

MERYC2023

Making music as we grow up



**Proceedings of the 11th Conference
of the European Network of Music Educators
and Researchers of Young Children**

4th-7th July 2023

Barcelona, Spain

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11th Conference of the EuNet MERYC
European Network of Music Educators and Researchers of Young Children
Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain
4th - 7th July 2023

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Jèssica Pérez-Moreno
Claudia Gluschankof

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INTRODUCTION

It has been an enormous pleasure to host the first MERYC conference after the Covid pandemic. For a while music practitioners and researchers from all over the world have had to reinvent themselves. There were no other opportunities to exchange among the early childhood community than keeping virtual forums. But now, in 2023, we had the opportunity again to meet face to face and enjoy more than presentations under the topic 'Making music as we grow up: Current practices in Early Childhood Music Education.'

Music is part of our lives even before we are born, or even before our mother is, as the famous sentence by Kodály says. As we grow up different sorts of musical experiences accompany us: father singing us lullabies for getting asleep, family listening to music while traveling by car, rhythmic improvisation with fork and spoon on the table while waiting for breakfast, shared musical practices at school, just to mention some examples. All of these opportunities for participation are essential and meaningful in different ways. Having children as the focus of the activity, it aims to nurture them and to let them explore their musical being.

What do we know about this daily life and meaningful musical practices? How can we connect the informal with the more formal approaches? Researchers and practitioners who were interested in such questions within the field of music education for young children (aged 0-8) were gathered in Barcelona, Spain, at the Autonomous University of Barcelona from 4th to 7th July 2023.

All submitted abstracts have each been blind reviewed by two members of the review committee, which consists of experts in music education research and practice, psychology of music, and other relevant fields. We thank them all for their precious time and careful attention in reviewing the submissions. While taking the task of editing the proceedings of the conference both editors made the decision of not questioning the content of the full papers that voluntarily were sent. We agreed upon authors taking the responsibility to ensure the veracity and rigor of the content and, also, highlighting the need of cultural and political context perspective to fully understand the papers. Finally, we want to state that we are using English as lingua franca among the participants noticing it as first language just of the minority of them. Linguistic accuracy in the presented texts is also the responsibility of the authors.

We are very proud to present the proceedings of the 11th Conference of the European Network of Music Educators and Researchers of Young Children.

Jèssica Pérez-Moreno & Claudia Gluschankof
Editors

KEYNOTES

Music as a universal activity: The role it plays in the lives of people

Jaume Ayats

Senior Lecturer

Autonomous University of Barcelona

ENGLISH VERSION

What I have to contribute is actually very straightforward: It's a question of remembering the social function of this phenomenon that in the so-called Western world we call music, but which is conceived in very different ways in other cultures (despite our attempts to prevent it). Assuming you have a certain interest in what I have to say, it is you, as educators, who have to apply this social function to the relationship between adults and children; in what we call education or, at the risk of sounding optimistic, music education.

First and foremost, I would like to describe the human framework where I situate this thing, we call music. Humans are animals that make sounds. We mainly build our societies, our relationships and our most advanced creations through the use of sound, which is not to say that this approach is exclusive because, above all, sound is very much interwoven into the work of the other senses, especially touch and sight, and very strongly linked to the gestures and social movements of our bodies.

On being animals who make ourselves social thanks to the emission of sound, we rely in particular on one faculty and talent that we have developed: speech. On the other hand, as regards what we refer to as music in the Western world, this consists of a special production of sounds intended for situations in our social lives (and sometimes also in our personal lives) that we wish to highlight in a specific way. We use special arrangements of sounds – with or without speech – for situations that we want to underscore as unique and more highly valued. This function is achieved by constructing extremely complex encodings of sounds. But, as I see it, it is the personal and emotional implications they acquire that makes them valuable. Then, in very recent times, with the conversion of the activity to subject, or even object, we started calling it music.

So, the social life that music facilitates is what gives it its real value. No more and no less. Thus, it is a mediator that enables specific and emotionally decisive aspects of the social lives of individuals. This is the source of its power and the positive assessment it generally obtains (although music can also hurt people: it can be used to control, coerce and even torture them, and we must not forget that!). Of course, each society makes a different kind of music, which emerges from a different social history, different common past and different languages. Despite the music industry's unchecked attempts to unify musical tastes globally for financial gain, the world of music is as diverse as the differences and level of comprehension between languages. And so, I contend that diversity and creativity are vital, because they provide one of the few solutions for the future that we have as an animal species. On the other hand, it is no secret that in the case of musical activity we are dealing – and this is often implicit – with themes of values, desires and disappointments, and hopes for the

future. At the same time, we negotiate meanings, discuss or impose points of view, and relate to the human and natural environment.

In short, what we call “music” is actually a dense social activity that plays a very important role in the lives of people and communities; important because it generates meanings and experiences that are both social and personal. But this is certainly not because music has some kind of value in itself, nor because it has some kind of value located in the ideal world of “cultural objects”. And neither does it make us better by merely existing.

At this point, it comes to applying these reflections on music to the world you work in. The first thing that I think needs to be rooted out is the cultural reference of music as an object. We teachers are not oracles who come to teach or reveal to children the cultural values of a treasure we call music. If we start out with this mistaken idea in our society – considered “obvious”, for example, by so many educational planners, our work will produce very poor results. Above all they will not be very positive in terms of the educational, community and human advances I understand we’re aiming for. Here, I think we need to take a radical stance: If music is a mediator of special moments in the lives of human beings, music with children must be like this too: with a clear and tangible communicative and social purpose, based on an education where the shared activity shows how these situations are created, how we value them and how we transform them.

We are fortunate that, for many young children, music does not yet exist as an object. In other words, they have not yet established the boundaries separating it from speech, from play, from body gestures, from the relationships with the other senses. In children, music and these boundaries are not yet defined or objectified as they will be soon after. I think you understand this much better than I do because you work in this way every day, despite the demands placed on you from outside to do the opposite. But you also need to think about this problem and conceptualize it so that you can defend your lines of action against this pressure.

With you, there’s no need for me to go into the details of this pressure, but I would like to mention an example that has been bothering me a great deal recently: the way our social environment constructs music as a fixed object, activated at will, encapsulated and ready to be bought and sold (as organised by the music industry), and passed on to children out of context.

Here I would call on teachers to always think of their relations with children as interaction that serves as mediation within a specific, shared situation, and which has a specific personal goal. We cannot suppose that songs have value in themselves, in an abstract way. Or that they should be “taught” and disseminated as if they were bytes of information from an encyclopaedia. Rather, we have to create situations for singing and performing whose value and interest resides in a specific place at a specific time. We need to move away from the idea of the “immovable song” if we want to identify the reality of the action expressed by singing: this leads to change, transformations and adaptations to the where, when and why that has been the basis of all popular culture for many centuries. Songs have always been mixed up, put together and taken apart. They have to promote creativity and exploration, and in the world of children this is very important because it provides a basic path towards the development of interrelationships.

All in all, it is necessary to insist over and over again on the importance of singing and making sounds from objects together, face to face, in a real spatial relationship that is both a form of physical communication (with sound as part of it) and absolutely cultural. Bringing into play recordings, screens and other technological devices not only contributes to the petrification of sound and communication (and being unable to think in any other way), but also removes us from the place and the moment where we are. Instead, we receive an encapsulated object that is insensitive to our reactions and organised in another space-time continuum, in an imagined parallel reality. If we let this happen, we are on the way to rejecting precisely the foundations of what we imagine people's relationships to be and the construction of a shared communicational space – of course this may be more uncomfortable or sometimes tense, but it is real life. The excuse heard in some classrooms in this country is “I don't know how to sing and so it's better to let the children listen to a professional performance”. This is a totally malevolent excuse: what we are giving them is the suspension of real space and time, replacing it with a distant, artificially idyllic and completely non-educating world, which only allows children a passive role and blunts their experience of the immediate reality that surrounds them. They already often encounter this at home, on the street and at shows. I don't think it's necessary to repeat this at school. The education that will help them grow up is not like this (but don't worry, they will be much better at using technology than us, without teaching them anything for even five minutes!).

There are more interesting things to do than creating parallel worlds for them that reject dialogue. Through activities mediated by music we can build special social spaces; we can learn to express things, create sounds and transform them according to the demands of the place and the moment; we can vocally and physically explore our own sounds and those of the world around us (and relate them to our bodies and the other senses); we can explore music and language as an indivisible sum of culturally situated communication... what can I say that you don't know already and don't control?

Perhaps the solution is quite simple: It's about establishing, through musical communication, relationships between people that will necessarily be affective and performative, creative and innovative. The most normal, commonest and easiest thing in the world, something most of our grandparents and great-grandparents understood very well in their relations with their grandchildren.

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CATALAN VERSION

L'aportació que jo puc fer és, en realitat, molt simple. Es tracta només de recordar quina funció fa això que nosaltres en diem música (en el denominat món occidental) i que en altres cultures concebien de maneres ben diferents (cosa que nosaltres els hem anat impedit de fer). Sou vosaltres, els educadors, els que, atenent a si us interessen més o menys les meves reflexions, ho heu d'aplicar a la relació dels adults amb els infants; a això que en volem dir educació i, amb un xic d'atreviment, educació musical.

Primer de res cal que expliqui en quin marc humà jo situo això que en diem música. Els humans som animals sonors, que construïm la nostra societat, les nostres relacions i les nostres elaboracions més sofisticades sobretot a partir del treball amb el so (cosa que no vol dir que sigui exclusiu ni, sobretot, molt imbricat amb el treball dels altres sentits, especialment del tacte i la vista, i molt fortament lligat als gestos i als moviments socials dels nostres cossos).

Aquests animals que ens fem socials gràcies a l'elaboració del so, ho fem sobretot a través d'un artifici que hem desenvolupat: la parla. Ara bé, en el món occidental denominem música a una elaboració especial dels sons destinada a situacions de la vida social (a vegades també de la individual) que volem remarcar de manera específica. Tenim ordenacions especials dels sons —amb l'articulació de la parla o sense— destinades a situacions que volem remarcar com a singulars i de més valor. Aquesta funció la fem construint codificacions dels sons altament sofisticades i, al meu entendre, valuoses per les implicacions personals i emocionals que adquireixen. D'això, fent, en èpoques molt recents, el pas de l'activitat a subjecte o a objecte, n'hem dit música.

La música, per tant, té el valor que li atorga la vida social que permet fer. Ni més ni menys. És, doncs, un mediador que fa possible aspectes concrets i emocionalment decisius de la vida social dels individus. D'aquí li ve la força i la valoració positiva que generalment li atribuïm (encara que fent música també es pot fer mal a les persones: es poden controlar, forçar i fins torturar, i cal no oblidar-ho!). Això sí, cada societat fa músiques diferents perquè parteix d'històries socials diferents, de passats comuns diferents i de llengües diferents. La diferència entre músiques —abans del desafortat intent de la indústria musical de forçar, per interessos econòmics, gustos musicals comuns a tot el planeta— és tan diversa com la diferència i la comprensió entre llengües. Per tant, en la meua aproximació, la diversitat i la creació és bàsica, ja que és una de les poques sortides de futur que ens queda com a espècie animal. D'altra banda, no és cap secret que en l'acció musical —i de manera sovint implícita— estem tractant temes de valors, de desitjos i de desil·lusions, de voluntats de futur, alhora que negociem significats, discutim o imposem punts de vista i ens relacionem amb l'entorn (humà i natural).

En resum, allò que en diem 'música' és, en realitat, una activitat social densa que té molta importància en la vida de les persones i de les comunitats, però que la té perquè condueix significats i experiències socials i, alhora, personals. De cap manera perquè la música sigui un valor en si mateixa, ni perquè sigui un valor situat en el món ideal dels "objectes de la cultura" (ni perquè per si mateixa ens faci millors).

Ara toca aplicar-ho al món on vosaltres treballem. La primera idea que crec que cal extirpar és la de la música-objecte com a referència cultural. Els ensenyants no som profetes que anem a ensenyar o a mostrar als infants els valors culturals d'un tresor que denominem música. Si partim d'aquesta idea falsa de la nostra societat –i alhora considerada 'evident' per tantes planificacions educatives–, el resultat de la nostra feina serà ben escàs, i fins i tot ben poc positiu per al resultat educatiu, comunitari i humà que entenc que cerquem. Aquí crec cal ser radical: si la música és un mediador de moments especials en les vides humanes, l'activitat musical amb els infants ha de ser això: una activitat amb una clara i palpable finalitat comunicativa i social, una educació que mostri en l'activitat compartida com es creen aquestes situacions, com les valorem i com les transformem.

Tenim la sort que per a molts infants en les edats inicials de la vida, la música encara no existeix com a objecte i, per tant, encara no estan establerts els límits amb la parla, amb el joc, amb els gestos del cos, amb la relació amb els altres sentits. Les músiques i els límits encara no estan separats ni objectualitzats com sí que ho seran poc temps després. Diria que això ho sabeu molt més bé que no pas jo i que ho exerciu cada dia, malgrat les pressions en sentit contrari que rebeu de l'exterior. Però també cal que ho penseu i que ho conceptualitzeu per tal de poder argumentar la vostra acció davant d'aquestes pressions.

No caldria que us parlés dels detalls d'aquestes pressions, però no em resisteixo a parlar d'un cas que, darrerament m'atabala: com el nostre entorn social construeix la música com a objecte fixat, activable a voluntat, encapsulat i apte per ser comprat i venut (tal i com vehicula la indústria musical), i el transmet als infants fora de context.

Aquí faig una crida a pensar sempre la relació amb els infants com una interacció que serveix de mediació dins d'una situació concreta, compartida i que té una finalitat personal concreta. No podem pensar en cançons que tenen un valor en si, de manera abstracta (i que cal 'ensenyar', fer conèixer com si fossin bites d'informació enciclopèdica), sinó en situacions de cantar i de tocar que prenen el valor i l'interès del que estem fent en un lloc i en un moment concret. Apartem-nos de la idea 'cançó fixada' per trobar la realitat de l'acció cantada: això permet canvis, transformacions i adaptacions a l'on, al quan i al perquè que ha estat el fonament de tota la cultura popular des de fa molts segles. Les cançons es barregen, es fan i es desfan, i han de permetre creació i exploració: això és molt important en el món infantil com a camí bàsic del desenvolupament de les interrelacions.

O sigui, cal insistir fins a l'extenuació amb la importància del fet de cantar i fer sonar objectes cara a cara, en una relació corporal i espacial que és alhora comunicació física (amb el so com a part de la física) i del tot cultural. Activar enregistraments, pantalles o artefactes tecnològics, no tan sols contribueix a la fixació fossilitzada del so i de la comunicació (i a no ser capaços de pensar-ho d'altra manera), sinó que ens sostreu del lloc i del moment on som, ens envia un objecte encapsulat que és insensible a les nostres reaccions i que està disposat en un altre espai-temps, en una imaginada realitat paral·lela. Cedir en això és a l'arrel de cedir en els fonaments mínims d'allò que imaginem en les relacions de les persones i en la construcció d'un espai compartit i dialogat (encara que sigui més incòmode o, a voltes tens, però és la vida real). L'excusa que se sent en algunes aules del nostre país és "jo no sé cantar i els proveeixo d'una interpretació de qualitat". És una excusa del tot

malèvola: allò que estem proveint és una suspensió de la creació d'un espai-temps real substituït per un món llunyà, treballadament idíl·lic i del tot deseducador, que només posa a l'infant davant de la passivitat i de la suspensió de la realitat directa que l'envolta. Això ja ho té sovint a casa, al carrer i als espectacles. No crec que calgui insistir-hi a l'escola. L'educació que el farà créixer no és aquesta (no patiu, en tecnologies seran molt millors que nosaltres, sense ensenyar-los-en ni cinc minuts!).

Tenim coses més interessants per fer que crear-los mons paral·lels exclosos del diàleg: podem construir cada espai social singular a través de les activitats mediades amb música; podem aprendre a dir, a crear els sons i a transformar-los segons les voluntats del lloc i del moment; podem explorar vocalment i corporalment els sons propis i els del món que ens envolten (i relacionar-los amb els cossos i amb els altres sentits); podem explorar música i llengua com un conjunt inseparable de comunicació culturalment situada... que us he de dir que no sapigau i no controleu?

Potser la cosa és ben fàcil: es tracta d'instal·lar, gràcies a la comunicació musical, una relació entre persones que forçosament serà afectiva i interpretativa, creativa i innovadora. Allò més normal, més comú i més fàcil que molts dels nostres avis i besavis tenien tan clar en la relació amb els seus néts.

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‘Alexa! Play Looby Loo’: Young Children Growing up with Music

Susan Young

Centre for Research in Early Childhood, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Across Europe, the babies, toddlers and young children with whom we work musically bring with them a rich background of musical experiences; what is often termed ‘funds of knowledge’. If education is conceived as a dialogue between what the children know, can do musically and what is meaningful for them, and the worlds of music that we, as adults, can introduce to them, then we need to understand their funds of knowledge in order to connect with them (Young, 2003; 2023). Yet - because the musical worlds of contemporary young children are changing rapidly and profoundly – we cannot assume to know their funds of knowledge. Their musical worlds are changing as a result of innovations in digital technology and the media they enable; the movement of populations internationally creating cultural diversity; political systems of many countries that result in increasing numbers of children living in poverty and perhaps due also to environmental aspects such as diet, air and noise pollution, disease and mental health. Because of these profound changes, understanding what children bring to our music sessions needs to be constantly researched and revised. This is the main theme of this presentation.

Advances in digital technology are also enabling new methods of research into young children’s everyday musical lives, as other papers in these proceedings demonstrate (see also e.g. Dosaiguas, Pérez-Moreno, Gluschankof & Costa-Giomi, 2021; Mendoza & Fausey, 2021). One of the most valuable innovations has been the use of small, wearable digital recording devices, known to many by the commercial name of LENA. These capture the child’s sonic environment throughout the whole day and careful analysis of these recordings is revealing much new information about their home musical environments (HME). A number of studies of HME are now accumulating and we are starting to understand more about the types of musical experience, its quantity and qualities and to arrive at some hypotheses as to how the very youngest children are enculturated into music in westernised home and family environments.

Digital technologies

Recent innovations in technology are changing the nature of musical experience for young children and particularly the ways that music can be embedded in children’s everyday family lives (Burroughs, 2017). A young child may wake to a mobile playing music above its cot, move into a family room with the TV playing, sit in a baby chair with touchscreen tablet attached and play with toys that produce melodies, sounds and words at the touch of buttons. Young children - even babies – can access a touchscreen on phone or tablet (Lovato & Waxman, 2016). They will see parents using touchscreen devices and know that these are objects imbued with high cultural importance. Touchscreens give direct access to mixed media (sound, visuals, animations, language, narrative) and even very young children quickly acquire some agency in using these technologies (Marsh et al, 2021). How often have we witnessed parents hand their phone to their child in order to occupy them when travelling, shopping or in waiting areas?

In the recent studies of babies' and toddlers' home musical environments, toys that incorporate digitised music – together with sounds and language – were frequently heard (e.g. Mendoza & Fausey, 2021). Typically the toys produce a thin, synthesised instrumental sound and the musical repertoire consists of traditional nursery rhymes, folk tunes and light, popular 'classics'. These tunes are juxtaposed in medleys, somewhat curious combinations of different genres of music – as for example one toy which played, in sequence, Old MacDonald had a Farm, Ode to Joy, and Polly, Wolly Doodle. Although the LENA studies provide sound only, the digitised musical content obviously belongs to the chunky, rounded, brightly coloured plastic toys, with which children are typically provided to play with at home. The HME studies reveal that what the baby hears from toys is typically disjointed short sections of synthesized instrumental music, that reoccur at different times of the day. What babies and young children are learning from these disjointed bits of tune, we can only begin to hypothesise, but for certain they must be hearing and absorbing repeat snatches of these melodies and sounds.

One important point to add here is that recruitment of families to studies that investigate the HME is difficult, and thus far families belonging to a small demographic of middle class, white, educated families, mainly in the USA and Spain, have been studied. Aware of the narrowness of recruitment in existing studies, Sulkin and Brodsky carried out a study using a checklist of questions to explore the home music engagement among families of minority culturally closed communities in Israel and found unanticipated and informative differences compared to the findings from their majority Israeli communities (Sulkin & Brodsky, 2021). I return to the implications when I discuss diversity in more depth.

Alongside the melodies the toys often give verbal instructions such as, 'play me', 'press the button', in the expectation that this will support children to play independently. The toys are designed for children to play with alone, and safely, indoors. This reflects the expectation of individual play, rather than social play due to a range of factors, including small families (so young children likely have no sibling playmates, or perhaps only one sibling); the reduction of outdoor, collective play and the increasing demands on parents to combine childcare with work. There is also an educative dimension to toys that may be incorporated into the lyrics of songs such as counting, reciting colours, or naming items such as animals. The educative emphasis reflects a middle class parenting culture in which parents perceive their role as one of providing the first steps to school-based learning (Lareau, 2003). From interviewing English parents of young children between the ages of 6 months to 3 years, all their children had such toys yet the parents betrayed ambivalent attitudes towards them. They wanted to justify them to me; *'it's awful isn't it, but she loves it, so we let her have it sometimes, sometimes I just need to get on with cooking . . . '*

In my reading of the studies interested in the Home Musical Environment (HME), they have yet to adapt to the implications of the comparatively new practices for young children's ways of engaging musically in digitised musical environments and conjecture what they might be gaining and learning from enculturation in this environment. The majority of studies focus on the traditional activities of singing and vocalisations, or simply logging the quantity and timing of music heard. It is important in my view that attention is also turned to the multi-modal digital media that children are accessing via digital technologies.

Digital Media

The majority of children growing up in contemporary homes access digital media as part of everyday activities (Young & Wu, 2019). There is much work by literacy researchers who are interested in digital media (e.g. Kumpulainen, Sairanen & Nordström, 2020), but this interest has not extended to music. The literacy researchers may note the inclusion of music in media, but with little more than a passing mention (see e.g. Gillen, Flewitt & Sandberg, 2020). There is a need to develop interdisciplinary understandings of children, media and culture that include music as one interwoven, multi-modal element. We might also consider how popular music constructs young children in a homogenous and restricted image of early childhood; as innocent, happy, cute and protected (Maloy, 2021).

Very little research attention has been given to young children's popular music and yet it is part of everyday life for the majority of children. The theme tune of a popular British children's animated TV programme for young children, the *Twirly Woos*, is a representative example of a common genre of children's music (see recordings on YouTube). It has been produced inexpensively, by a performer-composer. The tune is folk style, simple and short, played on an acoustic instrument, the guitar, and it has a singable, short-phrased melody. The top line melody is carried by a glockenspiel, or, in reality, probably a light, high-pitched instrumental setting on a digital keyboard. Novelty sounds and animal voices are included. The singing voice is 'polite', clear-toned and precisely enunciated.

Disney tunes are also a staple of young children's popular music culture. The song 'Let it Go' from the well-known Disney film *Frozen* has been streamed millions of times, and remains the most popular of the songs from films intended for children. Unlike the children's folk music genre, the production costs are high and sophisticated. What is it about Disney tunes that makes them so popular? They have a strong melody, often upbeat, and carry a strong emotional message that combines with high quality, captivating visuals. The emotional undercurrent to *Let it Go*, as with other Disney songs, contrasts with the saccharine, innocuous style of much music written for children and contrasts with the restricted, mediated image of young children I mentioned above. That children are drawn to Disney songs may indicate something important about the qualities and characteristics of music that are meaningful for them, even at quite young ages.

Opinions about the widespread influence of Disney vary, however. Giroux, writing in 1999 complained about what he termed the 'Disnification' of children's popular culture and criticized the corporate, commodified influence on early childhood. In contrast Kathy Marsh (2008) illustrates the frequent appearance of Disney songs in young children's musical preferences and spontaneous performances. She suggested that children's unlimited access to popular music models has formed a new mode of oral transmission in socio-musical behaviour (ibid). Marsh warned that to ignore popular music's role in young children's culture is to risk disregarding a major aspect of their contemporary environment. Yet, again, surprisingly, there is little consideration of how this wealth of popular music is woven into young children's musical lives and identities, the consequences for their musical learning and how educators should adapt.

Disparity

Neoliberal politics, to varying degrees across European countries, have resulted in increasing disparity between rich and poor. Children in many families in European families are growing up in poverty. We know that the consequences of poverty - poor diet, poor housing, stress, polluted environments - has many negative effects. We know that private early childhood music sessions are mostly accessed by affluent, middle class, European heritage families (Evans, Dean & Byett, 2022). We know too that there are different parenting styles according to class, as well as culture (Lareau, 2003). Early childhood music sessions are shaped by the parenting culture of middle class parents (Young, 2017) and developing models of practice that are more accommodating to diverse parenting styles remains an urgent and challenging issue. The questions that need addressing are what can we do as educators to mitigate the effects of poverty and to increase accessibility?

Diversity

The movement of populations across and into Europe as a consequence of war and economic pressures is resulting in a changing demographic of families in all countries. Anthropology and ethnomusicology offer methodological approaches well suited to understanding the cultural and social worlds of families, but tend to be applied to research in musical communities in 'far off', 'exotic' cultures, rather than close to home. Lucy Durán's ethnomusicology project, *Growing into Music* is a prime example of an ethnomusicological study of children growing up in musical communities in different countries of the world (Durán & Penn, 2019). Psychology remains the dominant approach for studying children and their musical lives 'close to home'. The result is lopsided versions of what it is to grow up with music. There are some exceptions, for example in the work of ethnomusicologist-educators such as Patricia Shehan-Campbell (2010) and Kathy Marsh (2008) who have provided detailed accounts of the musical lives of young children in everyday situations informed by their ethnomusicological perspectives and then go on to suggest implications for educational practice.

How do we as music educators respond to diversity and variability? What might we assume are norms, but are based on Euro-Western assumptions? One example is taken from a case study of one-year-old Aya carried out by Emma Powell (undated). Aya belonged to a Muslim family living in a city in central England and, like all children, she experienced one musical environment at home and another in her nursery. Her mother talked of children's animation programmes produced for Muslim children – for example *Mini-Muslims* – and these offer a mix of Western-style children's songs and the modes and rhythms of Quran recitation. However the gap between the musical worlds of home and nursery for children like Aya, brought up in a Muslim home, is likely to be wider than for children brought up in, say, white British middle class homes. The work of bridging that gap is left to the children themselves (cf. Ripani, 2023). So how do music educators accommodate bi-cultural musical identities in their work, and how are children belonging to varied musical heritages helped to navigate those gaps? This becomes an even more complex issue in super-diverse settings – increasingly found in urban locations across Europe - where the cultural diversity of the children attending is very wide.

The consideration of cultural diversity also raises the interesting question of parenting practice. Heidi Keller (2007), from anthropological studies of parenting styles, has identified a distinction

between 'distal' parenting and 'proximal' parenting. Although the distinction is simplistically drawn, and many parenting styles incorporate elements of both, it is nevertheless useful in bringing to attention some characteristics that have been assumed, by psychology, to be universal, but are in reality culturally determined. Distal parenting, prevalent in urban educated middle-class families of Western cultures is mainly face-to-face. This style emphasizes independence and separateness, with more physical and emotional distance between the parent and the infant. Parents use baby carriers of all kinds, do not prolong breast-feeding and babies usually sleep on their own. Proximal parenting, prevalent in rural, low-educated farmer families, prioritises body contact and body stimulation, co-sleeping, extended breast-feeding, prompt responses to infant signals, and a focus on relatedness, obedience, and hierarchy. Where distal parenting rather than proximal parenting style is the norm there is a strong focus on vocalisations, rather than embodiment. Hence the strong interest in theories of musicality that emphasise the role of mother-infant, face-to-face vocalisations as the source of early musical learning, but a source that is culturally determined, not universal, as often proposed. Interestingly Lucy Durán, from her ethnomusicological study, proposed that the children who participated in her study absorbed the body language of music first, together with its timbre and stylistic, expressive characteristics. So it is interesting to conjecture what studies of the contemporary home musical environment, immersing children in musical worlds enabled by digital technologies and experiencing contemporary and culturally diverse parenting practices, will reveal about the way children participate in and learn music.

Conclusion

We are learning much about the musical lives of young children growing up on which to build our theories of early childhood music education. However psychological theories still dominate, and the other disciplinary perspectives, particularly from anthropology, ethnomusicology, sociology and childhood studies can combine with psychology to offer richer, more rounded and context sensitive understandings. Too many of our theories are based on research with so-called WEIRD families (Western, educated, industrialised, rich and democratic) and this leads to certain upbringing practices being given more attention, such as vocalisations, play with objects/toys, even to the point of assuming them to be universals. We need to understand differences and similarities between and among families. Although I acknowledge, as I know from experience, that it remains difficult to recruit a wider representation of families and children in research samples. But we need to strive to expand representation. The impact of digital technologies, particularly touchscreens that enable agency and give access to multi-media items, need to be included in studies of the home musical environment, together with understanding the constructions and commodifications of early musical childhoods through musical media. The complex, multifaceted, multi-heritage musical ecologies of young children must be understood by educators so that our pedagogical approaches connect, complement and enhance in ways that are meaningful and musically empowering.

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FULL PAPERS

Current Practices and Educators Needs in Preschool Music Education in Croatia

Blaženka Bačlija Sušić

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Teacher Education

Zagreb, Croatia

blazenka.baclijasusic@ufzg.hr

Abstract

Music education represents an important element of preschool curricula that encourages educators to daily implement music activities (Barret et al., 2021; Bautista et al., 2022). Regardless, music education practices in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings are rarely in line with the set curriculum frameworks because of the limited preparation of educators for the implementation of musical activities in educational practice and their need for additional education in music (Bačlija Sušić, 2018; Baum, 2017; Barrett et al., 2019; Bautista et al., 2022; Lau & Grieshaber, 2018). Accordingly, it is important to spread consciousness and raise awareness among educational policymakers, educators, and kindergarten principals about the importance of better preparedness of educators for conducting musical activities with children (Bautista et al., 2022).

