

# Manju Durairaj

(United States/India)



## Orff-Schulwerk Association involvement

- American Orff-Schulwerk Association: Current Vice President for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access (DEIA). Member for 13 years.
- Past President, Greater Chicago Chapter (AOSA): Program Chair - Greater Chicago Chapter (AOSA)

## IOSFS involvement

- Led a Come Together at the IOSFS Forum in 2022.
- Part of the Diversity Panel led by Christa Coogan in 2023.
- Invited to put some teaching models for the online /distance teaching section of the IOSFS website.

## Current employment

- Latin School of Chicago - 21 years - Music Teacher
- VanderCook College of Music - Adjunct Professor - 12 years
- University of Illinois - 2 years
- Orff Schulwerk Teacher Educator- AOSA - 4 years.
- Doctoral Student and Teaching Assistant - University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA.

## Other leadership roles

- President, Elementary General Music Division, Illinois Music Education Association (Prepare and assist in organizing state conferences, curate session proposal process, work with the statewide general music representatives to organize and mobilize general music festivals, and Orff ensembles).
- Faculty Council Board President - Latin School of Chicago- Elected faculty. Advocate and organize number of schoolwide initiatives for faculty and students.
- Graduate Student Council Representative- School of Music, Middlesex University, London.
- Artistic Director, Midway Community Choir, Chicago, USA.

## Qualifications

- Current doctoral student at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA,
- Masters in Music Education -VanderCook College of Chicago-2003
- Master of Arts, Music - Middlesex University, London U.K.-2000
- Apprenticeship with Sofia Ibor Lopez and Paul Cribari at the San Francisco International Course in 2018.
- Summer course Salzburg (2012),
- Level 3 Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education - George Mason University, Virginia, U.S.A -2010
- Level 2 Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education- VanderCook College, Chicago, U.S.A -2009
- Level 1 Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education- VanderCook College, Chicago, U.S.A -2008
- AOSA approved Orff Schulwerk Teacher educator and teaching levels courses.
- Supplemental courses St. Thomas University, Minnesota, Anderson University, Indiana.

## Skills, experiences and perspectives that Manju can offer to the IOSFS Board

- Drawn to the mission and vision of IOSFS.
- Have been and am in leadership positions at organizations that I believe can sustain best practices in music education and bring about meaningful change where necessary.
- Believe in the spirit and dynamic of the collective in efforts that build the educational community.
- See the current IOSFS board as incredible, passionate, thoughtful and purposeful individuals committed toward a common vision that is aspirational as well as actionable. This vision, this board and the work of IOSFS has made an indelible impression.
- Experience in leadership
- Working collaboratively as a team
- Sensitivity toward listening and trying to understand diverse perspectives
- Working unstintingly toward a shared vision.

- Well versed and competent in various technologies, from maintaining websites, creating educational content for digital media (publications with Hal Leonard), data analysis, and organization and storage of data.
- Teach technology courses for teachers.
- Writing, editing, and contributing to various journals.
- Varying writing styles toward the intended audience be it a blog, magazine, or scholarly journal.
- Enjoy interacting with people, adults and children, teachers, students and peers.
- Social as well as professional skills applied to mentoring pre-service and newer teachers.
- Enjoy meaningful relationships with many people from different constituencies.
- Energized by organizations that are starting up or are in early stages.
- Working to develop creative and collaborative solutions for sustainable programs is a strength.
- The ability to quietly activate creative energy and facilitate the process of generating ideas in a group.
- Planning conferences, ensuring diversity in programming and presenters, as well as leading teacher education sessions.
- Listening and reflecting deeply on the wisdom of others.
- The courage to act, keeping in mind to maintain the dignity of all.
- As the geo-political map of the world continues to change significantly, as educational ecosystems struggle for sustainability, as epistemologies shift, at the very least in the realm of music education, IOSFS is building a global infrastructure. The current activities of connecting international organizations, teachers, researchers and institutions, disseminating scholarly thought, providing spaces and places for international meetings and more are initiatives that continue to be of significant import.
- The wealth of knowledge that currently exists within the IOSFS on a global scale is staggering and unbound. Accessing and disseminating this wealth, for the collective benefit of all, even collaboratively may take several lifetimes. However, developing thoughtful, purposeful and equitable processes, protocols and practices are tasks that I perceive IOSFS to have undertaken.
- In a world where social justice, culturally responsive teaching and accessibility in education seems to have become buzzwords, labels, rather than applicable concepts that define equity, IOSFS has the wherewithal to educate and inform issues of diversity, equity, access and inclusion within music education. Orff-Schulwerk provides a natural framework for building a musical community albeit a music class, a music experience or event, a group of teachers, researchers, organizations and institutions. The essence of human connectedness that is in the Orff-Schulwerk, can be made purposeful in practice.
- My lived experience as an international, who has studied, lived and worked in India, England, and the United States, has led me to have a deep appreciation for people of all walks of life, and an inherent respect and capacity for diversity of thought and belief. I have an innate curiosity for the way children and adults think and act, in general and in the music learning context in particular. This is why Orff-Schulwerk appeals to me as a human, and an educator.
- There is an inherent capacity for creativity, a thirst for human connection, a curiosity about the world in every child. Orff-Schulwerk draws this out in the most organic way, through movement, language and music, through collaborative musicking. Hence, it is sustainable and effective music education that finds a gentle way to thrive in diverse cultures, in various geo-political climates, and in any socio-educational context.
- In India, an ancient country with a plethora of sub-cultures, Orff-Schulwerk subtly invites music teachers to explore their own creativity, to guide a classroom of very diverse children to discover multiple ways of accessing musical content, in ways that transcends barriers of language, social class, religious beliefs and neurodiverse learning. This occurs in the spirit of inclusion rather than exclusion, because it centers the human. As a teacher, a perpetual student, an educational collaborator, I find myself able to find human and artistic connections in many parts of the world- through Orff-Schulwerk. It might be an aspirational vision, but children who grow up in Orff-Schulwerk can make a powerful difference in the world, because they are growing up with an awareness and respect for the humans they share the world with. This is my personal interpretation of "Menschenbildung".