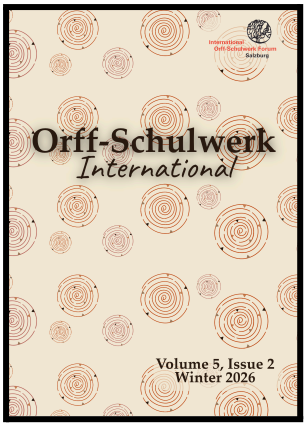
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FARE PER CAPIRE (Doing to Understand): When Music Becomes Encounter

Checco Galtieri, Dario Balleggi and Sonia Russino

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Project Report and Proposal

FARE PER CAPIRE (Doing to Understand): When Music Becomes Encounter

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Bethlem, occupied territories (2010)
Music lesson in a Christian school

Orff-Schulwerk Italiano (OSI), has undergone a profound process of transformation in recent years, marked by the pandemic and by the death of our founder, Giovanni Piazza. Among the most significant elements of this journey are the establishment of the "Polo di Formazione Continua" (Continuing Education Hub), together with the *Scuola Popolare di Musica Donna Olimpia* and the *Musica in Culla* network, and the creation of new opportunities for research and exchange.

While the OSI series founded by Giovanni Piazza, now guided by his daughters Laura and Sara, is approaching its fiftieth and final volume, the Hub's space for discussion has given rise, thanks to its collaboration with *Gesualdo Edizioni,* to a new publishing project: the educational series *Fare per Capire*.

The series is conceived as a place for exchange and reflection, a space in which to explore the reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation that emerge from concrete experience.

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All the attachments to the books in the series can be viewed free of charge on our platform: https://formazione.donnaolimpia.it/pages/collana-editoriale-fare-per-capire

A PROPOSAL FOR OSAs and ASIs

Alongside the books already published, a proposal is currently underway that we are sharing with Orff-Schulwerk teachers:

We would like to produce, together with other interested OSAs and ASIs, an international volume of educational proposals inspired by the Orff-Schulwerk, written in English (with original texts in Arabic and possible translations into the languages of the participating countries), dedicated to the valorisation of Palestinian musical heritage and dialogue between cultures.

The idea is to build a collective project, involving teachers and trainers from different countries, so that music can become a concrete instrument of mutual understanding and peace.

Those interested in a Zoom session are invited to write to didattica@orffitaliano.it.



Bethlehem, occupied territories (2004)
Meeting and playing with children during a visit to the Aida refugee camp

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To date we have published two books:

1 – From Palestine to the School: Music as a Tool for Encounter

The first book, published in the second half of 2025, is *Musical Landscapes from Palestine*.

Why?
During the most dramatic phases of the massacres in Gaza, the Italian Orff community asked itself: what can we do? What can our part of the Hummingbird be?[1]
We decided to create a collection of music-educational proposals from Palestine, designed for all age groups, with three objectives:

- To fill an existing gap in educational proposals in Italy and beyond, offering opportunities to make music and grow together.
- To draw closer to Beauty — and to the right to Beauty — through songs and dances that come from a world too often represented in partial and stereotyped ways.
- To raise funds to support an organization that creates Beauty, such as the Jericho Mosaic Centre, a Palestinian non-governmental association combining the craftsmanship of mosaic-making with ethical and social values. The centre currently employs twenty-five young Palestinians, mainly women.

Why propose a book of educational and musical activities inspired by the Middle East?
For too many years, the images returned to us by the media have been images of tragedies, bombs and massacres. Distorted and divisive associations have become rooted in the collective imagination, such as the equation linking Palestinians with fanaticism, creating confusion between religions and nationalities, between peoples and governments.

With this work, we want to help tell a different story: the smiles of children in a refugee camp, artists rediscovering their own cultural traditions, and the courage that this process requires. *Musical Landscapes from Palestine* is not a historical, cultural or political pamphlet. Its aim is to tell personal stories and seek beauty through music.

