

## Musical Partnerships in Play

**MERYC**<sup>UK</sup>

Conference | Cambridge 14<sup>th</sup> June 2014



**2<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the United Kingdom Network of  
Music Educators and Researchers of Young Children**

**ABSTRACTS**





**Edited by Alison Street**

**[www.meryc.co.uk](http://www.meryc.co.uk)**

Dear friend and colleague,

We are delighted to welcome you to MERYC-UK's 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference: Musical Partnerships in Play, hosted at the University of Cambridge on what we hope is a beautiful day in June. Our first conference was hosted by the University of Roehampton in 2012 where, back in 2003 Dr Susan Young and Dr Alison Street had organised a pioneering early years music conference, 'Music with people under three'. Delegates were enthusiastic about repeating the 2012 event, and, in view of the current changes in both early years policy and particularly in the provision of music, it seems an important opportunity to focus once again on current research and practice in early childhood music education. The conference themes of play and partnerships are explored on a number of levels and in a range of contexts which we hope will be both stimulating and thought provoking.

MERYC-UK has its origins and roots in the wider European Network of MERYC (Music Educators and Researchers of Young Children). At a EuNet MERYC meeting in Cyprus (2007) a small group of UK delegates, with the vision and leadership of Dr Susan Young, decided we should like to meet as a local group to support one another, discuss together and to establish some aims and principles of early childhood music education that we felt were important. Our aims are to:

-  foster collaboration between educators and researchers in Music Education practice with young children, that is mutually supportive between researchers and practitioners
-  promote and articulate high quality inclusive practice and musicianship in practice
-  pursue inquiry into early childhood music education through research and critical reflection on practice
-  conduct music education and research that recognises the cultural and social diversity of early childhood and childrearing practices in families in the UK

We think that young children have the right to musical experiences which:

- Are the highest possible quality
- Are developmentally appropriate
- Are child-centred and in the child's time
- Are progressive
- Value and respect cultural diversity
- Encourage inclusive participation
- Recognise a child's relationship with key people
- Are fun and engaging

We hope that you enjoy meeting colleagues here who share an interest in early childhood music education research and practice and finish the day having lots to reflect on and to put into practice in the future. Many grateful thanks to Dr. Pam Burnard who has planned every detail of the day with us, inspiring us, helping our hopes and dreams for the day to become a reality. Lucian Stephenson and Peter Miles have undertaken all the tasks that take time, attention to detail and knowledge of the venue and the people. Thank you both. To our research student assistants, you are stars! Thank you. We're all wearing rosettes, so if you have any queries do not hesitate to ask any one of us.

Enjoy the day, please contribute your views and ask plenty of questions!

## **Musical Partnerships in Play**

Our conference title takes the topic of music – for many of us a passion – and two threads of early childhood education and care, partnerships and play. These three threads will be woven into our contributions to the day and as we reflect on our own thinking and concerns about early childhood music education.

Dr Sue Rogers will challenge us about play in her keynote address: ‘Play and pedagogy in early childhood: problems and possibilities’. Maria Montessori calls play, ‘the work of childhood’; Albert Einstein calls it ‘the highest form of research’. Play can encourage possibility thinking, allow for exploration of ideas, the trying on of roles, rehearsal and imaginings. It can be individual or collaborative. However, play-based pedagogical approaches may be under threat in the current climate of assessment and achievement of outcomes.

Collaboration is at the heart of the second strand of early childhood education and care that we include in our conference, partnerships. Partnerships and collaborations thread through our sector and rely on a balance of skills and attributes to be effective. Collaborations – working and/or playing together – may depend on empathy and being able to put oneself in another’s shoes, seeing things from their point of view. Such skills are acquired in early childhood as a developing theory of mind; understanding first that we are separate from another person and then that we can think and feel differently from them.

Professor David Hargreaves will explore what young children learn through music and musical play. The domains of social, emotional and cognitive learning may well feature in his keynote presentation as part of this musical learning. These domains of development can all contribute to the skills of collaborating and empathising with others.

Presentations throughout the day will offer models from practice as well as recent research findings, hopefully provoking us to think about musical partnerships in play, playful musical partnerships, and partnership-ful musical play.

We hope you will enjoy weaving your own strand within this tapestry and through musical play in partnership with other delegates, be able to feel some of what Froebel describes children’s play to be, an ‘expression which his [the child’s] inner life requires. So it promotes enjoyment, satisfaction, serenity, and constitutes the source of all that will benefit the child’.

*Jessica Pitt*

## MERYC-UK 2014

### Conference organising committee

Linda Bance  
Pamela Burnard  
Peter Miles  
Jessica Pitt  
Lucian Stephenson  
Alison Street

### Panel of reviewers

Linda Bance, independent music consultant, UK  
Maureen Brookson, University of East Anglia, UK  
Michel Hogenes, chair, EuNet MERYC. The Hague University, the Netherlands  
Laura Huhtinen-Hildèn, board member EuNet MERYC. Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Finland  
Jessica Pitt, chair MERYC-UK, board member EuNet MERYC. University of Roehampton, UK  
Alison Street, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK  
Susan Young, UK

### MERYC-UK online editor

Ali Harmer

### Our research student MERYC Conference Assistants:

**Marisa Cheng** is a Masters research student in the Arts, Creativity, Education, and Culture route at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. She is currently investigating how auditory-visual synaesthesia mediates children's processes of constructing meaning.

**Humera Ishfaq** is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Cambridge. An author of 10 books in the field of Urdu literature, she is currently investigating Muslim Ashraf 's culture in the colonial period.

**Susmita (Mita) Pinjara** is an artist practitioner with a background in facilitating interdisciplinary arts projects with survivors of trafficking and refugee children in the UK. She is a Masters research student in the Arts, Creativity, Education, and Culture route at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. Her research focus in general is the transformative nature of arts work in the social change sector.

**Frances Shih** is a second year Doctoral Researcher at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge where she is investigating the formation and roles of mental representations in harmonic-based musical improvisation.

**Frances Turnbull** is an early years music specialist and part-time Masters research student in the Arts, Creativity, Education, and Culture route at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. She is investigating embodied learning and the educational benefits and implications of movement in Early Years music education practices.

**Antonia Zachariou** is a Doctoral Researcher at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. She is investigating whether children's musical play supports their self-regulatory development.

## Biographies of keynote speakers

### Sue Rogers

Dr Sue Rogers, is Head of the Department of Early Years and Primary Education at the Institute of Education, London. Her research interests include play, curriculum and pedagogy in early childhood, young children's perspectives and child- adult interaction. She has published widely in the field of early childhood education including three recent books *Inside Role Play in Early Childhood Education: Researching children's perspectives* (2008, with Julie Evans), an edited collection on play pedagogy entitled *Rethinking play and pedagogy: concepts, contexts and cultures* (2010) and *Adult Roles in the Early Years* (2012, with Janet Rose).

