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Through this journal, the ECMMA (1) provides a network of communi-
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courages teacher development by fostering a free exchange between
professionals in the field of music and other professionals in the field of
early childhood development, and (3) advocates education of parents,
classroom teachers, and administrators.

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and movement educators, and (3) practice-based research topics that
are relevant to early childhood music and movement education.

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Image courtesy of Terry Bacon
PRESIDENT’S LETTER
Jennie Mulqueen

Dear ECMMA Friends,

Sometimes, all it takes is an invitation. The very first ECMMA event I attended was the 1998 Baltimore Convention with my new friend, Mary Anne Slack. Mary Anne and I were M.Ed. students enrolled in the Creative Arts in Learning program at (then) Lesley College in Cambridge, MA. Mary Anne had been to several conventions already and invited me to join her and her family for a road trip to Maryland. I am so glad I said ‘yes’; thank you Mary Anne!

Featured at the 1998 convention was none other than Ed Gordon accompanied by Richard Grunow of the Eastman School of Music. I remember watching one of Dr. Gordon’s protégés, Wendy Valerio, as she demonstrated what a full class of musical babble could look and feel like; I was mesmerized. Having taught Music Together for 3 years,

I felt like I had come to the source, so to speak, for tonal and rhythm patterns as well as songs without words. While I had heard about Dr. Gordon’s work, this was an opportunity to experience it on a whole different level. Moreover, I enjoyed seeing how research was being conducted and put into practice and how the collegial process was unfolding. Now, in retrospect, I believe I may have witnessed a tiny bit of music education history. While I am sad that we said goodbye to Edwin Gordon this past Fall, I am honored to be part of the current ECMMA Board of Directors that can shine a light on his many contributions to our field—beginning with this special issue of Perspectives.

Indeed, becoming part of ECMMA has been an important part of my professional journey as an early childhood music specialist. My understandings have grown deeper through diverse and rich experience I could not have had otherwise. It is with this spirit that I invite you to look ahead to this June and make a plan to be at our biennial convention in Salt Lake City, Move Along and Catch a Song, http://convention.ecmma.org. This is your chance to be part of a little moment in history by gathering with wonderful colleagues with a wide array of professional perspectives, expertise, and wisdom.

Please do consider yourself invited, and bring along a friend. S/he will thank you later!

Keep Singing,

Jennie Mulqueen, President
EDITOR’S LETTER
Beatriz Ilari

Dear ECMMA Friends,

It is with great pleasure that we present this double issue of Perspectives, honoring the life and work of Dr. Edwin Gordon, who passed away in December of 2015. Music educators from across the globe have written personal narratives about their experiences with Dr. Gordon. Throughout the editorial process, we were careful to preserve both the ideas and styles of each individual contributor. The end result is a beautiful collage of lived experiences that celebrate the life and work of Dr. Gordon, who has made a tremendous contribution to the field of early childhood music learning and development. Although I have been familiar with Dr. Gordon’s work for quite some time, I never had the opportunity to meet him in person. Reading each individual narrative ignited my desire to return to his writings. I am certain that many readers will have the same reaction, particularly those who share an interest in children’s musical development.

Coincidentally, the two articles featured in this number of Perspectives also center on musical development, but with a very different focus. In the first featured article, Rebecca Giles and Jeannette Fresne discuss the connections between music, movement and mathematics. In the second featured article, Alicia Mueller focuses on the enhancement of literacy and musical skills through picture books. On a related note, in Research Review Diana Dansereau discusses a study on the relationships between home musical experiences and child development. Angela Barker reviews three studies on social cognition, movement and musical syntax in the early years, and Christine D’Alexander shares some technological innovations that may help young children develop their musical skills.

I would like to thank Alec Harris (GIML), Joohee Rho, Helena and Paulo Rodrigues, Paola Anselmi and Terrence Bacon for sharing and granting permission for us to publish the beautiful photographs that appear in this issue.

I hope that you enjoy this number of Perspectives and look forward to meeting you at the ECMMA convention in June!
We were saddened to learn that Dr. Edwin Gordon passed away on December 4, 2015. Throughout his life, Dr. Gordon was influential as a music teacher, researcher, author, editor, and clinician. Following his retirement as the Carl E. Seashore Professor of Research in Music Education at Temple University, he continued his activities as distinguished professor of music education at the University of South Carolina. In June, 2012 Dr. Gordon was inducted into the Early Childhood Music & Movement Hall of Honor. In October 2015, Dr. Gordon was designated a Lowell Mason Fellow by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), one of the highest distinctions in the field of music education. His research on music learning and development has influenced music education research and practice across the globe.

Voices of twelve former students and colleagues are presented here, in honor of Dr. Gordon’s life and work.
Music as a First Language
Beth Bolton
Temple University

One day in the winter of 2016, my nearly-4-year-old grandson and I were in the kitchen, preparing lunch for the family. He said, “Mimi, do you want to hear my pasta song?” And then he sang his pasta song, created at that moment as we were sharing a cooking experience. The song was expressive, musically coherent, with equal phrase lengths, and he presented an inventive melody with lively facial expression and movement. And then he said, “Do you have a pasta song, too?” And I sang my own pasta song, also created on the spot. It was as if we were having a conversation, a social interactive moment, sharing our experience and our ideas, but in music rather than language. It is as natural for us to share music ideas as it is to share thoughts in language. Music is our first and preferred language. Our journey toward audition began decades earlier, long before he was born.

Early in the 1990s, at Temple Music Prep in Philadelphia, Edwin Gordon and his graduate students were among the first in the United States to begin working with infants in early childhood music. Their work, and similar efforts of faculty and graduate students who attended Temple and numerous other universities, influenced early childhood music education throughout the world.

Watching Gordon engage in musical play with infants and young children at Temple Music Prep in Philadelphia and Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania in the 1990s was inspiring. His lively interaction with children was so graceful and effortless, one could get lost in the moment. He was like a kindly grandfather, there to play. Children engaged with him socially and musically in remarkable ways. It was easy to forget that he had a plan to present music in the environment, observe, and, at just the right moment, insert a musical pattern or movement, wait for a response, echo that response, and engage a child in a brief musical conversation. His goal was music learning; the experience was rich in social and musical interaction.

Even though Gordon focused on musical interaction and learning in the early childhood setting, observation of young children as they interact musically reveals that there is more at play than musical interest and learning. Children bring social interest to their early childhood music experiences. Natural tendencies to socialize provide opportunities to engage very young children and their parents in socially meaningful interaction as they co-construct musical/social experiences. Social and cultural experiences influence a child’s early life and those experiences interact with musical experience to produce a rich opportunity for musical/social/cultural dialogue.

Fueled by research and extensive reading in a variety of topics, and informed by his keen and experienced observation of musical behaviors, Gordon created a music learning theory and a teaching framework for early childhood music. That framework guides teaching and research today and provides educators with a blueprint for their musical work with very young children. His theory and framework evolved over time as he continued to research, read, and observe. An example of his evolving work is shown in Figure 2, a five-level diagram that illustrates the levels of music vocabulary development. Readers who worked with Gordon in the last decade of the 20th century may be surprised to see a five-level diagram rather than the familiar four-level diagram used at that time. The revised diagram more fully accounts for all stages of preparatory audition and illustrates the importance of thinking/audiating/improvising as a readiness for reading and writing music.

Gordon proposed that music learning sequence is similar to language learning sequence. He posited that an extensive music listening vocabulary is vital to later music thinking/audiating/improvising, reading, and writing, in much the same way as extensive language listening vocabulary is necessary to later success in thinking, reading and writing language. Gordon’s music vocabulary framework (Figure 2) illustrates the sequence of music learning in early childhood (informal guidance) and later (formal instruction). To emphasize his idea that extensive listening is vital to later learning, the listening vocabulary is placed at the bottom of the diagram, as the broad-based foundation for later learning.
The diagram shows that children build their singing and chanting vocabulary on a foundation of listening, but also illustrates their singing and chanting vocabulary will present less than they have heard, and subsequently their thinking/audiating/improvising vocabulary will present less than they have sung and chanted. Thus the larger and more extensive a child’s listening vocabulary, the greater might be the later developing vocabularies. Gordon’s message is clear: if we want to assist children to realize their music potential and to think, audiate, improvise, read and write with fluency, we should first provide a vast and varied listening vocabulary.

Gordon’s ideas and practice in early childhood music education have had a profound effect on my teaching career, the careers of many of my students at all levels, and the social/musical life of three generations of my family. Learning about audiation changed my musical perspectives. My path led me toward university teaching, extensive work with early childhood music teachers, parents, and children in many locations around the world, and to creating tunes in unusual tonalities and meters for use in music education settings. My now-adult children were still in school when my audiation journey began and they were my first laboratory as I was learning new techniques and ideas. Today they enjoy and appreciate music immensely and they participate enthusiastically in the musical life of the family, especially when the youngest members are present. The youngest members have benefitted from the rich and varied listening vocabulary available in the family. They sing and chant, dance and move as easily as they speak. In our family, music is a first language, and our family musical life is richer because of audiation and the principles provided by Gordon’s Music Learning Theory.

Beth Bolton has served the Boyer College as Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs since 2006. An internationally recognized lecturer and researcher, Dr. Bolton has served as a featured presenter at universities, conservatories, workshops, and conferences throughout the United States, and in Australia, Brazil, China, the Dominican Republic, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, and Spain. Dr. Bolton is the honorary president of Musica in Culla (Music in the Crib), an international organization of early childhood music associations in Italy and Spain. She is the founder and charter member of the international music education consortium One Vision, Many Mirrors, which includes members from the United States, Brazil, Israel, Italy, and Korea. She teaches annually in Spain and in the Italian national didactic course in early childhood music.

**With Gratitude to Ed**

Wendy Valerio  
University of South Carolina

*The following comments are drawn from the sentiments I delivered at the Gordon Institute for Music Learning 5th International Conference Closing Session on 8/6/15 in Oak Park, IL.*

**Dear Ed,**

Thank you for your courage and willingness to use your genius to challenge music educators of all pedigrees to examine their practices as musicians, teachers, researchers, and students. Perhaps it was always courage. Perhaps you could not help yourself in the beginning, but once you began down the path of inquiry, it took courage to stay on the path – the path less traveled. The questions you raised and investigated throughout your brilliant career have not been easy ones to answer. But, your persistence, diligence, and commitment to excellence paved the way for your students and their students to offer and experience lifelong music development “from the inside out” for all. Your legacy continuously challenges us to honor each person’s music aptitude, each person’s audiation, and each person’s achievements, no matter their age, station, or profession. You have taught us that listening is the most important job of the musician, and each one of us is a musician.
because each one of us is born with a musical birthright that deserves to be nurtured from birth, if not from the womb. Thank you for your willingness to nurture so many of us as teachers, researchers, and musicians. We are honored to be entrusted by you, and we are privileged to carry the torch for music education through audiation. As long as we remain true to audiation, we shall never be finished with music learning, teaching, or research. Moreover, by remaining true to audiation and its never-ending possibilities, we may always engage in thoughtful and honest musicianship through music education.

After meeting you at KMEA in Wichita, KS in February of 1987, I knew that I had to learn what you had to offer. After visiting you at Temple University that spring, I was convinced that I would like to use your ideas with elementary students, but I could not really see myself using neutral syllables (BAH-BAH, BAH) while singing and chanting to preschool children on the floor as you demonstrated. After entering the master’s program at Temple in the fall of 1987, I soon found myself using neutral syllables (BAH-BAH, BAH) while singing and chanting to children on the floor, and I am grateful to be doing that to this day—in a variety of tonalities and meters, repeatedly.

I am also grateful that you agreed to be my co-teacher during data collection for my dissertation so that I could investigate what happened when we put into practice A Music Learning Theory for Newborn and Young Children (GIA, 1990) with infants and toddlers. If you remember, I proposed, and you agreed, to teach those very young children and their caregivers for an academic year according to your tenets. For that academic year we used songs and chants without words in a variety of tonalities and meters while accompanying ourselves with continuous, free flowing movement, repeatedly. We even took it one step further; we agreed to not talk during our music lessons with those children and their caregivers. What? Who does that? How were those children going to learn anything from that sort of music environment?

