

ORFF SCHULWERK MUSIC & MOVEMENT EDUCATION

**Certification Program
For
Levels Courses**

**Institute for Music and Movement Education
Advancement (IMMEA) China**



Shenzhen, China

Updated 2026

Introduction

The Institute for Music and Movement Education Advancement (IMMEA) China is a not-for-profit association that aims to provide understanding, skills, and knowledge in all aspects of the Orff Schulwerk approach, through training courses, workshops, and online learning opportunities. IMMEA is proud to be an accredited Institute (ASI) with the International Orff-Schulwerk Forum Salzburg (IOSFS) since 2020. (www.iosfs.org)

This document outlines information about the *Certification Program* currently being offered by IMMEA and has been informed by the IOSFS Recommendations and Guidelines for Orff-Schulwerk Studies (2026 update).

The IMMEA courses focus on the Principles and Fundamental Characteristics outlined by the IOSFS, and provide a sequenced progression of content materials, and pedagogical strategies. The goals for participants in the IMMEA Levels Courses are:

- To develop knowledge of the Orff Schulwerk approach to music and movement education.
- To strengthen interpersonal capabilities in line with the group nature of this approach.
- To develop critical thinking and independent thought.
- To acknowledge creativity as a central component in all aspects of this approach.
- To appreciate reflective capabilities as an effective learning tool.
- To strive for artistry and aesthetics in all aspects of music and movement participation.

General Overview

Course Design

IMMEA's *Certification Program* offers Levels Courses conducted over a three/four-year period in the following format:

Level 1 – Foundation Stage

- Core 45 hours face to face over a 7 or 8-day period, plus
- Extra 20 hours of allied learning taken between the conclusion of Level 1, and prior to attending Level 2. This may be with other organisations/associations approved by IMMEA.

Examples of this allied learning could include:

- Attendance at workshops offered by IMMEA.
- Participation in relevant workshops offered by other reputable organisations/associations.
- Enrolment in Summer courses/conferences offered overseas.
- Active participation in the IMMEA Book Study weekly sessions. (Please note that a maximum of 5 hours is allocated for this.)

Level 2 – Exploration Stage

- Core 45 hours face to face over a 7 or 8-day period, plus
- Extra 20 hours of allied learning taken between the conclusion of Level 2, and prior to attending Level 3. This may be with other organisations/associations approved by IMMEA.

Examples of this allied learning are as per Level 1.

Level 3A - Proficiency Stage

- Core 45 hours face to face over a 7 or 8-day period.

Level 3B – Accreditation Stage

- 20 hours face to face (with IMMEA) over a 3 or 4-day period, at least 3 months following completion of Level 3A Proficiency Stage.

Course Hours

The total number of hours for the Certification Program, excluding homework, written tasks, reflection writing, and instrumental practice, is **195**.

The number of hours in face-to-face learning with IMMEA is **155** over the three or four years with demonstrated allied learning hours of **40**.

Participants must attend for the duration of each course, and the consequences of absences are determined by the teaching staff.

Participant Numbers

A minimum of 10 participants must be in attendance for each level. If paid registrations are below this number but are close, supplementary places can be taken by others who have completed the level previously, or teachers being mentored by the Teacher Educators.

A maximum of 25 participants can be enrolled in one group at one time. However, it is possible and can be desirable to bring all groups together for a specific activity or event such as singing, folk dance, or a lecture.

Prerequisites

Participants would ideally have had experience in workshops. However, not all potential participants have access to face-to-face workshops in their location. Attendance at online book study discussions, or workshops is encouraged. A genuine and evident desire to learn is required.

Course Progression

All participants start their Levels Course training with IMMEA in Level 1 unless they have completed a comparable Level 1 elsewhere. The acceptance of successful completion of Level 1 elsewhere is determined by the Teacher Educators following discussions about the curriculum and course format.