### David Hargreaves

David Hargreaves is Professor of Education and Froebel Research Fellow at Roehampton University, and has previously held posts in the Schools of Psychology and Education at the Universities of Leicester, Durham and the Open University. He is also Visiting Professor of Research in Music Education at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, Visiting Professor at the Inter-University Institute of Macau, and Adjunct Professor at Curtin University, Perth, Australia. He is a Chartered Psychologist and Fellow of the British Psychological Society. He was Editor of *Psychology of Music* 1989-96, Chair of the Research Commission of the International Society for Music Education (ISME) 1994-6, and is currently on the editorial boards of 10 journals in psychology, music and education. In recent years he has spoken about his research at conferences and meetings in various countries on all 5 continents. He has been keynote speaker at the Annual Conference of the BPS, as well as at TEDX 2011, at Warwick University.

David's 14 books, which have been translated into 15 languages, include *The Developmental Psychology of Music* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), *Musical Learning and Development: The International Perspective*, (with Adrian North, Continuum, 2001), *Musical Identities* (with Raymond MacDonald and Dorothy Miell, Oxford University Press, 2002), *The Social and Applied Psychology of Music* (with Adrian North, Oxford University Press, 2008), and numerous journal articles and book chapters in psychology, music and education.

David has appeared on BBC TV and radio as a jazz pianist and composer, and is organist in his local village church circuit. In 2004 he was awarded an honorary D.Phil, Doctor Honoris Causa, by the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts in the University of Gothenburg, Sweden in recognition of his 'most important contribution towards the creation of a research department of music education' in the School of Music and Music Education in that University.

# KEYNOTE PRESENTATION ONE

## Play and pedagogy: Problems and possibilities

**Dr Sue Rogers**

Institute of Education, University of London

Global interest and political interventions in the lives of young children have required us to rethink our understanding of what and how children should and do learn. Such interventions and the debates they engender invoke the questions: what constitutes an appropriate curriculum and pedagogy for young children? How and in what ways might play contribute to learning in the early years classroom and beyond? The presentation will attempt to address these questions and consider also what we know about how young children think and, what we think we know about how young children learn in educational settings. Drawing on a number of research projects including the perspectives of children on play, the presentation will focus in particular on children's imaginative play activity in the context of early years education. The social context of play is highlighted because imaginative play between children of similar age is a powerful way in which they come to understand the social, conceptual and material world in ways not possible in the relations between adults and children. It will be argued that ability to move beyond the here and now, between belief and make-believe is a uniquely human facility and one that is highly significant and potentially productive in the context of wider society, the arts and social intelligence. As such the prevalence in early years classrooms compels us to consider the role that pedagogy has in shaping children's imaginative play experiences.

## KEYNOTE PRESENTATION TWO

### What do young children learn through music and musical play?

**David Hargreaves**

Applied Music Research Centre  
University of Roehampton, London, UK

Learning *in* music refers to the development of musical skills themselves: some children learn to play instruments, and at a certain level of proficiency might become known as 'musicians'. But defining a 'musician' is increasingly difficult: all children can sing, for example, and a prominent current view is that at some level of expertise, every child is a musician. This is the starting point of my talk, which focuses on what children learn *through* music: I will look at four different aspects of this exciting and rapidly-developing field. First, I will explore the powerful idea that early development is in itself musical in character: Steven Malloch and Colwyn Trevarthen speak of *communicative musicality* in early development, and this can be seen in the spontaneous rhythmic abilities of babies and infants when they dance and move in response to music. This relates to some of the recent findings of neuroscientific research, and I consider the *plasticity* of the developing brain in relation to music.

Third, I go on to look at the effects of musical training on young children: there is growing evidence that this can promote not only aspects of intelligence, but also children's abilities in language, reading, and mathematical thinking. Alongside these cognitive abilities, music also has clear positive effects on children's emotional, social, and personal lives: I will look at some of the social aspects of creativity in musical improvisation to illustrate this. Finally, I consider some of the applications of these ideas for education and health, including the importance of collaborative partnerships with adults in musical play.

# SPOKEN PRACTICE PAPERS

## **'Tuning in'**

### **How a musician in residence can help highlight the importance of good listening skills**

#### **Linda Bance**

musicwithmum21@btopenworld.com

For the past two years regular music sessions for families and their children under three years have taken place at a children's centre in Hertfordshire UK. Sessions evolved as a result of local head teachers and the centre manager analysing the 2012 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results, and identifying a drop in attainment for communication, language and literacy. Attendance at these classes has been good and positive results are beginning to emerge. As this project continues the musician has been asked to emphasise a particular focus that can impact on communication, language and literacy. The aim of the project is to highlight the importance of listening skills. Theories drawn from Trevarthen and Malloch (2009) and Young (2003) and the findings of the EPPE report underpin the rationale for using family music making to support listening skills. We also refer to theories of language acquisition by Chomsky and Bruner.

Most families visiting the centre have English as their mother tongue. Through songs, games, observations and discussion we discuss with families how we can support their listening. Families are given tasks to share with other family members. These include:

- Noticing when their child is listening
- Paying greater attention to listening to the child
- Recording their children
- Recognising preferred songs or stories
- Using a 'Listening Lion'
- Creating listening games
- Creating a mobile phone ring of their children's voices.

Outcomes will be used to shape a resource for all families to access. They might assist musicians and staff of other local centres in how to relate with families through exploring listening together, and to empower staff to 'talk the talk'. This could result in a greater awareness of the important role listening plays in communication, language and literacy.

#### **Keywords:**

music, listening, children's centre, families.



## **Visible Thinking**

### **Sandra Barefoot**

visiblethinking@gmail.com

### **Sarah Moody**

sarahmoody@mac.com

### **Mike Akers**

### **Paula Kirby**

The Creative Club (CC) is a music and multi-arts Saturday School for children and their families living in St Judes, Bristol, a disadvantaged ward where a high proportion of families have refugee/asylum seeker status. With a team of five facilitators and numerous volunteers, CC has run as a ten-week pilot between February and March 14.

Like many cities Bristol has recently become home to families from such a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds (from new migration resulting in what Vertovec calls 'super-diversity') that it is no longer possible or appropriate to tailor music provision for one cultural group. Instead the CC is underpinned by a pedagogy that explores the transcultural space and how this might merge to form a third, hybrid space that becomes more than the sum of its parts. We find Cross's notion of music's capacity for 'floating intentionality' valuable in suggesting how music-making and improvising might engage participants and enable them to make the music meaningful on their own terms.

However, the CC combines free, improvisational music-making with formal teaching. It allows for all members of the family to access the session at any level or age and supports the consolidation of music skills through improvisation. Instruments taught are balafon, East African drum, violin, cello, guitar, ukulele, voice. Story is used to support the younger children in exploring their own musicality and creativity. Performances take place weekly and a public performance is planned.

The CC is underpinned by a reflective practice approach that aims to review and theorise the work. The models of practice that influence the team's work are drawn from community music, therapeutic arts, the principles of Reggio Emilia, formal music education, contemporary children's theatre practice and non-verbal communication for deaf and severely disabled children. We argue that early childhood music education and work with families tends to draw quite narrowly on a conventional model of practice and that by drawing on a wider range of approaches, the CC is developing a unique and specific model of practice that is well suited to work with diverse families.

