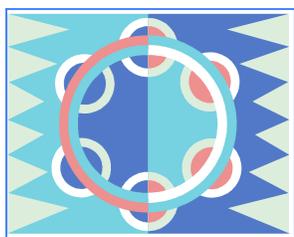


Musings



Newsletter of

ECMMA's Greater Washington, DC Chapter

The region's professional association for teachers of early childhood music and movement

Volume 1, No. 2
 December 2006

Fall 2006 Chapter Meeting

SONGS, MOVEMENT, DANCING IN ART MUSEUM

Sunday, October 22nd members gathered for a joyous and informative meeting, the second one of this first year. The setting was the beautiful and striking *Ratner Art Museum* in Bethesda, the use of which was generously donated to us through arrangements made by chapter member **Marni Ratner**, daughter of artist Dennis Ratner.

Beth Rubens, a classically-trained professional soprano, led the group in a gorgeous Hebrew round, "Hava Nashira" which resounded beautifully and appropriately in this museum dedicated to biblical themes from the Old Testament.

Chapter officers **Kaja Weeks, Diana Greene, and Caron Dale** led a brief business meeting. Diana Greene displayed the ECMMA-GWDC official charter that was conferred at this past summer's convention in San Diego. An announcement was also made about the forthcoming N. E. Regional meeting on March 23-24 to be held in the Princeton, NJ area. (See Announcements, p. 11 for details)

Then the program shares began! **Monica Dale**, founder of MusiKinesis (a contemporary approach to Dalcroze Eurhythmics) involved members in creative, improvisatory and joyful movement that grew from elements of musical structure, cued by Monica's spontaneous drum and then piano accompaniments. The inventive session came to an end by Monica's concretely linking the physically-learned rhythmic patterns to simple notation, thereby completing the kinesthetic-aural-cognitive circle.

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Musings Editor, Kaja Weeks
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Photo:

Monica Dale prepares dancer for an improvisatory dance with sequences of moving and freezing.

The second member share was by **Mara Bershad** who led a spirited version of a Zulu call and response song, “Sobonana Kusasa.” Mara’s interpretation involved dramatic arm movements. She also showed how, in her work with children, she emphasizes lip, tongue, and jaw involvement and clear articulation of consonants.

Maggie Corfield-Adams, who recently had returned from a trip to Gambia where she studied native instruments and dance, shared another African song. Maggie’s contribution was a song-game from Ghana, “Obwisana,” and she showed the group how she plays this with her students by using interesting and varied rocks for passing around the circle to rhythmic patterns.

An enjoyable and fascinating contribution was made at that point by **Corinne Mvou Turner**, a native of Gabon, who recently returned to the Washington, DC area and joined the chapter. She volunteered that that she knew “Obwisana” from her childhood, but that it was not a passing game. It was a song that functioned as a way for the mother to keep her daughter’s interest in cooking!

Members enjoyed wraps, fruit, and desserts and then the formal portion of the meeting ended with the closing round, “Goodnight, Goodnight” (a round sung at Bryn Mawr and passed on to us by Janet Hofmeister, local music teacher and mentor to many chapter members).

Numerous members stayed for the “Wind Down” of contra and circle dances. **Monica Dale** taught several dances she had learned from the Amidons’ workshop at Hartt School of Music this summer. The most fun was undoubtedly the colorfully named, “Sashay the Donut!”

Kaja Weeks taught “Neesa, Neesa” a Native American circle dance, learned at ECMMA’s Lake Junaluska, NC-based international conference. This meditative homage to the moon unfolded with canonic singing, co-centric movements and gestures.

Before ending, chapter members discussed the option of devoting the entire spring chapter meeting to various dances, with the possibility of some of our own live instrumental accompaniment.



Photo

Mara Bershad leads a spirited call and response song, “Sobonana Kusasa.”

More Scenes from the Fall Chapter Meeting



Photos

The Path of a Song

Maggie shares her version of "Obwisana" as a singing-passing game that she does with her students using interesting rocks; This leads Corinne to recall "Obwisana" from her childhood in Gabon where it had a functional use with mother and daughter, and she shows the motion of pounding food that accompanied it.



Photo

Contra dance "Sashaying the Donut"!

*Pictured from L to R:
Maggie, Maggie's husband and Marni -- sashaying, Diana, Corinne, and Ming*

BOOK CORNER

By Vera Owens

Fall 2006



Can you wave your arms like a monkey?
Clap your hands like a seal?

