Toward a Revised Understanding of Young Children's Musical Activities: Reflections from the "Day in the Life" Project

Susan Young and Julia Gillen

Introduction: Versions of Musical Childhoods

The tradition of developmental psychology has been of fundamental importance in providing versions of musical childhoods, particularly for the earliest years of childhood. However, in its focus on the individual child and in its search for musical behaviors assumed to be common across all children, developmental psychology has tended to be insufficiently interested in wider cultural processes. At the same time, the disciplines of ethnomusicology, the sociology of music, and popular music and media studies, valuable as they are in describing and theorizing the nature of sociocultural practices in music, have almost nothing to contribute to our understanding of musical practices in young children's lives, particularly before they attend school. What insights we do have into children's musical lives are drawn mainly from studies of play activity when children are attending out-of-home care and education (Campbell 1998; K. Marsh 2005)—much less are they drawn from family life in the home. There is little indeed concerning children's everyday experiences of music once they are in elementary (or equivalent) schooling that is not simply pedagogic in purpose (Barrett 2003; Campbell 1998). We suggest, then, that the integration of interdisciplinary accounts of young children's musical experiences is essential if we are to acquire fuller understandings of their musicality, the diversity of their musical practices, and how they develop musically within heterogeneous contexts.

In taking a perspective on children's musical practices or "musical lives," we wish to signal that we are interested in both the music that is presented to or selected by the child and the nature of children's responses. As Barrett observes, such seemingly sharp distinctions are often blurred: "Children's music has a double-edged meaning in the realm of music education, at times interpreted as music made by adults for children, at other times interpreted as music made by children" (2003:200).

Existing accounts of music *for* young children and the versions of musical childhoods that they convey place emphasis on traditional repertoires of children's songs: lullabies, play songs, and ring games. These repertoires have been collected and collated, those with an interest in children's folk-

Current Musicology, No. 84 (Fall 2007)

lore studies leading the way. How they are enacted has been documented, primarily with attention to the detail of performance and less to the use of these songs and their integration into the fabric of young children's lives in homes and families. Moreover, in earliest childhood, the performance of children's songs sits very comfortably within imagined traditions and somewhat idealized versions of musical childhoods and parenting.

Taking a perspective informed by wider cultural processes gains extra urgency given the rapidly changing nature of contemporary young children's lives (Prout 2005), a generation that is everywhere touched by phenomena loosely grouped under the term "globalization"—although, with Lull (1995) and many other commentators we do not intend to imply a homogenization of material circumstance or experience. Nevertheless there can be few communities where the tremendous pace of technological innovation, the changing nature of family life, and the possibility at least of making claims as to the commodification of childhood do not have some resonance.

For many children, their home is an increasingly media-rich, technologized environment (J. Marsh 2004) in which digitized musical and other sounds emanate in a sometimes constant, certainly varied, and copious aural landscape from TV, video, DVDs, music players of all kinds, ringtones, toys with digitized tunes incorporated, musical mobiles, and other sound-making domestic devices (Young, Street, and Davies 2007). In many societies such innovations often take place without any contemporary changes to living conditions (Lull 1995). Yet for many, the home is now the primary site of cultural participation—more so than community sites outside the home—in which families select, import, integrate, privatize, personalize, and routinize music in ways that mediate between their own family priorities and values and those of the culture at large, purchased, beamed, or downloaded into their homes (Chaney 2002; Lull 1995:28).

The Study

The work that will be reported here has been taken from a larger study entitled "A Day in the Life" (Gillen et al. 2007). In this study, a single day of home-care for seven two-and-a-half-year-old girls living in different countries (Canada, Italy, Peru, Thailand, Turkey, UK, USA), was video-recorded by project researchers, at least one of whom was either indigenous to the country or with considerable experience there. In an ecological approach to research, this video data was supported by a considerable body of other data including preliminary interviews, field notes, and mappings of the home environment. The video data was then reviewed against a number of themes, some identified prior to the data collection and some, including

music, identified once the data reviewing was underway. Such had been the quantity and variety of music and dance activity discovered in the "days" during early reviews of the video data that this became one main focus.[1] Importantly, therefore, the music theme had not been indicated either to the parents or researchers prior to the collection of the video-data. We suggest, then, that the inclusion of music within the days could be taken as approaching normal practice but with awareness that the parents probably presented, to some extent, a "model" version of a day—a version that demonstrates many of the material resources available to the family and that is revealing of their priorities and values.

The video data from the seven complete days was scanned for activities with a musical element. These were first assembled and broadly categorized to give an overview of the different ways in which music was incorporated into the days. Analysis then moved deeper into instances of musical activity taken as "situated examples." These sample activities are specific enough to remain close to the situational detail but general enough to support the emergence of some themes. The aim was to remain with examples which are neither too complex with specific analytical detail nor too abstracted to become detached from situation.

