

From the President

Summer Salutations to you all!

Summer is one of those times of year that we look forward to as teachers and one of the seasons that tend to slip by more quickly than we would like. Perhaps you are the type of person who counts down the number of days until school starts. Or maybe you live for each moment of every day. I am somewhere in between. I am cognizant of the fact that I have my first teacher meeting on August 14th, that I have my syllabi to finish up for my classes that start August 28th, AND the fact that new baby Raschdorf is due September 12th. This being said, for one of the first times in my life I am enjoying each day that this summer has to offer. For instance, this morning I drove my son to summer football practice. This has been a regular occurrence and should seem monotonous, but as I opened the door this morning the most glorious breeze hit me as I walked out of the house. What a wonderful reminder of the season we are in! Another instance was when I checked Facebook and I saw Pam Vellutini had posted a gorgeous picture of a sunrise from her back porch. I relished that moment as if I was there --the beautiful oranges and pink...so overwhelming! While I am glad that these moments



Taryn Raschdorf
Virginia Beach, VA



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have presented themselves, I wonder how often we either take them for granted or let them pass without realizing how enormous these “little moments” are.

Be ready
for the moment
that will
catch you
by surprise

In my last column I wrote about having a spirit of discovery and exploration to end the school year. As I am looking forward to the beginning of the new school year, I am hoping that discovery and exploration are a part of whatever happens. As the end of the summer approaches, however, I am taking on a more reflective attitude. Am I living for the moment or just keeping appointments? Am I appreciative of the fact that I have a roof over my head, food on my table, an amazing job, and five great kids, or I am letting the small things get to me and ruin my day? I was going to put in Merriam-Webster's definition of “reflection” at this juncture to drive

my point home. In reading the definition, however, there are so many ways to reflect, that I couldn't choose which one to use to prove my point. Instead, I have homework for you. Please look up a definition of “reflection” for yourself, then take the time to “reflect” on some of the wonderful things that have either happened already or be ready for the moment that will catch you by surprise; the breeze that hits your face, the glorious sunrise. While it may sometimes be easier to see the doom and gloom in a situation, I am sure there is good out there for us to snatch up and carry with us.

“When you look for the bad, expecting it, you will get it. When you know you will find the good—you will get that....” — Eleanor H. Porter, Pollyanna

-Taryn

**Not a current member of
SongWorks Educators Association?**

JOIN or RENEW

It's quick and easy! Go to

www.songworkseducatorsassociation.com

Mark your calendar, tell your principal...

2018 SONG WORK Educators Association Conference

“Playful Teaching, Vibrant Learning”

April 5–7

Bloomington, Minnesota

\$75

Student

\$100

Retired
Member

\$175

SWEA
Member

\$225

Non-Member

Registration available **September 1st**
at **songworkseducators.com**

Website: Exciting Update!

Historical Moments is a new section that has been added to the SongWorks Educators Association website!

Fleurette Sweeney, a founding member of SongWorks Educators Association, shares reflections on historical moments throughout the early growth of our organization.

Only SWEA Members have access to these videos. Please guide interested non-members to our [membership page to sign up](#).



Dr. Fleurette Sweeney Reflection Videos

These videos are intended for SongWorks Members only. Please refrain from sharing them but guide inquirers to our [membership page to sign up](#).

Discovery of Clusters

Dissertation 1

Dissertation 2

Form Books

Language Patterns & Hearing Impaired

Learners with Special Needs

Mapping

Mein Refugee Women

Number Patterns

Song Dots

What is CORE

Anacrusis Sensory Motor Integration

Canadian Context

English Based Music Study

Margaret Wharram

Mariam & Language with Hearing Impaired

Sharing at Courses



2017 VISITING SCHOLAR: CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

Ann Marie Stanley

This April, I had the good fortune to make music with many wonderful people who were “Digging Deeper, Reaching Wider” at the SongWorks 2017 conference.

It was a pleasure to see this living, breathing example of a *true* professional teacher learning community. The idea that teachers gathered together to share their work and ideas will learn from one another is a popular notion: one which underpins many teacher professional development activities. However, merely putting a bunch of music teachers in the same space is no guarantee that meaningful learning will occur. We know not all teacher communities will go *deep* OR *wide*!

For example, a group of music teachers might work together superficially, merely reinforcing the status quo. Or they might **dig deep**, collaborating to improve or reinvent their teaching practice.



Ann Marie Stanley
Baton Rouge, LA

for many teachers,
that fountain
-of renewal,
of inspiration,
of refreshment,
of beauty-
is SongWorks

Sometimes honest conversation and learning is stymied by norms of polite interaction; our desire for consensus can result in silencing of differences and retaining narrow views. But other times, we are able to **reach wide** to satisfactorily discuss hard questions about music education, even with those outside our immediate circle of compatibility.

So, what happened at SongWorks? Well, I witnessed colleagues whispering in the back of a conference room: parsing minute details about music teaching to divine what would be best for their learners. In the Hospitality Room, I heard late-night conversations where people questioned one another's deeply held beliefs about music education. Over every meal I observed people debating, laughing, singing, and reminiscing about their shared legacy in Music EdVentures.

The community of music teachers I met at the conference generously opened their practice to the close examination and critique of newbies, veterans, strangers, friends, professors, authors, novices, and experts alike. The conference attendees and organizers reached out to those who were wondering “what is this whole thing about anyway?” and explained patiently, passionately *why* they wake up and do what they do, every day, for children.

When I first read the conference theme, I started singing, “Deep and wide/deep and wide; There's a fountain flowing deep and wide.” I think that for many teachers, that fountain—of renewal, of inspiration, of refreshment, of beauty—is SongWorks.

All my best congratulations and admiration for the terrific community you've built...

Ann Marie

2017 VISITING SCHOLAR: CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

Carlos Abril

I am most grateful and honored to have been named a SongWorks Visiting Scholar for the 2017 national conference. It was a pleasure to spend three days engaging, making music, and chatting with so many of you—inspiring and inspired music educators committed to children and thoughtful about your teaching practice. It is clear that you have built a strong community of practice bound by your ideas on music pedagogy for children through active musical engagements with songs and the symbols used to represent music.



Carlos Abril
Coral Gables, FL

What made your literacy-based practices different from others I know was the careful attention to musicality. The symbols themselves, though abstractions, were designed to most closely reflect the actual sound. This resulted in the use of creative symbols, which deviated from traditional and quasi-traditional notation systems (e.g., stick notation), that seemed designed to produce more musical singing or movement. Movements of the body were also used to represent or reflect sounds, an embodied abstraction, resulting in musical gestures. The relationship between symbol and music-making was carefully thought out and a theme that pervaded many of the sessions. I will take many of these ideas back into my elementary general music methods course at the Frost School of Music.

In literacy-based
practices...
the careful attention
to musicality...
the symbols
themselves seemed
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more musical
singing or movement

Your community has a tangible culture of support. Participants celebrated one another's practices with applause, comments, words of encouragement, and cheers at times. There was a clear structure for supporting younger participants and those with less teaching experience through a formal mentoring program, scholarships, and opportunities to lead sessions. In addition, sessions focused on autobiographical accounts or cases from the field, seemed to serve as a catharsis for individuals and a lingering point of conversations for the community. There was also a seeming recognition of the need for outside support, as reflected in the Visiting Scholars program, in which a scholar in the field of music education is invited to participate, observe and reflect on the work and share those synthetic reflections to the community.

I really enjoyed the community celebration in the final banquet, where popular music-making and song-writing talents were showcased with flair and gusto (to say the least). We laughed, we danced, we sang, and we celebrated. Thank you for welcoming me into your music education community.

THE CHILDREN ARE COMING!

September, my favorite time of the school year

Sandy Murray

I have always enjoyed the anticipation of the new school year. It is a time for dreaming big and a time to consider what I believe in as a teacher. I think of how and when I will step aside and make space for the class to take ownership of the room and their learning. I imagine how I will allow creativity to flourish. And I think carefully about how singing, moving, and dancing will become part of our Grade 5 classroom culture.



Sandy Murray
Abbotsford, BC

Most of the elementary schools in our school district do not have music specialists; many students in my new fifth grade homeroom will be reluctant or even terrified to sing, let alone move to music. My goal at the beginning of the year is to introduce songs and games that help the students feel less self-conscious about singing and moving to music.

Many students
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grade homeroom
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even terrified
to sing...

The first day of school is only a half-day, but I want to start singing right away. *O Canada*, a song most of the students have sung at assemblies, is often my first song of choice for the year. I try to encourage the class to sing with their hearts and love for their country, but the sound is so tentative and hardly audible. The children have the first-day jitters and are also afraid that their classmates or teacher will hear their voice. My teacher response could be to tell the class that their singing was weak and timid and to, "Sing louder!", but I don't.

I've only just met them, don't even know their names, but love them already. I look at the class and ask for an observational kind of comment on our sound. It's not a judgment; we certainly do enough of that during the school year! One or two confident students raise their hands and offer descriptors like, "quiet" or "soft". We sing again. A few more students sing with a bit more confidence, but overall it's still tentative. That is what we can do today. Their sound is a direct reflection of how they feel. I assure the class that we will sing *O Canada* again tomorrow.

Day Two is the first full day of school. The class sings *O Canada* with a little more confidence. Questions like, “How many words did you sing?” or “Which part of the song speaks to you the most?” help the class focus on the song instead of themselves. The anthem becomes stronger and more musical with each repetition. We are on our way and it is time to add the element of movement to our singing.