Books That Move You

Very often, story-time is a welcome, restful time for both children and teachers. There are some books, however, that inspire excellent movement activities, even while they are being read. A prime example is **HEAD TO TOE**, by Eric Carle. The bold illustrations of Eric Carle's book are always superb for classroom reading, particularly for reading with a lively response.

A penguin says, "I can turn my head. Can you do it?"

The child in the book and all the children in the class reply, "I can do it."

Then of course, they do it!

A pattern of rhythmic speech and movement can then be established by repeating, "turn my head" four times to a steady beat as the children do their movement. With every page turn, a different animal challenges the children to identify, isolate, and move an individual body part in a way that is special for that animal. As children clap hands like a seal, bend knees like a camel, stomp feet like an elephant, they enrich their vocabulary of body parts, movement, and animals. The repeated reply, "I can do it," is also good practice for children learning to speak English. One cautionary note: the donkey kicks his heels, so safe spacing is important. Sometimes I skip the donkey page if adjusting everyone's position would break the momentum of the fun. The donkey illustration can be saved as a special introduction to donkey music such as "*Personages With Long Ears*" from "*Carnival of the Animals*" by Saint Saens, or in connection with songs about donkeys such as "*Tingalayo*" and "*El Burrito Enfermo*."

Continuing with this theme of movement inspired by zoo animals, and adding some of their sounds, is the "sing-along action book" **IF YOU'RE HAPPY AND YOU KNOW IT!** by Jane Cabrera. And of course there is the great children's song "*Going to the Zoo*" by Tom Paxton. Peter, Paul and Mary have a classic performance of this song on "Peter, Paul and Mommy", and Raffi has a lively arrangement on "Singable

Songs for the Very Young". These are so good that it's fun just to have the children sing and move and dance along with the recording.

After so much exploration of movement for individual body parts, and pantomime of animals, a very good locomotion activity can be developed from the book **WHO HOPS?** by Katie Davis.

She asks, "Who hops?"

With big, bright, clear pictures, the next three pages show that frogs hop, rabbits hop, kangaroos hop, and then a page with a picture of a cow that says "Cows hop". This is obviously a hilarious mistake so everyone can chime in on the next page with an emphatic "No, they don't!!"

This pattern is rhythmically repeated in response to "Who flies?" "Who slithers?" "Who swims?" "Who crawls?" Then the question is asked, who can do all those things, and the answer is...children. There is a picture of children each paired with an animal doing their signature activities. (Swinging on a swing counts as flying because, well, it makes you feel like you're flying.) I particularly like this picture because it is a good illustration for presenting the idea of simile. "She is hopping like a frog. He is crawling like a crab. She feels like she is flying like a bird, etc..." This leads inevitably towards moving to music in these ways. The music can be provided by piano improvisation, various sound qualities of percussion instruments, or selected recorded music, such as selections from "*Carnival of the Animals*". It is an opportunity for children to listen for and respond to musical qualities of high/low, fast/slow, heavy/light, loud/soft, staccato/legato. The teacher can provide hopping music and each child can "be" the hopping animal of his/her choice (and they will want to tell you what it is), or you could differentiate in the prompting music between the light hop of a frog and the heavy hop of a kangaroo, the slow slither of a snail and the quick slither of a snake. Animals, movements, and musical qualities beyond those suggested by the book can be added as you build upon this activity.

The book **DOWN BY THE STATION** by Will Hillebrand is an illustrated version of the song that has the train picking up baby zoo animals. The illustrations in this book are filled with details that invite focused examination, discovery, imagination, and discussion. Consequently, this book provides a very different experience from the forward momentum and physical response of the movement-oriented books. At the end of the story-song, however, the animals play with a group of children who are on a class trip to the zoo, and this scene reflects again on the movement qualities they share in their play.

One last book I must mention for the winter season is **OH!**, with words by Kevin Henkes and pictures by Laura Dronzek. In this book, it has snowed all night and it

is still snowing. One by one, page by page, a squirrel, a rabbit, a cat, a dog, birds and children come out to play in the snow, each with a special movement. As in HEAD TO TOE and WHO HOPS?, the beautiful clarity of the illustrations, and simplicity of the patterned, rhythmic text keeps drawing everyone back, making it possible for the children to move right along with the reading of the book while maintaining the cohesiveness of the story. At the end of OH!, it is night and the children go home to rest like all the other creatures who have played all day. Now maybe it's time for some relaxing music or a quiet story...or both.

