

**SPECIAL RESEARCH INTEREST GROUP - EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC**

NEWSLETTER NO. 12

MAY, 1991

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**NOTES FROM THE CHAIR**

This newsletter marks the phoenix of communication among the members of the Early Childhood SRIG. With new energy from Susan Tarnowski and Lili Levinowitz, the future of this SRIG and the impact it can have on the musical lives of children in this country look very positive.

A very exciting event will take place very soon -- the publication of our own journal devoted to research in music with young children. Details of this new professional journal are included in this newsletter, and I want to publicly thank Lili Levinowitz for her perseverance through all of the detail phases of presenting the proposal, and then on to the real job of serving as the first editor. No one can accurately assess the demands of time and patience required for this task. Thanks, Lili!

When it first began, the mission of the SRIG was to offer a support group for collaboration and communication among researchers interested in young children. While we have wandered through the 1980's in search of a specific direction to take in fulfilling that mission, perhaps our own "early childhood" phase as a group, I think we are now entering the adolescent stage of development as an organization. We know where we've been, and we know what we want: stability, maturity, and identity as an important force within the profession. It seems to me that the MENC has given us that opportunity by identifying music in early childhood as one of the six areas of focus for the profession. Our challenge has never been greater!

**R.S.V.P: RESEARCH MODELS FOR ASSESSING MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD**

The SRIG meeting for the New Orleans MENC meeting has been proposed to the Music Education Research Council (MERC) with the title listed above. The MERC always requires that our sessions be accessible to both practitioners and researchers, and happily, in early childhood, these "twain" often meet and this integration of teaching and research is not complicated to achieve. The purpose of this session is to identify appropriate models for the assessment of musical development in young children. A panel of

presenters will address the various aspects of this issue, with a focus on the importance of designing tools that are developmentally appropriate. Participants will be encouraged to apply the tools in their research and teaching.

This is where the R.S.V.P. comes in: in order to broaden the scope of representation on the panel, the SRIG leadership has decided to invite brief proposals from anyone who is interested in contributing research based on this theme. Approximately four or five people will be identified for the panel. If you are interested, send a brief (one page) statement to the chair or chair-elect of the SRIG. Selections will be made by June 15, 1991 to allow the names of the panel members to be printed in the conference program.

**ANNOUNCEMENT - MUSIC IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: A RESEARCH JOURNAL**

The first edition of a new journal dealing with research in early childhood music education should be received by July 1, 1991. We are delighted with this prospect! Subscriptions are available:

Music in Early Childhood: A Research Journal  
 The David K. Stengstack Foundation  
 Box 2072  
 Princeton, NJ 08540  
 \$17.50 (Individual)  
 \$22.50 (Institutional)

**ISME EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMISSION CALL FOR PAPERS**

"Sharing Discoveries About the Child's World of Music"  
 21-24 July 1992, Kunitachi College of Music, Tokyo, Japan

The aim of this seminar is to share and disseminate the newest ideas regarding research and pedagogical practices in early childhood music education. The Commission invites the submission of papers related to the following topics:

- Research related to musical characteristics, musical responses, or the musical development of the young child
- Research related to the role of adults in children's musical environment
- Research and/or models related to the training of early childhood music educators
- Models of exemplary pedagogical practice or research models with young children

Papers will be selected by the Commission based on quality, relevance to the Seminar topics, appropriateness for presentation at this seminar, and geographical representation.

Procedures for submitting papers are as follows:

- 1) Papers are not to exceed 2000 words in length.
- 2) Six (6) copies of the full text must be submitted in English
- 3) The paper must be accompanied by six (6) copies of an abstract, not to exceed 200 words.
- 4) If a video of more than 5 minutes is to be used, one copy of the video recording in VHS-NTSC format must be included with the submission. If a video of 5 minutes or less is to be used, a description of the video should be included.
- 5) Paper and abstracts must be typewritten and double-spaced. Copies may be duplicated on both sides of the paper.
- 6) The name, position, and complete address of the person(s) submitting the paper must appear on the first page.
- 7) The following must appear on the top of the first page of the paper: This paper is submitted for consideration for the Seminar "Sharing Discoveries About the Child's World of Music", 21-24 July, 1992.
- 8) It is condition of acceptance of a paper that the author will present the paper in person and that the author will attend the entire seminar. Copyright is vested in ISME.
- 9) Papers must be postmarked AIRMAIL no later than 15 SEPTEMBER 1991, and sent to the Commission Chair.

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EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC CONFERENCES/PRESENTATIONS OF NOTE

International Creative Arts Conference, Los Angeles - 1990  
Submitted by Lili Levinowitz

This past December, a conference focusing on the creative arts in early childhood convened in L.A. Of the many conferences I have attended, this conference was among the most informative. Clinicians, researchers, teachers, and administrators from all over the US and foreign countries were in attendance to garner information and share ideas about creative arts education for our nations youngest children.

Topics on music, dance, drama, and art were represented in clinics, research sessions, and round-table discussions throughout the 3 1/2 day conference. The conference participants could attend any of the sessions regardless of their area of expertise; it was interesting to see many music professionals crossing into the other disciplines to gather information so to teach with even greater expertise than we do presently.

In addition to the specific "break-out sessions" led by music professionals such as Barbara Andress, John Feierabend, and Elayne Achilles, and the research session under the aegis of

Carol Scott-Kassner, there were several general sessions where keynote speakers presented timely topics; probably the most exciting session was that presented by Dr. Lillian Katz.

It is my hope that another creative arts conference will be scheduled in the near future. With cooperation among the fine arts already intact, creative arts education can only grow and benefit.

