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Margaret Murray 1921-2015: Orff-Schulwerk Volumes I & II (2nd English version)

Kate Buchanan



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**Margaret Murray 1921-2015:
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In the summer of 1957, following the recordings of the new English version of Schulwerk Volumes I and II, Margaret and her husband Walter Jellinek visited Orff in Diessen, Germany. Orff proposed that Margaret should use this new material created for the recordings, for an English edition aimed at teachers in the United Kingdom. An earlier English-language edition of the Schulwerk (1956-61) had been created by Doreen Hall and Arnold Walter in Canada. There is evidence from correspondence with Margaret that Orff was unhappy about various aspects of this adaptation including omissions made in Volumes IV and V. Margaret notes in her diary that she, Walter and Orff travelled on to Munich and spent an embarrassing hour with Arnold Walter who was very upset, almost angry that Doreen Hall had been excluded from the recordings. This is understandable given the dedicated work that Walter and Hall had committed to developing their understanding of the principles of Orff-Schulwerk (Sanborn, 2005). Doreen spent over a year in Salzburg (1954-55) learning about the Schulwerk by observing Keetman's teaching, speaking with Orff, developing her German-speaking skills and eventually teaching pupils herself. This was, however, not a structured course of learning, more like opportunities for learning by osmosis and taking opportunities as they arose. The evolution and choice of materials for the Canadian version also proved problematic due to a combination of poor communication between Walter and Orff but also in terms of excluding indigenous folk music with which neither Walter or Hall was familiar and only including repertoire which tended to refer back to European folk music.

The desire for a version suitable for teachers in the United Kingdom, might suggest that Orff saw the advantages of developing links with Margaret for other reasons: on a professional level, Margaret and her husband had both been present at the German Schulwerk recordings and were therefore well acquainted with the working practices and artistic aims of the Schulwerk; they had developed a strong personal relationship during this period and there was potential for continuing to develop it. Orff was impressed by Margaret's musical credentials as evidenced by her working with him on revising his 'fairy tale' opera *Die Kluge*. With her love of literature and fairy stories in particular, Margaret was well-placed to provide advice and fresh insight both musically and dramatically, particularly as she was fluent in German. It was the start of a 25-year relationship which continued until Orff's death in 1982. Early correspondence is extremely formal with Margaret addressing Orff 'Lieber Maestro' and in return Orff replies 'Liebe Frau Jellinek'. However, the content is often affectionate and complimentary: Orff praises Margaret's excellent translation and on one occasion tried to create a bridge between Margaret and Doreen Hall who it seems was looking forward to seeing Margaret in Salzburg. Even if unplanned, Orff had created an unfortunate situation in encouraging two English versions of the Schulwerk without thinking through the implications of how they might relate to each other. Margaret never felt comfortable about it and it appears that it was never resolved satisfactorily for either side.

The first Orff Schulwerk courses in the UK

Margaret's husband Walter was away for several months at a time during 1958 and this coincided with new opportunities for her. A meeting was the first step in a journey which would change Margaret's life. In February 1958, Margaret met Doris Gould, Music Adviser in West Sussex in the south of England, who wanted to learn more about Orff-Schulwerk and was committed to helping elementary teachers learn how to teach music. Doris gave Margaret the skills and confidence to realise that she might work practically with the Schulwerk both with teachers and pupils. Doris had come across one of Doreen Hall's Canadian volumes of the Orff-Schulwerk. Whilst Margaret had happily taken on the project of adapting the volumes, she had never imagined that she would be called upon to teach the materials. Walter left for Bayreuth and Margaret gave her first weekend Orff-Schulwerk course attended by fifty teachers at the end of June knowing, as she states, 'a lot about [Orff-Schulwerk] in theory but not in practice'. Margaret had already received an early pressing of the English records and took along copies of the German edition writing in English texts as an *aide-mémoire*. A quote from one of Margaret's chronologies (1952-71), she did not call them diaries, sums up what she was experiencing at this time:

My main difficulty was that I had no strategies for helping those who had rhythmic or physical/technical problems with playing the instruments. The other problem (which only showed itself during and after my first Friday evening lecture where I played extracts from the records and outlined the philosophy and described the scope of the first two volumes) was that I did not realise that all basic music terminology was unknown to these teachers.

