



# Orff Schulwerk Association of NSW

For our members

*Narelle Jones was a dedicated music teacher who was so passionate about her teaching and all things musical in the community of the Central Coast of NSW. Over the years, Narelle was an enthusiastic participant at numerous Orff conferences, training courses, and workshops, and she was a special member of the Orff family. Sadly, Narelle passed away on 11th of June this year, aged 58. She will be greatly missed by the many students whose lives she touched over the years and by her many Orff friends. Narelle's three children have followed her example and are passionate about music and the Arts.*

*Narelle's daughter Miriam, who is a gifted writer and Early Childhood educator, has written this very special tribute to her mum.*

## Tribute to Narelle Jones

By Miriam Jones



Mum never followed what convention dictated for her. Despite doing well at school she chose not to go to university but rather to go to secretarial college. Her working career began as a secretary at the Indonesian trade office in Sydney where she hoped to use the language skill, which she had developed from having lived as an exchange student for a year in Indonesia. The work turned out to be too slow for her, so looking for something more challenging she moved to Teletronics, an Australian pacemaker company (where she

met her husband, my dad, Stephen). The work at Teletronics triggered a desire to know more about the heart, so she enrolled in an ECG technician's course, which soon after led to her working as an ECG technician at Concord Hospital and then cardiac technician at RPA Hospital.

Once she began her family, she became curious about how to teach music to her children, and interested in Orff and Kodaly pedagogies. In 1990 she completed some courses with Doreen Bridges at the Sydney Con,

started running early childhood music classes around Sydney, then continued these in our home when we moved to Pretty Beach in 1993. Over the years she attended many Orff workshops and conferences, including the 2001 Summer Conference in Brisbane, to which we (the rest of the family) tagged along as well, attending the concerts in the evenings, and the open workshops.

Mum loved the egalitarian ethos of Orff, and used lots of tuned percussion in her early childhood and primary music classes. Dad was often roped into making thongaphones, marimba bars, and other DIY Orff-inspired instruments.

She taught classroom music in a volunteer capacity at Pretty Beach PS from when I started in 1993 until well after Naomi, the youngest child, left. Her deep love of music, and particularly strong belief in music education, moved Mum to train as a teacher. In 2009 she graduated with a Bachelor of Teaching from UNE, which she had worked towards over 13 years, and was finally hired to teach music (and Indonesian) in a paid capacity at PBPS. She also taught at Hornsby Heights PS, Kariong PS, St Brendan's Lake Munmorah, and Holy Cross Kincumber, largely as a specialist music teacher.



Around 2000 Mum decided she would volunteer to produce a musical at PBPS. This first year she bought a pre-existing musical, but every second year after that (for about 10 years) she wrote her own, making sure that every child in the school would have a role. Her connections in the community meant that she was easily able to rope in choreographers, costume designers and sewers, dramaturgs, and many other volunteers. Xylophones often featured in these musicals!

Mum taught piano at our house until a few years ago. She would often encourage her students to transfer their piano skills to xylophone, and would play duets with her students on both piano and xylophone. At the end of



every year she organised a concert for her students. Mum also provided an opportunity for adults to play the xylophones, marimbas and other percussion in a Community Music Workshop at Pretty Beach Fair, which she presented with Barb Shearer-Jones.

Mum's approach to music was always very open and generous; she would never accept people saying "I'm not very musical" or "I can't sing". For her, anyone could and should sing, and anyone could and should learn to play music! Although she grew up taking piano lessons and playing in different ensembles at school, she didn't feel particularly "naturally" musical herself, partly due to a heavy reliance on notation in her early training. I think Orff helped her to approach music more intuitively and playfully, and to be able to share those skills with all the thousands of children she taught over the years.

Outside of work and education contexts Mum would also play music for pleasure. When Naomi and I were first getting into folk music we encouraged her to learn the piano accordion so she could accompany us. She really took to the accordion and used it extensively at school. She also played in a French music duo with a friend, Les Dupont-Louis, and together they played at a few local festivals and restaurants. In later years the piano music of Ludovico Einaudi was a big comfort and inspiration for her. One of the most beautiful things that happened in the last few months of her life was when friends from her a capella group came and sang (at social distance) for her on our balcony. One of the singers was fellow Orff-ian Barb Shearer-Jones, one of Mum's closest friends.

In recognition of Mum's musical contributions to the community as piano teacher, musical director, classroom music teacher, choir member, accompanist, and performer, the local Bouddi Foundation for the Arts has now created the Narelle Jones Scholarship Fund in her memory. This fund will go towards supporting young musicians who are involved in their local community and who are committed to sharing their love of music with others. If you would like to donate, please follow this link: <https://www.givenow.com.au/narelle>

