

Manitoba MODES

Official Newsletter of the Manitoba Orff Chapter

President's Message

BY JENNIFER GILLIS

I am honoured to be starting my term as president and represent the Orff educators in Manitoba. We are a province of creative and thoughtful teachers. which I am reminded of every time I talk with colleagues. Every conversation during the break of our workshops, all the posts of what I see happening in your classrooms; I always come away with new ideas of what I can do.

Whether you have just finished your "I Love to Read" month or are just starting, these cold winter months are a great time to pull out a book and use it as a starting point to sing, play, explore, move, and create. **Ear Worm!** by Jo Knowles is a book that is hopefully familiar to you. **Perhaps Sometimes I Feel Like A River** by Danielle Daniel, **Green** by Laura Vaccaro Seeger, and **When We Had Sled Dogs** by Ida Tremblay and Miriam Körner may not be as well known, but are also worth bringing into your classroom.



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Storytelling is such an engaging way to pull students into the learning, even without the book itself. For those at the WSO Discoveries workshop, Amanda's *Tico Tico* lesson may not have a book, but the students love to act out the story over and over. They all need turns to be the bird stealing the cornmeal, or the cat, or the mouse, or the farmer. Students learn the melodies and the form, and the story is what makes it all stick.

We held our MOC/ WSO Listening Workshops on November 8 and January 20, and once again we have two new sets of varied and thoughtful lessons to bring to our students. I have always found the MOC/WSO Listening Workshop to be valuable for my own teaching. I've gotten tried and true lessons that show how to take a work and use it as a starting point to pull out the context of the music, the musical elements, the inspirations to create, and the connections between music, art, and dance. And even more valuably, I've seen other teachers in action and watched them bring these lessons to life.

As we gradually leave behind winter and look forward to spring, we have PASSAGES, our National Conference, coming soon. This year's conference has chosen wonderful French options. There is a French session available in every time block. Chantal Dubois will be one of a handful of presenters from Québec. The keynote presenter, James Harding, will have sessions in both French and English. And there are many other exciting presenters: Heather Nail, Nicole Shultz and Tenielle Bennet, Andréanne Hétu, Josh Southard, Sue Harvie, and too many others to name.

Spring also means Children's Day is on its way. While our English day in Winnipeg (May 14) may be full, there is some room for our French day (May 13) and our Brandon day (May 1). Register soon to claim your spot!

Thank you for all the creativity and dedication you show your students, colleagues, and community. Our community has filled the last 50 years with the joy of music and learning. On behalf of our new board, we look forward to what the future will bring!



Jennifer Gillis

50th Anniversary Orff Merch

MOC has organized the creation of celebratory 50th Anniversary merchandise. For more information and to order, click [here](#)





Advocacy Corner

BY BECKI MOSS

February in many schools across the country brings the celebration of “I Love to Read Month”. With it, the potential for some amazing advocacy opportunities arises through the connection of literature and Orff Pedagogy. “I Love to Read” month has become a favourite way to connect classroom content, fluency and just plain fun through storybooks.

Not only do students love stories but incorporating them into the music classroom helps inspire imagination and creativity, make cross-curricular connections and engage critical thinking.

Depending on the type of story (cumulative, sound effects, movement-focused), the potential to make stories into a performance piece for assemblies, classes, families or board members is an excellent advocacy opportunity for your programs.

Cumulative books can help reinforce language for new language learners as they build on ideas. The repetition of language allows for rhythmic patterning with instrument playing. Sound effect-based books help to engage creativity in students and allow you to use those “fun” instruments that aren’t used in a regular classroom setting (like ocean drums or pop and thunder tubes).

Movement-based stories can also work on creativity, fine and gross motor skills and allow for fun props within the storytelling. Pairing movement with the opportunity to have students create the accompanying instrumental music engages more of the Schulwerk.

When used effectively, storybooks can:

- Utilize exploration, improvisation and composition
- Encourage sound discrimination (instrument families, quality, etc)
- Orff accompaniment (ostinato, bordun, etc)
- Enforce music vocabulary and expansion of language for EAL students
- Engage dance, drama and movement

Thanks to social platforms, there are so many opportunities to find stories that are grade and content level appropriate. A few resources and educators that have come across my feed that have excellent options and complete lesson plans are Aimee Curtis Pfitzner's "[O For Tuna Orff](#)" blog, [teachingwithorff.com](#) has an entire "[Children's Literature](#)" section of their website as well as a Facebook group entitled "[Diverse and Inclusive Books for Elementary Music Classrooms](#)". There are so many amazing culturally diverse stories that support varying school populations and celebrate students of the world. You may also wish to check out this article from NAFME and [Mrs. Stouffer's music classroom](#) for further literature connections.