Despite Margaret's lack of experience in working with teachers who were not music specialists, she introduced many activities including body percussion, imitation, canon, improvising and the idea of composing using words. The final activity used Orff/ Keetman's 'Apple tree, pear tree' (Orff & Keetman, adapted by Murray, 1958) as a basis for groups to come up with their own composition: one group used names of birds, whilst another (all men) used names of drinks progressing from fruit juice, apple juice, Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola to lager, pilsner then red wine, white wine leading to whisky, cognac, vodka and ending with 'Black coffee, black coffee'. Much laughter ensued. The practice of taking a model as the basis for composing would have been a completely new experience for music teachers at this time. Whilst a more child-centred education had been evolving in the visual arts and language teaching during the 1950s, music teaching was firmly rooted in formal instruction and lacked any creative input. In a letter to Carl Orff (dated 9 July 1958), she speaks enthusiastically about the course which 'was received with great enthusiasm'. As Margaret reported in an interview with me, - Doris turned to her and said "My dear, we've started something".

Dissemination of Orff Schulwerk: the first experiences

Later in the year, Margaret was approached by a group of Her Majesty's School Inspectors, responsible for music, who wished to be informed about the Schulwerk. As she was not allowed to go in person, Margaret prepared materials including the recordings and Vol 1 with some explanatory texts and loaned a set of instruments. One can only imagine a group of suited men getting to grips with the 'Orff instruments'. Did they sing? Play? Dance? Move? Chant? Improvise? There does not appear to have been any kind of follow up or response.



Margaret teaching (1964)

© Orff Society UK



Margaret teaching (no date) © Orff Society UK

Margaret was invited to present a lecture to the Standing Conference of Music Advisers in October 1958 through her links with Doris Gould. Margaret did not have the courage to lead a practical session but played extracts from the recordings and demonstrated examples by playing and singing herself. She reports that she did not feel she had made much impact however, two music advisers approached her: Kate Baxter and Michael Lane who quickly became committed to the Orff-Schulwerk approach and were founder members of the Orff Society UK when it was set up in 1964.

Again through the encouragement of Doris Gould, Margaret set up weekly sessions for teachers in Sussex and continued to work on the adaptation of Volume 2. Margaret's involvement in this activity, her increasing independence (she had recently bought her own car) was putting a strain on her relationship with her husband. Walter very much resented the time she spent on her own projects; he is reported (by Margaret) to have said "I want a wife not a translator". As a result of this professional and personal jealousy, Margaret's life was becoming increasingly difficult and the strain of this was making her ill. For a time she made concerted efforts to be the wife that Walter wanted her to be, taking holidays with him and avoiding additional 'work' outside the home. But this was short-lived.

A new beginning

At the beginning of 1960, a second aunt, Lil, was taken ill and died. This must have been a great blow for Margaret and she immersed herself in organising the funeral service and arranging a memorial service. Aunt Lil was in fact Lilian Lindsay (née Murray) who was the first British woman to qualify as a dentist and the first female president of the British Dental Association.

In the couple of months leading up to her separation from Walter in May 1960, Margaret immersed herself in music making and other social activities including attendance at many concerts and visits to friends. She mentions going to see the film *Les Enfants du Paradis* with Walter on 6 April but by mid-May, Margaret had been to see her lawyer and on 20 May left her husband for good. She spoke very little about the separation and in Margaret's understated and tight-lipped way had written (sometime later) to Carl Orff that it was 'somewhat distressing' that she and Walter had separated but in her typical fashion was extremely clear about her intentions 'I will have nothing further to do with him'⁴⁸. She was in the fortunate position of having received an unexpected inheritance from an unknown relative of her American mother. This enabled her to buy 31, Roedean Crescent, Richmond: an impressive and comfortably-situated detached house with much potential near Richmond Park in south west London.

