

Introduction of John Avinger
by Kerri Lynn Nichols

Good morning. It is a great honor and privilege to introduce my friend and colleague John Avinger.

I was first introduced to John twenty-two years ago by my mentor teacher on a trip to his first store in north Seattle. All I knew before the trip was, “You *have* to meet John.” Since that day, I have passed that message on to many others because to know John is to understand the joy of the Schulwerk. His response then is the same as it is today: “*How can we make this happen for the kids!*”

Come to his store or booth and you may well participate in an impromptu drum jam, hear a compelling story from his travels in Cuba or meet someone interesting as you play with the plethora of unusual instruments at your fingertips. If you don’t know the way, just listen for his remarkably, unique laugh.

John has tirelessly supported Orff-Schulwerk courses and conferences across the country in many capacities regardless of the number of students involved. When you hear him talk about the National Conference, you want to be there, and John is the kind of person who takes the time to talk and listen to every person he meets.

One of the highlights of the Olympia Summer course was John’s Cuban dance workshop where he passionately shared traditional grooves, told stories of his visits and interactions with the people there and provided an opportunity for participants to explore connections to a culture other than their own. John was able to help make a difference by establishing a charitable fund for the impoverished children of Cuba which allows him to send brand new musical instruments to their disadvantaged schools.

John has the playful heart of a child. He embodies many of the things we as Orff-Schulwerk teachers hope our students will find: creativity, empathy, celebration and generosity. There could not be a more qualified, deserving or exemplary candidate to represent AOSA Industry Service.

John, I hope you know that for many of us who have worked with you or purchased an instrument from you, you are present every day in our classrooms.

Congratulations!