Check out your library, local book sales and teaching colleagues. There are many ways to get access to amazing books without breaking the bank. This is also an excellent and natural way to connect with a Librarian or Teacher/Librarian in your schools. It provides more opportunities for cross-curricular connection through any projects or units they may be supporting students with in their regular classrooms.

If you have an excellent resource or literature related lesson that you think other teachers would benefit from, we would love to add them to our resources section of our webpage. Please email any content you would like to share to the email address below.

Becki Moss
Advocacy Chair MOC
beckikm@outlook.com

Off the Shelf

BY LORI ARTHUR

The Manitoba Orff Lending Library has some children's books in our collection. If you are studying the orchestra, we have a book by Vlasta Van Kampen and Irene C. Eugen entitled **Rockanimals**. This is a follow up to their first book **Orchestranimals**, but instead of playing orchestral instruments, there is a mix-up and they are left with instruments from a rock band. We also have **The Musical Life of Gustav Mole** by Kathryn Meyrick in which one lucky mole discovers a variety of genres and styles through instruments and special occasions. **The Story of the Incredible Orchestra** by Bruce Koscielniak explores how music and instruments have evolved.

The Fabulous Song by Don Gillmor examines what happens when parents want their child to be musical but the child finds his own calling. As a contrast to this, Kathy Stinson tells the story of Joshua Bell, the renowned American violinist who played free concerts in the Washington D.C. metro in her book **The Man with the Violin**. Looking for a musical alphabet book? Check out **M is for Melody** by Kathy-jo Wargin. Another lovely book in our collection was written by Julie Andrews Edwards and Emma Walton Hamilton. This is a magical tale with a timeless lesson about beauty, music and the power of giving. A Teacher's guide is included with our copy of **Simeon's Gift** covering a variety of curriculum areas, including instructions on how to make some homemade instruments such as a flute, a drum, and a rainstick.

We have two books which tell the classic tales: **The Sorcerer's Apprentice** and the **Nutcracker**. With the Winter Olympics happening, we are high on Canadian pride at the moment. I would like to point out one last book from our library: **Our Song: the Story of O Canada**.

Do you have a favourite book? Please email me at library@manitobaorff.org to either borrow a book or make a suggestion of books you would like to see made available to our members. Until the next time. Lori Arthur, MOC librarian.





Tech Tip

ChatGPT in the Elementary Music Room

BY JESSICA TAVES

Have you ever thought about using AI in the Music Room, but are not sure where to begin? If you have not yet tried using ChatGPT here are a few ways you could get started:

1. Create worksheets
2. Draft or proofread emails and permission forms
3. Create fill in the blank stories
4. Give lesson ideas based on the Manitoba K-8 Music Curriculum
5. Come up with clever names or titles
6. Generate report card comments



ChatGPT

Chat GPT saved me leading up to report cards when I realized we were lacking in assessment in the Connecting wing. In my haste, I could not come up with quality learning activities to explore the desired outcome in a rich and meaningful way. Enter ChatGPT, which provided a comprehensive, multi-lesson series, with an exit slip as a form of assessment at the end. I found it to be a great tool to distill the complexity of certain outcomes into child-friendly language that meets students where they are at.

All of this said, one of the biggest hurdles users face when working with AI is the quality of the prompts they give. If users give a bare-bones request (i.e. “Create a worksheet for instruments of the orchestra”), they will get a bare-bones response. As one provides greater detail, richness, and specificity to the request (i.e. “Create a worksheet designed for Grade 3 students that covers the woodwind family of orchestral instruments according to the Manitoba K-8 Music Curriculum. Please include a colouring page on one side, and a word bank and matching activities on the other”), so will the AI provide a better quality product. Don’t be afraid to critique what it gives you either. Asking for an increasingly detailed response each time will help to refine the product. One thing to be aware of, however: the free version only offers a limited number of requests in a five-hour window.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, nor does it have to be where your journey ends with using AI. I have found the best use of ChatGPT is as a jumping off point when I am creatively stuck, am very pressed for time, or just need a place for students to start - but there is certainly more to explore.

Interested in further reading?

1. Holster, J. (2024). Augmenting Music Education Through AI: Practical Applications of ChatGPT. *Music Educators Journal*, 110(4), 36–42.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00274321241255938>



Adventures in Music Workshop Review

BY OLIVIA KELLY

Those in attendance for the Adventures in Music workshop January 20th, had the opportunity to better understand the lesson material, move and make music together, and connect with colleagues from a variety of school divisions. This year's Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra: Adventures in Music follows an olympic theme, fittingly timed with the recent Winter Olympics. For those who are not aware, the WSO and the MOC work together every year to create a study guide for teachers and students attending the concert. This study guide provides music lessons written by Manitoba music teachers where students can explore the music that they will hear at the concert in depth. Those in attendance at the workshop had the pleasure of getting to work through almost each lesson with the teacher who wrote it.