Thank goodness the children’s parents trusted us, and thank goodness we were diligent enough to stick to our plan. What did we learn? We learned that purposeful silences (we used to call them omissions because we thought we were omitting something) are essential for young children’s audiation development. Those adult omissions allow adults who think they know everything to pay attention to what the children know and can do. To this day, when we a) limit ourselves to the bare bones of music by singing and chanting in a variety of tonalities, meters, while moving, b) express ourselves musically using those contents, and c) offer purposeful silences, we learn that the very young begin to demonstrate their audiation, and invite us to use their responses as springboards for music engagement and development. What a beautiful, wonderfil, awe-inspiring thing! Your wisdom led us to this key insight among so many more.

May we continue to be inspired by your work as we use your Music Learning Theory to enhance the music learning realities of all those we meet. With gratitude,

Wendy Valerio
2/7/16

Wendy Valerio is Associate Professor of Music and Director of the Children’s Music Development Center (CMDC) at the University of South Carolina where she teaches graduate and undergraduate music methods courses and conducts early childhood music development research which has been sponsored by The Texaco Foundation and The Presser Foundation. Her work is featured in Musical Experience in Our Lives: Things We Learn and Meanings We Make (Rowman & Littlefield), Listen to Their Voices (Canadian Music Educators Association), Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, Music Play: Bah Bah, Bebop, Beethoven (GIA), and she is co-author of Music Play (GIA), and Jump Right In: The Music Series (GIA).

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My Professional Life was Forever Changed...
Thank you, Dr. Gordon!

Joanne Rutkowski
Penn State University

In 1977, Veronica landed her first teaching position in a small Mid-western town; after an exciting 4 years being prepared as a musician and teacher at a well-respected university she was anxious to begin teaching. She planned lessons focused on musical elements – such as high/low, loud/soft – and hunted for enticing singing repertoire and listening examples. She remembered some of the components of the Orff and Kodály approaches discussed in college and incorporated singing, listening, instrument playing, and moving in her lessons. All was well—for a short time. Veronica began to run out of ideas and felt frustrated with a lack of specific meaningful goals for her students. Her “exciting” lessons became boring with much repetition. And, what were the stu-
dents learning? “What am I doing and why?” she often would ask herself. Of course, classroom management began to suffer, particularly in one school with a higher population of special needs students. In the Spring, when her mailbox became full of fliers advertising summer professional development opportunities, one, in particular, struck Veronica – a workshop at Kent State focused on meeting the needs of all students in music class. PERFECT, she thought! Maybe she would learn how to better work with her diverse student population. So, off she went—and her teaching and professional life would be changed forever. . .

Lois Schleuter, a former music teacher in the Iowa City Schools, taught the workshop that summer. Her husband, Stanley, was a faculty member at Kent State and a former doctoral student of Edwin Gordon. The supervisor of music in Lois’ school district was Robert DeYarman, also a doctoral student at the University of Iowa. Bob and Stan were working with Gordon on issues related to “how children learn when they learn music.” Bob collaborated with his teachers to begin applying Gordon’s ideas in the classroom with “real” children. When Gordon accepted a position at SUNY Buffalo he brought Bob and Stan with him. There, working with Maria Runfola, the applications of Gordon’s work to school music settings continued. When Gordon accepted a position at Temple University, Bob moved to the University of Toledo; Stan and Lois went to Kent State; and Maria held down the fort at UB. I am Veronica and that workshop I took from Lois completely changed my perspectives—I never “looked back”!

Gordon’s theories made perfect sense to me from the beginning and I immediately applied them to my teaching that next fall. I focused on tonal and rhythm skills (particularly pattern work, singing voice, and movement); expanded the tonalities and meters of the repertoire I taught my students; and focused on aural/oral first, then verbal association (applying syllables to patterns they already knew) prior to using notation. Using patterns that provided tonal and meter context made an amazing difference, as opposed to the interventional approach I had been using based on Orff and Kodály ideas. The difference in my students’ responses to classes and their achievement was tremendous. I remember pulling into the parking lot in the morning and hearing my second graders chanting rhythm patterns to one another on the playground! My students were, mostly (!), on task through music class and the times we had together were joyful and meaningful. I also noticed a huge difference in the work of my 6th and 7th grade choirs. Setting up a tonal context for them with warm-ups comprised of patterns focused on the tonic, dominant, and sub-dominant functions really improved their intonation and ability to sing a cappella. I heard my 7th graders, while listening to the 8th grade choir performing during a concert, humming along improvisations to these selections they had never heard! I was “hooked” and wanted more in-depth knowledge of Gordon’s work. Lois recommended I read his book “Psychology of Music Teaching” and contact Maria Runfola at UB – I attended summer workshops there, eventually enrolling in their masters and eventually Ph.D. programs – after much “arm twisting” from Maria! I have been so fortunate to spend my higher education career at The Pennsylvania State University, from where I retired last year.

To be honest, I’m not sure I would have remained in the profession had it not been for Gordon’s work. Application of his theories provided a framework for my teaching and, eventually, shifted my focus from “teaching” to student “learning”. When I focused on the way they learned, rather than teaching the way we thought we should teach, student achievement flourished and classroom management became a non-issue. Moreover, Gordon’s work turned my life in the early childhood classroom on its head! In the past 15 years, by listening to him, reading his work, observing others applying his theories with younger children, my entire approach to guiding and nurturing musical development from birth is radically different.

Gordon has challenged us to reconsider what is truly important for our students. It is baffling to me that his ideas are still considered “radical” and “new” when many of us have been influenced by his work for our 40-50 year careers in the profession. To this day, I continue to receive “push back” from some students and colleagues unwilling to challenge their preconceived notions about teaching and about his work. Gordon’s theories have provided foundation for all my teaching since 1978 – in elementary general music, middle school chorus, piano and guitar instruction, early childhood settings, teacher and graduate education. I will miss talking with him about his ideas and the profession has lost his continued perspectives. But he has left us with quite a legacy and much for us to ponder in the years ahead. My most prized professional possession is a signed copy of his first book that so influenced my thinking, my teaching, and the music learning of so many of my students. Thank you, Ed, for all you have given us. May we not squander your contributions but rather continue to explore, challenge, and question, “How do we learn when we learn music?”

With deepest gratitude – Joanne Rutkowski
Joanne Rutkowski - Professor Emeritus at The Pennsylvania State University, taught general and choral music, K-8, in Ohio and New York and continues to teach music classes for young children. Her research has focused on the nature of children’s singing voices and techniques and materials for helping uncertain singers in a classroom setting. More recently she has explored issues related to graduate education and preparation of music teacher educators. She has presented her work at international, national, regional, and state conferences and symposia and published in numerous journals and books. She held leadership and editorial positions with ISME, PMEA, and NAfME.

EDiting with Gordon

Diane Lange
University of Texas, Arlington

It is an honor to write about my experiences with Dr. Edwin Gordon. I have fond memories of him personally and professionally. Most of my personal memories consist of great conversation, laughing, and of course eating. He loved a good meal!

Professionally, Ed was always there to lend advice and expertise about life and research. His encouragement during my tenure process was greatly appreciated. It was also enjoyable to work with him and his wife, Carol, when I started the First International Music Learning Theory Conference. We spent several hours at a MENC Conference coming up with the title “Awakening the World through Audiation.” Of course we were out to dinner and our notes were written on several napkins. I was so nervous that I was going to lose the napkin with the finalized title, that I wrote the title on every piece of paper distributed at the conference. Two years later, in 2007, the first conference “Awakening the World through Audiation” was held in Dayton, Ohio. It was a great success. I know that Ed was pleased that this tradition continues today.

I also learned a great deal about writing when I edited some of Ed’s books. One story in particular is quite memorable to me. Right after I started teaching music education at the university level, I was sitting in a GIML Level Two course at Michigan State University and I asked Ed why I had my students buy this brown book (I held up the Reference Handbook for Using Learning Sequence Activities). He said, “That book shows you how to teach the Learning Sequence Activities.” I replied, “Not really.” He gave me one of his classic looks and said, “You think that you could write something better?” I said, “Yes.” So we went to lunch to discuss the details and he agreed to allow me to revise the book. Of course, he put me on a probationary period to see how I would work out.

A few weeks after the course he sent me the manuscript with a strict timeline (he wanted me to edit the first 20 pages in a week and send it back to him). I began to diligently edit the book. Here were his rules of editing: cross out the text in red of the material that you want to delete and tape a page next to the deleted text with the new material. At the end of the week I sent the manuscript back to Ed, a little nervous about his reaction because I crossed out multiple pages of material and taped in several pages of new material. A few days later he called and I answered the phone with apprehension. He said in a firm voice, “Diane, I received the manuscript. There are a lot of changes. [He paused and I could barely breathe.] I like them. Continue with the next 20 pages and I’ll make these corrections.” I was so relieved that he was not unhappy with my changes and I guess my probationary period was over because I continued to work with him editing the book.

Every week we talked about the changes I sent him. On several occasions we debated about some of my suggestions. Once we were debating about one of my changes and we were not coming to any conclusions. Finally, Ed ended the debate by saying, “We will not change that because my name is on the book, not yours.” I said, “Fair enough” and conceded.

The process was a wonderful learning experience; however, I had to remind him from time to time that he was retired and I had a full-time job. This didn’t change his timeline one bit, but I tried. I finished editing the book and it was published as the Reference Handbook for Using Learning Sequence Activities, 2001 Revision and I asked Ed that it not be brown. Thankfully it is blue and white. I was surprised and honored when I opened the book and saw the kind words that Ed wrote about me in his acknowledgements.

Debating with Ed was one of my favorite things to do. I sometimes would oppose his opinion just for the fun of it. You could tell by his expression when he knew I was bugging him. I am going to miss the twinkle in his eye when he knew he was right and had me pinned in a corner. I am also going to miss his corny jokes. I have repeated several of his appropriate jokes (once during an interview) and have chosen not to repeat others. The blind snake and the blind rabbit meeting in the forest is probably my favorite. The best thing about Ed’s jokes is that he usually laughed harder than anyone. Even if the joke was not funny, no one could resist that contagious laugh, which I will miss most of all.

[Side Bar: A blind snake and a blind rabbit meet in the forest. The blind snake touches the rabbit and says “long ears, fluffy tail – you
must be a rabbit.” The blind rabbit touches the snake and says “slimly, no ears – you must be a conductor.”

Diane Lange is Professor and Area Coordinator of Music Education at The University of Texas at Arlington where she oversees the music education area and teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in Early Childhood and Elementary Music Education. Dr. Lange has published two books on Combining Orff Schulwerk and Music Learning Theory, a chapter on combining Music Learning Theory and Orff Schulwerk that appeared in Music Learning Theory: Theory in Practice and several articles in General Music Today. Also, she is a co-author for Jump Right In: The Elementary Music Curriculum, Grades Kindergarten and 5.

Gordon DNA

Joohee Rho
Audie, Korea

Dr. Gordon changed my life. I would like to tell you how he did it. In 1993, I met Dr. Gordon in Korea and then I came to the United States in 1994 to study early childhood music with him. I soon realized that what I had learned from him in Korea was but a small part of a magnificent work called Music Learning Theory.

I was overwhelmed, but deeply motivated because I had never experienced such a complex educational framework before. Children are at the center. Teaching is based on learning. Sound comes prior to notation. The complexity of theoretical terms became clear upon hearing sounds. It was easy for children to learn, but profound and difficult for teachers to teach. Education is hierarchical, like a well-built building. I was truly moved by the music sung in his early childhood classes. It was all beautiful to me.

The learning process at Temple was emotional because so much of what he taught us was a real shock. I had to think deeply, examine my attitudes, and turn prior knowledge inside out. I needed to start from the beginning. Even universal truths about learning, already known by American music educators, were totally new to me.

He said, "Everyone has potential to learn music." Everyone? Really? I could not believe my ears, because I had always thought that only a special person could learn music. My elitist belief that I was “one of the chosen ones” crumbled in light of new information and new ways of thinking. After my prejudice died heroically, I became more open to new perspectives. Aha! Any society, culture, country, and history could hold their own music. Everyone can enjoy music. True! Musicianship is not a special ability, but universal.

