MyPlace, MyMusic: An International Study of Musical Experiences in the Home among Seven-year-olds

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For children who enjoy relatively affluent living circumstances, the home is now an important place for many forms of musical activity. Over the last decade, children's domestic music practices have expanded and changed due to recent developments in home-based technologies, the commodification of children's popular culture, and shifting patterns of family life. So, in order to understand these expansions and changes, research into childhood music is moving out of educational environments and into the home and other spaces and, as it does so, it is finding that it needs to draw on a wider range of disciplinary approaches and theoretical frameworks. However, although research is starting to accumulate, we still know little about the range and nature of contemporary home musical practices for children, particularly younger children.

This research project, therefore, undertaken by an international collaborative team of researchers, set out to explore everyday music in the home among seven-year-olds, in diverse international locations. Each researcher visited one or two seven-year-olds at their home to collect information about their everyday musical activities and experiences. The data was assembled centrally, and each of the members of the research team has access to the collective data. Some broad interpretations are being arrived at via shared dialogue, and single researchers, usually focusing on their own locally collected data, have pursued some individual lines of interest. The project is ongoing and flexible. This article describes the background, method, and some of the general interpretations arising at this stage of the project. Conceptually, the project is aiming to move beyond ideas of universal or globally applicable models of musical development that have prevailed in music education, and to generate rich discussion around the idea of musical childhoods. We suggest that a revised conception of musical childhoods holds important benefits for rethinking the bases of music education in early and middle childhood.

Introduction and Aims

In recent years, there has been increased interest in studying musical activity in the everyday lives of children and young people (Crafts, Cavicchi, Keil 1993; deNora 2000; Young & Gillen 2006). This interest has been motivated by the recognition that, in everyday life, children participate in forms of musical activity that are quite

different from the formalized musical activities of school (Campbell 1998; Marsh 2008). Not only are they different, but, by coming to understand these activities, it is hoped that educators will be able to recognize and capitalize on the skills and knowledge children bring with them into the classroom, and to identify what skills and knowledge children need to participate successfully in a range of musical cultures. Such a view is predicated on the belief that the purpose of music education is to equip children for participation in a wide range of musical cultures for which they need an eclectic collection of understandings and competences; not simply to progress them on a pathway that assumes the skills and knowledge of Western art music as its end point.

Everyday musical activity for children may occur in a number of different contexts: the home, in out-of-home play spaces, or at school during free, non-curricular times. Most research interested in children's informal musical activity has not visited the home but studied children in the playground, at school during breaks in lessons and so on (e.g. Gluschankof, 2005; Marsh 2008). Here, the material environment is minimal and social relationships are usually plentiful and mainly with groups of peers. However, in this study, it was the home environment that captured our particular interest. Here, the material environment (at least in families where income levels are high enough) is richly resourced, social relationships are with the family, and children may have more opportunity to play alone. Over the last decade, the material and media ecology of the home has changed dramatically. This is particularly so for children in the middle age phase of five to twelve years, as the rise of the "tweenager" has seen them targeted as consumers of a material musical-media culture specifically designed to capture their imaginations and desires (Bickford 2008). Music and multi-media experiences are now so easily beamed and downloaded in to the home that some are suggesting that the home is now the primary location for participation in cultural activities (Chaney 2002). Moreover, the changing technologized media environment of the home and the expansion of marketing to children relates in complex ways to the changing patterns of family life, ideologies of parenting, and conceptions of childhood.

This study was carried out by a team that specializes in early childhood music education. The field of early childhood music has been dominated in the last decade by research activity with infants and the under threes. Researchers have uncovered significant musical competences in the very youngest (see Trehub 2001 for an overview), which education researchers then sought to explore in relation to practice. As a result of this focus, however, older children have been out of the research spotlight. So, on one level, the study team sought to redress what we perceived to be an imbalance of attention according to age phase. It is an imbalance, however, that is symptomatic of recent theoretical foci within music psychology fueled by neuro-cognitive studies, evolutionary psychology, developmental social psychology, and communication in adult-infant interaction. The single child object of study for developmental psychology is being replaced increasingly by the mother-infant pair. The dyad is still a unit that is under scrutiny in an objective way, and normative models of musical mothering underpinned by attachment and communicative theories prevail. This project therefore not only represented a refocusing of attention to a neglected age phase, but a more profound wish to support a theoretical position that we also feel has been neglected; that of adopting a situated, culturally bound view of

musical participation. This position recognizes the contingent and contextualized nature of musical experience informed by the relatively new field of childhood studies,[1] and its cultural, anthropological and sociological orientations.