The project has the advantage of taking place in a diverse variety of settings. Investigations of case studies in different countries would once have been termed "cross-cultural." In this study we specifically reject this term which appears to equate "culture" with "country" or "community." We adopt rather a sociocultural understanding of culture pertaining to the young child that is concerned with the patterns of regularities, variations, routines, and values she experiences—and takes a part in shaping—in her environment, especially through interactions with caregivers and other significant people (Gillen 2007; Gillen et al. 2007; Roth 2007:147). The term "cross-cultural" can lead to the conceptualization and operationalization of direct comparisons between the case studies according to fixed measures or pre-selected themes. Our approach rather of juxtaposing one family's day with another is characteristic of more inductive interpretation, serving to highlight variations and similarities.

Moreover, locating this project in a number of diverse sites has assisted in the process of making "visible" the cultural specificity of norms and conventions at least from our own cultural standpoint. A useful notion in considering the musical resources drawn upon in these households is Ortiz's ([1947] 1995) concept of transculturation, which challenged the concept of "acculturation" by communities that were being overrun, whether militarily, politically, or economically toward more sophisticated societies. Ortiz proposed that the intermeshings of cultural borrowings are extremely

complex; they occur in different directions and give rise to new cultural hybrids and forms. We should emphasize that while we acknowledge that ethnocentrism infiltrates every stage of a research process from its initiation to dissemination (Christensen and Prout 2005), this project has had the benefit of including as researchers participants from most of the settings who have been consulted in the process of arriving at these interpretations. What follows are descriptions of seven examples, one from each of the days.

Canada

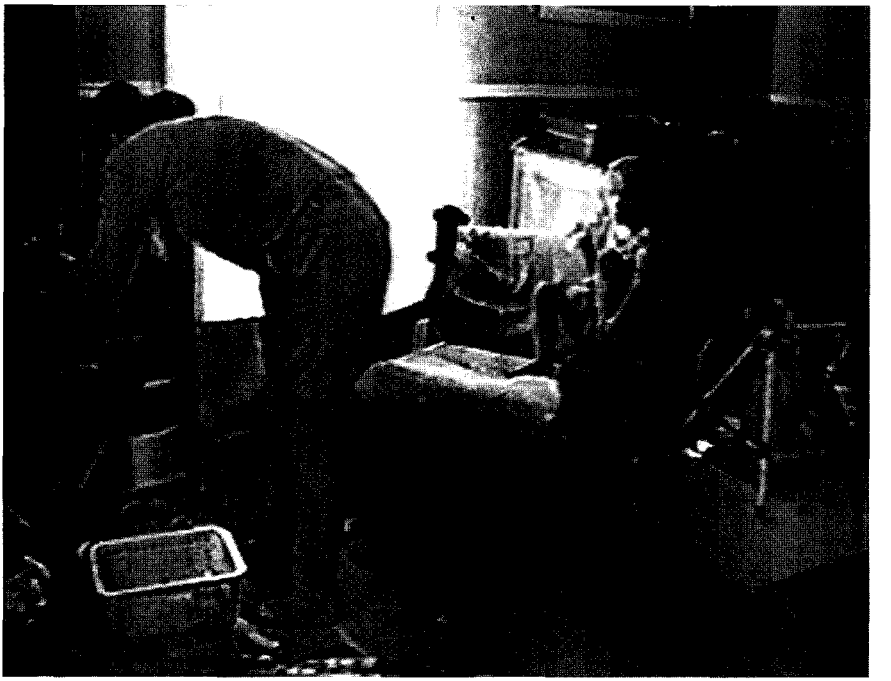
It is mid-morning break in the family sitting room; Nora is eating a snack and her mother Catherine sits with a coffee. Her mother asks, "Do you want to put music on?"

Nora replies, "And I can dance."

"And you can dance, that's right. And we have all the music that belongs to you here." As she is speaking, Catherine searches among the collection of CDs stored by the CD player that forms part of the family entertainment center and puts on one she has selected (figure 1).[2] It is a children's compilation. First is the American song of 1876, "The Grandfather Clock." The songs are performed by a small ensemble consisting of a male and female singer, percussion, electronic keyboard, clarinet, and flute. For "The Grandfather Clock" the keyboard is set to play the sound of a harpsichord, presumably to convey the historical, parlor feeling of the Victorian clock. Barrett draws attention to the construction of childhood by adults as in part mythological: "Childhood is simultaneously our fond, adult rememberings of a time past and the immediacy of our own children's lives" (2003:198; citing James, Jenks, and Prout 1998:59).