The folk song, *Old Dan Tucker*, is my usual choice. The silly words and the “Who is the leader?” game help my students overcome feelings of self-consciousness. The students are moving and singing, completely focused on fooling the guesser. I find the natural teamwork inherent in the guessing game helps to build the class community.

Old Dan Tucker

Verse

Old Dan Tuc-ker was a might-y man. He brushed his teeth with a fry-in' pan. He combed his hair with a wag-on wheel, and died with a tooth-ache in his heel. So,

Chorus

get out the way for old Dan Tuc-ker. He's too late to stay for sup-per. Sup-per's ov-er, break-fast's cook-in', Old Dan Tuc-ker just stands there look-in'.

Below, I've written a scaffold for how I introduce and develop a song game experience to *Old Dan Tucker* with my students. I've also included some suggestions for assessment, student leadership, and practicing respectful interactions--all of which are important expectations I establish at the start of the school year.

CONNECT WITH THE SONG

I ask my students to share with the class what they use to brush their teeth and comb their hair. When I sing, I ask them to listen for some of the interesting things that the mighty Dan Tucker does in this song. The students identify a few things and I sing the song again to confirm their ideas. We repeat this process to identify more of Dan Tucker's odd behaviours.

GAME FORMATION

Standing circle. Even though my classroom is packed wall to wall with 30 desks we can still make a standing circle around the perimeter of the room.

IMITATION GAME

- ◆ The circle follows a leader's movement ideas while singing the song.
- ◆ I usually take the first few turns, showing the class that the ideas need to be easy to follow.
- ◆ The leader can change their movement idea every one or two phrases or do the same idea through the entire song.
- ◆ The challenge for the class is to be able to sing and follow the leader at the same time.
- ◆ Make sure to ask the students to assess their own singing and moving. For instance, "Show a thumbs up, sideways, or down to indicate whether or not you were singing and moving at the same time."



After the teacher takes a few leading turns, students can volunteer to be the new leaders. This is a good time to find out whether or not the class noticed when the movement started and stopped. (The beginning and end of the song determine when to move and stop, but this is not always evident to everyone!)

I encourage you to teach this game at a school assembly or with a buddy class. Your class can teach the school the song and individual students can be the movement leaders.

Even though
my classroom
is packed
with 30 desks,
we can still...

"WHO IS THE LEADER?" GAME

- ◆ The circle imitates a secret leader's movement ideas while one person, the "guesser", tries to figure out who the actual leader is.
- ◆ Have the guesser leave the room, while the circle determines the leader.
- ◆ Invite the guesser back to the room and into the circle.
- ◆ The circle tries their best to watch and copy the leader's movement ideas without looking at them directly.
- ◆ Prepare students ahead of time, that even if the guesser shows an expression of realization, we sing the song in its entirety before taking guesses.
- ◆ Three guesses and then the circle can give the guesser some hints.

RESPECTFUL INTERACTIONS

This game is a great opportunity to learn names and practice respectful and courteous interactions:

- ◆ “Mandeep, are you the leader?” “Sorry Skylar, I’m not.”
- ◆ Observe how the class deals with the laughter that might occur if a student has difficulty guessing. This might provide a great opportunity to talk about the meaning of laughter and the feelings of the guesser.
- ◆ Remind the circle that it would be courteous to first ask the guesser if she/he would like a hint.



practice
respectful
and courteous
interactions

POSSIBLE STUDY IDEAS

- ◆ Antiphonning with teacher modelling
- ◆ Antiphonning by student leaders.
- ◆ Ostinato spoken -- “mighty man” during song
- ◆ Ostinato sung – “stands there lookin’” during song
- ◆ *Old Dan Tucker* was a •• •
- ◆ *He brushed his teeth* with a •• •
- ◆ *He combed his hair* with a •• •
- ◆ *And died* with a toothache •• •

CONCLUSION

With the singing of *O Canada* we pay attention to making a personal connection to the song. A deliberate decision to not evaluate the class's singing quality frees the students from any feelings of inadequacy. With *Old Dan Tucker*, the students are not preoccupied with how they look as they move during the playing of “Who is the leader?” This game is not about “good” ideas, but about fooling the guesser. And thus, a classroom culture of singing and moving begins!

Sandy Murray taught Grades 1 through 5 as a classroom teacher for most of her 34-year career in the Abbotsford School District, British Columbia. Now “retired,” she works part-time as a faculty mentor and sessional instructor for the Teacher Education Program at the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford. **SWEA Past-President**

BIG Moments little moments

Reflections on **2017** Conference

“No one is too old or too young.”

“I love how SongWorks is growing.”

“Stories are not a waste of time.”

“Studying prepared maps has the power to build intrigue, curiosity, and anticipation-all of which draw listeners through extended listening to instrumental masterworks.”

“There are many right ways to solve challenges.”

“Freedom to learn through play and discovery!”

“SO many ideas to get students problem-solving and puzzling!”

“So inspired to provide materials for stations and independent exploration!”

“LOVE, LOVE, LOVE the sturdy song presentations - gets us up and moving and thinking!”

“I can trust in all that I know and am capable of, and share that with my learners and the teachers around me.”

“I need to remember to *listen* to the children singing as I teach the song games.”

“Ah ha moment! The movements to Hungarian Dance 5, then translating them into a musical map-this finally made sense to me.

“Children are never too young to experience “being” an orchestra...reading those scores!”

“I wanted to be 5 again and to attend everyone’s schools.”

2017 EMERGING PIONEERS: CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

Alison Carter

Three years ago, I was introduced to the SongWorks practices and principles. At that time, I never imagined how much of an impact they would have on my classroom and my teaching. Particularly this year, while planning with another SongWorks member as well as being an Emerging Pioneer, I have found these principles beneficial.



Alison Carter
Littleton, CO

A few of the principles were already being implemented in my classroom, and some only needed a few tweaks on my end to start using. However, principle number 6 was a little harder for me to implement. Principle 6 states, "Accurate and constructive feedback helps students become independent learners." In my education, I had seen so many seasoned teachers give immense praise to their students, reward good behavior and punish negative, and thought that must be

After giving more accurate and constructive feedback to my students I've discovered...

the best way to give feedback. I taught like this for several years, wondering why it didn't seem to work. After giving more accurate and constructive feedback to my students I've discovered they truly want to do the right thing, and they become independent learners. I've noticed they get more out of the lesson. It saves my voice and my energy. All students feel acknowledged and cared for. And, the class is overall a more joyful experience for both me and my students.

The "sturdy songs" were a great starting point to practice the sixth principle. The activities and lessons written for each sturdy song gave me many ideas and strategies to give accurate and constructive feedback to my students. Once I felt comfortable with these specific examples and saw the responses from my students, I was able to use these strategies for feedback on my own. Instead of saying, "I like the way Johnny is sitting" (which I used all the time!), I now have changed that feedback to "I notice some first graders who are ready to learn!" I am amazed at the difference this simple change

made in my students. Changing my words just slightly has made such a significant difference.

Principle 6 is now habitual for me, and I can't imagine going back to the ways I once spoke to my students. I have even encouraged other teachers to try shifting the way they give feedback to their students as well. I am hoping that use of this constructive feedback--as opposed to excessive praise, rewards, and competition--will become the norm in more classrooms across the country.

...Changing my words just slightly has made such a significant difference

Alison Carter is in her seventh year teaching elementary music and choir in Littleton, Colorado. A Colorado native, she received her Bachelor of Music Education Degree from the University of Northern Colorado. She also holds a Masters degree in Educational Technology from the University of Nebraska. Alison enjoys singing with the Voices West chorus as well as teaching private piano and voice. When she's not working, Alison likes to spend time working out, catching a movie, or relaxing at home with her husband and dog.

2017 Emerging Pioneer, Alison Carter, shares this as her third of four assignments to fulfill her Fleurette Sweeney Fellowship for Emerging Pioneers award.

FEEDBACK



Since 2011, Music EdVentures has inducted 44 Emerging Pioneers into the Fleurette Sweeney Fellowship program. These early and mid-career teachers have deepened their relationships with SongWorks through year-long mentorships with an established member of MEI who guides them through regular reflections on their teaching, and prepares them to share what they've learned with their SongWorks colleagues at the annual MEI conference. Many Emerging Pioneers have become the torchbearers for the future of Music EdVentures and the SongWorks approach of teaching.

2017 EMERGING PIONEERS: CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

Halle Davis

As a new teacher in the state of California, I am required to participate in something called TIP (Teacher Induction Program) to clear my preliminary teaching credential. This two-year program pairs me with a mentor teacher as I complete my coursework. Luckily for me, my mentor teacher is an elementary music teacher in my district who has been a fantastic resource and collaborator. I knew I wanted to share SongWorks with her, but to be honest, I felt a little nervous. The SongWorks approach and community have made such an impact on my teaching and I wanted to be able to effectively share my enthusiasm with her.



Halle Davis
Santa Barbara, CA

...children so playfully engaged in the storytelling and drama of music making.

Going into the meeting, I knew what I wanted to talk about, but wasn't sure how to start. I realized that the most natural way for me to begin was to share my story, to share how I first discovered SongWorks. To do that, I needed to talk about the *MusicPlay* preschool program at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. Observing my first *MusicPlay* class was like watching magic. I had never seen children so playfully engaged in the storytelling and

drama of music making. I was hooked and had to learn more. After sharing this story with my mentor, she told me about a music classroom she observed at the beginning of her teaching career where she felt that same sort of magic. At the end of a long and challenging teaching year, I was glad we were able to reflect on these experiences.