In order to improve the quality of staff-child interactions that is connected with the quality of child development and learning (OECD, 2018, 2019; Eurofound, 2015), along with the initial music education during regular studies, it is important to provide an opportunity for additional music education to ECEC educators as a type of their life-long learning. Besides the mentioned factors and adequate material/environmental conditions in institutional settings, one of the most important problems in music education in the ECEC context in Croatia is the lack of cooperation of ECEC educators with music experts. Such type of cooperation could contribute to the improvement of preschool children's music education as well as to the well-being of children and ECEC educators, as the basic aim of ECEC education.

Keywords: ECEC educators; ECEC music practice; music activities; music experts; preschool children

The importance of music activities in child's development and in ECEC curricula

Music activities are an important part of the child's overall development that is highlighted by educational policies and contemporary Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) curricula in most countries (Barrett et al., 2021; Beaver et al., 2017; Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2019; Putkinen et al., 2015). Therefore, there is a need for the implementation of music activities in educational practice as well as a need to encourage educators to implement music activities on a daily basis (Bautista et al., 2022, Barret et al., 2021). Nevertheless, music education practices in ECEC settings are rarely aligned with specific curricular frameworks, as early childhood educators have limited preparation to implement music activities in educational practice. Conducted research indicates the expressed need of ECEC educators for additional music education (Bačlija Sušić, 2018; Baum, 2017; Barrett et al., 2019, Bautista et al., 2022; Lau & Grieshaber, 2018). Accordingly, it is important to spread consciousness and raise awareness among educational policymakers, educators, and kindergarten principals about the importance of better preparedness of ECEC educators for conducting musical activities with children (Bautista et al., 2022). All of the above furthermore implies educators' insecurity when conducting musical activities inadequate preparation and lack of confidence while

implementing music activities while working with children (Andang'o & Mugo, 2007; Barrett et al., 2019; Baum, 2017; Chen-Hafteck & Zhuoya, 2008; Digby, 2020; Hash, 2010; Ilari, 2007; Kulset & Halle, 2019; Koutsoupidou, 2010; Lau & Grieshaber, 2018; Liao & Campbell, 2016). These findings can be attributed to a number of reasons, such as neglecting music education within education programs of students, future ECEC educators and pre-service educators (Letts, 2015), insufficient education preparation of ECEC educators during their professional practice, their additional lifelong learning etc.

An unsatisfactory level of ECEC educator's musical competencies can also stem from some socio-cultural and educational prejudice (Welch, 2021) as well as from conviction that musical ability is a somewhat rare gift within the general population (Lehmann et al., 2007; Ruddock & Leong, 2005). It furthermore also affects insufficient recognition of the importance of ECEC educators' music competencies that are necessary for conducting musical activities with children as well as an insufficient level of quantity and quality of ECEC educators' music education preparedness and capabilities (Bainger, 2010). In addition to that, one of the fundamental problems in the context of ECEC and primary school education represents the difference between general, subject knowledge, which includes different subject areas of educators and teachers, and expertise, specialist knowledge and depth of knowledge of music teachers as music experts (Welch, 2021).

Croatian music ECEC practice

The Croatian Preschool Education Act (Croatian Parliament, 2022) defines the structural and organizational features of the ECEC system in Croatia. ECEC includes children aged from 6 months to usually 7 years old. Only the last pre-primary school year is mandatory when formal education begins for all children. Depending on their estimated functional status, some children have a delayed start to primary school.

The second most important document that includes principles of educational curricula for children's learning, development and well-being is the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education (Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, 2015). According to the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competencies for lifelong learning (Text with EEA relevance) (2018/C 189/01), Croatian National Curriculum (2015) focuses on a competency-based approach to education.

As an integral part of the National Curriculum (2015) music education and activities are part of the eighth Cultural awareness and expression competence. Music activities are a constituent element of an integrated approach to preschool music education in which all segments within the educational process are connected and integrated regarding content and time of implementation (National Curriculum, 2015). Through such an integrated approach various ways of children's creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions using different media, including music, literature, visual arts, etc. are encouraged. In addition, the importance of understanding the developmental identity and cultural heritage within the world of cultural diversity is emphasized.

Conducted research in Croatia also indicated the need for more representation of musical activities in preschool educational practice. Although the conducted research shows that educators assess their basic methodical and musical competencies as high, at the same time they expressed the need for further development of their practical musical competencies (Bačlija Sušić, 2018; Vidulin 2016). Research results also pointed out that the successful implementation of a quality music program in kindergartens largely depends on the educator's sense of personal self-efficacy in conducting musical activities working with children (Herzog, Bačlija Sušić & Županić Benić, 2018).

In addition, the findings of some research do not indicate a connection between attending classical music concerts, additional music education, singing in a choir and years of work experience with attitudes towards musical activities (Dobrota, 2019). Therefore, along with numerous other forms of support, it is particularly important to develop educators' and policy leaders' awareness of the importance and numerous benefits of music in a child's overall development. It can also contribute to the stimulation and development of the educator's interest and motivation in acquiring and developing musical competencies (Bačlija Sušić, 2018).

The educational policies and quality of ECEC

There are several challenges in educational practice (OECD, 2020) that contribute to the quality of ECEC and that also affect the problem of ECEC educators' music education in Croatia and other European countries. A number of international organizations and conducted research pointed out well-educated and competent staff as the main factor in sustaining ECEC quality (Milotay, 2016, Sharmahd et al., 2017; OECD, 2006; UNICEF, 2008). Proposal for key principles of a Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (2014) identifies professionalization of the workforce and supportive working conditions as key factors contributing to high-quality provision. Obtained results of the research indicated that the quantity and quality of in-service training opportunities available to ECEC staff currently are not sufficient to ensure that all staff, including assistants, are adequately supported in fulfilling their roles (Lazzari, 2017). The Council Recommendation on high-quality ECEC systems (2019) invites Member States to support the professionalisation of ECEC staff including leaders. In order to sustain the professionalisation of individual practitioners and teams, several initiatives can be undertaken at the level of ECEC institutions. Designing a lifelong learning strategy for the ECEC sector, which needs to be supported by investment and developed in partnership with key stakeholders (ECEC and training providers, Universities, and local authorities) is necessary. There is a need to design programs starting with staff learning needs. Along with additional education for ECEC educators in working with children from diverse backgrounds, and children with special needs, there is a need for additional training in music education. Hence, considering that participation in continuing professional development is the most consistent predictor of quality staff-child interactions, and also has direct links to child development and learning (OECD, 2018), it is important to enable additional music education for ECEC educators. In addition to it, OECD (2019) and Eurofound (2015) pointed out that the quality of ECEC is also related to the initial education of ECEC educators during their higher education.

Conclusion

Although, according to the analysis of the study programs, ECEC students from Croatia, in contrast to, for example, the neighbouring countries of Slovenia and Serbia, have continuously and successively represented music courses during the entire undergraduate study and the first semester of the graduate study (Bačlija Sušić & Miletić, 2019), additional and continuous improvement of study programs is needed.

According to OECD (2018) recommendations, there is also a lack of professional support in music education, as well as quantity and quality of additional training opportunities in music education, specialised within ECEC. In addition to continuing professional development, one of the important missing factors is the cooperation of ECEC educators with music experts who would visit kindergartens and help educators in conducting music activities with children concurrently

developing their music competencies and self-confidence in conducting musical activities with children.

Unlike music experts who have expertise and depth of knowledge of music, ECEC educators have general, subject knowledge that includes different subject areas (Welch, 2021) as well as they are experts who know the laws of early and preschool child development. Thereby, the role of ECEC educators and the manner in which music is presented to children as well as the availability of various artefacts are also important factors in institutional settings (Schei & Eriksen Ødegaard, 2020) that impact and contribute to music education in ECEC setting. Therefore, cooperation between ECEC educators and music teachers could represent the missing factor that can contribute to the improvement of early childhood music education in Croatia.

Last but not least, taking into account all mentioned problems and factors that affect music education in the ECEC context, children's learning and developmental needs, relevant societal developments (i.e., working with heterogeneous groups of children), rights of the child, conducting music activities with children can contribute to their and educators' well-being as the most important outcome of ECEC.

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Babelut Parcours: non-verbal sensory interaction between generations in an immersive artistic context

Loes Bruyninckx

Artistic coördinator, Musica Impulse Centre

Pelt, Belgium

loes.bruyninckx@musica.be

Abstract

Babelut Parcours creates a sensory, artistic and participatory musical environment for babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their (grand)parents. Non-verbal musical theater, mini-workshops and sound installations flow together and invite everyone involved to interact. Besides an immersive artistic production around a central theme and aimed at this specifically mixed audience, the project acts as a laboratory to explore the possibilities of non-verbal, sensory interaction between generations. Hence its relevance to education.

Indeed, the format shows how learning processes occur as a result of shared experiences between generations, rather than being the outcome of planned skills and knowledge transmission activities. The 'vehicle' for all this to instigate, is the shared artistic experience of contemporary composed music, and the artists who actively interact with all participants in a way that reflects aspects of early mother-infant interaction.

Built around a commissioned composition, the format allows each participant to find their own leads from the whole experience. A baby may be overwhelmed by the low timbres of the cello, perhaps a toddler is fascinated by the colors of the lighting and laughs at a funny sound. Siblings and (grand)parents may enjoy the composition itself performed by high level musicians. For everyone, all senses are on alert, and on each participant the performance has a different and evolving impact.

In the workshops, the audience can recall and process the sensory input by playing with the musical material of the performance themselves. Many different modes of play appear: some children like to discover everything on their own, while others like to explore together with their parents or siblings, still others just like to observe.

The musicians and dancers play along nonverbally, giving musical impulses or trying to engage in musical interaction. Not by forcing anything on the children, but by joining in the spontaneous play.

The whole approach flows from our extensive work in nurseries and after-school programs and leads to new perspectives in education.

A non-verbal and a non-linear approach can flow on seamlessly in working with music school students as well. Experiential learning leads to new artistic perspectives.

Keywords: Artistic environment, interactive performance, parent-infant interactions, exploration, intergenerational play.

Introduction

This text is part of the MERYC23 Symposium about the Erasmus+ SenseSquared project (2022-2024) highlighting the importance of early years 'musical' interaction as inspiration for an education for the future. This contribution focuses on the non-verbal, sensory interaction among baby's, their caregivers and artists in the context of Babelut Parcours, a project of Musica Impulse Centre (BE). We want to show that this non-formal artistic approach can lead to new perspectives in formal education.

Have you ever thought about how a performance for the youngest can incorporate aspects of early parent-baby interaction? Or even better, let's take the artistic aspects of a performance and compare them with the baby-parent interactions. If we were to integrate these aspects into our educational system, what would be the opportunities to make education more satisfying and rewarding for both children and teachers? Would it give more space to the children and teachers to explore their creativity? Would it open up more diverse ways to achieve a particular goal? How would it change the relationship among the children and their teacher?

Creating an artistic environment

Musica offers artistic environments to young children in a format called Babelut Parcours. Babelut Parcours creates a sensory, artistic and participatory musical environment for babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their (grand)parents. The experience of non-verbal musical theater, mini-workshops and sound installations flow together and invite interaction from all involved. In addition to an immersive artistic production around a central theme and aimed at this specifically mixed audience, the project acts as a laboratory to explore the possibilities of non-verbal, sensory interaction between generations.

The process of creating

Till now, we've created three editions: Gold, Igloo and ZIMZUM. At the moment a fourth edition called @ASTRA, is being prepared. How do we start creating this Babelut Parcours? I'll take you through the creation process and tell you about all the steps and all the things we take into account while creating for a young audience.

First we look with an open mind to the artistic field. Who would be interesting to work with, who's open for creating and performing for the very young? This can be an ensemble or a director or certain musicians. Besides them, we always work with a composer. You might think: 'Why a composer? You can use any existing music for the little ones. 'Yes that's true, but babies and toddlers are worthy of a new composition being created especially for them. Newly composed, contemporary composed music is not only for grown ups, the youngest can appreciate it as well. We've worked with Daniel Tanson and composers Hans Vercauteren and Lente Verelst, collective Down the rabbit hole, composer Frédéric Verrières and for the new edition this year I'm co-creating with Helene Bracke and Diederik Glorieux who's doing the composition design based on Wim Henderickx's music. The latter was originally involved in the project but unfortunately passed away in the midst of the process.

In brainstorm sessions we discuss various topics that could be interesting for the new parcours. Together with the core team we look for a common theme to work around. A thread that connects scenography, music, materials and so on from the very start. The scenography of the performance is very important for us. We like an abstract, minimalistic decor leaving much room for the imagination. Where possible, the elements of the decor are made to play with or can be used as instruments by the musicians. Of course, on a physical level, everything has to be 'baby-proof' so that no child can hurt itself. Young children experience a performance with all their senses, not only with their ears or eyes, but with their whole body. That's why we try to appeal to all the senses in the materials we provide.

The musicians and other artists who will perform Babelut Parcours stay in residence at Musica's headquarters for five weeks. In this way, Musica is able to guide the artists in the special requirements for working with the very young. Besides practicing the musical performance, the team works on movement, body language, expression, etc. Musica organizes a series of try-outs in order for the artists to experiment further with a real audience of children and caregivers and to refine the whole performance.

The elements of Babelut Parcours

Prologue

What about the format itself? How is it structured?

Each edition starts with a prologue. This is an essential part. Here every child and caregiver gets the feeling of being welcome and fully accepted. This is achieved by creating a soft, calm atmosphere in the foyer. The musicians playfully and interactively introduce short elements of the performance to come, like specific gestures, objects, an intriguing rhythm or just a few tones or sounds. Playing hide and seek behind a huge wooden block or playing on a self made harp together with a toddler.

Young children feel that the environment is safe, that the musicians can be trusted, and even fun to play with. The children share these experiences with their siblings and caregivers, while discovering the musical elements presented by the musicians. This will act as anchor points later on. These interactions refer to the early parent-infant communication and are full of playful elements like reciprocal imitation, repetition, variation, contrast and 'surprise at novelty' (Dissanayake, 2001). Malloch and Trevarthen call such interactions 'communicative musicality'. In every musical style you can find these principles again. In this way you could say that music, in general, is based on principles of the early parent-infant interactions. In a similar way as the informal 'talks' between a baby and his caregiver, the musicians try to make contact with the young children. In an equal way they make contact with the caregivers as well and promote interactions among both. From the reaction and spontaneous involvement of the caregiver, the child understands that this 'unknown person' (the musician) can be trusted which translates into a safe environment.

In many traditional approaches to performances, children just have to wait till the performance or concert begins. They meet the musicians or actors only when they enter the performance space or appear on stage. In such a context, curiosity builds up while waiting for the performance to begin,

and children often get nervous. Some children get anxious, others will go running in the foyer. This is why it is so important for us to plan a prologue for the show, to avoid this atmosphere of unrest and too much tension building up before the performance even starts. In fact the prologue overlaps somewhat with the scheduled start time of the show. That way we can accommodate latecomers without bothering anyone. We thus also give the implicit message that time is elastic and the way we experience it is individually determined.

After the prologue the musicians will take the audience to the performance space. The whole performance, including the prologue, happens in a completely non-verbal way. As a result the ambiguity of the artistic performance is being enhanced, leaving room for a direct focus on the overall musical experience, and possibly more specific aspects like rhythm, timbre, melody, dynamics, and so on. Children don't need words in order to experience, grasp, and thus 'understand' an artistic performance in which they are involved as active participants from the very beginning.

Interactive performance

In the performance the music itself tells the story. So, don't think of a story in the literal sense like a fairy tale or a story from a book. It is more about the energy of the music and how it is played. The narrative is in the music itself, and the participative activities follow how the musical structure evolves. When the music is very soft, the active participation of children and caregivers will be soft. When the music is mysterious, the expressions of the musicians get a mysterious touch as well. What's important is that the energy of the music alternates in a good balance. It's like how young children experience the world. They live now and experience the world at that very moment. They are not thinking about what will happen next, or where this story is leading to? They just enjoy the moment and go with the flow of the performance.

Because very young children experience the arts not as separate domains, but as one whole, we also try to integrate other artistic domains into Babelut Parcours. There have been two editions with a dancer involved. In the next edition we will integrate visual aspects by means of video mapping. The musicians do not just play the music, they are actors as well because they abundantly use facial expressions and body language. As a matter of course they play the score by heart to be able to make better contact with the audience. They move across the stage in various ways: quietly, very fast, funny, in slow motion, and so on.

Taking all these aspects into account, every participant takes his own leads from the whole experience. One can be intrigued by the movements of a performer, while someone else is fascinated by the sound of the flute and another one is gazing everytime the performers are building a huge tower out of blocks of mousse. But also the caregivers can enjoy this performance on their own level. We aim for a high quality musical composition performed by high level musicians, as young children are ready to face the world in all its complexity, even if they only partially understand it.

In the music we provide specific moments where the audience can join in, to make interaction possible between the performers, the children and their caregivers. This can be done in many ways:

by stomping their feet, rubbing their hands, rocking with their caregivers, saying repetitive sounds, even singing together. In these moments we invite the children to become performers as well. As such, they are equal to the performers and contribute to the performance in a personal way and to their own ability.

Sound Garden

After the performance it's time to go and explore. In each Babelut Parcours we create a sound garden. This is an environment where children can explore on their own, together with other children or with their caregivers. Also the performers are present here and ready to interact. In the sound garden children can interact with sound installations and other scenographic materials that they encountered before in the performance. Now they can discover the sounds themselves or play with the materials, again giving them the feeling of being musicians in their own right. All the senses are involved in this play: they can listen to the sounds, feel the materials, smell the odors of the materials, see all interesting colors and forms, while the youngest will even try to taste some of the objects. That's why it is very important that all materials and the whole environment are safe. Nevertheless it has to be interesting for the children without becoming too obvious and predictable.

Besides all the installations, objects and other things present, the overall atmosphere in the sound garden is another very important factor. The atmosphere should be calm, warm, friendly and inviting for everyone. The acoustics of a room should not be underestimated either. Lots of reverberation creates a restless atmosphere, some children play louder and others get overwhelmed by these loud sounds. With rather dry acoustics, a quiet atmosphere will prevail and therefore be much more appropriate to explore in.

Children like to reenact their previous experiences. This playing or reenacting can be done in many ways. Some children are really adventurous and go and explore everything on their own. Others like to have their brother or sister around to share things with. Still others like the safe feeling of having their caregivers around and share the playing experience together. In this way the sound garden acts like a laboratory that invites and even incites playful interactions between generations. As already mentioned, the musicians and dancers are also present in the sound garden. They play along nonverbally, giving musical impulses or trying to engage in musical interaction. Not by forcing anything on the children, but by joining in the spontaneous play. This is where communicative musicality (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2008) comes in again, like the prologue in the beginning of the parcours. Interactions arise like the parent-infant communication. They start playing with repetition, variation and contrast. This non-verbal turn taking can evolve to a fun game which young children love.

Challenges

The creation of each new Babelut Parcours results in its own specific challenges and questions. How to keep an intimate atmosphere when you have many families in the room? What is a good amount of people to have in the performance? Do we choose a classical or a more organic set-up?

A classical set-up means that there can be more audience in the space, but maybe less opportunities to have good interactions. A more organic set-up means perhaps less audience and less tickets sold, but in this case the public is more involved in the performance. This is what we will experiment with in the next edition. We have chosen an open performance space and different places to be

discovered. The audience can choose where to sit and even change places during the performance. It's exciting to experiment with different possibilities. These little children want to be close to the performers so why not put them in the middle of the performance space?

Conclusion

The whole approach flows from our extensive work in nurseries and after-school programs and may lead to new, less formalized perspectives in education. We noticed by experience that a total new relationship arises when children and teachers treat each other equally like in a baby-parent interaction. When the teacher doesn't give top down, linear instructions, but stands together with the pupils, you get a different kind of interaction. Acting together on a more equal level, they discover new things. The teachers still lead them rather implicitly and think together with the children with an open mind about different possible approaches. The initiative doesn't always have to come from the teacher. When children get the confidence to take initiative as well, this can lead to beautiful interactions, discussions or maybe even new projects. In current education there is often just one solution that is offered for a problem, but from genuine interaction among children and teachers, many solutions may emerge.

While the arts embody life's ambiguity, playing with and exploring in the arts at a very young age, allows children to maintain (or, if necessary, re-engage with) their natural self-confidence and wonder. They apply this attitude to each other and the world in other settings as well. If children are allowed in the classroom to use their 'art-way' of thinking, this may ultimately lead to a new kind of education. Children would learn how to cooperate in a different, more humane way with friends and adults, resulting in more holistic and integrated attitudes in life in general.

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What music do toddlers hear at home in a day?

Marta Dosaiguas

Music, Visual and Corporal Expression Department. Autonomous University of Barcelona.
Bellaterra, Barcelona, Spain
marta.dosaiguas@uab.cat

Eugenia Costa-Giomi

Music Education, The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio, USA
costa-giomi.1@osu.edu

Claudia Gluschankof

Beit Almusika and Levinsky-Wingate Academic College
Shafr'Amr; Tel-Aviv, Israel
claudia.gluschankof@gmail.com

Jèssica Pérez-Moreno

Music, Visual and Corporal Expression Department. Autonomous University of Barcelona.
Bellaterra, Barcelona, Spain
jessica.perez@uab.cat

Abstract

As Vygotsky stated, we learn from the expert member of the culture. Usually, music activities in a familiar setting are promoted by other members of the same family. Traditionally, we have studied music episodes observing and listening, from an adult perspective, what was happening in a familiar setting.

In our study we have described and analysed the vocal interactions of the younger members of the family, as registered in audio recordings. On the one hand, we have analysed the characteristics of the musical episodes, and, on the other hand, the repertoire used during the day.

Participants are three Catalan families with two siblings from two to six years old. We audio recorded 6 entire days (92 hours) , of the toddlers 'doing, using the recorder DLP (Digital Language Processor) as the instrument to collect data on young children's musical interactions in a familiar environment. DLP device can record up to 16 hours continuously, with a very high quality and in a non-intrusive way. The same device has an associated software: LENA®. LENA® has been developed to give feedback on vocal interventions produced between parents (or educators) and children during whole days.

We have found that the average of music heard at home is from 2 to 3 hours in one day: many of the hours listening to music and less minutes of creating or interpreting music. By analysing the repertoire that derived from their voices, instruments, or electronic devices we have found some shared repertoire. We discuss the place of the traditional repertoire, music in the mass media and the schools., as well as the use of the associated software LENA (Language Environment Analysis) to analyse the recordings when studying musical episodes where toddlers are the protagonists.

Keywords: Early childhood, music environment, home environment, musical episodes, repertoire

Introduction

Since the 1970s, the musical epistemological paradigm has undergone changes due to ethnomusicological studies such as those by Blacking (1973) or Merriam (1964), moving away from the concept of music as an object to studying it as a social phenomenon. Since then, we have known that to understand music as a whole, we cannot separate the study of music from the social group in which it is situated. Regarding the musical experiences of young children, we cannot overlook studying it within the family context.

This research is framed within the interpretive paradigm and examines children's musical experiences and activities holistically, relating them to their cultural and social context in order to understand situations where musical exchanges occur. Following Young (2016), we position this research within Childhood Studies, which view children as active, rational, and competent individuals and do not attempt to determine their developmental stage in relation to adults. Children are treated as individuals who construct their reality through the material and social interactions of their environment (Ilari, Young, & Gluschkof, 2016). As Young (2016) states, "a view that understands childhood as socially constructed provides not only a framework for identifying different modes of musical childhood but also a technique for considering how and why childhood is constructed in these ways" (p. 32).

As we know, music is an intrinsic part of every culture, and therefore, children's musical activities in each territory are shaped by that specific context, tied to their own values and rituals. Hence, it is essential to study each specific context to comprehend the diverse realities (Ilari & Young, 2016; Parker-Rees & Leeson, 2015; Tudge, 2008;).

Despite the high interest in understanding what occurs in the daily environment, conducting research in this field is challenging due to the need to delve into the privacy of families and because many data collection instruments have significant limitations in ensuring an accurate reflection of the reality under study. Costa-Giomi (2016) warns us that the majority of studies have been conducted by obtaining information through questioning parents, using interviews, questionnaires, diaries, videos, and recordings of moments when adults decide to document (e.g., Barrett, 2009; Gluschkof, 2023; Koops, 2014). This information provided by family members is likely to be biased, both in overestimating and underestimating the amount of music produced in the family environment. To comprehend the entirety of moments in which the child is in contact with music and its social relationship, it is necessary to conduct extensive research in the natural environments of children, without limiting oneself to specific activities or moments of the day.

Aim and context

The aim of this study is to get insight into the use of LENA® to study the musical repertoire of 2 to 3 years old Catalan children. This is the first exploration of Catalan repertoire based on direct data collected in the homes of young children using this technology.

Method

Participants

For this research, three participating families were selected. The participating families had well-established relationships with the lead researcher. This facilitated their commitment to the collection of monthly data over a relatively long and consistent period and their sharing of the daily activities and conversations captured by the audio recording device,

Each of three families consisted of four members. In addition to the father and mother, they included: 1) a five-year-old girl and a 24-month-old boy (Family 1); 2) a six-year-old boy and a 36-month-old girl (Family 2); 3) a five-year-old boy and a 28-month-old girl (Family 3). The three families shared a similar profile: a) they lived in a small urban centre; b) their socioeconomic status was medium to high; c) they had an interest in their children's music education; the children participated in music school as an extracurricular activity; d) at least one of the parents had formal or informal musical education; e) both adults had higher education degrees, and f) their native language was Catalan.

Families were observed from the perspective of the younger member of the family (children from 2 to 3 years old) during six full days recording. We analysed the characteristics of the selected musical episodes and the musical repertoire used in their homes.

Research tool

We used the Language Environment Analysis (LENA) system (Benetti & Costa-Giomi, 2020; Costa-Giomi & Benetti, 2017; Costa-Giomi & Sun, 2016; Lerma-Arregocés & Pérez-Moreno, 2022; Wiggin et al., 2012). This system was developed to study the language environment of young children and consists of a Digital Language Processor (DLP) that collects data, plus specialized software that analyses it. The DLP is a small portable device that fits in the breast pocket of tailor-made children's clothing. While the child wears the device, it records sounds within hearing distance for up to 16 continuous hours. The device captures sounds from a variety of sources in a real-life context and produces high fidelity recordings. The software analyses the sound data gathered by the DLP and provides an assessment of a variety of factors that affect language development. These include the total number of adult words, total number of conversational turns, total time of meaningful language, and child vocalization frequency. The audio files can be analysed for further study of any component of the child's soundscape.

We analysed audio files recorded on a weekend day. A total of six audio files lasting 92 hours were collected from the three families combined.

Procedure

We showed the family how to use the digital device and asked them to send a voice message to the researcher on the day of the study describing the children's activities that day (i.e., the time they woke up, meals, naps, the time they went to bed, car rides, outings and visitors).

Parents were asked to turn on the devices when the children woke up, put them in the breast pocket of the garments the children were going to wear, and let the children carry them around during the whole day.

Data analysis

Our first listening was guided by a table used at The Ohio State University (Benetti & Costa-Giomi, 2020; Costa-Giomi & Benetti, 2017) to analyse LENA files. This table helped us to extract some general information from the complete audio files and also ensured we remained open to new emergent data (Viladot, 2009). The table requires answers to the following questions: 1) Is there any music? Yes/no; 2) How far is it from the child? Close/far; and 3) Who/What is singing/playing/making music?

During a second listening of the episodes that included music, we completed another table to describe the musical episodes (see Table 1).

Table 1

Items and definitions from analysis 2

Category	Definition
Time of start of musical episode	Time elapsed in hours, minutes and seconds on audio file
Time of end of musical episode	Time elapsed in hours, minutes and seconds on the audio file
Length in seconds of the musical event	Seconds between the start and end of the musical episode
Participants	Who took part in the episode?
Way in which the activity was initiated	Autonomously, with the participant initiating the activity alone; or directed, with someone asking someone else to start the activity
Origin of the music	The support or resource used to make the music
Type of activity	We defined three types of activity: 1) Listening: when music comes from a device or person; 2) Improvisation: manipulation and variations of known songs, vocalizations, improvisations and brief pieces of new music material; and 3) Performance, with the reproduction of the music created previously

The third analysis focused on the repertoire of songs heard by the children and classified them according to genre.

Results

Use of LENA

The data collection instrument used in this research, the DLP recorder, was evaluated for its implementation in music research. We listened to entire days of data portraying excellent sound quality, and were able to listen multiple times and review what happened at any given moment. Therefore, the device allowed us to construct a narrative discourse about what was happening in the homes of the children throughout entire days. Listening to the recording as many times as necessary was critically important for the understanding of the children's home musical environment. The non-invasive methodology was crucial for the follow-up required in longitudinal studies like the present one. Often, it has been necessary to go back and listen from different perspectives to all the information we have collected.

From the researcher's perspective, the DLP device has the great potential to have many hours of data that allow us to relate different moments of the day. This strength allows us to listen again to earlier and later hours to compare them and understand where musical influences come from. Its weakest point is being unimodal: being able to only listen and not see what is happening may result in missing some relevant information that may exist in the reality of that specific moment.

From the perspective of the families, the DLP is not as an intrusive device as a video camera. We have found that recording audio allows families not to be concerned about the device's presence and does not add discomfort to their daily lives. The children who carried the DLP showed no discomfort either in using the device. In fact, they commented on whether they liked the pattern of the vest they wore over their regular clothing. Therefore, we can confirm that it did not cause them any inconvenience.

The LENA software, which determines the number of words the child hears, classifies the speaker by age and gender, and estimates how many hours of TV/radio are heard per day, has not been a useful software for analysing musical episodes. The analysis of musical episodes we completed in the present study had to be done manually and methodically by the researchers. In summary, the software does not provide relevant information for musical analysis and for the understanding of the toddlers' musical behaviours.

Musical episodes

We found that the three infants heard much music at home. The total listening time ranged from 80 to 220 minutes per day with differences between and within families in terms of the duration of music listening episodes.

