

# The Orff ECHO

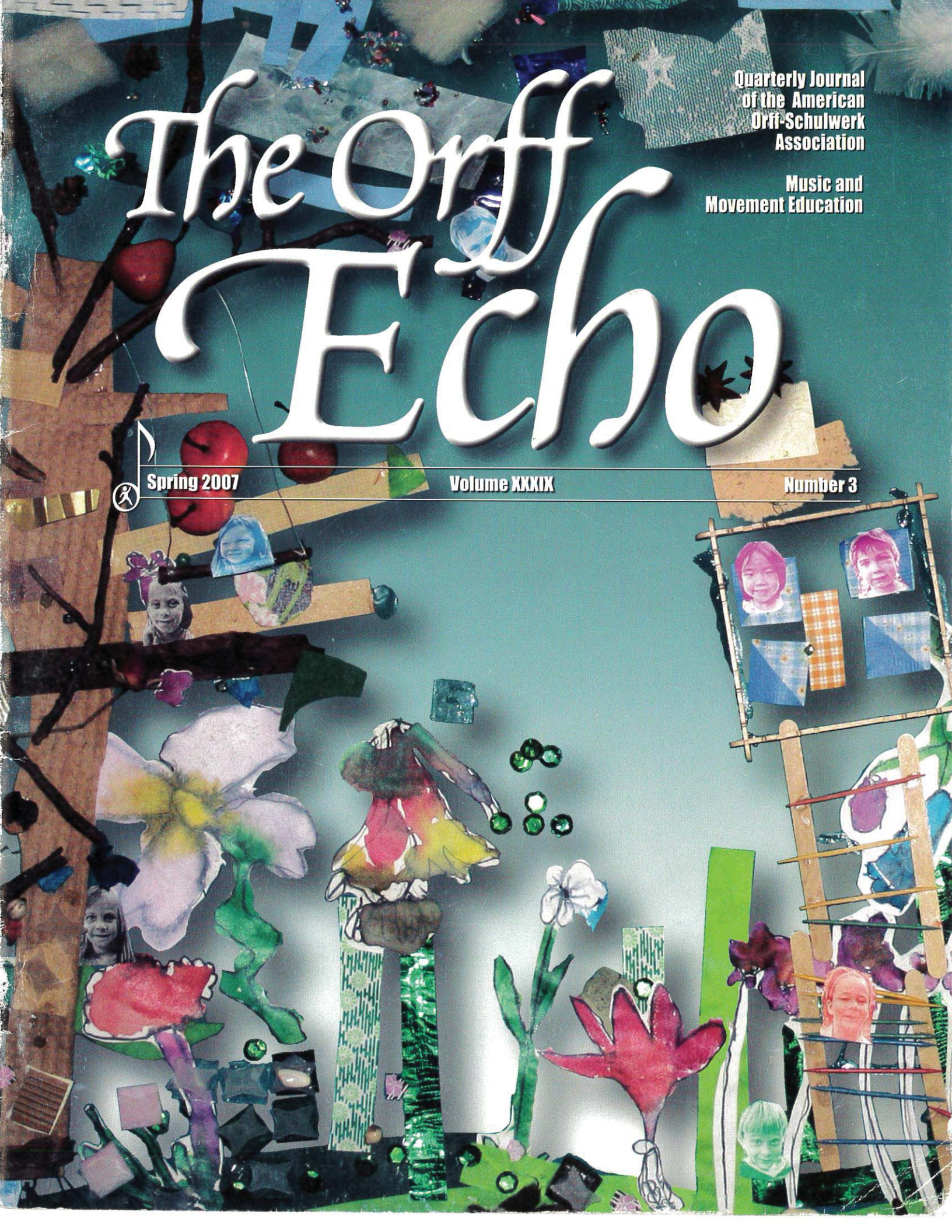
Quarterly Journal  
of the American  
Orff-Schulwerk  
Association

Music and  
Movement Education

Spring 2007

Volume XXXIX

Number 3



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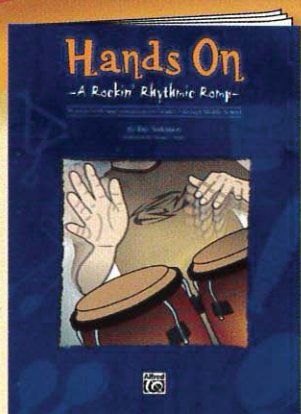
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Jim Solomon

Book ..... 00-25898

*Hands On* is a collection of thirty pieces with hand percussion instruments for grades three through middle school. From pure conga jams to timbre studies to polymetric rhythms, this book will keep your class tapping its toes while developing their brain.

Though the book contains excellent individual lessons, the author encourages changing the content to fit the specific needs of the student. *Hands On* takes into account that each classroom has different needs and provides the flexibility to meet them. With engaging songs, enriching content, and unlimited customizability, *Hands On* is a must-have for your classroom!

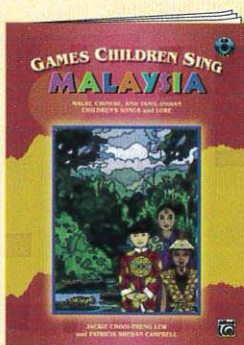


## It's Orff Showtime!

Konnie Saliba

Book ..... 00-24220

This collection of performance pieces is designed especially to show off your students' singing, playing and dancing abilities. Throughout the book, students are provided opportunities for creating and performing music. *It's Orff Showtime!* includes selections for lower elementary students that incorporate instruments and body percussion for special words in speech pieces, songs, games, puppets, dances, and improvisation activities. For the older students, there are more sophisticated rhythmic, vocal and instrumental experiences, as well as dances that create exciting orchestrations. Grades 1-6.

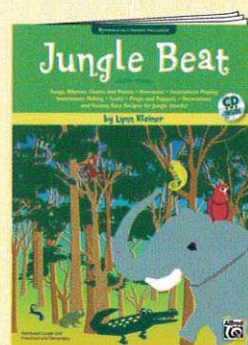


## Games Children Sing, Malaysia

Patricia Shehan Campbell  
and Jackie Chooi Theng-Lew

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Children's favorite songs from each country have been carefully researched and beautifully presented in these new collections. The purpose of these books is to share these wonderful "game" songs with your students. English texts were carefully developed to reflect the true meaning of the original texts.



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Lynn Kleiner

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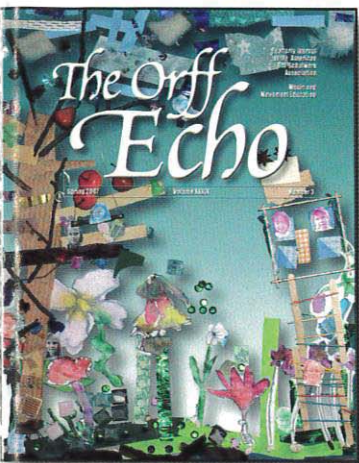


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Focus for this issue:  
The young  
child's musical world



Cover Art:

A close-up from a 3' x 4'  
collage created by students  
at the College School, part  
of the Reggio Collaborative  
in St. Louis, Mo.

- 8 The first four are the amazing musical years**  
by Barbara Lysenko  
“Exposure to the elements of music in early childhood is the catalyst for successful music-making endeavors on a personal and professional level,” said Lysenko.
- 13 Using a conceptual approach to dance education**  
by Jenny Burnett  
Burnett wants her young students to experience the communal nature of dance, as well as its ability to show meaning and emotion through movement.
- 26 Orff-Schulwerk and Reggio approaches are interwoven successfully**  
by Louise Caldwell and Brian Crisp  
The fundamentals of the Schulwerk, like the Reggio approach, are constant and yet changes come as we acquire knowledge of children, teaching, the brain and culture, according to Crisp.
- 32 From constructivist theory to Orff practices in the early childhood music classroom**  
by Marilyn Pitcairn  
“Orff Schulwerk is intrinsically related to constructivism, in that children are invited to interact with central concepts of music composition,” writes Pitcairn.
- 40 Language + movement: Fostering steady beat competence in young children**  
by Ann McFarland  
Studies in both kinesiology and music education suggest that overt speech can foster rhythmic accuracy.
- 45 Responding to the ecologies of music making in early childhood**  
by Lori Custodero  
To better understand the relationship between the individual and the environment, Custodero considers the home, public places and classrooms as *ecologies*.

## Departments

- 6 The President's Page**  
by AOSA President Sue Mueller
- 51 From the Classroom: Plant a seed and watch it grow**  
by Heidi Tzortsis  
“Like an enthusiastic gardener, I plant seeds with heart and soul,” explains Tzortsis. “My challenge is to create a welcoming and trusting garden where each child can bloom.”

**63 Index of Advertisers**

## In Review

- 56 Healthy techniques for singing (AOSA AV Library)**  
reviewed by Beth Iafigliola
- 59 All the Pretty Horses**  
(children's book) reviewed by Jennifer Shank
- 60 Handsprings**  
(children's book) reviewed by Nancy Glen
- 61 Reclaiming Childhood**  
(professional development) reviewed by David Thaxton
- 62 Ninna Nanna**  
(professional development) reviewed by Marjie Van Gunten

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**T**he American Orff-Schulwerk Association is a professional organization dedicated to the creative teaching approach developed by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman. We are united by our belief that music and movement – to speak, sing and play; to listen and understand; to move and create – should be an active and joyful experience.

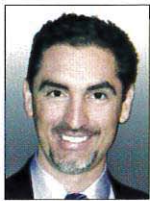
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- to demonstrate and promote the value of Orff Schulwerk;
- to support professional development opportunities; and
- to align applications of the Orff Schulwerk approach with the changing needs of American society.

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### The Orff Echo Editorial Calendar

ISSUE	COORDINATOR	TOPIC	CONTRIBUTOR'S DEADLINE
Fall 2007	Carolyn Beckie and Pam Hetrick	The power of play	May 1, 2007
Winter 2008	Carlos Abril and Carol Erion	Open submission	Aug. 1, 2007
Spring 2008	Alan Spurgeon and Marjie Van Gunten	Orff media: the voice	Oct. 1, 2007
Summer 2008	Martha O'Hehir and David Thaxton	Orff media: the word	Feb. 11, 2008
Fall 2009	Carlos Abril and Marjie Van Gunten	Orff media: instruments	May 1, 2008
Winter 2009	Pam Hetrick and David Thaxton	Orff media: movement	Aug. 1, 2008

We seek articles on these topics as they relate to Orff Schulwerk or to broader areas of teaching and learning. Editing and production is in process for some articles one year ahead of the publication date. If one of these topics appeals to you, please contact the appropriate Editorial Coordinator soon.

Also, articles on topics other than the above-listed may be considered at any time.

Before submitting manuscripts, please contact the editor for a copy of editorial guidelines. We cannot guarantee the publication of any submitted material.

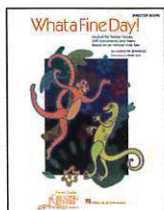
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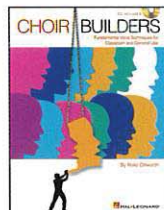
## WHAT A FINE DAY!

Musical by Carolyn Jennings

Henry Leck's *Creating Artistry* series proudly presents the story of Enkwambu and Enkende, based on an African folk tale. This well-crafted musical is perfect for young singers in grades 4-7, an Orff ensemble of 6-8 players and piano. The Director Score comes complete with 8 fully-accompanied songs, dialog, production tips and reproducible instrument parts.

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GR. 4-7



## CHOIR BUILDERS

By Rollo Dilworth

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GR. 3-12



## LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION!

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GR. 3-6



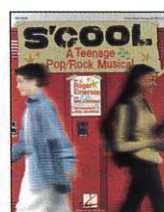
## BEAT! BEAT! BEAT!

By John Jacobson and Mark Brymer

Here are 12 new songs from the *Hop Til You Drop* series that will keep your young kids moving all year long, because once you start, you won't want to stop! This happy all-in-one collection comes complete with piano/vocal arrangements, choreography, reproducible lyric sheets and helpful lesson plans and performance tips.

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GR. K-3



## S'COOL!

By Roger Emerson and Matt Cleveland

This new pop/rock musical uses an exciting variety of musical styles to explore the feelings and frustrations experienced by contemporary teenagers. The need for minimal sets (all school-centered) and current dress help make it easy to stage for groups of all levels. The Score includes full script, accompanied songs, and choreography by John Jacobson.

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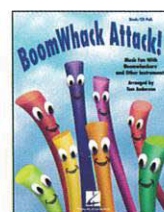
## ALL ABOARD THE RECORDER EXPRESS, VOLUME 2

By Janet Day

For MORE value-packed recorder fun, here are twelve MORE expertly written arrangements with reproducible parts for recorders, Orff instruments, percussion and piano. Difficulty levels range from easy to intermediate, and young performers are exposed to a diversity of musical styles, and hip tracks on the enclosed CD.

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GR. 4-6



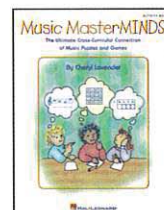
## BOOMWHACK ATTACK!

By Tom Anderson

Ten *whacky* one-of-a-kind arrangements of favorites like "Rockin' Robin," "C.C. Rider" and more are presented in a variety of styles for hours of music fun with boomwhackers and classroom instruments. This clever collection comes complete with reproducible instrument parts, vocal leadsheets with chord symbols, and a performance/accompaniment CD for added play-along excitement.

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GR. 3-6



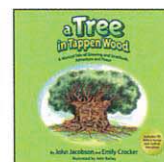
## MUSIC MASTERMINDS

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GR. 1-6



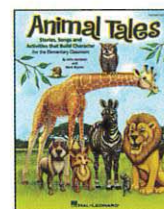
## A TREE IN TAPPEN WOOD

By John Jacobson and Emily Crocker

Popular writing team John Jacobson and Emily Crocker bring you this stirring, yet tender musical story for young readers that reminds us where we came from and helps us discover who we really are. Available in hard cover with full color illustrations and a CD with narration and 6 songs.

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GR. 3-6



## ANIMAL TALES GR. 2-5

By John Jacobson and Mark Brymer

Young readers in grades 2-5 will meet a host of animal friends in this character-building collection of interactive stories, songs and activities. For maximum learning and participation, a variety of reading and performance options are included to involve from one reader to a whole group. And everything is reproducible!

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GR. 2-5

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# The President's page

## Welcome, Spring!

by AOSA President Sue Mueller



Sue Mueller

The weather challenged us this past winter and the natural *elements* of nature seemed indifferent to disasters caused by attendant cold, wet or windy declarations.

This elemental delivery of nature's art should not surprise us. We deal with *elements* of the

Schulwerk daily in our lives of work and play. Why should we be surprised that we aren't in agreement and find ourselves challenged by its definition, its use, and its strength? As independent, creative individuals we are wired to push the envelope constantly defining and redefining the very *elements* we hold dear.

Speech, movement and song: that's it. These basic elements join together to allow for the fullest individual expression. Through this unity, all musical elements are explored, imitated and improvised leading to total engagement of the mind, body and spirit.

In the Orff Schulwerk community, there is a lively and ongoing discussion about this *process*. While one might say the process of an activity is the sequential steps of *how* you teach the material to students, there is so much more than the step-by-step order of events in a great lesson.

Music educators trained in the Orff approach provide building blocks from which students can freely express themselves through speech, song, movement and instruments. Through immersion in exploration, imitation and improvisation, students learn how to create their own compositions, their

own expressions in music and movement. The teacher is then no longer the director providing the step-by-step instructions, but rather the facilitator in this multi-modal, sophisticated process. The independent, creative individual is the goal.

Music is not *only* about literacy or the ability to play a piece, sing a song or perform a dance – although that is most certainly not to be ignored. Education in the Schulwerk develops expressive individuals who possess vital problem-solving skills and are better equipped to live and maintain their independence in an ever-changing society. Working cooperatively with our neighbors and colleagues in a diverse society and calling upon our creative side to assist in this process is paramount to labeling what it is we do.

The unifying qualities of the Schulwerk hold the promise of reconnecting us in a world of high-speed technology, virtual classrooms and media-reproduced people and places. Schulwerk nurtures the connection to humanity. Funding is available for countless worthwhile projects that create opportunities in the sciences. However, without the recognition and development of the artist within, those projects fall on closed, non-creative minds. The Schulwerk crosses all ethnic lines, age groups and belief systems and allows the creative expression and sturdy independence needed by members of a successful society.

AOSA is not only about what can be provided immediately in the form of member services. We are also a community of belief with a central philosophy: *creative music making is important to the world.*

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# The first four are the amazing musical years

by Barbara Lysenko

**M**usic development begins long before children enter the school environment. A baby's gentle coos and the erratic drumming of a 2-year-old toddler are important, observable signs of music development. Understanding the process of how and when music development evolves empowers music educators with the knowledge they need to help all their students, not just those perceived as talented, to enjoy and succeed in music. The beginning of early childhood, the time from infancy through age four are the amazing musical years.

More than 25 years ago I began my teaching career as a public school, K-5 elementary vocal teacher. It was enlightening to discover that many children could not keep a beat or sing in tune. Surprisingly, I was encountering the same situation with both children and teen singers in my church choirs. A good portion of rehearsals and lesson planning was focused on beat awareness and intonation, in other words: basic music competence.

With the birth of my first child in the early 1980s, I became curious about early childhood music. The emerging research was fascinating! Exposure to music during early childhood has a tremendous impact on music development. A playful musical environment in the early years lays a strong foundation for a lifelong love of, and active participation in, music. This, I discovered, was the missing link for the children I was teaching. At that point, I found my passion – early childhood music, the amazing musical years. Each class continues to bring new excitement and musical discoveries.