I brought several resources to our meeting including *SongWorks I*, *SongWorks II*, *RhymePlay*, both volumes of *Playing With The Classics*, and my laptop so I could pull up online resources. We discussed the *SongWorks Principles of Teaching and Learning*, and I shared what I felt to be some of the principles that make SongWorks unique. We used the resources page on the website to look at SongWorks strategies. My colleague expressed interest in antiphonning, and we discussed scenarios where it could be playfully implemented in a general music setting or in an instrumental setting. I realized while

talking through some of these strategies that just like my first experience with SongWorks, it is most effective to see it in action. We discussed ways that she could experience SongWorks firsthand, including observation, conferences, and online video resources.

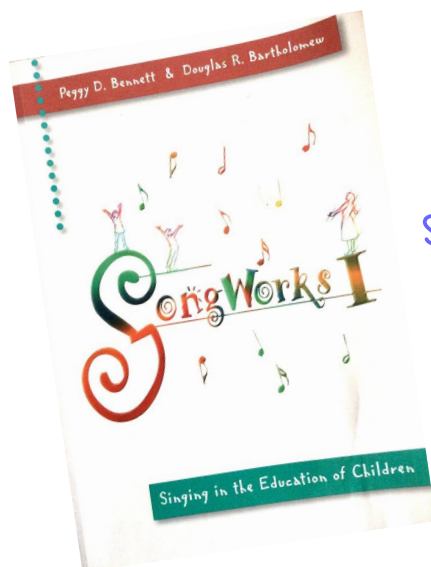
At the end of our visit, I asked my colleague what might have 'stuck'. Her first response was the flexibility of the SongWorks approach. She appreciated how these principles and strategies could augment what she was already doing in her classroom. She then expressed her desire to add more classical music experiences in her classroom and an interest in learning more about what I had done to introduce this repertoire via storytelling, mapping, and song dotting. We have made plans to meet prior to the new school year to plan and collaborate together. I am eager to learn from her, and to share more of my enthusiasm for SongWorks.

Halle Davis teaches K-3 general music and 4-6 instrumental music in Santa Barbara, California. Halle was introduced to Music EdVentures and SongWorks during her time at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music where she received a Bachelor of Music Degree in Violin Performance and a Master of Music Teaching. In addition to teaching, Halle plays violin with the Santa Barbara City College Orchestra and enjoys spending time with her family and their dogs.

**2017 Emerging Pioneer, Halle Davis,
shares this as her third of four assignments to fulfill her
Fleurette Sweeney Fellowship for Emerging Pioneers award.**

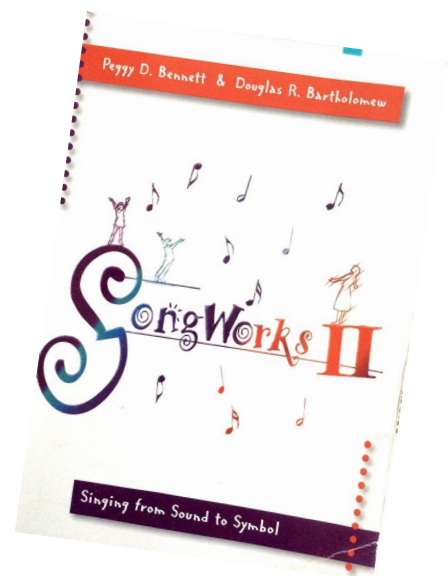
SongWorks

by Peggy D. Bennett and Douglas R. Bartholomew

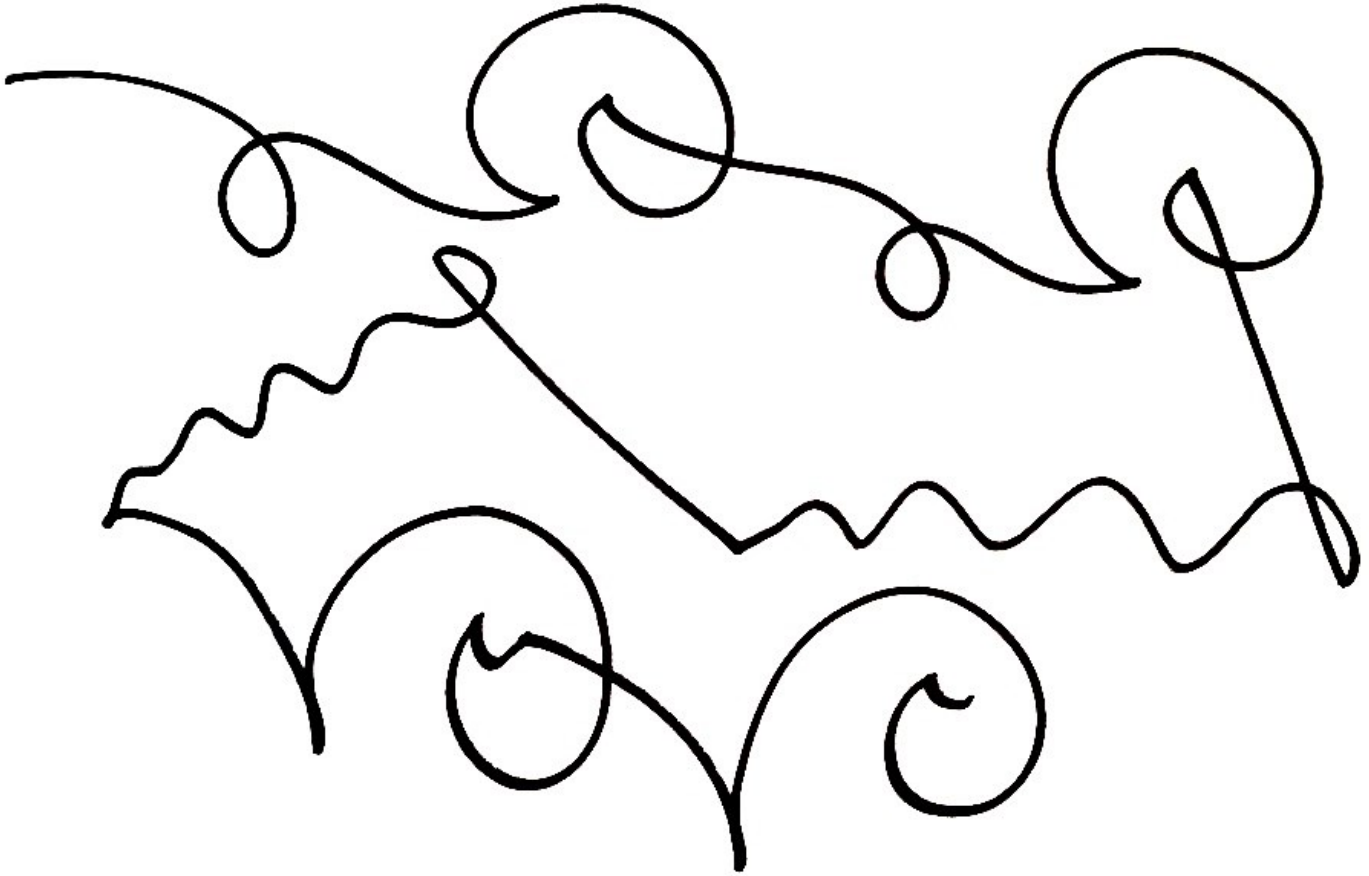


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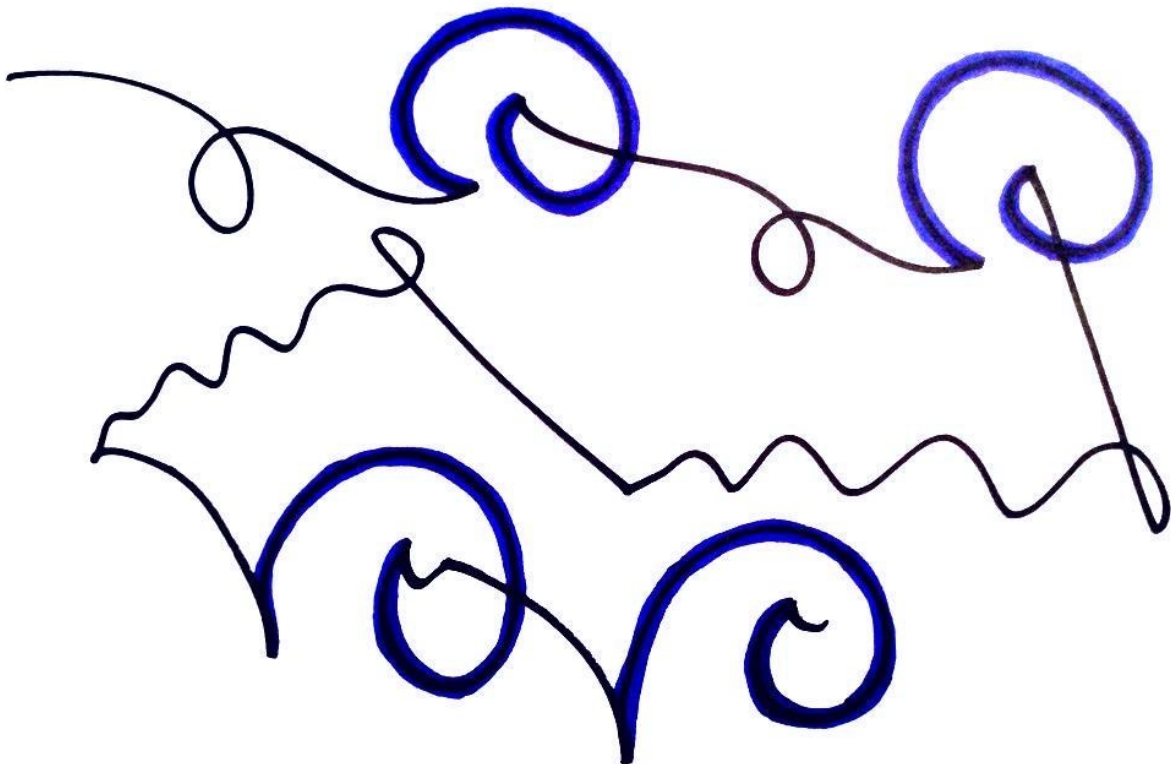
songworkspress@gmail.com



MYSTERY MAP: August



Want a clue? The four sections that have been highlighted in blue below all contain the same 3 pitches that belong to the song "Clickety Clack."