He said, "The score is nothing." "Sound is more important." Excuse me! What did you say? When I taught ear training at a university, I also emphasized the sound rather than the score. I marked the same score regardless if the student wrote in 2/4 or 4/4. Dictation on relative pitches was accepted. I did it, but I was not entirely sure if I was right. Notation had authority and no one could bravely challenge its power. Thanks to Dr. Gordon, I came to know that I was right.

He said, "A music teacher should be the best musician. They help children experience music." Wait a minute! Can a music teacher be the specialist? In Korea, music teaching was recognized as second-tier carrier at that time. Although I had the happiest time in my career when I was teaching in the Seoul Arts High School, I was not exactly proud of my career. He corrected my short-sighted views and I recovered my pride in being a music teacher.

When I expressed my desire to adapt Music Learning Theory to
young children, and iPhone and iPad applications.
My program, although it appears to be complex, is based on a single focus: audiation. “Sound itself is not music. It becomes music only when we audiate it,” he said. On a practical note, new songs and chants without words with natural voices, varied tonality and meters, with free-flowing movement, and pattern learning are all featured in Audie.

Repentance comes too late. I could not reach out to express my gratitude yet. I did not tell him how I have successfully adapted Music Learning Theory and early childhood education in Korea during the past 20 years. Dr. Gordon has left us but I can’t feel it, perhaps because I will not let him go. He still lives in our music, activities, and thoughts. His ideas, philosophy, and psychological insights are with us as we learn and teach. They are the creative source of our ongoing development. I deeply appreciate you, Dr. Gordon! You will live forever in my mind.

Joohee Rho, PhD, is a teacher and educator in early childhood music. In 1997, she established Audie, the first early childhood music learning center in Korea, and the Korea Audiation Institute for Research and Education. More than 6,000 young children participated in the Audie music program in 2015 only. Dr. Rho’s songs and chants are published in Joohee Rho’s Songbook. She developed Audie Piano pedagogy for very young children guided by song and play based on Audiation. She is also a producer and director of 8 performances for music education.

A Tribute To Edwin Gordon
Rick Townsend
Maranatha Baptist University

We all have our life turns on a dime moments. We receive our college acceptance letter, meet a special friend, lose a loved one, realize that we have a unique aptitude... Whatever the moment, we invariably look back years later knowing that something significant had changed, and that life had been substantively different from that moment forward.

Meeting Ed Gordon was one of those moments for me. It took only a few minutes to realize that something unique was in the air. From that very first day under his teaching I was challenged to rethink assumptions, reevaluate long-established teaching practices, and retool significant areas of my teaching arsenal.

The Workshop

The year was 1996, and I had just accepted a new teaching position at a Wisconsin College. One of the courses that I would teach during the upcoming semester was an elementary general music methods class. Having already begun a doctoral program,
and hoping to renew my Orff/Kodály/Dalcroze chops, I called Cindy Taggart at Michigan State University to see if they would be offering any summer courses in elementary general music.

“Sure. I think we have just what you need.” I could never have imagined what lay ahead.

The workshop began with a Gordon lecture. Nearly everyone in the room was an established music teacher. We had teaching chops. Most of us were earning advanced degrees. But even with all the collective experience in the room, Gordon’s opening lecture was different – far different, from anything we had ever heard. We learned a new word, Audiation, which he had coined and which, in 1996, was not even in a dictionary. (A few years later at a subsequent workshop, he announced that one of our goals for the week would be to create a ten-word definition for audiation. A dictionary publisher had come calling. I recall that we got it whittled down to fourteen words by the end of the 2-week session.)

To my complete surprise, the workshop turned out to be an early childhood music certification workshop. The first new skill I had to learn was one that I have still not mastered. I had to sit “criss cross applesauce” in a circle with the other participants as Gordon presented. It was the only time I ever may have upstaged Gordon – sitting there, trying to pull my feet under their opposite knees. But Gordon was doing it, so I assumed that, with patience, it would eventually become comfortable… never did – still isn’t.

We took a break after about an hour, and I remember Cindy Taggart walking over to me and asking “Are you alright?” Did she mean physically or emotionally? Gordon was in the corner of the room with a crowd around him. This is how I will most remember him – with a crowd around him asking questions, or perhaps just listening to his jokes.

He had a serious, but respectful demeanor whenever he was presenting, but he could also be surly at times, especially when talking about those clueless theory professors who, he would often say, don’t know anything about music. Or when he would present his belief that good teachers actually increase the achievement gap between high- and low-aptitude students, but disagreeing listeners would press their arguments a bit too far.

He told us, more than once, that he expected to have to die before his theories could be accepted, because he had made so many enemies through the years while trying to gain an honest hearing. Thankfully he was wrong about this one. Most who knew him knew a man with a kind heart and a cordial nature. I am happy to report that he did enjoy great acceptance in his later years – including being named a NAFME Lowell Mason Fellow shortly before his death.

And every now and then, his slight puckish grin would signal that it was time for a joke.

Growing Perspective

I’ve been privileged to see him on numerous occasions since those first certification workshops in the late 90s. He presented at our Wisconsin state music educator’s conference in 2004. Later, ECMMA was able to bring him to the 2012 ECMMA convention in Green Lake – where he keynoted, and was our first Hall of Honor recipient. And I would see him at GIML International Conferences where he was always the keynote speaker. The last time I saw with him was at his last GIML conference in August, 2013. He was reflective as we talked, thinking mostly about the people who would now carry his theories forward. He told me that afternoon that he expected his theories to be transformed in good ways during the next decades, because the people who will carry them are very good people. Then it was time to go.

I was always amazed that, no matter how many times I would hear his opening lecture about the basic principles of Music Learning Theory, I would always come away with a notebook filled with new notes – even in those later days. And reading his books, especially in my first years with his theories, could be a challenge. He rewrote his seminal book, Learning Sequences in Music: A Contemporary Music Learning Theory, at least five times. Fortunately, each time he rewrote it, the language became more accessible. I recall hearing him lament about his editor’s constant requests to reduce the age level of his writing for the sake of the reading audience. Language was important to him. We did not say basically in his presence – nor mention the people at the conference. They were persons.

Turned On A Dime...

One of my nicest memories came in 2009. GIML was holding its first international conference and I was a late arrival. As I entered the lobby, Dr. Gordon was there with his wife, Carol, whom I had not yet met face to face. They were surrounded as usual by a group of people...er...persons. As I approached the group, he turned to Carol and said “Carol. I want you to meet Rick Townsend. He’s the man who got me back into Wisconsin.” Wisconsin has yielded some great MLT names: Cindy Taggart, Dick Grunow, Tom Dvorak, so he could not have chosen a more honoring introduction.

As I walked away from the group that morning, I wondered about firsts. What might be his first point later that day when he would present his first keynote address at his first international conference? This will be my last point today.

He said that we must always remember that Music Learning Theory is not a methodology. It is a theory. And as a theory it is best when it informs, and is informed by, the practices of the
broader range of music education methodologies, rather than becoming a methodology itself. And this is what I have noticed in these past two decades since meeting him. Methodologies as far ranging as Orff, Kodály, Dalcroze, and Suzuki; and curricula as varied as Kindermusik, Music Together, MusicPlay, Musikgarten, and many others; all find that Gordon’s theories can inform their methods and, most importantly, can enhance what they have to offer to the children and their teachers. And the curricula that call themselves MLT curricula today are filled with Orff, Kodály, Dalcroze, Laban, Weikart, and a host of other methods and philosophies. MLT is becoming exactly what he intended.

All those years ago, when Cindy Taggart told me “I think we have just what you need,” she was exactly right. Dr. Gordon has passed from the scene, but he will continue to live in every class I teach, and in countless music classes far beyond our lifetimes. We are all better for having known him.

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Townsend
2/9/2016

*To see what it was like to participate in one of Dr. Gordon’s workshops, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRUCZp9uYOM. We are grateful to Denise Guilbault, Rhode Island College, for providing this set of videos from their 2011 workshop. This is the first of 12 videos that she provided from the session.

Rick Townsend is professor of music education at Maranatha Baptist University, where he teaches aural skills and music methods courses, directs the symphonic band, and teaches daily fieldwork classes in a daycare center and at an elementary school. He served as ECMMA Managing Director from 2007-2013.

Crawling with a Giant: Reflections on the Life and Work of Edwin Gordon

By Ron Gerhardstein
Pacific Lutheran University

Since hearing of Edwin Gordon’s passing on December 4, 2015, I have thought repeatedly back to the time that I spent with Dr. Gordon, his influence on thousands of music educators and researchers throughout the U.S and abroad, and his lasting legacy. I was fortunate to have been a student in two of Gordon’s graduate courses during his last semester at Temple University before he retired in 1994. I found his teaching awe-inspiring, the courses fascinating, and his exams Herculean.

Serving as a graduate teaching assistant at the Temple University Center City Campus for two years (1995 – 97) was without a doubt a highlight of my graduate studies. It was a blessing to work alongside my advisor and mentor, Dr. Beth Bolton and Dr. Gordon, as they taught preschool music classes for children age 1 month through age 5. His interaction with young children was remarkable and it was meaningful to see his theories put into practice. With the youngest children we often crawled on the floor while we guided singing, rhythmic chanting, and movement activities. It was a joy to work alongside Dr. Gordon and I felt time and again that the opportunity was surreal.

These experiences and this time of learning informed my practice in ways that I would have never thought possible. For my doctoral dissertation research (Gerhardstein, 2001), I spent a great deal of time interviewing and corresponding with Dr. Gordon, family members, former students, personal friends, professional colleagues, and some of his former mentors. It remains a mystery to me how and why I was given such a gift. His patience and generosity were remarkable.

Two foundational questions gripped Gordon throughout his entire career. (1) What is the nature of musical aptitude and how does it impact music teaching? And, (2) how do children learn when they learn music? These questions captivated his students and colleagues alike. Dr. Gordon was lucky to have a host of eager graduate students and colleagues to assist in his work, collaborate, and to test and edit his theories. Edwin Gordon was also enormously curious and a voracious reader.

Several years ago, Richard Grunow (Eastman School of Music) shared with me that Gordon learned the most “from his own research and from reading what others have written. His greatest teachers have been the authors of the many books (and related research) that he has read.” (Grunow, 2000).

I learned many things from Edwin Gordon. Two simple truths, however, have informed and transformed my teaching tremendously and have benefited my students.

A student’s current skill level in music is not an accurate reflection of that student’s potential in music

Gordon said it like so: “Music aptitude is a measure of a student’s potential to learn. It points beyond itself. Music achievement is a measure of what a student has learned.” (Gordon, 2011, p.2). Good music teachers all know that premature evaluations of music potential, especially a lack of potential, can have disastrous consequences. As music pedagogues, this idea of helping students to discover and to realize their musical potential is transformative and a gift of grace. It implies that I will not condemn your current level of musicianship and that I will work and give you the tools to discover your potential in music.
**Children learn music most effectively when audiation, the single most potent musical metacognitive tool, is a central focus of instruction**

It is a delight to hear this term used so thoroughly throughout our profession. All of my current collegiate students know this term well, yet few to none associate it with Edwin Gordon. The term has permeated the culture. The idea that audiation (or what others might call inner hearing or aural imagery) is part of the critical thinking tool chest of the musician is not new. Certainly, a part of our task as music educators is to train our students to think like musicians. As a long-time high school band director, my job was to help my students learn how to think musically and to teach themselves. Audiation is that tool.

My deepest wish is for interest in Gordon’s ideas and work to continue and thrive. I see clearly the value of examining his work in historical context. There will always be arguments among teachers of what to teach, how to teach, and when to teach. While these issues sometimes fueled Gordon’s critics, examination of the sources of his ideas, and acknowledgement of past practices and the changes brought about by his work, could illuminate his thinking, understanding, and development of new practices in music education. Further effort and research are especially needed to bring Gordon’s Music Learning Theory to a more deeply understood and central place in the traditions of secondary choral and instrumental ensemble teachers.

I met Dr. Gordon 22 years ago. His influence on my thinking and pedagogical teaching practice were so profound that it is difficult to remember the teacher that I was before I met him. My deepest hope is that the seeds that he planted will continue to grow and bolster our profession especially in regard to the importance of the musical guidance of pre-K students. I am grateful and honored to have known and worked with Edwin Gordon and am humbled that he was my mentor and my friend.