Children learn to speak by listening to the adults around them and experimenting with their own vocalizations. A baby's hearing becomes attuned to environmental rhythms and speech patterns

enabling her to learn effortlessly vocabulary and syntax. From birth, and sometimes even earlier, parents enthusiastically speak to their babies in full sentences. Although babies may not respond outwardly, adults persist in friendly conversation and sweet babbling sounds. Parents expose their infants to the language of the culture.

## It begins with a babble

At birth, the complex brain is beginning to make important musical connections. The soothing lullabies, engaging finger plays, silly high-pitched "parentese" and gentle rocking parents and relatives enjoy with the baby make an impact on his music development. Music intelligence – the ability to create and make music – begins to diminish soon after birth without the support of a musical environment. "It is what happens at birth and soon after birth that defines the quality of a child's musical life," according to Edwin Gordon, researcher and author.<sup>1</sup> Just as we speak to babies to encourage language development, they need to hear live singing models to stimulate music development. Immediate family, relatives, friends and daycare providers become the baby's first musical partners. These are the important voices a baby wants to hear. The musical ability of the adults is not important; it is the experience of hearing adult models that builds musicality in the infant.

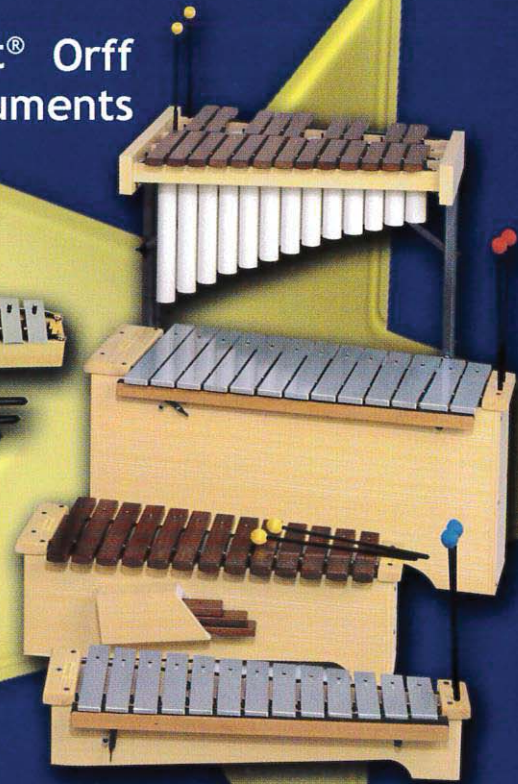
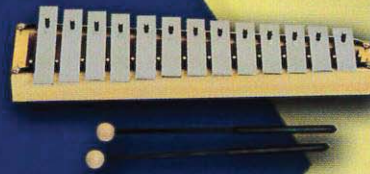
Music development, like language, begins with a babble stage, as the infant experiments with multiple combinations of vocal sounds. The chirps, squeals and even raspberries a baby creates are all part of this necessary stage. With plenty of early opportunities for singing, dancing, bouncing and moving infants will internalize the constructs of music long before reading or writing it.

Lilian Katz, principal investigator

*A playful musical environment in the early years lays a strong foundation for a lifelong love of, and active participation in, music.*



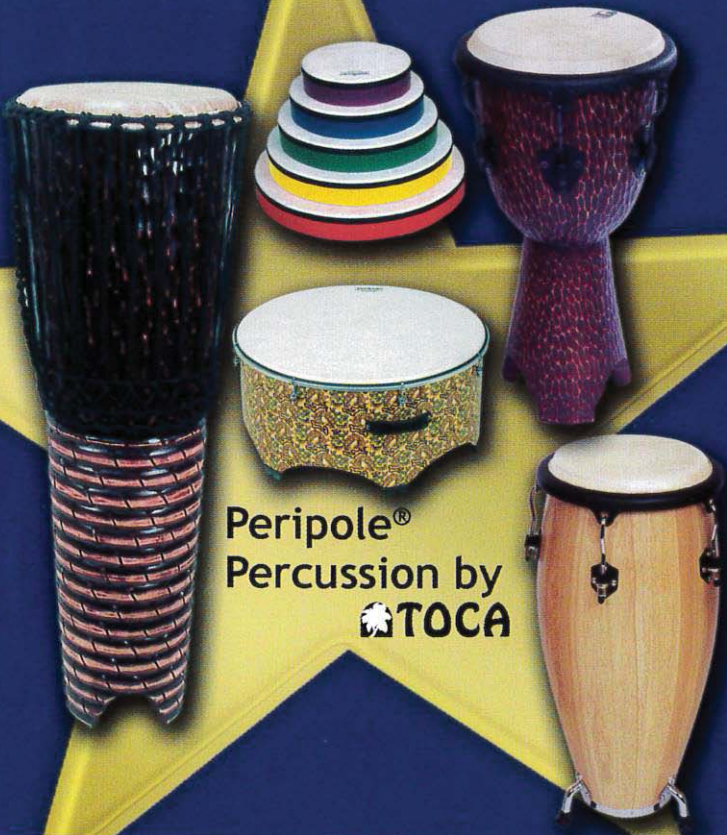
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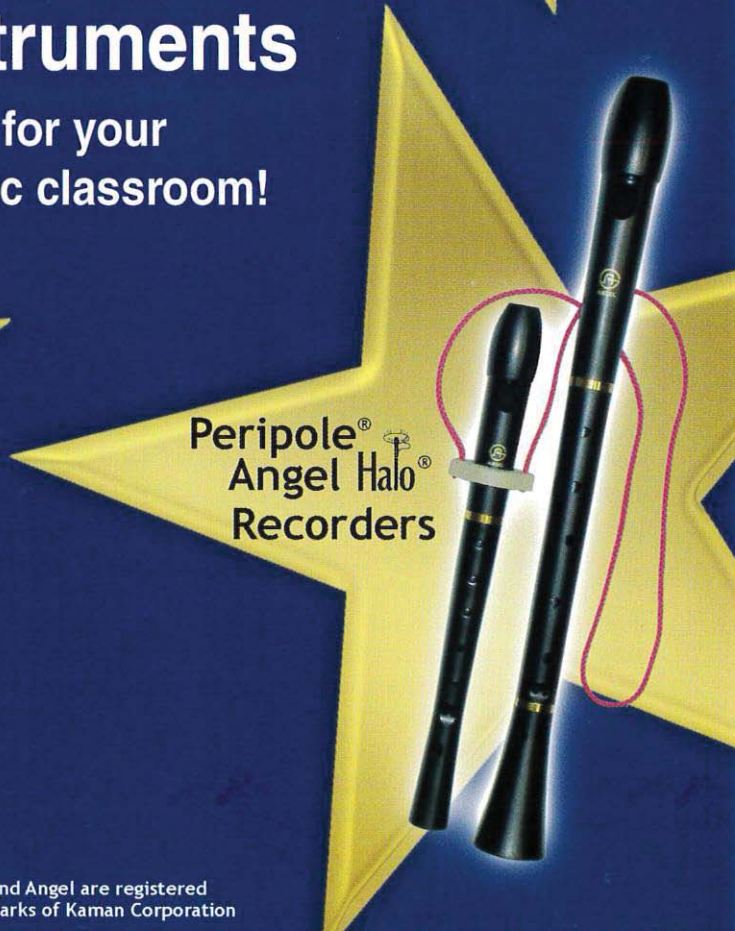
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**Henry and his mom, Pilar, explore lots of ways to shake the eggs.**

for the Illinois Early Learning Project, has researched four categories of learning: knowledge, skills, disposition and feelings. Knowledge and skills are taught by instructors and can be learned. Positive dispositions and feelings for a particular discipline or activity are acquired from individuals who impart a real joy. "Dispositions are not learned through instruction or drill," according to Katz. "The dispositions that children need to acquire or to strengthen – curiosity, creativity, cooperation, friendliness – are learned primarily from being around people who exhibit them."<sup>2</sup>

For example, my mother thought it was important for me to learn to sew, but did not pass along a love of sewing. I have the skills and knowledge, but I just don't sew. However, as a young child, I would enjoy listening to my mom share her rendition of "Chopsticks" on the piano. Although she could not teach me how to play the piano, she gave to me instead the greatest gift of all: the love of music. When adults model their enthusiasm for music they strengthen a child's lifelong disposition for enjoying and making music.

Look at what babies, toddlers, and preschool children can do with the

traditional rhyme, "Slowly, Slowly":

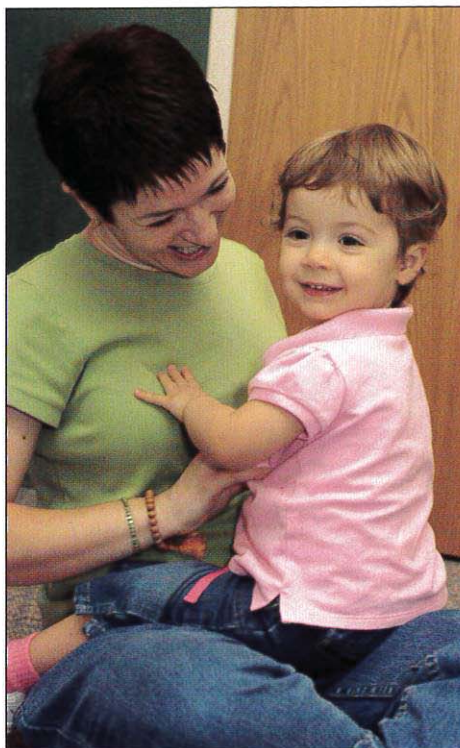
*Slowly, slowly, very slowly, creeps the garden snail.*

*Slowly, slowly, very slowly, up the wooden rail.*

*Quickly, quickly, very quickly, ran the little mouse.*

*Quickly, quickly, very quickly, in her little house.*

Her parents are an infant's first allies in music development. Babies



**Giddy up! Kaia and her mom enjoy a partner horsey ride.**

enjoy direct eye contact and playful facial expressions. Parents engage their infant in the rhyme by exploring high/low voice play. For example, move your hands from the top of the baby's head down to her toes while simultaneously using a sliding descending vocal line of "ah" or "oo." Give a gentle tickle back up the baby's body using a sliding, ascending line of "dee," or wiggle your fingers above the baby and slide hands and voice down for tummy tickle. Modulate the pitch of your voice, and the baby may follow.

Babies often turn in the direction of the musical sound and may begin to

imitate it. Reinforce any sounds the baby makes by repeating them. Through an encouraging response, you communicate to the infant, "Show me some more musical play!" To heighten the anticipation, creep all fingers "slowly" up the baby's legs to the beat, and then give a running tickle from head to toe for the "quickly" lines of the rhyme. Try reciting half of the chant in a soft voice, followed by a moderately loud voice, keeping in mind that babies can be startled by very loud sounds. Alternative movements can include a gentle massage or an easy game of "bicycling" to the beat. The baby may respond with gurgles and a sporadic arm or leg movements. Through this very basic rhythmic rhyme, you are teaching beat, rhythm, phrasing, dynamics and voice exploration.

Throughout the musical-babble stage, infants need to hear a diverse repertoire of musical offerings. Don't limit songs to the major mode, but provide opportunities to hear and absorb the nuances in a variety of tonalities and meters. Adults don't limit their vocabulary to what children understand. Likewise, don't limit



**Stephanie enjoys a dance while waving scarves.**

musical exposure to only the major mode and duple meter. An environment rich in musical experiences primes the baby for her musical journey. When language and music become meaningful through experience, the stage has been set for understanding.

Toddlers are inquisitive. Walking is a newly-acquired skill that keeps them constantly on the move and busy! Their exciting world is about play, exploration, discovery and creativity. An informal music setting allows the toddler to explore in his own way. He takes a different approach to “Slowly, Slowly” than does the infant. The toddler may begin to imitate the leader by doing his own interpretation of the finger play movement or squatting with an irregular bounce in his body. He may cruise on the outside of the circle and then wander back in for fun. You may hear one of the “ahs” or “oos” from the opening voice play when it’s least expected.

### Experimentation in preschool

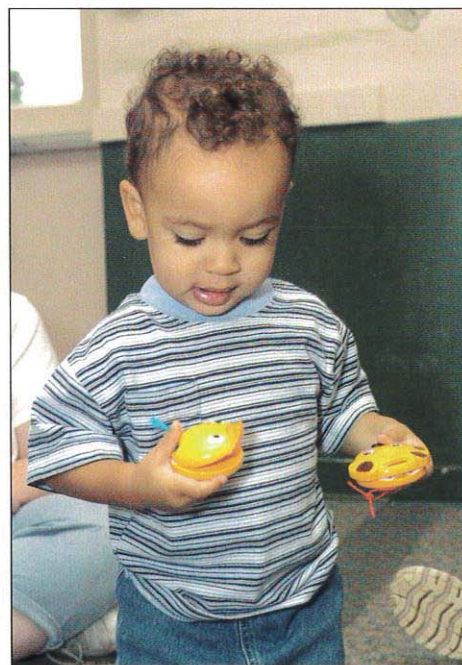
After presenting a singing activity, the toddler may join in on the beginning or ending of the song, or sing the resting tone. This is where children begin to experiment with intonation.



*Henry jumps enthusiastically in response to the music.*

After the music stops, carefully watch and listen. At this stage, children are beginning to audiate and play with the syntax of music. Audiation, as coined by Gordon, “takes place when one hears and comprehends music for which the sound is no longer or never has been physically present.”<sup>3</sup>

Sensory play is also an important learning experience. Toddlers love to play with basic rhythm instruments such as egg shakers, little maracas, drums and triangles. They may not play the instruments exactly the way we demonstrate, but no matter. Their play is the beginning of improvisation. Providing a safe environment, free of judgment, will allow the toddler to spontaneously create and enjoy music. You may observe the toddler playing or moving with a consistent beat. This beat may not match the beat of the



*Liam investigates the sounds of the castanets.*

music or rhyme; rather, the toddler matches the beat of her own internal drummer.

As 3- and 4-year-olds enter preschool, they are ready to build upon their understanding of music. Their imaginations are working overtime. For example, on “Old MacDonald’s Farm” there may have been... *a dinosaur!* Ask children how the dinosaur will move and how it will sound. Involve them in the creative



*Brendan enjoys a bounce to the beat with his mom.*

process. They are ready to use everything they have learned up to this point with language, melody, beat, rhythm and movement. The 3- and 4-year-olds will want to dramatize “Slowly, Slowly.” They are ready to experience the change in tempo.

Bring out the barred instruments to encourage exploration. Play with the concepts of ascending and descending lines, high and low, soft and loud, and fast and slow. Change the voicing for the snail and the mouse; use glockenspiels or metallophones for the snail and the xylophones for the mouse. Encourage the children to improvise their own parts for the snail and mouse with a game of question-and-answer.

These children enjoy singing games with their peers. You will be able to hear more accuracy in the intonation of the children’s voices, and their singing and moving may be more coordinated. Their ability to audiate is growing. They may even be willing to share some of their own musical compositions.

Steady beat is the foundation of every song we sing, rhythmic rhyme we chant and instrumental piece the children play. Movement is an essential element of all music instruction.

The child must feel steady beat in every fiber of his body. "The important thing, as one cannot repeat too often, is that the child should learn to feel music, to absorb it not merely with his ear, but with his whole being," Emile Jaques-Dalcroze argued.<sup>4</sup> To develop a sense of beat, children need a variety of movement experiences. Include small movement like finger plays or tapping body parts and large movement like jumping, flying, twisting and walking. Encourage and accept ideas contributed by the children. Introduce many genres of music and that of other cultures. As the child builds upon the movement vocabulary gained throughout the babble stage, he begins to feel beat and meter as well as interpret musical expression.

Exposure to the elements of music in early childhood is the catalyst for successful music-making endeavors on a personal or professional level. Early childhood is the time to nurture the music ability everyone is given at birth. If we do not speak to our children until they turned 2 years old, they will be speech-delayed. If we do not sing and dance with our children in early childhood, they will be musically deficient. Providing a stimulating musical environment in early childhood will develop the necessary skills of singing in tune and keeping steady beat. Early childhood music is what will change the quality of musicianship in our choirs, Orff ensembles and school performances and foster a lifelong love of music.

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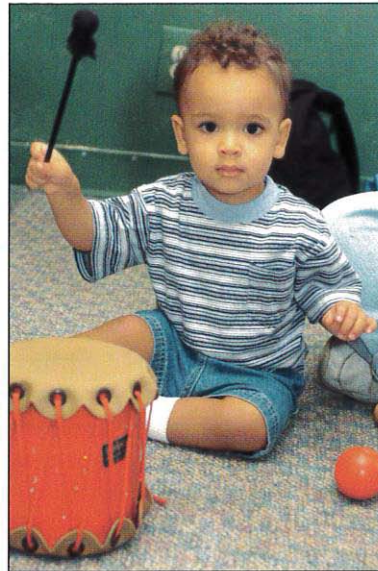
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- <sup>2</sup> Lilian G. Katz, *What Should Young Children be Learning?* (Urbana: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, 1992), ED 290 554.
- <sup>3</sup> Edwin E. Gordon, *A Music Learning Theory for Newborn and Young Children*, (Chicago: G.I.A. Publications, Inc., 1990), p. 10.
- <sup>4</sup> Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, *Rhythm, Music & Education*, (London: Hazell Watson & Viney Ltd., 1980), p. 49.

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Liam plays the drum during an improvised jam session.

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Barbara Lysenko earned a bachelor's degree in music education, as well as Orff-Schulwerk Level 1 certification from the College of New Jersey.

Her professional career spans more than 27 years teaching public school, church music, children's musical theater and preschool and parent/child music classes.

Contact Lysenko at:  
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Kaia improvises her own creation on the triangle.