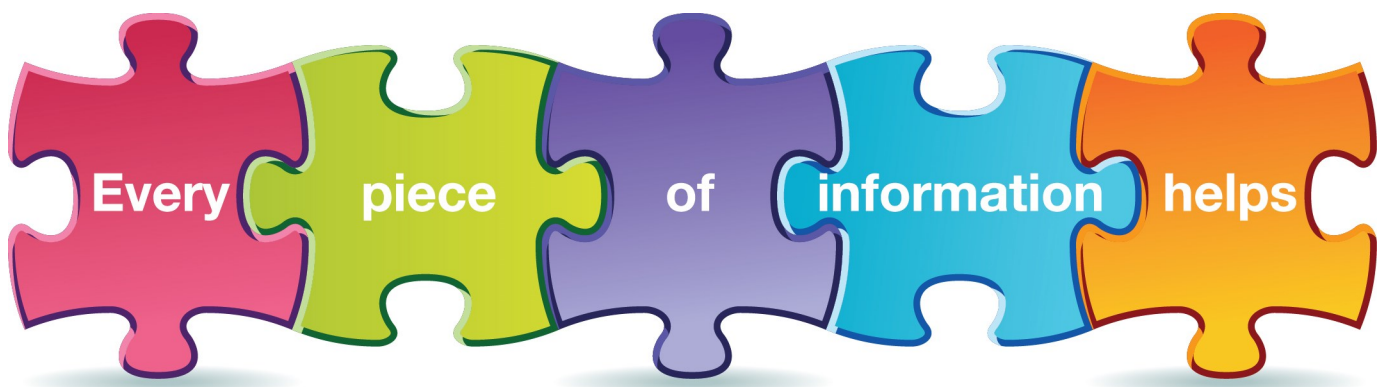


Check back next month for the answer!

Want to submit a mystery map from one of your favorite songs/masterworks? Don't be shy!
Submit maps for consideration to jeharkins@fcps.edu

Some PUZZLES about Musical Context*

- A teacher asks students on what word the “bridge” comes down in the song *A-Hunting We Will Go*. The teacher was expecting to hear students answer, “Catch.” Instead, students responded, “We’ll catch a little fox.”
- A researcher asks students how *Mulberry Bush* ends. The students respond not with the last word, tone, or syllable, but with “So early in the morning.”
- A piano student loses his place while performing during a lesson. In order to get started again, the student must begin at the very beginning of the piece.
- A teacher asks students to clap on the two-syllable words that sound like “Tucker” and “mighty” in *Old Dan Tucker*. The students spontaneously add a third syllable when they clap, completing the patterns: “mighty man,” “frying pan,” “wagon wheel.”
- A teacher notices that several students cannot match pitch when she or a student sings a tone for them, but these same students sing songs in tune with other voices.
- When asked to sing “the sun” from *Sally Go Round the Sun*, without singing the whole song, students seem unable to sing it in tune. They rarely sing it out of tune if they sing the whole phrase.
- Students have trouble singing the first phrase of a song in tune when singing it very slowly. They sing it in tune when singing it at a familiar tempo.
- A teacher notices that when her class tries to sing “see how they run” from *Three Blind Mice* without singing the first phrase, they almost invariably sing it to the tune of the first words, “three blind mice.” He also noticed that with other songs students are unable to sing the second phrase of a song without singing the first phrase.



*Bennett, Peggy D. & Bartholomew, Douglas R. (1999). *SongWorks 2: Singing from sound to symbol*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. Reprinted 2014 by SongWorks Press.

SONG WORKS

BACK TO SCHOOL

Vocal Warmups for
re-entry to teaching

Mixers
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Study Games

Beginning procedures of
mapping
song dotting

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~ YES, I'll be there

~ YES, Lunch

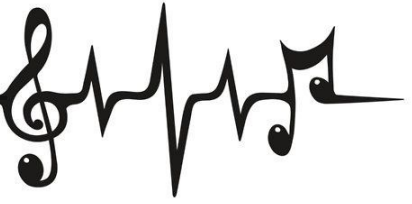
~ Will bring my lunch

IN PRACTICE: Music Literacy for Children

Part 2 of 6*

Jake Harkins

A Musical Evolution of Notation



Clustering: Developing a Musical Responsiveness

Literacy, as communication, begins long before the skills of reading and writing develop. Aural and oral language, the process of listening to and producing sound, is foundational to language acquisition. When infants perceive and respond to language “clusters,” they develop a responsiveness to language. Likewise, when children begin to perceive and respond to sound clusters, they develop a responsiveness to music (SW 2, *Principle 1*).

Clusters of musical sound are figural groupings of meaningful aural perception. When approaches to music education disregard clusters, and instead value metric groupings (the arithmetic of music), the musicality inherent in pre-literacy skills of aural and oral language are often diminished or extinguished. Consequently, how a child naturally hears and produces sound takes a back seat to the *metrics* of prescribed conventional notation.

Figural groupings
of meaningful
aural perception

When a responsiveness to language is nurtured, the listener begins to develop a phonological awareness—a general awareness of the fundamental characteristics of sound. A phonological awareness also develops as a result of a responsiveness to music. This includes where sound exists between silences, and, more specifically, the beginning and ending of sound. **Therefore, the largest cluster of sound in a song is, indeed, the whole song.** When we attend to the start of the song, and the end of the song, the points of closure (the start of sound, and a tonal/musical, linguistic, and natural ending) provide a framework for the nuances of musical sound to exist.

Bridge the gap
between
phonological
awareness and
phonemic awareness

It is human nature to find meaning and pleasure in patterns. Intentionally, and subconsciously, we organize and preserve musical clusters of sound within the whole of a song. **Phrases—meaningful aural perceptions of sound relationships within the context of a whole song—create a song’s structure** (examples: short short long, echo, balanced). A responsiveness to these smaller cluster phrases begins to bridge the gap between phonological awareness and phonemic awareness.

Beyond phonological awareness of a whole song, and phrases that exist within, exists a phonemic awareness—an auditory awareness of individual sounds within a chunk or phrase. **These smaller clusters of sound, also known as stress patterns and chunks, belong together aurally, but often not visually.** These phonemes create patterns that are identifiable by the stressed and non-stressed syllables that create the cohesiveness, expressiveness, and shape to a phrase. These units or clusters are easily remembered, easily repeated, and, therefore, valuable gems for sound and notation study. Song clusters group sound into units based on meaningful aural patterns. And these aural patterns are often distorted when beamed notes and barlines determine the pattern accents or stressed syllables.

In SongWorks, hearing, producing, and notating sound *in clusters* is fundamental because “the way music sounds, rather than how it looks, guides the selection and presentation of patterns for study” (SW2, Principle 4).

In this edition of IN PRACTICE, four educators share specific, real-life examples of intentionally nurturing students' responsiveness to music through an awareness of clusters. They share techniques for awareness of context: the whole song, phrases within a whole song, and smaller clusters. Preparing students for studying music literacy (mapping, dotting, ideographs, and blended notation) all begins with an awareness of clusters. In essence, teachers playfully choose to “highlight” clusters during the

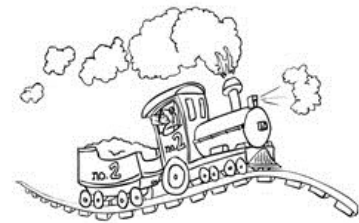
1. Introduction of a new song or secret song
2. Unfolding the song game experience
3. Journey into literacy study techniques

We hope their reflections will inspire you as they share how their intentional and playful teaching strategies support the highlighting of clusters in a vibrant learning environment.

CLICKETY CLACK -Jake Harkins

HIGHLIGHTING the “whole song” cluster

As described above, a phonological awareness includes where sound exists between silences, and, more specifically, the beginning and ending of sound. When we attend to the start of the song, and the end of the song, the point of closure provides a framework for the nuances of musical sound to exist. This awareness, and coordinating movement to the starting and ending of sound, is a fundamental skill to nurture in young children.



The cluster I chose to highlight in this experience is the whole song, and a hint at awareness of the phrase clusters (short short long) without naming or identifying them with the children. Highlighting the whole song cluster aims to elicit the responsiveness to musical sound. This activity draws attention to the largest point of closure--the start and stop of a song. Additionally, students begin to hear the smaller points of closure of the phrase lengths.