This is not, of course, a brand new theoretical position to adopt in relation to musical activity in childhood; there are precedents, and we will review these. But these precedents are to be found mainly outside of music education writings in the fields of ethnomusicology, the sociology of music, cultural and media studies, including popular music studies. As Bickford pointed out while introducing his own ethnomusicological study into children's informal use of MP3 players in the school environment, there is an almost complete separation between the psychological and pedagogical discourses that dominate education and the discourses of childhood studies and its contributory fields of cultural, anthropological, and sociological studies of childhood (Bickford 2011). Bickford's work is part of a move among ethnomusicologists to study musical cultures "closer to home" rather than the exotic far-away places of traditional ethnomusicology, and part of an even smaller move among ethnomusicologists to study children's musical worlds as stand-alone cultures. Researchers interested in children's musical cultures are still traveling, however, and Emberly left North America to re-enact Blacking's famous study of music among the Venda children in South Africa. It is pertinent, however, that her focus was on studying the influence of mediated musical experiences on children's musical cultures via TV programs (Emberly 2009). The shift in focus from Blacking's interest in the musical socialization of children within a distinctive, local musical culture to Emberly's global-local, mediated influences encapsulates the changing environments within which children's music making is situated.

In terms of precedents, there are a handful of educators who have adopted ethnomusicological methods in exploring children's own forms of musical activity, mostly among peer groups, in non-curricular non-home contexts (Campbell 1998, 2011; Marsh 2008; Lum 2008, 2009; Lew 2006 [cited in Campbell 2011]). They observe the playground and times and spaces such as breaks, meals, and school bus journeys, when children have the freedom to make their own music (see in particular Campbell 1998). The home, as we have already pointed out, is quite a different environment for music. It is the place where children's possessions are kept, where they have access to family resources for music, where they interact with other family members or are alone in indoor, private spaces. The home is thus subjectively experienced as a different and distinctive kind of activity and relational space. It is therefore logical that the home provides a particular kind of musical "ecology" that will engender other forms of musical participation not found beyond the home. Lum's study of Singaporean children making music at home and in school stands apart in setting the two contexts side by side for the same children (Lum 2008). His work captures some of the features of the home musical environment and the changing nature of musical practices at home for children.

The cultural studies of childhood, with its media studies and sociological connections, offer precedents to this study that approach from other angles. Baker's

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[1] Childhood studies was theorized and came to prominence in the early 1990s, and so it can hardly be called "new"; however, it has as yet had little direct influence on early childhood music education theory and research and so, for this field, it represents a "new" departure.

sociologically informed study of musical practices in an after-school club in an Australian city plots the identity work of six pre-teen girls via their popular music activities, many of them online (Baker 2004). The gender divisions in activity that become particularly sharply etched in the middle years of childhood are developed in particular in the recently formed field of girlhood studies[2] (e.g. Mitchell & Reid-Walsh 2005). In these small but active areas of research, there are general studies of cultural worlds of childhood that may include references to music and provide general themes and concepts that can usefully illuminate children's musical experiences (e.g. Mitchell and Reid-Walsh 2002).

Early childhood music education, with, as mentioned, its recent emphasis on the first three years of childhood, has seen a rise in studies that have accessed the home (e.g. Tafuri 2008). Here, however, the focus is less on the home as a musical ecology of stuff and family relationships, but rather on the home as the place where musical parenting takes place and the parent-child dyad can be observed (Papousek & Papousek 1981; Street 2004, 2006; Vries 2005)—or investigated in terms of conventional and pre-determined musical activities, mainly singing (Barrett 2009; Forrester 2010; Tafuri 2008). There are a few exceptions to this; a handful of studies have adopted a more open-framed perspective in understanding the home and family life as a crucible for forms of musical activity in earliest childhood, plotting the increased commodification of early childhood music (Ilari, Moura & Bourscheidt 2011; Young 2008, 2009).