For the first song, Nora joins in with the chorus, singing "stop short, never to go again," and bounces energetically on her child-size foam armchair while the song plays. When the song has finished, she sings the line from the chorus once more. Catherine, sitting with her legs curled and holding a coffee mug in a nearby armchair, is watching and joins in with singing sections of the chorus. She combines sitting and listening with a number of small caring tasks for Nora's younger sibling, and so her attention shifts frequently. During the second song, "Let's Go Fly a Kite," both mother and daughter return their attention to the song at its conclusion, singing portions of the chorus. The third song, "Little Brown Jug," prompts an animated tickling bout between Catherine and Nora, around the words "ha, ha, ha, hee, hee, hee." This continues into the following song, "The Monster Mash," which is preceded by mock terror noises from Catherine, "ooh, this is the scary one," and more tickles on the floor. As the compilation continues to play, their attention drifts away from the songs to other activities.

Figure 1: Selecting from "all the music that belongs to you."



Italy

During this hot summer day, Beatrice remains in the cool of the apartment. In her home she has been provided with purchased multimedia items intended for her use: Disney videos, CDs, and tapes. These are played on the media center in the living room, providing child-focused media events at points during the day. After lunch, her father Claudio puts on a cassette tape of songs, inviting her involvement in operating the equipment. The tape is a familiar one for Beatrice, who engages actively by moving, dancing, gesturing, singing, and responding verbally. Left alone at first, she fetches Claudio back from the kitchen to join her, and he sits in a chair, at first watching, then whistling the melody of one track and joining in with actions to another (figure 2).

Beatrice's participation is partly spontaneous and partly structured by her father in ways that are typical in style to early childhood education. We learn from the parent interviews that this tape is provided by her kindergarten as part of a home-kindergarten link. Buckingham and Scanlon (2003) have drawn attention to the influence in some homes, particularly among the middle classes, of activities framed by educational purposes.

Figure 2: Actions to the music.

Early childhood education has evolved a distinct repertoire derived from traditional, popular, and composed songs. This repertoire typically structures young children's participation around the reproduction of actions closely associated with the lyrics.

Peru

In Peru, after breakfast, Lina remains on her bed. Her father brings a CD player into the bedroom in order to play a CD of Peruvian popular music and encourages Lina to dance by performing some elements of the dance movements himself and indeed video-recording her himself for part of the time (figure 3). In other words, Lina was being video-recorded by two people at the same time! Nevertheless she appears quite comfortable; data from field notes and interviews shows that this pride in her prowess as a dancer, marked by video-recording, was a known, enjoyed, and revisited activity.

Lina holds her body in an upright stance (standing on the bed) and performs a number of movements characteristic of this style of Peruvian dancing. The movements are necessarily adapted to her current physical capabilities and also to the springiness of the bed. As she dances she adopts

Figure 3: Dancing on the bed to an audience of cousin and father (and the researcher).

a distinct facial expression and mouths words to the song. Her father's contribution is to initiate the activity, to select the track and control the player, and to video-record part of the performance. Her imitative enactment of postural and gestural dance forms articulate her emerging membership in this family and its community.

Thailand

In Thailand the family compound consists of three homes and a large outdoor space. Nong has free run of indoor and outdoor spaces (figure 4). The morning is taken up by a variety of self-initiated play activities, some partnered by her cousin, which are accompanied by the sounds of music and talking from the TV, which is switched on in the main living space. The TV provides a near-continuous aural environment of Thai-pop music. This music accompanies Nong as she moves in and out of its aural orbit occupied with her play activities, although she does not appear to engage directly with the music through movement or vocalization.

Turkey

In the sitting room of the family home, Selin's cousin Deniz is sitting on the settee with her twin sister Fusun. Selin enters the room and climbs on

Figure 4: On the verandah: birdsong one side; TV the other.

to the settee to join them. They have an electronic toy, a kind of pinball machine (figure 5). The toy plays a variety of tunes as balls circulate in two clear outer plastic tubes. Holding a central button causes spinning balls to rise slowly in two tubes. Pressing another button produces a bird chirping and squawking sound.

As Selin enters the room, the toy plays "The Entertainer" by Scott Joplin, which is quickly followed by "Pop Goes the Weasel," the "William Tell Overture" by Rossini, and finally "Chopsticks." The shorter melodies ("Pop Goes the Weasel" and "Chopsticks") are complete, but the longer melodies ("The Entertainer" and "William Tell Overture") are represented only by their first two phrases. Selin has some measure of control over the toy as she operates different buttons. Pressing buttons halts the melodies so that they are often heard in short interrupted fragments and incomplete phrases.