Musical episodes that centred on the production of music (i.e., improvisation and performance) were present every day in which data were collected. Although music production episodes did not last as long as listening episodes, they illustrated a variety of musical experiences afforded by the participating infants. By analysing the sung, listened to from live and recorded sources we found much shared musical repertoire among the families. As an example, 2 audio files were recorded close to a festivity and two families sang the same song. Another example is that we have listened

to the same musical band, a famous Catalan children's musical band, in two of the families. The detailed analysis of production and listening episodes is not provided in the present report.

What about conclusions?

As conclusions, we observe that music is highly prevalent in the lives of children, whether sung or played. In this study, which allowed us to track the minutes, we observed that throughout a day, there are numerous music episodes being present, although they appear irregularly. Furthermore, it is important to note that the repertoires used are highly diverse, yet we can still identify shared repertoire among different families. It is pertinent to investigate whether these findings are specific to this study, particularly given the striking similarity in profiles and close proximity to the families, or whether similar trends manifest in families characterized by more diverse profiles.

Concerning the use of LENA®, we state that this technology is very convenient to collect data from a natural setting and for long hours in a way that is non-intrusive/ disturbing for families. Even though there is an obvious important limitation for research -there are no images from the events – at the same time it facilitates deeper listening and preserves the naturality and privacy of the daily life of the participating families.

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Songs for Pepito: Spontaneous songs of primary school children

Laura Ferrari

Municipality of Bologna

Bologna, Italy

ferrari.lau06@gmail.com

Aura Vitali

Private Primary School “Amici del Sacro Cuore”

San Giovanni in Persiceto, Bologna Italy

piccolafelce@gmail.com

Abstract

In educative contexts like school, singing allows to express oneself, encourage the creativity, language acquisition and create social bonds and sense of community. However, there is a lack of data on the analysis of spontaneous songs done by primary school children (over 6 years-old) in formal context like school. In our project “The Pepito project” we have involved 23 children: 14 little girls and 9 little boys of 6 years old ($A=76.13$ months; $SD=5.21$). Most of them (82,4%) attended a preschool service before. This project involved two classes of a private primary school nearby Bologna.

Our aim is to collect and analyze the spontaneous songs individually done by children in order to plan the voice usage in musical activities. Our practice is inspired by the results and theoretical assumptions described by Deriu and Mazzoli (2013) and, in particular, the ethnologic approach to the spontaneous singing in context, like school, that children perceived familiar. We invited children to sing their “favorite” song to the parrot Pepito: Pepito is a fantastic character and is the “complementary background” (in Italian “sfondo integratore”) i.e. representing an educational tool to organize educational activities and context. Each child was free to sing, record and “deliver” to Pepito one or more songs with or without musical instruments. We analyzed the musical features of these spontaneous songs: pitch, tonality, rhythm, lyrics and structure. Singing and repertoire are interwoven children’s identities: The songs and instrument choice, the pitch and the rhythm express the personal world of each child and also his/her cultural and family background.

Keywords: Spontaneous singing, primary school children, informal music, music analysis

Theoretical Background

In the wide field of music education and practice, the theoretic and research literature underlines how singing is an important experience for all human beings. In educative contexts like school, singing allows to express oneself, encourage creativity, language acquisition and create social bonds and sense of community (Dean, 2020; Papageorgi et Al., 2022). The primary school teachers are often amazed by the way observation and musical practice bring out children musical potential, which is often misunderstood by teachers themselves and stays latent (Brewu and Adjepong, 2020). Other researchers underline as the first essential factor, to make the singing school really establishes, “is the presence of a committed and enthusiastic individual who provided an initial stimulus to engage with a particular activity” (Lamont, Spruce, & Daubney, 2012). Among its several results, the wide and transcultural ATBSS project underlines as the familiar context represents the principal context to study children’ favorite and spontaneous songs (Ilari & Habibi, 2015). However,

there is a lack of data about the analysis of spontaneous songs done by primary school children (over 6 years-old) in formal context like school.

Method

In our project we involved children of the two first classes of a primary school: They were 23 children, 14 little girls and nine six year old boys ($A = 76.13$ months; $SD = 5.21$). Most of them (82,4%) attended a public preschool service before. This project is conducted in a private primary school “Amici del Sacro Cuore” in a small village nearby Bologna.

The project was realized in two phases, and here, we would like to describe the first one: the collection and analysis of the children spontaneous songs.

Aims of the project

One of the most important goals of this practice project is to investigate what children sing spontaneously and to analyze the musical features of their songs.

Pedagogical approach

Italian children generally attend formal educational contexts at the age of three; there is, in Italy, a consolidated habit of singing in kindergarten: Children, under six-years invent songs and nursery rhymes, teachers sing them to support/foster learning and accompany some routines such as “welcome songs” and “lullabies” for the afternoon rest. Despite of this virtuous educational methodology, singing loses its centrality in Italian primary schools: Singing becomes a guided activity proposed often by teacher in the music lessons. Our practice project is inspired by the results and theoretical assumptions described by Deriu and Mazzoli (2013) and, especially, the ethnologic approach to the spontaneous singing in contexts, like school, that children perceived familiar. In their research-in action realized in nursery and kindergarten, Deriu and Mazzoli proposed a soft teddy bear as an interested and attentive listener, to build and to scaffold a space where children could experience the singing beyond preordained moments or activities. A fantastic character who is available to listen children and is devoid of judgment, it proposes singing within the school life.

The activities

A Letter from Pepito

We invited children to sing their “favorite” song to the parrot Pepito: Pepito is a fantastic character and it is the “complementary background” (in Italian “sfondo integratore”)¹ i.e. representing an educational tool to organize the educational activities and context. In particular, the complementary background represents a narrative connection structure: It consists in using narrative dimension to build situations to share meanings among children and between children and teachers.

In the annual program, Pepito is the device (“dispositif” defined by Frapat, 1994) to present new didactic contents to children.

The parrot Pepito sent a letter (written by teachers) to the children stating that he wanted to have a party in his island but he knew only few songs. The parrot asked the children to help him in learning new ones. To allow this, Pepito sent a small portable digital recorder to the children, asking them to record their favorite songs and then leave it inside an envelope in the place where Pepito and the children usually exchanged letters.

¹ One of the best-known theoretical constructs developed in the field of Italian institutional pedagogy in the 1990s (to an overview on the topic, see Canevaro and Berli, 1996).

Time and space to sing

Each child was free to sing, record and “deliver” to Pepito one or more songs with or without musical instruments (there were, in class, instruments as tambourine, maracas, sticks, guitalele).

Furthermore the children were free to choose where (in class, in the aisle, in atelier) and when record their songs: during the lessons or during the break; in the morning before the greeting We gave children a portable digital recorder that was easy to use: only one button to record and save.

The outcomes

An Overview

We collected seven recordings sung spontaneously by the children, almost all recorded during recess, in and around the classroom.

Six out of seven are sang in group, generally three and four children; one is sung by 11 children with their teacher, and it was asked by them to record for Pepito the welcome song of the class.

In three songs out of seven there are instruments: in two recordings is present the tastier giocattolo, and in one the guitalele played by the teacher.

One recording is an instrumental fragment with a simply melody followed by the Sonata for piano of Mozart: the children deliberately decided to record for Pepito these two melodies without singing.

Regarding the musical genre, four songs are contemporary pop Italian music ones; only a song, presented by a little girl, belongs to a musical group called "Me contro Te" which is aimed at an audience of children and teenagers and its songs are on youtube and on television programs dedicated to this age group.

Musical Analysis

By the microanalysis of the recordings, we identify if the songs sung by children were known (i.e. recognizable by words or melody) or invented. In the first case, we compare the children version and the original one, in doing this we analyze the song musical features as tonality, tempo, lyrics and structure.

- **Tonality:** The children sing in range of tonalities between B flat minor and E minor. They sing very similarly to the tonality of the original song: it is interesting in recording number two, the little boys sing the first ten seconds “la la la” imitating the melody of the kid piano keyboard (C major), then they start to sing the chorus of “Dove si balla” in the same tonality of the original song.
- **Tempo:** Four out of six songs are in 4/4 time, and two melodies are in 2/4 and 3/4 time respectively. Generally the children’s rhythm is slower than the original songs.
- **Lyrics:** The words sung by children are usually clear and intelligible. There are cases where “complex” words - for the Italian language - are replaced by children with others, as well as bad words. In the song “Supereroi” the verse, originally sung by the singer, is partly melodic and partly spoken rap; a little boy try to sing the verse similarly to the original version.
- **Structure:** Five out of six songs, where singing is present, children start singing from the chorus and not from the verse unlike the original songs. Only in one recording, the little girl sings the song exactly following the structure of the original one, also respecting the presence of the bridge between the first verse and the chorus

In summary, children sang in a “comfortable” key range around middle C (C3). They chose recent Italian popular songs. Their songs generally start from the refrain which, when listened, appears more precise, to the point that it is also repeated. The children preferred to sing in pairs and in groups rather than alone and the presence of an instrument or accompaniment was not perceived as necessary.

The words of the children

Almost all recordings, six out of seven, are characterized by the possibility of multiple interpretations. As described before, the recordings are spontaneous songs, but they represent also a tool to understand the children's intentions.

The most frequent words used by children are used to agree when start singing and when stop. Below three examples:

Examples 1 and 2: "Three, two, one, go!" ("Tre, due, uno, via!"), "Come on Chris!" (" Dai Chris")

Example 3: "It is enough, stop" ("Basta, ferma")

In examples 1, the children decide to start singing by counting, instead in example 2 one child invites Christian to start singing: Christian is the child who knows better the song.

In example 3, one child, of the four who are singing, after the end of the chorus, stops the singing of the group.

There are no word-signals about the tune up (intone) and the children, singing in group, take the note in an "immersive" way. In two different recordings, two children lead the singing: there is a boy, among the others, who knows better the lyrics of the song and seems more self-confident.

What do the spontaneous songs tell?

We deliberately choose to ask children to record what they want. What emerges from the recordings is the power of everyday informal music on children and the desire to share singing with peers.

Singing and repertoire are interwoven into children's identities: The choice of songs, of instruments, the pitch and the beat express the personal world of each child and also his/her cultural and family background. As we have described before, the similarity between the original songs and the children's versions underlines the importance of the informal context as families and groups of peers (Green, 2014) and of the motivation: children learned complex lyrics and structures.

It is also interesting to observe the children's strategies in order to "complete" the songs in their own way: the boys who didn't know a difficult word, changed it with another maintaining the original sound; a girl using the "la, la, la" to reproduce the instrumental bridge of the original song between the verse and the chorus.

"It is up to the adult to guarantee children the possibility of making mistakes in the songs, but also to come up with play ideas capable of directing repetition to invention and not just to the exact reproduction of the model" (Deriu and Mazzoli, 2013, pag. 129).

For future work we want to focus on how to create meaningful opportunities in class, in order to stimulate the exploration and play in singing during the course of every day. These goals require: a) the methodical preparation and organization of space and time in educational setting (the classroom); b) that the teacher is attentive and closely involved in children's spontaneous music-making, in order to enhance the child's vocal peculiarities (Tosto, 2009).

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Teachers musical practice – understanding musicality and human behaviour

SenseSquared symposium

Kirsten Halle

Professor University of Stavanger
Stavanger, Norway
kirsten.halle@uis.no

Abstract

Singing together facilitates many positive outcomes, such as social bonding, increased sense of wellbeing, language acquisition, and empathy promotion, not to mention the emotional and aesthetic pleasure of music as an art form. One would therefore assume that singing is an obvious part of everyday life in all ECEC settings and in all classrooms. However, mounting evidence suggests that teachers have a considerable lack of confidence in their music-making skills. This lack of confidence in music making can be seen as a negative musical identity. Findings from our recent research project (Kulset & Halle, 2020) suggest the importance of adult companionship to expand the music making in kindergarten and in schools. Singing together with other colleagues made them develop a more positive musical identity. Singing together can facilitate a safe place to express one's musicality focusing on togetherness and not on musical skills.

In the SenseSquared project we aim to develop this idea further; understanding musicality and the singing practice as an interpersonal and highly human behavior, rooted in the mother-child communicative musicality. Together with teachers from both kindergarten and primary school we will explore musicality and musical practice in various ways. Although practical singing workshops will be one of the core activities, the reflections from the teachers will make an important contribution to understand possibilities to enforce their musical teaching practice.

To empower teachers' musical teaching practice, we will have different approaches. Working close to the teachers as both researchers, educators and musicians can help us get a more composed understanding of the phenomenon. Research questions and analyses can help us understand and explore ideas intellectually. Interact musically in workshops musicality will also be experienced as a physical and emotional phenomenon and will open up for other forms of understanding human behavior. This way a more musical teaching practice can help teachers facilitate a more sensuous and bodily attuned learning environment.

Keywords: Teacher's musicality, musical identity, singing, communicative musicality, musical learning environment

Introduction

Intuitively we know that the way to connect with the newborn baby is to sing. Together with babies we all become musicians communicating and playing through our musical behavior with rhythmical patterns, melodic variations, gestures and mimicry. And the baby is not an ignorant part in these conversations, but an equal partner with musical skills interacting and participating using its innate musicality to express and to connect.

Whether this musical behavior will develop and become an important language in our life is very much depending on the culture we are a part of. Our musicality needs to be stimulated in meaningful contexts in order to maintain a strong way to connect to others and to express ourselves, as we do early in life.

We believe that the teachers play a significant role in order to stimulate the child's innate musicality, and we are looking for ways to empower the teachers' musical practice.

In the SenseSquared-project we are concerned with questions that investigates how a more musical education can help teachers promote a good learning environment with a wealth of approaches and ways to relate to both each other and the world. We believe that a more musical practice can act as an important tool working with all aspects of education, both cognitive, emotional, physical and social. Can a more musical education help us to connect easier, prevent loneliness and exclusion, promote wellbeing and a stronger sense of belonging? Can a more musical education also help us learn and develop skills easier?

Theoretical background

We find broad agreement over the fact that music is an important subject in kindergarten and in schools (Barret et al. 2019) and a vast body of research shows how important music education is for children's development and ability to learn (Busse et al., 2018; Kulset, 2020; Linnavalli et al., 2018; Pearce et al., 2015; Rabinowitch et al., 2013; Weinstein et al., 2016). Nevertheless, music has suffered major cuts over the decades, and we find the same situation in many countries around the world (Holgersen, 2008; Niland & Holland, 2019; Russell-Bowie, 2009; Vist & Os, 2020). These cuts are often justified in economic reasons and priorities, together with an increasing attention towards subjects as mathematics, science and language. This situation has been the subject of research for a long time, but one sees a clear tendency that the situation has not improved to any extent. Music in schools and in the educational system still has a low status and is given little political priority. Teachers and students report that they feel a lack of competence and that they feel insecure as music makers. Still, teachers play a key role developing a musical environment for children to explore their musicality. How can we empower teachers in their musical practice in order to get to the point that their musicality can become a powerful tool in the classroom?

Studies shows that both teachers and students are influenced by a negative musical identity (Ehrlin & Wallerstedt, 2014; Kulset & Halle, 2020; Torgersen & Sæther, 2021). They express that they are not skilled enough or have a lack of competences in order to sing or make music on an everyday basis. This attitude, or negative musical identity, is rooted in a certain view on musicality that we find many places in the western world: To sing and to be musical is not for everyone, but for those with a musical talent (Sloboda et al., 2000), also; being musical means that you can play an instrument, dance or sing beautiful (Stunell, 2010; Torgersen & Sæther, 2021). Such a perception of musicality seems to prevail teachers and students to a large extent. The focus on the performance skills is strongly prominent in their narratives and will in many cases stand in the way of being able to experience the potential of music making for learning and growth.

On the other hand, to hold a positive musical identity means using one's innate musicality, without the self-conscious outside gaze that evaluate this to be good or not good (Kulset, 2016). One's musicality can be freed up among teachers when musical behavior is perceived as significant, often focusing on relational qualities. Teachers needs to experience that making music is a highly human activity, a natural way to connect and express.

Gaining more knowledge about teachers' views on their own musicality provides important input in the development of further research. In the studies of Kulset and Halle (2019, 2020), we find a practice that seems to promote a positive musical identity among teachers. We call it the notion of

we. In our study we found that the musical identity individually was negative but turned out to be something completely different as a group: “When we sing together, I am an important part of the music making”. “Together with the others I can sing!”.

In this study we found use of Fredrickson’s ‘broaden-and-build ’model of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2004). By any understanding of the word ‘we,’ there is some sort of relationship involved. Research on the brain chemistry of relationships demonstrates that the endorphin system appears to be an essential component of the maintenance of relationships, such as friendship. As opposed to the oxytocin system, which play an important role in prosocial behaviour among all mammals, the endorphin system acts exogenously: it can be triggered in other individuals by grooming, and thus allows us to make others behave prosocial towards us (Dunbar, 2018; Gordon et al., 2011; Heinrichs & Domes, 2008). According to Dunbar (2018), as human evolution increased the size of social networks, people had to find new ways of triggering the endorphin system remotely in order to ‘groom ’several individuals simultaneously. In short, something other than physical touch was needed (Dunbar, 2010). These ‘new ways ’to trigger the endorphin system and generate an increased sense of bonding included laughter (Manninen et al., 2017), singing (Pearce et al., 2015; Pearce et al., 2017; Weinstein et al., 2016) and dancing (Tarr et al., 2016).

According to Sutcliffe et al.(2012) trust is the main component of every close relationship. Most definitions of the term relate trust to reciprocity and collaboration, and trust not only facilitates dyadic and group-level collaboration, but also underpins the formation and maintenance of social relationships. If individuals socially ‘groom ’each other frequently over an extended period of time, the level of mutual trust may increase to the stage where emotion becomes more important than the rewards of collaboration per se. This emotional engagement then provides the basis for future commitment whenever needed. To build trust, one must prove oneself as a committed and stable relation who can be relied upon.

‘Broaden-and-build ’model of positive emotions

In Fredrickson’s ‘broaden-and-build ’model of positive emotions (2004), positive emotions broaden an individual’s momentary thought-action repertoire through feelings such as joy, interest, contentment and love. By broadening someone’s momentary thought-action repertoire (as in play, exploration, or similar activities), the positive emotions promote the discovery of new and creative actions, ideas, and social bonds, which in turn build that individual’s physical, intellectual, social, and psychological resources. According to the model, cultivation of positive emotions might thus form the basis towards personal flourishing.

When the staff (and the children) in the study of Kulset & Halle (2020) played music together, those without formal music training also felt that they were good enough, and that they even contributed musically. This may suggest that more focus on doing music together and a more participatory music philosophy can strengthen the teacher’s musical competence. Focusing on the relational qualities of the singing and music making may help the teachers to overcome their negative musical identity.

Aim

This project is a part of a larger study. Working further on the findings from Kulset & Halle (2020) and the notion of WE, we aim to understand more of what teachers articulate when they are asked to develop their musical practice in their classrooms. We need to work close to the teachers practice

and look for ways to identify and develop a musical practice that will turn the teacher's attention towards the relational qualities rather than the level of musical skills performed. Further this knowledge will be implemented in the teacher training programmes' music curricula thus increasing the quality of music education credits.

The research questions that guide this part of the study are:

1. How can the notion of "we" overcome negative musical identities on an individual level?
2. How do you understand the notion of "we"?
3. How can you construct the notion of "we"?

The study

We have invited two partner institutions into the project: one primary school and one kindergarten.

We had two criteria for their participation:

- To have the headmaster/leader commit to the project.
- To have all the teachers/employees engaged in the project.

We are conducting workshops with the teachers and their leaders together. In these workshops we aim to give the participants multiple experiences of singing together. These workshops will be in the core of the project and will hopefully reveal ideas and reflections that can contribute to a more sustainable musical practice for those involved.

In order to get deeper into the teachers' ideas and reflections we will conduct group conversations in both institutions. The themes for these conversations will be:

- A musical environment
- Musical skills and repertoire
- Musical support – what does it mean?
- Improvisation

Preliminary findings

With our findings from our previous project (Kulset & Halle, 2020) and the importance of doing music together to increase the music making in the classrooms, we hope this project will help us to get deeper into how we can empower teachers to develop a sustainable and powerful musical practice. We hope to get information from the teachers reflecting over ways to overcome a possible negative musical identity, pointing towards the relational qualities of music making. We wonder what kind of skills are needed to engage the class in music. Is it about repertoire? Can it be helpful to develop a set repertoire list with songs that becomes somehow the core repertoire of the school? Songs that everyone knows. What kind of songs are they? Different songs hold different qualities. What kind of qualities are important due to the notion of "we"?

Besides the knowledge of repertoire, what kind of skills do the teacher need? We know that our communicative musicality is how we communicate through the dynamics of human behavior. How the melody moves, and how the rhythmic patterns are performed is what engage the little baby. Our gestures and our mimicry are not insignificant. In the context of relational aesthetic, Valberg (2012) emphasize the body and the posture of significance. He suggests a set of performative strategies when engaging a group of people/audience musically (Valberg, 2012). Will this also be of relevance for the teachers? How can these skills be developed? The little baby will interpret all these qualities of communication, and the fundamental message is for the baby to feel safe. The caregiver

will use the innate musicality and performative strategies to make the baby feel safe and to invite the baby to interact. Will this also be important aspects for the teachers?

Finally, we will investigate the theme improvisation. What will be important to know in these musical contexts? Is this about an attitude? What will be the goals for the music making?

Additional comments

This is an ongoing project. So far we have worked together with the partner institutions for a year investigating how to empower teachers musical practice. Being a part of an EU-project, we will also have additional perspectives from other cultural settings that will give the project valuable aspects. Working close to the teachers and their leaders over time gives us the opportunity to work deeper and hopefully give us some key-concepts that can be useful also for teachers outside the two institutions in Stavanger, Norway.

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Listening to new mothers' perceptions for participating in an online musical parenting educational program

Maria Papazachariou-Christoforou

Assistant Professor of Music Education & Pedagogy

Department of Education Sciences

European University Cyprus

Nicosia, Cyprus

Email: m.papazachariou@euc.ac.cy

Abstract

Much research has focused on investigating the different ways in which parents use music as a parenting tool. Musical parenting includes parents' behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes toward their children's musical experiences. Research has revealed that parents intuitively incorporate music (Papoušek, 1996) into daily life with their young children for many reasons: to strengthen their bond with their children, to regulate their mood, to educate the child, as part of the daily routines, and for entertainment. However, researchers suggest that educating parents about musical parenting can result in a raise of awareness as to the musical worlds used by young children and can thus improve musical parenting practices. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of a group of 20 new mothers engaged in a musical parenting educational program which was aimed at increasing their knowledge regarding the use of music with infants, and at suggesting practical implications. The research questions were: (1) What musical parenting attitudes and practices had formed the mothers' musical parenting prior to participating in the program? (2) How did the mothers use the program's content with their infants? (3) What structures of the program empowered mothers' musical parenting? This six-month qualitative research study was set within a constructivist paradigm. As a researcher and program facilitator, I utilized a number of qualitative data collection methods, including individual semi-structured interviews, group discussions, and weekly journal entries on the part of the mothers. Findings showed that several of the participants were unaware of the many facets of musical parenting during infancy and these reported that the program enhanced their awareness of them. Participation in the program changed their perceptions, values, and beliefs regarding the use of music in the daily care of their infants; it enhanced their awareness of the use of music by means of hands-on activities and the discussions initiated between the facilitator and mothers. The program empowered mothers' self-esteem in the creative use of music as a parenting tool, unlocking any hesitation reported by them at the beginning of the program. The mothers also provided feedback as to possible improvements to the program structure and content.

Keywords: changes in musical parenting, musical parenting program, infants, mothers' perceptions

Introduction

Recent findings in developmental psychology and sociology indicate that young children's development results from their active engagement in a complex interaction between themselves and their environment: people, places, objects, and symbols (Bronfenbrenner, 2001). Infants are born with an innate capacity to engage from birth in musical interaction (Gordon, 1971): social interactions between infants and their caregivers tend to be musical (Papoušek, 1996), combining music and language in an expressive, artistic form. The term communicative musicality (Malloch, 1999-2000), which refers to the musical interaction of arousal and attention between infants and parents, recognizes that the musical response begins very early in the child's life as a socio-cultural

practice that fosters their development (Barrett, 2009). "The repetitive structure and multimodal social cues (voice, facial expression, movement, and touch)" (Steinberg et al., 2021, p. 2) employed during musical interaction in infancy, foster group experience and connectedness (Savage et al., 2021).

The investigation into musical parenting, defined as the practices, values, and behaviours parents bring to their musical interactions with their children (Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003), has gained momentum in recent years (Ilari, 2017; Koops, 2020). More recent studies demonstrate that musical parenting encompasses multiple aspects and promotes various goals. Drawing on Small's (1998) concept of musicking as an active social process, Koops (2020) proposed the Family Musicking Framework, which contextualizes family musical interactions using the paired concepts of musical parenting/parenting musically and practical musicking/relational musicking. When musical parenting, they use music to accomplish musical goals, whereas when parenting musical, they use music for extramusical goals, such as encouraging feeding through a song. In both ways, musicking either supports a clear practical endeavour (practical musicking) or fosters or deepens a relationship. Both frameworks are envisioned as continuums meaning that a single activity or musical event might not squarely fit into one category or another.

Overall, research has shown that the use of music within families involves singing, chanting, moving, and dancing, and that these are used: as an accompaniment to the daily care routines (Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003), as a means of regulating emotional states (Ilari, 2005), for entertainment (Thehub & Schellenberg, 1995), for reinforcing cultural values and traditions (Custodero, 2009), and for promoting attachment to others and social bonding (Costa-Giomi & Benetti, 2017). The mother-infant bond had been reported as being more robust when mothers are encouraged to sing to their infants (Persico et al., 2017; Young et al., 2022), and that this acts as a scaffold on which they construct their role as a parent (McLean, et al., 2019).

Although musical parenting is considered a universal and intuitive practice (Papoušek, 1996; Young, 2018), it is not static because it is time and place specific (Ilari, 2017). Musical parenting has been found to be diverse across families depending on socioeconomic status, ethnicity, culture, religion, family structure (e.g., grandparents, maids, etc.), technology in the household, lifestyle, (Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003; Gibson, 2009; Ilari et al., 2011; Mehr, 2014) and degree of musical experience (Custodero, 2006). Specifically: (1) parents who have experienced musical parenting in their own personal lives and who have an extensive musical background (i.e. possess musical skills) exhibit richer musical parenting behaviour (Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003; Politimou et al., 2018; Rodriguez, 2019), (2) parents with no musical training rely mainly on digital media products because they lack the confidence to engage with music in a more active way (de Vries, 2007), (3) parents who have had positive musical experiences are often more motivated to engage in musical parenting (Koops, 2011; Rodriguez, 2019). Nevertheless, Gingras (2013) and Koops (2020) contend that parents are able to employ musical parenting regardless of their musical background.

Many researchers suggest that educating parents to understand their children's musical worlds can empower them and improve musical parenting practices (Bond, 2011; Abad et al., 2015; Barret, 2009). Several studies discussed the benefits of parents' participation in educational musical parenting programs (Rodriguez, 2021; Neilson, 2020). Monaci et al. (2021) propose encouraging

musical parenting experiences during pregnancy. Bond (2011) suggested that training parents and modelling appropriate musical behaviour will enhance musical parenting in the best way. This challenges Papoušek's (1996), assertion that educators should leave musical parenting to happen intuitively and without formal educational intervention. In agreement with that, Young (2018) on the other hand highlights the paradox of having "experts" training parents in something supposedly natural and intuitive.

In light of the above theoretical framework, the purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of a group of new mothers engaged in the musical parenting educational program "Music During Pregnancy and Infancy," which aimed at increasing their knowledge regarding the use of music with infants and at suggesting practical implications. The study's research questions were: (1) What musical parenting attitudes and practices had formed the mothers' musical parenting prior to participating in the program? (2) How did the mothers use the program's content with their infants? (3) What structures of the program empowered mothers' musical parenting?

The research

This qualitative study, set in a constructivist paradigm, investigated the insights of 20 new mothers who participated over a period of six months in the musical parenting educational program "Music during Pregnancy and Infancy". I acted as both program educator/facilitator and as researcher. To safeguard Young's (2018) concern that mothers might believe they lack skills, I took on the roles mainly of discussant and initiator rather than of expert.

The music parenting educational program, structured in 12 one-hour sessions (November 2022 to April 2023, every two weeks), was delivered online using the Blackboard Collaborate platform. Each session was purposefully designed to raise awareness, inform, and present practical activities to mothers regarding using music and movement with their children. During sessions, I also encouraged the mothers to interact with each other as members of a group with similar concerns and experiences, since this had the potential to contribute to their understanding of the topic. They were encouraged to share good musical parenting and reflect on their thoughts and concerns.

The practical activities presented to the participants covered the following topics:

- use of gestures and vocal improvisations
- use of lullabies and play songs
- use of rhythmic patterns and chants
- use of movement and dance
- use of listening

The activities and additional training materials were emailed to participants after the sessions.

I collected data through various methods, including semi-structured individual interviews (at the beginning, middle, and end of the program), group discussions (during live sessions), and weekly journal entries from mothers via email and social media. The transcribed raw data were organized and analysed with a coding process to get a sense of the whole and interpret participants' saying (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Findings and discussion

Two themes emerged from the data analysis, as follows:

1. Mothers reported that the program changed their perception regarding musical parenting and enriched the musical interaction taking place in the home, and
2. The role of the program's facilitator was considered influential.

These will now be discussed briefly. Before participation in the program, most mothers were unaware of the many facets of music parenting during infancy. Misleading information gleaned from the internet, social media, advertisements, and during discussion with friends and other mothers influenced their beliefs. The primary motivation for participating in the program was centered on the mothers' interest in providing their infants a rich caregiving environment, in particular:

- Fostering the child's mental and emotional development,
- Promoting its overall development,
- Enhancing the mother-child bond.