There are multiple layers to each lesson that ensures every student can succeed and understand the given material. Participants had the opportunity to practice parts of the lessons to better understand the material and how their own students may best participate. The music participants had the chance to try the performance or movement part of each lesson. This included barred instruments, scarves, ribbons, recorders, non-pitched percussion, and costumes! The music for the show comes from across the globe and represents many different cultures. Many of these lessons would be perfect supplements to any Black History Month, Asian Heritage Month, or World Music units that one may work through in their music room.

A personal highlight was learning an intricate orff piece, and the impromptu Mardis Gras parade to the piece Cidade Maravilhosa by André Filho. Students are sure to enjoy the lessons prepared, and will most definitely get excited for a trip to the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra!

Fall Fiesta Review

BY JULIANNA REMPEL

Dr. Susan Brumfield's elementary music workshops at Tempo 2026 at MBCI on Friday, October 24th and the Manitoba Orff Fall Fiesta on Saturday, October 25 at École South Pointe were both inspiring and highly practical.

As a Professor of Music Education at Texas Tech University, Dr. Brumfield brought deep expertise and enthusiasm to her presentations, which focused on her studies around brain breaks, skill building activities, and rich historical French Cajun songs and games, grounded in Kodály-inspired pedagogy and supported by current research.

She shared a wide range of fresh, engaging singing games and folk dances that were immediately applicable to the elementary classroom and adaptable for different age levels. Particularly valuable are her updated **First, We Sing!** editions, which feature revised lessons and refreshed song lists designed to more effectively teach musical elements such as pitch, rhythm, and form. Dr. Brumfield's approach reinforced the importance of joyful, sequential hands on singing experiences in music learning. Overall, the workshops provided meaningful ideas, strong pedagogical grounding, and renewed motivation to place meaningful music at the center of elementary music instruction.



Fall Fiesta Review

BY LARISSA HRABI



On October 25th, I had the pleasure of attending the Orff Fall Fiesta with Susan Brumfield. Fall Fiesta was a great time to connect with other orff teachers and learn about the work that Dr. Brumfield has created.

Dr. Brumfield came to the event with a wealth of knowledge, passion, and resources to share with us. I appreciated that she was realistic about keeping things simple and manageable for teachers when creating resources and manipulatives for the classroom.

Dr. Brumfield shared her research and methods on how to make sure that the pieces selected for classroom use are culturally responsible. I deeply appreciated that Dr. Brumfield has found a digital way to keep her physical works as up to date as possible if she discovers that a song is no longer deemed appropriate for classroom use.



It was also helpful that Dr. Brumfield shared how her research was used to create her resource **101 Songs and Games for Reading, Writing, and More**. Dr. Brumfield walked us through how the book is laid out with the song, how the game needs to be set up, and step by step instructions for how to play the games and associated activities. I found it incredibly useful that she demonstrated exactly how to follow along with her work by teaching us some sample material as if we were the children.

The song and game for “Cobbler, Cobbler” emphasized reading of rhythms and spontaneous responses to music making. Dr. Brumfield also demonstrated how to extend the activity into a rhythm writing activity, using children’s shoes to write rhythms. Dr. Brumfield also demonstrated how the teacher can reuse the same activities by simply changing the props. When she taught us the song “O, Sailor, Come Ashore” Dr. Brumfield substituted the shoes with little ocean animal stuffies. It was a great demonstration of how to reuse the same activity but keep it fresh and engaging for the students.

Dr. Brumfield brought her personal experience and the history of Cajun music with her, which helped me find similarities between Cajun history and our Manitoban Francophone community. This experience was incredibly intriguing, and helped bring perspectives on incorporating Francophone communities into the Connecting portion of the music curriculum.

It is fantastic to see how the Manitoba Kodály Society and the Manitoba Orff Chapter can come together and share resources and explore how the two pedagogies can work in tandem.



Scholarships & Awards

HELEN NEUFELD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

This award is given to the applicant(s) who best exemplifies Helen's commitment to the philosophies of Carl Orff Canada and her passion for music education.

This award is usually given to a student, or students, taking Orff Level II or III.

SUSAN BERRY MEMORIAL TRAVEL BURSARY

This bursary is awarded annually and provides financial assistance to rural music educators attending MOC professional development workshops in Winnipeg.

