MEET THE ORFFCATS

Thomas Metcalf Laboratory School
Illinois State University
Normal, Illinois

The Program

*Moten Swing/Roll 'Em*
featuring Shaurya Taxali, drums

arr. McCord
Reggie’s Blues
composed Brody Felix
featuring Stephanie Chow, guitar

A-Tisket, A-Tasket
arr. Zawatski
featuring Louise Rogers

More and More Amor
arr. McCord
featuring Stephanie Chow, guitar; Carter Bruns, vibraphone; Ellie Landes, piano

Kansas City
arr. McCord
featuring Drew Dahan and Stephanie Chow, guitar

Song for my Father
arr. McCord
featuring Carter Bruns, Boston Cooper, Luke Armstrong and Stephanie Chow

Cute
arr. McCord
featuring Ann Patterson, flute; Shaurya Taxali, drums

One Note Samba
arr. McCord
featuring Luke Armstrong, vibraphone, Stephanie Chow, guitar and Bennett Sinclair, drums

Perdidio
arr. Doug Goodkin
featuring Drew Dahan; Jason Landes, saxophone and Stephanie Chow, guitar

What is Orff?

Orff-Schulwerk (schoolwork) is an approach to teaching music that is based on developmentally appropriate activities for children. It involves the children accompanying themselves rather than the teacher playing the piano or guitar and doing the accompaniment for the students. It creates independent musicianship and because the instruments are in tune and sound good, Orff ensembles are pleasing to the ear!

Orff is also Carl Orff, the composer and originator of Orff-Schulwerk who came up with the idea of the instruments after visiting West Africa and Indonesia. Since the 1940’s schools all over the world use the instruments and the special approach to teaching Orff.

Orff instruments refer to xylophones (soprano, alto, bass and contrabass) and metallophones (soprano, alto, bass). Soprano and alto glockenspiels complete the traditional Orff instrumentarium.

Most schools use diatonic instruments. We have expanded to chromatic instruments and include a rhythm section and vibraphone (for taller students). Our instruments are primarily Studio 49 instruments that were developed by Carl Orff in Germany with a few chromatic Peripole instruments. We play Gretsch Catalina drums because of the smaller size. The drums
offer a perfect jazz sound and are too loud for unamplified Orff instruments. Our students have been playing and improvising since kindergarten using diatonic Orff instruments. We feel continuing on the Orff instruments and adding chromatic Orff instruments are the most developmentally appropriate way to eventually transition students who choose to play full size mallet instruments later in middle and high school.

The Orffcats

The Orffcats are four different ensembles that meet once a week after school.

- The Mildcats- a non-auditioned 3rd grade group that are introduced to jazz and rock styles on the instruments
- The Wildcats – typically 4th & 5th graders who audition. Auditions include body percussion improvisation that helps determine swing feel and independence of all 4 limbs for possible drummers, singing an easy song, sight-reading an easy jazz passage, and improvising on the Orff instruments playing in swing and rock rhythm section styles.
- The Alleycats- typically 6th-8th graders who also audition. Alleycats are often the top musicians in the school and many also play piano, guitar, drum set, or electric bass.
- The Reunioncats- Alleycats and 9th graders from the 2014-2015 school year. The Reunioncats are the group featured at JEN. The group represents our very best group of
Orffcats in the more than 10 years of the Orffcats. The Reunions are exceptional musicians and include recent Downbeat award winner, Stephanie Chow on guitar.

How are the Orffcats taught?

Jazz is introduced through a jazz curriculum, Chop Monster, Jr. (Berg, Fitzgerald & McCord) in 4th and 5th grade as a way to help students assimilate jazz styles and improvisational vocabulary. All Orffcats improvise and naturally play with good swing feel.
The Co-Directors

Donna Zawatski is the Metcalf Elementary General Music teacher. She holds music education degrees and French Horn performance from Oklahoma State University and Baylor University. She serves on the Illinois Music Education Association Board of Directors as the president of Elementary General Music.
Kim McCord is on the Illinois State University music education faculty in elementary general music. She is also known to the jazz education world through her many publications and presentations around the world. Her book *Chop Monster Jr.*, co-authored by Shelly Berg and Margaret Fitzgerald is a standard for teaching jazz to elementary level children. Her degrees are in music education and jazz education from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the University of Northern Colorado. She serves on the International Society for Music Education Board and is the founder of the Jazz Special Interest Group.

Other Performances of the Orffcats
Illinois Music Education Association Conference, Peoria
American Orff-Schulwerk Association Conference, Milwaukee
American Jazz Museum, Kansas City
Memphis All-City Orff Concert and Elvis’ Graceland, Memphis
Many schools in the Chicago area
Jazz Education Network Conference, Louisville, KY

Reunion Cat Members

Luke Armstrong
Carter Bruns
Stephanie Chow
Boston Cooper
Anna Greenfield
Evan Greenfield
Emily Houston
Ellie Landes
Faith Landes
Jaiden Mapugay
Adrian Mendez
Celeste Noraian
Bennett Sinclair
Shaurya Taxali
Olivia Urquizo

T-shirt designer- Stephanie Chow