No formal assessment is required at the conclusion of the face-to-face learning. Therefore, if a participant has fulfilled the attendance requirement, they may continue enrolling in subsequent levels regardless of their demonstrated abilities or understandings. However, the Teacher Educators may strongly encourage a repeat of a Level, or to take longer than the usual one year between each Level. Participants are advised if there is a perceived deficiency in an area (eg singing in tune) and direct them to actively focus on this development prior to future enrolment.

Approximately one year is required between attending the face-to-face component of Levels courses. This allows for consolidation of learning and practical applications in the participants' own teaching environment.

A span of more than five years since a completion of a Level will warrant a repeat of this level.

At the conclusion of each face-to-face core component at Level 1, 2, and 3, participants will be issued with a *Certificate of Participation* stating the total number of hours attended.

At the successful conclusion of the 3-year Certification program, participants will be issued with a *Completion of the IMMEA Orff Schulwerk Certification Program* certificate.

Teacher Educators

IMMEA courses employ a variety of appropriate Chinese and international Teacher Educators. In this way, the global influence helps to ensure the courses maintain rigour and integrity, and the local Teacher Educators can ensure cultural suitability. The Chinese Teacher Educators spend time with participants during courses to consistently reflect on how their learning can be applied to specific Chinese settings.

Participants gain a range of teaching styles through a minimum of three Teacher Educators in each Level.

IMMEA offers a Mentorship Program with the aim of developing future Levels Course Teacher Educators. They are given the opportunity to teach during the Levels Courses under the supervision of the current Teacher Educators.

Evaluation and Assessment

Evaluation is carried out continuously through the following:

- Observation
- Questioning
- Peer teaching
- Homework Tasks
- Performances
- Reflection

Although more extensive and detailed assessments are conducted during the Accreditation Stage of Level 3, the focus remains on constructive feedback.

Course Media

The following media is included in core face-to-face courses:

- The voice
 - singing, speech, and other sounds made by the voice.
- The instruments
 - body percussion, non-melodic percussion, recorder (Level 1 and 2 only), ukulele (Level 3 only), barred percussion, and sounds from other sources.
- Movement and dance
 - games and activities, traditional dance forms, creative dance, and movement accompaniment.
- Other instruments may be included in activities if appropriate, particularly traditional Chinese instruments.

Course Material

Teacher Educators select their own Course Material mindful of the following:

- Repertoire is selected for its capacity to teach specific concepts and ensuring possibilities for creativity.
- Songs and rhymes from the relevant Chinese school textbooks, including the music of specific ethnic groups, should be incorporated if appropriate.
- Global music is encouraged, with an awareness of language and cultural implications.
- In Level 1 and 2, Teacher Educators use examples from the Margaret Murray editions of the *Music for Children* Volumes.
- In Level 3, focus should be on the Chinese *Music for Children* publications, including considerable analysis of the works.
- Integration with other art forms is explicitly included.
- Sessions are timetabled that provide an historical context to Orff Schulwerk, and a global overview of current Orff Schulwerk practice.
- Participants will require the text '*Looking at the Roots; A Guide to Understanding Orff Schulwerk*' by Wolfgang Hartmann throughout the *Certification Program*.

Level 1 - Foundation Stage

Practicum

- Pedagogy of Orff Schulwerk.
- Orchestration and analysis of elemental style.
- Technique and Improvisation using the Orff Schulwerk instrumentarium.

Focus Sessions

- Voice skills, and repertoire including vocables, speech, and singing.
- Descant/Soprano Recorder skills, techniques, and repertoire with a focus on improvisation and ensemble playing.
- Movement in relation to folkdance, creative dance, and body awareness.
- Integration of music and movement with other art forms.
- Analysis of repertoire, specifically related to the *Music for Children* volumes, and the Chinese textbooks.

