run for her life had she known the incredible amount of work, the endless calls for help, the thousands and thousands of pages, the – most probably – hundreds of thousands of words waiting to be translated by her in the years to come? I think not!

Margaret was eager and ready to try whatever she was asked to do and she had time to start and time to practise. Actually she had more than 50 years to become the outstanding, brilliant translator of texts that she is known for today. Margaret had time to grow into the role of the 'queen of translation' for all those who wanted or needed a book, an article or a lecture to be translated into English. How many of her colleagues from the narrow or wider circle around Orff: the Orff-Schulwerk, the Orff-Institute and Orff-Schulwerk Forum, including the editors of the magazine *Orff-Schulwerk Informationen* have asked her for help again and again?

I cannot even count my own letters to her begging her to translate my own writings or asking her in my role as the editor of *Orff-Schulwerk Informationen* to translate contributions written for this or that issue of the magazine or for one of the documentations of International Orff-Schulwerk Symposia.

The beginning took place in 1956 when Orff wanted to make a recording of the first two volumes of his Schulwerk. The recording company was EMI and the Artists' Manager, Walter Jellinek, and his young, German-speaking wife Margaret, also belonged to the team. Shortly after the German records were finished, the plan was to do a similar recording with English songs and rhymes as Carl Orff mentions:

"Since Columbia had decided to bring out an English version of these two records, she [Margaret] was given the task of finding corresponding English children's rhymes and speech exercises or of making translations" (Orff 1978: 240).

She was asked to collect as well as to translate material from the treasure of England's children's lore, to find musicians and to train children for the recording. This was the beginning of the English version of *'Music for Children'* in five volumes (1957-1966) and several supplements by Margaret Murray. Walter Jellinek wrote in the introduction to the English records:

"No attempt has been made in this English version to keep rigidly to the original German texts or to traditional English tunes. No apology is made for either, because a way has been sought to follow the principle of Carl Orff's theories" (Jellinek 1957).

Margaret fulfilled her first impulse and task to bring the Schulwerk and its concept to her own culture, her language and her country. It was Margaret, the musician, the music teacher, the collector of children's lore who first started to introduce and adapt the Schulwerk according to its spirit – or as Jellinek says "following the principle" – rather than in its actual words.

Umberto Eco contemplates the art of translating, commenting upon the specific paradox of this field: the more a translator respects the text, the more creative his work will become. His thoughts remind

me strongly of how Margaret worked. Several times I have been allowed to witness the process of Margaret's insistent, indefatigable, almost humble search for the right word or image, the adequate

phrase, the rhythm or even rhyme according to the original. I admire her dedication, her wholeheartedness and patience. Sometimes she waited for days until the inspiration for the solution came, she would go over each paragraph countless times.

In the past decades she has done an enormous work translating not only all of the eight volumes of Orff's *'Dokumentation'*, but also many books and countless articles of his co-operators.

We cannot be anything other than deeply grateful to Margaret for feeling the obligation to share these works with a greater audience in the English-speaking world and to support other people in their attempt to communicate their ideas. Margaret dedicated years of her life to this task. What an extraordinary devotion!

KATE BUCHANAN

Margaret Murray MBE who has died aged 93 years, was a leading figure in music education. She dedicated her life to the promotion and dissemination of the pedagogical work of the composer Carl Orff known internationally as Orff-Schulwerk.



Photo 5: Margaret Murray and Danai Apostolidou

She worked closely with Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman to produce the English edition of Orff Schulwerk: *'Music for Children'* (1957-1966). From 1963 Margaret presented Orff courses throughout the UK (and South Africa, Australia and the USA) and in 1965 initiated and led the first English-

speaking Summer Course at the Carl Orff Institute in Salzburg. She completed countless translations of all the important documents relating to the work of Carl Orff and the Schulwerk and is highly respected all over the world.

Margaret's first contact with Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman was in 1956 when she attended a recording session of the Schulwerk in Germany. In 1957 Margaret was again in the recording studio, this time in London having organised eminent musicians including Walter Bergmann, James Blades and Alfred Deller to record her English adaptation of Orff Schulwerk: *'Music for Children'* (Orff & Keetman 1957-1966, Volume 1). This book was the first of five to be published by Schott and is still in use all over the world.



Photo 6: Summer course in Salzburg 1961

During the 1960s and 1970s Margaret continued with recording projects, gave courses and seminars throughout the UK in hundreds of schools, teachers' centres, teacher-training institutes and universities promoting Orff Schulwerk, an inclusive and child-centred approach to music education. Margaret inspired many teachers, young and old to explore new ways of engaging in music teaching and learning with improvisation, at its heart believing that every child has music within them that can be drawn out and developed. She established the Orff Society UK in 1964 and remained its Honorary Secretary until she died. She created a strong following of music and arts educators and worked alongside leading figures including Sir Alex Clegg, Chief Education Officer for the West Riding of Yorkshire and Diana Jordan who were exploring a child-centred and creative approach to learning in and through the arts.

