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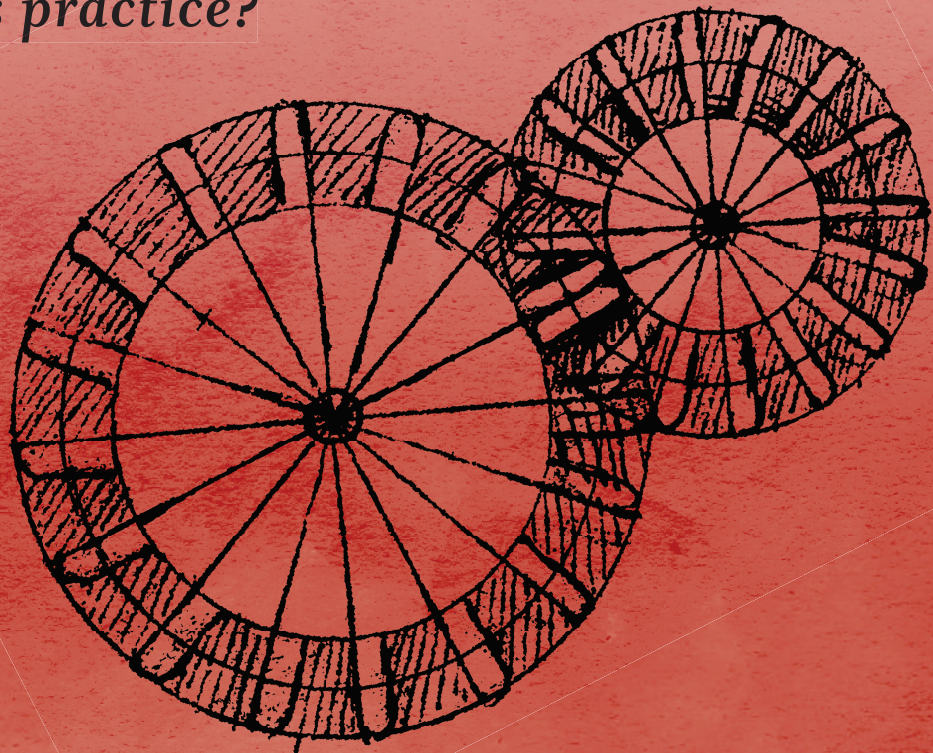
Orff-Schulwerk *heute*

Elementare Musik- und Tanzpädagogik
Elemental Music and Dance Pedagogy

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Welche Theorie
braucht die Praxis?

*Which theory
supports practice?*



Carl Rogers meets Carl Orff: person-centred theory and Orff-Schulwerk

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Carl Orff (1895–1982) and Carl Rogers (1902–1987) lived and developed their ideas in the same historical period in different continents and fields. Retrospective study of two approaches points out shared values, principles and ideas that enable interaction and fruitful dialogue between them.

Carl Rogers was a prominent American psychologist of his generation and was named as one of the most influential scientists in the fields of psychotherapy and education (ZIMRING 1994). He developed the **person-centred approach** according to the concepts of humanistic psychology and supported that education and therapy share similar goals of personal growth and self-knowing. The central hypothesis of his theory based on his view of human nature namely that individuals have within themselves vast resources for self-understanding and altering their self-concepts, basic attitudes, and self-directed

behaviour. So each individual can achieve personal growth, resolve difficulties and live successfully based on his/her abilities and strength as a fully functioning person (ROGERS 1959).

In particular, his theory of human learning is broad in scope, and addresses not just the means by which a person is motivated, but considers the learner as a whole person. Rogers focused on the meaning and highlights that: “the element of meaning to the learner is built into the whole experience” (ROGERS 1995a: 5). According to this, the significant knowledge is based on a meaningful experience that contains not only ideas but also feelings, senses and emotions, with relevance, involvement of the whole person, and utilization of the natural desire for learning and belonging (ZIMRING 1994). Rogers’ theory sees knowledge as a changing process that could happen only through the experience of a relationship. There is no failure but just mistakes, which are parts of the learning process. The therapist’s/ teacher’s role is to provide the environment and the space in which personal growth might occur (ROGERS 1995, ROGERS 1983).

In the educational field, the teacher is asked to act as a facilitator because the goal of education, if we are to survive, is the facilitation of change and learning. The educated person’s reliance is on process rather than upon static knowledge and has realized that no knowledge is secure or permanent. People need to see themselves more as a fluid growth process of creation rather than a fixed entity (ROGERS 1983).



Rogers focused on the attitude of the teacher, in the same way that he focused on the therapist's attitude, maintaining that this is more important than the method and is independent of the issue of teaching. The certain attitudinal qualities upon the significant learning exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner. There are three definable qualities (ROGERS 1983, ROGERS 1959):

1. Genuineness, realness, or congruence.

The more the teacher is in the relationship, without presenting a front or facade, the greater is the likelihood to be effective and significant knowledge to be achieved. The feelings that the teacher is experiencing are available to his / her awareness and he / she has to be able to live them and communicate them if appropriate. It means that the teacher comes into a direct personal encounter with the learner, meeting him / her on a person-to-person basis with presence, authenticity and awareness.

2. Acceptance, caring and trust.

This means an unconditional positive regard and acceptance toward whatever the student is "at that moment" in a total rather than a conditional way. This kind of acceptance based on the true belief that everyone can succeed leads the teacher to genuine appreciation. Such a teacher can accept all kinds of feelings and recognizes the learner as an imperfect human being with many feelings and potential.