# Using a conceptual approach to dance education

by Jenny Burnett

*By creating different activities based on one concept, each intelligence can be reached while still presenting a basic movement concept.*

A large group of 5-year-old children separate into duets and each couple creates a unique shape. Their small hands are pressed together, their feet spread far apart. The children balance together before gently releasing and dancing away. As the music changes to a brisk, light melody the children dance around, between, over and under each other until the music pauses. Their faces are lit with joy as they excitedly find their partners again to create a new, unique shape. They have been experimenting with the movement concept of relationships, their special word for the day. Some children share what they liked best, while others enthusiastically ask what "relationships" game we will play next.

A few years ago I was lucky enough to spend a week in Seattle studying

with Anne Gilbert. Before the workshop I read about her approach to dance but wasn't exactly sure how to implement her strategies within my own dance classroom. After completing a week-long crash course I was excited to get back to school and try it. I have to admit that I wasn't quite sure what I was doing at first, and soon realized it would take practice. Teaching in this way allows my own personality, past acquired knowledge and teaching style to influence a new way of thinking about dance education. Gilbert suggests focusing on basic concepts, making lesson planning easier and to help students learn more. Previously, I had difficulty figuring out how to teach simultaneously dance technique, creative dance and social skills. My lessons were inconsistent and sometimes lacked focus.



"At the beginning of each school year, classes begin with exercises and activities based on the concept of relationships," Burnett writes.

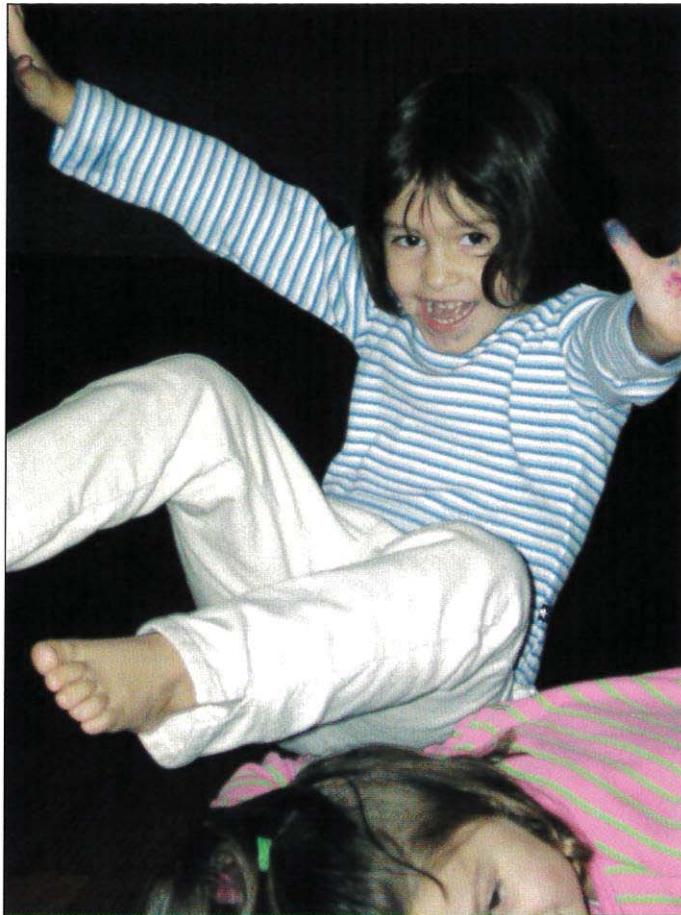
Thinking about the great dance teachers I have had over the years, the most inspirational ones use a conceptual approach. They may not focus on the same concepts that I prefer for my students, but they present one major idea during every class. My college ballet instructor would develop each class around a large concept, such as jumps or turns. As a student I began to understand that every exercise was preparation for the next, so by the time we actually did jump I felt fully prepared.

### Begin with five concepts

Combining my reflections on learning as a dance student with Gilbert's approach, I began infusing this knowledge into my curriculum by making a few key decisions about what would be absolutely essential for a young student to understand. One of the most important aspects of dance is its ability to show meaning and emotion through movement. Another essential aspect of dance is its communal nature, an ideal for young children to experience. I focus on these aspects to help me define the movement concepts I teach throughout the year. For example, at the beginning of each school year, classes begin with exercises and activities based on the concept of relationships. We talk about what it means to have a relationship with someone or something. Then we talk about the relational aspect of dance: we can dance with other people or without them, over them or under them, on the floor or off the floor, between, beside, or around. Almost any game I think of playing becomes more interesting to children when they are able to concentrate on a single focus, such as relationships.

The central idea with conceptual teaching begins with a simple vocabulary that grows as the student grows. The five concepts I use the most with early childhood students are *body*,

*space*, *time*, *effort* and *shape*. They are easy enough for young students to understand but also have enough information within each one to challenge them as they grow older. *Body*



*Burnett uses the concepts of body, space, time, effort and shape when teaching young children.*

is usually where I begin with the youngest students, developing lessons based on body parts, relationships, balance and shapes. Children are often most focused on themselves and their own needs. What better place to begin than with their own bodies? We play games, one of which is freeze dance. The student dances to music any way she likes until the music stops, then she freezes in a shape. Or we may focus on dancing with only one body part, and then add other parts to the dance, subsequently taking away body parts until only the first part is left dancing alone. As students develop a clear understanding of each concept, the games grow in difficulty; I may ask them to wiggle or float, then freeze in a straight or curvy shape.

*Space* (usually the second concept I introduce) pertains to direction, size, levels, pathways and place. Space involves the dancer's location, where his body moves and how much space he uses while dancing. We pretend that we are balloons being blown up from small to large. Then we take a trip floating high up in the sky, pop our balloons and whiz around the room until we have lost all of our air, becoming small and low again. Gilbert introduced me to a game called "Level Boogie" that focuses on contrasting levels. Every time I dance at a high level the students must dance low; if I switch to a low level they must dance at a high level. As students begin to show a stronger understanding of levels, I make the game more difficult by pairing students off and having them play against each other. The game can be further adapted so that each child can make a decision to change level at any time, while the other student must react, thus making it an activity of collaboration as well as levels. All the while the students are making their own decisions about

how they are dancing.

The concept of *time* has an easy sub-concept of speed and a more complex idea of rhythm. For early childhood students I usually focus solely on speed, which is easier for them to comprehend. Music certainly helps us to experiment with movements fast, medium-speed, and slow. I play a variety of musical styles while teaching about time to help children *hear* speed as well as *feel* it. Sometimes we will spend a few minutes listening to different musical selections and deciding whether it is fast, medium-speed, or slow. Then we improvise to the music paying attention to the speed that we hear. I often ask children to share their favorite dancing speed by having them show the class how they prefer to move.

Surprisingly, they often choose slow as their favorite speed once they have experienced all three.

*Effort* is arguably the most challenging one for young students to grasp, and for good reason. Moving with specific effort, such as lightness or strength, is just as difficult for the young child as manipulating a pair of scissors. By using chiffon scarves and chopsticks as props during a lesson on effort, we compare how a scarf floats through the air smoothly while a chopstick pokes through the air sharply. We then try to embody the movement of a scarf

and a chopstick. Imagery is very helpful when discussing effort with young children. I sometimes ask them to imagine petting a soft kitten or floating like a puffy white cloud while they dance to Chopin.



*Burnett often asks children to share their favorite dancing speed by showing the class how they prefer to move.*

*Shape* is the most technical – and least interpretative – of dance concepts. When dancers use the element of shape they are working with the most basic shapes in which they can move. When focusing on technique I usually begin with ball, wall, and pin shapes. These three shapes can be discerned in any interpretation of movement in dance. A ballet dancer, for

example, usually fluctuates between dancing in a pin shape (straight and long) and a wall shape (flat and wide). An Irish dancer almost always dances purely in a pin shape. A modern dancer often fluctuates between all three shapes. She may leap into the air in a wall shape, then fall to the floor ending with a ball shape roll. I often use the ball, wall, and pin images when my students begin to create their own movement phrases because they convey clear, concise vocabulary. Later they can use the other movement concepts (body, space, time, and effort) to embellish their movement phrase.

### Combining concepts

Combining concepts keeps lessons more interesting and challenging for the students. It also helps children to understand that each concept is related to the other concepts. One favorite game employs both *body* and *space*, and is played in pairs. One child creates a shape and freezes while the other child decides whether he will go



*A favorite game of Burnett's students employs both body and space. One child freezes into a position. Then a partner decides whether to go under, over, around or through the shape.*

over, under, around or through his partner's shape. This simple idea keeps children engaged far longer than if I teach them specific steps pertaining to the ideas of over, under, around and through. It also helps students develop critical and creative thinking skills while negotiating interpersonal relationships with their dance partners.

While co-teaching music and movement classes with Roger Sams, I have found that many movement concepts reinforce music concepts, and vice versa. The movement concept of *space*, for example, allows children to experiment with high and low, just as a young singer would experiment with singing high and low. Large and small often reflect loud and soft. The movement concept of *time* reflects rhythm and meter in music. Effort can reflect the

timbre of specific instruments, and so many times I will compare musical instrumentation to the choices dancers make with their own bodies. Ideally, a dance teacher is utilizing musical knowledge to enhance her lessons just as a music teacher uses movement concepts to support musical concepts. Dance is easily integrated into other curricular areas.

This also brings to mind the types of learners we teach. By encouraging a child to sing high while moving high, we recognize both the kinesthetic learner as well as the auditory learner. If half of the class observes

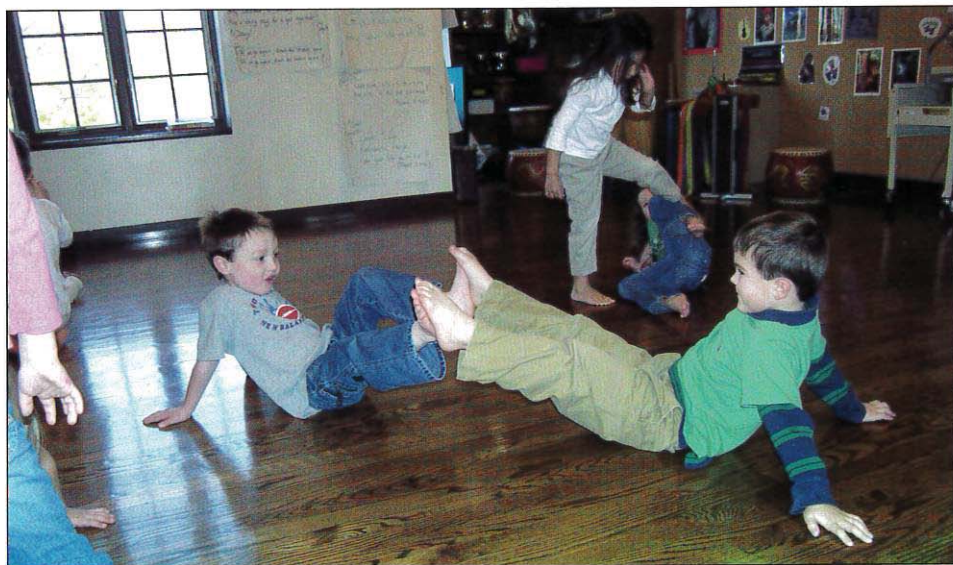
the other half, I have also reached the visual learners. The same is true with multiple intelligences. The musical and bodily-kinesthetic learners are usually fulfilled in the music and

dance classroom, but what about the linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist intelligences? By creating different activities based on one concept, each intelligence can be reached while still presenting a basic movement concept. Classroom teachers have observed that many concepts I teach are also explored in their classrooms. This is certainly not by accident, but it is also not a focus of mine. Crossover happens rather naturally through focusing on basic movement concepts.

Great dance classes focus on more than mere steps and counts. Missing in many dance classes are the most important aspects of dance itself: the communication of meaning through movement, to build and support community, to allow different ways of expressing ourselves, and to challenge and free ourselves physically. If I spent a school year teaching children how to skip, leap, and turn, they wouldn't understand the essence of dance itself. While it is difficult to find a happy medium between skill development and creative development, it is imperative that students of any art experience both, ideally at the same time. When that balance blends skill development, creative thinking, and conceptual understanding, students become not only skilled movers, but human beings more prepared to move through the world.



*Young children experience the ability of dance to show meaning and emotion through movement, as well as its communal nature.*



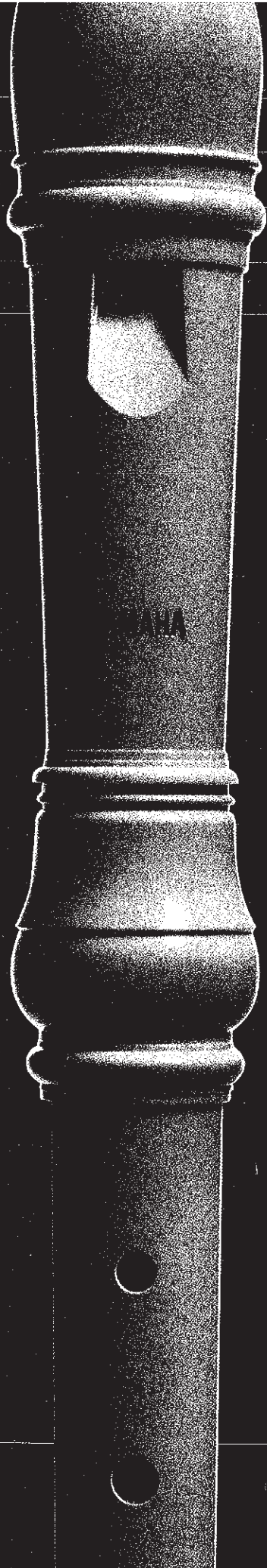
*"Almost any game I think of playing becomes more interesting to children when they are able to concentrate on a single focus, such as relationships," writes Burnett.*



*Jenny Burnett earned a master's degree in education from Kent State University and a bachelor's degree in dance from the University of Akron. She*

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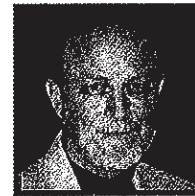
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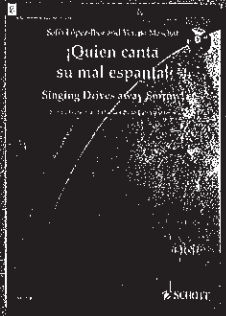
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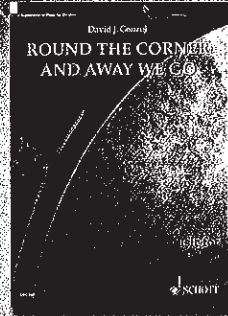


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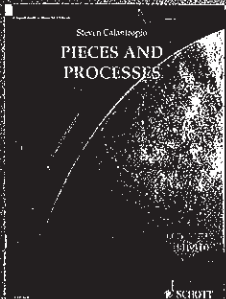
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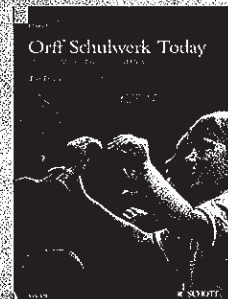


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# Orff-Schulwerk and the Reggio approaches are interwoven successfully

by Brian Crisp and Louise Caldwell

## Introduction

The Reggio Emilia approach to education is committed to the creation of conditions for learning that will enhance and facilitate a child's construction of "his or her own powers of thinking through the synthesis of all the expressive, communicative and cognitive languages." The approach to early childhood education is a city-run and sponsored system designed for all children from birth through 6 years of age. It can be a resource and inspiration to help educators, parents and children as they work together to further develop their own educational programs.

Briefly, the approach was developed in the Italian city of Reggio Emilia. It is based upon an "emergent curriculum" that builds on the interests of children. Topics for study are captured from children's conversations, through community or family events, and from the known interests of children (puddles, shadows, dinosaurs, etc.). Team planning is an essential component of the emergent curriculum. Teachers work together to formulate hypotheses about the possible directions of a project, the materials needed and possible parent and/or community support and involvement.

## Our collaboration

The Orff-Schulwerk philosophy and the Reggio approach are being successfully interwoven in the most interesting ways at the College School, an independent pre-eighth grade school in St. Louis, Mo. We have been working collaboratively as teachers for two years here. The common threads of our backgrounds in each of these pedagogies emerged through shared teaching and pedagogical discussions. Use of quality materials, reflective and intentional pedagogy, and socio-con-

structivist education runs central to the philosophies of Orff-Schulwerk and also to the Reggio approach. The dialogue between the two pedagogies is further enriched by our close relationship with educators in the schools of Reggio Emilia and the openness inherent to both philosophies.

At the same time Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman began their experiments with the Schulwerk in post-World War II Germany, the community of Reggio Emilia, Italy opened its first parent-supported preschools. Since then, the city has opened approximately 35 schools for young children that focus on developing the whole child in communicative, social and affective domains.<sup>1</sup>

The attention to collaboration,

research, the environment, documentation and the strong image of the child have made the Reggio experience accessible to many educators curious about the ideals of the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia. During the winter of 2006, a group of us from the St. Louis Reggio Collaborative studied in Reggio Emilia as part of an international study group for pedagogues, researchers, artists and administrators. The interweaving of our Orff Schulwerk with the Reggio approach was fueled by attending lectures, observing student learning and interacting with the environment and materials. This blending would include the birth of a music atelier, the emphasis on process and reflective pedagogy, the examination of the role



*The Reggio approach makes things fresh and exciting with each encounter, explains Caldwell. Here, a student spins to express her interpretation of the artwork behind her.*



*"When you see the child as full of ability, it changes your interactions, your thoughts, your respect and your responsibility for the learning," said Crisp.*

of the young child and the authentic assessment of an aesthetic approach to teaching and learning.

### **A conversation between Brian Crisp and Louise Caldwell**

Recently, the two of us discussed our work in the blending of Orff Schulwerk with the Reggio Emilia approach. Here are the highlights of our conversation.