Their responses during our first session are indicative: "Some friends of mine told me, music makes babies more intelligent, is that true?", "I believe music will help my infant grow in the best way", "I downloaded music by Mozart for my baby"; "I read somewhere that music can stop colic"; "I want to enhance the communication and closeness between myself and my infant" (notes from session#1)

Attending an educational program was also seen as an opportunity to access reliable information on the value of using music during infancy and to observe hands-on interactive musical activities. Two of the participants said that their prior engagement with music fuelled their decision to participate, stressing previous research findings suggesting that parents with more musical experience tend to engage in more musical interactions with their children (Ilari, 2017; Savage, 2015; Politimou et al., 2018; Rodriguez, 2019). Noticeably, none of the mothers reported that they needed to upgrade their skills regarding how to interact musically with their infants (see also Rodriguez, 2019; Youm, 2013); this supports Young's (2018) assertion that musical parenting is natural and intuitive.

While all of the mothers knew about musical parenting before participating in the program, they tended to understand it as limited to offering the infant the opportunity to listen to what they thought of as quality music (mainly classical), and to singing songs to the child. "I thought that singing and listening were the most important activities. I have never considered that trying to vocalize and communicate with my baby, might be important" (Mother 7, Interview#2). Listening to audio-visual musical recordings as a musical parenting technique was also reported by de Vries, (2009), Young (2008), and Koops (2020). The participants of the present study also highlighted that the use of singing to their infants was considered as their main musical parenting activity (Blackburn, 2017; de Vries, 2009; Custodero, 2003; Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003, 2008; Ilari, 2005; Trehub et al., 1997), and this reflected in their parenting practices before participated in the program. However, this perception had altered by the end of it. As the program progressed, most mothers begun using babbling, chanting, and moving with the infant as core in their musical interactions, rather than solely singing to their infants. They reported that the program had improved their ability to identify their infant's musical behaviours and that they themselves had begun incorporating a number of techniques presented in the program as a means of attuning to them. Remarkably

vocalizing and the use of improvised melodies have been found to be the nucleus of musical parenting, and this provides evidence of what communicative musicality encompasses (Malloch, 1999). The mothers used the songs and activities presented in the program creatively. For example, one mother wrote in her journal, "I cannot remember exactly the songs in the program. But I get ideas from the songs, and I do my own stuff with my baby" (Mother 8, Journal entry#5). Many reported manipulating the melodies to serve their infants' needs, and to align them with their own culture and daily home routines.

The findings revealed that participation in the program raised the mothers' awareness of their children's musical world (see also Abad, et al., 2015) and encouraged the conscious use of music as a way of interacting with them. "I have never thought that all these various sounds my baby makes, might be music..." (Mother 11, Journal entry#6). Most mother reported that the program unlocked new possibilities for musical interaction (Pitt & Hargreaves, 2017) and enhanced their confidence in using music in the daily care of their infant Barrett (2009). They acknowledged that understanding the concept of communicative musicality through the practical activities presented during the program was effective in promoting attachment between themselves and their infants. Social connectedness was considered the most significant result of engaging in music, altering their initial belief that using music during infancy aimed mainly at developing infants' brains and intelligence. Having experienced the enjoyment of musical interaction at home through voice, facial expressions, touch, and movement, they perceived music as a social endeavour that involved the whole family (Savage et al., 2021). "It's so rewarding to be able to communicate with my son. When I talk and babble to him, he smiles and moves his arms energetically. Moments like that are precious to us", one mother said (Mother 13, Interview#3).

When I delivered the program, acting as a facilitator rather than expert, was crucial for the mothers' active engagement in the musical activities: it nourished their self-esteem when it came to incorporate music at home with their infants. Considering the discussion in the literature regarding the notion of musical parenting as intuitive practice, my role as a facilitator rather than an expert during the program was found beneficial for unlocking mothers' hesitation to interact musically with their infants and fostering their confidence. Most participants emphasized that overcoming this hesitancy was a result of the support and encouragement they received from the facilitator/researcher during the online sessions, informal discussions, and weekly communication. The open-ended approach to the delivery of the activities, which used a variety of ways implementing the practical activities, and the flexible structure of the program, was perceived as a positive environment for flourishing mothers' skills and confidence. Acting as a "mother" myself, and not as an expert and establishing a participant-centered approach, where paying attention to the mothers' needs, concerns, and fears (see also Ilari, 2018) were core aspects of the process, empowered the mothers' musical parenting. "We enjoy the examples you share with us about your lived experience with your own young children. We feel confident talking to you about our experiences" (notes from session 10). Additionally, the mothers valued the fact that research findings concerning musical parenting were incorporated into the program, because this had the effect of neutralizing the misleading information that they had received before participating in it. The mothers also provided suggestions for improving the delivery of the program, such as arranging

individual face-to-face meetings with each mother and establishing follow-up communication with the mothers for reflection and future support.

Conclusion

This study discusses the perceptions of a group of new mothers engaged in an online musical parenting program. The findings reveal that the program transformed their beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviours with respect to musical parenting and supports the idea that intuitive means of interaction between parents and infants should be encouraged and reinforced (Monaci et al., 2021). The practical activities, were based on theory and inspired the mothers to use musical activities at home with their infants, as also supported in previous research (Pitt & Hargraves, 2017; Rodriguez, 2018). Mothers unlocked their initial hesitancy in engaging in musical interaction with their infants through babbling, vocalizing, chanting, moving, and singing and showed confidence to act musically. They parented infants beyond the “conventional idea of ‘song’” (Young et al., 2022) in a broader range of musical communication using vocal utterances, arrangements, and improvisations.

Through a mutual sharing between mothers and researcher-facilitator, the program improved the mothers’ understanding of the many facets of communicative musicality. It changed their perception of the impact of music during infancy. Accepting the diverse perspectives of the participants engaged in the educational program was revealed to be essential for the process of empowerment in musical parenting. Future research in musical parenting should also explore the fathers’ views on the topic.

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Immersing educators in senses and artistry through the artistic experience of the online music-theatre piece PaPI Opus 8.z

Ana Isabel Pereira

Musicology Department, School of Social Sciences and Humanities (NOVA FCSH)
CESEM - NOVA University of Lisbon, IN2PAST
Lisbon, Portugal
anapereira@fcsb.unl.pt

Helena Rodrigues

Musicology Department, School of Social Sciences and Humanities (NOVA FCSH)
CESEM - NOVA University of Lisbon, IN2PAST
Lisbon, Portugal

Paulo Maria Rodrigues

Communication and Arts Department, University of Aveiro
Inet-md
Aveiro, Portugal

Abstract

Companhia de Música Teatral (CMT)'s artistic-educative constellations model has linked education and artistic practice. The need for immersive training experiences based on the concept of communicative musicality is advocated in this model. That was accomplished in the GermlnArte project (2015-2018) and pollinated for the Mil Pássaros project (Thousand Birds). This comprises the musical-theatre piece PaPI-Opus 8.z shared with educators, parents, and children and conceived to be performed by Zoom to family audiences during pandemics.

Over thirty online performances were presented between 2020 and 2022 to families with babies and children, kindergarten classes and educators, primary school classes, and children at the hospital. There were spectators from Portugal, Brazil, the USA, Israel, and Spain.

The piece is part of *z.Lab Thousand Birds*, an online training program in arts for childhood that views training as a holistic process that includes the fruition and deconstruction of artistic experiences, such as PaPI-Opus 8.z. The program aims to demonstrate ways to provide educators and teachers with a vivid way to engage in arts during training courses and lifelong learning.

Recorded video excerpts that might catalyze educators' involvement in arts for childhood and their artistry are presented. They illustrate how PaPI-Opus 8.z emphasizes communication experiences. It is possible to relate the overall approach with mother-infant interactions, arguing that arts provide a special attachment and collective intersubjectivity. We deconstruct the piece reflecting on the common ground between art and playfulness in a continuum that involves all senses (despite PaPI-Opus 8. z being presented in Zoom), which is a strong focus in the SenseSquared project.

The *z.Lab Thousand Birds* training program is being improved and expanded in the scope of the SenseSquared project. Future work involves searching for ways to help educators and teachers feed their communicative impulses and "open the gates of their inner musicality." We argue that educators must have first-person experiences and feel the arts' benefits. Then they will be ready to share their own experience with children and families.

Keywords: z.Lab Thousand Birds, arts for childhood, immersive training, communicative musicality, *SenseSquared* project, PaPI-Opus 8.z, audience studies

Introduction

Companhia de Música Teatral (CMT) privileges Music as the basis of its work and seeks interaction between various languages and possibilities of artistic communication (e.g., Rodrigues, Arrais, & Rodrigues, 2013). The creation of relationships between art and education and the articulation between academic research, artistic production, training, technological creation, and community involvement defines CMT's philosophical matrix. CMT's work on disseminating the importance of the musical experience and art in general in social and human development has also been a hallmark. The intense work developed over two decades led to the implementation of the concept of artistic-educative constellations, whose model has linked education and artistic practice (Miguel, Rodrigues & Rodrigues, 2022). One of these models advocates: i) the need for immersive training experiences and ii) art for infancy as conceived in PaPI² (Portable Play to Play) — a set of small musical-theatre pieces that involve a high degree of portability and interaction between performers and audiences. These key ideas emerged in Opus Tutti, a project that has been seminal for innovative ideas and several CMT works and, later, gave birth to the Thousand Birds project.

1. From Opus Tutti to z.Lab Thousand Birds

Opus Tutti was an artistic and educational project that developed a framework of artistic practices aiming to contribute to well-being in the community and the enhancement of full skills since infancy (Rodrigues, Rodrigues & Rodrigues, 2016). Opus Tutti lasted four years, metaphorically named Germination, Rooting, Growing, and Fruiting³. A strong departure point in the project's rationale was that art and playfulness share a common ground. This idea gave birth to Art of Playfulness⁴, a generic name given to training activities — including Ludicity and Art for Childhood — conceived and articulated from the music-theater plays of PaPI. We intend to explain how action and reflection are melted in our work by sharing these actions.

1.1 PaPI - Portable Play to Play

PaPI is one of the artistic practices originally conceived as early years art, addressed to target audiences formed by families (with infants and toddlers) and to nurseries and kindergartens. It encompasses a set of musical-theatre pieces, each nominated by an opus number. The artistic works created under Opus Tutti's endeavor were developed in multidisciplinary residences looking to set standards for high-quality artistic practice for infancy and early childhood. They were assembled by versatile artists, specifically trained to develop their artistic expression (based on music, dance, and theatre). They also drew on genuine and positive human contact (Rodrigues & Rodrigues, 2016). So, a PaPI provides first contact with original artistic experiences in an atmosphere where the performer's interaction qualities are as important as the aesthetic artistry. The cycle PaPI has been expanding and refined since Opus Tutti. The creation of a PaPI is currently integrated into the CMT's artistic-educative constellations.

1 PaPI is the acronym of the Portuguese expression *Peça a Peça Itinerante*. The expression alludes to itinerance and sounds as sweet nickname for parent.

2 Similar names — *Budding*, *Putting Down Roots*, *Growing into the Light*, and *Bearing Fruit* — are titles of four documentaries that are available in open access on CMT's website.

3 *Arte da Lúdica* in portuguese. The expression is a kind of a pun with J. S. Bach Art of Fugue.

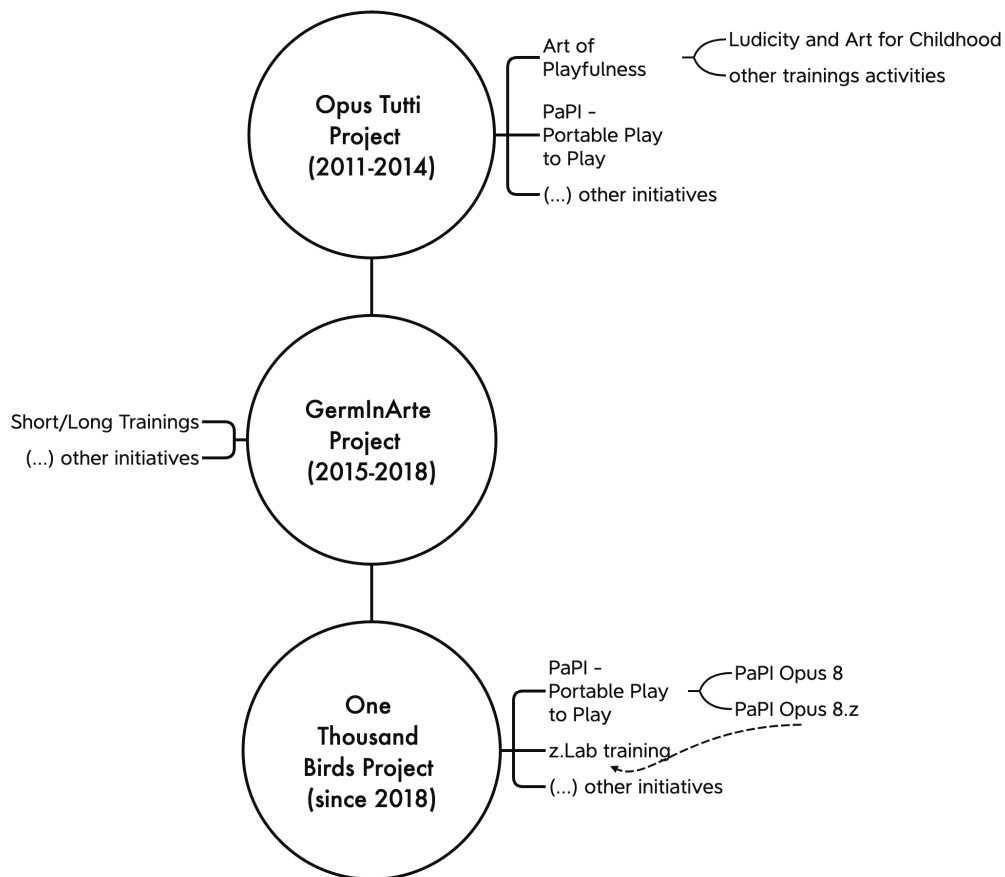


Figure 1 shows a diagram of the main projects covered in this article and their ramifications.

The key features that define a PaPI are: (1) The dramatic and musical action is performed just by one or two artists; (2) Scenarios and props are minimal and highly portable in a practical manner; (3) There is a considerable ability to adapt to available spaces in a short time, both in scenic and human terms. Therefore, a PaPI is designed to circulate easily and reach kindergartens, museums, libraries, and recreational associations. Notwithstanding, it should present enough artistic quality to be programmed by a theatre, a cultural institution, or a festival. By presenting a PaPI, we aim to create a harmonious and stimulating atmosphere for children and adults. We aim to provide a time for constructing togetherness through participation or shared contemplation. We also aim to inspire the adults that accompany babies and children. Using minimal resources, we convey that imagination and inner availability are the most important ingredients for playing and making art.

1.2 Ludicity and Art for Childhood

As part of Art of Playfulness, Ludicity and Art for Childhood⁵ was a training activity aimed at educators and educational assistants aside PaPI development. This training involved (1) practical activities on music, drama, and movement and (2) observing PaPI performances, presented live for parents and babies at Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. These were exploratory steps to provide first contact with the PaPIs that educators would receive in their day-care centers and kindergartens

⁵ Ludicidade e Arte para a Infância in Portuguese.

later. Implementing these steps brought us new insights since we realized that for some professionals, that was their first artistic experience. This made us think that exposure to the artistic experience should also be provided to the nursery and kindergarten professionals for their enjoyment and learning. On the other hand, we concluded that the better way to instill the idea of taking good care of children would be to provide good care opportunities for themselves.

1.3 z.Lab Thousand Birds

PaPI and Ludicity and Art for Childhood are a small part of Opus Tutti's history. These first actions were seeds that contained all the essential ingredients that allowed us to bear the fruits of some of those, now expanding and going deeper. We learn and improve our artistic and educational work according to a spiral⁶. All this knowledge and background are being mobilized for z.Lab Thousand Birds — an online immersive training on arts for childhood — to be done during the SenseSquared ERASMUS+ project. z.Lab is part of the Thousand Birds' constellation, in which the community is invited to send orizurus for a collective installation. This has been inspired by a traditional Japanese saying that a wish comes true when someone makes one thousand orizurus while thinking about it. Taking the birds' world as the core theme of the training process emphasizes the importance of listening, expanding it to all the senses. Birds' universe also inspires singing, movement, and interdisciplinary activities. Taking care of the environment and people are key values.

As part of the training program, educators attend the presentation of PaPI – Opus 8.z (a music-theater piece that was specifically developed for the Zoom platform). The artistic material of the piece is the basis for the music and movement activities of the training program. Subsequently, the same piece is offered to kindergarten classes of each educator participating in the program. Thus, we expect that educators who have experienced the joy of engagement in that artistic experience and participated in activities related to the piece will be prepared to engage their children in the universe of that artistic work by using senses and awareness. We also believe that they will be able to use a richer point of view when observing children as an audience or on the days after the performance (it is known that typically children “mull” elements from artistic performances on the days after).

2. PaPI-Opus 8.z as a flight path for educators

PaPI – Opus 8 was adapted for Zoom during the pandemic, giving birth to its Zoom version (z). Over thirty online performances were presented between 2020 and 2022 to families with babies and children, kindergarten classes and educators, primary school classes, and children (including some in pediatric isolation at the hospital) in Portugal, Brazil, the USA, Israel, Poland, and Spain. The Zoom version involved readjusting the narratives and timings of sound and dance to maintain the feeling of co-presence without sacrificing the musical and theatrical content. The visualization of these Zoom experiences reinforced empirical observations collected over 25 years by working in the early years' art domain. One of the main ideas that emerged was that it is possible to identify a kind of collective intersubjectivity – as Stern (2010) refers to — during artistic performances addressed to infants, toddlers, and children.

Malloch and Trevarthen (2010) underlined that babies possess an innate intersubjectivity, meaning that they take part “in shared consciousness regulated by emotions of affection and enjoyment, expressed and given meaningful form by rhythms of modulated movement” (p. 2). Adding to this

⁶ Rough allusion to Jerome Bruner's spiral curriculum.

idea, Harrison and Tronick (2022) refer to the process of meaning-making between two individuals as one that emerges from an active engagement of two different states of consciousness that create a dyadic state of consciousness. This means that intersubjectivity can describe the way humans grow in relationships. Therefore, in a music-theatre performance (MTP) context where caregivers and children participate, questions such as “To what extent do responses regarding artistic involvement in childhood elucidate the social function of music and art as factors in sustaining societies?” and “What is the function of aesthetic fruition in the development of children?” (Barbosa et al., 2018a, p. 245) are very pertinent.

In aesthetic fruition, from our point of view, intersubjectivity may exist through contemplative and participatory ways. In the same way, the training of educators should also follow the same ramification, translated into listening/observing and imagination/playfulness/action. Thus, as a departure point, we propose a set of performance engagement indicators to “tune the eyes and listening” toward one performance of PaPI – Opus 8.z. From here, we discuss the importance of observation to improve our “listening” and connection with others and some ideas on how the performer’s actions might catalyze the educators’ ideas and actions.

2.1 “Tuning eyes and listening”: Audience engagement in PaPI-Opus 8.z

To our knowledge, when studying aesthetic experiences in early childhood, the emphasis has been on theater performances (e.g., Hovik, 2018, 2019; Knight, 2011; Young, 2004). Fewer studies are dedicated to performances involving music (Barbosa et al., 2018a; Barbosa et al., 2021; Dionyssiou & Fytika, 2017; Rodrigues et al., 2008). In both contexts, children’s behaviors have been the focus, and results reveal that babies and toddlers are attentive spectators challenged at behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and vocal levels. Yet, as Barbosa et al. (2021) mention, “caregivers emerge as important companions in emotional regulation, cocreation of meanings, and sharing of experiences” (p. 10). Thus, their role in promoting children’s engagement during music-theatre performances should also be analyzed by focusing on their engagement in the performance.

To illustrate examples of children’s and caregivers’ engagement behaviors in the light of indicators described ahead, a short trailer of one PaPI-Opus 8.z performance will be used. It is available on open access at CMT’s website: <https://vimeo.com/489924355>. This performance occurred in 2020 to a Portuguese audience of 11 families and 13 children during the pandemic. Children’s age ranged from 4 months to 9 years old. Of course, the filmmaker already conditioned what is seen in the video, but we aim to explore a few possibilities. A further deepening of this work should be made by analyzing the complete performance and defining time intervals to code the behaviors through a microanalytical study. Zoom also provides a new context of analysis, which differs from previous studies and demands a new approach.

Based on the narratives described by Barbosa et al. (2018a) and the indicators defined by Barbosa et al. (2021), we defined a new set of indicators to analyze audience engagement in a Zoom setting (Table 1).

Indicators	Description
1. Shared experience by the caregiver-child dyad	When engagement occurs for both elements of the dyad in, at least, one of the following situations:
1.1. Attention	The child and caregiver are directed toward the screen in a still and contemplative manner.
1.2. Movement	The child and caregiver engage in movement behavior (e.g., flying) or exhibit rhythmic movements that are/seem related to the musical elements or other movements that are/seem related to the artistic events. They might be touching each other or not. The movements that are not related should be excluded.
1.3. Vocal	The child and caregiver participate articulately following a performance event that requires audience participation (speaking, singing, chanting, and imitating nature/environmental sounds). Obs. to be used only if the microphone is on.
1.4. Interaction actions	The child and caregiver direct their attention to each other (e.g., looking, smiling, laughing, embracing, and playing with body parts or objects).
1.5. Pointing	The child or caregiver initiates a pointing movement toward the screen that is followed by the other.
2. Child individual actions	When engagement occurs for the child in one of the following situations and the caregiver is engaged in a different situation:
2.1. Attention	The child faces the screen in a still and contemplative manner.
2.2. Movement	The child moves following a performance event (e.g., flying, jumping, rolling).
2.3. Vocal	The child participates articulately following a performance event that requires audience participation (speaking, singing, chanting, imitating nature/environmental sounds). Obs. to be used only if the microphone is on.
2.4. Pointing	The child initiates a pointing movement towards the screen that is not followed by the other.
2.5. Self-engagement	The child's attention is directed towards herself/himself (e.g., playing with an object, turning her/his body away from the screen).
3. Caregiver individual actions	When engagement occurs for the caregiver but not the child in one of the following situations:
3.1. Attention	The caregiver faces the screen in a still and contemplative manner.
3.2. Movement	The caregiver moves following a performance event (e.g., flying, jumping, rolling).
3.3. Vocal	The caregiver participates articulately following a performance event that requires audience participation (speaking, singing, chanting, imitating nature/environmental sounds). Obs. to be used only if the microphone is on.
3.4. Pointing	The caregiver initiates a pointing movement towards the screen that is not followed by the other.
3.5. Self-engagement	The caregiver's attention is directed towards herself/himself (e.g., playing with an object, turning her/his body away from the screen).
4. Unscorable	When it is not possible to code the engagement behavior due to the following:
4.1. Child	The child is outside the view of the camera, leaves the Zoom square or the face/body are obscured.
4.2. Caregiver	The caregiver is outside the view of the camera or leaves the Zoom square.

Table 1. Description of Audience Engagement on Zoom

The engagement with the performance includes four different behavior categories: shared experience by the caregiver-child dyad; child individual actions, and caregiver individual actions if the type of engagement situation is different between the child and the caregiver; and unscorable if it is not possible to code engagement behaviors due to the obscured face and/or body and leaving the Zoom square. The categories concerning child and caregiver individual actions and unscorable can co-occur. The engagement indicators can also co-occur, excluding attention and pointing, which cannot co-occur among themselves and others.

The indicators listed above are a departing point that needs to be refined over time using similar performances and audience observations. To illustrate a few behaviors, 2 frames were selected from the trailer (Fig 2 – 3).

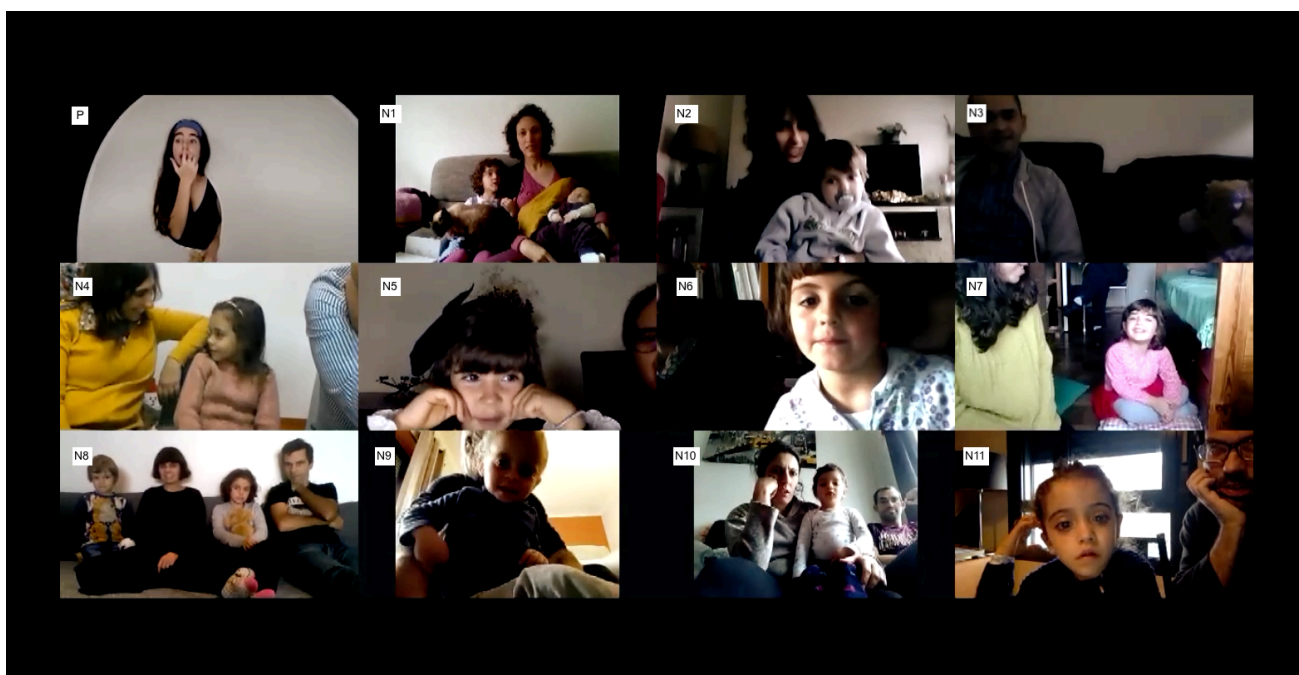


Figure 2. Frame 1 - Audience and performer in minute 2'00'' (Dendrocopos)

The moment captured in Figure 2 illustrates an interaction of the performer (P) with the audience (N stands for family nucleus). P chanted “Dendrocopos”⁷, which incorporates cities or countries’ names and things that rhyme with those names. P pretended she lacked something that rhymed with Paris, and asked, “What rhymes with Paris?”. The child in N5 answered “nariz” (nose in English). She then performed the chant with the word provided by that child.

⁷ Dendrocopos is part of the woodpecker’s scientific name. In Portuguese, the performer was chanting “Dendrocopos de Bragança, pica, toca, canta e dança”. Bragança is a name of a Portuguese city in the north of Portugal and the actions mentioned were sticks, plays, sings, and dance.

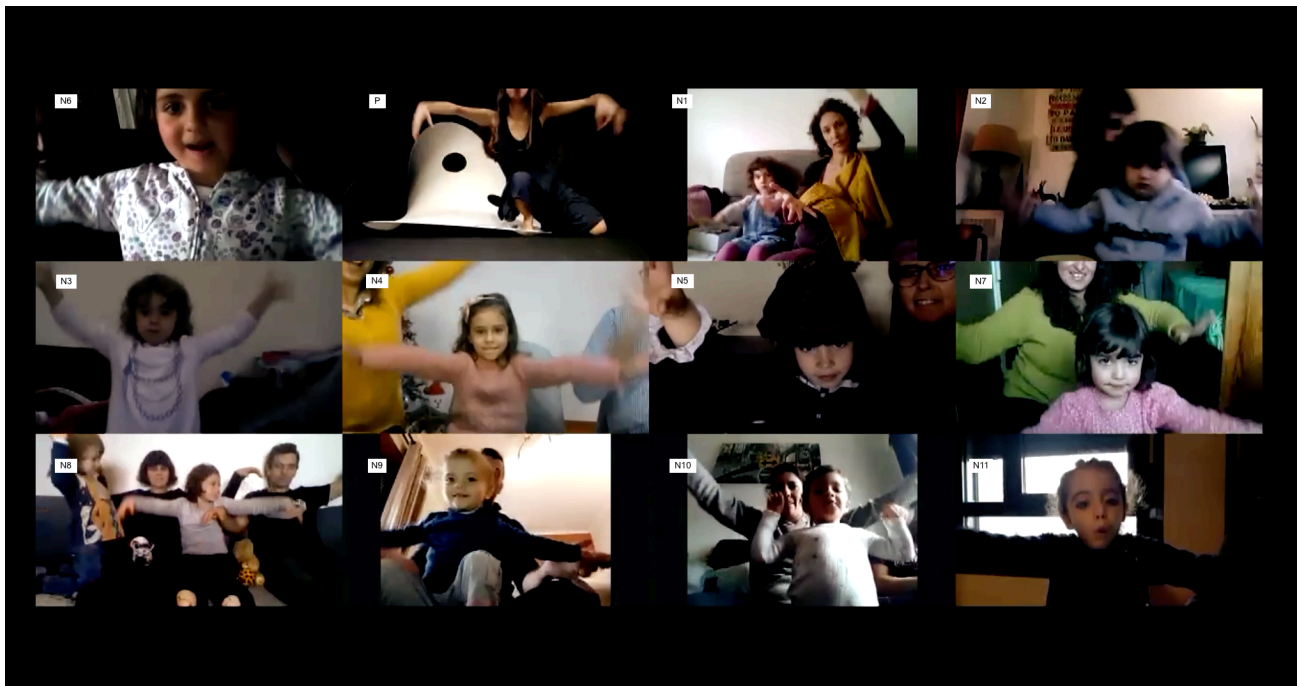


Figure 3. Frame 2 - Audience and performer in minute 4'59'' (sound of the flapping)

In Figure 3, P reproduces the beating of birds' wings, emitting vocal sounds. Even without verbal instruction, the audience imitates her movements.