Margaret was now living as a single woman and taking advantage of all that London had to offer in terms of theatre, concerts, films as well as social encounters. She had many visitors including old friends to stay in her new spacious house, went to special film showings and charity events and appears to have thrown herself into life after the breakdown of her seventeen-year

⁴⁸Correspondence: Margaret Murray to Carl Orff, 20 February 1961

marriage. She noted in her diary visits to the theatre to see contemporary plays such as *A Man for All Seasons* by Robert Bolt starring Paul Schofield and the film version of *Playboy of the Western World* with Siobhan McKenna. Others included Brecht's *Galileo* at the Mermaid Theatre, Chekov's *The Seagull* and Schiller's *Maria Stuart* at the Old Vic. Concerts included Isaac Stern performing the Brahms Violin Concerto with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and a recital by Victoria de Los Angeles with Gerald Moore, both at the Royal Festival Hall; and a Beethoven String Quartet series at the Victoria and Albert Museum in Kensington. Enjoying London's cultural life was an important part of finding herself again and connecting with her extended family who provided her with emotional support. She notes that her cousin Michael Murray took her to a charity performance of the original London production of the *Sound of Music* at the Palace Theatre in 1961. Michael was the son of Uncle Frank with whom Margaret had stayed at his hotel in Bedford in 1931 when she heard the sad news of her mother's death.

Margaret the performer

Margaret re-established herself as a performing musician realising that she needed time to practise and re-acquaint herself with the music she had been immersed in during her college studies and in her twenties. The long periods of European travel had prevented her from regular engagement in her own music making. She purchased a Steinway grand piano and took piano lessons with Phyllis Sellick, her former professor at the Royal College of Music. Margaret met regularly with another teacher and violinist, Grace Burrows who she knew from her schooldays, to work on the classical duo repertoire for violin and piano. She also started giving concerts with Joan Gray, singer and fellow student. Margaret's piano teacher and her professors at the Royal College of Music had always commended her skills as an accompanist. Excellent musicianship together with alertness and flexibility are essential in this role and Margaret had these in abundance. Margaret threw herself into refreshing her musical skills: she noted seven consecutive sessions with Grace Burrows over a ten-day period. This was immersion in music that had previously been denied to her due to the focus on her husband's career and his apparent need to be the only person in their relationship to succeed musically and professionally.

Margaret joined the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) which brought her professional status and an acknowledgement of her musical abilities from the outside world. She took every opportunity to make new musical contacts and to re-establish old ones. Her long association with the Barnes Music Club began at this time and provided her with friends, contacts and opportunities to learn new repertoire, perform in regular concerts, develop her ensemble skills as well as later experiences in leading and directing rehearsals.

She began to teach herself recorder and later had lessons with the well-established recorder player and teacher, Robert Salkeld, becoming sufficiently proficient to take part in performances with Walter Bergmann as a professional player.

Walter Bergmann (1902 – 1988) and Margaret Murray

Walter Bergmann ©Society of Recorder Players

Walter Bergmann, recorder player, harpsichordist, music editor and arranger first met Margaret at the second international Orff-Schulwerk Summer School in Salzburg in 1962. Margaret attended classes, talked to Orff and Keetman and, with her eye for detail and planning, absorbed a great deal of information in order to help her set up her own UK-based summer school; Walter wished to become more involved with the English publications of the *Schulwerk* through his role as editor at Schott in London. Now just turned 60 years old, this was a new venture for Walter and coincided with an increased involvement in teaching and adjudicating. Margaret and Walter hit it off straight away and they and Walter's wife Grete were to become firm friends and colleagues over the next twenty-five years. They shared an interest in the recorder and its repertoire, an important part of the *Schulwerk*. Margaret had already embarked on a series of regular recorder lessons to improve her knowledge and playing. Walter had not only arranged and edited hundreds of publications for recorder for Schott by this point but had also led numerous courses throughout the country many of them at Morley College in London as part of the work of the Society of Recorder Players.