### **Key Words:**

transcultural, community, place-making

## Music for Little People

**Karen Dickinson**

karen@musicforlittlepeople.co.uk

This presentation will aim to draw together the importance of the partnerships that come into play within a music class between the teacher, the children and the carers present within the context of “Music for Little People” classes for 0 – 5 year olds. Theories of developmental psychology will also be considered which can help to build a playful but structured curriculum that is appropriate to the child’s musical development. Justifications for the inclusion of music in the nursery curriculum are developed by consideration of arguments relating to the importance of music that have been made throughout the history of education.

The effectiveness of this musical education depends upon a carefully planned curriculum that matches activities to the age of the child. It also depends on the professionalism of the music leader who needs sufficient training and resources to deliver a worthwhile music curriculum and the support of a carer who is learning alongside their child. Confidence in their own musical knowledge and skills and a love and understanding of children will give the teacher this ability.

The significance of music as part of an all-round education also requires some consideration. The music we experience in childhood forms part of our earliest memories: lullabies from our parents, marching bands in the streets, making music with others such as playground chants used for skipping and hand clapping, and more structured music-making activities, all play a prominent role. Music is one of the ways in which children learn about their own culture as they search for and find ways to represent their world. This view has been echoed by many music educators such as Kodály, Dalcroze, Orff and Suzuki and by developmental psychologists such as Hargreaves (1986). Young children respond to music and communicate naturally through it, learning about their families, local communities, religions and other social groups.

Photographs, video and practical demonstrations will be used to demonstrate the importance of the quality of the interaction between the quartet of the teacher, the music, the carer and the child, albeit at different levels. The quality of this interaction needs to be of a high standard but delivered in a fun and playful manner if a positive learning experience is to be the outcome.

### **Key words:**

partnership, professionalism, interaction, parents

## **Morning Mood: a creative musical process based on Edvard Grieg's Morning Mood**

**Pauliina Hauta-aho**

Metropolia University of Applied Studies, Finland

**Annina Rintakumpu**

Metropolia University of Applied Studies, Finland

This presentation introduces a musical process based on the main theme of the Morning Mood from Peer Gynt, Suite No. 1 Op. 46, by Edvard Grieg. The process introduces children to the pentatonic scale in an experiential way. The goal is to encourage children to compose and improvise.

The target group is 5-to-8-year-old children, who study music at Finnish music institutes. The musical journey begins by listening to the recording and continues with the active involvement of the children through playing or by singing. It is essential that the teacher can achieve sensitive interaction with the children (Huhtinen-Hildén, 2012). It is also important to embrace their ideas and develop them further.

The pentatonic scale is an excellent starting point for composing and improvisation. The children produce their own ostinatos using the five tones of the scale. "Ostinato, the repetition of rhythmic forms, is the seed of musical structures" (Juntunen & Perkiö & Simola-Isaksson, 2010). The ostinatos that children create are written down, which gives them a visual form in addition to the auditory one. The teacher can play the melody, and the children can accompany the melody with their own ostinatos. They can also improvise and play solos and thus create something new. With these elements the teacher and the children could create a concert piece in the form of a rondo.

During the process, children are active music makers. In our presentation, we will show video material from the process. We will also share children's thoughts and emotions along this journey. The process of composing and improvising can last for months. This brings continuity to music lessons, and relieves the teacher from making new lesson plans. The final outcome of this type of pedagogical process is always unpredictable. This working method motivates and empowers children.

A musical process like this can be extended by integrating other forms of art into the lessons, such as dance, shadow theatre, storycrafting and visual arts. The only limit is your imagination.

### **Keywords:**

composition, play, improvisation, interaction

## **‘Parents as partners?’ Effective practice in engaging parents in Early Years music-making**

### **Dr Douglas Lonie**

National Foundation for Youth Music  
douglas.lonie@youthmusic.org.uk

### **Carol Reid**

National Foundation for Youth Music  
carol.reid@youthmusic.org.uk

### **Angeline Conaghan**

Groundswell Arts  
info@groundswellarts.com

### **Dr Jonathan Barnes**

Sidney de Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health

Recent research (Osgood et al, 2012) investigating the practice of engaging ‘hard-to-reach’ parents in early years music-making found that music had important socio-cultural significance in young children’s family life. According to the study, children readily engaged with music in the home and this acted as ‘inconspicuous cultural learning through doing’. Osgood et al contrasted children’s everyday musicality (i.e. home experiences) with the music they would be likely to experience in structured music-making sessions, suggesting that building on this everyday musicality could lead to better engagement of young children and their parents. It was recommended that effective practice in engaging parents needs to be considered in the planning, content and structure of music-making sessions.

In 2012 the National Foundation for Youth Music funded Woodlands Park Children’s Centre and Nursery School (with delivery partner Groundswell Arts) to undertake ‘The Lullaby Project’, to create ‘unique musical experiences’ for young children and their families. 210 children aged 0-4 took part in the 18 month project, which the children’s centre hoped would, amongst other things, ‘create pathways and dialogues leading to better relationships with hard to reach families within [their] settings’. This resonated with Osgood et al’s findings that it is not the parents who are ‘hard to reach’, but rather the services themselves in the way that they are designed and delivered.

Over the last two years, ‘The Lullaby Project’ has used a specific pedagogical approach to engage children and their families across Haringey. The music leader works directly with the parents to create a personalised lullaby for each child, drawing on the family’s personal and cultural references and heritage. Evaluation of this project has demonstrated positive outcomes around relationships and family life, communication and language skills, confidence and resilience, as well as improving the dialogue between home and centre.

This practice session will introduce key findings from the cited research followed by an in-depth case study of a project through presentations, videos and panel discussion. Youth Music’s toolkit, designed to engage parents in Early Years music-making, will be introduced alongside practical examples of effective parental engagement from other Youth Music-funded Early Years work.

### **Keywords:**

hard-to-reach, everyday musicality, musical identity

## Music and other arts in the everyday life of very young children

### Leena Pantsu

JAMK University of Applied Sciences; Department of Music, Finland

leena.pantsu@jamk.fi

According to Dewey (1908) the arts are central to life. An important approach is that the child becomes familiar with different kinds of arts and that this is connected with his daily life (Väkevä 2004). Music and the other arts, such as dance, visual expression, word art and puppet theatre are natural ways for a young child to experience their environment and express themselves. Therefore it would seem natural that a high-quality art pedagogy be also present in the everyday life of a very little child in day care and at home.

This approach has three aims:

1. To let children experience music and art education, ie music- and- art lessons, but also music with other arts, for example, "on the floor", where children are playing;
2. To extend the musical skills of day care staff so that they are able to use music and the other arts with their children together with parents or grandparents, by interactive seminars that explore new ideas for using music with other arts in the groups;
3. To strengthen educational partnerships with families and daycare, as well as internal interaction in families, where music and other arts may form a unifying "bridge" between home and day care.

The presentation illustrates how a lesson is built up through integrating music and other arts. There is one theme, but several ways to explore it; a simple fairytale, rhymes, songs, dance, movement and painting. The main idea is that such practice will motivate both children and educators to continue the theme in their everyday life (eg when getting dressed or on the floor when children are playing freely).