It is only when educational research and practice moves into the age phases of teenagers and young people that a longer tradition of studying out-of-school and everyday musical practices can be found (in the UK, for example, from Swanwick 1968 to Green 2001). Interest in popular music, often rock music bands, and the modes of learning that they engender has a relatively strong research lineage, particularly in the UK and Scandinavia, translated into practice approaches (Green 2001; Soderman & Folkestad 2004; Väkevä 2006). New technologies and how they might be incorporated into practice also receive attention. But, again, this work does not focus on the home nor on the intersections between media technologies, the changing nature of domestic musical practices they enable, and how these relate to family patterns and lifestyles. Recent interest in the internet as a source of networked musical activity accessed via home computers may seem to be an exception (e.g. Väkevä 2006), but this is studied as a virtual public activity space, not as a form of domestic activity.

From this brief overview, it can be seen that the everyday domestic musical activity of children in the middle years of childhood has been largely unexplored. There are divisions of labor by age, location, focus, and disciplinary orientation. Early childhood may visit the home but usually because this is where the parent-child dyad is to be found. Studies of older children in the middle years of childhood tend to focus on children's own music making, but in informal play times and spaces and not in the home. A focus on the changing technology and media environments experienced by children and young people is adopted mainly by those studying post 12-year-olds, although we are now beginning to see studies on the middle years as

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[2] There is also a small field of boyhood studies, but I found no significant research as yet in this field that incorporated musical activity.

researchers recognize the inroads of the new "tween" music market on this age phase. Finally, there *are* some interesting studies of the material and media culture of the home in the middle years of childhood, but these are framed by cultural and media studies that take a broad focus, often dominated by screen-based technologies with music receiving only secondary mentions (e.g. Facer, Furlong, Furlong & Sutherland 2003).

A View from Childhood Studies

As indicated earlier, this project seeks not only to explore the hitherto neglected sphere of children's musical experience, but also to shift the theoretical paradigm within which children are conceptualized musically. Psychological theory has dominated educational thinking to the extent that is implicitly embedded in educational research and pedagogical practices. Psychology has documented the ages and phases of musical development among Western children, implying that these are universal and broadly applicable to all children in all situations. Within this framework, musical childhoods are conceptualized as a kind of apprenticeship, always in a state of moving toward a predetermined end point (see Woodhead 1999), an endpoint that, in educational practice, is assumed to consist of the skills and knowledge associated with Western art music.

Childhood studies offers an alternative theoretical perspective, taking post-structuralist positions to demonstrate how circulating discourses create common meanings or "constructions" of childhood (James, Jenks & Prout 1998; also Fleer, Hedegaard & Tudge 2009). Childhood studies recognizes that there may be different ways of being musical as a child and different kinds of musical childhood. Psycho-pedagogical discourse constructs one form, but a form that is merely a cultural construction and not a universal given. The versions of musical childhoods held in the marketing strategies of transnational media corporations seeking to maximize profits will be very differently conceived from those of education (Steinberg & Kincheloe 1997). The kinds of musical childhoods held in the ideologies of parents who negotiate their own aspirations for their children with a number of competing pressures from sources outside the family will be differently constructed again (Pugh 2009).

Therefore, we propose that, theoretically, the notion of "childhood," narrowed for our purposes to musical childhoods, might offer a valuable template for theorizing children's musical experiences. In this article, we start with the home and use this as a situation in which to apply this template, but we would suggest this theoretical lens might be extended to other contexts. It is merely a template, however, and in that sense offers only broad descriptions of different forms of musical childhood. But its value is as a theoretical structure on a level that can encompass both the prevalent psycho-pedagogical conceptions of children as musical, and all the other forms of musical childhood that cultural, sociological, and ethnomusicological studies are revealing. By encompassing these hitherto separated discourses under one theoretical template, they can be set side by side and explored. We can examine how musical childhoods are modeled, reproduced, managed, reinforced and resourced. In this way,

their advantages and disadvantages, particularly where power and privilege result in uneven and unfair opportunities for some at the expense of others, can be revealed and subjected to critical scrutiny.