Deniz presses the button to make the spinning balls rise and matches their movement with a vocalization, a slowly rising vocal glissando on a closed-throat vowel sound. When she releases the button, both her voice and the balls fall. Selin imitates the ball pressing action and the vocal sound, and Deniz joins in. A third time, they press and vocalize together. Selin continues to vocalize the glissando while playing with other parts of the toy.

Figure 5: Playing a favorite toy.

As well as leading the vocalizing game, Deniz also encourages Selin to jiggle rhythmically to certain melodies as she claps and sings along.

The melodies played by the toy (eight in total) are a mix of children's songs of English-speaking origins and well-known "popular classics." They are melodies that have a long and changing history before arriving in this musical toy. "Pop Goes the Weasel," for example, is thought to have originated as a London folk song associated with the weaving trade, then becoming more familiar in collections of children's nursery rhymes. The finale to the Overture of Rossini's opera *William Tell* most notably was adopted as the theme tune of *The Lone Ranger*, and it has a long history of popular culture transformations. The history of these melodies and the transformations they have undergone, particularly their popularizing and consequent familiarity, loosens certain connotations they might carry. They have joined a repertoire of short, throw-away tunes that are increasingly embedded not just in children's electronic toys but in gadgetry of all kinds.

England

It is early morning and the three children, Jessica, her twin brother Matthew, and her younger sister Alison, are in their pajamas with toast and drinks. They sit close to their mother Rachel on the play-room sofa to watch a *Thomas the Tank Engine* video (figure 6). The signature tune introduces and concludes the video. Later the family visits a shopping mall where a Thomas the Tank Engine children's ride stands in the entrance. They encounter the same music now emerging from a large-scale, three-dimensional, replica

Figure 6: Watching a *Thomas the Tank Engine* video.

Figure 7: Encountering Thomas the Tank Engine in a shopping mall.

Figure 8: Lunch with Thomas the Tank Engine toy and Thomas-themed luncheon meat.

engine (figure 7). During the midday mealtime, a toy Thomas sits on the table and Jessica's meal includes luncheon meat picturing the Engine's face (figure 8). As Arthur (2005:167) has suggested, these intertextual connections between different media permeated by the same characters both absorb and bestow significance.

One of the challenges for theorizing musical practices in early childhood is to recognize that music is embedded in these kinds of multimedia arrays (N. Cook 1998) in which it blends or blurs with visual forms on screen or page, sounds and speech, and material objects. All this is further confounded when the imagery springs out of the video to morph into other forms during the day—even edible ones—and the music is sometimes there too and sometimes not. Whereas adults may assume the boundaries to be clear between these changing media, this is less likely to be the case for young children. And it is even more complex when you consider that children are engaging multimodally with multimedia in interaction with family members whose participation is also multifaceted—and permeated and nuanced by family dynamics.

A friend is visiting Katy's mother Elizabeth. They are all sitting in Katy's bedroom. Throughout much of the period studied here, Katy seems particularly keen to perform and especially to try to dominate the attention of her mother, possibly affected by the constant regard of the video camera on her. In her first musical encounter, she uses her foot to switch on a toy with flashing lights and a choice of, it seems, four nursery rhyme tunes, all rendered in a very reduced way. The first tune that plays is "Mulberry Bush"; Katy responds by tentatively tipping her head a little from side to side while putting hands on hips and smiling, as if in a pre-rehearsed way. This causes her mother, who is being treated as the audience, to make a reference to Katy's kindergarten class, suggesting that this movement is understood by both to be an activity encountered there. Katy then switches on "Old Macdonald Had a Farm" and makes distinct movements, firstly flexing her hands rhythmically by her sides and then changing into a whole body twist, pushing her hips from side to side. The adults join in by appreciatively singing a few of the words from the chorus. Katy echoes those same words but at the same time stops "dancing" and goes off into another activity.

It appears that this very brief musical interlude causes the adults to think that more sustained child-oriented music might be welcome, and after some minutes of discussion (featuring other strands of conversation too) in which Katy is involved, a German CD of the Eurovision Song Contest is selected. The Eurovision Song Contest is explained to the visitor: "This is funny . . . All the different countries put in their top song . . . it's all kind of pop . . . Are you ready, Katy?"

As the music starts (on a portable CD player), with a possibly unfamiliar drum beat and blend of voices and instruments, the mother explains that music might come from Moldova or Andorra and simultaneously encourages Katy who has announced her intention to dance with her "baby" (doll). The scene has been set for Katy to "dance" and for the visitor to expect some possibly unfamiliar music—she immediately enquires as to the (foreign) language.