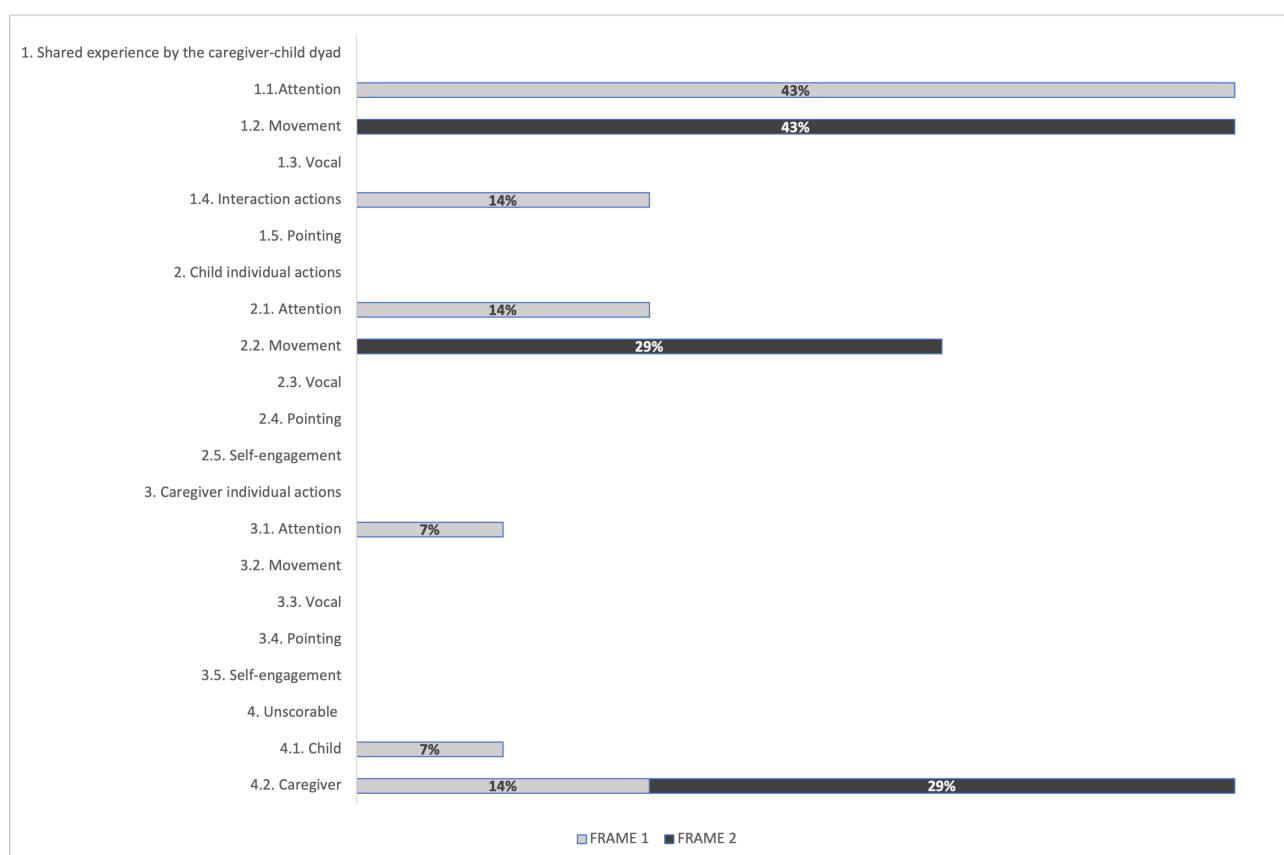


Figure 4. Percentage of audience engagement indicators coded *per* frame

Each frame and each nucleus were coded according to the indicators in Table 1 (Figure 4).

Frames 1 and 2 represent scenes with different musical materials and different behavior from the performer in terms of interaction with the audience. Attention was the prevalent indicator in Frame 1, whereas movement was more present in Frame 2.

The study of children and caregivers' engagement in the performance is trifold: to understand types of engagement according to different scenes; to improve subsequent performances; and to provide a common ground for observation in a Zoom context by adding new terminology.

2.2 Framework for educators

During the GermlnArte project (2015-2018), trainees - educators and other professionals who worked in early childhood settings – reported that observing live events with babies was fundamental for their training since they could verify how to transpose what they had learned to practice (Barbosa et al., 2018b, p.287). Yet, ideally, educators should be trained in observing and interpreting recorded performances before real-life situations involving children and where they are involved. Observing skills are essential to our capacity for empathy and affective attunement in situations involving human relationships. There is a need for training processes capable of transforming and renewing our thoughts about education (Rodrigues, Rodrigues & Vences, 2019). The scenes and excerpts from the video performance could also stimulate the discussion around different topics, such as (1) the use of rhyming activities in kindergarten, which, in turn, can be related to the development of phonological awareness; (2) expanding activities based on the performer's flying (e.g., how different birds fly, birds with big wings, birds with small wings, high up

in the sky, lower in the sky, fast birds, slow birds, birds that fly "legatto", that glide, that fly in groups, that fly alone); (3) what inspiration can bird movies or documentaries provide; (4) how to create a space where playfulness, communication, and artistry are explored, using music, dance, theatre, and visual arts; and (5) the role of educators in shared experiences during a music theatre performance.

Final remarks

Over the years, CMT's focus has been maintaining and feeding the communicative impulse accompanying us from infancy until adulthood (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2010). This impulse should be fostered whenever possible, using shared artistic experiences to elicit surprise, joy, wonderment, and other feelings that promote internal growth. Arts can provide a rich substrate for attachment and co-creating meanings. In the scope of Erasmus+ SenseSquared Project, we intend to continue nurturing educators' needs through deepening aspects of observation and playfulness inspired by PaPI-Opus 8.z.

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Musical-aesthetic education at the primary school level

Andrea Puehringer

University College of Teacher Education Vienna

Vienna, Austria

andrea.puehringer@phwien.ac.at

Abstract

Musical-aesthetic education represents an essential hallmark of schooling due to its substantial contribution to society and culture. Presently, transfer effects are often used to justify this type of education. But it is assumed that musical-aesthetic education has its own dignity and legitimacy, and for this reason the author dissociates from transfer research. Building on Günther Anders' theoretical work *Philosophische Untersuchungen über musikalische Situationen* (1930/31 in Andres & Ellensohn, 2017), musical-aesthetic education, as understood here, means to make musical-aesthetic situations possible, resulting in musical-aesthetic experiences.

In his recently published postdoctoral philosophical thesis from 1930/31 Günther Anders, influenced by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger and married to Hannah Arendt at that time, comprehends the musical situation as a cognitive situation that expresses itself in participation in forms of musical movement. The musical situation can be understood as a transformation of the human being into one of his 'dimensions', that finds reification only in music.

Building on this theoretical work the musical-aesthetic situation as a basis for music education processes and its contribution to developments of approaches of musical-aesthetic education at the primary school level will be discussed. Furthermore, practicable proposals are worked out, that bring enrichment for music universities, primary education colleges and especially for children at the primary school level.

The objective of this paper is to raise greater awareness for the inherent worth of musical-aesthetic education and to provide the necessary information on a well-founded basis in one place.

Keywords: Musical-aesthetic education; Musical-aesthetic situation; Primary school; Günther Anders, Music philosophy

Introduction

One of the most frequently cited philosophers in the context of educational theory is John Dewey. To gain some new insights, I decided to focus on less-known perspectives that contribute to intersections of philosophy, music, and education.

In his philosophical writings from 1930/31 Günther Anders, influenced by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger and married to Hannah Arendt at that time, describes the musical situation as a cognitive situation in a philosophical-anthropological way. Building on this theoretical work I will discuss the musical-aesthetic situation as a basis for music education processes by combining characteristics of the aesthetic experience with the musical situation and thus showing its contribution to approaches of musical-aesthetic education at the primary school level.

Since primary school can be considered a key institution to make music education possible for all pupils in modern migration societies, in a next step the Austrian primary school curriculum is used to demonstrate the formal framework for music education and its potential for musical-aesthetic situations.

Finally, the realization of the potential provided by the legal framework in Austria is scrutinized by the analysis of expert interviews to discuss main problems and make recommendations to improve musical-aesthetic education at the primary school level.

The manuscript

But why consider a philosophy of music from the 1930s? Buschkühle (2011, p. 9) says:

“The question, what is suitable for education in art, depends on the communication with philosophy.”

Günther Anders philosophical writings fit in a very special way to extend the actual discussion about musical-aesthetic education, which understands music education as a trans-discipline (Khittl 2017, p. 9). So, I would like to introduce Günther Anders at first.

Günther Anders was born in 1902 in Breslau – and died in 1992 in Vienna. He can be seen as one of the most important philosophers in German-speaking Europe. In his major philosophical work ‘The Obsolescence of Humankind ’or literally ‘The Outdatedness of the Human Species ’or in German „Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen“ Anders analyses the gap between what we are able to produce and what we are able to imagine. He also emerged as a central figure in the European antinuclear movement.

What is less known, before he immigrated to Paris in 1933 and then to the US, he engaged in two areas of research: philosophical anthropology and the philosophy of music (Ellensohn 2014, p. 108).

Anders describes his philosophy of music as a theory of situations. By this he means that he is concerned in his analysis neither with the musical work (the composition in the form of the score) nor the psychological experience of music, but with the musical situation itself. This according to Anders, is characterized by a specific subject-object neutrality. The traditional dichotomies of subject and object or intentional act and intentional object are inadequate when it comes to music; what is specific to music is the coincidence of subject and object, performance and work. (Ellensohn 2014, p. 110)

In this thesis Günther Anders describes musical situations as cognitive situations that manifest themselves in participating different kinds of movement (Anders 2017, p. 23-24). Musical listening essentially exists in “co-performance” of musical forms of motion and not, for instance, in a stance of passive receptivity.

This leads to a transformation of the human being (ibid., p. 64). According to Anders the human being in the musical situation lives neither in this world nor within the continuity of his or her own life (ibid., pp. 23-24). The center of the musical situation is *Being-in-music*, which is only possible, if the participants are actively and emotionally involved in the situation (Khittl 2016, p. 167).

The role of music within human existence could be to *experience and learn something in music*. Something that can be exclusively experienced and learned in its participation because certain dimensions of existence only become transparent by co-performing / participating (in) music (Anders 2017, p. 64).

To quote Günther Anders (2017, pp. 68-69):

„By participating such movements, human beings are not just changed in their formal time structure but completely modified and transformed. (...) Just because of this ability to modify, a kind of transformation is possible that goes to make the musical situation. These moods are not ‚just‘ occasional human attributes but colours of human existence. So – aside from their musical function - they are cognitive: kinds of self-awareness of existence, (...).“

Günther Anders describes such moods as for example *being-shaken*, *being-moved*, *being-elevated*, *to-float*, *being-separated*, *being-thrilled*, *to-me*’, *being-release*, *to-swim*, *being-dissoluted* or *being-carried-away* (ibid., pp. 69-70).

For I can’t be sure about the translation of Günther Anders terms, I decided to introduce you to three German terms that assume key roles.

Aufgelöstsein-in ’(dissolution), for example, finds fulfilment in hearkening, that can be described as an intensively concentrated ‚readiness-for-... ‘and thus an indifference of activity and passiveness. Intentional listening” corresponds to the musical situation that Anders calls ‘Gelöstheit ’(release) that he connects to the music of Viennese Classicism. It finds fulfilment in (an act of) singing, or rather virtual singing as “joining in” that can be described as the internal realization of music and thus an indifference of objectivity and subjectivity. ‘Abgelöstsein-von ’(separation) finds fulfilment in the participation of a strict musical form. That kind of participation can be described as becoming self-detached and thus as an indifference of distance and identity (ibid., pp. 28ff).

"The one feature that is shared by all types of listening is the transformation of the person who is in this state of auditory co-performance of a musical object. In the musical situation as a situation of transformation. The listener becomes the medium. He no longer simply finds himself in the music, rather he is the music. Music “speaks”, as it were, straight through the person, the listener." (Ellensohn 2014, p. 110)

I think it is safe to say Günther Anders’ considerations could be valuable today. To summarize and apply it to educational aspects I suppose the following for now: To get music education processes going, offering a wide range of opportunities to transform people is needed, to perceive music as a dimension of human being, where one can experience and learn something unique.

With the analysis of Bernd Kleimanns study on the characteristics of aesthetic experience (2002), I will show that by combining these key features with the musical situation a definition of musical-aesthetic education could be created.

According to Kleimann three essential characteristics of aesthetic experience can be distinguished: Sinnlichkeit: sensory approach, Gegenwärtigkeit: presence and Erfüllung: fulfillment (Kleimann 2002, pp. 54-55). In the following these general characteristics are applied to musical-aesthetic experiences.

(1) Sensory approach can be translated into musical-aesthetic perception. This means the receptive and active examination of the world of music (ibid., pp. 56-57). That can concern monosensory,

imaginative-polysensoric or synesthetic perception (ibid., p. 61), in which perception in narrower sense can include memories, imaginations and sense-bounded cognitions (ibid, p. 66).

(2) Presence as a key feature comprises fulfilled time, attention to a musical situation and the 'end-in-itselfness' (ibid., pp. 67ff) of the musical-aesthetic perception, also called autotelism-

(3) Fulfillment as a third characteristic of musical-aesthetic experience covers the complete range of the assessment spectrum between satisfaction and disappointment (ibid, pp. 90-91).

A great advantage of these characteristics of aesthetic experience is, that they allow different definitions of aesthetic education and focus on the situative aspects of learning. Furthermore, it is apparent, that artistic disciplines can be applied to these characteristics.

Based on these general ideas of the musical situation and musical-aesthetic experiences an operative definition of musical-aesthetic education can be deduced:

We are talking about musical-aesthetic education if the participants are involved continuously in musical situations, which sensitize perception by receptive and active examination of music, if the participants can generate intrinsic value and get space for the assessment of musical-aesthetic experiences.

For sure, we can't leave that definition as it is, but we must deconstruct it again to formulate key questions to find out more about the reality of musical-aesthetic education in primary schools. We must find out in which situations and to what extent musical reception and active examination of music happen in primary schools, how musical situations contribute to the sensitization of perception and how these situations contribute to generate intrinsic value of musical-aesthetic experiences for the young students. Besides, we must find out in which situations and to what extent assessment of musical-aesthetic experiences takes place.

As a first step to answer these questions and to show potentials, I have applied these five elements of musical-aesthetic education to the single elements of the educational and teaching task in the compulsory subject music education at the primary school level in Austria (Federal Ministry Republic of Austria: Education, Science and Research 2023).

Musical reception is represented by the following elements of the educational and teaching task:

- Leading to intentional listening
- Supporting experience capability
- Improving the hearing ability

Active examination of music refers to the educational and teaching task by:

- The consideration of the acoustic-musical environment
- By singing, making music, listening, and moving to music
- By supporting expressiveness
- The willingness to take part in extracurricular activities by the acquisition of basic musical skills

Which elements do we find if we consider sensitization of perception?

Here we have the following:

- Supporting perceptual abilities by the improvement of the ability of distinction in acoustic-musical sensations: hearing, sight, touch, balance, kinesthetic sense

Which points promise to generate intrinsic value of musical-aesthetic experiences?

- Creative work
- Pleasure-orientated musical activities
- Opportunities to experience pleasure, enrichment and excitation by early and modern music
- The consideration of the individual and the group

And concerning the assessment of musical-aesthetic experiences I have found the following:

- Describing listening sensations
- Supporting linguistic expression
- Critical and tolerant examination of music

This analysis conveys that the educational and teaching task can be a basis to realize musical-aesthetic situations at an amazingly high level. But, of course, it doesn't say anything about the actual implementation.

That's why - in a second step of my analysis - I have examined to what extent these elements of the educational and teaching tasks are translated into practice. For that I have interviewed different players in tertiary education institutions in Upper Austria.

According to lecturers at education colleges in Upper Austria the quality of music teaching in primary schools depends considerably on the individual teacher personality. It is to say that in Austria, a primary school teacher normally teaches all kinds of subjects. Ideally, the teacher incorporates musical situations several times per week. In this, the teacher's previous experiences, motivation and approaches play a key part because it is hardly possible to control if any musical situations are offered at all. Some interviewees also emphasize that there is nearly no musical experience required from those who pursue a career in teaching at the primary school level. Besides, the number of music classes provided at the education colleges are decreasing while at the same time the number of students in the various music classes and groups are rising (Pühringer 2016, p. 65). The assumption is that there is no full coverage of musical-aesthetic education in Austrian primary schools. Although the curriculum offers a framework it's entirely up to the teacher which opportunities are offered or if any musical situations are offered at all.

In view of the marginalization of music education and artistic subjects in general, educational research should focus on the examination of music, art and culture at schools providing a general education. Therefore, it is important to examine the framework as well as the actual quantitative and qualitative state of aesthetic education at schools and educational colleges in more detail. Especially the issue of quality education must be considered.

Based on the expert interviews deducted (Pühringer 2016), recommendations can be made, how musical-aesthetic situations can happen more continuously in Austrian primary schools and consequently lead to profound music education processes.

There should be sufficient musical-aesthetic education at a high level for future primary school teachers as well as sufficient continuing quality education programs in musical-aesthetic education for practicing primary school teachers. There should also be improved cooperation between educational colleges and music universities, between primary schools and music schools and cooperation between primary schools and cultural institutions. Well trained music teachers and musicians should be integrated and the primary school music curriculum at educational colleges should be further developed in cooperation with music universities.

Which plans of action are viewed as practicable depends on the current culture, institution, and situation. To quote Greeno and Sawyer (2009, p. 354):

“From a situative perspective, learning is the gradual appropriation, through guided participation, of the ability to participate in culturally defined socially situated activities and practices. And because every culture has its own unique set of practices, learning outcomes will be different within each culture.”

Therefore, individual concepts are needed for the current musical-aesthetic learning milieu, to make musical-aesthetic situations possible for all pupils in modern migration societies. The cultivation of the musical dimension can be considered an essential hallmark of school, which requires further research.

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ZINTUIN artistic interventions in primary schools: Paving a path towards an education for the future

Hans Van Regenmortel

Artistic coordinator, Musica Impulse Centre

Pelt, Belgium

hans.van.regenmortel@musica.be

Abstract

In recent decades, the ‘discovery’ of the musicality of the preverbal mother-child dyad has led to new insights and approaches in scientific research, early childhood practices and education, and early childhood music education.

One of the aims of the Erasmus+ SenseSquared project is to go a step further by highlighting the relevance of early mother-child interaction for later life and education in general. More specifically, the project aims to highlight the importance of further developing and refining the sensorium in relation to an artistic attitude and practice as a more fruitful foundation for and integration with rationality to be pursued in formal education from kindergarten to secondary school.

The starting point is a vision of musicality that not only aims to encompass the most important aspects of all musics in the world, but also sheds new light on how we can understand intelligence, how it is rooted in the emotions, and how both are in turn reflected in musical practice.

These ideas form the core of ZINTUIN, one of the Belgian contributions to SenseSquared. Four primary schools and a music academy have joined a two-year project that brings artistic interventions to schools as a stimulus for genuine interaction between children and teachers. The aim is to explore an education that moves away from the mainstream paradigm of knowledge transmission and its sometimes ubiquitous and probably overestimated step-by-step approach. ZINTUIN aims for ‘an education of attention’ and starts from communication in the real sense of the word: the search for what we have in common, in the way we recognise these principles in the musicality of the mother-infant dyad.

Another contributor to SenseSquared and closely linked to Zintuin, is hEAR DROPS. These online animations address primary school children and teachers as being in the same boat. The films encourage real-life interaction between children and teachers to develop a common understanding, vocabulary and artistic criteria, from which they can evolve towards commonly accepted goals.

Both projects aim to contribute to a path towards ‘an education for the future’ based on how we relate to each other and the world.

Keywords: ZINTUIN, mother-infant musicality, sensory, ambiguity, continuity of life.

Situating the project

This text is part of the MERYC23 Symposium about some key aspects of the Erasmus+ SenseSquared project (2022-2024). The main research question is: How can a sensuous approach and artistic attitude contribute to an education that leads to a more connected and sustainable world? Zintuin⁸, the Flemish (BE) contribution to SenseSquared, is being developed by Musica Impulse Centre.

⁸ The word ‘zintuin’ is a wordplay with the usual Flemish word ‘zintuig’, which means ‘sense (organ)’. The first part of the word (‘zin’) means ‘sense, meaning’, the second part (‘tuig’) is an old word for ‘tool’. By changing the last letter to an ‘n’, the ‘tool’ becomes a ‘garden’. So, literally ‘zintuig’ is literally the tool that makes sense, ‘zintuin’ refers to the environment where we shape and understand the world and our place in it.

Zintuin emphasises the relevance of key aspects of early years interaction in order to inspire an education for the future, with focus on kindergarten and primary school.

The problem addressed is the apparent lack of sensory based experiences that many students exhibit, and as a result the lack of a deep and embodied understanding and skill with subjects at hand. Already Gardner (1995) pointed out that the evidence for this is overwhelming, and plainly called the current system fraudulent. Meanwhile, the neoliberal turn has permeated almost all Western societies since the 1990s and has only sharpened things up. Although awareness is growing and many organisations, companies and schools boldly start exploring new paths in how we relate to each other and the world (Biesta 2018), most schools still breathe aspects that stem directly from production chains and hierarchical management-like approaches, often encouraged by a policy that likes to revert to old recipes in times of uncertainty.

That's how we ended up with an education where children became customers, school principals became managers and teachers became employees (Strobbe & Van Regenmortel 2010). How can an environment where planning and control are paramount - an approach at odds with the conditions in which human learning developed - emancipate children in the true sense of the word (> Latin: e-man-cipare = capture from someone else's hand, hence liberating from parental authority)? No wonder Biesta (2018) asks:

"When, perhaps in a hundred years from now, educational historians will look back at the turn of the millennium, they may well ask 'What was that all about?'. They may well wonder how, in a rather short period of time, almost the entire globe became obsessed with measurable learning outcomes, with league tables, with comparison and competition, and with creating education systems that, in the name of lofty ambitions such as that every child supposedly matters, were actually producing insurmountable hierarchies and inequalities where few could win and many would lose."

The challenge in education

Indeed, the situation has not changed much since Gardner's assessment, rather probably even worsened. The problem can be attributed to the general nineteenth century-based 'industrial' paradigm and current approaches in education, where discourse seems unable to escape the prevailing pedagogical rationale with its typical 'school-ish' habits and vocabulary. While our societies have changed rapidly and fundamentally in recent decades, schools struggle with diversity, even though diversity is an essential feature of biology and human culture. They struggle with inclusion, even though inclusion is the foundation upon which a society is built. They prepare students for a future that in practice is already partly a paradigmatic past. Therefore, Zintuin wants to offer a vision of education that brings together - or better holds together - aspects of our humanity that should never have been torn apart. Bodily experiences through the senses, emotions, intuitions and rational approaches are not separate, but inherent and developmental, and the latter grows out of all the previous ones.

Indeed, learning does not take place only in school, nor is it the automatically expected direct result of instruction and specific focus on learning. Learning is an integrated and integrating process that already takes place in the womb, even at the cellular level and when we sleep or daydream. It is in the 'doing/undergoing' (Ingold, 2018) of navigating space and time, handling materials and interacting with people. Learning is something that happens when conditions are favorable. It is a

fluctuating process, dependent on a number of variables that we can never know or control all at once.

No wonder that learning obeys the laws of complex systems dynamics, as it is an evolutionary adaptation to the natural environment in which our ancestors thrived, where chance and unpredictability prevailed, and where sensitive social interaction and collaboration were of utmost importance for survival. In such a context, learning was continuous, and for the same reason we assume that we learn more outside the school than inside the school (Pinker, 1994). Inevitably, then, these insights must be reflected in how schools seek to address the learning process more specifically.

In search of a universal clue

So, it seems necessary to zoom out in a way that eliminates overly specific cultural traditions and habits. We propose that the early interaction between mother and child encompasses and reveals the fundamental aspects of human development and learning, and that these remain valid for life, even as they take cultural forms.

One of these cultural forms we call music. Music seems a valid candidate to mirror the fundamental properties of the early mother-infant dyad in a way that is relevant for participants at any age irrespective of available musical expertise. Music, however, is not capable of this under all circumstances (Bjørkvold, 1992; Strobbe & Van Regenmortel, 2010). By this I refer to the common methodologies in Western music education. These often exhibit the same pernicious approach as we find in general education. Consider, for example, the generalized and almost unchallenged application of (at least from the adults' point of view) logically constructed step-by-step methodologies to what is in itself a complex, fluid and elastic phenomenon. Methodologies that apply to complicated systems, such as machines, cannot be simply applied to complex systems, such as people, nor can they be applied to complex domains of experience, like music. However, when in such restricted contexts talent does occasionally surface, this is seen as confirmation of the methodology applied. Indeed, traditional music education in the West still stubbornly assumes that musicality is a specific innate talent that is not given to everyone to the same degree. At the same time, music teachers enjoy receiving a pat on the back when one of their talented students performs well. But in this case, is the latter a consequence of the methodology applied by the teacher, or does it stem from the student's DNA? It is all too clear that the prevailing discourse in education is riddled with snags.

Similarly, labeling early mother-child interactions as 'musical' seems to be the result of a retrospective perspective on music from the adult's point of view. Indeed, while mother-infant interactions may have universal properties, many traditional cultures don't even have the concept of music as understood in the West (Bjørkvold, 1992). Because they felt no need. Should we then just add the assumption of the musicality of early mother-child interactions to the ideological constructs mentioned by Cross & Morley (2009)? Indeed, why not, on equally valid grounds, call these interactions linguistic, choreographic, gymnastic, visually oriented, architectural, etc.? What I propose - and without undermining the musical metaphor, to which I'll come back later - is to look at them as exhibiting the Gestalt psychological principles through which we prepare the baby for life itself.

My contention is that early mother-child interactions primarily reflect not only the germs, but the main characteristics of general human intelligence, with a primary focus on the social domain as reflected in the communicative aspects of seeking shared attention, expanding into physicality and the near-materiality of the world, exploring space and becoming aware of time, resulting in a growing awareness of self and the ability to shape, to some extent, interpersonal relationships and our relationship with the world.

Inspired by the concept of radical embodied cognition (Chemero, 2009; Kiverstein & Miller, 2015; Raab & Duarte, 2019), and without being able to delve deeper into this within the scope of this article, I propose that general human intelligence is expressed through the combination of:

- SENSING > the sensorium: detecting and becoming aware of difference through the senses (Glaveanu, 2016; Harris, 2021; Van Regenmortel, 2023 in press),
- EMBODYING > bodily interactions: responding to and shaping the world, being shaped by the world (Ingold, 2018; Rosa, 2019),
- COMMUNICATING > the sharing of experiences: shared attention and the search for what we have or find in common (Ingold, 2018; Van Regenmortel, forthcoming).
- IMAGINING > imagining futures from our memories and as reaction to a given situation, inviting and obliging us to make smart choices in the moment and in the longer term (Ingold, 2019; Van Regenmortel, forthcoming)

By applying the above, already in mother-infant interactions, memories are stored and conceptualisations grow in order to allow the child to more accurately navigate through the social and material world and through space and time. From these memories and the games that play with expectations, the baby detects affordances and ultimately starts to imagine a future from a given situation. As his experiences expand, this eventually results in a multitude of futures from which to choose. While the response to affordances may be more opportunistic and in the moment, we can understand intelligence as rather based on considered and balanced decisions, in a word good decisions. Indeed, it is here that intelligence reveals its essence. The word stems from the Latin *inter + legere*, which means ‘choose between’. In short, becoming intelligent means being able to imagine different futures from which to make smart choices.

Rehabilitating music's value

Here, music can reveal aspects of what it means to be adept at life, for example, when a jazz musician navigates - because that is what improvisation is all about - through the sparse outlines of a composition. It is a perfect illustration of the ‘doing/undergoing’ by which we navigate our way through life, and ultimately - but within narrower and more specific contours - through each domain of expertise, including arithmetic, geometry, rock climbing, biology, chess, sculpture, geography, cuisine, driving a car, etc. In all these cases, we start from a given situation and available understanding and skill (or, on an abstract level: information, which is in fact an imagination grafted onto existing experience) in order to imagine a future, a preferred solution, and if possible eventually realise this choice.

Thus, subverting the musical properties of early mother-baby interaction was necessary to establish precisely the value of music as a prototypical mirror of human intelligence. From all the domains of experience imaginable, we can regard music not only as the prototype of the arts (Langer, 1942), but as the domain par excellence for openly representing the fundamental principles of human intelligence, and for exploring and practising them at any level of expertise.

Therefore, and in order to open new and more fruitful perspectives in education, Zintuin regards musicking (Small, 1998) – indeed, again stressing the active component –, as the inspiration and model for actively investigating the relationship between body, emotion, matter, space, time, memory, imagination, theory, notation, and even ambiguity and precision. They are rooted in aspects of human communication that take shape through sensitivity of each other and the sensory manipulation of materials, objects and contexts.

Even without mention of language, music or dance at that particular stage of human development, the interactions between mother and infant exhibit the fundamental ambiguity of life, and as such already contain the characteristics of the later artistic process. The ever more complex games with repetition, variation, contrast and ‘surprise at novelty’ reflect the core principles of human psychology and show how we move through the social and material space and time. The interactions reveal how concepts emerge and evolve; how they are stretched, questioned or undercut. They show how we acquire habits and models that in turn become part of larger constellations of repetition, variation, contrast and surprise. They show how we can find common ground within which we can still develop and nurture our individual uniqueness. Additionally, they show that we learn most deeply when we are not focused on learning but when we are in flow with the object of (shared) attention.

We regard the interactions of the early mother-infant dyad as the evolutionary prototype of education, as it contains the seeds of how sensory experiences, embodied expression and understanding, communication, memory and imagination become intertwined. From here, and as far as we recognise specific musical aspects in these interactions, music forms an inspiring metaphor to remind us of the roots of our general and specific intelligence(s).