**BC:** *One of the ideals central to Reggio Emilia is the image of the child. How is this image critical to that philosophy and how is it different from other approaches to early childhood?*

**LC:** Rather than being weak and needy, the child is a being who arrives with a wealth of intellectual and creative capacity, and a drive to learn and make meaning out of experience. More than anything else, the child wants to make relationships with ideas, knowledge, nature and people. When teachers believe that the child comes to the world in this way, the power dynamic changes. This approach requires a balance that shares responsibility between the

teacher and child.

**BC:** *This image was one of the most revolutionary ideas conveyed when we were together in Reggio Emilia. When you see the child as full of ability, it changes your interactions, your thoughts, your respect and your responsibility for the learning. It also puts a lot of responsibility in the hands of the child.*

**LC:** Some people think that this means that you follow the child's lead, neglecting all thoughtful planning and prediction of learning experiences. Rather, this belief should lead you to carefully observe what you see and what you hear from the child in a way that impacts the planning of your teaching.

**BC:** *How does this change the relationship between the teacher and the child?*

**LC:** We are equal to the child, yet we are different due to our experience and our roles. We find ways to listen that honor the child's perspective. This makes things fresh and exciting with each encounter. The role of the teacher is based on deep belief in

this competent child. How can we create an authentic and rich relationship through each facet of the school setting — colleagues, children, families, materials, ideas and space?

The teacher is continually observing, making hypotheses and analyzing the learning and the teaching. You and I have vast experiences in art and music education, but we continually examine how children interact with learning, our ways of teaching, the world to which we are relating, and the materials being explored.

**BC:** *We never have a predictable outcome. As an educator I know well the concepts with which we are working and where they are placed in the life of the child. Yet, the culminating aesthetic experiences that combine speech, movement, dance and singing are dependent on the ideas of the children. Their ideas are rich and fruitful, and often surpass any imaginable outcome.*

**LC:** It is the birth of the expertise and passions of the teacher, the enthusiasm and freshness of the children, together with the desire to make meaning about the world and life. Our work is founded on universal ideas, aspirations, passions and concepts that we want children to learn in a deep and meaningful way.

**BC:** *One of the tools we have to gauge our work and the learning is documentation. This has the educator in a constant state of analysis and reflection. What is essential to documentation?*



*Crisp observed that the ideas of children "are rich and fruitful, and often surpass any imaginable outcome."*

**LC:** It is a process of following our work that actually makes the work possible. The moment when new learning occurs becomes a platform for the next steps. Documentation is a beautiful tapestry informing instruction. It is not about learning and then displaying what happened. Rather, it is the practice of using daily structures (recordings, video and photography) to create the learning journey.

**BC:** In our work, we both focus on the idea of relationships. How do you define relationships in the teaching and learning of the child?

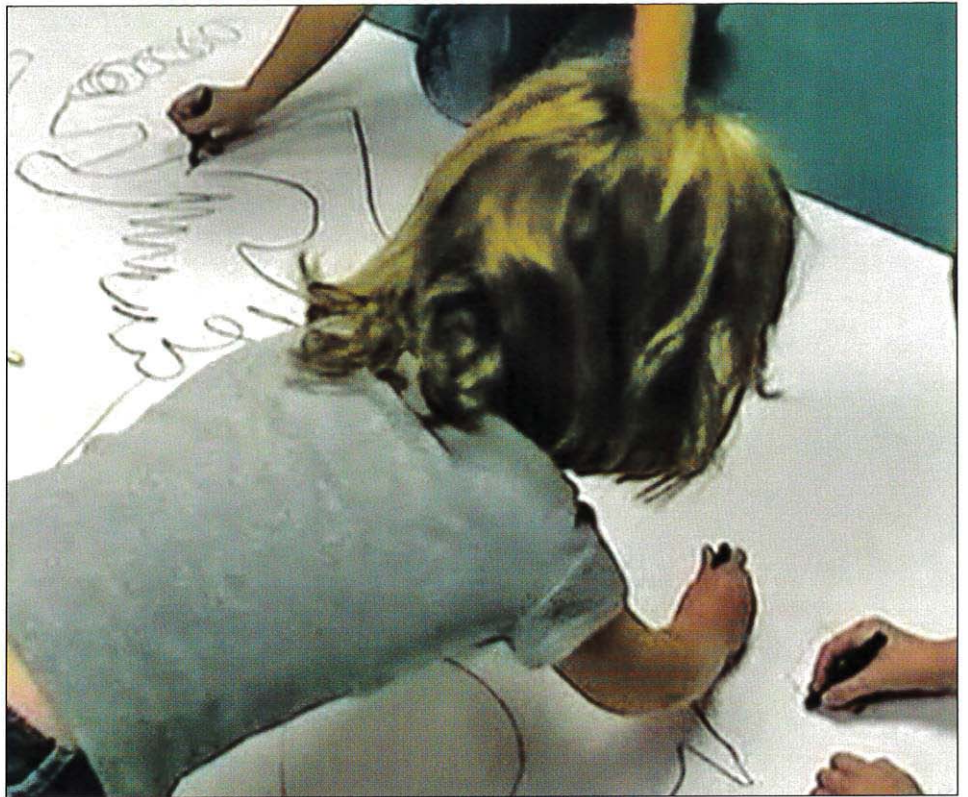
**LC:** We tend to think of relationships as being among people. Actually, we live our lives within a complexity of relationships, and they all interplay. These are the relationships of ideas, experiences, knowledge, aesthetics and domains of learning.

**BC:** Recently, you addressed the concept and use of the atelier in the role of teaching and learning. How does the atelier impact the learning of the child and our work with each other?

**LC:** The word *atelier* means lab or a studio. It is a place where children can make meaning with the support of atelieristi. As one of the students at our school noted, you can look out from the glass walls of the atelier and see the learning in the other rooms. This architecture conveys the idea of learning transparency and is the physical manifestation of multiple relationships. It honors and promotes the child's ability to construct new experiences. Loris Malaguzzi, the founding philosopher of the Reggio Approach, always dreamed of having many ateliers: one for dance, another for music, and one for science. This is where you and I are: we have the visual atelier and are in the process of developing and working with the music atelier.

Which leads me to ask: What is the purpose of the Schulwerk in our music atelier?

**BC:** Composer Carl Orff believed that children should be encouraged to compose their own music. For the young child, the Schulwerk is not the learning and singing of musical material inde-



A teacher using the Reggio approach must "carefully observe what you see and what you hear from the child in a way that impacts the planning of your teaching," Caldwell said.

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pendent of aesthetic value. Instead, it utilizes the child's natural arena for play to unite the language of music and the language of movement in a truly aesthetic experience. Thus in the music atelier, the intention of Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman is realized: the child creates truly spontaneous improvisatory works with the assistance of a music expert. Children are exploring music and movement ideas and provocations thoughtfully supplied by the music alterista.

**LC:** How are the founding principles of Orff Schulwerk still governing the work with children?

**BC:** As a conscious musician who improvises and composes in an elemental style, the child is a focal point of the Schulwerk. This style that deals with rhythmic emphasis, gapped and modal scales, patterns, simple forms and the unification of singing, playing, speaking and dancing cannot be lost. The atelier work is a supplement to the children's time in the music room. There are two different physical spaces and two different types of experience. The atelier work is more inde-

pendent than the time in the music room. The ideas from the music room easily find their way into the children's work in the atelier. Also the atelier is reserved for small-group work. Within the small group, attention is given to the research of cognitive functions, social development and aesthetics. In this approach, the child is never passive, but is continually creating and defining musical concepts and ideas. It is not about consuming already composed works but rather about creating new vibrant and beautiful pieces by children.

**LC:** Every school doesn't use the Schulwerk?

**BC:** No, some people have no idea about the Schulwerk, just as many have no idea about the schools in Reggio Emilia.

**LC:** What else captivates you about the Schulwerk? Why are you so passionate about it?

**BC:** The Schulwerk combines all the things about music that I love: beautiful music-making, theory, history, playfulness, emotionally rich experiences

and heightened aesthetic experiences. These were the things I loved about growing up with music in the mountains of North Carolina. In Orff-Schulwerk, the ideal that keeps propelling us forward is that the music is created by children. From these creative experiences, our students speak about music like musicians using the language that is discrete to the discipline.

**LC:** In the cross-pollination of the best from both the Reggio approach and Orff-Schulwerk philosophy, what are the main ideas we hope all of our students experience?

**BC:** The most beautiful part is teaching children to function as competent and independent musicians. Next, they should be able to analyze and query one another about the functions and communication of music and movement. Wonderful moments of learning happen when students begin to analyze their work and strategies for creating music.

**LC:** This analysis isn't unique to music but occurs also in writing, language, visual arts and math.



*"More than anything else," said Caldwell, "the child wants to make relationships with ideas, knowledge, nature and people."*

**BC:** Yes, the exploration leads to knowledge that constructs and informs future improvisation and composition.

**LC:** This reinforces the strong image of the child. We believe the child is able to think and engage with many ideas.

Is the Orff Schulwerk philosophy fixed or the same as it was when it was created in the last century?

**BC:** The fundamentals of the Schulwerk, like the Reggio approach, are constant and yet changes come as we acquire new knowledge of children, teaching, the brain and culture. This leads us to exciting evolutions of the

Reggio approach and Orff Schulwerk.

**LC:** Our understanding is enriched over time. As a teacher who embraces Orff Schulwerk, what are your wildest dreams about what music and dance could contribute to the community, this generation and the world?

**BC:** That's a Reggio-inspired question.

**LC:** I think it is. I also think that the aspirations of the Reggio approach and the Orff Schulwerk are very close, and I am curious about what you will say.

**BC:** The most important ideals for Orff

Schulwerk are the creation and discussion of truly aesthetic moments. These experiences provide a medium to realize how your relationships with thought, people and places are what truly make you fully human. The overall experience is not the piece that is made, but how you collaboratively make the piece. I think that is the wish of all teachers.

My favorite idea by Carl Orff is the thought that the birth and proliferation of Orff Schulwerk is like spreading wild flowers. Our students are also wild flowers. Their growth depends on their own abilities and the favorable conditions that encourage their growth. This is also our work with one other. We are wild flowers nurturing each one another but we respect the fundamentals of our source. We are growing.

<sup>1</sup> Caldwell, Louise Boyd, *Bringing Reggio home*, New York: Teachers College Press, 1991.

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Louise Boyd Caldwell, Ph.D., is coordinator of curriculum and professional development at the College School, part of the Reggio Collaborative in St. Louis, Mo. Her research focuses on child development through the arts, and on language acquisition. She studied in Reggio, Italy, and has written on the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood development.

Brian Crisp teaches at the College School, an independent school for students ages 3-14 in St. Louis, Mo. He earned a master's degree in Orff-Schulwerk at the University of St. Thomas and is a founding member of Schulfunk, an adult Orff-Schulwerk performance group. He is course director of Orff-Schulwerk Teacher Training at Webster University, and teaches summer courses in Orff Schulwerk elsewhere in the United States.

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# From constructivist theory to Orff practices in the early childhood music classroom

by Marilyn Pitcairn

The relationship of constructivism in education to the musical discoveries that take place in an Orff Schulwerk classroom is a rich area of inquiry. It brings clarity to the reasons which underlie our practice, and it invites a fresh look at the features of an Orff classroom that build such secure musical thinking, sound musical conclusions, and admirable musicianship in young children I encountered.

I became familiar with constructivist education in Bobbie Flexer's Elementary Mathematics Methods class in 1992.

She would grin with delight as she demonstrated the power of mathematical questioning, inviting a variety of playful mental operations rather than one dead-end answer. Bobbie had nothing short of contempt for the drill-and-practice method, and she sharply questioned the efficacy of that method as it relates to music performance. Her tempting invitations to extend one's mental reach, her carefully designed questions, and her very engaged students were the obvious explanation for her joy in teaching!

We all know the feeling! As Orff-Schulwerk music teachers, we experience the nearly effortless momentum of a class taught in the constructivist style. We set up musical situations which beckon for original solutions: a rhythmic question needing an answer, or a dramatic retelling of a folk tale and a musical interpretation to capture the identity of each character. This careful planning is invisible as we watch

the unfolding of student creativity and the processing of musical concepts.

This article will briefly define constructivism as it relates to early-childhood education and will consider features of the constructivism classroom, including the roles of student and teacher, the ethics of the learning environment and the style of assessment. Because children are constructivists by nature, and since Orff Schulwerk is philosophically aligned with constructivism, the theoretical framework will support and inform our practice.

## Constructivism defined

Constructivism is a strand of educational theory with historical roots in the progressive movement. Constructivism

purports that children build their knowledge, realities and concepts through active inquiry. Derived from the research of Piaget<sup>1</sup> the theory states that young children develop interpretations of the external world which are temporal and change as a result of experience. Such interpretations are closely tied to Piaget's developmental levels, ranging from concrete thinking to sophisticated, abstract thinking. The position of constructivism is that all knowledge is temporal. When a new experience cannot be understood by means of the child's existing knowledge, a state of *disequilibrium* is created, and this disequilibrium leads to the construct of new structures of understanding. Constructivist education seeks to cause



*"The mental processes involved in storing musical facts, versus those involved in manipulating musical ideas, vary in quality by many orders of magnitude in their capacity to develop the child's musical mind," according to Pitcairn. "The development of wonderful ideas depends on providing occasions to have them."*

disequilibrium.

The traditional educational model, described as *mimetic*, emphasizes the transmission of knowledge. It is content-centered, appealing to the simplicity of teacher-student roles and straightforward assessment opportunities. It is tailor-made for multiple choice formats and standardized tests. Constructivism stands in bold contrast to traditional models of learning theory and passive learning environments. Assessment is always closely tied to instruction, occurring in the context of learning.

A constructivist perspective leads to very different classroom practices with very different outcomes – a perspective which is closely aligned with active, exploratory, improvisational work in the classroom. Orff Schulwerk is intrinsically related to constructivism, in that children are invited to interact with central concepts of music composition. Yet, the extent to which we apply constructivist principles will measure the success of our teaching of the Schulwerk. Research confirms that “a cooperative classroom atmosphere combined with active, constructivist curriculum results in optimal development and learning.”<sup>2</sup>

### From disequilibrium to discovery

The teacher’s role is to develop instructional experiences allowing children to test their current thinking, find fallacies in that thinking and consequently experience *disequilibrium*, leading to revisions and construction of truth. Constructivist literature is full of examples of creative, intelligent, yet inaccurate conclusions that children develop based upon their experiences.<sup>3</sup> Broadened experience and effective questioning result in more accurate interpretations of phenomena. Thus, the teacher’s challenging role includes “posing problems of emergent interest to students.”<sup>4</sup> “You don’t want to cov-

er a subject, you want to uncover it.”<sup>5</sup>

The ethics of a constructivist classroom include a high regard for student thinking and classroom dialogue. To know the subjective experience of students, teachers must allow them to freely express their thinking on a top-



*“Classroom dialogue allows children to develop multiple representations of knowledge; there may be many ways to solve a problem in math, science, music, writing, or in other content areas,” Pitcairn writes. “The process of listening to the reasoning of other students allows students to consider other solutions, thereby creating more durable knowledge. This process, then, differs markedly from the single-answer approach.”*

ic. Constructivist teachers use knowledge of their students’ current thinking to inform instruction, to understand their questions and misconceptions and to know what is capturing their interest. Student ideas are valued because “we want children to construct the moral conviction that they want to treat others as they wish to be treated.”<sup>6</sup> We also want students to have the sense that their ideas are worthy, and that they bear a measure of responsibility in the community of learners. Classroom dialogue allows children to develop multiple representations of knowledge; there may be many ways to solve a problem in

math, science, music, writing or in other content areas. The process of listening to the reasoning of other students allows students to consider other solutions, thereby creating more durable knowledge. This process, then, differs markedly from the single-answer approach.

With teachers as respectful listeners, constructivist teaching precludes authoritarianism. The teacher intentionally relinquishes authority to encourage student responsibility and autonomy. When there is greater autonomy, “student-to-student interaction is encouraged, cooperation is valued and students’ freedom to chase their own ideas is abundant, students are more likely to take risks and ... accept challenges to their current understandings. Such teacher role models and environmental conditions honor students as emerging thinkers.”<sup>7</sup>

### Using prior knowledge

The notion that all learning should be structured around big ideas and primary concepts is pivotal in constructivist theory. In Orff-Schulwerk practice, learning is elemental. When children are confronted with the big picture, they will begin to break the picture into component parts based upon their prior experiences and conversations with peers. Then they apply their own tools of understanding to make meaning.

In the early-childhood music classroom, a broad topic may be moving in space. Children will generate movements (walk, jog, jump, hop, skip, gallop, crab-walk, etc.), variations on those movements, and sequences of movements. Any number of songs can provide this framework; the important feature is that the invitation is extended and the response valued.

Melchior develops big ideas around “polar conflicts,” such as

"individual/group, fantasy/realism, impulsivity/reflection."<sup>8</sup> In the early-childhood classroom students have many polar opposites to uncover: slow/fast, high/low, long/short, personal space/ general space. Children will construct knowledge around these large concepts in the context of stories which are dramatized (high/low voices); danced (personal space/general space); and accompanied (slow/fast, long/short). By allowing children to make musical decisions around large ideas, they will construct their own musical knowledge around secure structures. When the central concept is a musical element such as pitch, children may devise their own explanations for the relationship between the body scale, a tone ladder or the layout of Orff instruments. They can explain how higher vocal sounds relate to higher places on the body scale or to icons and notes placed on a staff. This is "minds-on" learning, and, like hands-on learning, the level of active engagement predicts the depth of conceptual understanding.