Katy has decided to dance with her doll, and during the next eighteen minutes she periodically "dances," often with the doll and sometimes without it, with long gaps between (figure 9). Her movement is almost always the same one: spinning round in a circle. This makes her dizzy very quickly, as monitored by her mother. Her movement is unrelated to the music except that the music is the stimulus to the act of moving. Once she bangs into an object and has to be comforted; later she incorporates comforting her doll for an imagined injury also incurred through the dancing. Thus the music is incorporated into pretence play.

Figure 9: Spinning round with a doll to Eurovision Song Contest music.

During these eighteen minutes the mother changes the music twice, both changes involving consultations with Katy and discussions with her friend. The other two CDs are of lullabies and French songs, apparently for children. All selections feature a variety of instrumentation and melody while maintaining a certain simplicity, especially of the vocal line, that one might assume is particularly targeted for family listening (clearly the latter two at least are designed and marketed for this purpose).

At one point Katy changes her movement to vigorously jumping up and down, which proves as impossible to sustain as whirling round and round. However, one gains the impression that, as much as she delights in the support and encouragement from the adults, her own sense of appropriate movement to these musical sounds is limited, and she finds this limited repertoire not completely satisfactory. It is however perhaps important to say that this aspect of responding to the music is part of many concurrent strands of activity as this time, as is particularly evidenced in the talk by the mother and Katy. The music and Katy's performance is both explicitly and it seems implicitly linked to other topics. For example shortly after "chocolat" has been mentioned in the French CD, "chocolate cake" features in a pretend tea party that becomes the next focus of activity, again supported by the adults.

Discussion

Returning briefly to a theme from our introduction, conventional accounts of music with the youngest members of families emphasize the performance of a participatory repertoire of children's songs. Across the full range of examples of musical activity in the "days," we observed a few instances of one-to-one musical activity which fitted closely with the genre of lullabies and playsongs. We found intimate moments of bodily contact on laps, slow tempo rocking movements, and gentle wavers of words, crooned, sung, or rhythmically spoken. These occurred at moments when, according to our interpretations, the parent decided, consciously or not, that a change in the child's physical and emotional state would be beneficial. To achieve this change in state the parents couple their own musicality to their child's.

In other writing these "live," parent-with-child musical activities have been our central interest (Young and Gillen 2006). However, for this article we have focused on those musical activities which are evolving in the context of home-based technologies and the new media items associated with them. We support Minks's (2002) distinction between a characterization of children's music in folklore studies as a narrow, one-mode activity of song-singing and a broader conception of expressive practices that are "musical, poetic, and kinetic" (2002:401). And, with Minks, we place emphasis on the generative interactions with surrounding people and things. These things, the electronic toys, CD players, and CDs, extended and supplemented the children's everyday domestic musical experiences. The sociology of technology is particularly interested in how technology often does not displace existing activities but becomes integrated into them (Hutchby and Moran-Ellis 2001). From the examples we described, we would suggest that parents' participation in musical activity, which has conventionally been confined to the performance of a specific repertoire of early childhood songs, has not disappeared, but blends and diffuses into musical play with this extended range of musical resources. The resources are frames for musical interactions that afford and articulate musical activities in certain ways. They are porous and flexible, so they can be easily integrated into ongoing everyday activity and connect smoothly to cultural worlds at large (Lee 2001). The musical resources themselves thus offer a kind of pivoting medium that both resonates within and without the family.

Family Musical Activities

Being porous and flexible, the musical activities we have described were typically interwoven with other activities and shifted in and out of focus, at

times foregrounded and at other times a background to the activities, tasks, and interactions that form the daily fabric of young children's and caregivers' lives. Such use of music connects with studies of everyday music in adult lives (DeNora 2000; Sloboda 2005) that reveal the use of music to entertain, enliven mundane activity, and provide interest and a change of pace and mood during time spent often in relatively confined spaces at home.

Music as a near continuous background to daily life, from radio or TV programs, was a characteristic of some of the days. The flow of music around parts of the day in Thailand corresponded to the fluidity of Nong's activity, in which she moved in and out of aural orbits of TV and radio, hearing mainly popular music influenced by the crossover between Western and Thai influences. The family compound offered a large space within the oversight of several members of her extended family, so freedom of movement and play was more easily accommodated than in some more enclosed living spaces. Perhaps for this reason Nong's day was less orchestrated, in both a metaphorical and musical sense, than the days of some of the other girls. Conceptions of upbringing will also play a part, whether parents or other family members are concerned to initiate and manage activities for their young children or whether they allow them freedom to play following their own initiations (LeVine 2003). Thus, the integration of technologized musical practices into the daily lives of our children is related to larger-scale structures such as space, housing, the constitution of the family, and conceptions of the parental role.