Practicum

Participants will be immersed in creative music and movement education daily. Active participation is key to understanding the process of teaching and the development of ideas. Through this immersion, participants will recognise specific techniques and strategies that can be practiced. The philosophy of Orff Schulwerk as outlined by Wolfgang Hartmann in his text *‘Looking at the Roots’* is presented throughout the learning experience. Discussion about the teaching, and reflection of the learning will make visible the principles of Orff Schulwerk.

This component of the course will specifically focus on:

- The principles of Orff Schulwerk and its applications.
- The Fundamental Characteristics as outlined in the *IOSFS Recommendations and Guidelines for Orff Schulwerk Studies*.
- The artistry and musicality within an Orff Schulwerk education.
- Analysis of teaching procedures.
- Exploration and quality of speech and vocal sounds.
- Exploration and quality of movement and dance.
- Exploration and quality of playing melodic and non-melodic percussion instruments.
- Scoring for the voice and instruments.
- The elemental style of arranging and composing, including ostinato, layered entry, and bordun accompaniments.
- Improvisation in all media.
- Recognition and understanding of typical Orff techniques such as imitation, canon, rondo form.
- Understanding of doh and lah pentatonic scales, pentachords and hexatonic scales.
- History of Orff Schulwerk.
- Implications of this approach within current education practice.

Focus Sessions

All aspects of the Orff Schulwerk approach will be demonstrated through the Practicum component of the course. However, Focus Sessions aim to develop specific skills and understandings within a subject area.

Vocal

Tonal qualities that can be produced by the voice are featured in these sessions as well as exploring visual representations of pitch. Using the voice expressively as well as singing set pieces will be included, however, the specific teaching of vocal technique is beyond the scope of this course.

This component of the course will specifically focus on:

- Improvisation of vocal sounds.
- Response to graphic notation with voice.
- Improvising in pentatonic scales with the voice.
- Singing canons.
- Development of repertoire of singing and speech with accompaniment.

Recorder

This component of the course will specifically look at playing the descant/soprano recorder in relation to:

- Development of recorder playing technique and skills.
- Understanding the role of recorder in Orff Schulwerk.
- Inclusion of recorder within an Orff ensemble.
- Improvisation on recorder over an accompaniment.

Movement and Dance

The elemental music approach demands a close connection with speech, music, and movement. In this section, movement vocabulary is learned for creative expression as well as set dance forms.

This component of the course will specifically focus on:

- Development of body awareness and body activities.
- Understanding of the role of movement and dance in Orff Schulwerk.
- Performance of dance repertoire.
- Movement and/as accompaniment.
- Choreography.

Arts Integration

This component of the course will specifically look at:

- Relationships between music and literature.
- Relationships between music and visual art
- Relationships between music and other curriculum areas

Adaptation for China

- Creative teaching approaches to Chinese repertoire is introduced including Chinese textbook examples, Chinese poetry and traditional Chinese song and dance material.
 - Specific challenges for Chinese music educators are discussed and acknowledged.
 - Reflection and discussion on how activities introduced by the Teacher Educators can be incorporated, adapted, and developed by the participants in their own teaching environment.
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Level 2 – Exploration Stage

Practicum

- Deeper understanding of pedagogy of Orff Schulwerk.
- Orchestration and analysis of elemental style at a more complex level.
- Technique and Improvisation using the Orff Schulwerk instrumentarium at a more advanced standard.

Focus Sessions

- Voice skills, and repertoire including vocables, speech, and singing at a higher level than in Level 1.
- Alto/Treble Recorder skills, techniques, and repertoire with a focus on improvisation and ensemble playing.
- Movement in relation to folkdance, creative dance, and body awareness at a more complex level than in Level 1.
- Integration of music and movement with other art forms.
- Analysis of repertoire, specifically related to the *Music for Children* volumes, and the Chinese textbooks.

Practicum

Participants will again be immersed in creative music and movement education daily. Active participation is key to understanding the process of teaching and the development of ideas. Through this immersion, participants will recognise specific techniques and strategies that can be practiced beyond what was learned in Level 1. The philosophy of Orff Schulwerk as outlined by Wolfgang Hartmann in his text *‘Looking at the Roots’* is presented throughout the learning experience. Discussion about the teaching, and reflection of the learning will make visible the Principles and Fundamental Characteristics of Orff Schulwerk.