Children add to these secure structures when learning is connected to prior knowledge. It is an integral feature of constructivism teaching to consistently allow children to make connections, creating mental circuitry from prior knowledge and experiences. Topics are regularly introduced with a careful airing of "what we already know." The power of constructivism education is that knowledge can be attained through hands-on interaction with objects, whole bodies engaged in exploration through movement, and minds-on manipulation of ideas. Learners amass structures of knowledge rather than forgettable facts. As the old proverb teaches: "I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand."

Research in cognitive psychology has proven that when knowledge is elaborated, discussed and represented in the mind through experience, memory and recall are enhanced. The actual structures of the brain are likened to pathways. Recall is based upon finding the pathways of knowledge to the desired information. If

children are allowed to hear many explanations of phenomena and construct knowledge by making connections with prior knowledge, then the pathways become more elaborate and recall is more secure. Imagine a network of roads, all of which lead to a certain destination. If one path is blocked many others are accessible. So how is it that we develop the secure acquisition of musical concepts in our primary students?

Eleanor Duckworth, a student of Piaget, has written an article of monumental importance on the topic of constructivism and its manifestations in practice. In "The Having of Wonderful Ideas,"<sup>9</sup> she begins by describing in detail the mental processes of children as they uncover their own scientific discoveries. Whether we are speaking about the individual child or the history of scientific knowledge, there is a clear process of building upon prior understanding. Children who are provided fruitful questions connected to prior knowledge and who have opportunities to explore those questions, will indeed have wonderful ideas.

In the Orff classroom, we provide the instrument, rhythmic idea or tonal set based upon prior learning. We provide the time to explore and create with a high regard for student products. Duckworth believes that "the having of wonderful ideas is . . .

the essence of intellectual development."<sup>10</sup> The key to providing such fruitful contexts is "the right question at the right time."<sup>11</sup> Children will work tenaciously to resolve this "right question" and this engagement leads to authentic intellectual strides.

Recently, in my classroom, the right question was my description of the impending cold of autumn, the reading of an evocative poem, and a question of exploring suitable instrumental timbres to create a sound setting for the piece. "Once the right question is raised, they are moved to tax themselves to the fullest to find an answer."<sup>12</sup>

And how is it that our Orff-Schulwerk students can solve the sound-setting question with such sensitivity, or that our second-graders can create such playful rhythmic responses to our four- or eight-beat questions, or that meaningful rhythmic or melodic ideas are knowingly contributed to a rondo form? "Wonderful ideas," Duckworth reminds us, "do not spring out of nothing."<sup>13</sup> In describing a student's brilliant conclusions with electricity, she instructs us to recall that "the main point to be made here is that in order to have his idea, Hank had to know a lot about batteries, bulbs and wires."<sup>14</sup> Our primary classrooms provide abundant opportunity to feel the beat, discover the surprise of silence, explore



*"The mental processes involved in storing musical facts, versus those involved in manipulating musical ideas, vary in quality by many orders of magnitude in their capacity to develop the child's musical mind," according to Pitcairn. "The development of wonderful ideas depends on providing occasions to have them."*

the length of a phrase or explore melodic motives.

Duckworth recommends "a curriculum with a difference," a program that anticipates children will have abundant ideas of their own, or in our case, letting children make their own music. We take an excerpt out of the *Volumes* and a whole musical event grows out of it. But it begins with a seminal fragment which is the "right question at the right time," creating a fertile context for wonderful ideas. As for training constructivism teachers, Duckworth explains, "first, teachers themselves must learn in the way that the children in their classes will be learning."<sup>15</sup> So, in an innately constructivism style, we move, dance, sing and play our way through Orff trainings and conferences.

Duckworth's central thesis is that 'the having of wonderful ideas' is the essence of intellectual development and that intellectual growth is at its core a creative process. The mental processes involved in storing musical facts, versus those involved in manipulating musical ideas, vary in quality by many orders of magnitude in their capacity to develop the child's musical mind. The development of wonderful ideas depends on providing occasions to have them. The mimetic setting provides few opportunities for wonderful ideas. If an idea happens to appear boldly without an invitation, it may not receive the warm welcome it deserves, and it will visit less frequently. In the constructivism classroom, wonderful ideas are welcomed, nurtured, applauded, and re-invited as

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honored guests.

As we teach for understanding, let us consciously apply this powerful theoretical paradigm to our classroom practices. Our instruction bears all the hallmarks: classroom dialogue and



*"Research in cognitive psychology has proven that when knowledge is elaborated, discussed and represented in the mind through experience, memory and recall are enhanced," explains Pitcairn.*

active experience to develop a rich substrate of knowledge, teaching that focuses on big ideas, shared responsibility for learning in a non-authoritarian context, respect for the child's process and interest in the child's current thinking, assessment inextricably tied to performance, original (creative) departures from the text, and teachers who are appropriately trained through experiencing the process.

If the wildflower is Orff Schulwerk, then the sun and rain are constructivism practices.

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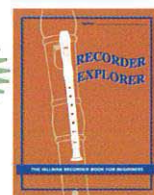
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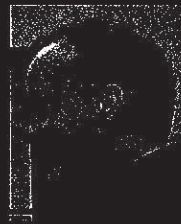
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# Language + movement

## *Fostering steady beat competence in young children*

by Ann McFarland

**F**ew music teachers would disagree with the importance of beat competence as a foundation for music achievement. Steady beat, after all, is the lifeblood of most children's music. Yet, how often have we watched in frustration as our students attempt to play a steady-beat drone on a barred instrument, only to watch them play, instead, faster and faster? What can we do to enable these students to play with a steady beat?

According to Edwin Gordon, every child is born with some level of music aptitude. Gordon says this level is highest at birth and is subject to change, dependent upon the quality of a child's musical environment between birth and approximately age nine. If a child's music aptitude is not bolstered during these early formative years, it will decline. He theorizes that music aptitude comprises a minimum of two subcategories: tonal aptitude and rhythm aptitude. As steady beat is

commonly accepted as the most fundamental aspect of rhythm, informal steady beat experiences provided by parents and caregivers are essential from the first days of life.<sup>1</sup>

In many cultures, children experience rhythmic movement from birth. They are rocked while their mothers sing soothing lullabies; they are carried on their parents' backs as they walk and work. Children from such cultures are not "taught" music as they are in the United States. Instead, they learn to chant, sing, dance and play as active participants in community dancing and music-making, first carried by a parent, and later joining in as they are able.<sup>2</sup>

This is not always true in modern America. In our society of music-consumers (rather than music-makers), some parents are uncomfortable singing and playing rhythmic games with their children. Children often do not participate in community music

making; neither do their parents. In previous generations, music and movement pervaded childhood. Activities such as playing hopscotch, jumping rope, performing partner hand jives, chanting nursery rhymes and singing songs were part of a child's daily routine. Unfortunately, these traditional activities appear to be eroding at an alarming rate. Today, children are spending more time in sedentary activities such as watching television or playing computer games. Biologist and educator Carla Hannaford reports the average American child watches three hours of television per day, and that 25 percent of all American children watch more than six hours per day.<sup>3</sup> Movement specialist Phyllis Weikart reports a steady decline in ability of first-grade students to walk a steady beat, from 34 percent in 1982 to 15 percent in 1990.<sup>4</sup>

### **The speech/movement connection**

It is interesting to note that community music-making within most cultures is not a separate art form, but rather a combination of dance, speech, dramatization, singing and playing of instruments. Carl Orff based his music education approach on such a community model. He saw rhythm as the starting point of all musical experience, and believed that rhythm could be learned best through the combination of movement and speech.<sup>5</sup>

Informed by many research studies, American music educators have known for some time that movement is essential for the development of rhythm accuracy. As early as 1936, the Standard Course of Study (prepared by the National Association of Music Education) included rhythmic movement as an important part of the elementary music curriculum. In contrast, although speech is also used



*"Although children entering kindergarten should be capable of beat competence, many are not," writes McFarland. "To take advantage of entrainment, steady beat movement, both locomotor and non-locomotor, should accompany chanting of rhymes and singing, always starting with movement first to establish the pulse."*

frequently by Orff educators as a starting point for teaching rhythm, it has received less attention from the music education research community. Results of research in other fields suggest the recitation of words aloud improves learning in many circumstances: recall of word lists, recall of visually perceived objects, reading achievement of first-grade students, development of inner speech in young children, and problem-solving.<sup>6</sup>

The phenomenon of *entrainment* was first described in 1665 by Dutch scientist Christiaan Huygens, inventor of the pendulum clock. Huygens noticed that the pendulums of two clocks mounted side by side on a wall appeared to swing at exactly the same time. After conducting several experiments, he determined that the movement of the pendulums was influenced toward synchronic rhythm by tiny impulses in the wall.<sup>7</sup> Twentieth-century scientists have discovered that it takes less energy for oscillators to pulse in cooperation than in opposition.<sup>8</sup>

Three centuries after Huygens, in the early 1960s, William Condon made a startling discovery: *entrainment of gestures and speech*. While conducting a frame-by-frame analysis of a filmed conversation, Condon noticed that the micro-movements of the speaker's body were synchronized with the micro-units of his speech. "All the movements, short and long, following the same beat, linking syllables, words, and phrases to the dance of the body in precise rhythm."<sup>9</sup>

Over the past four decades, the entrainment of speech and movement has been investigated extensively by researchers in fields such as neurophysiology, biomechanics and experimental psychology. Some have investigated the synchronization of the repetition of a single spoken syllable with a repeated finger tap (e.g., steady beat).<sup>10</sup> Each of these studies found that although adult subjects were able to simultaneously speak the syllable and tap a finger while maintaining a constant frequency and amplitude, change of frequency or amplitude of either task resulted in a similar change in the other task. These results demonstrate the existence of

entrainment between speech and movement.

Results of other studies suggest recitation of words aloud improves motor learning for adults. Some found speaking a relevant verbal label superior to speaking non-relevant verbal labels while learning and recalling a motor task. Researchers Braun and Bendig found overt speech (saying words aloud) to be superior to covert speech (thinking the words).<sup>11</sup>

Until recently, scant entrainment research has specifically supported the union of speech and movement when teaching music and movement to children. Results of two studies, one in kinesiology and one in music education, suggest that overt speech can foster rhythmic accuracy. Hamza and Bala<sup>12</sup> found that kindergarten students who chanted a text while learning rhythmic gymnastic routines performed more accurately than students who listened to the text or used no text at all.

A study I conducted suggests that third-grade students who learn body percussion pieces in combination with recitation of words aloud (which are eventually internalized) perform more accurately than students who learn the same pieces without speech. In a suburban school setting, two classes had received music instruction two times weekly since kindergarten. In an urban school setting, students in two classes had received no prior classroom music instruction. Within each school, one class was assigned to *Condition WS* (movement with speech) and the other to *Condition WOS* (movement without

speech). At the end of the 16-week teaching period, students individually performed three body percussion pieces. Videotape-recorded performances were scored by three independent

judges. Movement performances by students in *Condition WS* were significantly rhythmically superior to those by students in *Condition WOS*, regardless of a student's rhythm aptitude or school setting.<sup>13</sup>

Results of Hamza and Bala<sup>14</sup> and my own research<sup>15</sup> suggest that the phenomenon of entrainment between speech and movement can be used to promote rhythmic accuracy when working with children. The following activities take advantage of entrainment to build rhythmic understanding and

accuracy in children from birth through first grade.

### Using entrainment to promote rhythmic accuracy

Two common, steady-beat movement experiences for infants and toddlers are rocking and bouncing. Traditionally, both activities are enhanced by the addition of language – singing while rocking, and chanting while bouncing. Ideally, a live vocal model should provide both, promoting a more intimate bond between caregiver and child, and encouraging the child to explore his own voice.

When bouncing an infant, hold the baby in your lap in such a way that her feet are near your body, and her head is cradled in your hands. The infant experiences a gentle bounce as the your heels tap against the floor on each beat of the rhyme. The *Book of Bounces*<sup>16</sup> is an excellent resource.



"When bouncing an infant, hold the baby on your lap in such a way that her feet are near the your body, and her head is cradled in your hands," advises McFarland. "The infant experiences a gentle bounce as your heels tap against the floor on each beat of the rhyme."

Provide additional steady beat opportunities by chanting a rhyme while holding the child's hands and patting the child's lap (both hands simultaneously), or by holding the child's feet while tapping a flat surface such as a bed, changing table, or floor.

By the time children reach the age of three or four, they should be ready to begin tapping their own steady beat. Because each child has his or her own personal tempo,<sup>17</sup> the child, not the adult, should set the tempo. I have found that a simple discussion about the human heartbeat helps young children comprehend the abstraction of steady beat. After the child begins tapping, the adult should join in tapping with the child. To take advantage of the power of entrainment, chant a single word with each tap. In group situations, the rest of the children should be encouraged to copy the beat of the child leader.

Based on her research, Phyllis Weikart<sup>18</sup> states that it is easiest for children to begin non-locomotor movement (such as patting the lap) using both hands simultaneously, and tapping only on the macrobeats. Weikart has discovered that when young children tap microbeats, they tend to rush. After children are able to tap a steady beat while chanting a single word, they are ready to move to the next level: tapping the beat while chanting a simple nursery rhyme or poem.

Although children entering kindergarten should be capable of beat competence, many are not. To take advantage of entrainment, steady beat movement, both locomotor and non-locomotor, should accompany chanting of rhymes and singing, always starting with movement first to establish the pulse.

First-grade students who have had prior rhythmic

experience should be able to perform both locomotor and non-locomotor steady beat. Unfortunately, in order to meet budgetary shortfalls, some school districts have chosen to eliminate kindergarten music classes. First grade is usually a time when many music teachers begin to add steady-beat instrumental drones to accompany songs. Children are more successful in this activity when body percussion with speech precedes instrument playing.

Children who have achieved beat competency are now capable of playing non-pitched percussion ostinati and barred instrument drones using simple rhythm patterns to accompany songs and chants. The teacher can take advantage of the power of entrainment by creating a spoken text that embodies the essence of the rhythm pattern. Once the pattern is internalized, students playing non-pitched percussion or barred instruments should be encouraged to sing the song or chant the poem, and will be less prone to rushing.

## Summary

- It is never too early to begin informal steady beat experiences with children.
- Music aptitude is a product of nature and nurture.
- A child's music aptitude is never higher than at birth, and will decline if the child does not have appropriate music experiences during the formative years.
- Movement is crucial in the development of beat competence.
- Beat competence is essential for rhythmic learning.
- The addition of language, spoken or sung, to movement improves accuracy of steady beat and rhythmic timing skills.

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Studies in both kinesiology and music education suggest that overt speech can foster rhythmic accuracy.



In many cultures like the Orang Asli of peninsular Malaysia, children chant, sing, dance and play as active participants in community dancing and music making. Photo provided by author.

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John Feierabend, *The book of lullabies* (Chicago, GIA, 2000).

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make them  
think.

- Socrates

# Responding to the ecologies of music making in early childhood

by Lori A. Custodero

*"Sometimes, if you stand on the bottom rail of a bridge and lean over to watch the river slipping slowly away beneath you, you will suddenly know everything there is to be known."*

– Winnie-the-Pooh<sup>1</sup>

It may have been the regular sounds of the water slipping over the rocks that led to Pooh's epiphany. He may have even been swaying in synchronous companionship, perhaps even "having a hum," embodying the continuous flow of energy he saw and heard. Similarly, I imagine the boy described below, poised much like Pooh, experiencing his own epiphany:

"The boy sang, lying on the balcony and watching the beautiful landscape of Taipei Botanical Garden. He seemed so relaxed. I guess the beautiful scenery made him sing. He was not singing a [learned] song, but he was singing his own music. The music was so soft. Then, his mother told them to watch the lotus pool and he stopped to watch for several seconds, and then he continued singing ... I expected his sister to sing ... but she didn't sing with him. Five minutes later, their mother announced it was time to leave."<sup>2</sup>

The boy is accompanying what seems to be a very private moment within this public space: music might be assisting him to create such a secret world where he is "free to know everything there is to be known."

This episode is from the "One Day in Taipei" study, in which student researchers and I spent a full day in a variety of child-friendly locales of one city (restaurants, museums, parks, shopping centers) documenting the spontaneous music making of young children. We were curious about the function of music for children in

everyday life. Here, the boy is accompanying what seems to be a very private moment within a public space: music might be assisting him to create such a secret world where he is "free to know everything there is to be known."

What might such observations tell us about how to teach music in classroom settings? By looking at homes, public places and classrooms as *ecologies*, the focus is on relationships between the individual and the environment. By studying multiple ecologies, we can interpret the relationships between settings in terms of what children bring to and take from them.

Examples from research and teaching are used, starting with the ecology of homes and the music educational experiences of infants, toddlers and their first music teachers – parents, caregivers and siblings. In public



*"Observing children at play with music reveals what I have called their indigenuity – their ways of constructing music that emanate from a natural sense of wonder," writes Custodero.*

spaces and classrooms children learn from each other, as well as from the significant adults and accessible mate-

rial resources. These elemental experiences are basic and fundamental to the understanding of how we naturally integrate music.

Musical beginnings occur within the ecology of home and family, where infants' and toddlers' educational experiences are delivered by their first music teachers; parents, caregivers, and siblings. Additional music making may be observed in public spaces and ultimately in classrooms, where children learn from each other, as well as the significant adults and material resources accessible. These elemental experiences are basic and fundamental to the understanding of how we naturally integrate music.

To capture the playful spirit and the essential wisdom of childhood, I begin each section with an excerpt from

*Pooh's Little Instruction Book*. I hope the broad appeal of the characters invite broad interpretations of the ideas they introduce.