Zintuin

From this proposed rationale, in the spring of 2022, we began exploring and interpreting Musica's core ideas about musicality in a very hands-on way with our partners in SenseSquared and a number of teachers from the five participating schools (including one music academy), some 30 people in total. Since then, these teachers have acted as Zintuin ambassadors in their respective schools.

We started with an easily accessible exercise in which we organically layered the participants into making music with simple objects, instruments and the voice. From the discussion immediately afterwards, we were able to identify four overarching aspects of musicality that allow us to encompass all the musics of the world, past, present and (probably) future. These aspects represent a slightly narrower stance than the proposed rationale on general intelligence, in a sense that the sensorium gives more weight to listening, the body is intentionally used for producing sounds, the communication takes place nonverbally, and the imagining of futures restricts itself to recognising ‘sounding events that have been put in a time frame’ (see later), and for which we use the word ‘to audiate’ (coined by Gordon, in 1975), see Gordon, 2023).

We define music as the integrated behaviour of:

- listening
- embodying
- communicating
- audiating

For a total of four days, we provided training through which we explored these aspects in a more isolated way, while gradually finding out how they are interwoven. Looking back on the exercises, we explored new vocabularies to talk about sound experiences, bodily development, expression and communication and the way we imagine music, supported by examples from the early years, from music and from the arts in general, and, of course, from life itself.

While the order within the above ‘umbrella’ doesn’t really matter, the four aspects of musicality allow us to assign any musical parameter to one of them or any combination. We use verbs to emphasise the important aspect of music evolving in space and time. Note that, while time is one of the most important and challenging aspects of musicking, current educational approaches almost systematically neglect it (Strobbe & Van Regenmortel 2010; 2012).

The four aspects provide easily understood and grasped anchor points for teachers, who do often consider themselves not musical enough to use music as a fruitful lever for educational change. We notice that the theory enables non-specialists to recognize what is unfolding before their eyes concerning children’s musical behaviour or assessing their own behaviour.

At the same time, the theory invites a more artistic attitude toward music. Indeed, the theory allows to apply Cross’ (2012) idea of ‘something-like-music’, promoting ambiguity and what he calls ‘floating intentionality’ (Cross 2004, 2012). These aspects, that can be recognised in early mother-infant interaction as well (Van Regenmortel 2013, 2018), invite participants to develop their own (individually or generally accepted) criteria for assessing their musical activities and creations or making artistic decisions about a final outcome or performance.

Provided with these insights, we organised 6 artistic interventions in each of the schools and spread over the school year 2022-2023. From there, teachers, supported by the previously gained insights, were invited to use the interventions as an inspiration for further exploration, development and creation in class in the form of a collaboration among children (pupils) and adults (teachers). The idea was to start moving away from the usual hierarchical relationship between pupils and teachers. Teachers would adopt a more intergenerational and anthropological perspective, where children and adults work together on an equal footing, sharing available knowledge and skills, and where the adult still has sufficient weight and responsibility to nurture and guide the process. Generally spoken, the main aim was to explore what it means to adopt an artistic attitude, and to use it as a central starting point for being in the world.

Expanding the scope

With music acting as a mirror to general intelligence, the above elaborated model allows similar connections to be made to any other domain of experience, including topics from the usual school curriculum. Indeed, “music represents mental concepts from different domains as events by placing

them in a time frame, making the analogy to life obvious. Simply by phasing tonal and temporal relationships onto an understood frame of reference and its primal roots, music becomes the ultimate metaphor for everything we do and think, and at once the ultimate argument for its integration into our development. It begins at the interaction between mother and child, and from then on is never gone” (Strobbe & Van Regenmortel, 2010).

The next challenge of the project (school year 2023-2024) is to provide another series of 6 artistic interventions, from where to expand the artistic attitude to the regular topics at school with an ongoing focus on sensory experience, embodied understanding, the search for shared attention and understanding, and the ability to imagine futures and thus solutions (Macknight, 2016).

A complementary intervention within the Zintuin philosophy is provided by hEAR DROPS, an online offering on YouTube of nonverbal, short animations. These show children's musical adventures and invite children and teachers to explore the (possible) ‘rules of the game’ together. In the subsequent creative process, children and teachers are automatically in the same boat, as no written goals or lesson plans were formulated. The idea is that they define and accept these for themselves.

The whole process is being documented by the teachers (and children) involved as part of a Team Ethnography of Sensory Learning, supervised by Anna Harris from Maastricht University. This research will result in a book publication by the end of 2024.

Conclusion

Zintuin invites us to critically consider the mainly instrumental and methodical approaches that have permeated mainstream education in the West from a broader perspective, eventually transforming them. Through the temporal arts and with emphasis on music, we investigate how rich sensory experiences may lead to a more embodied intelligence and a sensitive attitude towards each other and the world at school.

Since music still encompasses in a balanced and integrated way the most important aspects of early mother-child interactions, musical activities can remind us of the fundamental principles of general human intelligence from which we can specify and adapt approaches to other subjects in school.

Moving further from current philosophical, scientific and artistic insights, Zintuin goes beyond the usual ideas of art education in schools. Instead of putting the icing on the cake, instead of teaching through or in the arts, the artistic attitude becomes central. The project aims to demonstrate how an artistic way of being in the world can lead to an educational approach based on how we relate to each other and the world.

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A new pedagogical model for music as a core element in teacher training

Félice Van der Sande

Stichting Muziek op Schoot
The Netherlands
felice@hetmuziekkwartier.nl

Marjanka van Maurik

Stichting Muziek op Schoot
The Netherlands

Abstract

The musical activities offered by our teachers are aimed at letting children (0-4) come into contact with musical experiences. In doing so, they make use of the zone of current and proximal development (Vygotsky, 1964). The game offered can make a child long for 'again!' or for more (Biesta, 2017). This need is met by working on a project basis (Meirieu, 2016, p. 92-96). By regularly repeating and varying the same element, newly created connections in the brain are strengthened (Levitin, 2006). In the past, two problems were visible: 1: The relationship 'child & music' was not always central. 2: There was fragmental work in the musical field. The aim was therefore to develop a model in which the musical experience is central and the child is approached holistically. The model is based on two basic pillars: respect for the child and the music. The teacher uses one appropriate long term musical aspect, referred to as the 'overarching musical theme'. This is repeated, varied and the child is musically challenged to take steps within this musical aspect with the support of others. The central issue here is whether the child itself feels it experiences this musical aspect and in its own actions is willing and able to act accordingly.

During their lessons, the teachers observe the musical initiatives that spontaneously take place. These observations determine the next steps to be taken. In doing so, they facilitate between the paradox of what they think the children would like to learn on the one hand and the spontaneous play in which children learn in absolute freedom on the other hand, which Meirieu calls 'the pedagogical paradox' (2016).

Through the group process children learn from each other. The adult provides space and inspiration for repetition, variation and challenge. The teaching material provides input for learning in different contexts. This enriches the musical environment, gives children time to enjoy practicing the new aspect and thus really internalise what they have learned (Boland et al., 2022).

Keywords: Enriched learning environment, musical initiatives, respect for the child and the music.

Introduction (Background)

The teacher training programme *Specialist in Muziek met het Jonge Kind van 0-4 jaar*, "Muziek op Schoot" [Music Specialist for Young Children in the age 0-4] approaches the child holistically. Based on musical and textual parameters, the child also experiences music holistically. However, this is a complex overall concept. By focusing on a particular musical element, we give children the opportunity to grasp and understand music and even to play with certain aspects of music.

Hence, the music teacher focuses on music. A speech therapist, on the other hand, focuses on language and speech. While a speech therapist works on the child's speech and language development, thereby tapping into other development areas and interests of the child (such as movement, musical play, and fantasy play), a music teacher targets musical aspects and, thus, the child's whole being.

We do this by connecting our extensive knowledge of the development of young children – and the different development phases these different development areas go through – with what we observe or have observed during the activities.

The musical activities offered to the child are aimed at letting them connect with new or recognisable musical experiences. The teachers invite and stimulate the child to experience and then to participate, either by themselves or with the help of a parent/carer. We hereby focus on the current development zone and the proximal development zone (Vygotsky, 1964 in Valcke, 2018) to ensure that the child is fully engaged in musical play. The play that is offered can make the child want to “do it again” or “do more” (Biesta, 2017). By emphasising a specific musical aspect, during a series of sessions, a sort of ‘project-based’ approach is used. The music play lets the children first of all go through ‘impressive experiences’: the teacher offers a new musical game or a new instrument for the children in an attractive way, which will have them show interest and create a high level of engagement (Boland et al., 2022). After that, a need for repetition and variation is triggered (Meirieu, 2007/ 2016). The regular repetitions, as well as the variations, also enhance the connections made within the brain (Levitin, 2006).

Apart from musical play, these guided activities not only focus strongly on the (musical) experiences but also on the relationships with others, the materials that are used, and the environment (Ryan & Deci, 2000, Boland, 2022). Children mirror adults as well as the children around them (Rizzolatti, G & Craighero, 2004) and imprint and internalise what is emphasised during the play (Grace, David & Ryan, 2008). Besides enhancing how they experience music, this also allows them to get to know the people around them. They are there and they matter. Such experiences teach you how you relate to others and the world around you. The arts play a particularly large part in these developments as they happen in a playful and fun manner (Biesta, 2017).

Problem definition and goal (Aims)

Music teachers specialised in working with young children have always been expertly trained in this field, but practice shows that music sometimes plays second fiddle, so to speak, to other subjects. Two specific problems rose to the fore: The first problem was that music was used qualitatively, but this no longer had the relationship between the child and the music at its core. Looking from a musical perspective, the second problem turned out to be an overly fragmented approach. When it comes to project-based actions to strengthen the connections in the brain and, thus, the actual skills, the approach was applied to development areas outside music – for instance via non-musical themes (autumn, Christmas, animals, etc.) – but not to music and experiencing music itself. This started discussions about whether music should be used as a stimulant for child development or whether music should be a focal point as a separate theme. Based on the opinion that we cannot develop the children as such but that we can help them experience music, a need to develop a model with musical experience at its core arose. At the same time, this model would approach the child holistically and with respect for the music as well as the child.

Model in the new situation (Main contribution)

The R/V/C model (Repetition/ Variation / Challenge model) as seen in Figure 1, is built on two basic pillars: respect for the child and respect for music – based on the “sensitive periods” (Kohnstamm, 2009) that purely focus on music. In practice, we see that there are sensitive periods for internalising

the play, either “with or without music”, manipulating timbre, the ability to move in different metres or even tempi, anticipating music to allow for active timing, singing, etc. As a teacher, you choose a clear direction by often using one of these principles. The teacher selects certain songs, musical games, and musical materials that support this particular musical aspect and which are in line with the musical development of the young child. This musical aspect is then used repeatedly and for a prolonged time, for example during ten weekly music sessions. This aspect is called the “overarching musical theme”. It is important to note that this is not a goal in itself! After all, grass doesn’t grow faster if you pull it. We cannot enforce the steps within a child’s development. The child takes the steps when they are ready (Meirieu, p.57). However, we can tempt them by providing a rich musical environment with regular play that they may come to long for (Biesta, 2017). The moment they begin to desire this type of play, you can offer repetition, variation, and enrichment (within the proximal development zone). This requires the teacher to observe how the child uses music itself and, based on this, they can tap into the child’s interest and choose to enhance musical play at specific moments (De Haan, 2012 in Boland et al., 2022). An intrinsic desire grows from a positive, successful experience (Bandura, 1994). The child enjoys musical play and comes into a flow. When this happens, the child is able to take bigger steps in the learning process (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990/1999).

Because the musical activities are done as a group, the children become each other’s cue: they learn with and from each other. The adult creates space and inspiration for repetition, variation, and challenge. The musically rich material and use of the space offer input for learning within different contexts through scaffolding. This scaffolding enriches the musical environment and gives children enough time to practise the new aspect and properly internalise the skills they have just acquired (Boland et al., 2022).

Repetitions give the child the chance to process automation and participate actively. Variations give the child the necessary scope to apply what they have learned within the current development zone and express their creativity and own initiatives. A challenge offers children musical play within the proximal development zone. In order to move from the proximal development zone to the current development zone, the challenge requires a lot of repetition and variation. All of this combined creates a rich musical play environment.

The holistic approach includes other musical aspects, which are inevitable as the child is offered music as an overall concept. Even so, the overarching musical theme, the aspect the activity focuses on, is extensively used. This theme is repeated, variations are offered, and the child is challenged to take its next steps within this musical aspect, supported by others. Whether or not we believe that this musical aspect is that is offered a lot with all kind of variations is not at the core – it is all about whether the child experiences this musical aspect and whether it wants to and is capable of acting on it.

for early childhood music teachers



Figure 1: The R/V/C-model for early childhood music teachers

The rich musical environment

The environment offered for musical play, should be given much thought.

During their lessons, music teachers observe the initiatives that occur spontaneously and how the children respond to musical play. These observations, combined with the teacher's professional attitude, determine the next steps taken during the ongoing session and the next sessions. As such, they need to find the right balance between the paradox of what they think the children would want to learn and spontaneous play, where children learn in absolute freedom – called “the pedagogic paradox” by Meirieu (2016). The freedom and scope for initiatives and reactions are incorporated and inspire the next steps. The teacher uses their knowledge about the development areas and stages the child is in. This knowledge is also used to prepare for the sessions, as in which songs are used and in the selection and design of musical play.

The teacher creates a rich musical environment for the child to explore – in which it finds recognisable repetitions and variations as well as new discoveries. Examples of variations are 1. a song with a different type of play; 2. the same type of play but with a different song; 3. the same type of play with a different music fragment; 4. using some musical material with the same type of play but leading to another musical result. This should all fall within music overall but emphasise the overarching musical theme. Musical play can be integrated into non-musical themes, such as the seasons, animals, peek-a-boo games, etc.

Such types of play are offered by the teacher based on their observations. The children follow their own minds in how to respond, but if they never experience this type of play, they will also never be able to desire it (Biesta, 2017). Enjoying musical play during which respect for music is equally

important as respect for the child (the one cannot be without the other) incites an intrinsic motivation for musical aspects, for finding fun in musical play, and for mastering musical aspects in line with the child's current development level.

Practical use (Implications)

For the child, the first musical experience (musical play) can be an intense experience. But what happens next? Not focusing on one musical aspect would only result in a fleeting experience and halt the child's development within this area. Looking at this neuro-scientifically, without repetition and variation, the newly created and still fragile connection in the brain would soon be "pruned" and be lost. The experience may have been positive and impressive, but the musical development of the young child is not yet stimulated.

Using the R/V/C model lets teachers think about the next steps in musical play they offer, based on how they observe the children's musical experiences. The activity is fluid and, depending on how the children respond, changes from challenge to variation to repetition, or straight to repetition. This allows for a variation that will later be repeated. A challenging activity can either be repeated or varied. As long as it is still a challenge, it remains a C (Challenge). As soon as the child shows that it can carry out the activity independently, the C changes into an R (Repetition) or a V (Variation). This method allows teachers to create a balanced session during which children are regularly but not overly challenged and will be able to internalise musical play through repetition and variation. This not only strengthens the connections in the brain but also lets them enjoy musical play intensely.

The result of the experiences built up after three years of training and using this method is that teachers seem to be more aware of how to offer musical play to young children. It gives more musical substance to the activities and the play itself. By practising this model regularly during the training programme, the novice teacher will be able to experience a clear direction. Furthermore, it provides more insight into the hugely varied selection of songs and materials. The play itself is enhanced creatively and musically, which is quite often triggered by the children's initiatives. The model lets them get more skilled in taking the next steps in the offered play, based on observations and initiatives. The teacher obtains more insight into the musical actions of the young child and this model makes it easier to differentiate. Within a group setting, the broad repertoire of repetitions, variations, and challenges that focus on a single aspect makes it easier to meet the needs of individual children. As a result, the young child's current musical development grows more strongly, which, in turn, makes them enjoy the musical experiences more and leads to more musical successes for the children, the parents/carers, and the teachers.

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Soundwaves: relational encounters to grow the early childhood music workforce in south-west England

Karen Wickett

Early Childhood Studies, Plymouth Institute of Education, University of Plymouth
Plymouth, United Kingdom
karen.wickett@plymouth.ac.uk

Jane Parker

SoundWaves Network South-West Project Lead, Take Art Ltd
South Petherton, Somerset, United Kingdom
jane@takeart.org

Abstract

In 2013 Take Art Ltd, an arts charity in south-west England, identified a gap in early childhood music education (ECME) provision. The charity designed and sourced funding for Soundwaves; a series of four ECME projects. Learning during the first project highlighted the necessity for workforce development. Overtime the workforce development opportunities have diversified and expanded to include the current and future early childhood workforces. A key partner growing these opportunities is the University of Plymouth. To date these opportunities include; musicians placed in Early Childhood Education and Care settings, professional development courses, conferences, researching, writing and presenting collaboratively, student internships and work-based learning placements. Jane, SoundWaves Project Manager and Karen, Early Childhood Studies lecturer are aware relationships are key to sustaining and creating opportunities for learning. The aim of our inquiry is not to find truths or develop relationship building programmes, but instead we hope to encourage new insights as well as appreciation towards relationship/s in the process of the creation of opportunities for learning.

We turn to and work with Barad's diffractive methodology to explore relationship/s in and around Soundwaves as learning opportunities are created. With pens, sparkly bits, ribbons, glue, paper, transcriptions, texts, photographs, we document the Soundwaves story. The diffractive autoethnography, provides Jane and Karen space and time to re-turn to the stories, re-write and re-pattern to notice the mingling and (e)merging relationship/s and intra-actions between human and non-human, during the creation of learning opportunities. Responsible caring ethics is throughout our practices. We acknowledge we are not separate from the inquiry and are accountable for the care of the human and more-than-human. Our (re)turnings, wonderings, conversations illuminate the ebb and flow of relationship/s and the ways of being in relationship, as ECME learning opportunities for student collaborators and us emerge. Actors, in the processual creation of these opportunities, are theory, experimentation, confidence, vulnerability, neo-liberalism, subversion and, and, and... Bubbling into view during this inquiry is the on-going ethical responsibility, appreciation and care for relationship/s and ways of being in relationship/s with the human and more-than-human, as learning opportunities come into view and are travelled.

Keywords: Learning, early childhood music education, collaborators, relationships

Introduction

This paper presents Jane's, an early childhood music (ECM) project manager, and Karen's, an Early Childhood Studies (ECS) lecturer, inquiry, which traces the mingling and (e)merging relationship/s underpinning our practices as educators and researchers. Since 2013 Take Art, an arts charity in south-west England, has designed and sourced funding for Soundwaves; a series of four Early Childhood Music Education (ECME) projects. Overtime workforce development has become embedded in the projects. The aim of the current iteration of Soundwaves is to grow the current and future Early Childhood (EC) and ECME workforces across south-west (SW) England. The University of Plymouth is a key partner in fulfilling this ambition. We are curious how relationships, in and around Soundwaves, play out as ECME learning opportunities are created in a Higher Education (HE) context.

We acknowledge the maxims, such as individualism, competition and the 'businessisation' (Bruce and Chew, cited Costas-Battle, 2018, p. 861) associated with the neo-liberal project shape and governs our respective organisations (Young, 2021a) and our relationship/s. Whilst we cannot avoid the clutches of the neo-liberal project, Massumi (2018, p. 69) encourages his readers to '...get creatively down and dirty in the field of play' to resist. As emerging post-qualitative researchers we put to work Karen Barad's, diffractive methodologies to amplify and re-pattern (Barad, 2014) the relationship/s in and around the creation of Soundwaves learning opportunities. The aim of our inquiry is not to find truths or ways that work, but instead we hope to 'provoke new thoughts and theories' (Cannon, 2022, p. 10) about relationship/s, as learning opportunities are created.

Background

Soundwaves comprises of a series of ECME projects; led by the arts charity Take Art Ltd, funded by Youth Music and Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Learning during the first project highlighted the necessity for workforce development. This development primarily focused on the current EC and ECME workforces. The third and fourth iterations of Soundwaves, sought to expand the opportunities to learn about ECME to those on Early Childhood Studies (ECS) courses and music courses. To address this ambition, an aim of SNSW is to identify and collaborate with Higher Education (HE), Further Education (FE) institutions and training providers.

A key partner in growing these opportunities is the University of Plymouth. Over the course of the Soundwaves projects, Karen and Jane, have created a diverse range of opportunities for ECS students and music students to participate. These include student internships and work-based learning placements where a musician has been placed in an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) setting, attending professional development courses (on-line and face to face), attending and presenting at conferences, engaging in research as researcher and research participant, writing and presenting with academics, joining the Soundwaves steering group.

Alternative narratives

Over the past decades the tentacles 'freedom and economic liberalisation' (Blond, 2010, p. 19) of the economic discourse neo-liberalism has strengthened a hold over education. Both EC and HE phases of education, have been shaped by the economic drivers of quality, investment and returns (Young, 2021a; Dalberg et al, 2013). These influences have resulted in the image of the learner as 'a unit of economic potential' (Moss, 2019, p. 12), the educator as a technician (Dahlberg et al, 2013) who delivers a standardised and 'what works' programme of study/curriculum. The aim of

education is to prepare pupils for the workforce ensuring economic success and stability for both the individual and the country (Moss, 2019; Sims, 2017).

The standardisation of learning experiences has led to learning becoming formulaic and instrumentalised (Sims, 2017; Young, 2021a) resulting in shallow learning experiences (Bunce & Bennett, 2021). In the HE sector, contributing to formulaic and shallow learning experience, is the fee-paying student. The image of the student is, as consumer of his/her education. The consumer student primarily focuses on the end goal - a good degree ensuring a graduate job (Bunce & Bennett, 2021). They are less likely to appreciate struggle and more likely to complain about difficult content (Bunce & Bennett, 2021) and different pedagogic approaches.

Until the recently published National Music Education Plan (DfE, 2022) there has been limited national strategic planning for ECME. This and the absence of any state funding for ECME sector has resulted in two models of practice dominating the sector: the 'private music session (the 'branded product') and short term, stand-alone projects led by charitable organisations (the 'funded project')' (Young, 2021a p. 107). Neo-liberal market forces shaping these two models of provision have led to disparate and inconsistent pedagogic practices and short-term projects (Young, 2021a). Whilst branded products are generally funded by the consumer, charities apply for funding from funding organisations to continue and/or deliver an ECME project. Often the funding organisations determine project aims and objectives. These expectations and the short-term nature of projects result in projects being viewed as an intervention, to improve practice, through upskilling the workforce, and outcomes for children, by ensuring they are ready for school (Ball & Junemann, 2012; Young, 2021a).

Neo-liberalism has seeped into most aspects of our lives that it can make it difficult to consider alternative ways of being and creating learning experiences (Sims, 2012). As trainee teacher, EC teacher and now academic, Karen felt constrained and silenced by these forces. Committed to resisting positioning those she works with as in deficit, passive, incomplete (and maturing) or a consumer, she turns to learning, playing and experimenting with theory (Taguchi, 2010) to consider alternative images of the learner. Instead of viewing those she works/learns with as collaborators in the learning process, who bring with them 'virtual backpacks of knowledges, skills and dispositions' (Thomson & Hall, 2008, p. 89). Her role is to resist and play with the forces that silence and marginalise groups 'voices, knowledge and to create places and opportunities of experimentation, creativity, uncertainty and possibilities (Moss, 2019). In these places, collaborators, human and more-than-human, create stories and knowledges for now and beyond. Similarly, Jane approaches her pedagogic practices, as an ECME project lead, as music practitioner, as teacher, as researcher ..., aspiring to create authentic meaningful learning experiences where learners are collaborators in the learning process. She works with Young's intention that collaborators 'knowledge and experience should be respected on an equal footing, listened to and freed from imposed controls' (2021a, p. 117). Key to respecting and listening to collaborators is establishing trusting and caring relationships.

Methodology

We are weary and dissatisfied with research that separates the researcher from the research process and contexts, objectifies and extracts knowledge, separates the human and the more-than-human. Thus, we turn to posthuman and critical new materialist philosophies and begin our playful

experimentation. We acknowledge knowledge and practice are not fixed, stable and individualized. Instead 'knowing' and 'practice/ing' are processual 'among human and more-than-human subjects' (Snaza et al., 2014). In and around an intra-action, the human is decentred, shifting agency from the human to an enactment between the human and more-than-human (Barad, 2007). No longer is the more-than-human viewed as passive and bounded (Vu, 2018).

Barad's (2014) diffractive methodology is put to work through this diffractive auto-ethnography (Vu, 2018). Unlike reflection, which generally presents patterns of sameness, working with diffractive auto-ethnography we come 'to know while being' (Vue, 2018, p. 6) through the processes of re-turning, and diffracting new patterns. (Barad, 2014). With paper, ribbons, colours, glue, sparkly bits, recorded conversations transcribed, texts, photographs, marks on paper, our Soundwave narrative was documented. To amplify the human and more-than-human relationships that (e)merge in our autographical narratives (Vu, 2018) we (re)-turn, (re)tell, and (re)write the relational narrative over several months. (Re)turning, (re) telling and (re)writing illuminates disturbances, connections, and omissions (Cannon, 2022) in and around the Soundwaves relational narrative, which re-patterns ways of knowing. The process has been possible by the shared cloud storage and Karen's move to the same town as Jane.

Responsible caring ethics is throughout our practices. We acknowledge we are not separate from the inquiry and are accountable for the care of the human and more-than-human.

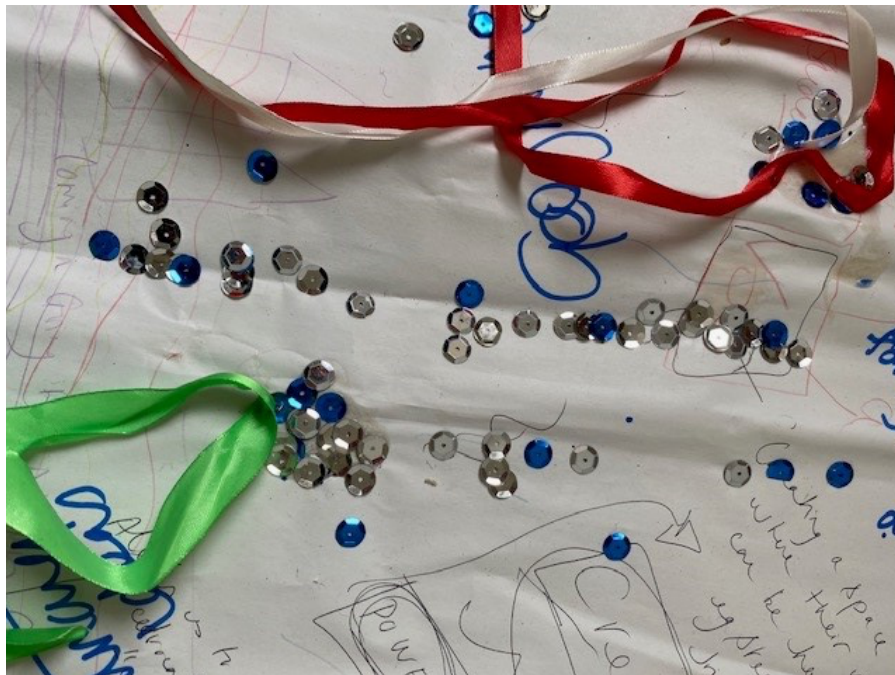


Figure 1. Forever in the middle

Why did you put the sparkles in the centre? Jane

We are in the middle. It's not a beginning or the end of our relationship/s. Karen

I think you've slightly thrown me by putting this in the middle. I kind of think of us going back and forth like this. Delphine saying, 'Oh, you need to connect with Karen 'down here [for

Soundwaves], but then also at same point we've got another project, Creative Elements. So let's bring Karen back up here to research Creative Elements. It kind of just goes back and forth. Jane

Yes, and prior to Soundwaves I had a relationship with Take Art as a teacher and then trustee. Before you started at Take Art your relationship was through Michelle, your tutor. Through your relationship with Michelle, you had heard about the organisation's work and research and then she encouraged you to apply for a role at Take Art. I found out about you when I read your application form. Karen

(Re)-turning to our conversation with writing and (re)reading illuminates 'our 'relational 'historialities ' (Barad, 2007) stretch across many calendar years and in and through other relationships with the human and more-than-human. On first reading of our narrative, the relationships and connections with each other and our colleagues are apparent. (Re)turning for a second reading reveals the more-than-human, stories, action research report, application form, are in relationship with the human. Our relationship/s are in flux and always in the middle 'on-going being-becoming ' (Barad, 2014, p. 182) with organisations, action-research reports, funding streams, advice from tutors, where we live and, and, and....

