

International Perspectives on
Early Childhood Education and Development 27

Susan Young
Beatriz Ilari *Editors*

Music in Early Childhood: Multi-disciplinary Perspectives and Inter-disciplinary Exchanges

 Springer

International Perspectives on Early Childhood Education and Development

Volume 27

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Susan Young • Beatriz Ilari
Editors

Music in Early Childhood:
Multi-disciplinary
Perspectives
and Inter-disciplinary
Exchanges

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Susan Young recently retired as senior lecturer in Early Childhood Studies and Music Education at the University of Exeter, UK, and, in retirement, has completed an additional postgraduate research degree in anthropology. She continues her academic activity as senior research fellow at the University of Roehampton, London, and associate of the Centre for Research in Early Childhood, Birmingham. Originally trained as a pianist at the Royal College of Music, London, winning the

outstanding student prize in her final year, she was awarded a scholarship to study Dalcroze Eurhythmics in Geneva. She spent her early career teaching music in a range of schools to children of all ages before gaining a PhD in early childhood music from the University of Surrey. She has published widely in professional and academic journals and is frequently invited to present at conferences, both nationally and internationally. She has written several books, including *Music with the Under Fours* and *Critical New Perspectives in Early Childhood Music: Young Children Engaging and Learning Through Music*.

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Chapter 1

Introduction



S. Young and B. Ilari

In recent years the provision of music for young children in its many forms has grown considerably. At the same time, young children's musical activity remains low on the scholarly hierarchy. This neglect of early childhood music in the various music disciplines relates to wider theoretical and cultural assumptions that lead to a lack of interest in young children and their music. More specifically it relates to the pervasive and persistent belief that because young children have not yet acquired conventional musical skills, their musical activity is not worthy of serious academic attention.

In the wider fields of early years education and childhood studies, early childhood music has been marginalised for a different set of reasons. It is typically viewed as a small-scale, specialist area and broadly assumed to have little relevance to mainstream issues and topics. This positioning reflects long-standing conceptions of music teaching and learning derived from music education's heritage in Western 'art' music. These conceptions suggest that music requires specialist teaching skills and that learning and progress is based on acquiring a set of narrowly defined, performance abilities. Despite much persuasive writing (e.g. Marsh & Young, 2016) that explains how musical behaviours are interwoven into holistic, playful and sociable activities in early childhood and convincing research providing empirical evidence, the assumptions are deep-set. These assumptions hold back the integration of children's musical activity into mainstream interests in early childhood and educational studies.

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In spite of this marginalisation, however, there are active scholars who are studying and writing about young children's musical experiences and activity. These scholars are working in the various fields of education, psychology, neuroscience, anthropology/ethnomusicology, philosophy, sociology and cultural/media studies. Many of them are starting to broach new ways of researching and understanding young children's music. But academics from different disciplinary areas who share interests in early childhood music rarely meet in the same conferences or publish in the same journals. Their work is dispersed. In the study of children more generally, beyond a focus on music alone, there have been important moves towards inter-disciplinarity, thereby reaping benefits from bringing multi-disciplinary perspectives together and encouraging inter-disciplinary conversations. Different perspectives complement one another, and contribute to a more holistic view of early childhood music. But contact and integration between scholars with varied disciplinary orientations is not yet taking place in early childhood music. There have been published volumes by various authors which take explicitly psychological (e.g. Sloboda & Deliège, 1996) and more recently, neuroscientific views (e.g. Folland, Butler, Payne, & Trainor, 2015). Some volumes adopt an ethnomusicological view without focusing solely on young children (Campbell & Wiggins, 2013) while others view early childhood music from educational and pedagogical standpoints (Burton & Taggart, 2011; Smithrim & Upitis, 2007). At the time of writing however, we could not find a single text where different views of music and young children, and their underlying epistemologies, are presented. This book was born out of this serious omission.

Music in Early Childhood: Multi-disciplinary Perspectives and Inter-disciplinary Exchanges explores many aspects of music in early childhood, bringing together a wide range of approaches and theoretical perspectives. The variety of subjects covered includes the capacities and competences that children possess for music, their musical interactions with those close to them, their musicking (Small, 1998) within the contexts of home, daycare and nursery as well as wider issues of musical traditions and identity, commercialism and the impact of new technologies. We intend this book to have both a pragmatic purpose; to be useful to all those working in music with young children as educators, community artists, therapists and more, and to provide theoretical stimulus for those more aligned with academia and research. That said, in their writing the authors move constantly between theory and descriptions of real-world activity in ways that challenge rigid theory/practice divisions. Many authors closely examine small events that they have drawn from observations of educational experiences or children's musical activity in everyday life. By analysing these small events they draw new insights, using them to inform and progress their thinking and develop theoretical depth. Many of these insights will, we propose, suggest new directions and possibilities for research and practice.