This component of the course will specifically focus on:

- The principles of Orff Schulwerk and its applications.
- The Fundamental Characteristics as outlined in the *IOSFS Recommendations and Guidelines for Orff Schulwerk Studies*.
- The artistry and musicality within an Orff Schulwerk education.
- Analysis of teaching procedures.
- More complex exploration and quality of speech and vocal sounds than in Level 1.
- More complex exploration and quality of movement and dance than in Level 1.
- More complex exploration and quality of playing melodic and non-melodic percussion instruments than in Level 1.
- Scoring for the voice and instruments.
- The elemental style of arranging and composing, including introductions, and codas.
- Improvisation in all media.

- Recognition and understanding of typical Orff techniques such as whole song method, augmentation and diminution.
- Understanding of modes, and non-functional harmony.
- History of Orff Schulwerk.
- Implications of this approach within current education practice.

Focus Sessions

All aspects of the Orff Schulwerk approach will be demonstrated through the Practicum component of the course. However, Focus Sessions aim to develop specific skills and understandings within a subject area.

Vocal

Participants should begin Level 2 with the ability to sing in tune. Using the voice expressively as well as singing set pieces will be included.

Tonal qualities that can be produced by the voice are featured in these sessions as well as exploring visual representations of pitch in a more advanced way than in Level 1. Using the voice expressively as well as singing set pieces will be included, however, the specific teaching of vocal technique is beyond the scope of this course.

This component of the course will specifically focus on:

- Improvisation of vocal sounds, patterns, and melodies.
- Response expressively to graphic notation with voice.
- Improvising in modes with the voice.
- Singing canons and harmonies with accompaniments.
- Development of repertoire of singing and speech with accompaniment.

Recorder

This component of the course will specifically look at using the alto/treble recorder in relation to:

- Development of recorder playing technique and skills.
- Various arrangements with recorder and other instruments.
- Inclusion of recorder within an Orff ensemble.
- Improvisation.
- Notation in relation to descant and treble recorder.

Movement and Dance

Movement vocabulary is learned for creative expression as well as more complex set dance forms.

This component of the course will specifically focus on:

- Further development of body awareness and body activities.
- Performance of dance repertoire that is more complex than in the Foundation Stage.
- Movement and accompaniment in various media.
- Choreography in both creative and set dance forms.

Arts Integration

This component of the course will specifically look at:

- Relationships between music and literature.
- Relationships between music and visual art
- Relationships between music and other curriculum areas

Adaptation for China

- Further Chinese repertoire is reviewed including pieces for music appreciation.
 - Specific challenges for Chinese music educators are discussed and acknowledged.
 - Reflection and discussion on how concepts and techniques introduced in this Level can be incorporated, adapted, and developed by the participants in their own teaching environment.
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Level 3A – Proficiency Stage

Practicum

- High level of understanding and demonstration of pedagogy of Orff Schulwerk.
- Orchestration and analysis of elemental style, using various scale structures.
- Technique and improvisation using the Orff Schulwerk instrumentarium at a high level.

Focus Sessions

- Voice skills, and repertoire including vocables, speech, and singing at a higher level than in Level 1 and 2.
- Ukulele skills, techniques, and repertoire with a focus on accompaniment and chord progressions.
- Movement in relation to folkdance, creative dance, and body awareness at a more complex level than in Level 1 and 2.
- Integration of music and movement with other art forms.
- Analysis of repertoire, specifically related to the *Music for Children* Chinese published volumes, and the Chinese textbooks.

Practicum

Participants will be actively immersed in creative music and movement education, with a greater emphasis on extending the participants' own music/dance knowledge and skills. Further texts and articles will be presented for discussion.