## **Music in the home: Learning to listen, listening to learn**

*"It's so much more friendly with two."*

– Piglet<sup>3</sup>

Music interactions in infancy are crucial to learning how to be in the world. Duets sung by infants and caregivers – the "friendly two" – have been studied across cultures; findings indicate the musical qualities of vocalizations used with infants are more universal than the associated movement practices or song texts,

which may be more-culture-specific.<sup>4</sup> The higher-pitched, wide-ranging and more focused tone is common,

helping people recognize whether a baby is present or not when a mother sings, even if the mother is from a culture different from the listener.<sup>5</sup> Such focus was evident when Amanda, a student, applied these findings to an action-research project in her kindergarten music class. She recorded children singing a familiar lullaby under typical classroom conditions, then asked the children to sing the lullaby to a real baby. The tone for the second performance was much clearer and more accurate, with more dramatic interpretation.

The melodies and rhythms of infant-directed speech constitute what Trevarthen and Malloch call "communicative musicality."<sup>6</sup> In this reciprocal process, the vocalizations of mothers and infants can be metrically analyzed; they form a predictable turn-taking sequence involving mutual imitation and responsiveness. Such dialogue is motivated by shared intention, a quality supported by our national study on families with infants, which found that most parents sang or played music for social-emotional reasons.<sup>7</sup>

Musical parenting changes in response to development: the intimate, emotionally based interactions of infancy give way to a more didactic approach to singing with toddlers.<sup>8</sup> To describe their interactions with their 4- to 8-month-old infants, parents used terms such as "bonding," "enjoyment" and "calming."

One parent shared: "When a good song comes on, it makes you feel good and you grab the baby and dance. When I hear a song I like, I feel good, and I guess that feeling is transferred to the baby."

Describing their interactions with older infants (12- to 16-month-olds) the words parents used were more skills-based, and often include other "educators" such as siblings:

"My 3-year-old daughter was also brought up with a lot of music and she just loves to sing and dance," said another parent. "Now, my 1-year-old daughter loves to watch her sister sing and dance, tries to imitate her, and smiles and laughs when her sister

sings to her."

Trevarthen interprets this imitative urge as an invitation to dialogue. In researching musical practices in families, we found evidence that this imitative character may exist past infancy, maintaining the early promise of reciprocity.<sup>9</sup> Parents of three-year-old chil-



*"Observations of young children reveal the use of music and especially their movement, to structure experience," Custodero writes.*

dren provided diary reports indicating the use of spontaneous song to accompany everyday activities ("Let's go to the pa-ark!"). Inasmuch as this practice is well documented in young children's play<sup>10</sup> perhaps parents are responding to their child's natural musicality in the elaboration of these routines and rituals.

Listening and being listened to, the outcomes of which build relationships, characterize the ecology of home musical environments. In the spirit of responsive mutuality, parents and children learn through this process, creating a shared repertoire of sounds and actions that are meaningful to personal growth and development.

### **Music in public places: Making sense through sound and movement**

*"Poetry and Hums aren't things which you get, they're things which get you. And all you can do is to go where they can find you."*

— Winnie-the-Pooh<sup>11</sup>

Pooh understands the relationship between music-making and place. Environments motivate sounds, through association with specific events or people and also through the available resources for making music, such as objects as instruments and people as performance partners. Children are responsive to stimulating sensory images and types of space in the immediate environment. They are also responsive to experiences inspiring melodies and rhythms, and to spaces that facilitate movement-generated sound.<sup>12</sup> Music functions for young children in much the same way as it does for infants; it brings comfort and stability. A lullaby complemented with motion comforting a baby transitions in childhood to the self-induced comfort and stability of spontaneous song, chant or rhythmic tapping, especially in public places where there is less familiarity and a need to make order from what is perceived as unknown.

To demonstrate, I offer two episodes in which children engage in similar musical behaviors. The first takes place on public transportation in New York City, and is from my collection of personal observations featuring children's music-making in everyday life:

In a subway, late afternoon, I jump on the C train, ready to notice the subtle music-making that usually provides accompaniment to my ride. Today, it is not so subtle. A young girl, looking to be about 5 or 6 years old, is inventing a hand-clapping game with her companion, perhaps her father or brother. They are singing "Do Re Mi" from *The Sound of Music*, and she is clearly the leader. He follows, but offers his own ideas; he wants to make the song into a canon. They collaborate, attempting to negotiate entry points. The child is giggling with each iteration of the tune, and as she continues her efforts, he continues his support. The duo has attracted the attention of everyone in the general vicinity. We look at one another and smile in acknowledgment of the joy that has been initiated by the child, then thoughtfully supported by her adult companion.

Here, the primary musical resources are an attentive adult willing to interact and a shared repertoire. The activity is sustained through increasing challenges in the song's execution, the surrounding community supports the interaction through silent approval and non-intervention. This social support is coupled with intellectual support found within the task itself, which provides opportunity for skill development through mastery of the game.

The second episode involves similar musical behaviors in a different ecological context. In this case, recorded by Amanda [a student] observes interactions on the school playground:

"I am watching [the kindergarten students at recess] play from my window [in the classroom]. There is a small group of girls who are playing hand games (pat-a-cake) together and chanting rhymes that I do not recognize. As they play, Natasha is dancing from pair to pair sprinkling what appears to be imaginary pixie dust on their heads. They are chanting 'Cinderella, dressed in yella (sic).' It is interesting that she is joining in with their singing, but choosing her own imaginary episode of involvement. I think she is imagining herself as Cinderella!"

Here, the primary resources are a community of peers, who also have a shared repertoire. The activity itself generates possibilities. Natasha invents her role as facilitator, sprinkling "pixie dust" on the performers. In addition to the growth represented in mastery of the hand-clapping challenge, she has created a character, growing the game into a narrative and motivating others to participate based on the action made necessary by story.

Children's music making in public spaces occurs not only in collaboration with others, but also in *simpatico* with the physical conditions of the immediate setting. In a Taipei museum, a young girl's glee at being able to leave one room of paintings was demonstrated in her rhythmic chant "go, go, go go ..." an accompaniment to her walking from the room, swinging her mother's hand. In an art museum in New York City I observed a

*The Orff Echo - Spring 2007*

young girl twirling around, the only inhabitant of the spacious room; she exemplified *entrainment*, aligning her sweeping movements to the generous allotment of space as she embodied the images portrayed on the walls.

By making sense through sound and movement, children attune themselves to the people and physical properties of their environments. Using music as a tool for adaptation, children can either familiarize the unknown or add complexity to the mundane. Observations of children in public places reveal their agency - their abilities to metaphorically go where poetry and hums may find them.

### **Music in the Early Childhood classroom: The responsive curriculum**

*"Don't underestimate the value of Doing Nothing, of just going along, listening to all the things you can't hear, and not bothering."*

- Winnie-the-Pooh<sup>13</sup>

When we speak of how to teach, we are speaking of listening and responding to those we provide instruction. Following the advice of Pooh, we might value the types of listening which too often remain hidden from our mind's eye (or ear). Pooh advises to listen and do nothing, allowing reflection to inform what we know and lead to epiphanies of understanding. In the *ecologies* of family life and everyday life outside the home, we find much to consider: the social and reciprocal nature of music making, the sympathetic orientation to environmental sounds and space, the expression of music and movement as intertwined and the invitation to transform, implicit in the materials children choose to sing and play.

Schulwerk creators Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman listened to children, as do contemporary teachers using the approach. The evidence lies in the familiar tenets of Orff-Schulwerk:

*Elemental Music:* Observing children at play with music reveals what I have called their *indigenuity* - their ways of constructing music that emanate from a natural sense of wonder.<sup>14</sup> Through our own pedagogical

attunement to the elemental in music and in children's ways of being we can be truly responsive.

*Interdependence of Music and Movement:* Movement is a natural response and an initiator for music-making; it is at the very core of musical meaning for young children. Researcher Edith Cobb equates this phenomenon with learning:

"In childhood the cognitive process is essentially poetic because it is lyrical, rhythmic, and formative in a generative sense; it is sensory integration of self and environment, awaiting verbal expression. The child "knows," or recognizes in these moments that he makes his own world and that his body is a unique instrument where the powers of nature and human nature meet."<sup>15</sup>

*Attraction of Musical Forms:* Observations of young children reveal the use of music and especially their movement, to structure experience. Infants readily note the beginning and ending of musical stimuli through changes in eye contact or head-turning. They anticipate phrases in familiar songs and chants by anticipating movement changes that coincide with the musical changes. By presenting musical forms comprised of predictable parts allows children to challenge themselves, to hypothesize, to test the hypothesis (the return of the A section in a rondo) with "re-cognizable" feedback.

*Improvisation:* Just like jazz musicians in a certain club with a certain combo, people and settings affect the types of improvisations children create. Research on play (noted) indicates that if a child is singing alone, the singing tends to be tonally and rhythmically free. When a child is using singing communicatively in social settings, it is more metrically patterned, syllabic, and repetitive. Such characterization has implications for the types of improvisation children are asked to perform.

Music in early childhood is social and it is expressive. It is used to attune to others and to the environment. As teachers of early childhood music we are called to be receptive and responsive to the children we



"Listening and being listened to, the outcomes of which build relationships, characterize the ecology of home musical environments," according to Custodero.

educate. Observing young children outside the classroom provides reminders of how they are naturally musical and sensitive to context. It allows the spirit of inquiry to inform and reinforce practice. By developing habits of self-reflection, we, like Winnie-the-Pooh in the opening scene, can look into that river and suddenly know all there is to know.

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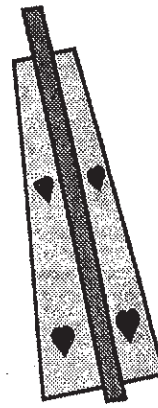
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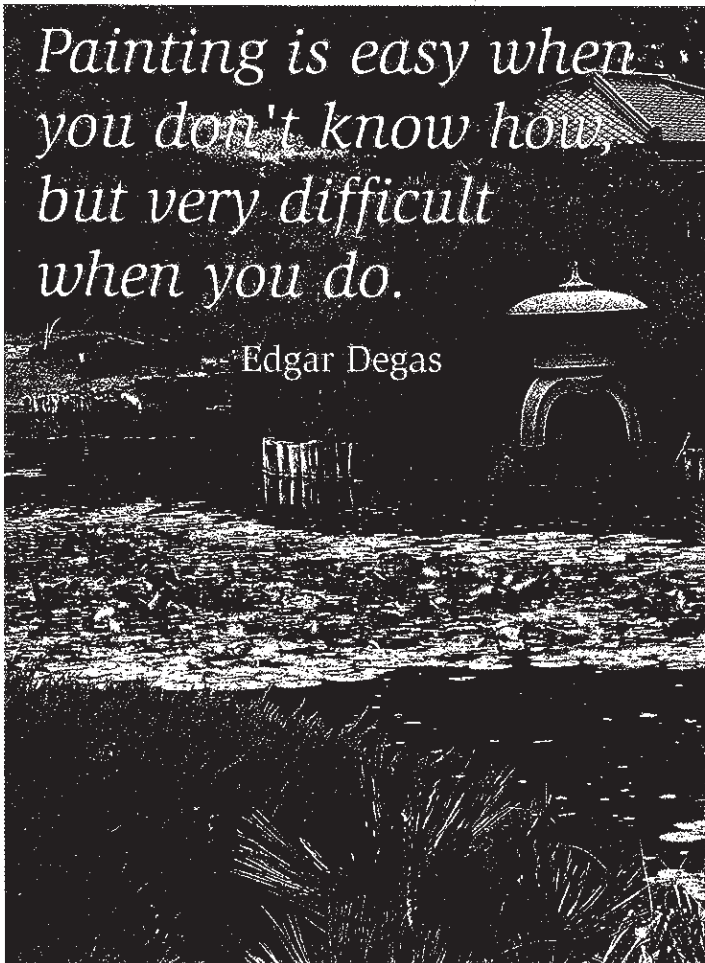
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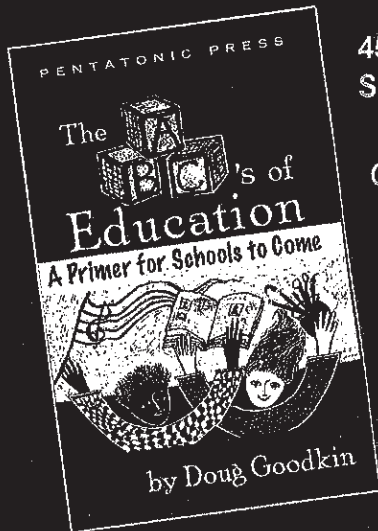


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- Oliver Wendell Holmes

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# From the classroom

## Plant a seed and watch it grow

by Heidi Tzortzis

*Like an enthusiastic gardener, I plant 'seeds' with heart and soul.*

I'm like a gardener who plants a little seed in a child's life and is privileged to watch it grow. My challenge is to create a welcoming and trusting garden where each child can bloom. I seek to balance teacher-directed activities with opportunities for children to experiment on their own through the processes of imitation, exploration, improvisation and literacy. What contributes to creating a safe environment in which this process can flourish? The schedule outlined below helps organize the time to facilitate improvisation and the spontaneous expressions of young children.

A greeting song welcomes children to music class, builds community and helps them focus on the coming excitement. From a repertoire of greeting and welcoming songs in many languages, I choose the one best for the moment: calming, focusing, encouraging or stimulating (See Figures 1 to 3).

While the children are still fresh and focused, we work on seasonal

songs, rhymes, finger plays or poems. I convey dramatically my total involvement in each song, poem or movement exploration. That way, the children respond with the same active engagement as they continue the play, happily adding antics of their own design. If a song is complex, we work in sections, repeating the part as a bee, a wolf, a fairy, a child falling asleep, etc. Imagination keeps rehearsal fresh and fun. Slowly and intentionally, I groom the voice by filling my imaginary basket with special sounds which I "blow" (hum) to each of the children, asking them to catch that specific sound. I can quickly assess who can hear a sound and reproduce it and who needs more playful activities to improve in that domain.

Next we develop songs that have meaning, are age-appropriate and fun and perhaps relate to an ongoing classroom project. I make sure the children understand what they are singing about. For example, the children are sensitive to the melancholy

Figure 1 Hello, Bonjour

### Hello, Bonjour

Heidi Tzortzis

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in the key of D major (two sharps) and common time. It begins with a repeat sign. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are: Hel - lo, Bon - jour, Good morn - ing to you. May Let's sing and play and have a good day. Come peace on and joy and share and fun be with you. spec - ial way.

quality of the autumn atmosphere and become quite serious when singing about it. We discuss the fascinating flight of migrating geese and learn about their amazing behavior and organization. We also experience the triangular position of flying, shown first with bean bags on the floor, then in movement with changing of the lead goose in a flock.

It is rewarding to observe and nurture a child's kinesthetic development. Even a 3-year old will demonstrate the wisdom of Carl Orff: music *is* movement and movement, music. As soon as a little one hears a drum beat, xylophone improvisation, or recorded music, she moves, adapting to the tempo and dynamics. Then, when it stops, she giggles with glee!

In class, to make movement fun and interesting, I wake the "sleeping" children with a fairy wand and transform them into cats that prowl around, feed on milk, catch mice, groom themselves and "fall asleep" again. They are transformed anew into soaring eagles by the fairy. We widen our knowledge about animal behavior and their interesting movements by reading beautiful, informative books. In this way, we build a



*"Movement inspired by props (scarves, hula hoops, streamers, mechanical toys, jump ropes, bean bags, balls) leads to amazing improvisation," explains Tzortzis. "We use different types of paper, stones, building blocks and other items to inspire movement."*

bridge between disciplines.

Movement inspired by props (scarves, hula hoops, streamers, mechanical toys, jump ropes, bean bags, balls) leads to amazing improvisation. We use different types of

paper, stones, building blocks and other items to inspire movement. Hula hoops are favorites with the little ones. They can form a circle on the floor for the children to move over forward, backward, sideways, while

**Figure 2** *When the Birds Fly South*

## When the Birds Fly South

Heidi Tzortzis



When the birds fly south and the wind blows cool and the green on the trees turns red; And the



days grow shorter and the nights grow long, and Jack Frost freezes grass dead, The



summer is gone and autumn has come to prepare us for winter's white spread.



*"It is rewarding to observe and nurture a child's kinesthetic development," writes Tzortzis. "Even a two-and-a-half-year old will demonstrate the wisdom of Carl Orff: music is movement and movement, music."*

running, walking, jumping or moving to the accompanying drum beat. Older children show their musical growth when they attempt to jump through the hoop using a specific rhythm pattern.

All children love time for free play. The hoop can be a pizza, a bicycle wheel, a moon held up high, a lawn mower, a helicopter, etc. There is no end to their fantasy and improvisation. For instance, students can sit in a hula hoop and pretend it is a musical elevator. As the melody climbs up the scale, both the child and "elev-

ator" rise. What joy to look around in the "toy store on the eighth floor" (to the sound of a continuous high note). But be aware of mechanical troubles: the elevator may suddenly plunge down and with it, the melody!

Recently a class of 5-year-old students was interested in shapes. They formed triangles, squares, circles, and then, different letters. They began with solo work, then moved to having partners. Finally, at the end they all joined together to form the shape of ... a paper clip!

How can you measure this growth? Circle games, singing games and folk dances strengthen not only motor skills but also the feeling of belonging and working together, thus adding to the child's social growth. The ending ritual helps maintain a sense of community. We often sit around the instruments or props used in class, arranged in a creative way, then sing our ending song. Older children reflect and talk about the "seeds" that have been planted during class.

Like an enthusiastic gardener, I plant "seeds" with heart and soul. A personal goal has been implanting in my students a "Love for Peace" through song and dance (see Figure 3). This is the most important message our children should claim and carry into their lives. The youngest students in our school often lead in a peace song when asked to sing the school song. May it grow through the world.



