



Early Childhood Music Newsletter

Early Childhood Music Special Research Interest Group

In collaboration with The Music Education Research Council of the Music Educators National Conference

Issued at the School of Music, 1225 University of Oregon

Eugene, OR 97403-1225

Newsletter No. 20

Prepared by Mary Lou Van Rysselberghe

June, 1995

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Your research with young children and music is of keen interest to us. Letters, articles, book reviews, and comments are most welcome for publication in future issues. Please send them to: Mary Lou Van Rysselberghe, School of Music, 1225 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1225 by December 31, 1995, for consideration in our February Newsletter.

Contact by phone (503) 346-3769, FAX (503) 346-5669, or e-mail: mlvr@oregon.uoregon.edu

NOTE FROM THE CO-CHAIR

Danette Littleton

In our previous newsletter, co-chair **Diane Persellin** initiated a discussion of the music and spatial task studies conducted by a research team at University of California-Irvine led by **Fran Rauscher**.

The response and interest in this media-hot topic generated many questions and comments from our SRIG members. You wanted to know more about Rauscher's early childhood studies: a) research procedures with 3-4 year-olds, b) musical content of the piano lessons—any Mozart here? and, c) what do the results mean?

Recently, **Lori Custodero**, SRIG member and doctoral candidate at the University of Southern California, spent some time with **Dr. Rauscher** at Irvine. Additionally, **Lori** observed early childhood studies in progress and discussed the project with its music consultant.

Analogous to the previous newsletter report by **John Flohr** and **Kris Chesky**, we hope this report will stimulate continued discussion about the Irvine studies and general issues of research concerning music and young children.

—Danette



The Research/Practice Interface: Questions Raised by the Irvine Studies

Lori Custodero

Early childhood music educators have been following the research of a team at the University of California at Irvine, who have been studying not only the effect of passive listening by adults to a Mozart sonata, but also the interactive music-making of preschoolers. The purpose of the research concerns an investigation into a causal link between music training and spatial reasoning, and the existence of a critical period for that training to occur.

Although the results of this study have been widely disseminated, little is known about the content of the musical treatment, that is, how music training for young children is being operationalized. The researchers have chosen private keyboard lessons as their primary means of training—a decision unsettling to many early childhood specialists. The following report examines reasons for that choice as articulated in interviews with key members of the Irvine team. **Frances Rauscher**, along with physicist **Gordon Shaw**, is a principle investigator of the study. **Eric Wright**, percussionist and music technology specialist, was one of the first people recruited by **Shaw**, and is responsible for designing the keyboard training format. **Rauscher** holds a degree from **Juilliard** as well as a doctorate in social psychology with a specialty in child development from **Columbia**. She generated the experimental design but was not involved in the treatment design; research protocol precluded her observation of the instructional sessions. Recorded observations of the designated treatment are also included here, leading to a consideration of the role of developmentally appropriate practice in research design.

Results from previous studies (**Rauscher, Shaw, & Ky, 1993**, and **Rauscher, Shaw, Levine, Ky, & Wright, 1994**), as well as preliminary findings based on data from the current study (**Rauscher, personal interview**) indicate salient scoring differences in the music treatment group specific to the Object Assembly task. Two commonalities between this task and music are cited: the requirement of successive steps and the ability to form a mental image (**Rauscher, personal communication**). **Rauscher** believes work on the keyboard provides a unique three-way sensory experience: "I suspect we are seeing the relationship between visual-spatial manifestations on the keyboard with motor and auditory feedback, especially as it regards intervallic relationships. This linear relationship may be specialized to the keyboard."

The current instruction includes twice weekly 10-minute

private keyboard lessons with free time opportunity for "practice." Lessons are to include the following: "finger coordination exercises, associating fingers with numbers, creativity exercises, associating numbers with musical pitches, musical memory exercises, and introduction of standard notation using numbered finger symbols" (Rauscher et al., 1994, p. 12). During our discussion, Wright added letter recognition and rhythm games. In addition, 30 minute daily teacher-directed singing activities including popular children's tunes and folk melodies with hand motions were delivered by another music specialist. The children involved in the study range in age from two to five years.

Lessons at the particular site observed are taught in a room set up with three keyboard "centers" divided by make-shift partitions. The keyboards, set on small tables, are Yamaha Portasound PSS 190s, with three octaves and small-sized keys. The accoutrements—100 available timbres, drum pads, and sample tunes—are either disengaged or not used. There are numbers written on the specific keys utilized in the lessons. Children enter three at a time, and are allowed to select which station and teacher they prefer. At the end of each session, children convene to get stickers and take their bows. Below is a sampling of lesson content observed by the writer. Children are in their eighth month of lessons. Teachers vary widely in style, materials used, and background.