**References**


**Ron Gerhardstein is Assistant Professor of Music Education and Associate Director of Bands at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA. At PLU, he directs the University Concert Band and teaches coursework related to music education, instrumental conducting, instrument methods, and supervision of student teachers. He taught instrumental music for 18 years in the states of Washington, Idaho, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.**

He earned two degrees from the University of Idaho and completed the Ph.D. in Music Education at Temple University where he studied with Edwin Gordon and Beth Bolton. Dr. Gerhardstein was honored in 2014 as the WMEA Music Educator of the Year.

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**Sharing Music Learning Theory with Brazilian families**

By Ricardo Dourado Freire
University of Brasilia, Brazil

I was not supposed to be an early childhood teacher. I came to Michigan State University in 1997 to finish my DMA in Clarinet Performance and my goals were to finish my research about the history of the clarinet in Brazil and to play all four required recitals. But there was an unexpected change of direction when my two young sons were enrolled in early childhood music classes at MSU Community Music School with Dr. Cynthia Taggart. I first experienced Music Learning Theory as a parent, and that perspective never left me.

MSU has offered GiML certificates in General Music, Instrumental Music and Early Childhood since the mid 1990s. Cindy Taggart observed my participation as a parent and wisely invited me to take part in the summer program of 1998. That year, Dr. Gordon would be teaching in East Lansing, and I went to the classes knowing nothing about him. I was astonished, shocked and amused by his musical ideas. I came to the workshop as a curious musician interested to know a little more about music education, and I left as a passionate early childhood music advocate. In 1999 there was a shortage of teachers and Taggart invited me to become a teacher. I accepted the challenge and my life followed a different path ever since.

I returned to Brazil in 2000 to continue my career as a Clarinet Professor at the University of Brasilia. Upon my return, I decided to teach Music Theory at the freshmen level, to apply the principles of MLT to college students in Brazil. In August 2002, the program Música para Crianças (Music for Children or MPC) started, as a community outreach music project, with 3 classes and 14 children. The idea received a warm welcome from the community and soon more families requested to participate. It was necessary to prepare teachers and offer more musical options. The community outreach project became popular in Brasilia, and rapidly grew to have 900 students in 12 courses by 2008. The classes begun in the Early Childhood level, for children from 6 months to 4.5 years old, followed by
a transitional period called Pre-Instrumental Level, aimed at children between 4.5 and 6 years old, who received formal guidance and could choose their instruments. At age 6, children could elect one of the following instruments: violin, viola, cello, guitar, recorder, flute, clarinet or piano. Two string orchestras and a wind ensemble promoted group activities for children who wanted a social experience. Today MPC has a great impact on the cultural life in Brasilia. It is almost an “urban legend”, because it is now very difficult to enroll in the program, due to a waiting list of approximately 1500 students and only 48 openings per semester. We have also developed partnership with local social programs and prepare Military Police musicians to work as Early Childhood teachers, who offer classes for underprivileged families.

In Brazil, it is necessary to mention the work done by Arnolfo Borsachi and Vladimír with Quarteto Gordon in São Paulo, they have done many workshops and concerts for young children. Fabiana Mariano and Malba Tormim have done important research using MLT theoretical framework. They finished their Doctoral degrees in Education at Universidade de São Paulo – USP, under the guidance of Dr. Tisuko Kishimoto. Dr. Tormim wrote Du Dubabi: a proposal for training and musical intervention in nursery and Dr. Mariano worked on Music in nursery: teacher training and the Music Learning Theory by Edwin Gordon.

Gordon offered me the possibility to look at music education as a developmental process with many stages. The greatest challenge was to tie together early childhood classes and college level music theory. How does one go about creating a good mindset for learning and to nurture music comprehension? Gordon is still guiding the quest for the theoretical understanding based on music comprehension that is audition. My experience with children influenced how I teach college students, and the experience with college students made me more aware of child development. The stages of preparatory audition guided my experiences with young children, and the stages of skill learning sequence were applied not only to college students, but also young children. Each stage presented by Gordon offered me challenges to apply the theory according to the Brazilian culture. It was also necessary to adapt and develop many pedagogical resources. “Moveable Do” solfege needed to be replaced with an “Extended Do” system, and rhythm syllables had to be adapted as well.

I came in contact with Music Learning Theory and Dr. Gordon with a fresh mind, and the experience of observing his classes and listening to his workshops showed how important it is to experience the joy of music. I could witness one of his invisible pedagogical secrets; children can enjoy music before they start to learn music, and that perspective is what inspired me to become an early childhood music educator.

My children are now grown men. One is pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree in Violin and the youngest is studying cello in Sweden. I owe their musical development to the path indicated by Edwin Gordon—he set directions and indicated how to get there.

The ideas and framework left by Gordon continue to be important for my future as a music educator. But there is still much more to discover. I can agree with him that audition is a mental stage in which music is a very comprehensible and understandable language. My work now is to promote awareness of audition.

Gordon also helped me to become a proud parent whose children love music as an essential part of their lives. I would like to continue to share Music Learning Theory with Brazilian families, to help all parents value music as an important aspect in the development of every child.

Ricardo Dourado Freire is a professor of clarinet and music theory at the University of Brasilia, in the capital of Brazil. He is the director of the Música para crianças outreach program, which is one of the largest and most respected of its kind in Brazil. He is also an active researcher, educator, clinician, and performer.

Without Words
Michal Hefer
Jerusalem Academy of Music & Bar Ilan University, Israel

Pheladelphia late 1990’s ... I have just started my master’s program. I’m entering a large room... wandering around... many students are already seated, waiting for the class to begin. “The Professor is here already”, they say. My eyes are scanning to see him. He is lying on the floor with dozens of babies, toddlers and their parents... I surely wasn’t expecting that.

Dr. Bolton joins him and, together, they both start the lesson. The Professor and Dr. Bolton begin to sing songs and melodies without words ... rhythm patterns ... chant... melodies ... no words. Ba, Ba, Pa, Pa, Bum, is the text of the entire song. The setting is very different from anything I have ever known. The interaction is physically close. Face-to-face. One-on-one. The atmosphere is very calm and quiet. There is a lot of silence, a lot of eye contact between teachers and children. No words... It is something completely different, especially for a foreign student like me. This kind of musical communication is so powerful that some babies stop breastfeeding and turn their heads towards him. I realize that sometimes music is more existential than food.
Many questions and thoughts come to my mind. I am both confused and surprised at the same time. It’s like magic for the children, I think to myself... but why? What makes them so engaged and focused?

Later on, I am reading Dr. Gordon’s books. I become familiar with his research and discover Music Learning Theory. Music Play turns into the most practical textbook in my teaching and I become more and more interested in children’s responses to music and the cognitive process associated with music learning.

Gordon’s philosophy and theory turns into a dominant milestone in my practice. As I return home, I start teaching and training teachers on the MLT’s approach. It was even more astonishing to observe how children from a different culture like Israel responded to this way of teaching. This form of musical communication seems to be natural to infants, as if it was a universal, international language and the best way to interact musically.

I met Gordon for the first time teaching a music class for babies. It was the moment of unique synthesis between sounds and children. There were no words. And now, I am left without words, speechless, with the news of his passing. Edwin Gordon was a great musician, philosopher, teacher, educator, theorist and scholar, who taught me the route to musical communication with children.

Thank you is just a very small word to describe my appreciation for his gift.

May he rest in peace.

Farewell.

SHALOM.

Michal Hefer completed her doctorate in the field of music cognition in the early years at the Musicology department of Tel Aviv University. She is an M.A. graduate from Temple University and holds a B.Mus from the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. Her research topics are focused on music cognitions, music education and teacher training. She is also certified by the Gordon Institute of Music Learning (USA) and was a pioneer in developing his approach in Israel. Dr. Hefer has been a faculty member at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance and at the Bar-Ilan University from 2007 onward. Dr. Hefer developed “Ktan-Tone” (Little Tone) a music learning program that represents a new pedagogical model to enhance infants’ musical skills. Her work has been presented at many international conferences, workshops and courses in the United States, Italy and China, Greece and Brazil. She has composed several CDs for young children and a guidebook for music teachers.
A Letter to Dr. Gordon
Paola Anselmi, Scuola Popolare di Musica Donna Olimpia, Italy

Dear Dr. Gordon,

I remember so well the first time I met you: after a long car trip, crossing Italy and France to meet you when you presented a seminar regarding new perspectives of music education in early childhood at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. I listened to you while you talked, a bit “in trouble” for my bad English. Then I told you that I did not speak English very well, and you said, “If you talk in Italian to me I can understand, because I can listen to you with my heart.” This is my first memory of you. At that moment, it became clear to me that speaking to the heart would become the most congenial language for my work with children. It is the language that I have used continually since then, and the one I use in my musical life with children and educators; the one that I share and practice with our dear Prof. Bolton, whom I met in your GIML courses.

When I think of you, Dr. Gordon, my thoughts are mixed, as personal and professional experiences meet in my memory. The cold classroom at the university, dinner at Japanese restaurants where you scolded me because I ate “too little”, your book with the illegible inscriptions, your wonderful wooden sculptures. I also think about the improvisational sections where you told us: “Don’t worry, start from simple things, but what you feel are comfortable things.” I also think about the emotion to have you in Rome for the first time, in my little school.

Today the school has grown, thanks to you and our friend and colleague Dr. Bolton. In that school you opened a “new world” that welcomed many educators. You were a great teacher, as well as a musician, theorist, and philosopher. You understood that kids “think big”. You were the first one whom I’ve met to look at children as rich and complex people, with illuminating glances and smiles. You were the first to allow us to not only be educators, but to also be musicians who make music with children in a rich, exciting, and profound way.

I think about the smiles of the parents who were so excited when you and Dr. Bolton came as guests in our classrooms, because your work, designed to teach the language of music, has contributed significantly to the development of their children’s social and emotional skills.

Meeting you, Dr. Gordon, changed my life. Your music education ideas inspired me to take action, to create a program for children aged 0-3 years, who were lacking musical opportunities.

I continue to plant the seeds of music education that you gave us long ago, by developing music for children in my country, and enjoying this extraordinary means of communication that allows us to overcome differences and barriers, with Italian children, and also with English, Spanish, Israeli, and Arab children. I have used many of your ideas, and occasionally I have changed some of them for use in my teaching, keeping in my mind what you once told when a student asked, “Why do you sometimes teach differently than what is written in your book?” You answered, “this is growing and changing rapidly, because children grow and change quickly.”

Today I share Music Learning Theory with hundreds of parents and educators, trying to make sure that each of these educators will, by knowing Music Learning Theory, find their own coherent way to spread the great contribution to early childhood education and music education that you have left for us.

Goodbye, Dr. Gordon.

Paola Anselmi, Rome, February 8, 2016.

Paola Anselmi is a teacher, program administrator, author, and teacher trainer. She studied early childhood music education with E. Gordon and B. Bolton in USA and with Giovanni Piazza in Italy; she has dedicated her work to serving as a music educator for children. She is founder and coordinator of the international project Musica in Culla in Italy and Spain, and teacher trainer and presenter in conservatories, hospitals, universities, public and private institutions in Italy, Spain, Palestine, Greece, Cyprus and Israel. Paola’s work focuses on the task of transforming the importance of music in a child’s life and development into reality in children’s lives. She is part of the team of Musichild Project, a European Project on interculturality in early childhood music education in Mediterranean countries.
Don’t Teach Music, Be Music for your Students

Andrea Apostoli
Padova Conservatory of Music and Italian Gordon Association for Music Learning (AIGAM)

I met Dr. Edwin Gordon in 1998. As a musician and a music teacher I was just astonished by his words during my first class with him at the University of South Carolina. I was his first student from Italy. That was a huge privilege and responsibility. He answered many unexpressed questions that were “hidden” in my mind about how we learn music. Only a real genius can do that: answer questions that someone doesn’t consciously know to have.