Where
sound exists
between silences,
and, more specifically
the beginning
and ending of sound

ENGAGING LISTENING

Kindergarten, 2nd week of school

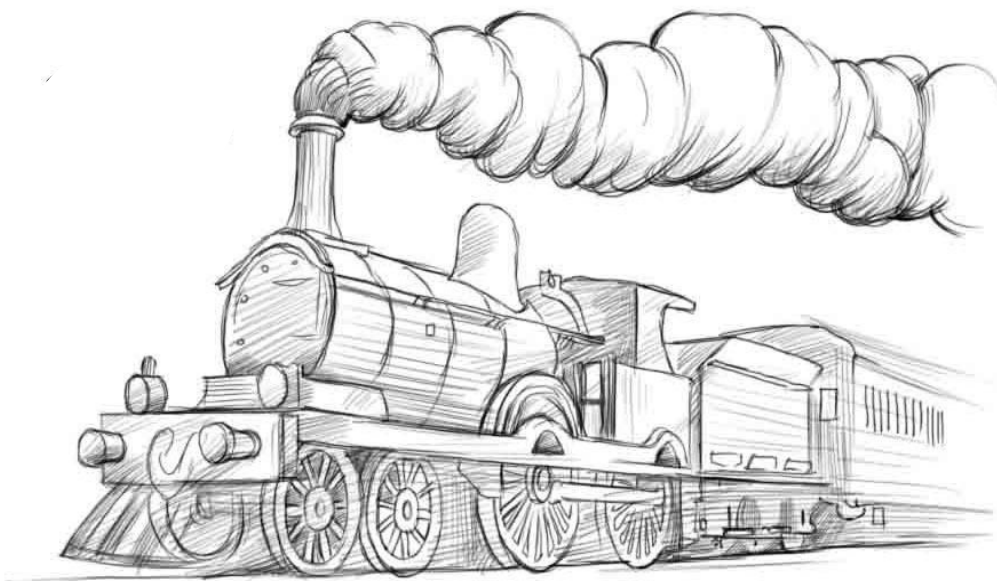
- ◆ *Listen to my song. Watch my fingers.* (T sings and tiptoes fingers up and down arm).
- ◆ *What did you notice?* (T gestures to students to share, and provides verbal/non-verbal affirmations).
- ◆ *Let's check!* (T sings and performs motions again).
- ◆ *What do you think this song is about?* (T gathers student responses, and provides small conversational questions/feedback as appropriate).

FOCUSED STUDENT TASKS: aural, visual, kinesthetic

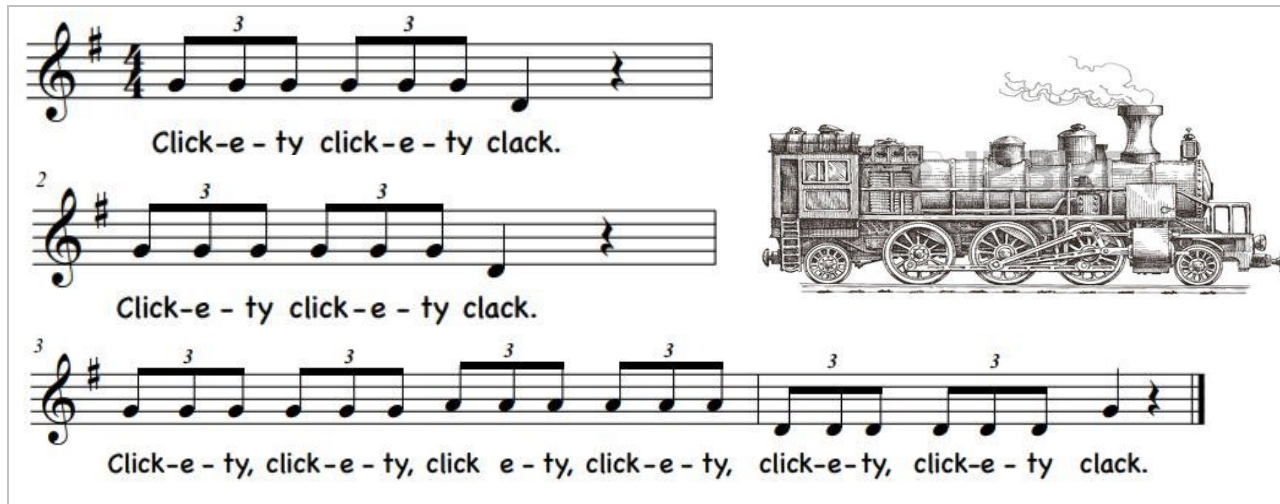
- ◆ *We know this train is going somewhere! Something happens to it during its journey. Watch and listen.* (T sings and moves fingers again on arm, stopping on the word “clack” for each phrase). Students become aware of the pauses (aural, visual).
- ◆ *Let your train start and stop like mine.* (T sings and students perform motions). *You were watching and knew just when to stop your trains!* (visual, aural, kinesthetic).
- ◆ *How did you know?* (S describe they were watching my fingers).
- ◆ *Yes, I agree. But just for fun, close your eyes. Because, there is something else that helps us know when to stop. Listen to my voice, and get your train ready!* (Aural, kinesthetic).
- ◆ *What did you hear?* (S respond T voice stops. If anyone catches the change in word to ‘clack’ I would acknowledge that as well). (aural)
- ◆ (Playfully) *Are you saying that you think you can face away from our circle, and still know when to make your train start and stop?! Lets try.* (visual-own fingers and/or neighbors, aural-teacher and perhaps own or other student voices, kinesthetic-own fingers).

INTERACTIVE MODELING: THE GAME

- ◆ *You look and sound ready for a challenge! Take a watching turn, as my fingers share their job with my feet.* (T pretends to bring fingers to bottom of each foot, and stands. T and S sing while T tiptoes in place during the song, always stopping on ‘clack.’)
- ◆ *Did my feet remember when to stop?* (S provide feedback).
- ◆ *Standing (gestures up), your feet will take a turn now.* (S sing and tiptoe in place during song). T provides appropriate feedback on S focus, success, and effort.
- ◆ *I know my train is ready to leave the station. Take a knee and watching turn while you sing, because this time the end might surprise you!* (S sing; T tiptoes to the rhythm around the free space during the song—always pausing on ‘clack’—and ends facing a student saying...)
- ◆ *This train is looking for another car to join. Do your feet feel ready to join my train?* (S accepts; T asks class for ideas on how the cars could join safely—often deciding on the fingers of the back train resting gently on the hips of the car in front. If S does not accept, T asks, *Whose feet feel ready? Do we all want another practice turn?*)
- ◆ As the game unfolds, and the train grows behind the teacher, the S who is the caboose invites the nearest child from the standing circle at the final ‘clack’ of the song.



Present
the ‘problem’
as a
challenge
for students
to solve



Click-e - ty click-e - ty clack.

Click-e - ty click-e - ty clack.

Click-e - ty, click-e - ty, click e - ty, click-e - ty, click-e-ty, click-e - ty clack.

EXTENSIONS

On future days, the game may return as a secret song. The actual play of the game may include playful variations which highlight more focus on the phrase clusters within the whole song:

- ◆ Student leaders as the conductor at the front of the train
- ◆ The conductor, caboose, or another 'car' may be responsible for shouting 'all aboard!' followed by a full-class whistle imitation/vocal exploration
- ◆ As the train grows and a new 'car' is invited each time, perhaps they will get to choose to be the caboose (as played thus far), or become the captain at the front.
- ◆ Further, the student who joins each time may decide to take the leadership role as captain, but have the train cars turn around before the song starts, so that everyone has switched direction from the previous turn.
- ◆ Perhaps the train will move forward, then backwards, then forwards again, switching direction after each 'clack' and mapping the short short long phrase lengths in the childrens' bodies and physical memory

TIPS FOR RESPONDING TO BEHAVIORS

Should the movement extensions prove to become "messy" or "rowdy," some options to re-direct without scolding could include to pause the game, level down, and...

- ◆ Bring the movement back to the arm while singing. Provide some students the responsibility to choose where on the body the train will travel this time. When the energy level feels focused again, bring student attention to their quality singing, and accuracy of when they stop. State that when we stand, we will bring the same singing, and focused movement to our game.
- ◆ Use the situation as an opportunity to discuss safety, and present the 'problem' as a challenge for students to solve. Gather ideas for changes that need to be made in student choices or behaviors, and when ready, stand and continue.
- ◆ Challenge students to start from the beginning with their fingers, performing the small motions while they sing with "magic lips" (audiate the song in their inner hearing). Select individual student volunteers to give their feet a turn again, while the rest of the class sings in their brain. Try adding another person or more, and have students observe those moving, to describe what they notice. When the energy feels focused, stand and continue the game.

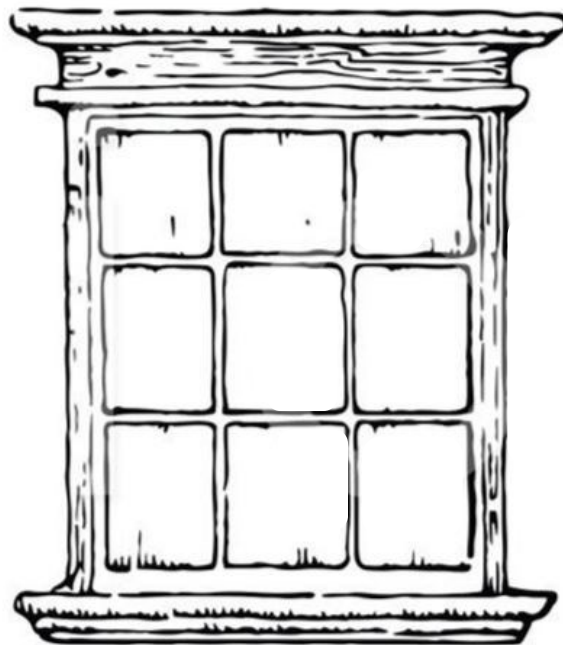
Next steps towards literacy of the highlighted whole song cluster include a scaffold of teacher modeled, and student-created line maps. Just like our movement, the map always starts and stops with the song. Student nuances of the phrases in maps may or may not be present. Depending on your students' readiness, bring attention to these phrases in our singing, breathing, and recalling the movement games and encourage them to show those sections in their maps.