The bursary recipient will receive up to \$400 for transportation, meals, accommodation, and/or sub costs incurred to attend an MOC workshop.

GUNILD KEETMAN SCHOLARSHIP

The Gunild Keetman Fund was established in 1976 to provide annual grants to selected Canadian students or teachers.

Scholarships are awarded in the spring of each year and are available for all approved Orff Schulwerk courses offered in Canada, summer and winter. Applicants must be members in good standing of Carl Orff Canada, who have successfully completed a Level I Orff course.

Please visit [our website](#) for more information and application forms.



05 01
Brandon English
 BU School of Music

05 13
Winnipeg French
 U of M Desautels Faculty of Music

05 14
Winnipeg English
 U of M Desautels Faculty of Music



ORFF CHILDREN'S DAY

~~Early Bird Registration
January 23rd~~

Spots are still available for the Brandon day and Winnipeg French day - register [here](#).

05 01
Brandon en anglais
 Université de Brandon

05 13
Winnipeg en français
 Faculté de musique Desautels à U de M

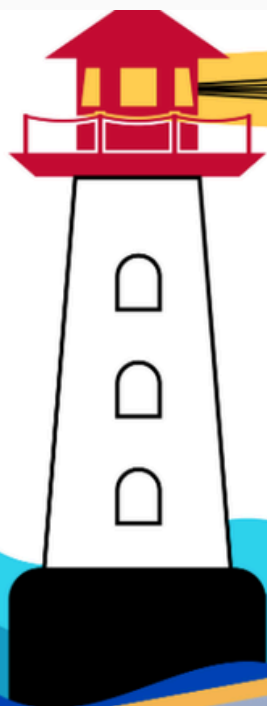
05 14
Winnipeg en anglais
 Faculté de musique Desautels à U de M



JOURNÉE ORFF POUR ENFANTS

~~Date d'inscription hâtive
le 23 janvier~~

Visit the [Passages 2026](#) website for more information.



Apr. 23rd-26th, Halifax, NS
du 23 au 26 avril, Halifax, N.-É

Passages 2026

Find Your Way | Trouve ta voie



MARRIOTT HALIFAX

APRIL 2026
AVRIL 2026





NEW FROM ♦ NOUVEAUTÉ DE

Carl Orff Canada

24 new inspiring lessons
24 nouvelles leçons inspirantes



Orff... On the Go!/En mouvement ! sales have begun.

Please order the resource book [here](#).

If you want a print copy and are not attending the Passages 2026, please email Lori at programs@manitobaorff.org and arrangements can be made to pick up your copy in Winnipeg.

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MOC 50TH ANNIVERSARY 2025-26

MAKE MUSIC, MANITOBA!

BY KELSEY SIMPSON

WHAT Created by Brandon resident, Kelsey Simpson, this song is gifted to you as the Manitoba Orff Chapter celebrates its 50 years on November 4th 2025.

HOW Feel free to sing it, play it, move with it, and make arrangements of it in your classroom!

WHEN Starting November 4th and throughout 2025-26, you are invited to post your classroom interpretation on social media with the hashtag #MOC50 or send your interpretation to info@manitobaorff.org.

STUDENT WAIVER FORMS AVAILABLE AT THE END OF THE DOCUMENT

A dark blue background is decorated with various musical instruments and notes. At the top, there are black musical notes on a white staff. Below, there are colorful elements: a purple globe, a blue stage light, a red electric guitar, a yellow saxophone, a blue cassette player, a black vinyl record, a yellow trumpet, a pink microphone, and a yellow amplifier. The text is centered in white and light blue.

50E ANNIVERSAIRE DU CHAPITRE ORFF
DU MANITOBA (2025-26)

FAIS DE LA MUSIQUE, MANITOBA! PAR KELSEY SIMPSON

QUOI

Créée par Kelsey Simpson, résidente de Brandon, cette chanson vous est offerte à l'occasion du 50e anniversaire du Chapitre Orff du Manitoba, le 4 novembre 2025.

COMMENT

N'hésitez pas à la chanter, à la jouer, à bouger au rythme et à en faire des arrangements dans votre classe !

QUAND

À partir du 4 novembre et tout au long de l'année 2025-2026, vous êtes invités à publier votre interprétation en classe sur les réseaux sociaux avec le hashtag #MOC50 ou à envoyer votre interprétation à info@manitobaorff.org.

FORMULAIRES DE DÉCHARGE POUR LES ÉTUDIANTS DISPONIBLES À LA FIN DU DOCUMENT



Contact Us

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info@manitobaorff.org



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