Lesson 1 (4-year-old student with Teacher 1)

Child plays several songs from a book; teacher points to page (contour notation using lines for discrete pitches), singing words as child plays. Teacher drills note names: "Show me all the quarter notes on this page ..." and asks child to clap a line of small hand-written notes, while saying the correct number of beats, ie. "1-2", etc. Final activity is keyboard drill on C, D, and E.

Lesson 2 (4-year-old student with Teacher 2)

Teacher plays a tune ("Jurassic Park") for student to identify. Student is asked to play first all the white, then all the black keys up and down the keyboard, followed by fingers 1 2 3 4 5 in C position. Number recognition is drilled (speed is encouraged—teacher models how fast it can be done). Letter recognition is drilled. Child plays a song in pre-reading shape notation, teacher cues by saying finger numbers. Song is stopped halfway through (ending on the dominant). A rote tune, "Kookabura," is played by teacher; student plays along with teacher, one pitch at a time. "Crab walk" exercise follows: student plays melodic 3rds up the keyboard. Final activity is rote song played in imitation, "10 Little Indians."

Lesson 3 (4-year-old student with Teacher 3)

Student plays up and down the black keys, followed by drill on numbers 1-5. Student reads songs with finger numbers from a Bastien book (teacher demonstrates at fast "adult" tempo). Teacher introduces piece from a Suzuki book, notated in small notes in High C position with written finger numbers. Child requests teacher point on the page and write finger numbers on the keys. Child ignores and begins improvising, teacher encourages. Child titles his work; teacher asks child to repeat composition (child plays a new one).

Lesson 4 (2-year-old student with Teacher 1, excerpt)

Teacher points in a music book to animals, child plays appropriate high, low, or middle sounds. Child is asked to identify numbers by counting them on the page (struggles through). Child is asked to play black keys up the keyboard.

Lesson 5 (3-year-old student with Teacher 3, excerpt)
Child is asked to imitate teacher's playing "red jello" and "pepperoni pizza" on a key. Child interrupts and wants to do "Lion King." Teacher acknowledges request and postpones. Teacher asks child to play song requiring playing black keys up and down the keyboard. Teacher asks child to do finger independence exercises in the air, child refuses. Characters from the *Lion King* book are used to elicit high/low concepts and 2 vs. 3 black keys. Teacher plays chant with dotted rhythm "Blue bugs for breakfast" and asks child to imitate. Teacher asks child to improvise for observer. She uses the back of her hands and is stopped, encouraged to do it "the right way."

The content and interactions in these lessons raise serious questions about the relationship between research and practice. What is the musical content of these sessions? Are the subjects engaging in truly musical experiences and demonstrating musical understanding? If not, how can one explain the salient results, which, according to preliminary data analysis, do not transfer to a group from the same population receiving computer instruction (Rauscher, personal communication)?

When confronted with the writer's observations of the music instruction, Rauscher confided that they confirmed misgivings she has had about an element of the study already in place upon her arrival. In discussing the robust effects found, she offered a possible hypothesis having to do with what goes on during the free play "practice" sessions. According to research assistant Wendy Dennis, children spend this time accompanying spontaneous and learned songs, playing less structured improvisations, and play-acting "rock star." This chance for the child to control the experience may be the more vital interaction, perhaps facilitated by the formal lessons.

While it is imperative to keep in mind that the design addresses the testing of a link between spatial reasoning and music training and NOT the testing of a teaching model, it can be argued that more rigorous attention to appropriate practice may contribute to its validity. Viewing the way in which this particular study defines musical training raises questions for music education researchers: To what extent should researchers in other disciplines (such as psychology) adhere to musically appropriate and developmentally appropriate methodology if they are not testing *musical* outcomes? Is there a danger that people will apply these research methods to their teaching practices? Would the results of the current study differ with changes in the approach to keyboard teaching? How can research in musical development better inform other fields of inquiry? This last question may have its answer in a proactive SRIG, one which serves as a resource not only for its membership, but for interdisciplinary projects concerned with music and young children.

Rauscher, F. H., Shaw, G. L., & Ky, K. N. (1993). Music and spatial task performance. *Nature*, 365, 611.

Rauscher, F. H., Shaw, G. L., Levine, L. J., Ky, K. N., & Wright, E. L. (1994). Music and spatial task performance: a causal relationship. Paper presented at the American Psychological Association 102nd Annual Convention, Los Angeles, California.