In this way a basic music and art education may be equally available for the healthy growth and evolution of every child, and interaction between day care staff and the families may be strengthened. Childcare staff are able to make music with their children and also with parents or grandparents. This model strengthens the interaction between child and child, child and educator, child and parent, as well as educator and parent.

### Keywords

music, arts, education, children under 3 years, day care

## **The Drama of Sound: Developing educators' reflective practice in working with children's musical ideas**

### **Catherine Reding**

Sightlines Initiative, Cumbria  
catherine@sightlines-initiative.com

The work is built upon many years of action-research projects undertaken by Sightlines Initiative. It is informed by the reflective, creative pedagogy of the preschools of Reggio Emilia and Sightlines Initiative's 'Developing Environments of Enquiry' framework. We worked with 3-5 year old children and their educators in 6 settings over 4 years. The educators had a wide range of varying skills in reflective educational practice and music.

The aims of the project were to enable early years educators to develop high levels of competence in working with children's musical ideas and enquiries, through developing reflective practice methods with them; to enable young children to become competent, enthused and empowered to use music as a way of exploring the world and communicating their ideas and to develop and deepen the adults' and children's enquiries into sustained long-term action-research projects.

One or two musicians worked alongside school/nursery staff in weekly or fortnightly half-day sessions over 1-2 terms. Together the adults observed children's musical play, learning how music and movement were part of children's everyday explorations and expression. From our observations we developed our own research questions and set up opportunities where children could further their musical explorations. Alongside school staff we explored and developed ways that the adults could work with children creatively. For example, through spontaneous improvisation in music and dance, through providing musical 'provocations' enabling opportunities for children to revisit, reflect on and deepen experiences, encouraging group learning and reflection, and creating an 'environment of enquiry' for both the children and the adults.

Staff continued with children in between the regular sessions, gaining confidence to develop ideas for themselves. We found they noticed children's musicality far more, and how important it was in children's development. They had the skills to develop their own creative action research projects and become reflective, responsive musical companions with children.

The project emphasizes the importance of creating and sustaining an environment of enquiry for children and adults in developing creative musical practice.

### **Keywords:**

reflection, enquiry, companionship

## Parents and musical creativity: a licence to play

### Ben Sandbrook

Independent facilitator of Early Years Strategic Roundtable, hosted by Earlyarts  
bsandbrook@gmail.com

The Early Years Strategic Roundtable is a national alliance of organisations supporting creative experiences in the expressive arts for children in their early years. It brings together mainly organisations from the Early Years and Arts (including music) sectors with a national remit, as well as the Youth Music-funded regional Early Years networks. Since 2012, the Roundtable has been hosted by Earlyarts, with Youth Music Networking funding, having been established by Youth Music in 2009.

The Roundtable brings together a group of organisations (MERYC-UK has participated in the EYSRT since it started), chiefly through quarterly meetings, to look at how we can work strategically to influence policy and practice, and to ensure national coherence, aspiring for all children in their early years to have sustained, high quality, creative experiences in the expressive arts.

Having undertaken an audit of the landscape for arts in the Early Years in the UK, so as to establish key priorities and opportunities, the EYSRT, over the past few months, has been developing a campaign, targeting parents of young children, with the aim of helping parents to understand and learn to support their children's creativity, musicality, expression and broader development through creative play. Our aspiration is to bring together people working to support young children's creative and artistic abilities to reach and support parents across the UK. This campaign builds on a body of evidence that EYSRT participants have been drawing together, looking internationally at available sources of evidence of the impacts of creative arts in the early years and models of effective practice.

In this presentation, I will give an overview of the EYSRT and its activities, share the findings from the body of evidence we have collated, and talk through the 'Ingredients for creative arts in the early years.' Then, for the bulk of the presentation, I will outline the campaign 'All children are born creative, but need your support to become tomorrow's creative adults' – and discuss with participants how they can get involved.

### Keywords:

families, play, musicality, campaign

## Progressive music skills table for under sevens

### Frances Turnbull

University of Cambridge / Musicaliti  
frances@musicaliti.co.uk

Increasing interest internationally in children's music in recent years (Barrett, 2006; Tafuri & Welch, 2008; Young, 2003) focuses on child-centred approaches, however, Orff (Keetman, 1954), Kodaly (Choksy, 1999) and Dalcroze (Jaques-Dalcroze, 1912) had already developed approaches to children's music education in the last century. Recent research resists promoting music for extraneous benefits, yet appears to overlook last century's approaches, risking ignoring potentially useful music-teaching concepts. Combining these approaches, I submit a table of progressive, self-correcting, measurable skills based on natural movement, rather than numeracy and literacy.

Participant ages ranged from birth to 7 years old (end of Key Stage 1) children with normative physical and cognitive development. This table presumed regular (weekly) musical intervention, either at nursery or carer-child music sessions.

The aim of the project was to devise a table of on-going musical progression for children with normative physical and cognitive ability. The framework was intended to be straightforward enough to use with minimal training by Early Years practitioners with potentially limited confidence and musical experience.

A constructivist pedagogical approach was used through consulting and merging literature on the three main children's music education approaches. The order of musical concepts was trialled by developing a rolling series of topic-specific sessions for 0-7 year olds over 2 years. This multiple-approach method intended to avoid Grand Narratives whilst remaining practical and accessible. Session outcomes showed that all children were involved and absorbed, and sessions were very well received by parents. In addition, many of the children that attended these sessions took up instruments, and led in school performances, student groups and academies. Delivery outcomes showed that a subcontracted independent nursery teacher developed confidence in both musical and children's skills, and an instrumental teacher used the table in progressing her primary-aged students.

The reception of this table suggests that the arranged sequence appeals to both teachers and students. This implies that it allows for teacher intervention when necessary, student exploration to maintain interest, and thus musical development, along with additional benefits. These premature findings suggest that there may be some merit in testing this table further afield.

### **Keywords:**

early years music, musicianship criteria, musical measurement



## **Chamber Tots: Setting a framework for the balance between adult-led and child-led musical learning**

### **John Webb**

Wigmore Hall Learning, Wigmore Street, London  
c/o Daisy Swift, [dswift@wigmore-hall.org.uk](mailto:dswift@wigmore-hall.org.uk)

### **Esther Sheridan**

Workshop Leader  
c/o Daisy Swift, [dswift@wigmore-hall.org.uk](mailto:dswift@wigmore-hall.org.uk)

### **Cath Sewell, Daisy Swift**

Chamber Tots was started by Wigmore Hall Learning in 2001 to offer children aged 2 – 5 the experience of live music, and the opportunity to develop strong musical skills, as well as to support and develop the musical skills and confidence of Early Years staff more widely. In Chamber Tots musical exploration and development occurs in both child-initiated and adult-led activity, and this paper brings together Chamber Tots leaders to discuss the flow of activity between these two elements. Young and Row, (2009) emphasised the combination of child- and adult-led activities, as “they support [the children’s] abilities to initiate and sustain their own self-motivated play and because they support their ability to listen with absorbed attention. Both are important qualities for children to acquire if they are to participate successfully in early years education.”