When music was in the foreground of their attention and children were musically engaged, their participation was not continuous but often moved toward and away from points of greater intensity. In Turkey, the rising crescendo balls in the toy created moments of high-focus shared activity between Selin and her cousin. In Canada, the refrain of "Little Brown Jug" around the syllables "hee, hee, hee" cued the tickles between Nora and her mother. In Italy, Beatrice and Claudio, anticipating the climax of a song about a wolf, reached a pitch of surprise and excitement. These were moments of shared fun and pleasure, "musical jokes" as Levitin would call them (2006:209).

Such family musical activities, extended by the resources made available, offered what might be termed "scripts" for participation (Nelson and Gruendel 1986). These had become revisited and familiar games. They encapsulated a history of participation in which the activities with musical elements had gradually evolved to what we saw during the filmed day and from which they would continue into the future of the parent and child.[3] In these ways the parents shape the children's participation, which has an impact upon the children's emerging musical identities (see also J. Marsh

2005). Our proposition here is that technologies and media items associated with them afford different and potentially greater scope for these processes to occur within the home—whether it be the acquisition of bodily comportment as a dancing member of the community, acculturation into local popular music styles and the use of music as an accompaniment to mundane activity, music as "edutainment" (Buckingham and Scanlon 2003), or the pervading but largely unmarked encounters with music as one of many "intertextual" (Arthur 2005) references in a day richly resourced with the material items of commodified childhoods (D. Cook 2004; Hughes 2005; also Young forthcoming).

However, our interest in the sociocultural contexts of family music practices does not require that we reject that versions of early childhood musicality which focus on the musical behaviors traditionally investigated by developmental psychologists. In the introduction to this article, we proposed that well-rounded versions will be multidisciplinary. The next two sections therefore focus on the children's musical activity per se.

The Children's Musical Activity

Several of the days featured moving to music, which was referred to as "dancing" in all instances by adults and girls alike. The way the adults participated in the children's moving ranged across a spectrum, from direct modeling and imitation of one another—adult of child or child of adult—to interested attention or partial attention interspersed with other activity. Participation on the part of the adult was combined with gestures, calls, and words of encouragement and sometimes with forms of monitoring (to avoid injury to self or sibling). The parents' bodily participation conveyed personal, familial, and cultural variations of bodily style, comportment, and gesture—as much when they did not join in with moving but remained seated as onlookers. Hands placed on hips or angled arms held aloft by the parents echoed popular dance styles, either explicitly modeled for imitation or implicitly picked up in the child's movement.

The children's movements consisted mainly of twirling on the spot or a regular rhythmic movement such as tapping a leg, bouncing up and down, or swaying the torso. This movement vocabulary partly arises from the children's maturational physical capabilities, their motivation to practice and extend their physical repertoire, and the potentials (and constraints) for movement offered by the furnished indoor spaces. Twirling and bouncing boisterously on soft furnishings may be the best options when space is limited. A handful of studies have been interested to identify typologies of movement and their progression in response to recorded music in the

home (Moog 1976; Chen-Haftek 2004) and daycare (Gluschankof 2005). The children's movements we identified in the days conform to these broad typologies. But we emphasize that, in their wish to normalize, such versions delete the complexities of interactions between the people and things in the child's immediate environment and beyond to the social and cultural context.

Just as we found congruencies with the few studies of children's moving to music, so we similarly found congruencies with developmental accounts of children as singers. Throughout the twentieth century a strong line of research considered how children gradually become singers (for an overview see Welch 2006). The girls in our days often joined in with the recorded versions of songs, vocalizing with short snatches which had particular salience—some features which made them distinctive and therefore more graspable, typically repetitive, rhythmic, "catchy" words. It was at these key points that the parents often also joined in. To embark on a detailed discussion of how the children's singing did or did not fit with developmental models is not our purpose here; nor indeed, could the ramifications it would entail be achieved within the scope of this article. But suffice to say that, just as with the dancing, children's musical encounters arise from the many interfaces between their vocal abilities (determined by maturational factors such as length of vocal ligaments and lung capacity), their motivations to sing, and the song-singing experiences offered by their environments (also Young 2006).

Since musical environments are another dimension contributing to an understanding of children's musical activity, the music that prompted the dancing and vocalizing (the music on CD, TV, video, or in toys and rides) that was selected by parents needs to be brought under the spotlight.