TIDEO -Alice Nordquist

HIGHLIGHTING the structural components of a “whole song”: phrases and clusters

This introduction to “Tideo” is designed to draw student attention to hearing and feeling clusters within the larger phrase structure of a whole song. Students explore the story of the song through questioning and build a game that features distinct motions for each smaller cluster. Following this experience, students have the opportunity to check and confirm their awareness of the sequence, patterning, and grouping of individual clusters through discussion of the movements and antiphonning.

The aural, visual, and kinesthetic components of these initial experiences prepare students for subsequent study of the sounds within the song. For students in preschool or Kindergarten at the beginning of the year, the study could culminate in an early reading experience in the form of an ideograph, with extensions into arranging and puzzling. For students with more experience, the encounter with the ideograph could lead to rhythmic and melodic discovery through blended notation, song dotting, and use of the pentahand.



DISCOVERING MEANING

- ◆ *Listen for a word you don't know.* (T sings.)
- ◆ *Did you hear it?* (S: tideo, jingle, gull-at-the-wind, and perhaps others)
- ◆ *Let's focus on "tideo"—what could it mean? Those other words might make more sense when you hear the song again.* (T sings.)
- ◆ *What are you thinking?* (T collects student responses.)
- ◆ *Check how your idea fits in the song. I'll watch and see if you do anything new!* (T sings; S might also start singing.)
- ◆ *Here's what I thought the first time I heard this song. I wonder what you'll think.* (T sings and waves during each occurrence of “tideo,” including a smile and eye contact with a different student each time.)
- ◆ *What are you thinking?* (S: hi, hello, howdy, a greeting)
- ◆ *Let's try it.* (T and S sing and wave.)
- ◆ *How many "tideos" are there? Show me. Face a partner and check. One partner wave; one partner count.* (T and S sing, wave, and count.) *Switch!*
- ◆ *I'm adding something new.* (T and S sing, wave during each “tideo,” and mime ringing or shaking a bell during each “Jingle at the window” cluster.)

BUILDING A GAME

- ◆ *Where I live in Baltimore, the houses are all right next to each other, in a row!* (T shows picture of a Baltimore row.) *If I want to visit my neighbor, I can just step over to her window and say hello! Have you ever done that?*
- ◆ *I thought we could make a row of houses right here. What would that look like?* (S decide a formation for the game; T provides guidance as necessary through questions: *What about two sides of the street? Have you ever seen houses in a circle?*)
- ◆ (T stands at the edge of the row.) *I'll be the first Jingler! Ready, sing...* (T and S sing while T performs the following motions):



TEXT	MOTION
Pass one window, Tideo	1st sideways-striding step to next student in row wave, smile, and make eye contact with 1st S
Pass two windows, Tideo	2nd sideways-striding step to next student in row wave, smile, and make eye contact with 2nd S
Pass three windows Tideo	3rd sideways-striding step to next student in row wave, smile, and make eye contact with 3rd S
Jingle at the window Tideo	hop with excitement at 4th S & jingle imaginary door bell wave, smile, and make eye contact with 4th S
Tideo Tideo	tap thighs, clap own hands, pat 4th S hands high level same as above (in time with the rhythm of the word)
Jingle at the window Tideo	hop with excitement at 4th S & jingle imaginary door bell wave, smile, and make eye contact with 4th S
Tideo Tideo	tap thighs, clap own hands, pat 4th S hands high level same as above (in time with the rhythm of the word)
Jingle at the window Tideo	hop with excitement at 4th S & jingle imaginary door bell wave, smile, and make eye contact with 4th S

- ◆ *I added something new when my partner and I connected. Did you catch it? Watch again, then turn to a partner and try it.* (T sings and models tap-clap-pat pattern again; S practice with a partner.)
- ◆ (Spoken to S who partnered with T) *Nathan, I need a rest! Can I come in? Would you like to be the next Jingler?* (S accepts and trades places with T, or declines invitation.)
- ◆ *There's a new Jingler in town!* (Game play continues. Increase the number of Jingers playing simultaneously to three or four, so that all students may experience the movement and cluster pairings.)

CHECKING AND CONFIRMING

- ◆ *What did you notice about the Jingler's job? Tell your neighbor.* (S discuss ideas; T collects responses.)
- ◆ *Do the Jingers stay in one place? Are they always moving? When do they pause? When do they get to stay at one house for a while?* (T guides S to describe movement as related to larger and smaller phrases within the whole song: The Jingers move from house to house during the first half of the song, then stay and play at the fourth house during the second half. Within the first half of the song, the step followed by a pause places a container around each smaller phrase, "Pass (one) window, tideo.")
- ◆ *Watch my hands.* (T leads playful antiphonning experience to highlight the different clusters within the whole song: smallest clusters, shorter phrases, and longer phrases. T uses a variety of performance modes including singing lyrics, chinning, tapping, and audiating.)

Tideo

Pass one win dow ti de o, pass two win dows ti de o,
pass three win dows ti de o, jin gle at the win dow ti de o,
ti de o, ti de o, jin gle at the win dow ti de o,
ti de o, ti de o, jin gle at the win dow ti de o.

Next steps towards literacy of the highlighted structure of phrases and individual clusters include (1) encountering an ideograph as a secret song, (2) adding, removing, or rearranging components of the ideograph to create further reading opportunities, (3) investigating the musical similarities and differences between each occurrence of "tideo," and (4) discovering the rhythmic or melodic notation for each "tideo" cluster.

OLD HOUSE - Lisa Schoen

HIGHLIGHTING 'tear it down' sound clusters

The lesson will introduce a new song and highlight the 'tear it down' sound clusters. It will utilize movement, antiphonning, chinning, tapping, audiating and may lead to song dotting and instruments.

FIRST EXPOSURE

The following process is not a script, but aims to provide a sequence and scaffold to introduce the new song, using specific questioning to target the listening experience, and incorporating movement gestures to elicit student choices and response to the song. These invitations and attention to specific tasks (listening, movement, etc.) during the introduction of a new song are valuable steps/strategies to engage students.

- ◆ *Listen for any "tools" in this song.* (hammer, saw, wrecking machine)
- ◆ *Lets check the song. Add an arm movement when you hear each of those tools.*
- ◆ *Are there repeating words?* (tear it down)
- ◆ *Check the song.*
- ◆ *How many times did we sing "tear it down"?(6)*
- ◆ *Catch my motions.* Tap your fingertips together on the "tear it down" clusters.
- ◆ *Where else should we tap when we hear those words?*
- ◆ *Try to tap that part on your neighbor's shoulder while they tap on yours.*
- ◆ Add actions for the rest of the clusters (old house, who's gonna help me, the next thing you bring me). T may pick these, or S may offer ideas.
- ◆ *Watch my eyes. You will sing when I open them.* Antiphon for playful practice. Include lyrics and actions.
- ◆ *Now I will only take one part of the song.* Antiphon highlighting the "tear it down" clusters: Teacher gestures for students to start the song; teacher sings the "tear it down" clusters to make sure students are hearing accurate pitches.
- ◆ *It is your turn to take those repeated parts. When my elbow is down you sing, when it is up, I sing. Watch carefully!* Switch so that students are only singing "tear it down" clusters.



...watch
my eyes.
You will sing
when I
open them

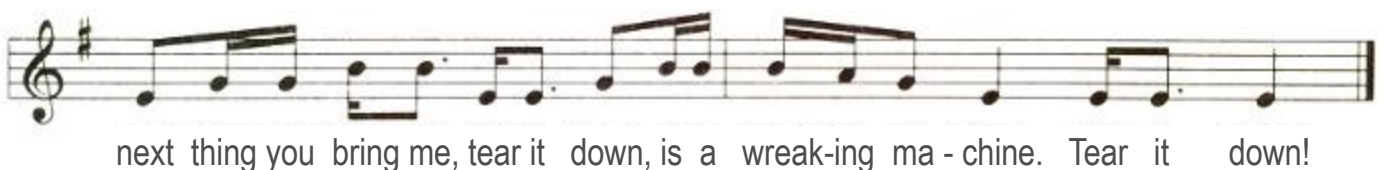
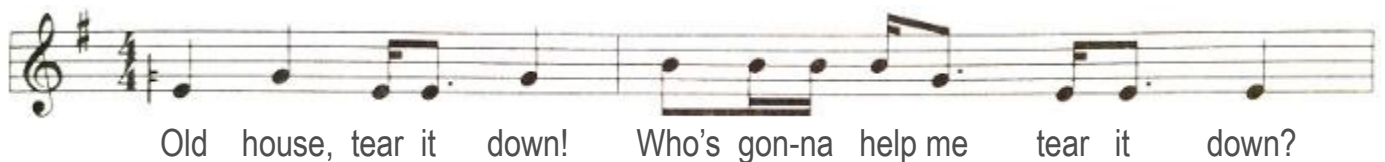
SECOND EXPOSURE

- ◆ Secret song: teacher chins the whole song on “doo” or “la” and collects words that come to mind.
- ◆ T sings whole song and substitutes collected words into the song; S check for others.
- ◆ More play and practice using antiphonning (teacher-led and student-led) to highlight “tear it down” clusters. Antophon using:
 1. Lyrics
 2. Change the words to nonsense syllables (chinning)
 3. Audiate the words, use only the actions and tapping.
 4. Tap the rhythm
 5. Combinations of lyrics, chinning, audiating, tapping
- ◆ During each of 5 experiences above, maintain the goal of antiphonning many times through the whole song. Be purposeful that the last time through that experience (say, number 2), the students are responsible solely for the highlighted cluster (either singing, chinning, actions, tapping), and all other parts of the song are audiated. In this way, the teacher will make no sound, and the students have experienced vocalizing, hearing and moving to the cluster in many ways, while in the context of the whole song.