The children in the project are from mainstream state nurseries and schools with diverse social and cultural backgrounds, a significant number having English as an additional language; and teachers, teaching assistants, nursery workers and music co-ordinators. Interactive music sessions led by experienced early years music leaders, explore the core elements of music through singing, percussion-playing and movement, incorporating existing approaches such as Dalcroze and Kodály. The project also includes staff training, reflection sessions, workshop and resources and culminates in a celebratory concert at Wigmore Hall including parents/carers.

Outcomes for setting staff are to feel more confident in leading music-making activity, to explore the value in musical freeplay and encourage spontaneous music-making, to incorporate music into everyday school life, to support children in their musical development, and to share ideas/resources with colleagues and inspire/encourage music-making activity throughout the setting. Outcomes for children are to experience high-quality music; to explore their musicality and expressive movement; to explore a variety of musical concepts and develop their musical skills; to develop cooperation through group songs, turn-taking and listening; and to develop confidence through leading group music-making.

Chamber Tots refines support for musical development in early years children through ongoing evaluation. As the long-term incorporation of musical activities in settings lies with the staff, it is important to consider how they develop confidence in facilitating the flow between child- and adult-led activity, and how we can encourage them to appreciate the value of child-led freeplay.

### **Keywords:**

innovation, practice, child-led activities

## Embedding music in EYFS planning and practice

### Janet Wright

Edgehill University  
wright.j56@gmail.com

This practice paper presents a model of training for EY practitioners, developed through working in one setting with six members of staff for a post-graduate assignment with Edge Hill University. Aspects of the assignment have also been presented to lead practitioners and are now being trialled in other EYFS settings. Working from current research about 'sustained shared thinking' and communicative musicality, I wanted to bring the generalist EY practitioner into the picture and find ways of ensuring quality musical experiences for children when specialist input is unavailable or limited. I had noted that many settings find it possible to implement the EYFS curriculum without recourse to quality creative music making. I have a strong belief that music is too important to entrust entirely to the specialist.

The aim was to develop an approach to working with practitioners that focused on equipping them with specific 'tools' rather than relying on resource books. This approach links more closely with Development Matters and provides a means of including music more readily in practitioner planning for the setting. There was also a desire to empower those practitioners who lack confidence because of the perceived complexity of musical concepts and understanding. A more relaxed and improvisatory approach to music seems possible by tackling this perception and increasing practitioner awareness of their own innate musical skills.

Settings have taken some simple musical ideas and applied their own very professional and specialised knowledge of their children and of curriculum requirements. They have been guided in a way which reflects the way they in turn guide the children by observation and discussion and the consideration of possible lines of development. Activities were noted and recorded and the planning for the setting showed the presence and development of more music focussed activities than previously.

The work seems to have tapped into the natural human desire to share and communicate through music. I suggest that where practical possibilities can be demonstrated, developed and fully understood by the non-specialist practitioner, the more confidence can be generated within a setting and the more fertile the ground for benefiting from current research findings and specialist input when available.

### Keywords:

non-specialist practitioner, reflection, professionalism, shared communication

# SPOKEN RESEARCH PAPERS

## What is the nature of communication between two year olds in a musical free play environment?

**Charlotte Arculus**

Great Yarmouth Community Trust  
charlotte.adventure@ntlworld.com

This small piece of qualitative, practice-based research was undertaken as part of my MA dissertation. I examined the nature of peer to peer interactions between two year olds in a musical free play environment. Drawing on theories including Communicative Musicality (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009) and Affect Attunement (Stern, 1985), I asked how young children adapted and transformed the social-emotional skills learned with their carers and families to make meaning with peers. The research took place in a Sure Start nursery setting, in a summer house dedicated to music and group work which the children were familiar with.

During the research sessions a protocol of adults responding to, but not directing or initiating interaction with children, was adopted and talking was kept to a minimum. The context was designed to be conducive to enabling two year olds to freely interact through music making, by which I mean bodily gesture, voice play, and sound making. The sessions were videoed and peer to peer interactions were micro-analysed. The nature of interaction between children during the sessions was short and intense. The children derived pleasure from successful interactions with each other and used a variety of musical expressions in their connections such as bodily movement, gesture and voice play.

Results showed a surprising amount of *affective group interaction*, a term I use to describe phenomena where several children are taking part in something simultaneously and there is a sense of dynamic group mutuality. The study raised interesting thoughts around young children's abilities to tune into group activities. I argue that music and the temporal arts give unique affordances to facilitating multi focus, group activity.

### **Keywords:**

musical communication, musical play, two-year-olds, musical empathy, intersubjectivity, musical free-play, group empathy.

## **The use of Recorded Music in Early Childhood Settings**

### **Nicola Burke**

Freelance Early Childhood Music Specialist

Nicola@musicforearlyyears.co.uk

This research involved looking at the recorded music that early childhood practitioners use in their day to day practice. When surveying literature in this subject area it was clear that there is a paucity of research on the use of recorded music within early childhood education suggesting that research into this area is in its infancy. The study investigated the styles of music used and if there are patterns in the use of recorded music across a range of early childhood settings. The aim was to explore the styles of music used, for what purposes practitioners use recorded music and if they use it at particular times.

This study was a qualitative piece of research which drew upon numerical information. Data was gathered via a written survey in both paper and electronic formats followed by a small amount of telephone interviews. The findings suggest that there is very little music listening within early childhood education and there is a lack of understanding regarding the development of children's musical preferences and listening skills. The study found that there is a small range of music styles used and that there are certain styles which are favoured in the sector. The findings also suggest that the widest range of styles is used by practitioners working with a wide age range of children and there appears to be a relationship between the type of setting and the quantity of styles used.

The research concluded that the audio environment in settings may be having a detrimental effect on children's learning. The impact that recorded music is having on young children's listening skills, communication development, musicality and creativity is unknown. Children's emotional well-being may also be being impacted; music can be very emotive and the music played could be having an instant effect on children and how they feel.

### **Keywords:**

recorded music, listening, settings.

## **Practitioner approaches in early childhood music groups**

### **Zoe Greenhalgh**

Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)  
Birmingham City University (BCU)  
zoeviola@btinternet.com

This paper draws on two complementary studies, (2013 & summer 2014), which focus on the aims, knowledge, background, skills and attitudes of early childhood music group leaders in the UK: Who they are, what they are trying to achieve and how this relates to music in early childhood. The early childhood music group sector is large with many providers within the UK but it is unmapped and apparently unconnected with national Early Years Policy and professionally accepted notions of best practice in early childhood education. Despite evidence that a well-trained and skilful adult significantly enhances a child's learning (Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden and Bell, 2002) this unmapped sector has no prerequisites or concepts of professional accountability and anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a wide variation in quality, particularly in relation to music.

In the first study, six practitioners were observed and audio recorded during one of their sessions to gain an insight into the way they talked and communicated with the parents in the group. These practitioners also undertook a short structured interview providing information about themselves and their work. The aims and objectives of these group leaders were found to be diverse, and their skills, knowledge and experience was wide ranging. Contrary to expectations it also became apparent that in some cases neither aims and objectives nor the lead practitioner's knowledge and skills were related to music. The second, much wider study explores these findings further. Via a survey questionnaire, this study involves many early childhood music group leaders across the UK in order to examine their background, knowledge, experience, qualifications and attitudes to music sessions for young children. This information coupled with richer data from telephone interviews with a selection of questionnaire respondents will be examined for emergent themes and insights to gain a better understanding of early childhood music group practitioners and their work.