This component of the course will specifically focus on:

- How the Principles and Fundamental Characteristics of Orff Schulwerk are embedded in teaching.
- The further development of artistry and musicality within an Orff Schulwerk education.
- The elemental style of arranging and composing through functional harmony.
- Further development of speech, vocal sounds, the body, and instruments through mixed metre and syncopation.
- Fluency of specific Orff techniques learnt in Foundation Stage and expanded on in the Exploration Stage.
- The range of Orff media with an expectation of a developing skill level.
- Improvisation in all media with confidence and competence.
- Analysis of teaching procedures at a deeper level than in previous Stages.
- Development of specific teaching activities related to more complex concepts.
- Current considerations of Orff Schulwerk globally.
- Implications of this approach within current education practice.

Focus Sessions

Vocal

Prior to beginning Level 3, participants will have continued to develop their singing voice to ensure singing in tune and holding a part against another. Using the voice expressively as well as singing set pieces will be included.

This component of the course will specifically focus on:

- Artistic responses to graphic notation with the voice.
- Improvising over harmonic structures.
- Singing canons and harmonies with accompaniments.
- Development of repertoire of singing and speech with accompaniment.

Ukulele

The ukulele is being introduced as an instrument that can assist in the understanding of harmonic structures.

This component of the course will specifically focus on:

- Playing a range of simple chords.
- Strumming technique.
- Playing as an accompaniment to speech, song, and movement.

Movement and Dance

Movement vocabulary is learned for creative expression as well as more complex set dance forms.

This component of the course will specifically focus on:

- Further development of body awareness and body activities.
- The role of movement in concept teaching.
- Creating movement activities for various target groups.
- Movement and accompaniment in various media.
- Choreography depicting specific stories/events.
- Solo and group improvisation.

Adaptation for China

Specific challenges for Chinese music educators are discussed and acknowledged. The role of advocacy for creative music and movement education.

Level 3B – Accreditation Stage

This 20-hour component of the course aims to consolidate the learning and understanding of Orff Schulwerk gained through the three Levels of training. The Teacher Educators will ensure the environment is one of acceptance, encouragement, and support. If possible, this Stage will be in the form of ‘live in’.

Requirements Prior to Attendance of this Stage

1. Participants will present video footage of a 30–40-minute lesson with children or adults at least 2 weeks prior to attendance. The Teacher Educators may elect to show all or specific parts of the video for discussion and feedback during this course. Obstacles and difficulties faced in teaching will be reviewed and discussed.
2. Participants will provide an essay of 1000-1200 words outlining their understanding of Orff Schulwerk, at least 2 weeks prior to attendance. Components of these essays will be distributed for discussion and reflection.
3. A resource folder (digital or hands-on) will be developed by the participants prior to attendance, to be brought to this course. These will be presented with several ideas/activities highlighted for discussion about the applicability of that resource. The sharing of these resources provides repertoire, arrangements, and suggestions for all participants for use in their own teaching environment.

Requirements During Attendance of this Stage

1. All participants will be expected to actively engage in discussions and feedback opportunities.
2. Participants will teach an arrangement or composition to the group demonstrating the process of teaching.
3. Participants will work with others to write a reflection of the IMMEA Levels Courses.
4. The setting up of an ongoing platform (eg WeChat group) for sharing, meeting, questioning, and discussion will provide future support for those who have completed Level 3.

Assessment/Accreditation

All those who have satisfied the IMMEA requirements for Levels Courses will be presented with a *Completion of the IMMEA Orff Schulwerk Certification Program* certificate.

The Teacher Educators' aim for those gaining this certificate to for participants to demonstrate a high degree of skill and application of Orff Schulwerk principles. However, as the assessment system is based on encouragement, rather than a pass/fail model, there can be no guarantee that all those receiving these certificates are of this high standard. We hope that our discussions with participants throughout the courses ensure that those lacking in any specific skills, understanding or attitude, will have worked on rectifying any consistent shortcomings.