As Tano D'Amico writes in a recent photographic publication (*Under the Walls of Jerusalem*, Mimesis, 2023): "Without these images, without the sounds and songs connected to them, without the poems […] truth will no longer have anyone to defend it or seek it. It will no longer have anyone to find or create it."

Ilan Pappé, a former Israeli university professor from Haifa, writes (*A History of Modern Palestine*, Einaudi, 2005): 'Most histories of Palestine and Israel are histories of a conflict. […] Yet life is not determined by conflict alone. […] I refuse to see conflict as the essential element of life in Palestine.' Palestinian composer Rima Nasir Tarazi, author of two of the proposed songs, expressed these thoughts:

> If we were a free people, we could be a great people… I have always loved children, ever since I was very young. In them I have always seen everything that is truly life. […] I have always felt that caring for children and being responsible for their education is a sacred mission that must be taken very seriously. I have tried to draw their attention to the beautiful

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things in their country and in their lives: a fruit, a flower, an olive tree, the moon, the sun and the stars.

Above all, I felt it was important to keep hope and joy alive in their sensitive hearts, offering them a respite from the traumatic experiences of everyday life.

I pray that the miraculous healing power of music and songs may bring comfort to all children whose lives are marked by indescribable suffering, lifting them from their pain and enabling them to feel the warmth of hope and appreciate the joy of being part of this wonderful world.



Italy (2008)

The Qanun is one of the most technically demanding acoustic instruments in the Middle East. It is a large, plucked table zither featuring multiple courses of strings and numerous brass levers—known as 'mandals'—that allow for the adjustment of pitch in microtonal intervals in real time, while playing.

What it contains

After a year of study and research, the collective project produced a series of Schulwerk-style educational proposals for all age groups, usable in Italian schools from nursery school through secondary school.

The pieces, some traditional and some by contemporary Palestinian composers, around which the educational proposals were developed, are:

- **NINI YA MOUMOU** – a lullaby from the Maghreb;
- **ANA TIFL FILESTINI** (*I Am a Palestinian Child*) – Rima Tarazi [2];
- **TIK TIK TIK YA UM SULEIMAN** – Assi and Mansour Rahbani [3];
- **WEIN A RAMALLAH** (*Going to Ramallah*) – traditional;
- **HALA LALA LAYYA** – traditional;

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- **AL-MOQUADEMA** (*The Prelude*) – Suhail Khoury [4].

The pathway also includes connections with *Teleat Ya Malha Nourha* and with a French lullaby.

The book contains a transliteration table, accompanying audio and video, choreographies, musicograms, body-percussion activities and simple arrangements, rhythmic patterns, proposals for the use of voice and Orff instruments, onomatopoeia and spaces for improvisation, conceptual maps, and other educational activities that can be adapted to different needs.



Bethlehem, occupied territories (2011)
Music lesson in a kindergarten

Who

The volume is edited by Checco Galtieri, with a preface by educationalist Mario Piatti, and is the result of the work of eleven musicians, teachers and educators from across Italy, from Cuneo to Palermo, united by their Orff-Schulwerk training:

Paola Anselmi, President of the International Association *Musica in Culla*, Rome; Professor of Pedagogy at the Conservatory of Vibo Valentia.
Maria Grazia Bellia, Director of the Choir of the *Scuola Popolare di Musica Donna Olimpia*, Rome; Professor of Pedagogy at the *V. Bellini* Conservatory in Catania.
Luca Dalmasso, primary school teacher, Cuneo.

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Eliana Danzì, secondary school teacher, PhD in Technologies and Methods for University Education, Palermo.
Mascia Dionisi, primary school teacher, Amelia (Terni).
Checco Galtieri, President of OSI Orff-Schulwerk Italiano; Director of the *Scuola Popolare di Musica Donna Olimpia*, Rome.
Michela Miccio, music educator, Naples.
Ciro Paduano, Vice-President of OSI; Educational Coordinator of the Junior Department of the *Scuola Popolare di Musica Donna Olimpia*, Rome.
Gianni PeTa, music educator, Turin.
Alessandro Piacentini, primary school teacher, Amelia (Terni).
Sonia Russino, 0–6 educator, *Musica in Culla*.

