From the Editor
Browsing through the articles and photos in this issue, I am again struck by the immense energy, creativity and genuine teamwork of ONZA teachers, committee members and students. This issue features a feast of musical performances at the Auckland and Christchurch Marimba Festivals and by Auckland’s Norwest Marimba Ensemble. Tony presents a profile of Don Squire, an inspirational figure in New Zealand music education, and Renée sends news from the Orff Institute. Enjoy Shirley’s playful and practical suggestions to encourage singing and pitch matching in the junior school, and Christoph’s reflections on a composition process. Thanks to all contributors and the ONZA committee for your enthusiasm and team spirit.
Alison Talmage

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Co-ordinator’s Report

Greetings fellow music teachers,

By the time you read this newsletter, perhaps the teaching year of 2010 will be over for you, and you are enjoying (or looking forward to) a well deserved rest. I hope so.

At this time I would like to thank the ONZA committee for the events that they have initiated, planned and delivered to the music education community this year.

This committee consists of hard-working teachers by day (and by night!). It is their passion for the value of music making in children’s lives and the role that the Orff approach can play in this, that gives them energy for extra-curricular activities. This passion is not unique to the ONZA committee, of course, and it is wonderful to see it shared by so many willing participants and, as well, reflected in the many other wonderful musical events for children, here in Auckland, where I am based, and throughout the country.

In particular I would to like to thank our newsletter editor, Alison Talmage, for the very valuable service she has given over the last three years. Not only has she produced newsletters of a very high standard, she has been a terrific person to work with, always supportive of ONZA activities and keen to remind us to promote these appropriately. Alison is stepping down form this position after she eases our new editor (to be announced) into the job for our next issue. Thank you, Alison.

The ONZA committee are currently in the process of planning professional development opportunities and events for 2011. The date for the AGM has been set down for Wednesday 4th May. We would love to see some fresh input in our committee. Please contact me if you are interested. You do not have to be an Auckland resident!!

In the meantime, best wishes to all for a happy festive season and a restful and rejuvenating summer

Millie Locke

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Strum hum wriggle drum!

Early Childhood PD Day

Our first venture into early childhood workshops was on a wet mid-August Saturday at Belmont Primary on the North Shore. The 35 or so participants brought enough enthusiasm for a much larger crowd.

Celia Stewart from Christchurch presented a popular plenary session which provided context for learning in all other workshops. These included storytelling with music, motivational themes, and lots of singing, rhythm, rhyme and movement. Marie Bagley’s introduction to the Dalcroze approach to learning was a highlight for many participants. Opportunities to stock up on puppets, CDs and resource books offered by stall holders were well received.

Our next early childhood workshop day is planned for August 2011.

Shirley Harvey
Christchurch

In conjunction with ONZA, Music Education Canterbury held their fourth marimba festival on 30 October, once again in the St Andrew’s College gymnasium. The number of schools participating has grown from nine in 2009 to 17 schools in 2010, so we needed to have two performances to cater for the increased numbers.

It has been a difficult few months for Christchurch schools. The festival was a wonderful opportunity to uplift shaken spirits and enjoy the opportunity to make music together. Each school learned ten massed pieces and some schools took advantage of the opportunity to present an individual item, which provided lots of variety for the audience. The teachers did a fantastic job teaching the children all the pieces, some under quite difficult circumstances.

The children performed superbly, and feedback from the audience of family members, teachers and friends was very positive and enthusiastic. They also looked great, with each school in a different bright coloured T-shirt and with their wrists adorned with their “I ♥ my marimba” bracelets.

The marimba festival is continuing to grow and we are looking forward to an even bigger and better year in 2011.

Celia Stewart
Auckland

Children dressed in black, blue, green, orange and purple t-shirts said it all. Six years of Marimba Festivals! (The first years were in black in case you think my arithmetic is bad.)

What started at the Britomart Events Pavilion as a single concert with about 15 schools has grown to three concerts over two days with thirty four groups taking part.