*Heidi Tzortzis trained in Europe as an occupational therapist and music educator. Certified in Orff Schulwerk, she has been teaching music, movement and storytelling at a private preschool and daycare center in San Francisco for 21 years. She has also presented workshops and seminars in the United States and Europe.*

**Figure 3** *Peace Song*

## Peace Song

Anonymous

Peace is the world smi-ling. Peace is a gen-tle dove. Peace is shar-ing.

6  
peace is car-ing, peace is fil-ling the world with love.

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*Every  
child is an  
artist.  
The problem  
is to remain  
an artist while  
the child  
grows up.*

– Pablo Picasso

*The life  
I touch for good or  
ill will touch  
another life,  
and that  
in turn another,  
until who knows  
where the  
trembling stops or  
in what far place  
my touch will  
be felt.*

– Frederick Buechner



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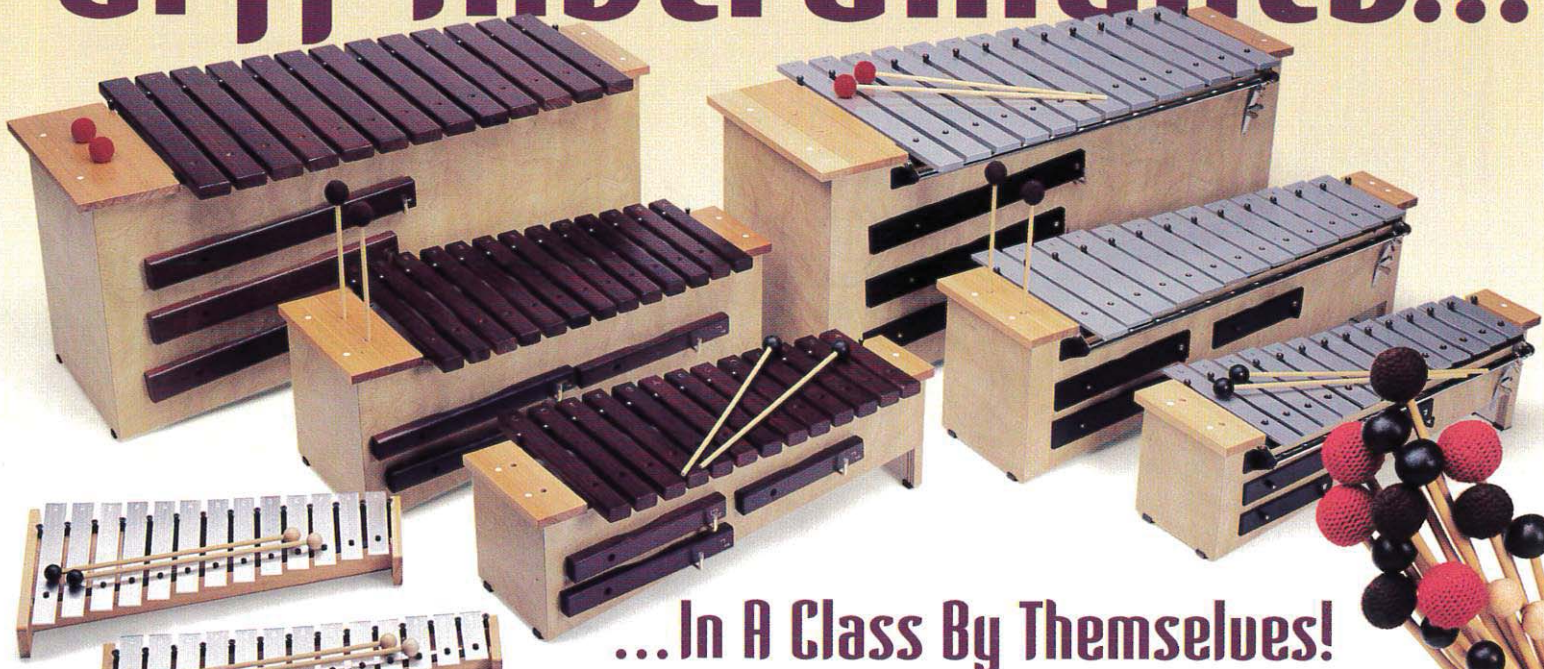
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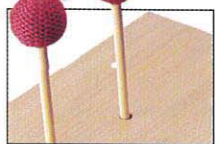
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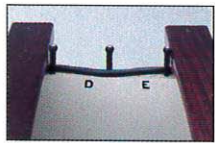
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# Healthy techniques for singing

Presented by Brenda Smith  
AOSA AV Library: 144BS (DVD only)



Reviewed by  
Beth Iafigliola

**T**he voice is finite, explained Brenda Smith, Ph.D., a lyric soprano who teaches studio voice, diction and vocal pedagogy at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

"As music teachers, we qualify as professional voice-users," she said. "We are vocal athletes.

"Your voice communicates your soul," she added.

This 2005 AOSA National Conference session, videotaped in Birmingham, Ala., reminded music teachers to consider the consequences of their daily activities and to make a conscious effort to preserve their own health and the health of their students.

"As teachers, we model, for good or ill, vocal techniques every time we stand before students and sing or speak," Smith explained.

Before 1982, anecdotal evidence and personal example set the style for vocal coaching. Technological advance in modern instruments required a change in practice. In 2000, Smith received the Van Lawrence award recognizing achievement in voice science and pedagogy. In the session notes, Smith listed two current resources for further study.

The session continued with an overview of the basics of singing. Smith led participants in a body warmup. After stimulating their various muscle groups through movement and imaginary images, she guided the group to achieve a relaxed, upright posture, with the weight of the body resting on the balls of the feet. She encouraged participants to open their

arms wide and reach out to the side. With squared shoulder, arms outstretched and hands rotated up to the sun, each one slowly lowered their arms while maintaining upright singing posture.

The next step was breathing exercises. Smith guided the group to pant like puppies, mimicking the "dough boy" seen on television commercials. Next, they played with lung capacity by exhaling and continuing to expel remnants of air left in the lungs. By learning to measure the breath, the singer relaxes, having enough air for all the words of the phrase. There is always more air, Smith confirmed.

"As Thomas Cleveland said," Smith pointed out, "We live in an ocean of air."

Smith, who teaches at the University of Florida, joked about the prevalence of mosquitoes in that state. She asked participants to mimic the insect's whine while adding vowel changes. She called the singer's formant the "mosquito spot." The placement of the sound in the head, the position of the tongue, and the relaxation of the jaw and lips only add to the vocal quality.

In parting remarks, Smith warned participants not to abuse their voices. When speaking to the class, she said, try to add melody and lightness to the voice, rather than speaking in a lower pitch range. Do not yell, clear your throat or violate the vocal margin, she cautioned, and drink water often.

She ended the session warning that while the voice will heal, it will not regenerate. The voice lesson ends with words of encouragement and hope. Take care of this precious gift — your voice.

## Related AOSA AV Library materials on developing singing techniques:

- 102BB **Barbara Baker** "Singing Black Gospel, You Can do It, Too!"
- 48MW **Isabel Carley** "Speech Play: The Magic of Words"
- 48SS **Isabel Carley** "Speech Play: From Speech to Song"
- 131DG **Denise Gagne** "Let's Get Them Singing"
- 62DJ **David Jorlett** "Vocal/Choral Techniques for the Developing Voice"
- 111AK **Ann Kay** "It Ain't Over 'Til the Students Sing in Tune (and in Parts)"
- 12SR **Helen Kemp** "Sing and Rejoice - Guiding Young Singers"
- 12BM **Helen Kemp** "Body, Mind, Spirit, Voice - Developing the Young Singer"
- 99US **Sevilla Morse** "The Uncertain Singer"
- 104SN **Silvia Nakkach** "Building a Systematic Repertoire of Educational Songs and Vocal Practices" (experiential vocalizations and vocal styles of world cultures)
- 137JS **Julie Scott** "Play It and Sing It, Too!"
- 90CE **Marilyn Wood** "Choral Music for Children in the Elemental Style"

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there is music.*

— Norm Goldberg, MMB Music Founder

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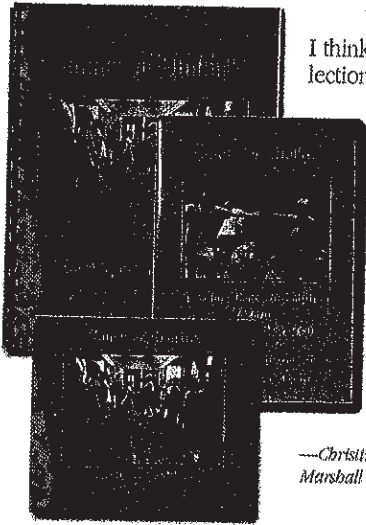
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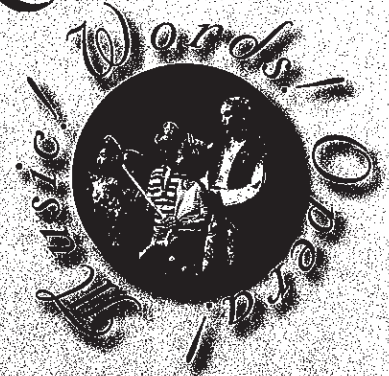
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The Pirate Queen. Photo courtesy of Vancouver Opera.

# All the Pretty Little Horses

Illustrated by Linda Saport  
Clarion Books 1999



Reviewed by  
Jennifer Shank

**A**ll the Pretty Little Horses is a traditional lullaby with unclear origins. It is thought to have its roots in the rural South, spreading throughout the United States the last 150 years. Several Internet sites host ongoing discussions of its meaning. There are indications the lullaby was once sung to the master's child by a slave as she listened to the cries of her own baby left alone. The reference to cakes and pretty horses allude to all the things not afforded to a slave's child. Some of the other lyrics associated with this song (but not found in this particular book) carry a darker element. In one version of the song, there is mention of the loss of the lamb's eyes and his subsequent cries after they had been plucked out. That version might not sit well with the pre-kindergarten set, yet it's worth noting to give context to the melancholy of the song.

This version of *All the Pretty Little Horses* must have been chosen by the illustrator for its rich word painting and imagery. Linda Saport's illustrations in the book are breathtaking. She uses pastels and soft lines to create a dreamy state between awake and asleep. Each two-measure phrase has a separate picture, and each picture evokes a sense of calm and wonder. The beautiful imagery also sets the tone of love, quiet and tranquility. The colors are soft, inviting and interesting to even the youngest of children.

The book can be read or sung depending on the use.

At the pre-kindergarten level,

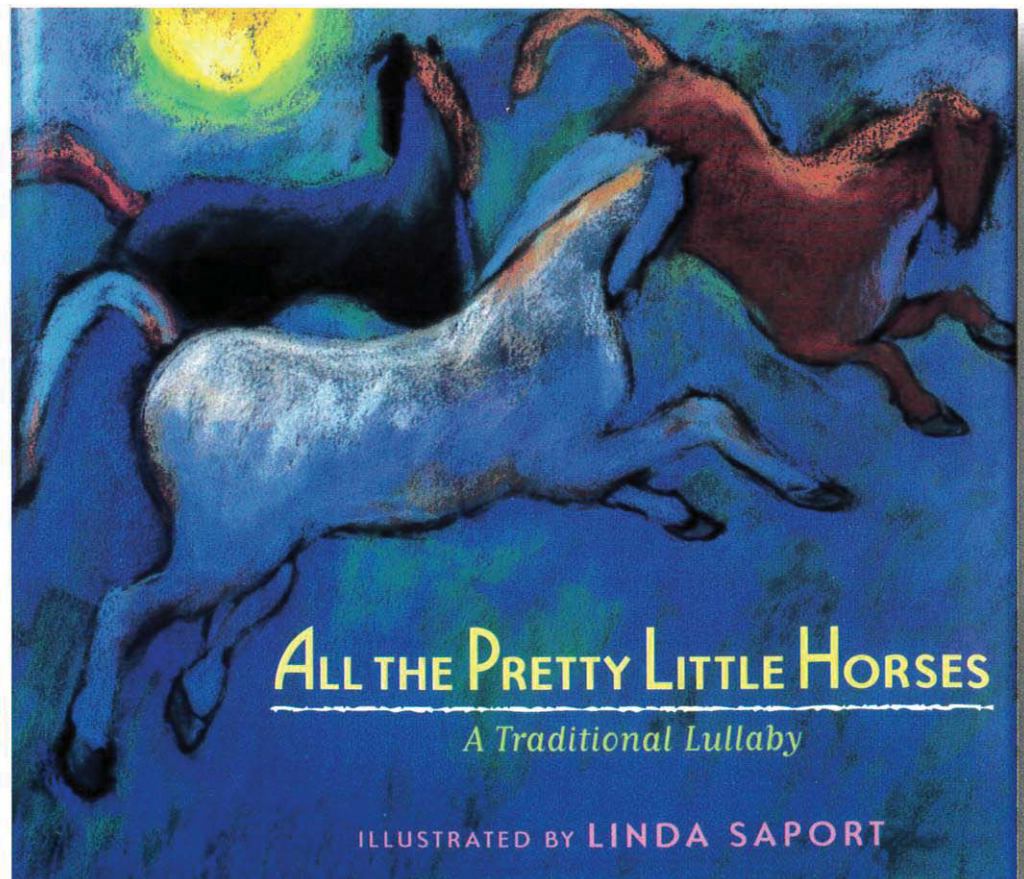
it's not only a wonderful "lap time" book, but children can be encouraged to learn the song by rote. They can use movement to explore its word painting, or they can participate in dramatic play, acting out some of the song's phrases. The song, along with simple accompaniment, is included on the last page so it can be performed using piano, recorder, and guitar or arranged for Orff Instruments.

The book and lullaby can also play a part in elementary curriculum. The lullaby itself offers an opportunity to open sociological and historical discussions about African-American culture, how songs are passed aurally through generations, and specifically

what resources children had, depending on when and where they were raised. Often times, elementary school children have a tough time with historical and social contexts foreign to their own lives. Talking about the horse and cake in the song may help them know how children born into slavery were not permitted to have luxuries like cake.

This small but mighty book holds many teaching opportunities between its 32 pages. It is a must for any early childhood library and also has a place in elementary grade classrooms.

Write Shank at:  
[Jennifer.Shank@usm.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Shank@usm.edu)



# Handsprings

Poems and paintings by Douglas Florian  
Greenwillow Books, 2006



Reviewed by  
Nancy Glen

Spring may come every year, but we never tire of the excitement and promise it brings. New plants, animals and warming weather signal the renewal of the life cycle and our release into the outdoors after a long, cold winter. Douglas Florian's delightful book is a compilation of 48 poems about this wonderful season. His child-like paintings accompany them, each showing activities the poetry describes, such as spring cleaning, bike riding, berry picking and nature walks. The poems are organized to flow from the end of winter to the approach of the warm summer months. The book is one of several written by Florian, but most notably it is a companion book to his other seasonal titles: *Winter Eyes*, *Summersaults*, and *Autmnbings*.

The joy of this book is in the way Florian plays with colorful, active words in each poem, giving readers a sense of movement, inviting their imaginary, if not actual, participation. For example, "When Winter" has a simple text: "When winter winds wind down and end/Then spring is coming round the bend./When winter ice begins to thaw/Then spring is knocking at the door./When winter snow is nowhere found/Then spring, you know, has come to town." The poem provides an excellent springboard to launch a rondo-form performance, including improvisational movement, a speech piece and instrumental ostinati to accompany the reading of the poem.

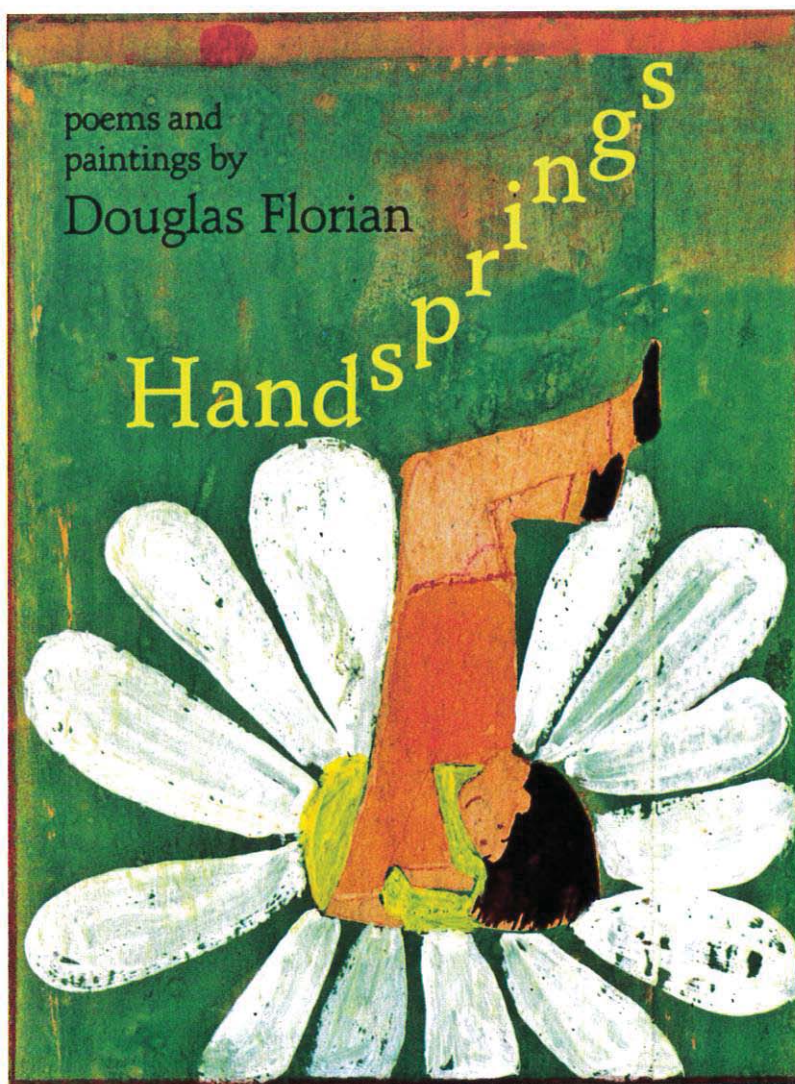
The book is a visual treat, with the poems arranged on pages in different styles of organization. "Spring" provides a narrow, vertical list of what spring "does" with colorful verbs

including singing, stinging, zooming and blooming. One of the most visually appealing layouts is for the poem, "Rain Reign," presenting all the words in vertical sentences, like sheets of rain falling from the sky.