2 – When Two Methodologies Meet: A New Idea of Music Education Emerges

The second book, published in July 2026, is *Music Is a Serious Game. Musical Thoughts and Synaesthetic Activities for Preschool and the First Cycle of Primary School*.



Rome (2025)
Music lesson Scuola Popolare di Musica Donna Olimpia. Musica è Gioco (‘Music is Play’)

Why did we write this book?
This book grew out of the practices and reflections of a working group that, over the years, asked itself how to bring the Orff-Schulwerk approach and the *Musica in Culla* methodology together, with the strong intention of developing a musical intervention profile specifically dedicated to children aged 4–6.
Every content needs a container, a frame to inhabit, and for the authors of this collection it was no different. We were fortunate to find the place where all our educational

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imaginations could meet, recognize one another and take shape, where they could begin speaking to one another for the first time and never stop.

Both approaches teach us how to inhabit a community to such an extent that we can no longer do without it, and their methodological principles develop from the premise that the individual — in this case, the child — is the subject, not the object, of educational action.
We have always been deeply connected, and we remain absolutely convinced that teamwork is a *conditio sine qua non*: through close collaboration and continuous exchange, we have enriched one another, building a collective understanding of music education.

We believe that the primary objective of pedagogical activity is not the transfer of knowledge, but the cultural, human and social development of an individual, enabling them to take active and responsible roles in society through the acquisition of skills in the three dimensions of knowing, knowing how to do, and knowing how to be.

Every action directed towards children, even the simplest, is always an educational act. The developmental stage between the ages of 3 and 6 has distinctive characteristics: on the one hand, children progressively move towards autonomy and horizontal relationships; on the other, their view of the world is still free from fixed representational categories.

The pathway called *Music Is Play*, offered by the *Scuola Popolare di Musica Donna Olimpia*, educates children in the language of music by proposing music as a serious game, made up of rules without which the game loses its authenticity and risks ceasing to be enjoyable.
Hence the following perspective: **music is play and play is music**.

Play is therefore not a device for learning the language of music, but the very substance of music itself.

All activities always begin with the group. Whether an idea comes from a child or from an adult, there must always be room for intervention, creation and personalisation of the musical experience, and this necessarily has to be collective because music is social: it is made together. The activity itself cannot be a recipe to be administered; it must always be adapted and modified according to the group with whom we make music, while keeping the objectives clear.

This book does not aim to be a manual of ready-to-use activities, but rather a text from which to draw methodological ideas — a way of doing music education — in the hope of sparking the reader's curiosity.

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Rome (2025)
Music lesson in the *Scuola Popolare di Musica Donna Olimpia*. *Musica è Gioco* ('Music is Play') class.
Activity: The Pinwheel

What it contains

The nine activities proposed in the book focus on the conscious use of the body, voice, rhythm, instruments and compositional aspects. They provide stimuli, possible ways of structuring the pathway, and tools for independently creating further, countless pathways. Some activities are accompanied by a QR code linking to explanatory videos and digital support materials.

We have collected our own experience, so these are all pathways we have actually carried out with our classes: rhythmic nursery rhymes that can be dismantled and recombined, body percussion, songs from the Italian oral tradition, melodies on which to build structured movements, or to explore expressive movement in space. Some activities focus on the quality of movement, while others focus on construction and therefore on children's ability to organise themselves in order to give shape to structures within which they can invent a game.

The music is original, and for each piece we provide a score and guide tracks recorded by us. Children's abilities at this age need to be nourished by providing creative stimuli close to their experience. From these stimuli, we can build a creative language together with them, as part of a shared pathway. The educator's role is to create the conditions for this to happen and to guide children in learning music, starting from their resources and contributing to the development of their overall personal growth.