Baradene College was once again the festival venue, with Alison Talmage as Musical Director/Conductor and Tony Ramsay as MC. All three concerts featured the same ten items played by the massed ensembles. ‘Albatross Rock’ was the opening number followed by ‘Boris the Bassman’ both written by Jon Madin. Jon has a special place in the heart of the ONZA committee since it was his Marimba Festivals in Victoria, Australia that we wished to emulate in New Zealand. This was followed by ‘Rugare’, a Zimbabwean tune that would be typically played on marimbas, a tricky tune that tested the playing abilities of the children. Each concert now featured solo items which were as varied as swing tunes and calypsos.

The next two massed items were as far apart as it possible to be and demonstrated how versatile the marimba ensemble can be. The children performed a convincing rendition of Pachelbel’s famous ‘Canon’, a very popular piece of classical music. This was followed by ‘Random’ a piece that Mark Brimblecombe from Whangarei wrote last year specifically for his marimba group.

Solo items followed including a Doug Goodkin piece by Cambridge Middle School called ‘Boom Chicka Boom’. Cambridge Middle School had come from the Waikato to perform in this year’s Marimba Festival, one of three schools that had made the trek from outside the Auckland area proving the growing popularity of the festival. The others were Kaipara Flats School and Omata from New Plymouth.

The third bracket started with ‘Dance 31’ continuing the tradition of having a Carl Orff piece, followed by ‘The Rainforest Song’ written by Mary Helen Solomon the master Orff teacher from Florida who has visited New Zealand on several occasions now. The teachers’ item in this bracket ‘Nyoka’ was dedicated to the late Lindo Francis who taught many of us and who loved tuned percussion. We felt his spirit was there among us as the children played. This was followed by ‘ONZA Rondo’ written by our very own Clare McCormack who led the children in this wonderful body percussion piece. Well done, Clare!

The last solo items were followed by ‘Here Comes the Dragon’ written by Caroline Zeeman, who played guitar at every concert. Our hope has been that more and more of the repertoire be written by locals, and this lovely piece with its zany poetic introduction was great. The honour of the last piece went to Jon Madin again. ‘The Rocking Dogs’ (a superb piece of music) showed off the children’s ability to play varied dynamics in one piece.

Another successful Marimba Festival. We can’t wait for next year!

Tony Ramsay

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Just wanted to thank you for all your help before and over the weekend for the festival. The kids had a blast and my principal has put it on the school planner as a biennial event, which is fantastic. So many thanks again and look forward to catching up with you all, perhaps in April 2011, if not before.

Jan Aiello - Omata School, New Plymouth

Thanks to Clare McCormack, Auckland Marimba Festival Co-ordinator, Alison Talmage, Musical Director, and committee members, Millie Locke, Tony Ramsay, Philippa Drake, Janine Wymer, Caroline Zeeman, Sue Dickson and Shirley Harvey. Thanks to Janet Channon and Owairaka School for the Auckland photos.

Marimba makers present at the Auckland Festival were: Ian Drower idrower@gmail.com and Neil Bruce nb001_wave@ihug.co.nz.

Cambridge Middle School was delighted to be invited to our first Marimba Festival. This year was the first year I had had a Marimba Group at school. Our children were told early on in the year that they would be taking part in the festival and this gave us a marvellous repertoire to work from. The children were so excited, especially at the prospect of travelling all the way to Auckland and we were not disappointed. I particularly enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere with no pressure. How do you guys do it? Coming from Cambridge it was too difficult for me to get up to the meetings but this did not matter. The whole event ran like clockwork and no one would have known that the students hadn’t all played together before. The Tee Shirts were amazing and our students are going to be wearing them for their performance on Grandparents Day. Thank you ONZA for putting on this awesome day for the students, we loved every minute of it.

