



## From Around the World

### SingOrff in the Pandemic

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Like everyone else in the world, we in Singapore were adversely affected by the pandemic. Heightened health restrictions were in place after a 6-week circuit breaker whereby life in usually hectic Singapore came almost to a standstill. School teachers were given only 48 hours to craft online lessons and after two weeks of this they were told that school holidays were brought forward a month to help alleviate the pressure on parents and teachers.



But not everything was gloom and doom for us. The world discovered ‘Zoom’ and many of us took the opportunity to take online lessons with various Orff experts around the world, to join virtual music conferences and seminars and to keep in touch with friends both near and far via the various virtual conferencing platforms.

SingOrff took this opportunity to join the first virtual IOSFS Convention 2020 “*Legacy and Vision*” with committee members either presenting Come-together sessions, other presentations, or hosting a discussion group. This was a gift for the teachers in Singapore as unlike in other parts of the world, we do not have summer holidays during July and August so school continues. These teachers then do not normally have the chance to attend the yearly convention in Salzburg or the summer workshops.

This unforeseen “gift” saw the SingOrff team presenting at the Forum Resonances in March 2021 “*Discovering the Wildflower*”, sharing the growth of our Association, with members demonstrating a local song and how we had adapted the Schulwerk within our culture. SingOrff again took part in the IOSFS Convention 2021 “*Play and Planning in Orff-Schulwerk*”, presenting a Come Together Session as well as hosting a discussion.

The team had originally organized with various other Asian counterparts to be part of the European Mentorship Programme in Orff-Schulwerk Pedagogy – Singapore Satellite, the mentors being Soili Perkiö and Elisa Seppänen, both from Finland, and Christa Coogan, from Germany/USA. The final participants were Anida Chan from Hong Kong, Abdul Hakim, Josephine Ho, Goh Wan Yu, Joyce Ang, Yang Wen Tirng and Rebecca Lau from SingOrff, Singapore. All of the participants came away inspired and refreshed even though they only met online. Admittedly there were some challenges due to the nature of online meetings, but one can safely say all grew in artistry and understanding of the Orff-Schulwerk process due to the expert guidance and support from the three mentors.

Another offshoot of the virtual meetings is that SingOrff was able to invite people from afar to conduct online workshops. Peta Harper and Michelle Rollins from Sydney, Australia, Rob Amchin from the USA, Kofi Gbolonyo from Ghana/Canada and Estêvão Marques from Brazil all presented weekend workshops for local participants.

As SingOrff believes in sharing: we presented an online session for educators in India in July and in the midst of the political turmoil, in Myanmar, we were still able to somehow share through the online platform with those who came from far-flung villages, eager to learn about the pedagogy of Orff Schulwerk. This took place in both December 2020 and December 2021.

We were not able to conduct face to face workshops due to heightened health restrictions like social distancing and the banning of singing and playing wind instruments. The Singapore Levels Courses were not held in 2020 and 2021. We hope to conduct levels training in a hybrid version in 2022, though this is still very much in the air due to the fluid nature of the restrictions.

As can be seen, SingOrff had to roll with the punches. We found ourselves in a rather new and strange world in April 2020. There were painful lessons to go through, but with teamwork and collaboration, we managed to grow with the new technology and be even more vibrant as a team!