From this setting out of different conceptualizations of musical childhood, educators can make decisions about what forms of musical childhood they wish to promote (or counteract), and how best to do that. However, this is not to imply that such an approach promises an easy translation from what is learnt about children's out-of-school musical experiences to pedagogical practice in school. Where studies have explored non-curricular and informal practices and consequently suggested modifications to school-based music, this tends to be at a straightforward level of identifying informal approaches and competences and then importing those into the formal classroom (Green 2001; Marsh 2008). If anything, a musical childhood perspective complicates such an endeavor even further. Importantly, however, it focuses on children and their musical worlds and seeks to understand from their viewpoint, rather than focusing on current educational and musical worlds. All too often, education research adopts as its assumed starting point the educational practices that currently exist, and looks outwards toward children's lives beyond the school walls (if they look at all to be honest), and evaluate what they see in relation to these unquestioned starting points.

In the next sections, we present the method adopted by the study and then go on to give a broad set of interpretations arising from the study at this current stage, returning to the overarching topic of musical childhoods to draw the threads of the article together in conclusion.

Method

The study set out a number of aims:
1. To expand accounts of children's musical development by collecting data on children's musical practices from heterogeneous contexts;
2. To expand knowledge of the everyday home music experiences of seven-year-old children in internationally diverse locations;
3. To collect information on the resources for music in the home with particular attention to technological devices, and to expand understanding of how technology is influencing the range and nature of musical engagement for young children in the home;
4. To collect information on the media resources for music in the home, with particular attention to children's popular culture, and to expand understanding of how popular culture is influencing the range and nature of musical activity for young children in the home;
5. To collect information on any local musical traditions (with particular attention to traditions associated with religious practices) that may impact on the range and nature of musical practice for young children in the home;
6. To build a database of seven-year-olds from internationally diverse locations singing a song of their own choice;
7. To build a database of a "typical week of music" for the seven-year-olds.

Ten researchers from different countries, united by their interested in early childhood music education, have contributed to the project. The project design aimed to foster collaboration between researchers widely dispersed across the globe and, at the same time, pragmatically to recognize that, for busy people, the contribution of each needed to be concise and efficient. The project received no external funding, save a small internal grant from the host university for data management,[3] and so each individual researcher contributed one unit of data that would combine to form a much larger data set. In this respect too the project represented a deviation from the usual single-handed research project or hierarchical team-led project, and aspired to explore collaborative, non-hierarchical approaches to research (Young & Perez 2011).

Individual researchers recruited at least one seven-year-old and ideally two, one boy and one girl. Some simple criteria guided their selection of a child. The children recruited were members of an indigenous local population or at least third-generation settlers in the country (therefore, not newly or recently arrived), and of the same or similar ethnicity as the researcher/fieldworker. We also requested that children be recruited who would be confident and competent in communicating independently with an adult field worker. Since the research method required the children to show and talk about their musical resources and activities at home, it seemed sensible to include this criterion. However, as we discovered, even within our imagined participatory role for the children implicit in the method design there were culturally defined constructions of children that confounded the research process in some locations. Middle class Western children may be encouraged to treat adults as conversational equals and to respond to questions independently. Our research method had assumed this. The Chinese-Singaporean girl however deferred to her parents when asked questions, as befits the enculturated role of Chinese children, particularly girls.

Home Visit

A home visit of 1-2 hours was arranged. The visit was preceded by a brief explanation of the purpose of the study and procedures concerned with permission and ethics underpinning the study.[4] The project leaders designed a common protocol to guide the home visit and to indicate different areas of data collection. The intention was for the protocol to provide enough clear guidance and detail to ensure commonality across all the data collection without being overly prescriptive. Over prescription might have closed down the opportunity for different detail and variation to emerge from the data, pointing to aspects that had not been anticipated. This was a study intended to explore, map and describe the home musical environments of seven-year-olds, not to answer pre-determined questions. Even so, individual researchers are rooted in different institutional and national research cultures that shape how they view the research process. For this reason, there were some unforeseen variations in how the

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[3] A small internal research grant from the University of Exeter.
[4] The research was covered by the ethical guidelines issued by the University of Exeter.

project members approached the study and how they carried out the protocol. While some may see such variation as sullying the research process and rendering the data unreliable, we see this international variation as woven into the interpretive process.