3. Empathic understanding.

This is happening when the teacher has the ability to understand the student's reactions from the inside with sensitive awareness and feel "like" them. The attitude of standing "in the other's shoes" of viewing the world through the student's eyes, is rare but has a tremendously releasing effect when it occurs. This kind of understanding is sharply different from the usual evaluative understanding, which follows the pattern of "I understand what is wrong with you".

This attitude requires an active-empathic listening that is one of the most potent forces for change. Rogers was aware of the difficulty in achieving this attitude so he abstracted a number of principles about learning for helping teachers (ROGERS 1983):

1. Human beings have a natural potential for learning.
2. Significant learning takes place when the subject matter is perceived by the student as having relevance for his / her own purposes, when the individual has a goal that he / she wishes to achieve and sees the presented material as relevant to the goal. Then, learning takes place with great rapidity.
3. Learning which involves a change in self-organization in the perception of oneself is threatening and tends to be resisted.
4. This kind of learning is more easily perceived and assimilated when external threats are at a minimum.
5. When the threat to the self is low, experience can be perceived in differentiated fashion and learning can proceed.



Zeichnungen: Anne Schmidt

6. Much significant learning is acquired through doing.
7. Learning is facilitated when the student participates responsibly in the learning process.
8. Self-initiated learning which involves the whole person of the learner feeling as well as intellect is the most lasting and pervasive.
9. Independence, creativity and self-reliance are all facilitated when self-criticism and self-evaluation are basic and evaluation by others is of secondary importance.
10. The most socially useful learning in the modern world is the learning of the process of learning, a continuing openness to experience and to incorporate into oneself the process of change.

Trying to be more precise he gave to the teachers some guidelines according to the methods that developed (ROGERS 1983):

The facilitator:

- is very important to set the initial mood or climate of the group or class experience,
- helps to elicit and clarify the purposes of the individuals in the class as well as the more general purposes of the group,
- relies upon the desire of each student to implement those purposes which have meaning for the student as the motivational force behind significant learning,
- endeavours to organize and make easily available the widest possible range of resources for learning,
- regards himself/herself as a flexible resource to be utilized by the group,
- in responding to expressions in the classroom group, accepts both the intellectual content and the emotionalized attitudes, endeavouring to give each aspect the approximate degree of emphasis which it has for the individual or the group,
- as the acceptance classroom climate becomes established, is able increasingly to become a participant learner, a member of the group, expressing his/her views as those of one individual only,

- takes the initiative in sharing himself/herself with the group feelings as well as thoughts in ways which neither demand nor impose, but represent simply a personal sharing which students may take or leave,
- throughout the classroom experience, remains alert to the expressions indicative of deep or strong feelings,
- in his/her functioning as leader, endeavours to recognize and accept his/her own limitations.

Rogers highlights that if the teacher is not fearful of accepting contradictory purposes and conflicting aims and if he/she is able to permit the individual a sense of freedom in stating what they would like to do, then this helps to create a climate for learning.

These principles have been put to use in a number of educational settings, such as programmes in medical education, educational policy in California, teacher education and postgraduate programs. The results of the programmes where these teacher attitudes have been attempted indicate that it is difficult for teachers and administrators to change their attitudes, to share their power and responsibility and to trust the intrinsic motivation of their students to learn. But the results also indicate that, when teachers and administrators change their attitudes, the student's motivation, learning and behaviour is improved (ZIMRING 1994).

Research results show that the person-centered approach is not an idealistic, utopian educational form but is essentially a person-to-person relationship between the teacher and students. In addition they show that university students can become more responsible, self-directed, exercise more power in the academic setting and feel less helpless (CHICKODONZ et al. 1986). In one of the first and largest research projects 600 teachers and 10,000 students from kindergarten to grade twelve were involved. Teachers who were trained to offer high levels of empathy, congruence and positive regard were compared with control students of teachers who did not offer high levels of these facilitative conditions. Mentioning some of the results, the students of facilitative teachers, made greater gains on academic measures,

increased scores on self-concept creativity measures and I. Q. tests, indicating more positive self-regard, presented fewer disciplinary problems and became more spontaneous (ASPY/ROEBUCK 1969).

Creativity is a central point in Rogers' theory as a required element of life. Creative skills develop when:

- a) the person is exposed to the experience,
- b) the internal individual point for evaluating the results of the process is more important than the external evaluation and answers the question "do I have to create something that satisfies me", and
- c) the person has the ability to "play with meanings and elements" (ROGERS 1995).

Rogers' perceptions for body deserve mention. Endorsing mainly the theories of Thomas Hanna and of his partner Eugene Gendlin they consider the person and the body as one system. He accepts that there is a special kind of internal bodily awareness and a body-sense of meaning as an ongoing interaction with its environment with more than conceptual and language forms (GENDLIN 1981, HANNA 1970).

Orff-Schulwerk is a humanistic education that is implemented in educational, social and therapeutic contexts. It is based on a holistic approach of the person, supports and facilitates individual expression and creativity, encourages interpersonal relations, incorporates and utilizes diversity. Interaction, cooperative learning and teamwork should be taking place in any lesson based on Schulwerk. Orff visualized his Schulwerk as an open approach in a constant process of development. Under this perspective, Rogers' theory could contribute as a supplementary and supporting theoretical frame in the training of "Orff-Schulwerk teachers", lifelong education and personal growth. Rogers' method provides activities for developing facilitating attitude and the literature itself can motivate personal growth. Theoretical principles can also be used in the organization and the articulation of the objectives, means and activities of the teaching. On the other hand the means of Orff-Schulwerk can contribute

to the actualization of what Rogers aims for education and therapy.

Probably the two "Carls" could begin discussing now through teachers who share the principles of humanistic education.



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