After my first Early Childhood Master’s Program, before flying back to Italy, he invited me into his office and looking deeply in my eyes, said something I will never forget: “Andrea remember: evolution, not revolution. Try to apply the MLT principles I have taught you gradually and without totally changing your teaching from the first moment when you get back.” (I did not exactly follow this because I was so passionate about what I had learned form that great man that I wanted to base my whole teaching on MLT from the very first day). He also said something even more important: “Andrea, remember: don’t teach music to your students, be music for them!” After meeting him I could bring together the “musician” and the “teacher” in me.

In 2000 he suggested that I found AIGAM, the Italian Gordon Association for Music Learning. Until 2010 he came to Italy every year to teach at the National Music Teachers Courses and to the AIGAM board in the development of the association. Every year, he spent about 10 days at my house.

I translated for him during the courses, during congresses and interviews. He was fantastic, so clear, so able to fathom the mind of whoever was listening to him. And he was always taking care of that young student who was trying so hard to translate his speech. Then there was the gift to write two books with him that were published by Edizioni Curci.

When I close my eyes and think about him, only one word comes to my mouth: THANK YOU.

Andrea Apostoli, is an italian Author, Musician and Music Education Professor. He is President of AIGAM, the Italian Gordon Association for Music Learning and Professor of “Gordon Methodology” at Padova Conservatory of Music. He is co-author with Dr. Edwin E. Gordon and author of music education books.

He also collaborates with important Orchestras and Music Institutions such as Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Berliner Philharmoniker, Shanghai Children Arts Teather, and Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz, in the design of concerts for children.
Six Hands Play for Edwin Gordon and his Newborn Star

Helena Rodrigues and Paulo Maria Rodrigues
Universidade Nova de Lisboa & Companhia de Música Teatral, Portugal

It is hard to choose what to write about Edwin Gordon. Shall we write about the fabulous - and not fully understood - researcher who originated a “revolution” in music for infancy in Portugal (and probably in Europe)? Shall we write about the superb teacher? Shall we write about his influence on the artistic work of Companhia de Música Teatral? Shall we write about the mystic who could read faces and inner states? Shall we write about the insightful communicator who knew how to establish connection at a deep level with each student?

Two hands play by Helena Rodrigues

Philadelphia, USA, 1994: Finally, I’ve met Edwin Gordon at Temple University in Philadelphia. Since earning my Master’s degree, and having read several of his writings, I am in my thoughts constantly in dialogue with this author. Now he and his wife Carol have invited me to stay in their home, and I feel privileged to transform the imaginary dialogues into vivid discussions. “Everything is ephemeral... everything is being replaced”, he says. This is the beginning of a deep friendship; happily the imaginary dialogues become reality and I can nurture my inquisitive mind with conversations. “How can I thank you?” I asked. “Find someone that is worthy to work with. Help him or her. This is like a snowball. I received it, I give it to you, you’ll pass it to someone else.”

Fort Dodge, USA, 2015: His searching mind is there—he is curious to know what comes after death. His teaching heart is there—he has accomplished his mission in life. He is ready to discover the “new dimension”. On my way home, I was informed that in Fort Dodge there is just one street. Life appears to me simultaneously as a single long and short one-way street.

Two hands play by Paulo Maria Rodrigues

Lisbon, Portugal, 2015: After having translated his book A Music Learning Theory for Newborn and Young Children into Portuguese, I heard him explain his ideas at a seminar held at the Gulbenkian Foundation. He was brilliant; clever, clear, engaging. He had a fantastic sense of humor that he sprinkled over his ideas with a truly musical sense of communication. At the end, he picked up a double bass, I sat at the piano, and we engaged in a musical conversation about his love for Gershwin.

Aveiro, Portugal, 2015: Helena tells me he is gone. I thank him for all the inspiration, and I hear him playing A Foggy Day, his eyes closed, his body moving.

Two hands play by Companhia de Música Teatral (CMT)

These are the things of human nature that the Companhia de Música Teatral celebrate with Bebê Babá. Their work is one of intimate artistic discovery, with infants’ musicality as inspiration. I think the most important message for us city dwellers is how a festival of musical action can make a community.

(Colwyn Trevarthen in the Forward for BebêBabá)
The landscape of music for infancy in our country has been significantly altered since 1994, when the ideas of Edwin Gordon on musical learning for newborns and pre-school children started being spread in Portugal. Gordon’s ideas were seeds for the pioneering musical-theatrical work addressed to very young children and their families that Companhia de Música Teatral has been developing. Companhia de Música Teatral is a project based in Portugal that creates artistic and educational projects wherein music is the basis for interaction among various techniques and languages of artistic communication. After leading guidance sessions demonstrating ideas about Music Learning Theory all over the country and throughout Europe, we created Bebé Babá in 2001, which was dedicated to Edwin Gordon (see cover image), recognizing his teaching as an influence on our artistic practice.

This project involves a combination of workshops for caregivers with their babies and workshops for just the adults. The process develops over 5 or 6 weeks, and culminates in a final festival on stage. A special edition of the project was done with imprisoned mothers and their babies in 2008 and was documented on film as well. The philosophy and structure of the project were also pillars for a postnatal depression treatment program that was implemented in a psychiatric hospital in Belgium (Van Puyvelde et al., 2014). Edwin Gordon’s ideas also had a great influence in the conception of an innovative teacher training project called Grande Bichofonia’ and in its associated publication Enciclopédia da Música com Bicho (Rodrigues e Rodrigues, 2006; Rodrigues e Rodrigues, 2008). Aimed at music teachers and their students, this set of musical stories presents differentiated and contrasting musical examples, following pedagogical suggestions based on Music Learning Theory.

Conceived as an encyclopedic publication, each Tome—an illustrated book with an audio CD—is devoted to an animal and contains a riddle, a story, and a song. For example, the Tomo Snail approaches the Dorian mode and binary metrics in a story about the housing problems of a snail that wants to get married, be happy and have children; the Tomo Pinguin approaches the Locrian mode and an unusual meter in a story about a penguin that dares approach the Creator to request a new garment after being questioned why he is wearing a tuxedo. The musical contents of this publication were the starting point for the “immersive” teacher training Grande Bichofonia. This project is aimed at developing artistic skills, tools, and experiences that might influence the way that music is taught in primary schools. Training combines vivid experiences with reflexive practice concerning the implementation of ideas in school settings. Individual artistic development through group dynamics combining music learning theory and Murray Schafer’s ideas are at the core of this “immersive” experience. One of the distinguishing features of the

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2 “Space audiation” is found in the titles of Edwin Gordon’s last publications. Please see references.
3 “Thank you Dr. Gordon” was the title of the first article introducing Gordon’s ideas in Portugal. Please see references.
project is its organization in a format of artistic residences, aiming for the presentation of a final performance with professional artists. So, at the end, teachers are artists on stage and their students constitute an important part of the audience. Musical content used in the training sessions and in the final show is based on the Enciclopédia da Música com Bicho. In this way, children might gain a deeper sense of understanding and enjoyment of the final show that makes use of its musical materials. In fact, during the process, teachers might use this encyclopedia as an instructional resource based on Music Learning Theory, at the same time that they are being exposed to similar experiences, which they could then offer to their own students.

The aforementioned projects are good examples of how Music Learning Theory has been nurturing fruitful relationships between artistic creations and education, contributing to a definition of a working model, which we call “artistic-educative constellations”. Edwin Gordon stated that principles of Music Learning Theory “can spawn more than a million methods” (2010, p. 121). There is no doubt that Edwin Gordon’s ideas will also give rise to new CMT artistic-educational constellations in the future.

Post Scriptum on six hands play: “Space audition”? Ed, is a superb concept! We are not sure if you ever gave a concise definition of it. But who cares? We’ll search for inspiration in memories of your hands’ dance while teaching about space and movement. And, also, in the poem you wrote about your sculptures and wall hangings — “an illusion of continuous free flowing movement in frozen captured space”. There is so much that remains to illuminate our dreams and their interactions with life!

Your newborn star is vibrating in space. Rest in peace, we’re doing well.

“Thank you, Dr. Gordon”!

References


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Early childhood is the perfect time to use music and movement to discover mathematics. Music is organized in mathematical ways through recurring patterns and sequences making proportions, scale, frequency, patterns, ratios, space, and time a few of the concepts that are shared by both mathematicians and musicians. Certain brain development research shows that the early years are a prime time to make strong connections along associated neural pathways (Strickland, 2002). Listening to and making music form strong connections in the brain, and these same connections are also used to solve math problems (Dodge & Heroman, 1999). Because adults with prior musical training have the ability to activate more areas of the brain, musical training helps to improve math performance (Schmithorst & Holland, 2004). Studies focused on music for young children suggest that math gains increase according to the number of years that students engage in active music learning (Gardiner, 2000). Rauscher & Hinton (2006) advocate teaching music to improve students’ mathematical skills stating “young children provided with instrumental instruction score significantly higher on tasks measuring spatial-temporal cognition, hand-eye coordination and arithmetic” (p. 234). Active participation in musical experiences can support young children’s emerging understanding of the ideas in early mathematics (Du Sautoy, 2004; Perret & Fox, 2006; Southgate & Roscigno, 2009, Rauscher & Hinton, 2006), making music an optimal and exciting tool for supporting early mathematical thinking (Geist, 2001; Geist & Geist, 2008).

Many favorite childhood songs incorporate a variety of basic mathematical concepts, including one-to-one correspondence and amount (through beat, rhythm, and lyrics, matching and comparing (through changes in pitch, volume, timbre, form, and rhythm); patterning and sequencing (through repetitions of melodies, rhythms, form, and lyrics); counting beats and ordinal numbers, and simple operations, like adding or subtracting by one with each verse. Incorporating movement with children’s singing further strengthens their understanding of words and concepts (Pica, 2004) while creating a multi-sensory, whole-body learning experience.

Music is a natural outlet for creativity and self-expression that often promotes socialization and feeling of belonging. Children, who are not typically leaders, will lead songs while high-energy students suddenly focus on content. Music can stimulate slower learners and help maintain the attention of easily distracted youngsters. As a result, “Music is a highly social, natural, and developmentally appropriate way to engage even the youngest child in math learning” (Geist, Geist, & Kuznick, 2012, p. 78). Music enriches the mathematical learning environment by making activities more pleasurable and promotes learning through active participation (Edelson & Johnson, 2003). Further, music can extend the length of children’s involvement in a mathematical learning experience, which promotes enthusiasm for mathematics and supports the construction of mathematical concepts. Movement is a natural partner to music and a nonverbal response for children who do not yet have language ability (Pica, 2000).

A positive attitude and strong foundation toward mathematics begins in early childhood (NAEYC, 2002). Learning mathematics, like literacy, should be embedded in real and meaningful experiences (Epstein, 2003) woven throughout the day in various contexts including encounters with language and music (NAEYC, 2002). While available evidence indicates that children under 3 years of age enjoy and benefit from various mathematical experiences (NAEYC, 2002), this manuscript focuses on mak-
ing mathematical connections through music for children ages 3 to 6 and addresses various skill areas found in the Common Core State Standards for Kindergarten (http://www.core-standards.org).

**One-to-One Correspondence**

Beat is a basic element of music defined as an unchanging continuous pulse. Like a heartbeat, it is repetitive and evenly spaced. Rhythm may vary, but steady beat remains constant (Flohр & Trollinger, 2010). Children first experience steady beat movement through rocking in infancy. Singing while rocking, nodding, tapping or patching (patting thighs), helps children to keep a steady beat and notice relationships between a song’s rhythm, beat, and words. The words represent the rhythm, and the motion represents the beat (Geist & Geist, 2008).