Michelle Flint
The Norwest Ensemble - children from Henderson Valley and Target Road Primary Schools, with teachers Millie Locke and Clare McCormack, provided fresh and innovative examples of musical creativity. They played their own music to a packed house at the APPA Music Festival in the Auckland Town Hall on 16th November - a spectacular setting for anyone, even more so for young children.

The children performed three pieces on Orff Instruments, marimbas, recorders, gong and hand percussion. There was an arrangement of Pachelbel’s Canon for xylophones and marimba with delightfully sonorous recorder work. The children’s sense of timing involving melodic patterns and intricate tremolo in 3/4 metre was good. In ‘Rocking Dogs’ by Jon Madin, the children expressed mysterious sound qualities with well-coordinated step dynamics from mp to ff.

The highlight was the performance of their own composition, an interpretation of the Māori creation story, Ranginui and Papatuanuku. The work was performed in a large ensemble with bass marimba, several three-octave marimbas, bass metallophone, bass xylophone, alto and soprano metallophones, xylophones, recorders, gong, putatara (conch shell) and hand percussion. After an opening on the putatara and gong, there was a series of well-conceived ostinato patterns, contrasted with tremolo sounds, then another section with new and youthful riffs. Changing dynamics, a varying tapestry of ostinato patterns, and a continually emerging melodic development allowed the listener to sense images from the story.

The audience showed their appreciation with warm and heartfelt applause. The performance left an overwhelmingly positive impression of genuinely creative and child-centred work. It was obvious that the two teachers believed in their children’s abilities and the power of imagination.

Christoph Maubach

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WANTED!

A defunct (resonating) box only that the tone-bars from an imported alto xylophone or metallophone used to sit on - the tall style that has been made overseas since the 1950s.

Whether it is Japanese, German, English, Taiwanese or ??? is irrelevant and it does not need to be in good order - the shabbier the better!

Please phone (09) 6272942 or email don@squire.co.nz
Profile of Don Squire

Don has made an extraordinary contribution to music making in New Zealand with the development of his XyloPercs, and this happened following his retirement from teaching! For the last several decades he has developed tuned percussion instruments with the sole motivation of fostering a love of music in children.

Music has been in the Squire family for a very long time. After the Battle of Waterloo Don’s great, great, grandfather opened a Squire piano making factory in London. His son perfected the check action that is still used in pianos today and then consolidated the firm’s reputation at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Don’s grandfather arrived in New Zealand in the late 1800’s and began to import Squire pianos from 1894. Don’s mother’s grandmother taught piano and her husband’s father had been part time organist at Gloucester Cathedral before emigrating to New Zealand.

Don’s choice of career, however, was education, and by the late 50’s he was head teacher of a small country school. Because of his musical background he was often called on to direct musical festivals and other musical events. He also loved woodwork and this interest was to become crucial later on in his career. In 1966, while working in Te Puke, the late Lindo Francis showed him his student design xylophone and explained how easy it was to make one. Don was hooked.

In 1968 he moved to Auckland and his interest in designing and building xylophones began to increase. When he finally retired some years later he had made headway in creating the basics of the xylophones that many of us now have in our tuned percussion ensembles. His experience with children meant that he understood the limitations of some of the otherwise excellent xylophones on the market. How to get an instrument that had the bass response and tonal quality of well made xylophones but was small enough for children to use? Eventually he succeeded in producing an instrument with a Partly Enclosed Resonating Chamber. The XyloPerc was born, an instrument that was half the size, half the weight and cost less than conventional xylophones.

The next stage in the story of the Xylo illustrates Don’s perseverance. He attempted to sell his design under licence to Premier Percussion in England, Sonor and Studio 49 in that his Germany, but although they agreed design was excellent, for business reasons they weren’t interested. He worked from the workshop under his house and could produce 50 alto xylophones in 50 working days. He travelled around New Zealand getting more schools interested in buying his wares. An ensemble of XyloPercs these days can include contrabass bars, bass, alto and soprano xylophones, metallophones and, his latest creation, pictured below, the sopranino (which my children love to play).