The seven-year-olds were interviewed informally about their everyday musical activities, invited to "show and tell" any musical items they had at home, including technological, and where they were situated in the family home. The visit concluded with an interview with the parent, framed by some outline questions.

During each home visit, the following data was collected:

The Home
- Photographic documentation of the home and its location.
- A written description of the location and a drawn plan of the home.
- Description of the local climate.
- A list of resources for music in the home and where they are located (with photos), with a particular focus on technologies for music
- Detailed information about media and popular culture items in the home (videos, DVDs, CDs, downloads, details of TV programs, etc.).

The Family
- Details of the family members resident in the home and their ages.
- The musical experiences, activities or interests of the family.
- Any family, social or religious musical traditions.
- Informal, semi-structured interview with primary caregiver (usually the mother) according to a simple pre-given script.

The Seven-year-old
- Exact age at the time of the visit.
- "Show and tell" video recorded session with the child, describing musical activities in her life at home.
- A singing of "favorite song," recorded as a separate video clip.
- Detailed information about a typical week of music collected on a grid format.

Each researcher contributed the data collected to a central project coordinator located in the UK. The data consisted of mixed media information: video data, photos, drawings, and written documents. How to collate and share the mixed media data between the project participants efficiently, economically and ethically, safeguarding the identities of the participating children, proved problematic. After deliberation, the final decision was to create a central project wiki to which all the forms of data could be uploaded (Young & Perez 2011). The members of the research team are free to mine the data for their own individual interpretative purposes, and certain key interpretive themes and ideas are evolving from the process of writing and presenting collaborative papers. In the sections that follow, we present some of these key themes and ideas.

The fact that the researchers and their researched children are located in different countries might lead to the assumption that this is a cross-cultural study. However, it is important to stress that the aim of the project was not to carry out a

cross-cultural study, in which the usual procedure is to take a predetermined idea and test it in different cultural contexts. Such an approach assumes culture to be the "add-on" variable that can influence behavior and will be revealed by comparison of identical procedures carried out in diverse locations. The aim of this project is to observe and describe first, and then to set the individual "cases" side by side. From this process, we arrive at broader ideas that emerge through an inductive process of interpretation of data from diverse locations. The data from individual children is juxtaposed so that, in keeping with Rogoff (2003), it is the similarities and regularities that become interesting, rather than necessarily the search for differences. The priority is to collect a number of rich examples of individual children and to involve a team of experienced researchers who bring a range of different approaches and perspectives in looking at the data. They happen to be in varied international locations. This is a comparative process of sorts, but one in keeping with qualitative methodology in which themes and patterns emerge from the data. It is thus more a process of reflective awareness than systematic analysis; more a question of generating new meanings and understandings, which are judged in terms of their usefulness and plausibility, than accessing some assumed, transparent "realities." For this purpose, the dialogue between members of the research team, each, themselves, representing different localities, becomes essential to the data generating process. They contribute an understanding of their local data as well as looking with researchers' eyes across all the data.

Interpretations and Discussion

This is a research project with many components rather than a distinct study, and so work is ongoing. The interpretations and discussion presented here represent a broad set of themes that are arising from a general review of all the data. The discussion starts to coalesce under the umbrella idea of musical childhoods, and concludes with some final comments as to the worthwhileness, in our view, of the project and its theoretical position.

Researchers selected children for study to whom they had easy access and so, for the most part, they were the children of friends or family belonging to the same middle, professional classes to which the music education researchers belong.[5] Collectively, the photographs from the data showed most children living with their immediate family members, perhaps with one or two siblings, in independent, self-contained housing ranging from detached, spacious ranch-style housing in the US with a generous garden, to the more cramped accommodation of high-rise apartments in the Asian cities. Most of the children had their own separate bedrooms, generous collections of toys and access to material items for music making, acoustic and

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[5] The individual children in this study are not all necessarily from the so-called "developed" world—or minority world as it is also sometimes termed, Brazil and Kenya were also included for example—but nevertheless belong to the middle classes.