BOOKS DISCUSSED

- FROM HEAD TO TOE, Eric Carle, Harper Collins, 1997
- IF YOU'RE HAPPY AND YOU KNOW IT!, Jane Cabrera, Scholastic Inc., 2005
- WHO HOPS?, Katie Davis, Harcourt Brace & Co. 1998
- DOWN BY THE STATION, Will Hillenbrand, Gulliver Books, Harcourt Brace & Co. 1999
- OH!, Kevin Henkes, illustrated by Laura Dronzek, Greenwillow Books, 1999

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Vera teaches at Levine School of Music, Strathmore and teaches music at the NIH (National Institutes of Health) Preschool in Rockville, MD

Editor's Note: After reading this wonderful column by Vera, you may enjoy checking out Eric Carle's illustrated description of how he came to write From Head to Toe at www.eric-carle.com/bb-H2Tnotes.html



OF NOTE

Music Research
Music in the News



HOW SINGING IS EMBEDDED IN FAMILY LIFE

PROF. LORI CUSTODERO'S RESEARCH EXAMINED SINGING WITHIN FAMILIES WITH TODDLERS

Dr. Lori Custodero, Associate Professor of Music at Columbia Teacher's College, recently conducted research on the nature (function and types) of songs used in a select group of families with three-year old children. Data included parent interviews, observations of children, parent journals of children's musical activities and researcher reflections after each encounter. The results were published in the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Spring 2006. (Published by MENC)

While much research has been done on the nature of music between mothers and infants as well as on children of school age, the toddler and preschool age is less studied, particularly so in its naturalistic (home) setting. In order to uncover the possible "hidden" repertoires and contexts, Custodero invited parents to become co-researchers in documenting their children's musical activity.

Although each child/family's use of music was a unique constellation, the research highlighted common patterns. Custodero notes, "... singing seemed to fulfill ... the notion of elaborating or "making special" the everyday." Whether during routines (such as bedtime) or during other especially intimate parenting moments, singing heightened the emotional intensity of the experience. The study noted a correlation between families that had a regularity of singing routines with children who ended up with a large repertoire of songs and were able to use songs freely during other times of the day.

Another important feature that family portraits showed was the collaborative nature of singing when both parents and children were involved. The children were included in initiating musical activity and choosing routines. Custodero speculates about the possible importance of this kind of musical parenting in helping foster a child's awareness and ability to "own" their musical needs.

Musical traditions played a varied role in families and show the importance of parents' own musical upbringing and the role of music to bind social groups and maintain identity.

A fascinating portion of the study looked at children's singing culture separate from that of adults. This use of this singing was often spontaneous and pervasive throughout the day, providing a kind of musical soundtrack to the play and events of daily life. One of the parents who originally thought music did not have a big role in their lives was surprised once she began to focus on it, finding that her daughter was enthusiastically singing throughout the day! (The mother's concept of music-making had been on formal instrumental instruction.) Children's spontaneous singing may grow from songs they know but be more improvisational as well as expressive (rather than communicative) in nature.

Reciprocity between parents and children in this study leads Custodero to note that the "data suggest further exploration of a possible developmental link emanating from the reciprocal infant-parent communication: **that the "motherese" of post-infancy is spontaneous singing** – a hallmark of this period of musical development in young children."

These musical family portraits have a wealth of implications for educators, who can learn from the parents as the "first teachers" who are "biologically programmed for such a task." (Trehub). Custodero concludes by saying, "while educating parents is an essential part of our professional obligation, early childhood music settings can learn from parent-child relationships where collaboration is valued, and conscious efforts are made to honor singing for its emotive and intimate qualities."

COMMENTARY

Family Musical Portraits, Anyone?

The above study, yielding rich and enlightening views not only for researchers but also for the parents may inspire some of us to initiate informal projects with our families. Keeping a "musical journal" or tape recording of spontaneous music-making can be eye-opening and a fun sharing experience with the group, and springboard for more.

Let us know if you try it!

- kw

In this issue of Musings we are pleased to introduce Gina's column, which will be a regular feature. Her forthcoming columns are meant to be interactive – involving each and all of us! So, please do volunteer your responses to her on some of the thought-provoking questions she poses here; and do respond to her requests should she call upon you individually to share your wisdom, dilemmas, and insights. We will all learn from each other, and enjoy each other's musical company vicariously!



TEACHER TIPS and BEYOND

By Regina Lacy Wilt

Socrates said, "Know Thyself."

Why do we teach? And why choose to teach music?