This work offers some research evidence relating to the grossly under researched area of early childhood music group provision and thereby contributes to a deeper understanding of the nature of the sector in relation to the aims and motivation of the lead practitioners and what skills and understanding they possess to enable them to fulfil their role as Early Childhood Music Practitioners.

### **Keywords**

early childhood music groups, professionalism, music with families, knowledge, experience

## **Enhancing musical experience for very young children with severe sensory impairments: Vibro-tactile music, dynamic interplay and flow**

**Alison Harmer**

ali@musicgarden.co.uk

Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)

Birmingham City University (BCU)

According to Bruner (1959), early sensory deprivation prevents the formation of adequate models and strategies for dealing with the environment. Quality, contextual sensory experiences for children with PMLD are vitally important but rarely exploit music as a leading motivator of dynamic interplay (Pavlicevic1990). Increased understanding of the somatosensory system (Sofianidis et al 2012), haptic feedback (Steinbach et al 2012) and findings linking touch with sound (Kayser et al 2005) support the hypothesis that music as a simultaneously aural, vibrational and visual experience offers an opportunity for playful, multi-modal and contextual play as the carer and child share the musical experience through sound, voice, touch and visual stimulation using flow theory to guide music selection.

To offer a rationale rooted in flow theory (Csikszentmihályi 1990), current thinking about somatosensory phenomena, arousal and valence as to how music can support interaction between a sensory-impaired child and carer. To evaluate the use of a musical repertoire in cooperation with early years SEN practitioners and parents of children with PMLD.

Practitioners and parents played a range of specially-written non-vocal repertoire through a resonance board/table-top via a resonance speaker at home, placing the child on the board and interacting through touch, voice and visual aids. Music was composed to be bass-heavy to ensure vibration was felt and was sorted to a non-linear grid allowing the carer to choose music quickly and intuitively along a “flow” line of “challenge/valence” and “energy/arousal” allowing the carer to focus on joint attention.

Playing a selection of specially-recorded live music organised with reference to Thayer’s Mood Model (1982) via a resonance speaker to a resonance board on which a child lay was found to be conducive to dynamic interplay. Children were relaxed and alert during the session yet exhausted afterwards, suggesting a balance of achievement and challenge commensurate with “Flow”. Fourteen children (age 0-3) with carers used the music to support touch and vision-stimulating activities. All reported increased duration and intensity of interaction, response and relaxation of child during yet tiredness of child after interaction. Organisation of music plus the multi-sensory experience maximised the child’s opportunity to contribute to the joint interaction.

### **Keywords:**

PMLD, dynamic interplay, sensory music

## Navigating in dialogue: Supporting the formation of professional identity and knowledge

### Laura Huhtinen-Hildén

Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Finland  
laura.huhtinen-hilden@metropolia.fi

This presentation describes the key issues in developing an outcomes-based curriculum and suitable learning environments for a bachelor programme in early childhood music education and community music in Helsinki, Metropolia University of Applied Sciences. Tynjälä (2008; 2011) defines a concept of integrative pedagogics. This principle states that the key elements of expertise (theory, practice and self-regulation) should be integrated in all learning situations. Tynjälä also emphasizes the importance of tutoring and reflection when developing new practices in higher education. Education should enable and enhance professional work, interdisciplinary collaboration, collaborative learning and new kinds of learning environments (Tynjälä, 2008; 2011).

The results of my research, concerning the professional identity formation process in becoming a music educator (Huhtinen-Hildén, 2012; 2013) has highlighted the intertwined nature of the professional identity and knowledge. They form the professional landscape (see Connelly and Clandinin, 1995; 1999) which is a crucial element in professional growth. The aim of the developed outcome-based curriculum and practice is to nurture the growth of the future music educators in a direction that will enable them to meet the needs of each learner in music teaching contexts. Supporting the formation of the professional landscape has challenged teaching methods and values underpinning teaching.

One of the goals of this education programme has been to widen the horizons of the students' professional landscape. This is supported by giving students practical experiences of different teaching contexts, in the form of live projects, throughout their studies. Focusing on experiential learning and reflection as well as supporting the integration of different forms of knowledge seems to be fruitful for constructing the professional identity in a new way (see Huhtinen-Hildén, 2012; 2013). Wenger (1998) suggests that practice is inseparable from theoretical knowledge or thinking - their relationship is complex but interactive (Wenger, 1998, pp.47–48)

In this presentation the experiences of developing learning environments for future music educators will be shared. This opens a debate about developing professional-identity and knowledge of an early childhood music educator.

### Keywords

professional identity, professional knowledge, curriculum

## **Parent-child group activities in Children's Centres: Comparing music, art, and outdoor activities**

### **Jessica Pitt**

University of Roehampton  
jessica.pitt@btinternet.com

Parent-child group music making activity in Children's Centres can be seen as part of socio-cultural learning. Vygotsky suggests that society has an important part to play in an individual's development with interaction between parents, carers, peers and the wider cultural context contributing to higher order functions (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). Mental functions originate socially between people (interpsychologically) and then inside a child (intrapsychological), the interaction is dynamic – society influences people and people influence society. Rogoff draws on this theory with a particular interest in the cultural aspects of collaboration, learning through observation and the role of adults as guides to children's participation in cultural activities (Rogoff, 1991, 2003). Additionally, the earliest 'intersubjective' interactions between adult and child (Fogel, 1977; Stern, Beebe, Jaffe and Bennett, 1977; Trevarthen, 1999; Trevarthen and Malloch, 2000) are viewed as essentially musical in nature, with sustained shared empathetic meaning. There is an emotional and musical aspect to socio-cultural learning between a parent and their young child.

This presentation will propose a model of musical-social-learning based on the findings from the final phase of a three-phase doctoral research project. Parent-child group musical activities were compared with similar art and outdoor activities through an open observation of fifteen children for a random 15-minute time period.

Some of the findings suggest that the music group activity's action songs, which Eckerdal and Merker (2009) describe as an introduction to active participation in human ritual, may help the child and parent to co-participate in the activity. Furthermore, this may allow for self-assessment through the shared group experience (based on Fogel et al., 2000), which may lead to a sense of 'communitas' (Turner, 1982) or shared 'flow' experience, giving rise to positive feelings and confidence, since more smiling and laughter were evident in the music group than in the other two activities. The art and outdoor activity groups promoted speech, movement, pointing and the wide use of objects and materials, indicating that different approaches to partnerships in play with young children and their parents/carers may have different benefits.

### **Keywords**

social-cultural learning, music in early childhood, parents, professionals, mixed methods



## **Giving voice: partnerships with South Asian families**

### **Alison Street**

Oxford Brookes University  
streetalison@aol.com

### **Nuzhat Abbas**

Parents Early Education Partnership (PEEP) Oxford  
nuzhat.abbas@peep.org.uk

This paper contributes to the growing body of research that seeks to understand and inform intercultural practice. It focuses on recent action research projects with South Asian families in the south Midlands in the UK which have supported parents with their young children's early learning through sharing and promoting women's remembered songs and stories. First, we draw on the ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979) to elaborate on these memories both as powerful social and cultural influences and also as learning resources in families. Then we explore how the ORIM conceptual model, based on Hannon, (1995) can be applied when engaging with families who have English as an additional language. When using this model with parents and children together, practitioners draw attention to the everyday potential for learning parents can offer their children by providing Opportunities, Recognition of their children's efforts, Interacting through songs and playful activities and being a Model for them.