technological, which were mainly located in family living spaces, but were also sometimes located in their bedrooms. All these immediately observable conditions may have a level of obviousness about them, but they create certain possibilities for musical experience and close down others. The sound of music takes up space, and so musical activities, by necessity, may be more shared among family members where homes are smaller. Certain types of music tended to take place in family living areas and take advantage of family owned and shared-access resources such as piano, CD player, TV and so on. Where children have large bedrooms just for themselves, which are perhaps generously equipped, they may be able to develop more forms of solitary musical activity. Some researchers learned that individual, solitary music could take place in bedrooms, linked in with imaginative play, perhaps with toys (cf. Kearney 2007). Other times and places for music were described in talking with the children and the parents. Bath times for Charlie were a favorite time for shared song singing with her father, and the playing of some novel waterproof drums.

In the family times and spaces for music among our seven-year-olds, the parents' music and musical choices still seemed to dominate. The parents' music collections were housed centrally, and patterns of music use in the home reflected the parents' interests. Some concessions might be made for children's music use or their musical activities at certain times of the day. Music played at breakfast time before school in Charlie's kitchen was her choice, the need to play with or practice a musical instrument for example, or the chance to play favorite CDs on the entertainment center that served the whole family.

The parents' ideologies of parenting and perceptions of their role as providers of education and entertainment in the home impinged strongly on the provision of resources for music and how those resources were used. Since parents were usually present during the "show and tell" sessions, their contributions in shaping what was recorded by the researchers often betrayed their values and expectations in terms of their children's musical lives. Contemporary middle-class children hold a certain symbolic currency for parents in which their own sense of self-value is calculated in relation to their children's "worth" (Zelitzer 2002). Some parents had provided Western instruments (piano, violin, recorder) and the children either had started formal lessons, or were about to. Displays of proficiency on instruments occupied some of the video data. It may be part of the public presentation of their children to an outside audience to describe these aspirations in primarily academic achievement terms, and also merge these with culturally prevalent ideas that to be musical requires certain formalized skills and performance abilities.

Many of the children possessed musical items marketed specifically for children, including CDs and tapes and the CD and cassette players to play them. A characteristic of recent years is the rapid expansion of a market for children's music and equipment for music, much of it capitalizing on new technological developments. The digitization of music means that it can be embedded easily in toys and integrated into all kinds of entertainment devices. Video games, for example, include music as one multimedia element that blends often high-spec visuals with gaming, sound effects so that audio is but one stream in the blend. The gaming equipment links up with TV monitors and computers. Media convergence, both in terms of equipment and the media itself is, increasingly, a feature of the domestic media technology environment (Jenkins 2006).

Many of the seven-year-olds seemed to be on the cusp of the "tween-age" market, their material culture vacillating between the earlier favorite toys of childhood, still played with, often in private and more intimate times—a favorite soft toy that plays tunes—and items that represent the commodified musical culture of middle childhood. Some musical activity moving into the "tween" world may be influenced by older peers, such as Charlie's play with a recently purchased Bratz doll video game; an integration of her ten-year-old brother's video game equipment with her own gender-specific play with Bratz dolls. The dolls have different characters and story lines, one of which includes a girl band, a toy tour bus owned by Charlie and online sites with song and dance videos, video narratives around the Bratz doll characters engaged in typical young women activities of partying, having fun with friends, and shopping. The proliferation of "branded" characters through a range of media and material items is characteristic of children's marketed play cultures. The corporate musical world is redefining musical childhoods according to its market criteria; a fact that many find troubling (Giroux 1999). Disney represents the largest, global media corporation, and the home musical environments were infused, not surprisingly, with Disney products. If not directly presented to the visiting researchers, they would certainly have been seen and heard via the omnipresent TV and increasingly via internet access.

Our interviews, sometimes backed up by the videos, revealed parents grappling with the dilemmas and tensions raised by these commercial musical cultures: in what ways and how much to allow them to intersect in the domestic lives of their children and families, whether they were to be participated in with parents, or alone, how they related to the children's ages and their own aspirations for their children. The Dutch mother on the video is seen hesitating when her son wishes to show a CD with cover images of the singer in quasisexual poses as one of his favorites. One father expressed the contradictions between what he saw as the fun and enjoyment to be derived from popular music and videos from his own boyhood experiences, in contrast to the discipline and practice required to learn a musical instrument in a formal context. Thus he condoned a range of popular music practices for his daughter, but had fixed the tuning on her personal radio in her bedroom to only receive one popular radio station that he considered played music that was "more appropriate."