The Musical Resources

Interestingly we heard many instances of "transculturation" as music heard in one location echoed in another. The compilation tapes and musical toys played English-language songs that are conventionally considered to be "nursery rhymes"—carrying on a tradition of assembling children's songs and folksongs from the seventeenth century onwards. Each generation selects and filters to arrive at an appropriate repertoire that is both configuring of childhood in general yet at the same time serves to configure a specific child's understanding of music in their particular context. Music selected for young children tends to be rendered as innocently free of certain connotations with youth or adult music as possible—although in Peru the café dance music was an interesting exception. This is an example of an instance where setting the

days side-by-side threw into relief certain features which we might otherwise have taken for granted. In the attempt to shake off connotations, "distance," either in time or space, between the present culture and the music's origins seems to be one strategy. For example, Elizabeth, our mother in the USA, selected current music, but from a "faraway" little-known country in Europe, Moldova, and in another language. The compilations contain melodies from traditional or classical repertoires—but reduced, transformed, jostling one with another—all neutralizing, "cleansing" strategies which then allow the music to be simultaneously absorbent and reflective of constructions of musical childhoods.

The selected music and its performance feature simple melodic lines, absence of articulation or ornamentation, rhythmic simplicity and regularity, clear vocal timbres, and a preference for higher pitches. So jazz and rock styles, with their characteristic rough, grainy, lower-pitch timbres carrying sexual overtones, are strictly avoided. The anodyne, thin, neutral timbres of electronic toys are well suited, relatively free of associations with existing musical styles. The pace and dynamic are uniformly animated, the songs on CD compilations sung with an earnest enthusiasm, for adults wish early childhood to be happy and carefree. The song topics, similarly, convey images of idealized childhoods: typically rural childhoods of yesteryear, on farms with mulberry trees and domesticated animals. The Canadian compilation CD included the songs "Over the Rainbow," "I Can Sing a Rainbow," "Puff the Magic Dragon," and "Let's Go Fly a Kite"—all conveying an ephemeral, magical land of childhood. Giroux (2000) observes that this striving for bland images of innocence appears to be ever stronger while delivered in ever diversifying commercial forms.

Conclusion

The aim of this article, then, has been to draw on data capturing instances of everyday musical experiences and to consider these from a number of different points of view. For this purpose we pursued interdisciplinary approaches—music psychology's interest in musical development, the sociology of technology, children's popular culture, studies of everyday music, the privatization of musical practices in the home, and the growing recognition of "agency" as children actively construct their own experiences. Our intention is to move beyond straightforward, self-contained accounts of developmental musical childhoods or of technological changes and conjectures about their possible impacts on young children's lives. Instead, we consider how musical practices are interwoven into young children's everyday experience, with particular attention to how access to

new technologies and media resources are changing the nature of family musical practices and participation. We wish also to illustrate some of the ways in which "children's culture" as presented to them especially through technologized media can be viewed as a flexible resource to be taken up in various ways. Children "are active contributors to, rather than simply spectators of, the complex processes of cultural continuity and change" (James, Jenks, and Prout 1998:83). Our aim is that this work will contribute to the current, expanding interest in understanding young children's everyday musical experiences and that these understandings can lead to revised and enlightened versions of children's musical childhoods.

Notes

1. Other foci included literacy practices, eating, swings, and hammocks, framed within the project's overarching interest in notions of parenting a "strong" child—with awareness that "strong" may be differently conceived according to varying parental values and priorities.

2. The images in this article have been altered where necessary to protect the identities of the children.

3. See also Littleton (2002) for an interesting and valuable account of how recorded music provided scripts for participation in daily home-care between a grandmother and her granddaughter.

References

Arthur, Leone. 2005. Popular Culture: Views of Parents and Educators. In *Popular Culture, New Media, and Digital Literacy in Early Childhood*, edited by Jackie Marsh, 165–182, London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Barrett, Margaret. 2003. Meme Engineers: Children as Producers of Musical Culture. *International Journal of Early Years Education* 11 (3): 195–212.

Buckingham, David, and Margaret Scanlon. 2003. *Education, Entertainment, and Learning in the Home.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Campbell, Patricia Shehan. 1998. *Songs in their Heads: Music and Its Meaning in Children's Lives.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Chaney, David. 2002. *Cultural Change and Everyday Life.* New York: Palgrave.

Chen-Haftek, Lily. 2004. Music and Movement from Zero to Three: A Window to Children's Musicality. Paper presented to the ISME Early Childhood Commission Conference—"Els Mons Musicals dels Infants (The Musical Worlds of Children)." Escola Superior de Musica de Catalunya, Varcelona, Spain, July 5–10.

Christensen, Pia, and Alan Prout. 2005. Anthropological and Sociological Perspectives on the Study of Children. In *Researching Children's Experience: Approaches and Methods,* edited by Sheila Greene and Diane Hogan, 42–60. Thousand Oaks, CA, and London: Sage.