Children’s personal tempo has been found to be correlated with the reading and mathematics achievement test scores of children in first and second grades (Weikart, Schweinhart, & Larner, 1987). “Further, teachers report that children with better abilities in steady beat are more well behaved in class and have less aggressive physical contact with other students” (Weikart, 2003a, p. 87). The benefit of steady beat is attributed to its powerful function as an organizer. There are a variety of ways to “keep a steady beat” with young children. One way is for children to rock while sitting cross-legged on the floor – forwards-backwards or side-to-side – while listening to instrumental music with a strong steady beat or singing a variety of songs. Instrumental music with a strong, steady beat may be used as a “stand-alone activity” or played while students work. Avoid familiar songs that are recorded without words, since the brain will “sing along.” Choose instrumental compositions such as Eine Kleine Nachtmusik by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and The Four Seasons by Antonio Vivaldi [Footnote: Concerto No.1 in E major, Opus 8, “La Primavera” (Spring); Concerto No.2 in G minor, Opus 8, “L’estate” (Summer); Concerto No.3 in F major, Opus 8, “L’autunno” (Autumn); Concerto No. 4 in F minor, Opus 8, “L’inverno” (Winter).] Additionally, these compositions provide a strong beat for locomotor or nonlocomotor movement. The counting, folk song Over in the Meadow has a gentle, flowing melody that naturally promotes rocking or swaying while each verse is sung (Fresne & Giles, under review). Other options include having children shift their weight from foot-to-foot or stiff-arm clapping with arms extended out front. Both actions are preferable to marching or traditional clapping, which require greater spatial coordination and motor skill (Giles & Fresne, 2015). Steady beat activities also help children understand numerical relationships, such as more and one-to-one correspondence (Geist & Geist, 2008). Weikart (2003b) suggests using a “Learner Say & Do” sequence to provide a cognitive-motor link for introducing and/or reinforcing the concept of one-to-one correspondence. In this process, children say the word that defines their actions while simultaneously performing a matching movement. For example, children who are walking in place say the word “step” every time a foot touches the floor. Several simple instruments, such as the egg shaker, tick-tock, lollipop drum, and jingle bells, work well for instilling one-to-one correspondence as young children keep a steady beat (Fresne & Giles, 2015). Maintaining a steady beat using a rhythm instrument may be less complicated for some preschoolers than singing, which involves understanding, remembering, and pronouncing words while recreating a tune (Connor, 2004). Eggs and jingle bells, which have the advantage of not requiring a mallet or striker, can be used for steady beat when they are held in one hand and tapped with the fist of the other hand. Some suggested variations include tapping the held instrument with an open palm, gently on the floor, against a leg, or lightly on a shoe. Playing the instrument in different ways easily varies the experience for continued interest and enthusiasm (Connor, 2004). Using instruments with about one-third of the children at a time makes the activity more manageable by reducing the need for a large number of instruments and increasing on-task behavior, as the desire to play an instrument is usually sufficient motivation to ensure appropriate conduct (Fresne & Giles, under review). Keeping the activities brief avoids too much time spent waiting (Pica, 2000).

Repeating the song until every child has a turn with an instrument and designating motions for those children not currently playing an instrument ensures that all are actively engaged.

**Counting and Ordinal Numbers**

As children count and compare quantities, they develop an understanding of numbers which allows computational procedures to be learned and recalled with ease (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2000). In addition to steady beat activities, instrument play can be incorporated when speaking rhymes, reading rhyming stories, or singing to demonstrate amount. Children can be asked to play an instrument a set number of times when a specific word or phrase is heard. For instance, children can be directed to strike the drum eight times (usually four or eight) each time they say, “No more monkeys jumping on the bed” in the rhyme Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed.

Counting and numbers play a significant role in many folk songs and rhymes by providing the organizational structure for the lyrics. “This Old Man” plays one… on his thumb, two… on his shoe, three… on a tree, etc. The rhythmic structure, consisting of quarter notes, eighth notes and sixteenth notes, uses simple patterns that strengthen the underlying pulse for the singer. The children instinctively align their movement with the strong steady beat. Led by a teacher, children can hold up one finger when they sing, “Plays one” and bend their thumb as they sing the first verse. Keeping a steady beat while tapping on their
shoe during verse two, the momentum of the song continues from verse to verse with new adventures numerically delineated. Children familiar with the numeric representations for numbers (numerals) will enjoy the challenge of using their bodies to create numerals in response to this musical prompt sung to the tune of “This Old Man.”

Number 1; Number 1; I can make the Number 1;
With my arms and legs, and shoulders, knees, and toes;
I can make the Number 1!

Begin simply by having children make a 1, 0 or 7. Then, have children collaborate in pairs to make more challenging numerals like 2 or 9. The fun and learning increase along with the need for cooperation as children are instructed to work with two or three friends to create each numeral named.

Patterns and Sequencing

Introducing patterns serves as the building blocks of mathematical understanding (VanDerHeyden, et al., 2011). Children’s early exposure to patterns introduces the concept of basic operations (i.e., addition, subtraction, division, multiplication). Algebra is one of the five strands of content identified by the National Council for the Teaching of Mathematics (2000) that students should learn beginning in prekindergarten. Young children can be encouraged to use algebraic reasoning as they investigate patterns and relationships among sets. Patterns in music can be explored by having children use their bodies, everyday objects, and instruments to echo-play, echo-say, and echo-sing the teacher’s rhythm, which is when a teacher taps a four-beat rhythm pattern followed by students immediately tapping the same pattern. For echo-singing, the teacher sings a short phrase and the students immediately echo. Such activities offer an abundance of opportunities to compare and contrast different patterns.

As children move into the preschool and even kindergarten years, they can recognize, describe, extend, and create patterns (VanDerHeyden, et al., 2011) that are more complex and more numerical (Geist, Geist & Kuznick, 2012). Children can experience building patterns in music by making and representing their own instrumental patterns that others can play. Musical activities, in which children arrange patterns of music and then represent that pattern or sequence with movement, enhances children’s seriation abilities (Sawyers & Hutson-Brandhagen, 2004). Experiencing rhythmic patterns physically (whether they are teacher generated or student generated) with one’s whole body eliminates the need to memorize complex sequences and allows children to participate fully (Connors, 2004). Dramatizing songs with sequential lyrics, such as “I Know an Old Lady who Swallowed a Fly” and “Today is Sunday” or musical games like “The Farmer in the Dell” provide further opportunities for young children to develop sequencing skills.

Addition and Subtraction

Songs such as “Caught a Fish Alive” not only count up to 10 but follow tones up a scale so that the change in pitch (getting higher) reinforces the increase in amount that counting signifies (Church, n.d.). For a visual representation of numerals when counting, children can dramatize the song “The Ants Go Marching One by One” and may even like to adapt the lyrics by replacing “ants” with “kids” to more accurately describe their actions. Performing actions, while singing “Johnny Works with One Hammer,” requires children to add a corresponding motion (right hand, left hand, right foot, left foot and head) as the number of hammers increases with each verse. Increased movement (using big motor functions) translates and symbolizes the continual rise in quantity. Other songs and rhymes entice children to count backward (subtraction) instead of or in addition to counting forward (addition). Subtraction may seem to be an advanced operational concept for preschool, but the idea of “take one away” is easily conveyed in the framework of a song (Church, n.d.). For instance, children are able to subtract one quite easily in the context of singing songs like “Ten in a Bed,” “Five Little Ducks,” “Five Green and Speckled Frogs,” “Alice the Camel,” and “Five Little Monkeys.”

Conclusion

Quantitative ideas are part of the language of mathematics, and movement provides a tangible means of conveying many of these ideas to children (Pica, 2004). Combining music and movement is a powerful means of making mathematical learning meaningful. Playing an instrument or moving one’s body to a beat or rhythm tangibly reinforces the concepts of one-to-one correspondence, amount, and patterns. The integration of music and movement to mathematical learning provides a more comprehensive way to strengthen understanding than simply counting by rote and memorization, while building conceptual awareness of basic operations.

Ultimately, the full spectrum of music, including influence, impact, and aesthetics, allows infinite possibilities for reaching the human mind, body, and soul. Using music as a vehicle for better learning explores one avenue of the vastness of this subject and art form. As an individual subject, participating in the study of music, including active participation in making music, instrumental or vocal, contributes to the overall development of being human. As stated by the National Association for Music Education (2016), “Music shapes the way students understand themselves and the world around them. It allows for deep engagement with learning. It nurtures creativity, curiosity, and personal motivation. In other words, music is essential to a superior 21st century education” (para. 2).
References


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Enhancing Young Children’s Literacy and Musical Skills through Picture Books

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Picture books are a clearly defined literature genre. Stoodt and Amspaugh (2009) state that picture books serve as excellent means to share engaging stories by providing the integration of language and pictures. Within this genre there are different ways the text and images interact, as suggested by Nikolajeva and Scott (2013): 1) symmetry, with equal treatment of the words and pictures; 2) complementary, where the words and pictures correspond with each other; 3) enhancement, in which the words and pictures support and depend on each other; 4) counterpoint, where the words and pictures are equally dependent on each other; and 5) sylleptic, where words may not necessarily be included, and two or more narratives function independently.

Young children’s early literacy skills can be enhanced through the integration of music with age-appropriate picture books (Cornett, 2011). Picture books will lend themselves to repetitive phrases and sections that can be chanted by children individually, in partners, in groups, and chorally (Cunningham, Hall, and Cunningham, 2014). Rhymes, poems, and picture books that are comprised of short, repetitive text phrases and sections lend themselves very well to echo and choral reading activities.

With longer text sections, children can be assigned to speak or chant shorter lines or phrases, combined with assigning children to pantomime these lines, then rotate roles. This type of activity integrates the music skills of chanting and movement. Activities that connect properties of the music elements and components of literacy kinesthetically engage the development of children’s musical skills – singing, chanting, listening, instrumental play, and movement/dance. According to Campbell, Scott-Kassner, and Kassner (2014), music skills include “... singing, moving, listening, playing ...”, and music concepts include the elements of “... melody, harmony, rhythm, tone color ... form, style ...” A primary focus of this article is to integrate music skills with literacy skills.

Basic literacy components include the development of the four primary language forms – speaking, reading/viewing, listening, and writing (Hansen, Bernstorf, and Stuber, 2014). Picture books lend themselves to a focus of specific reading/viewing skills, such as the following select decoding skills: 1) phonological awareness, 2) fluency, and 3) sight identification; along with the following select comprehension skills: 1) using imagery and 2) making predictions. Reading comprises decoding and comprehension skills, and when illustrations, photographs, and other graphic means are used, reading
capabilities are enhanced (Grundvig, 2012). Grundvig states that while text may appear verbal, and therefore abstract, a picture will be viewed as visual and concrete (2012). Interactions between text and pictures, then, allow for mutual reinforcement and result in increases in reading, decoding and comprehension skills.

In the next section, I share activities that explore music skills, as they can be integrated with specific music elements, and ways they can be developmentally connected with select literacy skills, in relationship with a few of the author’s picture book favorites. The guided activities and strategies that are provided have successfully been implemented within the author’s early childhood instructional settings (ages 2-7), and can be incorporated into lessons with similar literacy and music skills foci, for various specialists and generalists who work with young children. Although some of the activities are not entirely new, they have been developed as a result of my own attempt to integrate specific literacy skills with select music skills, and they serve only as a sampling of experiences that have been ‘kid tested and teacher approved.’

**Proposed activity 1**

**Humpty Dumpty**

The English nursery rhyme, Humpty Dumpty (Opie and Opie, 1997) is one of the best known and more familiar rhymes in the English language. Its text is short and easy for young children to remember:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king’s horses and all the king’s men
Couldn’t put Humpty together again.

The rhyme lends itself to activities for 2- and 3-year-olds, to children in grades 2 and 3. Specific skills to be developed in the following Humpty Dumpty activities include: 1) movement skills, demonstrating music element knowledge of rhythm and timbre (tone color); 2) literacy skills, including phonological awareness, since the syllables of the chant directly correlate with short and long rhythm durations; and imagery, since imaginations can be used to create movements and role play the character, Humpty Dumpty, as depicted in the nursery rhyme and correlating picture book (see below).

For toddlers, teacher should lead children in chanting the familiar nursery rhyme, then add the following:

1. Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall – children stand and bounce their entire bodies in whole body movements, while the teacher plays a corresponding rhythmic beat on a drum.
2. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall – children fall to the ground as they speak a descending “Oooo” following the spoken phrase, with the teacher playing a downward glissando on the step bells. This connects to the music element, timbre, since children are exploring qualities of their speaking voices.
3. All the king’s horses and all the king’s men – children jump or gallop, while the teacher plays a “gallop” rhythmic duration on a wood block.
4. Couldn’t put
Humpty together again – children move upward to their original standing positions (a symbol of Humpty being put back together) as they speak an ascending “Oooo” following the spoken phrase, with the teacher playing an upward glissando on the step bells. Again, this integrates timbre since children are exploring qualities of their speaking voices.