These global media permeations were not the only "outside" musical influences. More local musical cultures from places of worship, school, and other community contexts were also perceivable. Football songs, religious songs, music from instrumental lessons or school songs were also presented to the researchers, particularly following the request to sing "a favorite song." These songs were diverse in their origins. The recordings of favorite songs illustrate the diversity of musical sources from which children weave their musical experiences, and also the way in which they absorb and integrate these various musical experiences and cultures and re-work them in their own experiences.

These glimpses of everyday life begin to reveal how the musical lives of our seven-year-olds center on their home and family, parents and siblings, and circulate through school, global media, church, sports and other community events. Musically, therefore, their home lives reveal these different spheres of actual and virtual participation and influence, intersecting and interacting. A childhood studies

perspective starts to ask how these different spheres of participation construct different versions of musical childhood. It then asks what kinds of values underpin and shape these different domains: market values; the values of parents; the values of traditional schooling; the values of church, community, society? Family values, beliefs and aspirations are translated into material items and practices that afford certain possibilities for musical participation and development and constrain others. The media world, with its distinctive, and highly gendered and racial constructions of childhood, underpinned in turn by values articulated by its market priorities, infiltrates the homes, enabled increasingly by the new technologies. The influences of peer and school worlds also impinge. The influence of the school world was identifiable particularly in the songs the children chose to sing as their favorite song. School music is also articulated by its own sets of values. Each musical resource, sphere of participation, or world, however we might term these, affords different forms of meaning for the children—and places limits on others—from which they forge their musical childhoods.

Although, as we suggest, musical childhoods offer a useful conceptual tool, the children, of course, do not experience separate musical childhoods but negotiate across and between them, integrating and re-working them. Different forms of musical childhood are not separate, fixed categories, they dynamically merge, connect, transform. But to conceptualize children's musical experiences in this way usefully highlights how children's music learning, which is conceptualized by education as a unified, linear process through the idea of schooling, is now fragmented. It is fragmented but also interconnected across many domains and subject to a range of cultural, familial, social and commercial influences and pressures. The children experience the tensions that may arise between them, for example when the Greek mother censored her daughter's wish to sing a football song as her favorite song and substitute a song learnt from school and considered, as we interpret it, to present her daughter in a better light. The football song holds a certain currency and is meaningful within her peer group, drawing energy from popular culture, but the school song has different forms of currency to her parents' drawing on the institutions of schooling. The children can also experience the creative ways in which they can draw on different musical resources and rework them. Giovanna in Brazil is proud to sing two of her favorite songs: the theme to the children's film "Shrek" and the romantic country music ballad by *Sertanejo* artists Victor & Leo. Shay, the Israeli girl decided to sing songs from her piano book: very well known children songs of Jewish festivals, songs that she knew by heart but insisted on singing them from the written text and melody. Song repertoire intermingles most easily, and where adult educators, parents and researchers, may see sharp divisions between genre and styles of songs, the apparent ease with which children slip between songs sees no such divisions.

Final Thoughts

A project such as this, which appears to deviate in many aspects from the usual conception of research as theory and hypothesis driven, as framed by certain

procedures that ensure objectivity and minimize bias, which aims for representativeness and to arrive at generalizations that might be widely applicable, may meet with criticism. However, the project's aims are at the same time modest and profound. It claims only to describe, and from these descriptions to offer some tentative interpretations within our proposed theoretical template of musical childhoods. The home environment for music is difficult to access and under-researched, and so we suggest that this first-stage mapping provides some insights that are useful and expand our horizons. The project strengthens our conviction of the importance of understanding children's musical experiences in the many different contexts that make up their lives, and strengthens the rationale for carrying out further research in this vein. The changes to young children's lives in terms of new technological developments, the expanding children's music market and changing family patterns make it imperative that we understand the resultant changing nature of their musical practices. We need this understanding in order to design future educational experiences for children more wisely, equally, and ethically.

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