Rauscher, F. H. Personal interview, May 23, 1995.

Wright, E. L. Personal interview, May 23, 1995.

Nominating the next Chair-elect and Regional Coordinators for SRIG

It is time to start thinking about nominations for SRIG Chair-Elect and Regional Coordinators for the next two years. Our nomination process for these positions will begin prior to the publishing of the next Newsletter in February, 1995. By-Laws of SRIG are helpful in specifying the duties of both the National Chair and the Chair-elect.

Excerpt from BY-LAWS OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP:

III. ORGANIZATION

- A. The National Chair holds the primary authority for the SRIG.
1. The duties of the National Chair include:
 - a. Providing leadership and vision for the SRIG.
 - b. Managing the general affairs of the SRIG including the biennial report to MERC and a proposal for the SRIG session for the biennial conference.
 - c. Serving as a liaison with MENC, SRME and other interested groups and individuals.
 - d. Maintaining communication among the membership, the chair-elect and the regional representatives.
 - e. Soliciting members to serve as regional representatives.
 2. The National Chair assumes duties following a two-year term as Chair-elect after election by the SRIG membership during the year of the biennial conference.
 3. Should the National Chair be unable to carry out the duties of that position, the Chair-elect will assume those duties.
- B. The Chair-elect holds secondary authority for the SRIG.
1. The duties of the Chair-elect are:
 - a. To publish and distribute the SRIG newsletter on a bi-annual basis.
 - b. To solicit contributions to the newsletter.
 - c. To maintain the SRIG membership list.
 - d. To assist the chair in determining future directions for SRIG.
- C. The six regional representatives serve as an advisory council to the SRIG.
1. The duties of the regional representative are:
 - a. To serve as a liaison between the National Chair, the Chair-elect and the regional membership.
 - b. To monitor early childhood research and events in their region.
 - c. To assist in solicitation of material for the newsletter.
 - d. To serve with the Chair-elect as the nominating committee for the Position of Chair-elect.

Diane Persellin has agreed to serve as Chair of the nominating committee which is made up of our Regional representatives and myself. We welcome your nominations for the next Chair-elect and Regional Coordinators of SRIG! Send your nominations to Mary Lou Van Rysselberghe so that we can present the candidates in the next newsletter. You can nominate yourself if you wish to serve as Chair-Elect or Regional Coordinator. Send a brief bio and state your SRIG interests.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF COMING EVENTS

Summer, 1995. Regional conventions sponsored by The Early Childhood Music Association in Billings, MN, Dallas, TX, Toronto, Ontario, & Williamsburg, KY. A midwest site to be announced. These conventions focus on information, strategies, and curriculum related to early childhood music/movement education, ages birth to eight years.

Contact: Karen Hornyak, ECMA Office
2110 17th Ave.
Greeley, CO 80631

April 17-20, 1996. MENC National Biennial In-Service Conference in Kansas City, Missouri Four papers have been accepted for the SRIG session. More about these in the next newsletter.

April 20, 1996. *Music & Young Children.* A special conference for music educators, kindergarten teachers and care providers in Kansas City, Missouri (See Call below.)

July 15-19, 1996. ISME Commission Early Childhood Music Education Seminar in Winchester, England

July 21-27, 1996. ISME General Conference, Amsterdam, Holland (See Call below.)



CALLS FOR MANUSCRIPTS AND PROPOSALS

Music and Young Children

Plans are being made for the fifth biennial *Music and Young Children* conference to be held in conjunction with the 1996 Music Educators National Conference convention in Kansas City, MO. Early childhood music educators are invited to submit a proposal to present an hour small group session for the Saturday, April 20 one-day conference. Early childhood care providers, kindergarten teachers, and music educators from the Kansas City area as well as MENC members attending the national conference are invited to attend this exciting event.

Susan Kenney from Brigham Young University will be the keynote presenter. Susan has been a popular and experienced early childhood music clinician at the state, national, and international levels. Her opening presentation is sure to set the tone for the day.

An onsite committee of early childhood leaders from Kansas City as well as MENC members representing the various geographical divisions of MENC will be selecting the proposals for sessions submitted to MENC. Music educators and early childhood educators interested in submitting a proposal are encouraged to complete the application included in the June issue of *Teaching Music* and return it to the MENC office by the July 15 deadline. Questions regarding the conference should be directed to Diane Persellin, conference chair, (210-736-7265) or Mary Pautz, assistant chair (414-421-6465).

