



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:

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NOTES FROM THE CHAIRS:

Lori Custodero and Rachel Nardo

The conference is quickly approaching, and our session looks to be both provocative and informative. Entitled "Methods and Meaning for the Millennium: A Panel Discussion on What Matters Most for Early Childhood Music Research in the Next Century," it features talks by two prominent researchers as well as brief formal responses. Past SRIG Chair Danette Littleton will speak on "From Practice to Research: What Children Tell us About How They Learn"; and University of Surrey's Susan Young will present her paper on "Young Children's Instrumental Music-Making: A Developmental Perspective." Abstracts from both of these papers appear in this issue on page 2. Make sure to read ahead and consider what you might wish to ask or comment upon during the discussion -- we look forward to your input! Another important function of our biennial meeting is to choose a new chair-elect. The nominating committee is pleased to put forth Joyce Gromko's name for the position. You can read about Joyce's contributions to research in early childhood music, as well as her commitment to serving the SRIG on page 7. You may cast your ballot in one of two ways. If you will be attending the Early Childhood SRIG session at MENC you will have an opportunity to vote then. You can either bring the completed ballot (see p. 7 of this Newsletter) with you or we will have ballots available there. If you are unable to attend the MENC conference, you should complete the ballot, on p. 7 in this Newsletter, and mail it to Lori by **Monday, March 6th** in order for your vote to be counted.

Early Childhood Scholarship -- More Suggested Reading

Two recently published books piqued our interest. The first by John T. Bruer, *The Myth of the First Three Years: A New Understanding of Brain Development and Lifelong Learning* (New York: Free Press, 1999), has caused a bit of a media stir. It has been suggested that his writing implies efforts to increase awareness of the

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importance of caring for our youngest population have been misplaced. In actuality Bruer's tome provides a systematic look at much of the research and offers scientifically based alternative perspectives on notions like "window of opportunity" for skill development. It is an important read for those of us who want to be fully aware of the complexities of research. The second book, by developmental scientists Alison Gopnick, Andrew Meltzoff and Patricia Kuhl, offers a clearly written, scrupulously supported alternative to Bruer's perspective. In *The Scientist in the Crib: Minds, Brains, and How Children Learn* (William Morrow, 1999), we are reminded of the extraordinary innate drive to make sense of the world; the information is delivered with exceptional humor and insight.

Thank you for allowing us the privilege to serve as your co-chairs. We have appreciated the opportunity to think with and learn from you and look forward to seeing you all at our meeting in Washington, D. C.: Thursday, March 9, at 10:30 a.m.

Lori and Rachel

PREVIEW: SRIG session at MENC

Early Childhood Instrumental Music Making: A Developmental Perspective *Susan Young*

In common with the dominant perspectives in psychology, many approaches to music education have considered the musical mind and behavior of the individual child as distinct from the social world (e.g., Swanwick & Tillman, 1986). In contrast, over the last 25 years, those psychologists with a more developmental focus have increasingly recognized that, from the moment of birth, the infant is primed to communicate with immediate caregivers (e.g. Trevarthen, 1993). These early exchanges are fundamentally musical;

communication is conveyed by variations in timing, in intensity and pitch contour (Trevarthen, 1979). In a current study of spontaneous music-making among 3- and 4-year-olds in a London preschool setting, early childhood musical behaviors are viewed as an extension of the interactive forms of early infancy

From Practice to Research: What Children Teach About How They Learn

Danette Littleton

Given the temporality of children's lived experience and the temporality of musical time, tone, and timbre, how we practice music education with young children must remain open to examination, scrutiny, and revision. Based on the premise that young children's play provides the context where their experience and understanding of music is first observed and best interpreted, I conducted a series of studies investigating young children's music practices within free play, music-specific, environments (Littleton, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1997, 1998). Analyses revealed children's use of conventional musical elements, techniques, and ensembles according to exploratory, structured, and dramatic music-play classifications.

In this paper, I argue that the child's music culture is, in all ways, different from that of the adult's. Music-making impulses that occur freely and unrestrained in young children have yet to be seriously regarded as more than random gestures. Adult preference for rule-bound practices - heedless of young children's predisposition for spontaneity and self-initiated play with music - endangers the expressive freedom of childhood. This dissimilarity between child and adult music practices signals the need for a new and expanded theory founded on research of young children's music culture from an insider's perspective, the child's.