For over ten years, Margaret Murray worked as a volunteer with autistic children at St Thomas's Children's Day Hospital in London. After her 'retirement', Margaret worked as a volunteer at the Royal College of Music's Department of Portraits and Performance History, cataloguing their large collection of programmes and other materials.

Margaret Murray was born on the 11th of March 1921 in Lille, France to father James Robertson Murray, British Consul and mother, née Helen Brookes Wilson from Connecticut, USA. The family moved to England and Margaret attended Wycombe Abbey School. Looked after in the holidays by a team of aunts following the death of both her parents, Margaret experienced international travel and entered the Royal College of Music in 1939 studying piano with Phyllis Sellick, cello and accompaniment. There she met her husband-to-be Walter Jellinek, also a pianist and an aspiring conductor. After her divorce in 1961, Margaret re-established connections with musical life in London which included performing professionally as a cellist, harpsichordist and pianist with esteemed performers including Paul Esswood, Franz Brüggen and Walter Bergmann. Later, she became a member of the Barnes Choir which she actively supported for over twenty-five years. She was a part-time music teacher at Darell Primary school which she combined with her teacher-training activities and performing.

Margaret maintained strong links with the Carl Orff Institute in Salzburg and other contacts all round the world. Her wide network of colleagues and friends is testimony to the love and respect she commanded in equal measures as educator, musician and as the translator of a large body of literature connected to Carl Orff's life and work.

Margaret was awarded an MBE in 2014 and Primo Honorarum from the Orff Foundation and Schott & Co Music Publishers in 2011.

SHIRLEY SALMON

I did not meet Margaret until I moved to Austria in 1977 and then was lucky enough to see and talk to her at international Orff-Schulwerk symposia in Salzburg, swap numerous emails and to visit her over the last few years when I made my yearly trips to London.

Margaret had a great sense of humour, was inevitably constructive with her comments and suggestions. She was incredibly generous with her time and advice. There were innumerable occasions when I was stuck translating a tricky text

and where I knew that she would reply to my urgent emails immediately. This would often extend into discussions about various possibilities.



Photo 7: At Margaret's 90th birthday party in 2011

Her command of English was impressive and she would not only come up with more than one suggestion very quickly but also the pros and cons. She often had something to say about some seemingly never-ending German sentences and their authors! When I was feeling brave, I even asked her to proof-read and correct some of my own texts in English.

Her contribution to making Orff-Schulwerk known worldwide through her English adaptation and her translations of all major German texts cannot be valued highly enough. Inevitably, I think I will feel her looking over my shoulder with a twinkle in her eye when I write or translate anything in the future and I will try to live up to her very high standards. It was a great honour and a privilege to have known her.

SELECTED TRANSLATIONS BY MARGARET MURRAY

- Haselbach, B. (1978). *Dance Education: Basic Principles and Models for Nursery and Primary School*. London: Schott.
- Haselbach, B. (1981). *Improvisation – Dance – Movement*. St. Louis: MMB Music Inc.

Haselbach, B. (Ed.). (2011). *Texts on Theory and Practice of Orff-Schulwerk – Reports from the Years 1932-2010*. Mainz: Schott.

Keetman, G. (1974). *Elementaria: First Acquaintance with Orff-Schulwerk*. London: Schott.

Keetman, G. (2004). *Gunild Keetman: A Life Given to Music and Movement*. Mainz: Schott.

Kugler, M. (Ed.). (2013). *Elemental Dance – Elemental Music. The Munich Günther School 1924 – 1944*. Mainz: Schott.

Orff, C., & Keetman, G. (1957-1966). *Music for Children* (Vol. 1-5). London: Schott.

Orff, C. (1978). *The Schulwerk: Carl Orff and His Work, Documentation* (Vol. 3). New York: Schott Music Crop.

SUGGESTED LITERATURE ON ORFF

Hennessy, S. (Ed.). (2013). *Reflections on Orff-Schulwerk. Essays in Celebration of Margaret Murray*. London: Schott.

Jelinek, W. (1957). Introduction to Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman, *Music for Children*, 2 LPs, EMI/Columbia, London.

Orff, C., & Keetman, G. (1950-1954). *Musik für Kinder. Orff-Schulwerk* (Bänder I – V). Mainz: Schott.

Salmon, S. (Ed.). (2013). The Orff approach to special music education and music therapy: Practice, theory and research. *Approaches: Music Therapy & Special Music Education. Special Issue 5(2)*.

REFERENCES

Orff, C. (1978). *Documentation: Carl Orff – His Life and Work* (Vol. 3). New York: Schott Music Crop.

Orff, C., & Keetman, G. (1957-1966). *Music for Children* (Vol. 1 – 5) (English Edition by Margaret Murray). London: Schott.

Suggested citation:

Ayling, M., Watson Coleman, F., Coleman, D., Haselbach, B., Buchanan, K., & Salmon, S. (2015). A Tribute to Margaret Murray (11 March 1921 – 31 January 2015). *Approaches: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Music Therapy*, 7(2), 242-247.