

ORFF-SCHULWERK Origin of Instruments

The **Orff Instrumentarium** is an important and versatile collection of **uncomplicated and easy to play instruments** developed to enliven music teaching with **one's own free and creative music making**. Glockenspiels, xylophones and metallophones were de-signed with reference to exotic instruments

The Orff Instrumentarium is an important and versatile collection of un-complicated and easy to play instruments developed to enliven music teaching with one's own and those of the Middle Ages.



The Gunther School in Munich was founded by Dorothea Gunter and Carl Orff in 1924 to teach gymnastics, music and dance. The development of the Orff instruments grew out of Orff's work at the school and his belief in the close relationship of music and movement. Most valuable was the preparatory work of Karl Maendler, a Munich instrument builder, who developed instruments not commonly used before that time. His enthusiasm and initial attempts were further refined and developed by STUDIO 49 in 1949 in close cooperation with Carl Orff. The instruments are classified according to construction, playing technique and use as follows: those with bars and single bars mounted on a resonating box (Klangbausteine), instruments with stretched skin, and rhythm instruments. The barred instruments used in Orff-Schulwerk originated in southeast Asia.

Xylophones of different structure can be found in Africa although they are probably related to those of Asia. The xylophone found its place in Europe around the 15th century. It was originally constructed of loose wooden bars laid on a pile of straw and called "Strohfiedel." For a long time the four row trapezoidal placement of the bars was characteristic of orchestral instruments. It was replaced much later by an instrument originating in America constructed in two rows with tubular resonators. This is a direct development of the African "calabash xylophone" brought to America by the African slaves. Other primitive forms that influenced those used in pedagogical areas today are the "cradle" xylophones from Bali, Burma, Java and Thailand. The bars of these instruments lie or hang in a row on cradle-shaped resonance boxes.

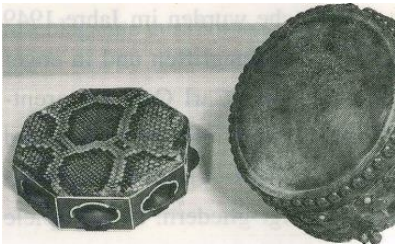
Metal instruments, often called glockenspiels, are only vaguely similar to those used in the Middle Ages although the way in which the sound is produced has been retained. Bells originally carved from wood or made from dried fruit husks, probably the forerunners of the small bent iron bells of Asia and Africa, are now forged and cast bells. In the 13th century the mechanically struck glockenspiel was developed and somewhat later the tower bells (carillon). The name glockenspiel was given to instruments with metal bars whose origin was in Java.

Metallophones with bronze plates are an essential element of the various Indonesian Gamelon types. Gamelon is an orchestra consisting of xylophones, metallophones, different sized gongs and drums.



Today the metallophone is an instrument with bars of light metal. It has a characteristic deep, smooth and long lasting sound in contrast to the silvery sounding glockenspiel which has bars of special alloyed steel.

The **skin instruments**, mainly drums, originated in lands where the inhabitants use them almost exclusively for purposes of magic and cult. This manifests itself, among other ways, by the kind of drum and its decoration. Pictorial representations of different kinds of drums in highly developed early civilizations can be found, especially in Egypt. In Europe during the early Middle Ages single and double-headed drums appeared in both round and angular forms. Drums on which the skin can be tightened with a cord threaded between two frames (similar to the African "Hourglass" drum) and also timpani probably came to the Western world as a result of the Crusades.



The Orff Instrumentarium contains many kinds of frame drums and tambourines, bass drums and smaller drums as well as many models of timpani.

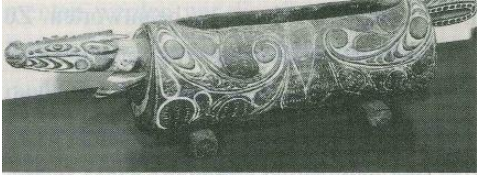
The most important rhythm instruments are as follows:

Cymbals come from primitive Asian origins and were used by the culturally elite people as religious cult instruments.

The **triangle** came to Europe along with cymbals and bass drum via Turkish Janissary or military music in the 18th century.

Wooden drums of different kinds belong to the instrumentaria of many native folk. Small high pitched wooden drums dominated in the traditional percussion-rich theater music of China and Japan, whereas the slit-drums were to be found mostly in Africa used as "talking drums" to spread news.

Small **wood blocks** with one or two slit openings became known through jazz bands.



Temple blocks in groups of five mounted on one stand originally came from Korea. **Sticks**, native rhythm instruments of hard wood (mostly rose wood) were known in the Far East as well as in Africa. They came to be known as claves in the

Latin-American folk and dance music traditions where they quickly became widespread.

Castanets, similar to finger cymbals also known as "Tanzcinellen" are found in earlier times as seen in the many representations in ancient art. They are probably Asiatic in origin. .

Many other instruments, especially those which abound in Latin-American percussion like maracas, guiro, cow bells, agogo and others open up additional interesting timbres to the Orff Instrumentarium.