The book's inviting design draws a child into the text. It is attractive, engaging and provides ample material in every poem for a teacher to use in developing rhythmic and improvisational activities for the classroom. Its gentle, contemplative encourages the

reader to experience the sights, sounds and feel of spring in an original offering. In the book-jacket notes, Florian explains that his collection of poems and paintings "captures the freshness and promise of spring, whether it comes in like a lion or lamb." Yet the true promise of this book is the wealth of opportunities it provides for enjoyment of the beautiful spring season!

Write Glen at:  
[nglen@csusb.edu](mailto:nglen@csusb.edu)



# Reclaiming Childhood

by William Crain • Owl Books, 2003



Reviewed by  
David Thaxton

“Why does she do that?” my wife asks with more than a hint of exasperation as our 6-year-old daughter, seated in the back seat of the car, repetitively intones a nonsense chant of her own creation.

“I don’t know; she must be working on something,” I reply as the repetitions climb into the hundreds and our nerves slowly disintegrate.

Indeed, it is serious work, though she is not doing it to annoy us (maybe), nor is she doing it to score better on a test, outperform her peers in schoolwork or get into an Ivy League school.

In his book *Reclaiming Childhood*, author and developmental psychologist William Crain, Ph. D., draws from Rousseau, Montessori, Piaget, Gardner and others to show a perspective of the achievement-oriented environment insistently pushed upon today’s children, and the harm it does. His central tenet is that our society has grown increasingly obsessed with “the future;” we have placed such a powerful emphasis on adult-centered education that we have lost sight of the vitality and importance of child-centered education and parenting. By focusing solely upon how children will perform in the future, parents and educators fail to meet their present intellectual needs. The result is that we have overly stressed children, burned-out from the relentless push for high-scoring academic performance. If, instead, we give children time and space, they will naturally and vigorously explore the world their own way. In so doing, they will develop remarkable skills, deep understandings and a life-long love and

thirst for learning.

At first glance, *Reclaiming Childhood* seems like an odd reading choice for music educators. Written primarily for parents, Crain deftly explores the natural affinities of children in drama, art, poetry, language and their connection with the natural world. While he makes no mention of musical capacity, Orff practitioners will likely draw profound conclusions from reading the book, as the ideas parallel our own realm of child-centered musical experience.

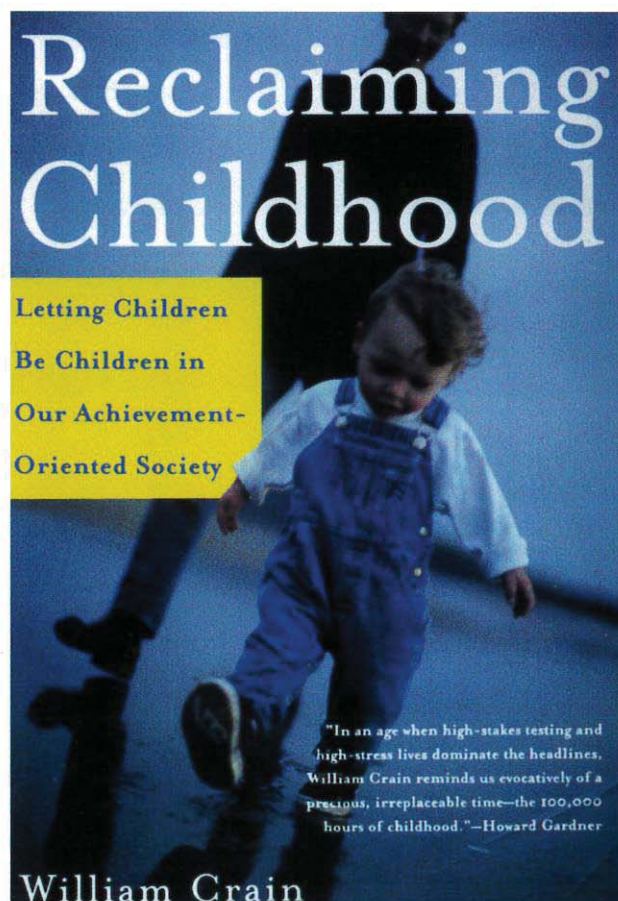
In the latter portions of the book, Crain implores parents and educators to rethink the widespread push for standards and to reconsider the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act. He asks critical questions about children’s increasing exposure to computers, television and video games in the home and classroom. Additionally, his articulate arguments through the book are a valuable resource for all advocates of child-centered education.

In my own Orff Levels teacher training, Judith Cole gave me a powerful bit of advice I have heard echoed many times since: “Take time to just watch your students – they will show you exactly what they need to

learn.” Whether a child is jumping and dancing his way down the hall, silently contemplating bug, or rehearsing *ad nauseam* a chant in the back seat of the car, we do a great service by giving him the space to explore these elements of his being. *Reclaiming Childhood* is a timely call to reevaluate the way we raise and educate children, and a stimulating read for anyone who strives to understand children for what they are: *children*.

David Thaxton serves on *The Orff Echo* Editorial Board.

Write Thaxton at:  
[yoteech@sbcglobal.net](mailto:yoteech@sbcglobal.net)



# Ninna Nanna

## Lullabies (ca. 1500–2002)

Montserrat Figueras  
AliaVox (AV9826)



Reviewed by  
Marjie  
Van Gunten

According to the liner notes, singer Montserrat Figueras believes lullabies are "...food for the young child." While this exquisite feast of music would make a perfect gift for new parents, it is not for children only. Spanning 500 years of lullabies, the recording includes songs from Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East. It also represents a variety of composers, including William Byrd, Max Reger, Darius Milhaud, Modest Mussorgsky and Arvo Pärt.

Most wonderful about this recording is the artful arrangement of the music. Selections are not ordered chronologically, but rather appear to have been sequenced to offer a contrast in style and tonality to demonstrate the wide diversity within the genre. Aesthetics of language, lovingly passed along from generations, also come into play. There are texts in more than 12 languages, including lyrics by Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca.

Yet within this diversity, there are universal threads to be discovered. Each language seems to have its own version of onomatopoeic sounds to soothe a baby: *nana-nana* in Portuguese, *eya eya* in Latin, *bayou bay* in Russian. The repetitive rhythms indicate the songs are meant for rocking and swaying, until a baby falls asleep.

In contrast, adults will be exhilarated by the passionate singing of Figueras and the sensitive accompaniment by Hesperion XXI (under the direction of her husband, Jordi

Savall). Accompaniments are authentic to the cultural source of the song (with instruments such as *oud*, *santur*, *pandero*) as well as its historical context (transverse flute, psalterium, viol). Figueras uses her voice to move smoothly from folk to classical. She adds delightful little lifts at the end of phrases in a Greek lullaby, and perfect lyrical phrasing in a Max Reger piece. The soaring countermelody in "Kuus, Kuus Kallike" (composed by Arvo Pärt for the album) showcases the expressive style and sweeping range in her voice.

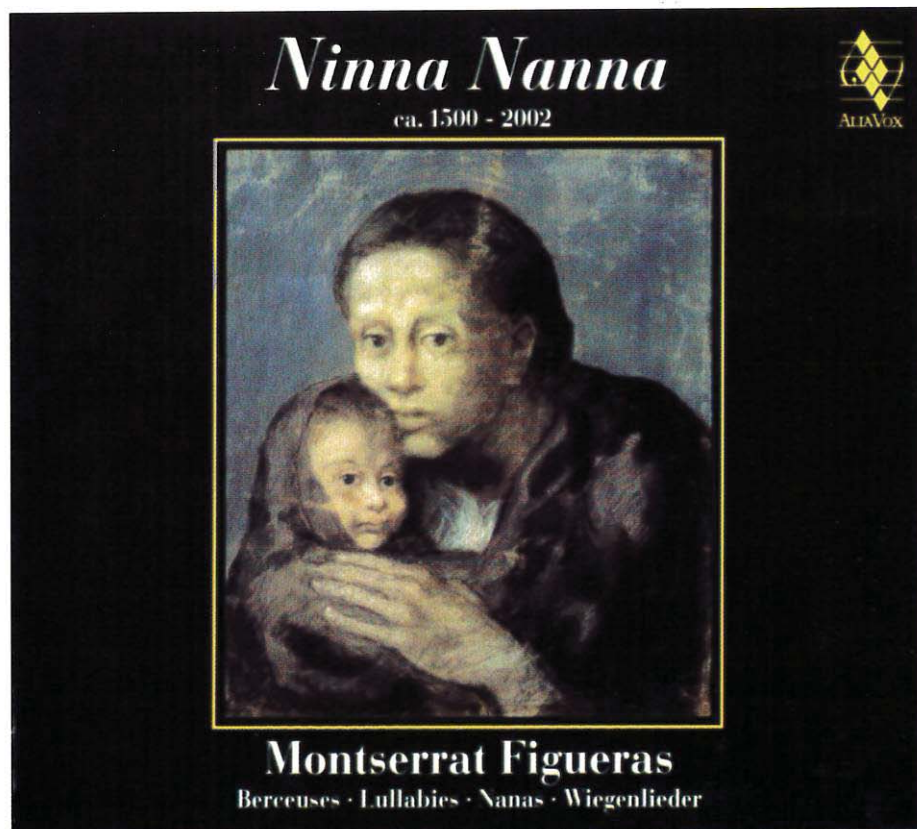
The accompanying booklet includes translations in eight languages (including the original) of the lyrics for each song. It also offers extensive informa-

tion on style, cultural context, a short history on the lullaby genre, photographs of recording sessions and a reproduction of a handwritten score by Avro Pärt.

Many of the lullabies in this collection are quite long, and few are likely to make their way into your personal repertoire. However, listening to them is better than nap time for an adult. Lucky is the child who grows up listening to these gems.

Marjie Van Gunten serves on *The Orff Echo* Editorial Board.

Write Van Gunten at:  
[marjiev@mindspring.com](mailto:marjiev@mindspring.com)



Index of Advertisers	
Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.	1
American Drum	25
Backyard Music	49
Beatin' Path Publications Ltd.	49
Belmont University	58
Bridgewater State College	44
Carnegie Mellon School of Music	28
Choristers Guild	38
Creative Motion Alliance	44
DePaul University School of Music	44
Hal Leonard Publishing Corp.	5
Hal Leonard Publishing Corp. (Schott)	25
Jazz Course	44
J.D. Wall Publishing Company	49
John's Music Center	50
Kids' MusicRound	54
Macmillan/McGraw-Hill	7
MMB Music - Studio 49	57
Music Is Elementary	37
Music Together LLC	48
Musikgarten	37
New England Dancing Masters	58
New York University (Kodaly)	54
Opera America	58
Peripole Bergerault, Inc. (Sienta/Angel)	2
Peripole Bergerault, Inc. (Star)	9
Roots of Rhythm World Drumming Teacher Workshop	30

Sonor (Hohner, Inc. HSS)	IFC
Suzuki Musical Instruments	55
Ted Brown Music Company	36
Trophy Music Company	58
University of Florida School of Music	49
University of Hartford (The Hartt School)	31
West Chester University	43
West Music	IBC
World Music Drumming Workshops	39
Yamaha Corporation of America	17

Summer Study	
Anderson University	22
California State University Los Angeles	20
Chapman University	22
Eastman School of Music	19
George Mason University	18
San Francisco Course (Bay Area)	24
Southern Methodist University	21
Trinity University	20
University of Kentucky	23
University of Memphis Rudi E. Scheidt School	23
University of Oregon School of Music	20
University of St. Thomas	19
Western Connecticut State University	21

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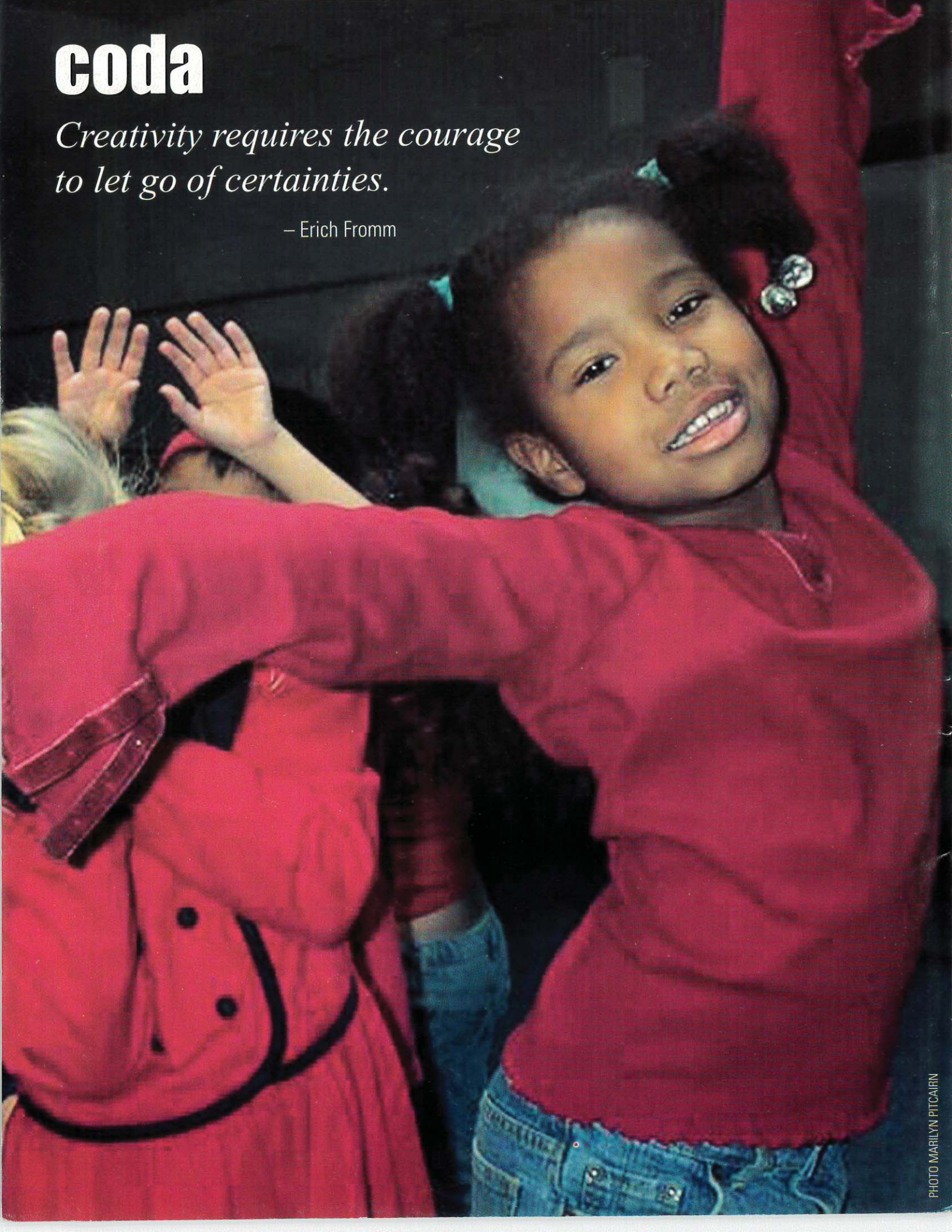
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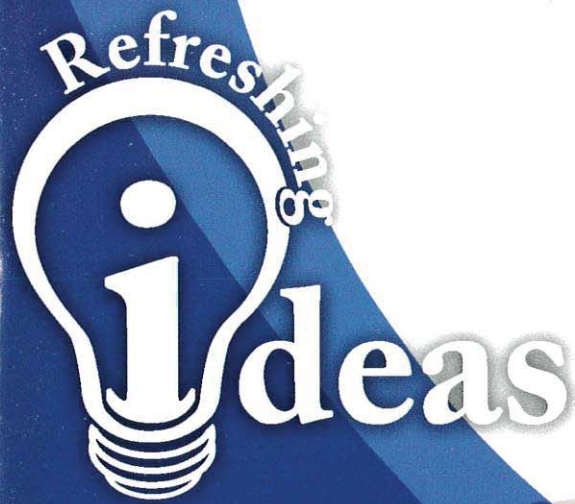
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*Creativity requires the courage  
to let go of certainties.*

– Erich Fromm



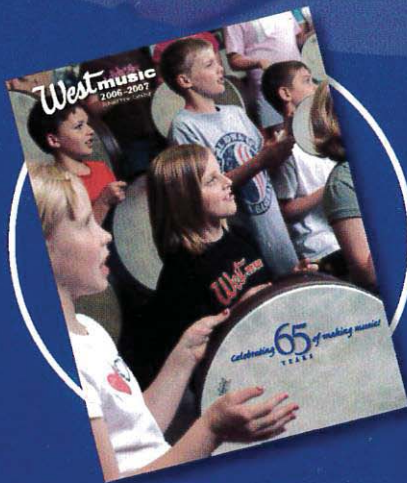


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