Margaret was planning the first UK performance of Carl Orff's *Christmas Story* (*Weihnachtsgeschichte*) for which she had prepared an English translation. The concert was to take place at Wykeham County Secondary and was a collaboration with Willesden Schools Music Association. In correspondence with Carl Orff, Margaret had put forward the pros and cons of adopting an equivalent regional English dialect although she acknowledged that she was 'no expert'. The Bavarian dialect of the original was put into a simple, direct form of English to ensure that it would be understood in any part of the UK and in other English-speaking countries. Orff could see the sense in this approach and was in agreement with Margaret's suggestion. There is an interesting exchange of letters where Margaret provides what she thinks is meant by some of the Bavarian dialect words – using her knowledge of German as spoken in Austria (Margaret's husband Walter Jellinek was of Austrian origin) – it appears she was correct.

She approached Walter Bergmann to conduct. He was also able to provide recorder players. Margaret noted that the performance in December 1962 was good musically but she considered that the production was 'really dreadful'. The angels looked like 'washing hanging up on the line, really awful'. The pastoral introduction featured bleating sheep which had been pre-recorded but it failed to work so Margaret created the sounds herself. The review in the Times Educational Supplement (TES) praised the skilful 'verismo effects' of the offstage animals and, in contrast to Margaret's critique, thought the performance was 'admirably produced' by Miss Margaret John. Among the instrumentalists was a pupil at one of the Willesden primary schools who stood out from all the others. Margaret remembered her clearly and was delighted to inform me that this was Lesley Hornby, a 13-year old who was the only child to write and thank Margaret. Lesley became a famous model and was later known by her professional name, Twiggy. The review in the Times Educational Supplement (7 December 1962) was full of praise for the concert's pioneering spirit in avoiding the often dull end-of-term Christmas concert, the quality of the production and the 'exceptionally striking' musical inventiveness of Carl Orff. Performances of Orff's *Christmas Story* are given regularly in Germany and other European countries, notably Poland.

The relationship with Walter Bergmann now opened up new opportunities for Margaret as a performer on cello, harpsichord and later recorder. A few months after the *Christmas Story* saw 'An evening of 17th and 18th Century Music' at the St Pancras Arts Festival in London in which Margaret played the harpsichord. The programme included Purcell's '*Music and Masque to Dioclesian*' and music by Bach, Telemann and Blow featuring singers Ilse Wolf, Norman Platt and Alfred Deller, and solo instrumentalists William Bennett (flute), Neil Black (oboe) and Philip Jones (trumpet), all musicians who were or would become well-established solo and ensemble performers on the professional circuit. Margaret had now become a regular part of the 'baroque entertainment' (on recorder and cello) which Bergmann had created some years earlier and now entitled 'Musical Pills to Purge Melancholy'. The title came from Thomas D'Urfey's dedication to '*Wit and Mirth*' and involved singers, actors and instrumentalists in a kind of cabaret with dramatic presentations of songs and instrumental pieces from the 17th and 18th Centuries. Various reviews commented on the 'amusing entertainment... admirable performers in song and speech' (The Times) and 'high class cabaret' (The Scotsman). From Margaret's own notes it would appear that she took on the role of selecting and ordering the repertoire for some of the performances depending on the audience, length required and the number of musicians booked for the concert. When Margaret joined the ensemble, it usually comprised three singers: Clare Walmesley, Laura Sarti and Norman Platt. They would do a short run in a small theatre or hall (sometimes supported by funding from Arts Council of England) and once gave a performance at a well-known boys' public school. Walter had the idea of re-enacting the situation in the time of Handel when two singers were arch rivals. Each singer had their 'claque' who applauded their respective heroine with vigour. The boys were encouraged to 'take sides' and the pandemonium that followed made the singers furious as they could not be heard (nor hear each other!). Another highlight was a performance at the BBC New Year's Eve Party in 1964 given to celebrate Yehudi Menuhin's presidency of the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM). Margaret enjoyed taking part in these performances

which not only provided her with income but also helped to re-establish her credentials as a performer.