Don has attempted to retire from this second career (he is now in his 80’s) and spends a great deal of time on photography but he still produces some xylophones because there is an on-going demand for his excellent instruments.

Visit Don’s website: www.xylophones.co.nz

Tony Ramsay
Every child, every teacher, indeed every person has creative and expressive abilities. Teachers inspired by the Orff Schulwerk approach invite creative music-making by seeding ideas and providing an environment where these ideas can grow. The circumstances which allow creative work to flourish are shaped in a variety of ways. Instruments and the voice are welcome tools. There are often starting points or triggers, such as a spoken text, an artwork, a photograph, dance movements, or another musical work - anything that ‘tickles’ the senses. In addition, a positive attitude, faith in creative expression and the ability to take risks are enabling factors. In the Orff approach conscious, practical exploration of sounds, playing about with musical patterns, observing sounds and movement and being totally in the present all make for good stepping stones into the world of the creative self. Trusting in the first creative flash of an idea and then trying to work with this is a good way to foster inspiration.

The following example ‘appeared’ when I came across a Maori proverb in a book with beautiful photographs and texts: *Earth, Sea, Sky: Images and Maori proverbs from the natural world of Aotearoa*. I selected this particular proverb because I was especially attracted to the sounds of the spoken words and the accompanying photograph, which shows the rhythmic flow of seaweed between rocks in ocean waters.

When I repeated the words of *Rimu rimu*, I noticed a natural lilt creeping into the rhythmic way I recited the words; a gentle 6/8 metre began to develop. Soon the first melodic idea came to mind. A kind of thesis, the rising motif (a), and anti-thesis, falling motif (b), developed. This was followed quickly in my musical imagination with a resolution (c), all repeated. A new phrase (d) set the words *Rimu rimu* to an elongated rhythm pattern, leading to a repeated melodic pattern *Rere ana, Rere ana*, and a final ending on an insistent single tone.

The melody bubbled up over a period of nine months. Recently I created an arrangement for Orff instruments and alto recorder (next page). I remembered the models and pedagogical ideas of Keetmann, Orff and others; and also discussions among postgraduate Orff students at University of Waikato about aspects of elemental composition. For example:

- Is the composition playable/singable by young people?
- Can melodic and rhythmic patterns be memorised?
- Is there a relationship between the natural speech metre and the musical metre?
- Is there room to develop movement and music co-ordination?
- Is there room for musical improvisation?
- Are there ostinato patterns, which young players can ‘get their teeth into’?

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Is the ostinato or ‘loop’ development too repetitive, so that it becomes boring?
Is there colour in the orchestration, to liven up the music and keep the players ‘on their toes’?
What is the scale - modal, pentatonic, major, minor?
Is the topic vivid, opening the imaginative mind to other arts activities?
Do the mood, rhythm and melody entice dance movement and dance creation?
Is the music transparent enough to offer engagement with score reading and composition techniques?

After creating this arrangement, I felt the typical ‘creator’s doubt’. There is creation with enthusiasm and then it remains to be seen whether there is tangible benefit to others. But is it actually necessary for elemental compositions to bring tangible products to the world, or is the process enough? Can I leave the answers to these questions with readers, as you engage with the arrangement of ‘Rimu rimu’?

Christoph Maubach

Reference
Finding a singing voice

Given that the optimum age to match pitch to a given sound, and so to learn to sing, is before about 7 years, much of what I do with 5 and 6-year-olds involves an individual singing response - and children are always so keen to play such games at this age. I use the sequence of pitch patterns used by Stuart Manins in “Music Stories for Juniors” (www.smbooks.co.nz), choosing one that needs practice.

Here are four ideas which allow children to hear themselves and others, and for the teacher to assess their progress.