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The ingredients

- **Imagination and fantasy**, the driving forces behind every action.

- **Motivation**: the pleasure that comes from realizing that one is already capable of doing and creating (self-esteem), from sharing these creations with others (sociality), and from giving concrete form to creativity (performance, understood as the collective construction of an activity rather than an act of demonstration).



Rome (2025)
Music lesson in the *Scuola Popolare di Musica Donna Olimpia. Musica è Gioco* ('Music is Play').
Activity: Nature Blues

Who

The authors are four OSI trainers, people connected by a deep friendship and a profound interest in music education in early childhood.
They are certified OSI trainers, in the tradition developed by Giovanni Piazza, and have training in the *Musica in Culla* methodology, founded by Paola Anselmi. All have more than ten years of experience in music education for young children.

Emanuela De Bellis — pianist, trainer in the national *Musica in Culla* courses, and psychotherapist specializing in developmental age.
Sonia Russino — singer, music educator for the International *Musica in Culla* Network and OSI trainer.
Marzia Mencarelli — pianist, trainer in national courses on the methodology and practice of Orff-Schulwerk in Italy.
Dario Balleggi — double bassist, music education teacher at *IC Savio-Alfieri* in Naples and OSI trainer.

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Dario Balleggi Music Education teacher at *IC Savio-Alfieri* in Naples since 2023. Certified Expert and Trainer for Orff-Schulwerk Italiano since 2020.
He has taught at the *Scuola Popolare di Musica Donna Olimpia*.
He graduated in double bass at the *Istituto Superiore di Studi Musicali L. Boccherini* in Lucca and obtained a second-level Academic Diploma in Training for the Communication and Dissemination of Musical Cultures and Practices at the *Santa Cecilia* Conservatory in Rome.
His project *I Colori della Musica* was selected for the INDIRE platform *Musica a Scuola*, Ministry of Education and Merit, in the good-practice section.



Checco Galtieri Pianist, President of OSI and Director of the *Scuola Popolare di Musica Donna Olimpia*, graduated from the Conservatory of Frosinone.
He studied interpretation of the Baroque repertoire, Schenkerian analysis, improvisation, new technologies, folk music, pedagogy and educational methods, group management and management.
He has collaborated with numerous journals and coordinated the City of Rome project *Note di Pace in Medio Oriente*; founder, spokesperson and president of numerous local and national networks for music education, and member of the National Committee for Practical Music Learning of the Ministry of Education.



Sonia Russino Singer and actress, Master's degree in theatre literature from *Roma Tre University*, diploma in Jazz Singing from the *Saint Louis College of Music* in Rome.
Teacher of contemporary singing, choral singing and music education for early childhood; OSI trainer since March 2023.
She teaches in the Zerosei department of the *Scuola Popolare di Musica Donna Olimpia*.
She recently had the opportunity to contribute, together with wonderful colleagues, to the writing of *Musical Landscapes from Palestine* and *Music Is a Serious Game*, both published by *Gesualdo Edizioni.*

NOTES

[1] An ancient environmental fable widespread among the Quechua (Andes) and Guaraní peoples (South America) and in sub-Saharan Africa. It was brought to wider attention in Europe by Pierre Rabhi.

[2] Born in 1932 in Jaffa, Palestine, she is a prominent figure in Palestinian culture and activism. Pianist, composer and social activist, she was one of the founders of the *Edward Said National Conservatory of Music.*

[3] Both originally from the suburbs of Beirut, Assi, born in 1923, and Mansour, born in 1925, the two brothers were a milestone in Middle Eastern culture. They composed songs, plays, films and poetry.

[4] President of the *Edward Said National Conservatory of Music* of Palestine, he composed the piece for the Palestinian folk-dance company *El Funoun*, as an introduction to the 1989 production *Marj Ibn 'Amer*.

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