The reawakening of interest in music education on the part of contemporary composers has been an encouraging musical development in recent years. Carl Orff, one of Germany's illustrious composers, first became associated with music for children in 1924 through his work with the Guentherschule, a school for gymnastics, dance and music in Munich. This work was interrupted by the war, but was resumed when he and his associate, Gunild Keetman, prepared material for a series of radio broadcasts produced by the Bavarian Radio in 1948. His writings for children were gathered together and eventually published in five volumes as "Das Schulwerk", or in English, "Music for Children", translated and adapted by Doreen Hall and Arnold Walter.

Orff's teaching is based on the doctrine that music is the natural outgrowth of speech, rhythm, and movement. The spontaneous rhythms of children as used in their rhymes, chants and games provide a starting point. From the universal chant of childhood - the falling minor third - grows the pentatonic scale; soon simple folk songs and nursery rhymes in this idiom are added. Creativity plays a great part in the Schulwerk. The early material is based entirely on the pentatonic scale, and the children improvise over ostinati, using simple basic forms as a rhythmic framework. Later, the Schulwerk progresses to the diatonic scale, major and minor, and the haunting beauty of the various modes, again allowing much freedom for improvisation.

The use of instruments is an integral part of Orff's approach to music education. His emphasis on rhythm led to the development of specially designed percussion instruments. These are instruments of great tonal beauty, and include glockenspiels, xylophones, metallophones, timpani, an assortment of untuned percussion instruments, as well as gambas, recorders and guitars.

One of the problems in establishing and developing the Orff Schulwerk in America has been its successful adaptation to our culture, so different from that of Germany. Orff, in discussing
the origin and aims of the Schulwerk at the opening session of the Orff Elementary Education course at University of Toronto in 1962, stated: "It wasn't simply a matter of translation, but rather of using a country's folklore, its nursery rhymes and children's songs in the same way as the German ones have been used in the original." The challenging task to adapting the Orff Schulwerk to our culture is made more complex by the fact that there are so many different interpretations of Orff. It is not a structured, rigid system, but one which allows for much freedom and creativity on the part of the teacher.

I have successfully used a number of Canadian folk songs in my Orff teaching. This material has infused the Schulwerk with vitality and relevance for Canadian children. Some of the songs have been arranged for Orff instruments, notably by Keith Bissell, who has assembled several excellent volumes, including many Canadian folk songs. Especially to be noted are; "Songs for Schools", Schott Edition 4864, and "Let's Sing and Play", published by Waterloo music Company Limited. I have found other suitable songs by searching through the standard folk song collections. The three books edited by Edith Fowke and Richard Johnston and published by Waterloo Music Company Limited, "Folk Songs of Canada", "More Folk Songs of Canada", and "Folk Songs of Quebec", are an excellent source of material. "Chantons Un Peu", Thirty French Folk Songs Collected and Translated by Alan Mills, published by B.M.I. Canada Limited, contains some delightful songs. The Canadian lullabies included in "Folk Lullabies", compiled and edited by Barbara and Michael Cass-Beggs and published by Oak Publications, are ideal for use with Orff. For speech patterns and verse, "Sally Go Round the Sun", by Edith Fowke, published by McLelland and Stewart Limited, contains a wealth of material.

Canadian folk songs and rhymes which can be used in the context of the Orff Schulwerk do exist. If the philosophies and doctrines as stated by Orff are to be followed, teachers must find and use this material. To remain a lasting and meaningful educational force in Canada, the Orff Schulwerk must be adapted and integrated fully into our Canadian culture.

-Donna Hossack