The processes of (re)turning and (re)writing data unearth entangled relationships, with ways of being in a relationship with the human and more-than-human. For us these were as teacher/partner, as trustee/critical friend, as researcher/learner, as neighbour/friend (Karen), as student/learner, as freelancer/employee, as applicant/acquaintance, as candidate/possible colleague, as employee/colleague, as Soundwaves partner /learner, as neighbour/friend (Jane). Uncontainable, unpredictable monster

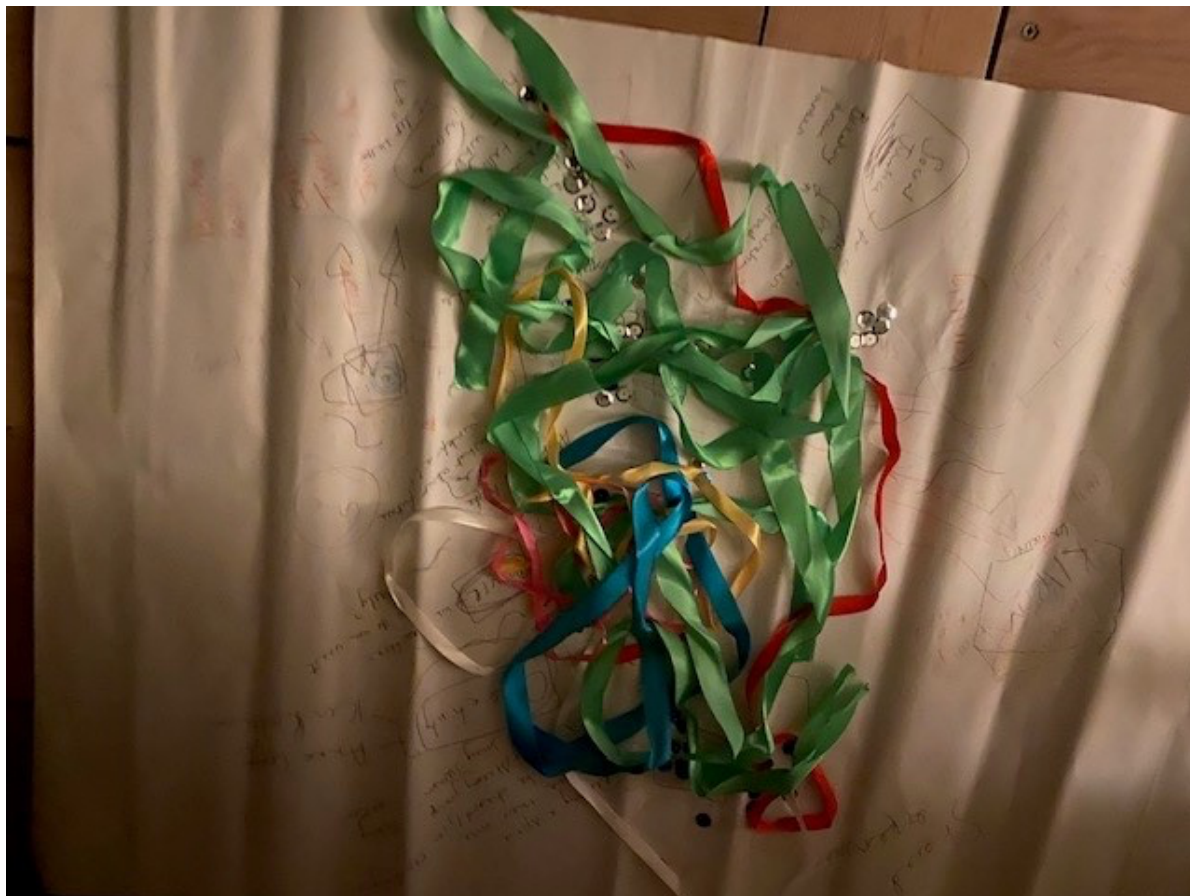


Figure 2. Uncontainable, unpredictable monster

I feel I'm learning such a lot as we dig around our Soundwaves relationship/s. You have given me the confidence to dip my toe into Barad's philosophies and put them to work. In and around Soundwaves I feel that we're all learning and generally we enjoy it. Karen

For me learning is the sparkle and it's between us but also with other people, Jane

Here are some ribbons. They can move as they are not stuck to the paper. The movement of the ribbons reflect our unfolding relationships and learning with each other and with students collaborators⁹. I'm not involved with the students on their Soundwaves work-based learning placement. Instead, I walk with them, as collaborator, when attending and presenting at the conference in London, writing the music blog, planning the regional conference, attending training courses. We are always looking to create expansive opportunities for our collaborators and ourselves. Karen

I find the power I have is tricky at times for me. You know – I am uncomfortable with power. ECME students ask for advice and then might go and do it. And then I just think, I don't know if I have advised the right thing. Jane

Beyond and around the work-based learning placements is a liminal space where ECME learning opportunities emerge. Instead of assessments and targets, invited into this space are

⁹ In keeping with our philosophies students will be referred to as collaborators from this point.

experimentation, movement and an 'openness to relationships' (Zaman & Desai, 2022, p. 52). Attending and presenting at the conference collaborators and Karen were entangled with the more-than-human, Power-Point, train, underground, computer, early morning, late night and, and, and. In moments of the shared experience, conferencing, relationship/s between academic and student collaborators was less bounded and hierarchical.

It is not always possible to attempt to flatten relationships between Jane as mentor and collaborator. Power resists these attempts. The relationship between Jane and ECME students is rooted in Soundwaves. These rootings limit chances to distribute power and hierarchies remain which may be why Karen learns/works with collaborators around Soundwaves rather than in Soundwaves projects.

There are learning opportunities in and around Soundwaves for Jane and Karen. This paper is one such opportunity. Our relationship with learning is 'an uncontrollable, unpredictable monster' (Jane). At times it can make us shimmer and sparkle with enjoyment, but at other times it makes us vulnerable (as I (Karen) write this I want to walk away as I am so unsure and feel vulnerable working with post-human and critical new materialist philosophies). Our relationship/s support us as we navigate our relationship with learning. As a 'we' Jane gives me 'the gift of confidence' (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2008) to continue our inquiry with the post-human and critical new materialist philosophies.

I suppose coming together makes us stronger. And we can resist. We acknowledge the contexts we're working in, enabling us to resist and find cracks. Through horizon scanning we can find cracks in our organisations' systems to find possibilities for learning like the internship for the PhD music student; co-writing the blog ECS students, PhD music student, you and ECS programme lead, attending the conference in London with ECS students and music and ECS students helping to host a conference in Plymouth. Karen

Our relationship creates unstable spaces. These are little tremors that create the cracks to learn ECME and more. I do see you as my ally in my work. You're the kind of person that gets it. We have similar values and ideas about ECME and belief in the possibilities when the arts and EC collaborate, but also you are my critical friend. You challenge me and we both and care about relationships! Jane

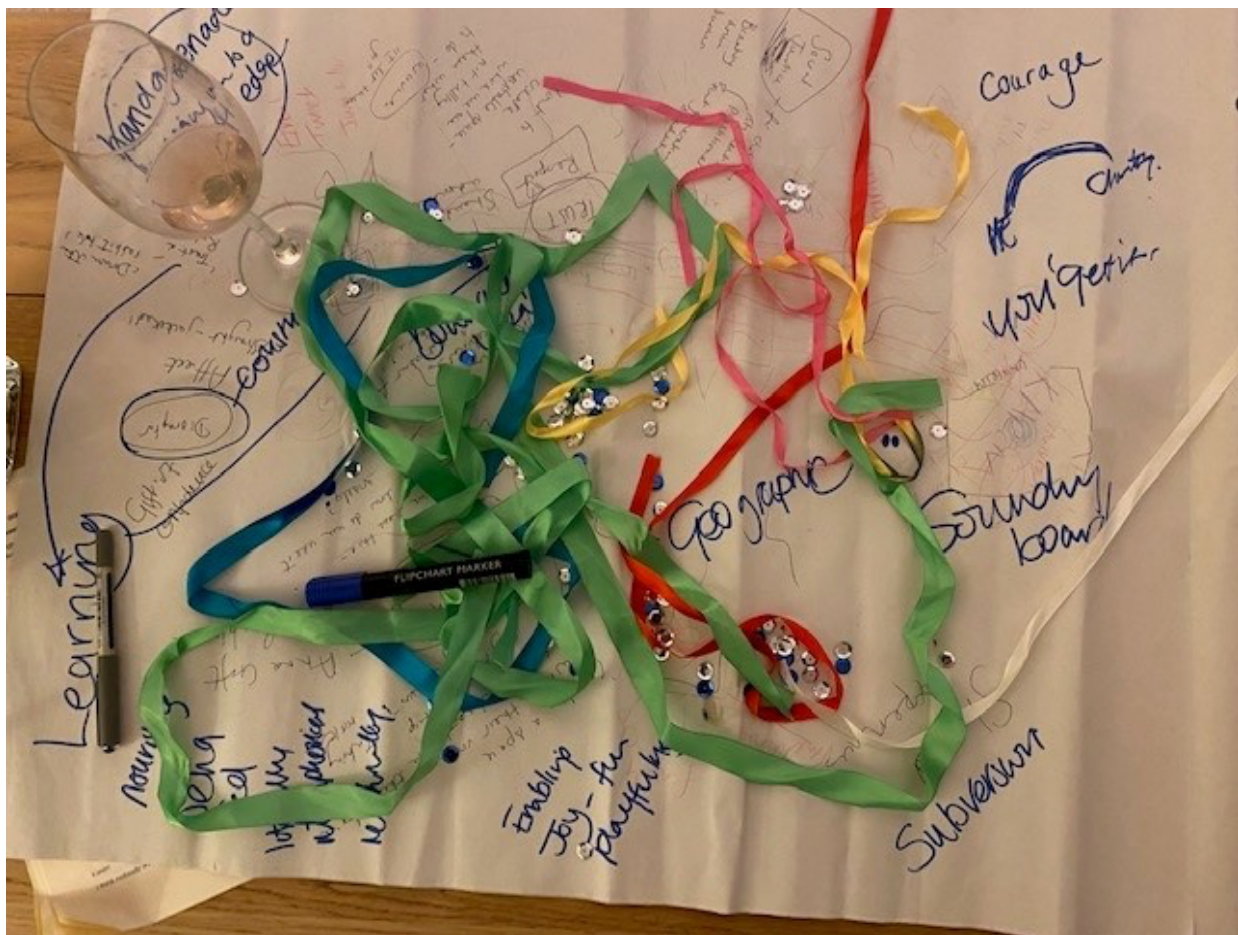


Figure 3. Gaming it

Our relationship with neo-liberalism positions us as resistant, some may say petulant, as we lean into Mussumi's counsel 'don't bemoan complicity - game it' (cited Roulston, 2021, p. 209). Working in different organisations, with different roles but with similar values, we create a space where we can horizon scan beyond and around Soundwaves. In this space we are allies actively looking for cracks to 'game' the system, to ethically expand and experiment in the process of creating ECME learning opportunities for us and collaborators. (Re)turning and (re)writing this piece has illuminated these learning opportunities; are fleeting, involve one or two collaborators and there have been fewer music than ECS collaborators involved in Soundwaves.

The university music lecturer is committed to offering his students (under-graduate and post-graduate) a range of music opportunities and career possibilities and is thus willing to share Soundwaves information and opportunities to his students. Karen and Jane have occasional contact, via email/zoom, with the music lecturer and Karen can have fleeting ad hoc meetings in a university corridor or cafe. We are connected by the ambition to provide students with a diverse range of opportunities, but have differing musical interests and ambitions. The different music education sectors and the image of ECME as a poor relation to these can lead to ECME being sidelined (Young, 2021b), less visible and silenced during the music degree. In this context of 'gates closing' (Roulston, 2021, p. 212) it may be difficult for music students to step into Soundwaves to build relationships with the associated theories and knowledge.

Returning to Karen's and Jane's relationship. Over time as our relationships unfold there are varying moments of intensity. At times we are distance. During these moments of distance text messages,

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Looking to the past to inform the present

Susan Young

Centre for Research in Early Childhood,
Birmingham, United Kingdom
Susanyoung351@gmail.com

Abstract

Recovering accounts from the past can inform, influence and shape our present and suggest directions for the future. I have over the years collected historical early childhood music education books. I have been particularly interested in books written by scholar-pedagogues: practising teachers who sought to apply in their practice theoretical ideas that had currency at that time.

In this presentation I will focus on four books, all written in English. Two are by British authors and two by authors from the USA. First I introduce Eunice Bailey who taught during the late 1940s in England and describe her application of Susan Isaacs' psychoanalytic pedagogy in her music practice with preschool children. Next I discuss the work of Marjorie Glynne-Jones who, during the 1960s, sought to interpret Piagetian theory in a music education approach for British infant schools (4- to 7-year-olds). Finally I introduce the work of Frances Aronoff and Barbara Andress who in the 1960s and 1970s both, individually, interpreted Bruner's theory in their work in the USA. I will describe how each of these educators applied psychological theories to practice and the pedagogical approaches they gave rise to. I will present a chronology of influences on early childhood music education in English speaking countries from the 1940s through to the 1980s.

From these introductions I will suggest theoretical ideas which we might revisit and reclaim for early childhood music education and suggest some implications for present-day work. Questions I will raise include, why did the psychoanalytic pedagogy of Susan Isaacs go out of fashion and be replaced by the cognitive psychology of Piaget? What might Piaget and Bruner contribute to contemporary models of practice?

I will also acknowledge the geographic and linguistic limitations of this historical account. Hopefully the presentation will stimulate an interesting discussion in which participants contribute a history of music scholar-pedagogues from their own countries.

Keywords: History of music education, Piaget, Bruner, Isaacs, Montessori

Introduction

In the first part of this paper I offer some general points about the historical study of early childhood music education and its value. In the second part I introduce four books about early childhood music education, spanning the period 1950 to 1980, and position them in relation to the theoretical context of that period. At the conclusion of the paper I consider what we might gain for present-day practice from this retrospective.

The historical study of music education

While the historical study of music education is a fairly active field, particularly in the USA (see McCarthy, 2012) the history of early childhood music education has received almost no attention. Music provision for the under-3s is a relatively recent phenomenon, and so, self-evidently, does not have a long history, but music education for 3-year-olds and beyond has historical roots stretching back to the late 1800s. The handful of British texts on the history of music education have focussed on secondary education [11-18 years in the UK] (e.g. Cox, 2002; Finney, 2011; Pitts, 2000). If the education of young children is mentioned in these texts, the purpose is to serve the main secondary themes, not to focus on early childhood music education for its own sake. Since education for early childhood has followed a different historical trajectory to secondary education (Tisdall, 2020), these books tell us very little.

A review of research and practice related to a specific topic is typically undertaken as part of academic study. How far back in time a review reaches may depend on the topic. However, literature reviews typically scan the recent past. Historical research looks to the more distant past and this longer time frame allows for trends, changes and continuities to emerge. The consequence of short-term literature reviews framed by specific topics can be a sense that practice and theory constantly edge forward, with little recognition of how ideas and practices are anchored, positioned and shaped by longer-term trends of music education theory and research. Moreover, the study of the past aims to understand the wider framework of political, social, economic, scientific, technological and cultural changes over longer periods of time. Awareness of these broad contexts and how they evolve can provide viewpoints from which to evaluate and critique present-day theories and practices (Westberg, 2021).

There are further benefits from digging around in historical versions of music education. The process can reveal ideas and practices that have contemporary currency. Shevock, for example, found inspiration in Satis Coleman's 100-year-old writings on music and nature for his contemporary eco-literate music pedagogy (Shevock, 2018). In short, recovering accounts from the past can inform, influence and shape our present and suggest directions for the future.

The pitfalls of historical study

There are some possible pitfalls with historical research. Past accounts may need to be filtered through a lens informed by present-day awareness. They can contain out-dated beliefs and attitudes, particularly towards race and gender. We have the sociology of music education to thank for alerting us to power relationships, hierarchies and unhelpful ideologies that may lurk in historical writing and to provide a lens through which to read the past. But any such flaws in past accounts are not a reason to dismiss them completely.

Processes of selective construction may result in lopsided versions of history, with some theorists, philosophers and educators becoming better known than others. Selective construction has a range of causes. The same texts and studies tend to be cited and rise to the surface, while others sink from sight; a point I have made frequently, particularly with respect to sources not written in English. In addition, certain ideas have a kind of theoretical concreteness, easy comprehensibility and are porous enough to be applied to many situations. The theory of 'communicative musicality', originally from Stephen Malloch's work (1999), is a good example of such an idea, whereas the

insightful analysis of the Papoušeks from the 1980s – who wrote about the musicality of infant-adult interactions long before Malloch - is rarely mentioned. Diligent scholarship is required to search for primary sources.

Intellectual fashions and trends play a part in what is selected from the past and what disappears. Psychoanalytic pedagogies, of which Isaacs was the dominant proponent, went out of favour, to be replaced by pedagogies influenced by developmental and cognitive theories. Economic factors may also contribute to the process of selective construction. For example, the London based Froebel foundation, with assets of £21,000,000 generously funds research that disseminates Froebelian principles, bringing them to prominence. In contrast, there is no charitable trust working to promote research related to Susan Isaacs' philosophy and pedagogy, in my view as worthy of application and further interpretation as Froebel, but rarely discussed.

The challenge is how to arrive at a balanced and even-handed version of the past.

The four texts

Having set out some general issues concerning the historical study of music education, I now introduce the four authors and their books. They share some characteristics. Each represents the purpose of MERYC which is to foster dialogue between research, theorising and practice. The authors seek to apply theoretical interpretations of young children's learning that were circulating at the time - by Isaacs, Piaget and Bruner - and, importantly, to illustrate and explain what those theories look like in practice. Dalcroze Eurhythmics is the only music education approach applied explicitly by one author, Frances Aronoff. Each author has attempted to convey the detail of pedagogical exchanges between teachers and children and to capture and communicate the musical agency of children through a range of authorial strategies: scripting real or imaginary conversations, describing and notating children's musical activity, providing photos, drawings of children's compositions or of children in action. These are books by practising teachers, addressed to practising teachers.

We should recognise that each scholar-pedagogue (as we might call them) was working within an educational context that enabled them to have professional autonomy and to explore innovations in practice. They were not required to follow externally prescribed local or national curricula. Their employment was state funded and so they were free of economic pressures to secure their income by designing work that would appeal to fee-paying parents, commissioning managers or to serve funders' pre-determined priorities. Each educator was connected with an academic institution, in varying roles, and so had contact with the mainstream early childhood educational thinking of the time and received various forms of support to develop their theory-informed practice. Barbara Andress, for example, reports that her approach evolved from 6 years of research in the Arizona State University Child Development Laboratory. Eunice Bailey received a year-long Susan Isaacs fellowship award.

The earliest text - published in 1958 by Eunice Bailey and titled *Discovering Music with Young Children* - was based on an application of Isaacs' philosophy and pedagogy to music. Isaacs had trained in early childhood education, philosophy and psychoanalysis. She is well known for having run a progressive nursery school in England during the 1920s where she evolved her principles of

psychoanalytic pedagogy. Bailey's application of Isaacs' pedagogical principles to music education led her to be convinced in the value of allowing children's 'natural interests, enthusiasm and instinctive drive' to motivate their work and play (Bailey, 1958, p. 106). The result was multi-media forms of activity that combined drama, dance, role play and music. Her writing reveals the conviction that emotional drive and the exploration of intellectual problems are integrated; a cornerstone of Isaacs' pedagogical theory. She was particularly concerned with the children's emotional engagement in music and dance activity, and how they might gain in confidence and stability through emotional release. Moreover, the role of the teacher is defined throughout the book, in her ongoing commentary, ranging across the teaching-role spectrum from standing back and observing to direct intervention and instruction.

Isaacs' pedagogy, influential in the 1950s, was overtaken by Piagetian theory and its model of development which came to the fore in the 1960s. Her child-centred philosophy had paved the way, but psychoanalytic pedagogy with its concern for the inner, emotional life of individual children went out of favour to be replaced by a focus on inner cognitive processes that were thought to be common to all children. The named individual children of Bailey become an anonymous boy or girl, tagged by their age in Marjorie Glynne-Jones' direct application of Piagetian theory in her book of 1974, titled, simply, *Music*. Music education, often lagging behind other fields in terms of theory-informed innovation, was not strongly influenced (in Britain) by Piaget until the 1970s. Glynne-Jones' literal application of Piagetian theory is revealed in comments about 5-year-olds' pre-operational stage, using ideas intuitively, 'with no mental analysis' (Glynne-Jones, 1974, p. 13) and an assumption that they are exploring ideas which only later will become 'concrete, specific and capable of analysis' (ibid.). Nevertheless Piaget's ideas of staged cognition lead her to prioritise learning through discovery. She describes and notates children's short exploratory compositions together with their talk that reveals musical thinking. Interestingly, she references Bailey's book of 1958, suggesting a direct lineage. Both authors interpret and apply progressive educational thinking current at the time in their music pedagogy, but draw on quite different theoretical sources.

Piaget was interested in children's cognitive processes and the development of those processes, but he was less interested in how teaching could promote changes in cognitive function. Bruner, in contrast, was interested in the processes of teaching and learning in relation to children's cognitive abilities (1960). His ideas about concept learning, modes of representation and curriculum structure were taken up by music educators working in the USA. Aronoff in her book *Music and Young Children* (1969) adopted Brunerian theoretical ideas and integrated them into an approach based on Dalcroze Eurhythmics. Andress blended Brunerian theory with Montessori's principles of self-guided learning and provided children with Montessori-style educational materials and resources she designed and made herself. Her book *Music experiences in early childhood* was the last of the four to be published, in 1980.

Bruner's thesis was that the teaching and learning of the structure of a subject, its concepts, rather than simply the mastery of skills and facts, is at the centre of learning (1960). Moreover, he advocated that the structure of a subject can be introduced from the start, and then revisited, reinforced and refined; the key principle that underpins Bruner's idea of the spiral curriculum. There

is no need to wait for a shift, say, from operational to analytical thinking before encouraging conceptual thinking. While Bruner emphasised intuitive thinking and self-discovery, as did Piaget, for Bruner intuition and exploration can be productive and lead to analytical thinking; an idea not dissimilar to Isaacs' proposal that curiosity, emotional drive and intellectual thinking are unified (1930).

Aronoff adopted another key Brunerian idea, the modes of representation (enactive, iconic and symbolic) and illustrated its application through Dalcroze-inspired activities. Her lengthy, imaginary dialogues between children and teacher attempt to capture the process of teaching, conversations in which she takes ideas from the children, responds, prompts and guides them towards points of learning, using transformations of mode to develop their conceptual understanding (Aronoff, 1969, p. 163).

Andress states that her book focuses on process rather than product, and 'embodies a hands-on, experiential discovery approach to music' (Andress, 1980, p. vii). Her approach is more explicitly developmental than Aronoff's, with Piagetian influences revealed in her assumption of limitations in young children's thinking, but the modes of representation and concept learning of Bruner are also evident. Her emphasis on exploration and piquing children's curiosity led to an interest in building environments for nursery settings that promote musical exploration. These were directly influenced by Montessori's musical materials in that they seek to promote discovery of certain musical properties, particularly of tone and timbre, inherent in the materials.

Some final thoughts

What might we draw for present-day practice from these four texts? In my view the authors' precise attention to teaching process – the art of pedagogy – is worth harking back to. Attempting to convey the 'how to' of teaching, not simply the 'what', requires a secure sense of educational purpose underpinned by theoretical foundations.

From the perspective of theory, historical theories, particularly of children's development, have been largely rejected because they are thought to contain inherent weaknesses. These weaknesses include a tendency to identify what is lacking in young children's competences, to be over-prescriptive according to age, to smooth out differences between children rather than acknowledge variation, and to neglect cultural and social diversity. This, however, has led to their overall neglect rather than sifting out what is valuable, such as the modes of representation and concept formation of Bruner, the specifics of schema theory and sensorimotor thinking from Piaget, or the bonding of emotion and cognition from Isaacs.

Child-centred approaches value a particular stance in practice which seeks to foster and understand children's musical play and spontaneous, self-generated musical production, but can easily lack pedagogical direction. In versions of practice which seek to hand musical agency and creative initiative to children, the adult role becomes highly complex. As Biesta emphasises (2017), teaching embodies an intention – an intention for a meeting between the adult and the child; a dialogue, an encounter, in which the adult has the intention to guide the child to somewhere new. Where that new place is, and might lead to, raises crucial questions based on values, ethics and aesthetics, with cultural, political and economic overtones. Therein lies the enormous responsibility of teaching and

one not to be avoided. In these books, quaint and outdated they may be, I think we can find some inspiration to inform the process of teaching as dialogue and as intentional – some, I stress, for of course, many aspects of the current context are different. But looking to the past, to the books written by these authors - can inform the present.

The four books

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ABSTRACTS

The abstracts here included are those of research and practice presentations, as well as posters and workshops presented at the conference, that are not included as full papers.

ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTATIONS

Culture Kids Project as a Learning Environment for Early Childhood Music Education Students

Hanna-Maija Arnio

Every child born in Helsinki in 2020 and after is invited to join the project Culture Kids. In the project the child will be invited to at least two cultural events every year. The events are designed to support the child's development and promote the well-being of the whole family. All Culture Kids events are free of charge. The project will continue until the child starts school at the age of seven. (Culture Kids, 2020)

In this project the second year students of early childhood music education and community music major will organise music sessions as a part of the Culture Kids project in cooperation with Helsinki City Museum. There will be 15 workshops for small babies (born in 2022) and these events are taking place in April and May 2022. In this presentation the possibilities of a project like the Culture Kids as a learning environment are discussed.

The aim of this project is to lead the families to know the cultural organisations in Helsinki. As early childhood music education experts the aims of the students are also to enhance well-being and support the early mother-child interaction with musical activities. The music sessions in Culture Kids will be multi-sensory and participatory. The theme of the sessions will be historical Helsinki next to the Baltic Sea. Various elements of music practise will be used, e.g. singing, dancing and playing instruments. The focus will be on group interaction and learner-centred approaches.

In addition to planning and facilitating the music sessions this project offers early childhood music educators several other possibilities for learning. The different roles of early childhood music teacher and museum educator have been discussed when planning the workshops. The students have also observed other Culture Kids events and music classes for babies. In addition a deeper look on the music pedagogy and pedagogical material for the babies has been taken. Students have also been given the time to compose their own material, e.g. songs and rhymes for babies. In this presentation the pedagogical approaches and actions of the project and the outcomes will be discussed.

Variations and Repetitions of Songs during the first three years of life: How Eva learned to sing

Eugenia Costa-Giomi & Florencia Ontiveros

Background

Infants' soundscapes consist of many types of musical sounds, from digitalised lullabies in toys to live vocal performances by parents. Exposure to recorded and sung melodies affect singing development.

Aim

To explore how variability in the mode of presentation of song during the first three years of life influences when and how infants sing them.

Method

We collected data from a single Argentine infant, Eva, over the course of three years with a digital language processor that captured all environmental sounds for 12-16 continuous hours. We analysed 10 audio files with over 117 hours of data identifying categories of musical events and describing their content and contextual characteristics. We first identified the songs the infant was most exposed to and calculated the total time of exposure across all 10 audio files. We then evaluated the variability in the mode of presentation by implementing a classification system that considered aspects such as live vs. recorded and accompanied vs. non-accompanied singing. Finally, we calculated the total time the infant vocalised those songs through the course of data collection.

Results

We found that Eva was exposed to more than 25 songs over 28 months and vocalised 7 of these songs. The seven songs were the ones she had heard performed with the most variability and embedded in interactive settings. For example, at 16 months, Eva started vocalising "Happy Birthday", using the word "pata." She had heard this song sang by her mother with and without guitar accompaniment, with the proper lyrics and nonsense words, and performed in a recording. Eva's vocalisations of the song were reinforced by the mother who cheered and sang jointly and alternatively with Eva. On the other hand, Eva did not vocalise the song "Osías" which she had heard as much as "Happy Birthday" but mainly through a recording.

Conclusion

Natural variability in the music environment of infants is important for music learning and development. Being exposed to different types of singing in varied interactive settings may contribute to infant singing development and song imitation.

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Multimodal approach in music learning

Sandra Fortuna

The simultaneous integration of different modalities (visual, audio, bodily, verbal) is considered a viable means to reinforce the process of learning. At the same time the process of reshaping the content of music learning shifting from one modality to another (from bodily to visual and verbal domain) Kerchner, 2014) may lead the children to shape and structure a phenomenon according to different perspectives.

The aim of this paper is to theoretically discuss the role of a multimodal approach as a way to enhance a deeper and richer process of music learning.

The effectiveness of a multimodal design arose from the results of two studies in which the children of primary school were invited to describe a piece of music through their body movement, next to describe the piece by means of graphical representations and finally to explain verbally the link with the music. The translation of the music in different domains (bodily, visual, and verbal) fostered the children to shape the multi-sensory experience according to diverse perspectives (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

Based on a framework of the 'constraint-led theory' elaborated by Newell (1986) each modality entailed a set of possibilities or constraints that affected how the children interacted and made sense of the music.

While a body alignment to the music leads to experiencing the unfolding of the music over time in a tridimensional space, graphically representing the music relies on an analogic, symbolic, or figurative description of the piece anchored in a bidimensional space. The synthetic and discrete nature of the verbal modality allows to express feelings, emotions on the music, but it is detached from the ongoing listening experience.

Arguably, different modalities seem to be integrated and complementary to each other in the way of representing a musical phenomenon. The integration is grounded on the sensory-motor root of each modality (e.g., verbal metaphors are based on the embodied schema, while the act of drawing entails a motor activity), while the complementarity is determined by the different interactions each modality establishes with the music, which leads to the conveyance of varied but interconnected information of the same phenomenon.

Musical early learning program, parental sensitivity and socio-emotional outcome: a randomised control trial

Aimée Gaudette-Leblanc, Bolduc Jonathan, Sébastien Boucher, Julie Raymond, Andrea Creech & George M Tarabulsy

This randomised controlled trial examined the effects of participating in a music-based intervention strategy implemented in a community setting. Specifically, we measured the direct and indirect effects of participation in a Music Early Learning Program (MELP) on parental sensitivity and socio-emotional functioning in children aged 2 to 5. Given the results of previous studies (i.e., Nicholson et al., 2008; Nicholson et al., 2010; Williams et al., 2012), we hypothesised that participation in a MELP would promote parental sensitivity and that this improvement would positively affect child behaviours. To test these hypotheses, 38 families were randomly assigned to a MELP or to a no-MELP condition. To assess the different variables at the heart of this research, we conducted home visits before and after implementing the MELP. We used the Maternal Behaviour Q-Sort (MBQS, Tarabulsy et al., 2009) to assess parental sensitivity and the Behavioural Assessment Scoring System (BASC-3, Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2015) to assess child socio-emotional functioning.

Consistent with previous studies, we found that participation in a MELP showed greater and more positive changes in parental sensitivity during interactions with their children. However, participation in the MELP did not affect variables linked to child socio-emotional outcome. These findings indicate that exposure to MELPs may have benefits for parent-child interactions and relationships in much the same way as attachment-based intervention. However, the absence of child-based, socio-emotional results suggests that other factors are involved that either facilitate or hinder changes in child outcomes. More research is required to draw out the specific mechanisms involved in changes to parental sensitivity of parents exposed to MELPs. Discussion focuses on the MELP-based mechanisms that may provide changes in sensitivity, as well as on the developmental processes that may be involved in such changes.

