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Foreword

Music expressed in speech and song, with hands and feet, with easy-to-play beautifully toned instruments is exhilarating and exciting. Making music with others is much better than making it alone. Brainstorming and cooperating to build an ensemble can bring excellence and beauty that is unreachable by oneself.

This book deals with the whys, hows, and ingredients of active music-making with the voice, the body, and classroom instruments in a variety of textures and registers. Rather than imposing an adult concept of music on the student, I am concerned with the child's nature—his way of solving problems, his native tools and endowments of curiosity and reasoning, of moving and reaching—and his needs for worthiness and achievement.

As his space becomes smaller, his need for flexibility increases—to be able to live and communicate peacefully with others, to work with others for mutual benefit of earth and man. No longer can he live in a self-centered individual world.

In our open space schools where much of the day is spent in individual pursuits, music-making has become a vital daily need. Daily practice in such working together and listening to each other is a human need. Deprived of such brainstorming and “peak” experiences, one soon loses the desire for anything greater than that which he can achieve by himself. The exhilaration that comes with “self-stretching” to meet performance skills in group effort does not occur and the student goes his own way, becoming more self-centered and less concerned with the needs of others.

The new role of the arts, and music *per se*, in elementary education is focusing on greater individual effort, more creativity in self expression, release from tensions through rhythmic motor-muscular response and basic performance skills. These goals can be attained in a greater degree through active involvement with the ingredients of music, language and movement, rather than a “talking about” and “listening to” program in the traditional manner. And, if American education in its various forms is dealing with human needs, then active music-making in class size and/or smaller groups is needed more often and more than ever before in order to counteract and balance the increasing amount of packaged and individual learning that fills the rest of the day.

This puts music at the core of the curriculum, and in relationship to human disciplines, at the core of human development.

CHAPTER 1

Today With Music: Perspectives

The function of beauty in the education of children is to lead them imperceptibly to love through sensory experiencing what they will afterwards learn to know in its own form as an intelligible principle.

—Plato

OVERVIEW

Today with Music is an approach to child development through the components of music combined with language and movement, rather than the teaching of music as a subject and/or imposing an adult concept of music on the child. This approach uses the elements of music, namely rhythm and melody, expressed in different textures (timbres) and registers, together with language and movement according to the child's world. His way of learning and his needs in this changing environment are primary considerations.

Process

The process is one of building an ensemble from a small idea or sound into extensions and complexities through contributions, cooperation, and collaboration with others. Where it may start with a simple rhyme, experience or fantasy, the ensemble expands into other media of sound, color, movement, and language in a gestalt-like growth. The participants explore possibilities, using no less than three of their senses (sight, touch-manipulation and hearing) which can be extended into peripheral sensory intake. They become more alive and alert, more able and flexible in solving problems. As they become more selective and discriminating in their judgments, they are also finding out about themselves in relation to the environment.

Purpose

Where the purpose and concern are for the total growth of the child, rather than his acquiring a particular performance skill and musical knowledge, the outcome is a higher degree of skill and knowledge that are basic to all musical performance, and a greater sensitivity to his total environment.

Sources

The sources of this philosophy can be found in the educational premises and 1

CHAPTER 2

Creative Approach to Rhythmic Coordination

Rhythmic experience aids coordination and freedom of expression. Muscular coordination enables the individual to move gracefully and confidently. No longer concerned with or inhibited by clumsiness, he may assume a sense of well being which will enable him to become a more articulate person in music as well as in other media.

Coordination begins with the use of body sounds in rhythmic accompaniment to speech. The hands and feet are translated into instruments of sound which occur in *space* and *time* and have an element of *quality, timbre* or *weight*.

Rhythm is a life force and according to Carl Orff, rhythmic exercise proves beneficial to all children. Dr. R. Van Allen¹ indicates that a child who cannot respond physically to music will probably be too tense and withdrawn to respond to printed symbols. On this basis, would it not be wise to try music and do more music making first or to bring language and rhythmic expression together in music and movement?

This chapter on rhythmic coordination, while involving muscular and motor action, is separated from the chapter on movement because of its specialized focus. In this chapter, we will be dealing with muscular action sounds in rhythmic settings derived from and accompanying speech texts while attempting to use the arms and legs as percussion instruments; expressing and combining rhythmic contents, coordinating two or more action sounds with speech. Both chapters are essential to understanding the development of flexibility and coping with abilities needed to become a more adaptive human being in our rapidly changing society.

A major goal in rhythmic-coordination practice is to reach the stage of being able to *internalize* the beat and the rhythmic line. The preparation for this is *externalizing*,—expressing both with the muscles, body and speech.

A second goal is the utilization of the subconscious in its role of repeating patterns (as muscular sound patterns used in play), and hence to facilitate accomplishment and adaptiveness. To bring this about, students must be made aware of the tremendous force

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