The relationship between Margaret and Walter operated on many different levels and was mutually beneficial. Not only were they collaborating in musical performances, but also Bergmann's role at Schott meant he was involved in editing *Schulwerk* materials, as well as their promotion and dissemination. Notes in Margaret's *Chronology* indicate that Walter gave lectures and showed Orff-Schulwerk films at various Recorder Summer Schools, conventions and seminars. In 1965 Walter was invited to teach at the International Orff-Schulwerk Summer School in Salzburg and subsequently undertook this role for the next eight years until 1973. Margaret and Walter would often travel to Salzburg by car, visiting various relations of Walter's *en route* in addition to well-known recorder players who were working on editions with Bergmann. This would certainly have helped cement his and Margaret's friendship and working relationship; here were two people with shared interests moving forward with tenacity and persistence (perhaps more than self-belief which often wavered) to achieve their goals.

As Margaret's recorder playing had become more secure technically, she was now in position to accept invitations to perform with the Bergmann Recorder Quartet (with Walter Bergmann, Elaine Kaye and Theo Wyatt). Dates included a performance of Byrd's *Fantasia* at the 1963 Aldeburgh Festival, established by Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears in a concert, devised by Imogen Holst. Later that year, Margaret contributed musical 'illustrations' to a lecture given by Walter at the Chester Grosvenor Museum as part of the Incorporated Society of Musicians' annual conference. The museum houses a famous collection of Bressan recorders from the late 17th century. In June 1964, Margaret joined forces with Walter in a number of performances as a recorder player, cellist and harpsichordist as part of the Stour Music Festival in Kent, which had been established in 1962 featuring early and renaissance music by the counter-tenor Alfred Deller. The Bergmann Recorder Consort performed Gibbons, Byrd and music by King Henry VIII plus pieces with Alfred Deller at All Saints Church, Boughton Aluph which continues to be the focal point of the festival over fifty years later. Walter's association with Deller had begun during the war years at Morley College and he had become a regular collaborator both as an accompanist and recording artist.

Margaret was a loyal supporter of Walter and attended many of his concerts at the Purcell Room and Wigmore Hall. Margaret joined Paul Esswood, Frans Bruggen and Walter at a concert at St John's Smith Square in 1970, the first concert Frans Bruggen was to give in London. The critics were dazzled by Bruggen's outstanding artistry and virtuosity. Margaret also performed in concerts of Walter's compositions (Purcell Room – 1973; Rutherford School – 1975). In November 1982, Walter celebrated his 80th Birthday with a concert at Morley College organised by the Society of Recorder Players. Attended by many musical friends it included his arrangement of the Drummer Boy by forty school children and members of the Orff Society UK, all masterminded by Margaret.

This article has explored the transition from creating Vols 1 and 2 from the English recordings and Margaret's initial experiences of working with teachers. This was certainly a challenge for Margaret who at that point had no experience of working with non-specialists. The time was right. Educators were looking for new ideas to teach music in a less formal way, to make it more child-centred and accessible to every child in the class. At a lecture in Salzburg, Margaret gives an insight into her first encounters in those early days which would continue to grow into her life's work. 'Orff-Schulwerk began to take possession of me in gradual and subtle ways' (Murray, 1975).

[Part 3 will explore the establishment of the Orff Society UK, development of courses both in the UK and abroad, and Margaret's role as translator of Orff-related materials.]

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Kate Buchanan is currently Deputy Chair of Orff UK. Kate was formerly Head of Creative & Professional Practice at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester where she managed a wide-ranging programme of vocational and specialist training. Recent Orff projects include course director for an ongoing London-based CPD Programme: 'Teaching Music with the Orff Approach' and a trip to Croatia to lead workshops for 'The Sound of the Garden' summer course for the Croatian Orff-Schulwerk Association. Her consultancy work has included projects for Channel 4 Learning, the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the National Foundation for

Youth Music. Kate is co-author with Stephen Chadwick of *Music Connections: Practical Music for all Primary Teachers* published by Cramer Music.