Historical and Contemporary Indicators of Musical Talent in Young Children

Claudia Gluschkof

Background

Identifying musical talent in young children has been, and still is, discussed among music educators, psychologists, stake holders and parents. It is assumed that identifying a musical talent early in life, the choice of the appropriate music education will be better.

Aims

The aim of this historical study is to reflect on the observable indicators of musical talents in young children as described in three early 20th century sources, published about 100 years ago, comparing those sources with the views of contemporary early childhood teachers and music teachers.

Main contribution

About 100 years ago three publications - Lavignac', Révész's and Seashore's - in three different languages (French, German, and English) and countries, addressed this issue. Lavignac, a French music scholar (1846-1916) published a music education book in 1902. It includes a discussion on the ever-present nature-nurture debate and offers clear observable indications of musical talent in young children (4-6 years old) which rarely deceive. This book has been translated a year later into English and Spanish. New editions have been published since then, in French and Spanish. In 1926, an unacknowledged and shortened version of the chapter regarding musical talent was published in a Buenos Aires Yiddish newspaper by Gidekel, a cantor, music school director and music store owner. In 1935 Gidekel published, what seems to be a shortened and adapted version of Lavignac, in Yiddish. Révész (1878-1995), a Hungarian experimental psychologist, published in 1916 "The Psychology of a Musical Prodigy", describing retrospectively the first signs of musical talent. Seashore (1866-1949) published in 1919 "The Psychology of Musical Talent", presenting measures for musical talent, a book and measures that are still referred to in contemporary studies.

Implications

The perception and conception of musical talent differs considering the cultural context, the aims of those defining them and their construction of musicality. Using historical indicators may contribute to reflect on contemporary constructions of musical talent, the ways musical talent is measured, when it is measured, and especially why and by whom is measured, and how it influences the music education practice.

The important role of singing activities on development in the context of recent trends in early childhood curricula

Helga Rut Gudmundsdottir

Recent research evidence on the effects of music activities, such as singing and playing rhythm games, suggests that music and singing provide unique opportunities for developmental growth in a multitude of important social, emotional and cognitive skills in early childhood that may not be achieved as effectively through any other means.

In this paper, development of early childhood curricula in the past three decades will be reviewed with focus on the emphasis on singing and music as subject areas and integral to early childhood education and care. The review focusses on curricular developments in Northern European, Scandinavian- and Anglo-speaking cultures.

A trend is identified suggesting that music and singing are more prominent in earlier curriculum documents in Scandinavia than in the latest versions. It seems that where music had a central role as a subject in earlier curricula, the more recent versions mention music or singing only as optional modes of expression under the umbrella of arts and creativity. In fact, the grouping of all arts subjects as one item in the early childhood curricula seems to diminish the importance of music and singing in particular as they appear (or don't appear) in latest curricular documents for early childhood. Compared to the Scandinavian curricula, the Anglo-speaking versions may have traditionally placed less emphasis on music and singing, according to documents dating back to the 1980s.

The questions raised in this paper are partly philosophical, regarding the importance of music in early childhood and the role of singing in documents for early childhood education and care. The paper concludes with a summary of the benefits of singing and music activities in early childhood as demonstrated by latest behavioural and neurological evidence followed by reflections on the possible consequences of ignoring this evidence in future curriculum documents.

Enabling Instrumental Exploration in Toddlerhood

Ilil Keren

In average educational systems, young children seldom have free access to musical melodic instruments - instruments that include melodic possibilities and different tones. The common educational percussions used in nurseries and kindergartens provide rhythmic possibilities but lack full melodic musical expression. A recent 19-month longitudinal study documented the instrumental improvisations of 25 toddlers (14–24 months old) using a chromatic metallophone and bongo drums in a nursery. It discovered a shared and partly ordered process in which each toddler developed highly complex personal musical expressions that indicated increasing levels of musical understanding. Given the freedom to explore the instruments repeatedly, the children developed rich melodic and rhythmic means of expression.

The current ongoing adult-led practice project was based on the developmental theory from that study and the desire to apply it practically, raise awareness, and enable everyday access and exploration of melodic instruments in nurseries and daycare centres. As part of the project, three daycare centres were provided one chromatic metallophone per age group (birth–1 year, 1–2 years, 2–3 years) to enable daily access to it in private and quiet-as-possible surroundings (e.g., in a curtained corner with no music in the background). We developed the details regarding how, where, and when to offer the instrument to the children jointly with the groups' caregivers, considering their convenience and possibilities. Caregivers shared their expectations using rating-scale questionnaires before we started, and data and feedback were collected starting in November 2022. Two more questionnaires and video documentation of the children's participation are expected throughout the project.

Because this ongoing project follows the groups from fall until summer, the outcomes and conclusions are still in progress. The results of the first questionnaire found caregivers' concerns about the "noise" and some doubt regarding the children's abilities to engage in such an activity. However, so far, we have seen great enthusiasm from both the children and caregivers. We expect to develop a solid suggested framework for nurseries and daycare centres to enable free play and the development of musical expression and understanding.

What do we know about music interaction in the daily life of a family with an under three-year-old? A case study based on full day recordings using DLP from LENA

Daniela Lerma-Arregocés & Jèssica Pérez-Moreno

Musical interaction between adults and children is a phenomenon that has been extensively studied for the last twenty years from the perceptions and experiences of the adults participating. However, the methodological design of these studies has not contemplated long lasting observations of the events in a real situation, neither participant's individual behaviours to understand the particularities of these musical encounters. In more recent pioneering research in the field of early childhood music education (e.g Costa-Giomi & Sun, 2016) children's spontaneous musical experiences and vocal behaviours have been documented as they happen in real time from their immediate soundscape, using the DLP audio recording technology associated with LENA (Language Environment Analysis) software.

The qualitative study that we present has adopted this data collection tool to achieve the main goal of identifying the characteristics of parent-child participation in musical interactions involving vocal expressions in the family environment. Participating families are from the area of Barcelona and have at least one child between 6 to 36 months. We have collected six recordings from each family over nine months. Thanks to the particularities of this device, which features we will present, we were able to record audio files of sixteen continuous hours of the child's sound landscape and thus document the musical and communicative encounters with their parents in real time.

To analyse the collected data an analysis tool was designed and validated. The MICAD - Music interaction Among Children and Adults Descriptors - integrates categories resulted from previous studies and new categories emerged from the data itself. For this conference we will present the case study of one family. We will share recordings from their daily life to show their musical interactions relating the nature of the same with the identified categories and their family context. This study will help us to discuss about these family practices of which we know little about from the real situation.

The power of the space in between: A case study on creating the music environment in preschool

Mei-Ying Liao, Lee-Chen Chen & Po-Ya Huang

Montessori, Piaget, Vygotsky and Malaguzzi, great early childhood educators, all stressed the importance of preschool environment. They believed that a good learning environment could stimulate children's desire to learn actively. Taiwan's preschool curriculum in recent years has also paid special attention to children's free play and learning environment, so creating an environment with aesthetic feeling and appropriate development is extremely important. The aim of this study is to explore the use of preschool space in between to create a music environment.

The research method is a qualitative case study of a preschool in the north of Taiwan, creating music environment innovation in space in between for two years. The implementation process was divided into three stages: exploration period, development period and maturity period. The environment layouts were changed according to seasons, festivals or children's interests, about once every two months. Children were free to interact with the environment in the school time. Data was gathered through observation, interviews of children, teachers and principal, and children's works.

The results showed that the preschool mainly provide loose parts for playing in a gazebo during the exploration period. Children seemed to be very interested to play loose parts instruments, but stayed in the exploration level without any variation. The preschool used strategies of song and a listening map to create flat and three-dimensional environments in the corridors during the development period. The results revealed that children had more focus on performance and creativity. A listening map helped them to focus on song structure and resulted in a higher level of music understanding and performance. During the maturity period, instruments making station and music puppet centre were established. The spaces in between were fully utilised, which not only had an aesthetic feeling, but also had an educational function. It provided opportunities for children to operate, integrate children's aesthetic experience and deepens their musical abilities. The music environment design of this case could be used as an example. Through promotion, the quality of early childhood and music education in preschool can be improved.

Generalist teachers successfully facilitating musical play: the power of general teaching skills

Christiane Nieuwmeijer

Young children learn largely by means of play. 'Musical play' is a play-based activity in which children (voluntarily and independently) explore, improvise and create with sound, allowing them to learn about music in a broad and playful way, consistent to their age. The teacher acts as a facilitator, observer and guide (e.g., Marsh & Young, 2006). Musical play can be a valuable addition to young children's musical development; not to replace music instruction, but to offer additional developmentally appropriate, child-directed music-play opportunities.

Dutch early childhood teachers, however, appear to have little knowledge on how to facilitate and guide musical play (Nieuwmeijer, Marshall & van Oers, 2019), as their music education consists mainly of whole group based, teacher-driven activities such as group singing or music making (Hoogeveen et al.) Such approach to music education, however, seems to require just those musical abilities teachers feel uncertain about, such as singing (Hallam et al., 2009; Stakelum 2008; Stunell, 2010).

As many Dutch early childhood curricula are play-based, it is likely to assume that the majority of early childhood teachers will possess (some) play supportive strategies such as observation and guidance. Therefore, this research aimed to explore whether engaging in a child-centred, play-based approach to music education, calling on pre-existing supportive skills, might have a positive impact on early childhood teachers' self-efficacy in teaching music. Hereto, a multiple case study was set up (Yin, 2003). Over a six-month period, fourteen teachers participated in a professional development course, consisting of literature-based pedagogical content knowledge on musical play. Consistent with theory on effective PD, the design was teacher-centred, subject content-focused, set in school context with teachers leading and taking responsibility for learning opportunities (Gruenhagen, 2007; Van Veen, Meirink & Verloop, 2010).

The effects of the PD on teachers' self-efficacy were monitored by means of reflective questionnaires and interviews. Findings demonstrate that taking part in the PD enhanced teachers' self-efficacy for musical play, and for fifty percent of the respondents for music education in general. The PD's design features longer duration, collective participation, active learning and qualitative curriculum materials had contributed to teachers' learning.

Daily musical practices in Lithuanian preschools: Perspectives of pre-service teachers

Emilija Sakadolskis & Rūta Girdzijauskienė

Background. Early encounters with music are important for child development (Barrett et al., 2017). Music can positively impact children's cognition (Eisner, 2002), learning-related attitudes, behaviour, social skills (Hallam, 2010; Kern et al., 2007), and language acquisition (Paquette & Reig, 2008), especially when incorporated into daily routines and integrated with other subjects (Barry, 2010; Burton et al., 1999; Fisher & McDonald, 2004).

Aim. Lithuanian preschools employ music specialists who provide two weekly music lessons (20-30 minutes) during which children sing, improvise, play instruments, musical games, etc. There is the likelihood that music education is limited to these lessons. Our study aims to discover how a child interacts with music during a typical day. How are music experiences directed by specialists and generalists similar or different? Additionally, we were interested in learning whether existing practices concur with students' ideas about the role of music in pre-school settings.

Method: Unstructured observation was chosen as the data collection method. 15 pre-service preschool education students spent two days with a selected group of children from the time they arrived until the end of the day. They described every musical moment and took photos that best reflected daily musical practices. The data consisted of 30 observation descriptions and 60 photographs. Additionally, students kept journals of musical activities they encountered during their month-long practicum.

Results. Active musical activities are more frequent in the morning, while later in the day music is often used as background. Teacher-initiated musical practices are more prevalent, while children's initiatives are fragmentary and not often recognised or supported. Aside from intentional musical activities, only a limited number of situations employ music. Both specialists and generalists do not provide sufficient opportunities for explorative, play-based music activity. The findings of the study were discussed with the observing students, which provided insights for enriching daily practices.

Conclusions: The often-encountered maxim that "teachers teach the way they were taught" needs to be countered by reflection about the purpose and type of musical development that students envision in their future practice. Student-conducted data collection and reflective practices in teacher education can facilitate changes in pre-school music.

The place of early childhood cultural affairs in MERYC's Archives

María Magdalena Sánchez

Background

Despite the evidence on the lifelong scope of the environment during the early years - drawn upon health, nutrition, protection, education and culture - the beneficial impact of music in children's lives, and the expected reach of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), children from birth to five continue to experience unequal and scarce opportunities for music education and artistic-cultural access across Europe and England.

More specifically, under-fives are massively underestimated as active audiences at arts and cultural institutions, seeing their right to art extensively challenged. This landscape might derive from several barriers faced by cultural institutions, and from a rooted conceptualisation of childhood in terms of the future, forgetting that investing in early childhood development makes economic sense for the present, beyond the unpostponable social benefits.

Aims

A literature review of MERYC England's and MERYC EuNet's archives is being done (conference proceedings from 2009 onwards) with three main aims:

Respond to:

How does MERYC archive inform conceptions of cultural practices, rights and policies in early childhood music?

Inform of trends and concerns that represent MERYC's community in the time period of the last thirteen years.

Situate possible gaps and challenges in research and practice, by granting a special focus to cultural affairs and their relationship with MERYC's community.

Main Contribution

This review of MERYC literature reveals some central areas that have occupied early childhood music educators and researchers. In doing so, we spot an underrepresentation of themes concerning culture (policies, rights, early childhood at cultural institutions, implications of early childhood as a cultural audience), opening questions regarding the possible imbrication of music education, culture and policy for the early years.

Implications

This is the first time that an archival review of MERYC's proceedings is carried out. It may posit an interesting contribution to the organisation and its community, pointing out the themes and practices that have occupied the European and English early childhood music community for more than a decade. Moreover, it facilitates the detection of challenges in research and practice, detecting some potential pathways to cover in relation to culture.

ABSTRACTS OF POSTERS

Creating OER for a broad international audience

Alexander Riedmüller, Elisabeth Pelz & Frauke Haase

During the last three years a team of Eurhythmics teachers at the University for Music and Drama Hamburg (Germany) developed the website "Rhythmics / Music and Movement" on the digital platform of the Hamburg Open Online University (HOOU). Its aim was to make the subject of "Eurhythmics" more visible and to give an easy accessible panorama about what it is about.

The result of this journey is a diverse kaleidoscope about Eurhythmics all published on one place and open to access and share for everybody. At the HOOU website you will find an animation video in nine languages explaining history and theory of the subject, eleven short films about Eurhythmics work with different target groups (e.g., kindergarten children, university students, senior citizens), three react-to-videos with experts analysing video material of Eurhythmics classes, a podcast series about artistry in Eurhythmics, as well as twelve presentations of Eurhythmics practitioners and researchers from five countries. Most of the content is available in at least two languages, German and English.

<https://www.hoou.de/projects/rhythmik-musik-und-bewegung/>

The poster displays the several features of different content on the website as well as explaining the frame that make the project possible.

Effects of prior musical experience and EMP interventions on spontaneous imitation and creation of body percussion patterns in 8-year-old children

Werner Rohrer

Compositions for body percussion were already published in the 1950s by Carl Orff (cf. Orff & Keetman, 1950) and are popular in music and movement classes. Body percussion is in the true sense of the word percussion training with the body. It can be used in lessons regardless of location and equipment. It can be the starting point for individualised, varied work and play processes to get to know rhythms, to train coordination and motor skills, or to explore differentiated sound production. In addition, it is possible to explore movement, language or song in a variety of ways.

The present empirical-quantitative study determines whether statistically significant effects of prior musical and movement experience as well as interventions according to the principles of EMP (cf. Dartsch, 2022) on the skills in imitating and spontaneously created patterns can be observed. Prior musical experience is measured by means of appropriate assessment instruments and body percussion skills by means of rhythm patterns. A body percussion assessment sheet for skilful imitation of rhythmic movement patterns (cf. Cañabate Ortíz, 2017, p. 243) will be adapted for the age group. Assessment possibilities for spontaneously improvised rhythmic patterns will be developed.

In the pre-post study, the effects of the teaching methodology (three EMP interventions) only affect the measurement repetition of the body percussion tasks.

Data from 8-year-old pupils (N = 115) from 11 primary school classes (70 children in the intervention group and 45 children in the comparison group) are examined.

One of the guiding questions is whether differences in performance situations with and without intervention are evident. The study aims to determine

- a) whether children perform better depending on the teaching strategy,
- b) with which type of patterns (for example combination of different sound gestures with hands; feet and hands; with and without speech) an improvement occurs and
- c) how spontaneous created patterns change during the measurement period.

It is to be expected that prior music- and movement knowledge (cf. Renkl, 1996, p. 177) shows positive effects on skills. Since there is a significant positive correlation between motor and musical skills (cf. Gruhn, 2019, p. 69), this can also be expected for body percussion skills.

ABSTRACTS OF SYMPOSIA

Symposium - Listening for invitations to play: Investigations with an early years music-arts organisation.

Jessica Jane Pitt, Charlotte Arculus, Barbara Cavanagh & Sophie Fox

Our symposium presents the work of an early childhood music practice-research group. Since 2003, this group of artists-researchers has been rooted with the families, educators and collaborative partners in one town. This situatedness is important to the socially engaged arts practice that is an underlying tenet of the organisation. Through sharing qualitative research and practice findings across a number of studies the symposium will present a conceptual framework for the pedagogics approach.

The praxis of emergent listening (Davies, 2014) is embodied by the artist-researchers as openness to possibility and surprise. It is based on a beyond-words-pedagogy with attentiveness to the generation of co-created, previously unimagined events. By being with children, in a moment-by-moment unfolding with music, the underlying purpose of music education as a one-way transfer of skills and knowledge is contested. Situating practice, within a play-based, early childhood education curriculum, possibilities are opened for music education to be found within the play sphere.

By looking back to the early childhood educational pioneer - Friedrich Froebel's philosophical ideas, (re)reading these through the lens of contemporary feminist new materialist thinking, an entangled connectedness is found to rest this practice-research approach within a richly textured story of early childhood theory and practice.

The symposium presentations will raise issues for discussion, including the purposes of music education for young children, what we can come to know with children when adopting a talk-free, sound-rich, emergent listening approach. What we come to know with adults when play becomes the foundation for professional development for artists and educators wishing to work with music and young children, and to tease out the issues for artist-musician-educators working in socially-engaged music education contexts.

The symposium consists of a practical workshop and presentations. The 60-minute workshop includes improvising and interacting without words in musical play to experience and understand the generative potential of this powerful practice. The workshop will explore practices which create time and space for babies and young children's musical expressions to be valued. The workshop experience, combined with the two research papers, will provide provocations for facilitated discussion with participants.

References

Davies, B. (2014). *Listening to Children: Being and becoming*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Keywords: musical play, beyond-words-pedagogy, emergent listening, feminist new materialism, Froebel

More than Adult Musicians in Waiting: Opening up to the unimagined possibilities of children's music

Charlotte Kathleen Arculus

Taking the conference headline “making music as we grow up”, this paper/workshop will challenge ideas of the musical child as somehow less-than the musical grown-up. In Leal’s (2005) words: ‘children have been educated much more in the interests of their submission to the rules of an adult centred world than to their own possibilities’ (p. 114). Music education is no exception to this. Resisting and interrogating developmentalist ideologies in music education that persistently construct children’s music making as adult-music-in-waiting, I offer a conceptualisation of children’s music making as non-teleological phenomena. I invite grown-ups to consider how they might create and inhabit a borderland where both adult and child onto-epistemologies overlap in a contagious knowledge/reality exchange (Arculus, MacRae 2020). This requires grown-ups to approach children’s musical worlds with curiosity, uncertainty, awkwardness (Lorimer 2014) and a willingness to experiment in partnership with children. It also involves letting go of spoken language.

Drawing on practices of improvisation across art forms, including contemporary clowning, movement and free music, I suggest that children’s music making is filled with generative potential and able to open up unimagined possibilities. I work with feminist new material thinking to consider how children are situated and in conversation with the more-than-(grown-up)-human-world and as such are able to operate beyond the individualised subject. Improvising involves moving through the awkwardness of discomposure, vulnerability and disconcertion (Lorimer 2014) as the boundaries of our individualised and separate selves become leaky (Manning 2009) and emergent (Guattari 1995, Stern 1985), sensing and feeling towards a ‘mutually transformative sense of unfolding collective action’ (MacRae and Arculus, 2020: 43).

Drawing on my doctoral research project and the work of Magic Acorns, I present research and practice stories, I ask what it might mean for adults to grow-with music and children’s ways of doing music.

Inside Out: connecting Froebel's principles with contemporary early childhood music practice

Barbara Cavanagh

This paper will share findings from a small scale, interpretivist research project, which looked at the work of Magic Acorns (an early childhood arts company) in particular their use of wordless sound play, through a Froebelian lens. Froebel, a 19th Century philosopher/educator, the founder of the kindergarten, was a radical of his time, not accepting the status quo in terms of education. His philosophy centred around eight principles, including play as the principal tenet of learning, centring the child in their own learning, providing the right environment for learning to happen, valuing childhood. However, the notion of unity and connectedness, where everything in the universe is linked, was Froebel's key principle. Where and how the inner and outer worlds of children connect and how they evolve through and from each other, was the basis of his philosophy.

These principles are akin to those of Magic Acorns, who situate children firmly at the centre of their work. Their innovative approach to music education, using words sparingly, encourages and incorporates an openness to possibility, seeing beyond the narrow outcome-based focus of mainstream education, which emphasises the importance of talk. By attuning to what children offer, not seeing them as somehow deficient, Magic Acorns works with children in a mutual fusion of connectedness. Analysis of the Froebel archive was undertaken. Further reading around play, creativity, and slow pedagogy led the research team to the unexpected emergence of a posthumanist lens with which to frame the research. Data were collected through observation of live sessions as well as video footage and interviews with Magic Acorns artists. Froebel's belief that everything is connected and that there is a unity to the world through these connections is similar to posthumanist thought of the 'more-than-human' i.e. that humans should not think of themselves as the pinnacle of evolution, that animals, plants, objects have an equal part to play in the world and that the connection between all things is what holds the universe together (Barad, 2003). Entangling with the philosophical ideas of a 19th Century educator amongst 21st Century posthumanist/new materialist/feminist thinking, this paper shares emerging findings for early childhood music education.

Barad, K., 2003. Posthumanist performativity: Toward an understanding of how matter comes to matter. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, 28(3), pp. 801-831

Playful spaces: making space for music/sound play with babies and very young children

Sophie Fox

Drawing on the work of Magic Acorns, UK, this workshop will explore musical playfulness as a pedagogical imperative. Working in nursery settings, with families and in community spaces offers different opportunities and challenges - exploring musical play as a creative and communicative act. In this workshop we will start to consider *our* skills of attunement, improvisation and wonder in these spaces. Turning ourselves on to be in-the-moment we can step into listening modes that are “not...bound by what we already know” (Davies, 2014:1) and this receptiveness can prepare us for working with very young children as divergent thinkers.

During this workshop we will explore interacting without words in our musical play, and how this simple yet powerful practice can offer space for babies and young children’s expressions to be foregrounded, noticed and celebrated. Putting aside traditional didactic teacher modes of commenting, narrating, praising, questioning and directing, we will step into modes of play which create sensitive conditions where we might start to notice what otherwise might have been missed. Purposely planning time for unplanned-ness we de-centre outcome driven agendas and we make space for play, discovery and improvisation, allowing uncertainty and open-ended sound exploration to come to the fore with adults in the space ready and musically receptive to what might occur.

Using our bodies, voices and the room that we are in, we will explore the potential of sound play as sites of emergent discovery. Not knowing what is going to happen next enlivens all the senses to improvisatory offers - and the lens of music enables our play to explore ambiguous threads of enquiry in pedagogies of improvisation (Lines, 2018). Through music and sound play we can make attempts to connect and make meaning together in the moment.

Lines, D. (2018). Jazz Departures:Sustaining a pedagogy of improvisation. In C. Naughton, G. Biesta & D. Cole (Eds.) *Art, Artists and Pedagogy*. Abingdon: Routledge. pp. 52-60.

Davies, B. (2014). *Listening to Children:Being and becoming*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Symposium - SenseSquared: Exploring the relevance of mother-infant musicality for education in schools

Hans Van Regenmortel, Loes Bruyninckx, Kirsten Halle & Ana Isabel Pereira

The Erasmus+ EU funded SenseSquared consortium connects 6 European partners from Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Portugal, all strongly committed to the importance of the arts for education. The main research question is: How can a sensuous approach and artistic attitude contribute to an education that leads to a more connected and sustainable world? We want to show that such an approach can and even should become the core of education.

The musicality of the early mother-infant interaction serves as a core inspiration. In the last decades, the specificity of this dyad has received increasing attention from scientists and artists worldwide, resulting in scientifically informed practice with the early years, artistic approaches in daycare centres and on stage, and new approaches in music education. However, we believe that the interaction of the mother-infant dyad provides far wider reaching insights of what it means to be human, to communicate and to learn.

To what extent does 'the cradle of life' equal 'the cradle of the arts', as well as 'the cradle of education'? To what extent do their basic principles remain valid for later in life? Can these serve as germs for how we interact and learn in formal educational contexts? What is their relevance for the future of education? Can they form the basis for 'an education for the future'?

In this symposium, we present four contextual examples that illustrate and underpin the validity of the main proposal, forming the basis of a subsequent discussion among attendees. One presentation focuses on non-verbal, sensory interaction among baby's, parents and artists. The second proposal focuses on singing and teachers' musical interaction with children in relation to how teachers conceive their own musicality. The third contribution highlights how the temporal arts can act as an instigator for genuine interaction among children and teachers in primary schools, and the possibilities to take a sensory approach and artistic attitude as the core paradigm of an education for the future. The fourth contribution links educators' training to artistic performance addressed to children, and presents ideas that might raise educators' artistic involvement.

Please see full papers section

Loes Bruyninckx

Babelut Parcours: non-verbal sensory interaction between generations in an immersive artistic context p.27

Kirsten Halle

Teachers musical practice – understanding musicality and human behaviour p.45

Ana Isabel Pereira, Helena Rodrigues & Paulo Maria Rodrigues

Immersing educators in the experience of PaPI Opus 8.z: Stimulating senses and artistry through an online music-theatre Piece p.59

Hans Van Regenmortel

ZINTUIN artistic interventions in primary schools: Paving a path towards an education for the future p.77

ABSTRACTS OF WORKSHOPS

Brazilian activities for children

Taianara Goedert

In recent years, much has been said about the importance of using music from different cultures in music classes. Not only musical expressions from other cultures can be inserted in the educational context, but also teaching-learning approaches experienced in non-formal and informal contexts. Scholars of community music still advocate for the participation of the culture bearer as a facilitator in teaching a new sociocultural expression to students. Considering this, the workshop aims to present different Brazilian musical activities for children aged 0 to 8 years. Through Brazilian traditional songs, rhythms, body percussion and dances, participants will learn important aspects of Brazilian culture that are usually disseminated through oral transmission. Strategies to adapt these activities in other teaching contexts will also be presented.

The audience will be engaged through a practical interaction. Participants of this workshop will learn this content by doing circle songs combined with body percussion, playing rhythms in percussion instruments while they will also learn the melodies of some important songs from the Brazilian folkloric repertoire. Elements of Orff and Dalcroze approaches will be used to teach these activities. In addition, participants will also learn through pedagogical approaches used in the universe of community music, more specifically in the context of Brazilian informal and non-formal music learning. Through this workshop, participants will expand their musical repertoire from different cultures, learn how these activities are taught in the original context, and be able to apply these musical activities respectfully and consciously in different contexts, such as schools, daycares and community projects.

Musical Bumps and Babies - exploring museum spaces with new families

Xenia Mary Horne & Nicola Wallis

Our project invited new families to explore the gallery spaces of the Fitzwilliam Museum through music, movement and sing, with a focus also on relaxation, refreshment and reflection. Working with Museum educator Nicola Wallis, we developed a series of 8 sessions with small harp - which was played as we journeyed through the spaces - creating a holding accompaniment which rippled outward to other visitors.

In each session we would focus on objects and art works to which babies were drawn and used these as the starting point for micro songs - and gradually extending our improvisation so that by the final session we created a whole piece together which was informally shared with other visitors. The practical sessions were interspersed and supported with informal live music performance again encouraging new families to enjoy the museum through a different perspective. We would love to share the practical activities which were used to engage our new families in relaxed, inclusive music making using our voices and bodies as the main resources. We would also like to explore the unexpected outcomes around infant vocalisations and interactions in the space, benefits of the experience articulated by new parents and the impact of the project on the social and musical interaction between the infants.

Application of Loose Parts in Music Teaching for Young Children

Mei-Ying Liao

The theory of loose parts was proposed by architect Simon Nicholson in 1971, who thought landscapes and environments that form connections. He believed that people are all creative and loose parts (open-ended) in our environment will empower children's imagination and creativity. Educators have stressed the importance of providing unstructured materials to inspire their children's thinking and creativity. Many early childhood educators adapted the theory of loose parts into preschool curriculum especially for Waldorf and Reggio approach. However, loose parts have been seldom discussed in music education.

Loose parts were used as instruments or teaching tools popularly in Dalcroze, Kodaly and Orff methods. Yet, the application of loose parts in musical elements is seldom discussed. The aim of this workshop is to introduce loose parts in early childhood music education and demonstrates how to use loose parts in music teaching. The structures of this workshop are shown below:

- Theory of loose parts
- Loose parts gathering and managing
- Application of loose parts in music education
- Examples of loose parts in music playing, musical elements exploration and movement. The presenter will use three songs for playing loose parts: Dancing leaves, Taxi tango and Old MacDonald had a farm.

Activities example:

- Dancing leaves: the presenter will use leaves for teaching motivation and lead the participants to use scarfs and clothes to dance as leaves and trees.
- Taxi tango: the participants will experience how to use loose parts to explore and represent musical elements (dynamics and timbre). In addition, they will use loose parts for instrument playing.
- Old MacDonald had a farm: the presenter will demonstrate how to design the music environment for a nursery song to encourage young children to play loose parts.

This workshop will lead the audiences to re-think the importance of children's play. The value of loose parts could play a better role to foster children's creativity than instruments do.

This workshop requires audio-visual equipment and some materials that can be played, such as tin cans, PET bottles, cardboard boxes, etc.

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