1. Pat pat who?
Children are sitting in a circle and we begin keeping the beat on our knees. The teacher chooses a 4 beat pitch pattern such as So La So Me (G A G E, or F G F D, or at whatever pitch the children are likely to be successful) or So Me La Me (e.g. G E A E). As they pat their knees, children sing their name - e.g. ‘Pat pat Jamie’ - to the given pitch pattern and everyone echoes. The aim, apart from maintaining the pitch pattern, is to keep the beat going right round the circle.

2. Bean frog
Beginning with So Me (minor third interval as in G E,) then turning it upside down to Me So (E G) and later using other pentatonic pitch patterns, the teacher throws a frog (or any other ‘beanie’ animal, of course) to a child and sings.

Keeping the interval the same, adjust the pitch down (or occasionally up) to where the child can be successful, then gradually raise it as the child becomes more skilful.

3. I spy with my little eye
(‘No speaking’ zone)
A range of instruments are put in the middle of the circle with children sitting round the outside. The teacher or a child chooses the pitch pattern (4 beats long).

A child sits out the front and using the chosen pitch pattern sings:

'I spy with my little eye,
something beginning with C..'

Hands go up, and the child out the front points to one, who sings:

'Is it the claves?’
(or cabasa, or castanets....)

Responses have to be sung, so if a child speaks, the child at the front selects another person. The leader sings, ‘Yes, it is’ or ‘No, it’s not’.

Frequent changes of leader sitting on the teacher’s chair keeps the game moving, helps children remember the names of instruments, and reinforces the letter-sound relationship.
4. I hear a bird in a tree

Children each find a spot on their own standing in the room. They are trees!
The teacher decides on a pitch pattern for assessment, e.g. so-me.

One child, who is the first bird, flies to land in a tree (stands behind a child) and every-
one sings:

‘I hear a bird in a tree. 
Listen, it’s singing to me.’

The ‘bird’ behind the tree replies:
‘Tu-i Tu-i’ (so-me, so-me)

All the children (trees) echo:
‘Tui-Tui’ (so-me, so-me)

The bird sits down to become a bush, and the tree turns into the next bird, who flies to another tree.

Shirley Harvey
Five weeks ago the “Special Course” started here at the Orff Institute in Salzburg, and I have the great privilege of being a student in the programme. So far it has been extremely interesting, exciting, and I enjoy every minute of it.

The days are filled with classes of dance technique, improvisation and choreography, body percussion and speech rhythms, didactics, composing with and for children, ensemble and pedagogy, history of the Orff-Schulwerk, vocal ensemble and more. Most of the teachers who work here have been involved with the Institute for decades, and their expertise and talent is beyond words. It is simply mind blowing to be here and to study with these masters.

Besides the regular dance and music classes, we also have guest teachers. A few weeks ago, Sofia Ibo-Lopez came from San Francisco for two full weeks. During that time, we learned heaps and what fascinated me the most was the way she uses and transforms patterns to move from one activity to another. It is truly beautiful to see how from a simple rhythmic and/or melodic idea, a movement, a picture or a poem, she expands into a multitude of musical and movement avenues. Her teaching is very specific and clear, and always stimulating and exciting. She is not afraid to repeat things over and over, knowing that every time it will be modified and transformed either by her or by the students. Complementary ostinati, questions and answers, echo, contrast, dynamics, metric/non-metric music, transferring sound ideas on to the body or an instrument, working with different partners - all the principles can be applied within one lesson. And as with many other Orff teachers, non-verbal communication works very well, as long as there are patterns to lead the way.

Talking of patterns, Christa Coogan - who teaches “choreographing with and for children” - also emphasises the importance of using clear patterns with young students.

Together we played this little game:

- Sitting in a circle, students receive two beads each (we used chestnuts).
- One at the time, students place their two beads anywhere inside the circle.

The second round

Each student chooses two beads from the design created on the first round and puts them somewhere else.

The third time

Do the same as the previous round, but this time very quickly.

It was interesting to see how much we all wanted to create patterns and, following a group discussion, we made an improvised choreography based on patterns.

Renée Morin