For early-middle elementary levels, the teacher leads children in chanting the nursery rhyme as they keep the rhythmic beat on their legs, then with partners. While saying the chant have children play the rhythmic duration on their legs, alternating hands. Transfer the beat and duration to two contrasting rhythm instruments, such as the wood block and hand drum. Incorporate additional creative dramatics with the nursery rhyme “story,” tapping into children’s interpretations and/or extensions of the story.

When children chant or move to the rhythmic durations of “Humpty Dumpty” they are demonstrating their knowledge of phonological awareness, since the rhythms are being infused with the syllables. Children can also pretend they are the various Humpty Dumpty characters and role play the storyline of the following picture book, which demonstrates the ability to use imagery. The picture book, Humpty Dumpty (Kirk, 2000), lends itself to being read in the rhythmic duration style of the chant itself, as an interesting story unfolds in its many verses. The teacher can integrate music, creative dramatics, and literature concepts with the children’s book. In the story, Humpty Dumpty is characterized as an egg who wants to get a good seat for King Moe’s birthday parade. King Moe, however, only wants to hide from the parade onlookers so hides in his coach. The paths of these two opposites cross, creating a friendship at the end of the story. The author’s presentation of the text is done in the rhyme scheme of the nursery rhyme, within the context of the storyline.
Proposed activity 2:
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?
Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?

The two popular books, Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? (Martin and Carle, 1967) and Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear? (Martin and Carle, 1991) are full of musical possibilities for young children of all ages. These books are told from the viewpoint of a narrator, asking various colorful animals what they see (Brown Bear . . .) and hear (Polar Bear . . .), with responses sequentially progressing to the next animal in the story. Each question and response follows a rhyming stanza. Three- and four-year olds enjoy making predictions about animals that will appear on the follow-up pages of each book. The book storylines lend themselves to children pretending to “read the books” at these young ages, as a demonstration of fluency skills. The teacher transfers the rhythmic beat and recurring patterns of the text to rhythm instruments. Rhythm sticks or shakers/rattles, for example, can be added for special effect timbres.

Proposed Activity 3:
Barnyard Dance

The children’s picture books by Sandra Boynton can be used with a variety of ages, and the story lines are silly, imaginary, with many rhyming and dance possibilities. The characters of the book, Barnyard Dance (Boynton, 1993) are silly, fun-loving farm animals, and they are described with the use of movement words. Children are guided in creating body movements to represent each of the animals then, as the story is read, the teacher leads children in kinesthetically experiencing the movement elements as the story is read, pausing when necessary for appropriate responses. The rhyming text describes many funny movements of the wacky animal characters. The story has many sight identification words, along with several rhyming words. This is followed with a focus on rhythmic durations and patterns, by teaching the rhythmic chant: Stomp your feet! Clap your hands! Everybody ready for a barnyard dance! The teacher leads the students in creating a 4-count body percussion, followed by decisions on rhythm instruments to play during the chant. The rhythmic chant is inserted throughout the story’s form as it is read, and the children are encouraged to continue their movement/dance creative dramatics responses. Children can also be guided to audiate the chant with body percussion and rhythm instruments during selected parts of the story. Finally, the activity can be extended into the visual arts area by creating animal costumes representing the animal characters in the story.

Proposed activity 4
Pajama Time

Pajama Time (Boynton, 2000), another entertaining book, lends itself to movement and dance, as the following syncopated rhythmic chant (an extension of a repeated phrase throughout the story), can be performed with a jazzy style: It’s Pajama Time! Yeah – yeah! It’s Pajama Time! Yeah – yeah! This could be categorized as a goodnight book, but it contains silly, fictitious characters who, through rhyming text, are getting ready for bed. The teachers can guide early elementary children into creating rhythmic dance movements, along with selecting rhythm instruments representing various timbres to reinforce the chant. Then the chant can be transferred from the speaking voice to the singing voice through a call and response activity based on the C pentatonic scale. This new song is inserted at appropriate places throughout the story, with the accompanying dance movements and instruments. The teacher can also focus on dynamic contrasts as the story unfolds, emphasizing the decrescendo as the story ends. Because this is a story about getting ready for bed, children can be led in a storytelling experience by creating and writing dream stories, to be integrated with the picture book activities.
Final Thoughts

The children’s picture books integrated in this article represent a small sampling of ideas to enhance literacy and musical skills. Young children are at a critical age for music and literacy development, and picture books serve as one vehicle through which these skills can be developed (Jensen, 2001). Development at earlier ages optimizes literacy and musical skill sets, along with kinesthetic and motor skills. Integral connections between music and reading include decoding and comprehension skills, along with music elements such as rhythm, timbre, and form (Cornett, 2011). Teaching music with integrity serves as a goal for educators of young children, and integrating quality picture books continues to enhance music and reading elements and skills.

References


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The study that I am reviewing has garnered a good amount of media attention since its publication. For example, Time Magazine’s website summarized the study in a post entitled, “How Music Trumps Reading for Childhood Development” (Vinney, 2015). Within the post is this compelling advice to parents:

Forget the Mozart Effect and Baby Einstein, take it easy on acquisitions for your two-year-old’s private library, and don’t fret if your three-year-old hasn’t started violin lessons just yet... Instead, try making up songs with your toddler. A new study suggests that regular informal music-making with very young children may even have benefits above and beyond those of reading. Vinney (2015)

The study was also cited on websites like those of Kindermusik and the American Orff-Schulwerk Association, and it further spread via Facebook and individual teacher websites. As in that childhood game ‘Telephone’, the messages researchers communicate in their initial article can morph by the end of an internet-fueled communication chain. Consequently, a close read of an original study report is in order.

In undertaking the study (Williams, Barrett, Welch, Abad, & Broughton, 2015), the researchers sought to 1) examine “the association between frequency of shared book reading when children are 2-3 years old and measures of children’s vocabulary, numeracy, school readiness, self-regulation, prosocial skills, and behavioral skills” (p. 116), 2) examine “the association between frequency of home music activities when children are 2-3 years old and the same group of outcome variables” (p. 116), and 3) examine “the extent to which the frequency of early home music activities is associated with later outcomes when home reading is included in the same model” (p. 116). The researchers began their report with a thorough and helpfully critical review of the literature on the importance of home learning environments for very young children, shared book reading at home, and music as a learning activity at home. In terms of the home learning environment, the authors posited that “it is conceivable that particular shared parent-child home learning activities that require joint attention, active cooperation, turn-taking, and immediate feedback between parent and child, would support children’s self-regulatory and social environment” (Williams et al., 2015, p. 114). Regarding shared book reading, the authors reviewed studies that indicate that such activity is positively correlated with children’s vocabulary, comprehension, narrative skills, math achievement, social skills, and self-regulatory functioning. They also suggested that shared literacy activities might be a particularly helpful mediator between a child’s socio-economic status and social skills, academic achievement, and behavior problems.

Williams et al (2015) described shared music activities for young children as including “joint and supported singing (including action songs, counting songs, nursery rhymes, and children’s songs), generating original songs to accompany routine activities, dancing, playing basic instruments, and listening to music on CD, DVD, and MTV” (p. 114). Studies that the authors considered to be well-designed and experimental with random assignment were cited to argue that such interactions might improve children’s vocabulary, executive function, IQ, early math achievement, social skills, internalizing and externalizing behavior, and prosocial behaviors.
Method

Data for this study came from an Australian Government-sponsored study entitled Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC). The study began in 2004 and Williams et al. focused on the cohort consisting of children aged birth to 12 months, who were studied every 2 years. LSAC data collection tools included parent and teacher questionnaires, computer-assisted interviews with parents and children, and direct assessments of child participants. In order to qualify for the Williams et al. study, the home music activity item on the parent interview (conducted when the children were 2-3 years old) as well as the parent-reported data on the outcome variables (collected when the children were 4-5 years old) needed to be completed. The resulting sample consisted of 3031 participants. In order to isolate variables, the researchers chose to only use data collected from mothers; therefore, they are clear that the sample for their study is not representative of the Australian population.

To measure home music and reading activities, the researchers (Williams et al., 2015) used the items on the parent questionnaire that read “in the past week, on how many days have you, or an adult in your family, played music, sung songs, danced, or done other musical activities with the child?” (p. 117) and “in the past week, how often have you, or an adult in your family, read to the child?” (p. 117). The researchers compared data from these items with data that reflected the children’s vocabulary, numeracy, school readiness, self-regulation, emotional regulation, prosocial skills, behavioral problems, and multiple demographic variables.

Results

Descriptive analysis revealed that 42% of families engaged in musical activities with their children 6-7 days per week, 32% did so 3-5 days per week, 23% 1-2 days per week and 4% reported “not using music at all in the last week” (Williams et al., 2015, p. 118). Only 30% of families reported that book reading and music occurred daily. There was a weak correlation \( r = .21, p = .00 \) between the frequency of musical activity and book reading, which the researchers believed indicated that the two activities are largely separate and may not happen to the same degree within families.

A series of analyses was conducted to determine the extent to which home reading activities were associated with outcome variables when the 2-3-year-old children were older (4-5 years). Higher levels of home reading activity were associated with stronger vocabulary skills, school readiness, numeracy skills, attention and emotional regulation, prosocial skills, and fewer behavior problems. The researchers found that, as with reading, higher levels of musical activity were associated with stronger vocabulary skills, numeracy skills, attentional and emotional regulation, and prosocial skills; however, unlike reading, music was not associated with school readiness or behavior problems. Williams et al. warned that “in large sample sizes such as these, statistically significant effects are more easily found than they are in small samples and it is important to note that all estimates were very small” (Williams et al., 2015, p. 119).

When book reading and musical activities were analyzed together (controlling for book reading), musical activities were still associated with numeracy, attentional regulation, and prosocial skills. Prosocial skills, in particular were shown to be “relatively strongly associated” with musical activity, while the association between book reading and prosocial skills was not significant in the combined analysis.

Discussion

Williams et al. (Williams et al., 2015p. 119) provided a helpful interpretation of the relationship between musical activity and book reading that sheds light on the findings of this study:

Both involve parents and children in close proximity engaging in joint action, shared attention, and both expose children to rich language and vocabulary. Both activities also hold the potential for parents to share domain-specific information with children such as number facts, letters of the alphabet, and other concepts. Unique to music activities, participation in dancing, action songs, and playing instruments, involves children in structured fine and gross motor activities that are less likely to occur during book reading. Further, many action songs provide cues that practice regulation of impulse and action. This sensori-motor element to music participation may be key to children’s domain-general developmental capacities, given that interventions known to be efficacious in improving children’s executive functioning share an element of physical exercise and brain-body connectivity...Further, for pre-verbal children, the gestures and cues that are integral to action songs can operate as signs or cultural tools...by which they can create and communicate meaning with self and others. (p. 121)

Regarding the relatively strong association between musical activities and prosocial skills, the authors note that such activities “might provide an important opportunity for children to practice imitation, shared intentionality, social interaction, cooperation, and mutual responsibility with a trusted caregiver” (Williams et al., 2015, p. 121).

There’s an implication in the Time.com piece that home musical experiences may have more positive effects than early childhood music classes – a comparison that was not investigated in this study. Further, that author wrote, “this study suggests that parents should feel encouraged and empowered in tapping their own inner musician before looking outside the home” (Viney, 2015). While all who care about early childhood music development would likely support parents feeling empowered to be musical with their children, Williams et al. did not suggest that this ought to be in place before seeking musical activities outside the home. Rather, they argued for “a shift of focus in these very early music education settings from teaching the child music, to empowering and reinforcing parents’ capacity to use music in their own parenting practices” (Williams et al., 2015, p. 122).

It’s important to remember that the study involved Australian participants, so generalizations to other populations may not be appropriate, and “the results should be interpreted as an exploratory and correlational (rather than causal) investigation in this under-researched area” (Williams et al., 2015, p. 121). Having said that, this study makes an important contribution to the literature. Let’s hope that similar well-constructed and large scale studies that address this important facet of music-making in early childhood are forthcoming.