MENC Research Session

Researchers are invited to submit reports of excellent research for consideration as presentations at MENC's general re-

—DIVISION NEWS—

Central Division

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E-mail: lschleu@uofto2.utoledo.edu

Lois encourages those of you in the Central region to contact her with information about upcoming conferences, research, etc., that you would like to share. Please note her new E-mail address above.

Northwest Division

Mary Lou Van Rysselberghe
School of Music
1225 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403
E-mail: mlvr@oregon.uoregon.edu

Oregon is among those states, along with Ohio, that are currently considering new levels of teacher certification or license. A new area would be birth to second grade. We are on the crest of a national trend that reflects our belief in the value of sound preparation for music teaching of children throughout their earliest years. Is your state considering certification for teaching children in early childhood? I join Lois Schleuter in wishing to know about courses and field experience you may be offering to prepare teachers for this specialization. Please contact either one of us, and we will share your responses.

Southwest Division

Rachel Nardo
Pasadena Area Community College
1570 E. Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91106-2003

If you are looking for an excellent video using the Orff approach in early childhood, be sure to see "Kids Make Music." This two-part, 45-minute video was developed by Lynn Kleiner of Music Rhapsody in Manhattan Beach, California. The program includes delightful lesson demonstrations by children, plus instructional commentary for parents by Lynn Kleiner, Frances Rauscher, Ph.D. (Mozart Effect), and Cecilia Riddell, Ph.D. It is useful for preschool teachers, early childhood music teachers, teacher educators, parents, and administrators. The cost is \$14.98. Call (800) 264-6375 for orders/catalog. (Reviewed by Rachel Nardo.)

If your state is looking for ways to "reach out" to the early childhood community, try hosting a weekend mini-course at a local preschool site. Californians were recently exhilarated by Donna Brink Fox (Eastman School of Music) in a two-day mini-course on Developmentally Appropriate Prac-

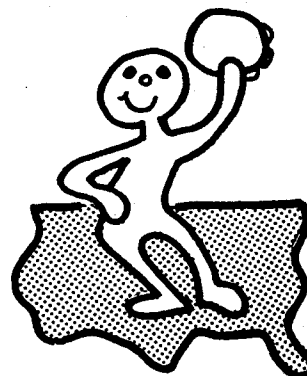
tices for Music in Early Childhood. Donna packed a semester-long course into ten, fun filled hours. Participants came away with a lot of new ideas and a clear understanding of how and why music is important to the young child's development; it was an excellent balance of practical ideas and theoretical foundation. The great thing about this mini-course was the idea of *bringing the music specialist to the preschool teachers*. Kudos to Lynn Kleiner for organizing the course.

The California Survey of Music in Early Childhood will be finished Summer 1995. A presentation of its report will be featured at our SRIG session in Kansas City next April. Meanwhile, advocacy projects have sprung from the ECE Task Force working on the project, which could be useful to other states. Working in conjunction with California Music Educators Association (CMEA), a *Consortium for Music in Early Childhood* (COMEC) was formed as an affiliate group of CMEA. The unique aspect of COMEC is the offer of low-cost membership to *non-music ECE teachers*. Its purpose is to develop music advocates in the ECE community by giving them affordable access to professional music in-service programs and newsletter mailings. COMEC will also assist in organizing CMEA's yearly "Music in Early Childhood Day." The Consortium's future plans include developing a State Framework for Music in Early Childhood. For a copy of the organizational By-Laws contact Rachel Nardo (818) 795-7366.

The Music & Science Information Computer Archive located at the Center for the Neurobiology of Learning & Memory at UC Irvine offers useful resources to researchers and educators. Its staff maintains a comprehensive and continually updated computer-based record of scientific research on music and its biological substrates, as well as publishing a no cost informational newsletter called *MuSica Research Notes*. Access to the database is also free. For an account or subscription, contact Dr. Norman Weinberger via e-mail: mbic@mila.ps.uci.edu.

Northeast Division

Joanne Rutkowski
The Pennsylvania State University
School of Music
University Park, PA 16802-1901



search session during its conference in Kansas City, Missouri, April 17-20, 1996. Participants chosen will be required to prepare a poster describing their research and to be available during the session to discuss their work with interested music educators. The complete call for papers in the Winter issue of JRME provides specific details. Four copies of a full report beginning with its abstract summarizing the research should be sent to Patricia Flowers, School of Music, 110 Weigel Hall, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210-1170. Deadline: September 1, 1995.