Cook, Daniel T. 2004. *The Commodification of Childhood: The Children's Clothing Industry and the Rise of the Child Consumer.* Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press

Cook, Nicholas. 1998. *Analysing Musical Multimedia.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

DeNora, Tia. 2000. *Music in Everyday Life.* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gillen, Julia. 2007. Derwent's Doors: Creative Acts. *Mind, Culture, and Activity* 14 (3): 150–59.

Gillen, Julia, Catherine A. Cameron, Sombat Tapanya, Giuliana Pinto, Roger Hancock, Susan Young, and Beatrice Accorti Gamannossi. 2007. "A Day in the Life": Advancing a Methodology for the Cultural Study of Development and Learning in Early Childhood. *Early Child Development and Care* 177 (2): 207–18.

Giroux, Henry A. 2000. *Stealing Innocence: Youth, Corporate Power, and the Politics of Culture.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Gluschankof, Claudia. 2005. *Spontaneous Musical Behaviors in Israeli Jewish and Arab Kindergartens—Searching for Universal Principles within Cultural Differences.* PhD dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Hughes, Patrick. 2005. Baby It's You: International Capital Discovers the Under Threes. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 6 (1): 30–40.

Hutchby, Ian, and Jo Moran-Ellis. 2001. Introduction: Relating Children, Technology and Culture. In *Children, Technology, and Culture: The Impacts of Technologies on Children's Everyday Lives*, edited by Ian Hutchby and Jo Moran-Ellis, 1–10. London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

James, Allison, Chris Jenks, and Alan Prout. 1998. *Theorizing Childhood.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lee, Nick. 2001. The Extensions of Childhood: Technology, Children, and Independence. In *Children, Technology, and Culture: The Impacts of Technologies on Children's Everyday Lives*, edited by Ian Hutchby and Jo Moran-Ellis, 153–69. London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

LeVine, Robert A. 2003. *Childhood Socialization: Comparative Studies of Parenting, Learning, and Educational Change.* Hong Kong: Comparative Educational Research Centre.

Levitin, Daniel. 2006. *This Is Your Brain on Music: Understanding a Human Obsession.* London: Atlantic Books.

Littleton, Diane. 2002. Music in the Time of Toddlers. *Zero to Three: The Musical Lives of Babies and Families* 23 (1): 35–40.

Lull, James. 1995. *Media, Communication, Culture: A Global Approach.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Marsh, Jackie. 2004. The Techno-literacy Practices of Young Children. *Journal of Early Childhood Research* 2 (1): 51–66.

———. 2005. Ritual, Performance, and Identity Construction: Young Children's Engagement with Popular Culture and Media Texts. In *Popular Culture, New Media, and Digital Literacy in Early Childhood,* edited by Jackie Marsh, 28–50. London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Marsh, Katherine. 2005. A Cross-Cultural Study of the Musical Play Practices of Children in School Playgrounds. In *The Legacy of John Blacking: Essays on Music, Culture, and Society,* edited by Victoria Rogers and David Simonds, 152–66. Crawley: University of Western Australia Press.

Minks, Amanda. 2002. From Children's Song to Expressive Practices: Old and New Directions in the Ethnomusicological Study of Children. *Ethnomusicology* 46 (3): 379–408.

Moog, Helmut. 1976. *The Musical Experience of the Pre-school Child,* translated by Claudia Clarke. London: Schott.

Nelson, Katherine, and Janice Gruendel. 1986. Children's Scripts. In *Event Knowledge: Structure and Function in Development,* edited by Katherine Nelson, 36–57. New York: Norton.

Ortiz, Fernando. [1947] 1995. *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar,* translated by Harriet de Onís. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press.

Prout, Alan. 2005. *The Future of Childhood.* London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
Roth, Wolff-Michael. 2007. Introduction: Heeding the Unit of Analysis. *Mind, Culture, and Activity* 14 (3): 143–49.
Sloboda, John. 2005. *Exploring the Musical Mind: Cognition, Emotion, Ability, Function.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
Welch, Graham. 2006. Singing and Vocal Development. In *The Child As Musician: A Handbook of Musical Development*, edited by Gary McPherson, 311–29. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
Young, Susan. 2006. Seen But Not Heard: Young Children's Improvised Singing. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood 7* (3): 268–78.
———. Forthcoming. Lullaby Light Shows: Everyday Musical Experiences Among Under-Two-Year-Olds. *International Journal of Music Education* 26 (1).
Young, Susan, and Julia Gillen. 2006. Communicative Musicality as Parenting Practice. [La Musicalita comunicativa come pratica educative.] *Rassegna di Psicologica* 3 (23): 61–77.
Young, Susan, Alison Street, and Eleanor Davies. 2007. The Music One-to-One Project: Developing Approaches to Music with Parents and Under-Two-Year-Olds. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 15 (2): 253–67.