References


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Your resource for early childhood music therapy.
SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

Perspectives offers practical, research-based articles on current topics of interest to anyone who works with young children, pre-birth through age 7. Our readers include music specialists, movement specialists, music therapists, early childhood educators, childcare providers, parents, early intervention specialists, elementary school principals, researchers, teacher educators, students, policy makers, and others.

The mission of Perspectives is to

• provide a network of communication, support, and information among the members of ECMMA;

• encourage teacher development by fostering a free exchange between professionals in the field of music and professionals in the field of early childhood development; and

• advocate for music in early childhood by supporting education of parents, classroom teachers, and administrators.

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Please submit articles written in a clear, concise conversational style and that avoid the use of unnecessary jargon, technical language, and passive voice. The excessive use of long quotations from other sources is strongly discouraged. The content of the article must be consistent with related professional literature. Authors should avoid personal commentary that is not relevant to the current topic or content that promotes a specific person, performing group, institution, or product.

Manuscript Requirements

The word count for articles is 800 to 3000 words (excluding references). Each page must be numbered and formatted with 1-inch margins, and the text double-spaced throughout (including references). Submit manuscripts via email as text documents in MS Word (.doc, .docx) or similar formats to Beatriz Ilari, Perspectives Editor, ilari@usc.edu

Submit images (figures, graphs, and pictures) as separate graphic files (.tif, .gif, .bmp, .jpg) and tables as MS Word documents (.doc). Please submit images that are 300 dpi or a minimum of 1 MB. All images and tables must be clearly marked as to their placement in the manuscript.

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• 150- to 250-word abstract

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The Early Childhood Music & Movement Association seeks to promote developmentally appropriate practices for all early childhood music and movement specialists, positively impacting the lives of all children.

In this study, the researchers investigated the ability of 112 children (1st to 5th graders) to detect appropriate musical syntax of cadences in simple (monophonic children’s songs) and complex (polyphonic piano pieces) musical examples, and then to rate each as congruous, incongruous, or slightly incongruous. The Western tonal music examples were all original and unfamiliar to the children. James et al. recorded the children’s responses using “a continuous scale with positive and negative poles depicted by happy and sad face icons, respectively” (p. 162). With the exception of the youngest, all of the children participating in the study received regular music instruction as part of their school curriculum, and most of them indicated they listened to music regularly outside of school.

Within the context of the study, the researchers hoped to find evidence that 1) the accuracy of the children’s responses identifying congruous and incongruous examples would increase with age, 2) children’s ability to identify subtle or slightly incongruous changes would increase with age, 3) detecting incongruent endings in the polyphonic examples would be difficult for the older as well as younger children, and 4) children with musical training would be more accurate in identifying subtle irregularities in musical syntax than those with no musical training.

Based on the study’s outcomes, James et al. found that, for both the simple and the complex examples, “all children [in the study], independent of their age and amount of musical training, rated the three levels of congruity hierarchically” (p. 166), thereby corroborating results from related studies that have shown children as young as 6 years old exhibit implicit learning of musical syntax. Furthermore, the study revealed identical developmental trends in the ability to identify congruent and incongruent endings for musically trained and non-musically trained children. By contrast, the researchers found that the detection of subtle or slightly incongruous endings did not evolve with age but improved only in children with musical training, indicating the limitations of implicit learning and amplifying the effect that specific learning has on higher levels of music processing.

Sevdalis and Keller reviewed and reported on a number of empirical studies “that used dance as a research tool for exploring the behavioral and brain bases of action understanding and social cognition” (p. 234). They focused on studies that explored different “forms of dance as well as rhythmical full body movement” for the purpose of examining connections between perception and action “rather than on aspects of motor control related to biomechanics or rehabilitation” (p. 231). Their comprehensive review explored the areas of motor experience and expertise; learning and memory; action, intention, and emotion understanding; and audio-visual synchrony and timing.

In regard to this relatively new area of study, Sevdalis and Keller acknowledged the importance for such a review to connect corroborative research and lay the groundwork for future investigations. Furthermore, they suggested that the studies reviewed serve as examples for how “the implementation of dance-related movements in observation- and execution-based experimental designs can take various forms, thereby constituting a rich domain for exploring behavioral and brain functions in human action and interaction” (p 235). In the concluding section, the authors provided an informative discussion and included considerations for forming hypotheses, a broad range of insightful questions to guide continued inquiry, and thoughts about possible empirical approaches to explore the social-cognitive aspects of dance.


The featured article examined the general question: What is creativity in the early years? Specifically, the authors provided an extensive description of the theoretical and empirical foundation for the notion that children’s creativity is formed by the concept of ‘possibility thinking’ (PT), or the process by which children “transition from ‘what is this? to ‘what can I do or we do with this?’ as well as imagining ‘as if’ they were in a different role” (¶2).

Craft et al. reported that there are seven proposed features of PT in young children: question-posing, play, immersion, innovation, risk-taking, being imaginative, self-determination, and intentionality. These features occur through the development of “a dynamic interaction between teacher and child, in an enabling context” (¶4). The researchers identified specific ways by which instruction could facilitate the development of PT in children. These involved adults placing a high value on enabling children’s agency, offering children both space and time to develop their ideas and perhaps most importantly, standing back from the children in an acutely sensitive way, with close scrutiny of the children’s engagement so as to choose wisely when to step in to provoke, clarify, support, extend, challenge. (¶4)

Adults providing opportunities for “exploratory, combinatory play” (¶5) proved to be particularly important for nurturing PT in young children.

Previous studies have examined in detail the role of play in PT, which led to a study of “the nature of children’s question-posing and question-responding during episodes of PT in playful contexts” (¶6). As a result, a taxonomy of children’s question-posing and question-responding was developed, providing an in-depth analysis of specific types of questions and responses that enabled and encouraged PT.

In this report, Craft et al. addressed two primary areas that have provided the impetus for their research dealing with creativity: How is children’s creativity/possibility thinking manifest in child-initiated play? What is the role of the practitioner in supporting this? (¶12). They offered in-depth information about research design, methodology and methods, the participants, ethics and rigor, data collection, and the data analysis associated with the studies involved in the PT project.

The researchers responded to both research questions addressed in the study with detailed discussions of their findings along with applications of how the findings support current research in possibility thinking. They concluded with these thoughts:

This research offers a new landmark in the study of possibility thinking, in revealing the blend between individual, collaborative and communal creativity, in the play of young children, together with insights into the role of the leading question or narrative and the delicate balance for practitioners between standing back and stepping forward, and thus between child- and adult- initiated play. (¶79)
MUSIC4BABIES – LEARN TO READ AND WRITE MUSIC WITH THE ANIMALS

By Olivier Romanetti
Designed for children ages 5 and under, Music4Babies encourages children’s curiosity, listening skills, and creativity. With a brightly colorful, child-friendly interface, children will enjoy exploring and playing music with unique animal sounds. They can choose their favorite characters and explore moving them up and down the musical staff as they learn about melodic movement of pitches, with an optional feature to include note names below each character. Twelve adorable musical characters including a frog, pig, bee, cat, owl, and mouse, each join in on the fun through pitch exploration and an introduction to composition. Children can compose their own short tunes with a backdrop of colorful, playful scenes. Music4Babies can be found on the iTunes App store and can be purchased for $1.99.

TUBBY TOTS KIDS XYLOPHONE

By Rec Masters LLC
Tubby Tots Kids Xylophone is an exploratory music app for young children aged 0-36 months. Your little one can explore sounds of a diatonic scale while associating each pitch to a color and adorable cartoon animal. Children may choose the sounds of a trumpet, clarinet, piano, guitar, and percussion. Sound playback is of high caliber, providing genuine authenticity of instrumental pitches. The app responds rapidly to touch and allows up to five pitches to be played at once, great for chords! The interface is colorful and simple to use with large buttons for small fingers, providing endless fun for your child to explore musical sounds, instruments, and even composition. Tubby Tots Kids Xylophone is free and also available for iPad and Mac.

PEEKABOO ORCHESTRA

By Touch & Learn/James Lewis Design Ltd.
Peekaboo orchestra is a stimulatingly colorful, interactive peekabo game for babies, toddlers, and young children aged 18 months and older. With easy-to-use controls for younger children, Peekaboo Orchestra provides endless fun as they discover new instruments, sounds, and tunes. For younger children, the simple mechanics assist in developing hand/eye coordination, while toddlers and preschool aged children will enjoy hearing the sounds of a hidden classical instrument and clicking the screen to reveal what is hiding. The Peekaboo Orchestra interface is clean and simple, allowing the child to play on her own. A selection of nursery rhymes can be played on each instrument, a fun way for your child to begin sound recognition. Orchestral instruments include piano, violin, cello, harp, trumpet, saxophone, clarinet, timpani, and more. Nursery rhymes include Baa Baa Black Sheep, Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star, Little Bo Peep, and many others. Peekaboo Orchestra can be found on the iTunes App store and can be purchased for $1.99.

KIDS SONG MACHINE

By Genera Games
Designed for toddlers and young children, Kids Song Machine allows little ones to sing and learn song lyrics through beautiful interactive animations; all easily moveable simply by touching the screen. Having sold over 600,000 applications and currently in the top ranking in 65 countries, Kids Song Machine includes 10 songs such as I’m a Little Tea-Pot, The Wheels on the Bus, If You’re Happy and You Know It, and Old MacDonald. The application is simple to use for the young child, and the images bring the songs to life. Available on the App store and priced at $1.99, this is a high quality resource that children can return to again and again.

MUSICAL RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

By Christine D’Alexander, D.M.A.
Longy School of Music of Bard College
YOLA at LACHSA Program Director
University of Utah
Beverley Taylor Sorenson Arts & Education Complex

“The Beverley Taylor Sorenson Arts & Education Complex celebrated its Grand Opening in February of 2014. The colleges of Fine Arts and Education, as well as Tanner Dance, call this beautiful 110,000 square foot building their home. The facility not only has the traditional classroom and research space, but also features six dance studios, a performance auditorium, a visual arts studio and a black box theater that seats 250. Housing the arts and education departments in the same building is the key to offering an integrated program that uses both the fine and performance arts as a part of learning other subjects, rather than offering them as separate add-on programs. ECMMA is excited to be able to offer you the opportunity to participate in professional development events where our hosts are dedicated to researching and implementing the best strategies ‘for the good of the children’.”
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We welcome new members and certifications from 7/1/15 – 12/31/15

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- Rachel Youngling – West Yarmouth, MA

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- Spring Lui – Tai Kok Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong [new member with existing Tutti Music Limited Institution Discount membership]
- Rourke O'Brien – Bellevue, WA
- Dimple Rubrico – Tai Kok Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong [new member with existing Tutti Music Limited Institution Discount membership]
- Isabeau Totterer – Tai Kok Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong [new member with existing Tutti Music Limited Institution Discount membership]

**South Central:**
- Benjamin Rivers – Wichita, KS

**Southeast:**
- Myrna Dixon – Tamarac, FL [with new Florida Youth Orchestra Supporting Business membership]
- Alexis Ford-Green – Mobile, AL
- Briana Larsen – Clarksville, TN
- Sue Sechrist – Williamsburg, VA [new member with existing ECM School at Williamsburg United Methodist Church Institution Discount membership]
- Patty Shukla – Tequesta, FL

**Southwest:**
- Heather Falter – Westminster, CO
- Ann Pittel – Los Angeles, CA

Certifications:

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- Elizabeth Christopher – State College, PA
- Cynthia Jorgensen – Lake Benton, MN
- Carissa Knoles – Taylor, MI
- Swans Ng – Markham, ON, Canada
- Dominique Stewart – Menomonie, WI
- Emily True – Woodruff, SC
- Siew-Ling Chong – Sg Buloh, Selangor, Malaysia

**Level I – Renew**
- Regina L Lacy – Baltimore, MD

**Level II – New**
- Siew-Ling Chong – Sg Buloh, Selangor, Malaysia
- Katherine Palmer – Phoenix, AZ

**Level II – Renew**
- Nancy Spahr – Peru, IN

**Level III – Renew**
- Beth N Marshall – Madison, WI
- Sharon Mello – San Diego, CA
- Lelani Miranda – Houston, TX
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