Suncoast Music Education Forum on Curriculum

The University of South Florida sponsored a spring conference that took curriculum in music as its theme. The keynote speakers were Bennett Reimer of Northwestern University and Howard Gardner of Harvard University. Dr. Reimer's presentation was titled "Towards a Concept of Curriculum for Music Education" and focused on four areas: knowing within, knowing how, knowing about, and knowing why. Remarks by Dr. Gardner addressed issues related to cognitive science and psychology and learning. His presentation was titled: "Art, Mind, and Multiple Intelligences". Donna Brink Fox spoke on "Curriculum Issues in Early Childhood: All I Really Needed to Know I Learned Before Kindergarten". Dr. Fox described musical behaviors of young children on a continuum from first attempts at exploration and production of sound to the complex "game with rules" that we know as music as adults. The proceedings of the Forum will be published in the near future.

University of Arizona Symposium on Research in General Music

Taken from a summary report by David G. Woods  
Director, School of Music, University of Arizona

I would like to congratulate Professor (Wendy) Sims, Professor (Elayne) Achilles, and Professor (Joanne) Rutkowski for their contributions to the understanding of how preschool age children respond to music. It is clear from the research presented by Professor Sims that young children can be taught to use labels to identify contrasting characteristics of music with high levels of success. Professor Sims and others encourage the use of language and vocabulary at an early age to describe and communicate about music. Because rapid language growth occurs early for the child, it seems natural to introduce language as a representation for musical phenomena. However, Professor Sims makes it clear that children's concept development does not singularly depend on verbalizing or responding to verbalizations about music. The results of this and other studies leads us to the conclusion that both verbal and nonverbal tasks and activities should be encouraged within the context of the music environments for young children.

Little research has been done regarding the influence of parental involvement in musical achievement and aptitude development in young children. It is apparent from Professor Achilles' research that the parent plays a significant role in the reinforcement of musical ideas, skills and concepts. Her conclusions are as

follows: a) parents often respond positively or negatively to the musical development of their children depending on their own childhood musical experiences; b) parents need skill development in order to reinforce the skills and concepts presented in more formal educational settings; c) parents need to be encouraged to emerge from their more passive roles in the music education of their children to more active roles; d) anxiety levels of parents should be reduced to allow optimum learning to occur. The attitude of the parent appears to be extremely important in the encouragement of musical aptitude and achievement in children.

Professor Rutkowski investigated the effectiveness of individual or small group singing activities used in the traditional large group setting on kindergarten children's use of the singing voice and developmental tonal aptitude. The purpose of her study was to identify strategies for assisting the young problem singer. She concluded that individual remediation within a large group or classroom setting may be provided through individual/small group instruction. She found that in this setting, the child's singing voice use did improve, but use of the singing voice had little effect on the developmental tonal aptitude of the children.

If music is to be a significant and meaningful experience for young children, we must provide a variety of activities in sound exploration, movement and singing. We need to create musical environments that allow each young child to develop the perceptions and skills needed to have music as a vital means of expressions and communication in his or her life.

#### Great Lakes Regional Music Therapy Conference

A session presented by Pat Flowers (The Ohio State University) at this regional meeting in Minneapolis focused on "Musical Behaviors in Early Childhood and Applications of Research to the Teaching and Learning of Young Children". Drawing on her own research (Flowers and Dunne-Sousa, 1990; Flowers and Costa-Giomi, 1991; Jellison and Flowers, in press) and that of others, Flowers presented information on the uses of music in education, musical behaviors, interests, and abilities of disabled and non-disabled children, song development, movement, listening and discussing, and creating music. It was a good introduction for many of the session participants.

#### PRE- OR POST-CONFERENCE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKSHOPS

Using as a model the Saturday workshop for early childhood educators presented during the national meeting of MENC in Washington, D.C., several states, including Wisconsin, Minnesota, California, and others, have incorporated an "early childhood music day" into their state MENC conferences. The SRIG leadership would be pleased to hear of other such enterprises, and to offer help by referring members to other researchers or educators interested in structuring such events.

#### A CODA FROM THE CHAIR-ELECT

It is evident as one peruses the information in this newsletter alone, that interest in both the research and practice of early childhood music education is vital and on-going. It is the nature of groups of individuals, such as our SRIG, that self-study and self-evaluation continually take place, and with the publication of this newsletter, a need to examine and re-define our goals again arises.

Our mailing list is large, and includes individuals who wish to disseminate results of their own research and practice, those who wish to engage in small collaborative efforts, those who would be willing to participate in a large research project, those who are able to participate in the leadership of the SRIG, those who wish to be kept abreast of recent findings, and those who desire only to receive our newsletter. The effectiveness of the SRIG in achieving those results for our varied membership is dependent upon the membership itself making known its desires for future directions. I present several issues for discussion prior to the meeting of the SRIG at the MENC meeting in New Orleans:

- 1) Establishment of a committee to examine and recommend future directions for the SRIG
- 2) Revival of the regional leadership (6 regional divisions)
- 3) Revival of the specific issue Task Forces for collaborative work
- 4) Instigation of a national project to be done under the auspices of the SRIG
- 5) Consideration of the concept of an on-going Chair-Elect with specific responsibilities
- 6) Continued solicitation of articles, announcements, summary reports, requests for help, etc. to be published in a regularly scheduled newsletter
- 7) Consideration of the levy of a slight fee to receive the SRIG newsletter (few departments or individuals are able to underwrite the cost of production and mailing)

In looking back over previous newsletters, including the survey results reported in Newsletter #11, 1988, none of the above appear to be new issues. I welcome any and all comments or suggestions from the membership, and am as interested in the opinions of those leaders who helped to shape the SRIG as those members who are new to our ranks and may bring fresh insight. Please let me know of your interests as we formulate an agenda for the business portion of our meeting in New Orleans. Thank you!

If a copy of this newsletter was not mailed to you, please send your complete name and address to Susan Tarnowski.