With reference to a video vignette and case studies, we aim to illustrate the complex issues facing some South Asian parents in relation to their perceptions of the value of their own languages and therefore their expressed voices. These are often seen to be problematic by early childhood settings and services rather than as opportunities for dialogue and learning. We explore notions of agency and expertise in both parent and practitioner and draw on the writings of Vandembroeck and colleagues (2009) and Noddings (2010) when reflecting on practical strategies which we found to be both helpful and unhelpful in engaging in partnership with parents.

Implications are drawn about the powerful role songs and stories can play in parents' everyday lives with their children, about the role of the practitioner who facilitates playful relevant musical activities with South Asian families, about the need for further research and training, and about the quality of listening to and recognising voices that are all too often ignored.

### **Keywords:**

parents, voices, language, intercultural practice

## ***Sounds of Intent* in the Early Years: a new framework to gauge the emergence of musical engagement**

### **Angela Voyajolu**

University of Roehampton  
avoyajolu@gmail.com

### **Adam Ockelford**

University of Roehampton

### **Graham Welch**

Institute of Education

### **Evangelos Himonides**

Institute of Education

'*Sounds of Intent* in the Early Years' is a research project that explores the musical development of children aged 0-7. The first phase has focused on the creation of a new developmental framework, which is based on observations of children engaged in music, the existing literature on typical Early Years musical development, 'zygonic' theory and the *Sounds of Intent* model of musical development for children with learning difficulties.

The aims of the project are:

1. To provide a framework of musical development of children in the Early Years.
2. To identify similarities and differences between this and the *Sounds of Intent* framework for children with learning difficulties (of all ages).

Observations of children ranging in age from ten weeks to four years within an Early Years setting were taken over a one-year period, and stored in the form of video recordings and field notes. The observations made were 'snapshots' of children engaged in spontaneous musical activity, either on their own or with peers or adults, as well as within more structured adult-led sessions. These observations were then analysed in relation to the extant *Sounds of Intent* framework to determine whether the types and levels of engagement with music that were seen could be framed within the existing model and to identify areas of potential mismatch.

The result is the preliminary version of a framework of musical development for all Early Years children that spans four levels, each encompassing three domains. These domains are 'reactive' (listening and responding to sounds), 'proactive' (causing, creating and controlling sounds) and 'interactive' (participation in the context of others). Each level is broken down into a further four elements that aim to describe children's musical engagement in more detail. The framework implies stage related rather than age related development.

*Sounds of Intent* in the Early Years provides the first iteration of a framework from which practitioners and parents can gauge where their children are musically and support and encourage them in their development. Further research is planned that involves: observing individual children's longitudinal musical development; setting up practitioner-groups to evaluate the framework (and to suggest modifications in the light of their experience); and to test the model against Johannella Tafuri's corpus of recordings of children in the early years vocalising and singing.

### **Keywords:**

early years, music, *Sounds of Intent*

## **Musical play and self-regulation: Exploring teacher-child and between-children partnerships**

**Antonia Zachariou**

Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge  
az292@cam.ac.uk

**Dr David Whitebread**

Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge  
dgw1004@cam.ac.uk

Musical play's universal and innate nature and its link to human's fundamental capacity for musicality deem it to a particularly significant type of play. Musical play is distinguished by its dependence on inter-subjectivity, its affordance for self-regulatory language and emotional self-regulation and its inherent social, rule-based nature (*inter alia* Marsh & Young, 2007, Bannan & Woodward, 2007). In a different strand of literature, these characteristics are argued to foster children's self-regulation. Self-regulation is the ability to monitor and control all cognitive, emotional, social and motivational aspects of behaviour and its importance in learning is well-documented in the literature (*inter alia* Bronson, 2000; Baumeister & Vohs, 2004). The present paper makes an innovative attempt to link musical play to self-regulation and presents a study aiming to explore the potential of musical play in affording the emergence of self-regulatory behaviours.

This mixed-methods, cross-sectional study was based on observational methods and developed within a socio-cultural framework. The study was implemented in Cyprus, and it involved observing 36 children (6 and 8 years old) during musical play sessions taking place in their music classes, where a repertoire of musical play activities was implemented. These observations were analysed, using a coding framework, to identify and code any self-regulatory behaviours and were later subjected to quantitative analysis.

This paper reports on the overall results which indicate that musical play provided a ground for self-regulatory behaviours to flourish. In consistency to the focus of this conference, this paper presents the findings related to partnerships during musical play. First it focuses on teacher-child partnerships and explores what happens (as far as regulatory behaviours are concerned) according to a) whether the teacher or the children initiate and lead a task and b) according to the teacher's level of involvement in a task. Then the paper considers between-children partnerships according to c) the musical play's social context (whether children were playing individually, in pairs or groups) and d) according to the social intentionality of the regulatory behaviours observed, that is whether the regulatory behaviours were intended towards regulating one's self, regulating somebody else, or sharing the regulation within a group.

### **Keywords:**

musical play, self-regulation, partnerships

# WORKSHOPS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

**No music: no language, no feelings, no motivation, no learning.**

## **Nuzhat Abbas**

Parents Early Education Partnership (PEEP), Oxford  
nuzhat.abbas@peep.org.uk

## **Julia Shay**

Parents Early Education Partnership  
Julia.shay@peep.org.uk

This workshop explores practice with parents and their young children under five. We have developed practical strategies for engaging with those parents whom services might consider 'hard to reach' or socially isolated for cultural and linguistic reasons. This demonstration aims to show how a range of activities may be both useful and less effective with families of South Asian origin. It considers the value of focusing on and drawing parents' attention to the importance of babies' early babbling, of recognising the musicality of interactions (Trevarthen, 2002), that are socially and culturally situated within home languages and the ways feelings and emotions are expressed. It moves on to examine how some elements of musical playfulness can help self-concept and can motivate parents to support their children with their early learning. We aim to build on the existing skills in playful interactions rather than assume a deficit model.

Participants will have the chance to experience a variety of creative activities that can be relevant to South Asian families, while drawing on their own experiences and contributing their own ideas. Activities will include singing, playing, improvising and moving, and learning and appreciating new languages too. We aim to see how these practical strategies for engaging with families may apply to a culturally diverse range of parents, through talking together about our own experiences of difference, vulnerability, work experiences and aspirations.

When practice is informed by research it is enriched not only by those whose knowledge base puts them in powerful positions of influence, but also by those whose views are sought and whose voices are listened to. Research shows that where families' existing views and practices are valued they are likely to engage in activities that are meaningful and enjoyable and to go on doing them at home and in their everyday lives with their children.

Implications can be drawn about how professionals who support families share information about musicality and the importance of acknowledging and encouraging parents' mother tongue in the best interests of young children's overall development.