Students
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of the
whole song.

Next steps towards literacy of the highlighted cluster include a scaffold towards song dotting, where that experience focuses in on the repeating ‘tear it down’ clusters. Solfege is added to the dots, and these clusters are explored on the xylophones.

Old House



PAW-PAW PATCH -Terolle Turnham

PREPATORY to this lesson, students

1. Learned the full story of the verses of the song
2. Developed a hiding game in relation to the story
3. Have familiarity with the song-dotting process

HIGHLIGHTING: Cadence cluster

The learning goal is to highlight the feeling of the melodic rhythm in the cadence. In future study, students see how stems, flags, and beams add meaning to the song dot to reflect the fastest sounds, slowest or longest-lasting sound and those in the middle.

To prepare the cluster with thrill, not drill, it will be experienced through playful and musical movement study and chinning the cadence. These experiences are intentional preparation for future song dotting, as they set students up for describing the sense of fast, slow and medium moving sounds gleaned through kinesthetic awareness and teacher demonstration.

RECALL

- ◆ *Last week you sang two songs that included the name of a girl. Can you name them?* (S responses may include: Where oh Where is Pretty Little Sussie?, Sally Go Round the Sun, Polly Put the Kettle On)
- ◆ *Let's sing the songs about Sussie and Polly.* (T gives starting pitches, S sing Sussie song, then Polly song)

SECRET SONG

- ◆ *Watch closely as I sing one of those two songs in my head, with the help of my hands.*

- ⇒ Teacher sits quite still, tapping her fingers inaudibly to the rhythm of the melody and text.
- ⇒ She begins tapping alternating pointer fingers on phrase 1, and switches to pinky fingers for phrase 2. This shows students a visual clue of a new beginning in language phrase, as well as a harmonic and melodic shift. The third phrase shifts back to the pointer fingers, still with no sound.
- ⇒ The final cadence cluster (phrase 4) is clapped at the end of the secret song. Making this cluster the only audible one during the secret song immediately highlights it to students. This cluster will continue to be highlighted throughout the experience, with playful repetition to prepare students for subsequent study.

- ◆ *What did you hear?* (Several students answer)
- ◆ *Lets check.* (The class then checks both songs by singing or audiating them, while the teacher repeats her above performance.)

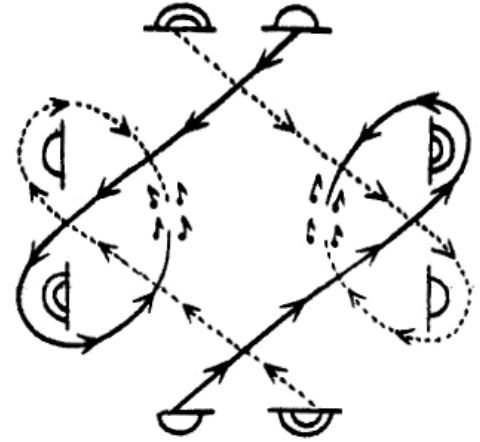


...What
did
you hear?
Lets
check...

SMALL GROUP WORK

The following assignment utilizes the three learning modes: aural, visual and kinesthetic. It uses two performance modes: movement and chinning (singing the song on a syllable like loo, too, or doo).

- ◆ You have named and checked the song. Now for your tasks (counts fingers on hand while speaking):
1. Arrange yourself in groups of 4-6 students.
 2. Plan moves for the first three phrases of the song that show what you notice by changing your direction. You may use familiar figures from barn dancing activities we have learned (do-si-do, allemande, elbow swing, cross-partner, two-hand arch, etc.)
 3. Plan moves for the cadence that feel like the sounds you heard in my clapping.
 4. I will sing most of the song while you sing along in your brain. When we reach it, you sing just the cadence out loud.
 5. Watch for my usual signal to know when our class rehearsal turn will begin.



Students quickly move into groups and begin the task. There is lively chatter and some singing.

OSTINATO VARIATIONS

These variations provide playful repetitions, intentionally putting the sound of the highlighted cluster into the children's bodies to prepare them for a future song dotting experience.

Once all groups have their plan in place and have practiced together, each group has a turn getting "stuck" on the cadence movement and rhythm, removing the text and chinning the melodic rhythm. They perform their plan as an ostinato to the full song sung and performed by the others.

Paw-Paw Patch



After two groups have used this process, the third is given a choice:

- ◆ *We know we have our ostinato introduction before the other groups begin from the beginning of their dance. Would you like us to hear 1 or 2 cadences added by your group following the end of the full song?* (a type of student-decided coda) The answer is heard by all and the class is challenged to remember the new plan.
- ◆ *So, one group will sing and perform their cadence movement the entire time (including an introduction and coda). The rest of us will start our movement from the beginning, singing from the start of the song in our brains; remember we will all sing out loud on the final phrase.*

CREATING A FORM

- ◆ *We will keep our elongated coda theme. For our last group, like the others you will add an introduction by singing and performing the cadence before we sing the whole song together. When the song is over and we all "get stuck" on that cadence, how many cadence turns will you add? 1, 2 or 3?* The plan is in place; all sing and perform
- ◆ To close out the class, sing the full song and see if you can lead your students to switch to rhythm language for the cadence.
- ◆ *You did as I had expected. You worked well in your groups. You were ready to perform, to sing, to think, to cooperate and to compare sounds. This was a challenging task and you did it! You are capable musicians!*

Next steps towards literacy of the highlighted cluster includes a scaffold towards song dotting, where the experience zeroes in on the cadence.

CODA TO CLUSTERING -Jake Harkins

Reflect on how, in the examples above, the teacher highlighted their selected cluster(s) for future study. How did they bring a natural awareness to these clusters, without pulling them from their context, and drilling them as rhythmic or melodic fragments? Consider how the teacher never said, "Today we will be studying this rhythm (claps) from a song we played last week. Here is how it looks (shows standard notation). Listen and echo me."

The above sample lessons for highlighting clusters each presented song games with attention to visual, aural, and kinesthetic learning modes.

Students may become more engaged in the **visual** learning mode when there is something specific for which to watch. This can include a small or large *intentional movement/gesture* by the teacher during the context of the whole song. In this case, the teacher has selected either a word, or cluster of words, to 'highlight' and has selected a gesture or motion to be performed simultaneously with that word or cluster. Playful repetition is successful because the teacher invites student engagement by having students watch for something specific. Knowing this, we think about ways we can plan our gestures during the introduction of a song, with specific, intentional, and engaging visual tasks.

Students are engaged in the **aural** learning mode when there is something to listen for during the context of the whole song. Listening for something, instead of simply listening to something, requires *intentional* teacher-prepared listening tasks, often initiated through a simple statement or

...Invite
engagement
by having students
listen or watch for
something specific

or question. This listening task/question may be regarding a songs' language content (a text's meaning or the imagery or emotion it evokes), or a phonemic awareness (rhyming word, how many time a specific word occurs, which word occurs the least or most, etc.) and/or combined with the kinesthetic learning mode, as explained below. When students are asked to listen *for* something, the song experience becomes a playful puzzle, and their task is something to attend to—a phonemic awareness—while listening to the sound of singing—a phonetic awareness.

Children
become
responsive
to music
when we value
their perceptions

Perhaps most common in the general music classroom, the **kinesthetic** learning mode has the power to engage students when there is a specific small or large intentional movement/gesture task during the context of the whole song. This may correspond with visual learning, if students are asked to “do as I do” and the song is sung. Or, kinesthetic learning may correspond with aural learning, if students are asked to perform the movement/gesture on a specific word or identified cluster.

In this case, the movement/gesture may be teacher-selected, or student-selected. It may be

1. Student-produced (Teacher asks a student for ideas, “What could we do with our body when we hear ‘clack’?”) and teacher-selected (Teacher selects one of the gestures to try, or they try a few)
2. Student-produced and student-selected
3. Teacher-produced (“When we hear ‘clack’ should we stamp our foot, or touch our pinky finger to our nose?”) and student selected.

When students have the responsibility of demonstrating their listening, perceptions, and understanding through a movement gesture, we hold them accountable in a playful way that is also engaging their physical memory. When introducing a song, or presenting a secret song, tapping into the kinesthetic learning especially opens concrete and tangible opportunities for student choice and student leadership.

Each of the sample lessons in this article

- ◆ Requires careful teacher planning in word choice, guiding questions, and gestures
- ◆ Invites students into the song game with very few teacher words, listening tasks, and playful gestures
- ◆ Scaffolds student attention and development of student involvement/leadership

As you plan to develop a responsiveness to clusters in your own classroom, reflect on how

- ◆ A focus on listening and movement tasks during the introduction of a new song invites student responsibility.
- ◆ The playful techniques of chinning, antiphonning, audiation, and intentional movement/gesture choices during the unfolding of a song game experience engages students' attention to and awareness of sound clusters.
- ◆ The combination of student ideas, teacher goals, and a careful scaffold prepares students' responsiveness to musical clusters for subsequent success in literacy study.