Goethe reflects, "There is nothing like music to fill the moment with substance."

In this new feature column, I invite each of you to reflect upon these fundamental questions and more specific ones as well, and to share your insights and experiences so that we can develop a philosophical and practical dialogue with each other. As I laid the groundwork for this column, a number of central themes came to mind that I hope will stir your thoughts:

Preparing and Cultivating Fertile Ground

Preparation, a key to successful teaching, is often viewed through finite plans (e.g. "lesson plans," curriculum, etc.) Yet the teacher's true preparation is the culmination of his or her life experiences and learning and insight into one's own character, emotions, values, and principles. **What are some of the life experiences and roads leading to self-perception that have prepared you for the work you are now doing with young children?** Each of us is unique in this way, as is each child we teach. **Do we teach curriculum or do we teach the student? In a large class is it possible for individual teaching and learning to take place?**

Making true Sense!

In reaching each child through our teaching, attention to the role of our senses is critical. We *all* perceive first through our senses and these sensations take on emotional content. However, this sensory/emotional combination plays a particularly critical role for young children (i.e. those in "sensory-motor and pre-symbolic orientation) and can affect capacities of pathways that allow information to enter working memory. **How would you describe your ability to size up children's**

sensory perceptions and reactivity? Is it something intuitive, or do you use more formal methods? Are you able to offer “musical substance” in a holistic way that addresses different functional domains (i.e. visual, vestibular, tactile – what about taste and smell?) that all need to bloom and connect in early childhood? What else in your training or experience would facilitate your reaching this essence?

Facilitating Creativity

What a worthy goal it is to keep our focus on developing musicians and not “technicians.” And often, how challenging! For the latter requires only pouring in the prepared mix and being satisfied when the contents are reproduced. But the former requires so much more: an emotional connection that develops not only intellect, but also artistry. **How do we guard against our well-meant “preparation” from dampening each child’s inherent and growing creativity?**

It can be exhilarating to transfer knowledge to another human being, especially when students and teacher gather for music making and a community is formed. The truth is that we never achieve alone. As was well said by C.S. Lewis, “We need others physically, emotionally, intellectually; we need them if we are to know anything even ourselves.” As we embark on education reform, music teachers and music will be in the forefront in creating an environment conducive to learning.

So, fellow teachers while you are out there planting seeds and laying foundations for higher learning, would you reflect for a moment and share why you teach, and why music? Or share an insight, or some experience that might be helpful to others. I may call on you for information for future columns. Please email me at dolce7lacy@yahoo.com or call 410.661.5382.

Regina (“Gina”) owns and directs the Baltimore School of Music, a community music school which offers group and private lessons. She is a long-time member of ECMMA (national) and Host of the GWDC’s Early Keyboard Interest Group.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SAVE THESE DATES!

→ March 23-24, 2007

ECMMA Northeast 2007 Conference
Hopewell, NJ

→ April 29, 2007

ECMMA-GWDC Spring Chapter Meeting
Circle, Contra, & Folk – a Gathering of Music and Dance!

_____ Details Below _____

The following “PEEK” about the NE Regional Conference has been provided to us by Laurie Mueller, Conference Chair. Expect to receive a brochure mailing from her soon with full information. In the meantime, you may contact her at gartenmusik@verizon.net.

ECMMA – Northeast 2007 Conference

“No Teacher Left Behind”

Educating the Whole Child Through Music and Movement

- When: March 23-24th, 2007
- Where: Hopewell, NJ (Outside of Princeton -- in the new Music Together Facility)
- Featuring: Keynotes by John Feierabend (Sat) and Robin Gilmore (Fri)
- Breakouts: John Feierabend, Robin Gilmore, Lara Davis, and Improv Session with Eve Kodiak
- Also: Fri Evening JAM session and circle dancing!
- Closing Concert: Sat afternoon - Princeton Area Homeschool Choir and Trenton Children’s Chorus
- Opt. Bonus: Conference hosts, Music Together, will be offering a glimpse of one of their preschools in action on Friday morning. Note, that this will require advanced reservation, as spaces are limited.

ECMMA NE Regional Continued ...

Both **early childhood music/movement teachers** as well as **preschool classroom teachers** are invited to attend -- breakout sessions for each.

If you have colleagues who are preschool teachers, please let them know about this worthwhile meeting!

Conference Fees Below

Please note that conference rates do not include meals or housing

EARLY BIRD RATES are for registrations postmarked by February 15th.