## **Keywords:**

musicality, mother tongue, interactions, professionalism

## The craft of making and leading action songs

### **Barnaby Brown**

University of Cambridge, Faculty of Music

bjb1001@cam.ac.uk

www.barnabybrown.info

This practical session shares original material and insights born on the floor working with young children over the last twenty years, in classrooms and at home. Only the human voice and body are required, making the approach universally portable and accessible. As a composer-performer-educator, leading pre-school workshops at music festivals and theatres, I draw heavily on 'mouth music' traditions, or nonsense words from a variety of cultures. I began using action songs as a classroom music teacher in Rome, working with 300 children from 70 nations aged 3–11. My insights were honed over seven years leading the module 'Teaching Musics of the World' on the BEd (Music) programme at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. As my two boys grew up and I observed their musical experiences in and out of school, I began to ask: What makes a good action song? What makes a good leader of action songs?

This session will interweave practical exemplification with reflection and discussion on the symbiotic crafts of composition and leadership: the skill of creating and tailoring action songs for any environment, from the back of the car to a whole school assembly. As practitioners, how do we learn and disseminate the art of captivating young children, energizing everyone within earshot – children and adults – and sustaining high levels of satisfaction throughout a music-making session? What are the most valuable social impacts? Why do we not have a wonderful time more often?

Failure has been my best teacher. The action songs I have selected for this session include 'instrumental' intros and outros in contrasting musical styles, new lyrics to famous tunes, and arrangements of material from unfamiliar cultures. For example, we will weave a spell using Highland bagpipe chant, meditate and splash in the Ganges between bursts of Indian tabla chant, and jive with the mouse when the clock strikes five. Reflections on the craft of leadership will include: activating your eyes, hands and whole body; ways of getting young children empowered (composing and conducting); chunking material and responding to how brains work at different ages; the dynamics and shape of a session; and approaches to preparation. Having witnessed what is possible when action songs are treated as a virtuoso craft, I conclude that group music-making with young children is widely undervalued and underskilled. New appreciation for such a universal, low-cost, life-enhancing activity may prove to be vital in shaking up the mindset of professional musicians and policy makers.

### **Keywords:**

action songs, innovation, leadership

## **Let's move- let's ride - let's sing- let's laugh!**

**Margareta Burrell**

mhburrell53@googlemail.com

This workshop will be centred around a simple traditional British lap song, highlighting the rich variety of musical elements and how to explore the many possibilities of musical play it has to offer.

We will discover the music content in this simple rhyme, experience how its musical elements can be explored and used as a starting point, being mindful of the child's need to move in the space, to sing, to imitate, to explore and play. We see how a simple musical form can inspire playfulness, while laying a foundation to all musical development: Listening, inner hearing, language, movement, spatial and social awareness and expression.

The workshop will include quotations and show examples, which help us to reflect on the value of traditional songs and rhymes, highlighting the aims of interaction, communication and relationship building. We become aware of how we can strengthen trust and emotional bonds through spontaneous laughter and music making. Appealing to the fundamental musicality of the child through rhythmic and melodic elements via movement, the voice and physical touch, we can see how this kind of musical play can build the foundations of musical awareness and skills.

Through exploring the rhythmic and dramatic elements of this well known, traditional rhyme, we will be inspired to apply the same approach to other similar songs and rhymes and give the traditional rhymes the place they deserve.

### **Keywords:**

musicality, playfulness, movement

## Every Song Tells a Story

### Steve Grocott

Freelance

steve.grocott@btinternet.com

There is great, largely untapped, well of musicality among the people who work in Early Years settings. This practical workshop presents some tried and tested ways of realising this potential in the context of key, overarching theoretical ideas. It arises from thirty years' experience of making music and stories with children across the Early Years age range leading to a series of workshops for practitioners and parents at places that include the Institute of Education, and the Childminding Association. The emphasis is on providing strong material (irresistible songs, captivating rhymes, hilarious stories etc.) that connects with what people already know and teaching simple musical and improvising techniques that build practitioners' confidence in their own musicality. All four of the conference themes are addressed in the workshop.

The aims are to share tried and tested material that enhances children's music making and can be used to communicate important, useful ideas to practitioners on three themes:

- Music and language, as explored by Mithen (2005) and Kineally (2007);
- The parts and the whole, with reference to right/left brain theory as propounded by McGilchrist (2009);
- The idea of improvisation; looking at examples of essential templates as provided by stories, songs, games and rhymes and simple, effective ways of making variations with reference to phenomenology.

*"We have to find a way of thinking which splits the difference between 'finding' and 'making' (Wachterhauser cited in Bortoft (2012, p.24)*

This is a participatory workshop where music making will be experienced as well as discussed. Each item will illuminate key ideas that connect practice and theory. Engagement and laughter are guaranteed.

Humans are musical and will realise more of their musical potential with the appropriate encouragement. The benefits of this are well documented. The workshop offers specific activities and practices to encourage music making, overarching themes that inform the practice and starting points for a lifetime of musical discovery.

### Keywords

improvisation, phenomenology, body learning, story making

## Dance and movement in Early Childhood Music Education

### Elina Simes

Metropolia University of Applied Studies, Helsinki, Music Department,  
elina.simes@metropolia.fi

### Julia Hämäläinen

Metropolia University of Applied Studies, Helsinki, Music Department  
julia.hamalainen@metropolia.fi

The basic goals of Finnish early childhood music education can be divided into two categories: musical goals and holistic pedagogical goals. The musical goals include the perception of rhythm, melody, harmony, form, tone colour and dynamics. The holistic pedagogical goals of music education with young children are more numerous and complex, but we find these to be the most important ones:

- Social aims: being part of a group, adapting to rules, listening and respecting other people,
- Physical aims: developing motor skills, perception of the body image,
- Psychological aims: developing cognitive skills, recognizing and expressing emotions,
- Fostering a positive attitude towards music,
- Preserving and developing creative activities in the lives of children,
- Introducing children to Finnish folk music and tradition.

(Perkiö (2010:12); Marjanen(2009:390)

### Body Movement in Music

The fundamentals of using movement and dance in Finnish music playschools are based on the pedagogical ideas of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950), who combined music and body movement into a new way of learning music. His pedagogical ideas were based on the conceptions of the human being as a holistic entity and the holistic way of learning. His pedagogical goals included: developing the musicality of pupils holistically (body and mind combined); encouragement of creativity and improvisation, and focusing primarily on kinesthetic learning and the bodily experience of music (Juntunen, 2010:11,18).

Jaques-Dalcroze's ideas were followed by Carl Orff, who has also had a major influence on the development of Finnish music education.

In our workshop, we will introduce the conference audience to some of the working methods of Finnish early childhood music education through singing, movement and dance. Songs will be drawn from the Finnish folk music tradition, but the exercises are easy to apply to a variety of music pieces. Integrating movement and dance into music teaching facilitates the process of learning and makes it more comprehensive than a learning situation without body movement. Musical expression, the mood of the music, beat and musical forms are easier to perceive with the help of one's own body, which indisputably is our most important instrument (Perkiö, 2010).

### Keywords

body movement, pedagogical process, holistic learning