This practice of “highlighting” clusters allows us to draw student attention to musical clusters for rhythmic, pitched, and structural study, without pulling them out of their context. Using antiphonning, audiation, chinning, and movement, we **highlight** clusters within the context of the whole song. When students **describe** the isolated clusters, we open the window to understanding their perceptions. The context of the whole song provides the cluster's meaning and purpose in relationship to other sounds. When we become especially interested in the demonstration of a child's perception, we invite him/her to become a part of his/her learning. Children become responsive to music when we value their perceptions instead of allowing the symbols of conventional notation to lead a pitched, rhythmic or mathematical study.

When students begin to feel points of closure, phrases, and clusters, it is their understanding and curiosity that leads to the discussion and attention to visually capturing the experience. Those experiences will be discussed in future newsletters.

CHECK BACK in the October newsletter for IN PRACTICE next steps: mapping—a kinesthetic, tactile, and tangible way in which clusters of sound may be visually represented as notation—by the child!

The Sound of a Quarter Note

Doug Bartholomew

What does a quarter note sound like? OK, this may sound silly, but when you stop to think about it, it brings up an important issue.

Consider the issue of pitch. You can answer what middle C sounds like. You might even be able to sing it. In contrast, it makes little sense to sing Sol without reference to other tones in the scale. A pitch can begin to sound like Sol only when one has the sense of what it would sound like in relation to a Do (and by extension, to all the other tones in the scale). Sol does not mean much without its relationship to other tones.

But a quarter note? How long would it be? Does it have anything like a specific duration, the way middle C has a specific frequency?

A quarter note is not like a specific pitch. Its sound depends, like Sol, on other things. Here are some examples of the problem of thinking that a quarter note has a specific sound.

The Issue of Notation

The sound of a quarter note depends completely on how we decide to notate what we hear. The pulse of a composition can be indicated by many note values: a quarter, a dotted quarter, an eighth, a half, just to name the more common options. We should be careful of making the quarter note synonymous with the pulse (or beat), as in "a quarter note gets one beat." Can we be surprised when students have difficulty with cut-time, since they have learned that the quarter note is supposed to "get the beat"? And when we get to compound meters, where the beat is more than likely represented by the dotted-quarter, it just gets more complicated.

What
does a
quarter note
sound like?

Doesn't it make more sense to begin instruction in rhythmic notation with a more flexible approach to what represents the beat? A rhythm that can be notated with eighths and quarters can be just as easily notated (maybe more easily?) with quarters and halves. Or sixteenths and eighths. And I should emphasize that while these different notational representations would likely be represented with different time signatures, they would definitely not represent different metric feelings.

Consider the long-term benefits of making sure that students get used to seeing rhythmic patterns in various "metric transpositions." I am encouraging us to be aware of a monopoly of "quarter-note-ness" in our rhythmic instruction. The quarter note is really not a single thing, nor should it control how we teach rhythm and meter.



Doug Bartholomew
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The Issue of Duration

Think about how articulation and phrasing change the duration of quarter notes. A staccato shortens the duration, and a tenuto makes it longer in comparison. A quarter note indicates the onset of a tone (and not its absolute length), and limits when the next sound can occur. It is less about how long a tone sounds, and more about when the next one can begin.

A quarter note only specifies the length of time from the moment one tone begins to the point at which the next one CAN begin, and this always assumes a meter. Quarter notes, to the extent that they have a sound, only have a sound in the context of a notated rhythm and meter.

The Issue of Relation

The sound of a quarter note does depend on its relation to the sounds around it (and how they are represented). But to be clear, remember that it is not the actual duration of the sound. It is the duration between the onsets of these sounds that is important. This is why clapping a rhythm works so well in expressing these relationships. Each clap is of the same duration (really short), but the intervals (in time) between the claps reflect quite accurately the rhythm intended.

It's also worth pointing out that the mathematics of our rhythmic labels (quarters, eighths, and so on) is easy enough, but the sounds they represent and the durational relationships that exist among the onsets of these sounds is not so easy to detect. Feeling the two-to-one relationship between a series of quarter and half notes in a song has more to do with feeling a two-to-one relationship among the quarter notes and an underlying pulse (a half note pulse, in this example).

Another example of the difficulty in actually feeling a two-to-one relationship occurs in 6/8 meters (and other meters in which the divisions at play are not just two-to-one). In the following example, is it really so obvious (in sound) that the single eighth notes are half as long as the quarters, and three times (and not just twice) as long as the dotted quarter? And what about the quarter that is two-thirds the length of the dotted quarter? Do we actually hear (or feel) that two-thirds relationship? Isn't it more like just a shorter portion (not so much a fixed relationship) of a longer pulse?



Clearly one can "count" (or subdivide) these rhythms, and this is a very helpful technique, but it is also a bit abstract, and this technique assumes the feeling of the pulse and moves us into the realm of meter.

The Issue of Function

It is easy to think about rhythmic relations in terms of durations at least in part because of the mathematical language we use to label and describe these durations. Of course, teaching this mathematical language is an important part of our pedagogy, but it does distract us from thinking about how these durational relationships work together in musical flow. The following examples focus on how the eighth notes sound (feel) differently in different metrical contexts.

Here are three examples taken from children's songs. Notice that the rhythms under the brackets are the same sequence of quarters and eighths but notice how different each feels.

Yonder She Comes



Yon - der she comes

I See You (w/pick-up)



I see you, I see

You Turn for Sugar and Tea (with syncope)



You turn and I turn

Which woman do you see?



Anonymous postcard, Germany 1888

There is one sequence, quarter-eighth-eighth-quarter, and it sounds different in each context. The way this pattern (1) is draped over the underlying pulse (and meter, for that matter), (2) is a member of a larger rhythmic context (which is affected by the words) and (3) is influenced by the sounds that occur both before and after the sequence, is fundamental to the sound (feel) of each sound. The eighth and quarter notes function differently in each example. The sound of a quarter note depends on how it functions in a metric flow.

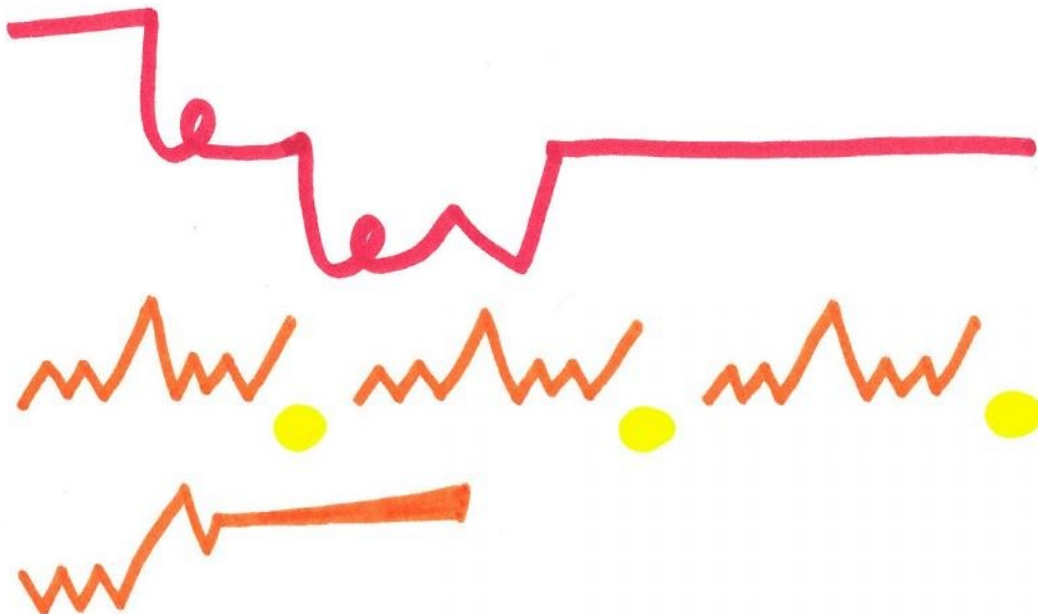
Quarter notes are not as simple as we sometimes make them. They sound differently in different situations. They function differently in different meters. They function differently whether they occur on the beat or off the beat, on the first beat or the last beat of a measure. They have no pre-determined length. Each is still a quarter note (and some people call them crotchets), but the way we talk about each quarter should take into account how each quarter is used (or feels).

The issues raised here should give us pause. When we consider how to approach instruction in rhythmic notation and how to think about student mistakes, we might want to reflect on our tendencies to base our strategies on quarter notes. Then perhaps we can think about including strategies that focus on the way rhythms sound (and feel) in the music the students are experiencing and then show them what they can (not must, or do) look like. Hitching our strategies to how we notate rhythm instead of to how rhythm sounds (or feels) is a bit like teaching children how to spell before they can speak.

Douglas Bartholomew taught music education and theory courses at Montana State University and at the University of Windsor, Ontario, and taught middle school music in Omaha, Nebraska and Muncie, Indiana. He is co-author (with Dr. Peggy Bennett) of *SongWorks 1: Singing in the Education of Children* and *SongWorks 2: Singing From Sound to Symbol*.

June Mystery Map Revealed!

Olympic Fanfare and Theme
John Williams, 1984



Map by Anna Shelow

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1. Practices that foster interactive, facilitative learning environments.
2. Strategies that empower the learner within the context of music experience and study.
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