ISME 1996

The 1996 SEMINAR: UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULAR ELEMENTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC EDUCATION will take place July 15-19, 1996, at King Alfred's College of Higher Education, in Winchester, UK. 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 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 methods 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. Finances permitting, one author of each accepted paper will be the guest of the Commission and the UK sponsors (room, board and registration fee provided—we cannot provide transportation). Opportunities will be provided for a limited number of people who wish to attend the Seminar and are not making presentations. For information about applying for these spaces, deadlines, etc. place your name on the mailing list by writing to Sheila Woodward at the address below.

Papers with similar topics may be submitted for presentation on a Commission Session at the 1996 World Conference in Amsterdam. Please follow the procedures below, modifying item B accordingly. If presentation at either the Seminar or the World Conference would be acceptable, please indicate this as well.

Procedures for submitting papers:

1. Papers are not to exceed 2,000 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 of the paper, 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-PAL format must be included with the submission. If a video of 5 minutes or less is to be used (e.g., to provide an example of research procedures), a description of the video should be included.
5. Papers and abstracts must be typewritten, double-spaced, and

may be duplicated two-sided.

6. If a multiple-author paper is selected, only one author will be invited as a guest of the Commission. Additional authors may attend at their own expense.

7. The name, position and complete address of the person(s) submitting the paper must appear at the top of the first page.

8. The following statement must appear at the top of the first page of the paper:

This paper is submitted for consideration for the Seminar "Universal and Particular Elements of Early Childhood Music Education" 15-19 July 1996.

9. It is a condition of acceptance of a paper that the author will present the paper in person and that the copyright is vested in the International Society for Music Education. It is also a condition that, if selected, the author will attend the entire Seminar. Everyone attending ISME Seminars and Conferences must be members of ISME (membership information is available upon request).

10. Papers must be postmarked AIRMAIL no later than September 15, 1995, and sent to the Commission Chair, Sheila Woodward, at the address below.

Send submissions and/or enquiries about attending as a visitor to the Chair of the Commission, Sheila Woodward at this address:

Sheila C. Woodward (Chair)

2 Shaw Road

Rondebosch

7700

South Africa

Phone: 27-21-6851054 FAX: 27-21-6851054



CODA

Susan M. Tarnowski

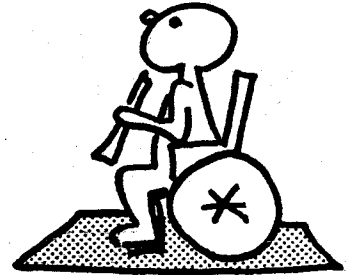
In re-reading the 1993 MENC publication *Music in Prekindergarten: Planning and Teaching* edited by Mary Palmer and Wendy Sims, I was again struck by what appears to be an ongoing concern of early childhood music educators. Dorothy McDonald's article "Long Range Program Goals" deals with the problems inherent in constructing a curriculum in music for early childhood programs. Dorothy gives us some reasons for these problems as she states: "As a course of study, music sometimes gets bumped off the track because of its very usefulness. It is a multifaceted phenomenon, and teachers use it for many purposes" (p. 15). She cites the benefits of music for enhancing the practicing of cognitive tasks, the social development of the children, transitions between the days' activities, and general atmosphere of the classroom. Spontaneous music-making is also cited as something that is often encouraged by the teacher and is reinforcing for the child. However, all too often there is no overarching plan for the musical development of the individual child. Music exists as a series of unconnected activities.

So much of the good research about the musical development, responses, and abilities of children has remained just that: good research. Far less has found a home in curriculum development. Some wonderful attempts continue to be made to bridge the gap between theory and practice: the MENC sponsored early childhood music days during the national conferences, the publi-

cations and video information available to educators, the clinics offered at the regional and state levels, and the participation of early childhood music educators at early childhood conferences and in early childhood professional associations. And yet, cursory observations during visits to many preschools and daycare centers evidence the lack of careful planning for music learning.

Perhaps as we continue to do the needed research as well as in-service clinics and instructional articles in non-music specialist journals, we can reference the research we depend upon to make informed decisions. We can assist the non-music specialist educator in knowing *how* we are able to recommend the activities and curricular sequences we offer as suggestions. We can cite specific sources for further reading or conversation. Helping other educators *know how to know* is as much a part of our mission as the research itself.

Planning for musical learning and implementing those plans is the end result of the art and science of conducting research. Let us continue to explore ways to communicate the growing body of knowledge with both our music and our music specialist colleagues.



EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Bitnet or internet address (if available) _____

Research topic(s) or area(s) of interest _____

Please return to Mary Lou Van Rysselberghe before December 31, 1995 (February Newsletter)

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