DIVISION NEWS

NORTHWESTERN DIVISION

(Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon,
Washington, Wyoming)

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Mary Lou Van Rysselberghe has officially retired from the University of Oregon this year and will be missed terribly by students and colleagues here in the Northwest. We are hoping that in her emeritus faculty position she will still share her immense expertise with us from time to time.

Kathleen Jacobi-Karna has now joined the faculty at the University of Oregon and her appointment includes teacher preparation, elementary general music methods, and early childhood music education.

The Oregon Music Education Association State Conference was held January 28-30, 2000 in Eugene, Oregon and Dr. Kathleen Jacobi-Karna presented an early childhood research session entitled "The What, Why, and How of Music in Early Childhood." This session included a brief literature review regarding the singing, playing instruments, listening, moving, and creating of young children as well as direct application of the research findings through sample experiences and activities.

NORTH CENTRAL DIVISION

(Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska,
North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin)

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I would like to generate a list of members in this Division. All SRIG members from the North Central Division should e-mail their name, address, phone number, and e-mail address to me (lwalker@kent.edu) by March 1. Thank you!

WESTERN DIVISION

(Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Utah)

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Greetings from the Western Division. Two division researchers have had papers accepted for the "Music Within Every Child" Conference to be held in Kingston, Ontario CANADA July 10-14, 2000. Rachel Nardo (California State University, San Francisco) will present a paper entitled "From Research to Practice: California's Model for Training Preschool Music Specialists." Rachel will discuss a model for training and certifying preschool music specialists at California community colleges. The program content responds to guidelines stated or implied in the PreK National Standards in music, to self-reported needs of California day care and child development centers, and to state certification requirements. The music course content is particularly

amenable to lower division, undergraduate programs concerned with early childhood music teacher education. This two-year certificate program was established in 1998, with an initial enrollment of 60 students. Gwendolyn McGraw (CSU, Sacramento) will also present a research paper at the ISME conference in Canada in July 2000. Entitled "Music Within Every Child: Reclaiming the Singing Voices of All Our Children," McGraw will summarize recent research (McGraw, 1996; Wurgler, 1990; Brown, 1988) investigating the effects of a pedagogical emphasis on the lower range (C1 to A1) for singing. She will then present a continuum of head voice singing skills, along with a discussion of the relative difficulty of each skill for children who have become habituated to chest voice during early childhood and primary grades. Other research on the young child's singing voice by G. McGraw will be presented in the 1:00 p.m. Research Poster Session of the MENC 2000 Conference in Washington, D.C. The relationship between children's music perception skills and their music production skills (with implications for teaching practice) is the focus of a paper on the highly inaccurate young singer. McGraw's poster will present research and theory describing and explaining the singing production of the so-called monotone--"Rethinking the Monotone: A Model Explaining Poor Pitch Singing."

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SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION

(Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas)

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Diane Persellin (Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas) gave a presentation, "The Effect of Music on the Brains of Young Children", at Strings in the Mountains Music Festival last August in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

This August, Donna Brink Fox (Eastman School of Music), Wendy Sims (University of Missouri-Columbia) and Diane have been invited to participate in a symposium as part of the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival (New Mexico) to develop a music program for young children.

The Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) Conference will be held in Minneapolis, MN, March 25-28. John Flohr will be serving on the College Faculty Forum Advisory Committee headed by Arthur Tollefson. They will be working on pedagogy and NASM standards.

SOUTHERN DIVISION

(Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia)

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No report given.

BY-LAWS OF THE EARLY
CHILDHOOD MUSIC SPECIAL
RESEARCH INTEREST GROUP

I. NAME AND PURPOSE

- A. This organization will be known as the Early Childhood Music Special Research interest Group. It is organized under the auspices of the Society for Research in Music Education (SRME) of the Music Educators National Conference (MENC).
- B. The purposes of this SRIG will be:
 - 1. To focus attention on the needs for research and its dissemination in early childhood music.
 - 2. To stimulate music education researchers to conduct well-designed studies focusing on the musical development of the child as well as the improvement of practice and teacher preparation.
 - 3. To encourage individual and collaborative research efforts that will contribute to a comprehensive, over-arching SRIG research program.
 - 4. To share information through the publication of a bi-annual newsletter to be sent to all SRIG members, other SRIG chairs and the SRME executive committee.