STUDENTS (with proof of at least 9 credit hours for Winter 2007) and SENIORS (65 and better) see special rates below.

FULL CONFERENCE:	by 2/15	after 2/15
ECMMA members.....	\$125	\$150
non-members.....	\$135	\$160
students/seniors.....	\$ 95	\$120

ONE DAY ONLY:	by 2/15	after 2/15
ECMMA members.....	\$65	\$75
non-members.....	\$70	\$80
students/seniors.....	\$50	\$60

Laurie offered the following area hotels:

Princeton Courtyard

1-609-716-9100 Rates from \$99.-

<http://marriott.com/property/propertypage/TTNCY>

Courtyard Ewing Hopewell

1-609-771-8100 Rates from \$129

<http://marriott.com/property/propertypage/TTNE>

Princeton Forrestal

1-609-452-7800 Rates from \$149

<http://marriott.com/property/propertypage/TTNDF>

Ramada Flemington (Closest to Newark Airport for those who want proximity)

Rates were noted as \$92 and up

<http://www.flemingtonramadainn.com/locationdirections/>

NOTE TO GWDC Members

Please check out these hotels (or any others you may locate yourself) and reserve early if you plan to attend. Hotels, especially in the Princeton area, fill up early!!

We already have several Greater Washington DC members who are planning to attend and hope to have some car pools. More soon.

ECMMA-GWDC Spring Chapter Meeting

Circle, Contra, & Folk – a Gathering of Music and Dance!

Sunday, April 29, 2007 is slated for our Spring chapter meeting (time to be determined). Please Save this Date on your calendars!

This has the makings of a great gathering. Based on conversations at our last meeting, we are formulating a full program dedicated to learning of and participation in community-style dancing. We are hoping to have a portion of the accompaniment be live music by our own members!

More Information as it develops ... if you have any input, please feel free to contact one of the chapter officers or to post a group email.



CALENDAR NOTE:
Sunday, April 29th

ECMM Employment Opportunities sent to our chapter:

- From Inja Stanic:

The International School of Music in Bethesda has an opening for an Early Childhood Music Teacher beginning in January for at least 5 weeks, and possibly grow into a long-term position, as the early childhood music program is growing. Interested applicants, please contact the school at 240-418-9063 or visit the website at <http://www.ismw.org>. You are also welcome to fax your resume to 202-558-5473 or email it to info@ismw.org or mail it to:

Inja Stanic
International School of Music
5110 Ridgefield Rd. #212
Bethesda, MD 20816

- From Sally Mennel (GWDC chapter member):

Think Summer!!

Even though it may be December 2006 to everyone, I'm starting to plan for summer 2007! That is planning Levine School's very popular Music & Arts Day Camps. We have 2 3-week sessions in 3 locations: Upton St, NW DC; Arlington, VA and N Bethesda, MD (Strathmore Music Center). Our goal is to nurture the total musical child in a supportive and stimulating environment. Through singing, dancing, playing instruments and sharing artistic experiences, children develop skills for creative expression and aesthetic awareness.

Every year, we pick an area of the world as our theme to focus all the music, art, dance, traditions, stories etc on - but this year we have chosen an era: "**Shake, Rattle & Roll!**" - the sounds of the '50s & '60s - from The Big Bopper to Wood stock!!

I am always looking for new teachers - from Orff based music teachers to dance, art, instrument (violin, cello, piano, guitar, flute), general/music PreK & K, music theater and sports/yoga teachers. It's a great camp to work in: very collaborative, wonderful kids, great staff, lots of fun and not too bad pay! Ask some of the GWDC members - many have worked in the camp before.

Send me an email if you are interested in joining me this summer and please pass the word to friends and colleagues. We also use teens (rising 7th graders and up) as apprentices in the camp. I have a few stipend positions for 16+ year olds otherwise it's volunteer (many schools accept it for their community service hours). Feel free to send any teens who like music/dance/art my way.

So put on your poodle skirts and saddle shoes and join us as we sing and dance the days away at Levine's summer sock-hop!

Sally Mennel (202) 686-8000 ext 1040, smennel@levineschool.org

Finale ...

This year has been a truly fruitful and creative start for our local chapter of Washington, DC area early childhood music and movement teachers. Thank you to everyone – our national organization for providing a supportive and inspiring umbrella, our officers, Spring and Fall meeting teachers, writers, group leaders, and members!

Let's continue so well with music and camaraderie into 2007.

Happy New Year to one and All

Until Next Time... Lift your Voices!



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