II. MEMBERSHIP

- A. Any member of the Music Educators National Conference may be a member of the Early Childhood Music SRIG.
- B. MENC members may become members of the Early Childhood Music SRIG by notifying the chair or chair-elect of the SRIG.
- C. SRIG membership will remain active as long as MENC membership is held or until a request for discontinuance is received by the SRIG chair.

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 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.
 - f. Developing SRIG membership.
 - 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 the SRIG.
 - 2. The Chair-elect assumes duties after election by the SRIG membership during the year of the biennial conference.
 - 3. Should the Chair-elect be unable to carry out the duties of that position, the National Chair, after consultation with regional representatives, appoints an acting chair-elect until such time as an election for a new Chair-elect may be held.
- C. The six regional representatives serve as an advisory council to the SRIG.
 - 1. The duties of the regional representatives 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 the solicitation of material for the newsletter.
 - d. To serve with the Chair-elect as the nominating committee for the position of Chair-elect.
 - 2. The regional representatives will assume their duties upon appointment by the National Chair.
 - 3. Should the regional representatives be unable to carry out the duties of that position, a new representative will be appointed by the National Chair.

IV. ELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE OF THE CHAIR-ELECT

A. Nomination Process

- 1. During January of the biennial conference year, the nominating committee (see above III.C.1.d.) will submit a slate of candidates to the National Chair.
- 2. The Chair will contact each nominee and request a short statement of interest and qualification. That statement will appear in the next issue of the SRIG newsletter.

B. Election Process

- 1. A written ballot will be included in the issue of the SRIG newsletter to be returned before the biennial conference.
- 2. Ballots will also be available at the meeting of the Early Childhood Music SRIG.
- 3. Candidates will be elected on the basis of a majority of voting members. In the event of a tie, a run-off election will be held during the meeting of the SRIG.

- C. The term of office of the Chair-elect will be two years, followed by two years as National Chair.

V. MEETINGS

- A. The Early Childhood Music SRIG will hold its business meeting and professional session(s) at every biennial conference.
- B. Ad hoc meetings may be called by the National Chair, the Chair-elect or the regional representatives.

VI. AMENDMENTS

- A. Any provision of this document that is in conflict with the constitution of MENC or the by-laws of the Music Education Research Council (MERC) is null and void.
- B. Any amendments to this document requires a two-thirds majority vote of those present at the biennial meeting.

NOMINATIONS CHAIR-ELECT

My name is Joyce Eastlund Gromko. If I were a toy, I would be red, yellow, and blue, and the side of my box would read: "Recognized expert, with more than 30 published articles, on children's learning and literacy in music. Extensive experience in teaching (preK - post baccalaureate) and administration. Guaranteed to help your child think in sound." As a SRIG, we need to promote our expertise, conduct research in partnerships, and advance our nation's understanding of the critical importance of the arts in children's development. Let's start drawing attention to ourselves, to our profession, to our research, and to the music in our schools. Let's get ahead of the toymakers in catching the attention of parents, the policy-makers, practitioners, and the rest of our research community.

Joyce Eastlund Gromko is an Associate Professor of Music Education at the College of Musical Arts and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the Graduate College of Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio. She earned her undergraduate degree in music education at Luther College (Decorah, IA), her master's degree at San Diego State University (San Diego, CA) and her doctorate in music education degree at Indiana University (Bloomington, IN). She has taught choral, instrumental, and general music in Iowa and California public schools and Hawaii and Washington D.C. independent schools. For the past nine years, she has taught undergraduate and graduate level courses in music education at Bowling Green State University. Dr. Gromko's research concerns children's development of symbol use in music and the development of aural perception. Her articles appear in the Journal of Research in Music Education, Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, Psychology of Music, Research Studies in Music Education, Educational Theory, General Music Today, Update, and Music Educators Journal.

BALLOT FOR EC-SRIG CHAIR-ELECT, 2000-2002

Joyce Eastlund Gromko

Write in _____

If you are attending MENC you can vote at the Early Childhood SRIG session.
If not, please mail your completed ballot by **MARCH 6** to:

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