Moreover the view of music learning that threads through the chapters is not confined to educational settings but expands to include children's immersion in everyday musical activities of family and home, and participation in musical events and activities in social groups and communities. With this volume, we also aim to problematise and contribute to the debate on musical development. Musical devel-

opment is often conceived in narrow and limited terms as the unfolding – from pre-birth through to adulthood – of musical skills derived from Western art music. Furthermore, developmental music research has typically centred on a view of music as a body of skills and knowledge to be learned, and of children as immature adults who are undergoing a process of ‘becoming’ musical. Until fairly recently, conceptions of musical development have also followed models or stages, with adult abilities as both the point of reference and the end goal (see Ilari, 2018). Yet, as is very evident in this book, young children live their musical lives in the present, ‘being’ musical. Their musical experiences can be compared to constellations in that they may appear and disappear in a fraction of time, only to re-emerge later on, in a similar or varied form. Being and becoming intersect in children’s lives (see also Ilari & Young, 2016). Therefore, a much broader view of musical development is needed in order to understand what changes have occurred in children’s musicking over the course of time. Such a view must encompass not only the myriad ways children engage with music, but must also take into account the diverse factors that enable musicking, from micro influences at the family level to the broader societal and cultural influences (see also Hargreaves & Lamont, 2017).

The Present Volume

In planning this present volume, we invited contributors whose work represents a range of disciplinary perspectives. We did not ask them to mould their writing to fit a predetermined framework of our design, but invited them to select topics from their recent work. We thought that the risk of divergence between chapters would be off-set by the freedom given to each author to write what they considered to be timely and important to say from their specific viewpoints. Readers will notice that chapters follow writing traditions from distinct disciplines, each with their own representations of musical child, childhood and children’s musical lives.

On receiving the chapters, we read them closely and identified emerging themes that started to coalesce across and between chapters. In a multi-disciplinary text it is important to move beyond simply gathering together motley ideas drawn from different disciplinary perspectives but to look for similarities and commonalities. We discovered that some authors, although from different disciplinary orientations, were writing about similar or overlapping ideas. Equally, there were some ideas, such as the use of the term ‘musicking’ and an interest in children’s musical agency that cropped up in several chapters but had been applied in different empirical and theoretical contexts. So rather than introduce all the chapters individually with a short synopsis as is familiar practice in the opening chapter of an edited volume, we present the topics and themes that we identified. We accompany the presentation of topics and themes with a brief discussion that points to what, from our reading, are emerging and important areas to consider for all those concerned with young children and their music. Thus we aim to begin an inter-disciplinary exchange that we hope readers will develop and continue beyond our starting points here.

Our identification of themes and similarities also underpins the grouping of chapters into four parts. The first part includes three chapters that explore music made by children as they interact with others (siblings, parents, daycare workers and peers) in homes and care settings. The second part focuses on the capacities for music that all children possess such as sociality, self-generated vocalising, and embodiment. In the third part we assembled those chapters that explore the types of music that adults provide and introduce into young children's lives with a particular focus on musical traditions and their re-enactment in light of shifting social, cultural and political environments. The fourth and final part includes chapters that explore varied constructions of musical childhoods as gendered, as created through commodified music, through formal tuition, and enabled by new technological devices. Whatever the focal topic of a chapter, in many instances discussion surrounding the introduction of types of music and musical engagements into children's lives reflect parenting, educational, cultural, political or commercial goals. As will be seen, sometimes there is congruence between these different goals, but at other times there are tensions and conflicts.

Before we embark on presenting the topics that frame the chapters and the themes that emerge from dialogue between them, there is more to say about the contributing authors. They are at varying stages in their careers: some are early career authors and some more experienced and established. In our view, new voices should be heard and new work, from new theoretical positions, should reach wider audiences. We strove for international representation, but this was less easy to achieve than we had hoped and the authors still cluster around our own European and North American locations. We are however very aware of the geographical omissions and hope in the future that it can be otherwise. Almost all our authors are either educators and researchers currently working closely and substantially with young children, or have practical experience prior to their move into academia. We believe this to be important, as nothing can replace the tacit knowledge that is acquired through direct contact and experience with babies and young children and their musicality.

The Chapters

There are some general points of convergence between the 15 chapters in this book. As we juxtaposed them, we realised there are theories and earlier works of particular salience to the field which remain informative to the writing of several authors. Examples include Malloch and Trevarthen's communicative musicality (2009), Small's musicking (1998), and Leman's embodied music cognition (2007), as well as seminal writings by John Blacking, Amanda Minks, Patricia Shehan Campbell, and Ellen Dissanayake, to name a few. This canon of literature reaffirms, in many ways, what practitioners and researchers have experienced in situ. Embodied music cognition, for example, not only aligns well with the writings of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, but also connects with the widespread view of movement as central to

young children's musical experiences. Likewise, the works of Blacking, Minks, Campbell and others, which have helped to advance the idea of children's musical cultures, are consistent with the different expressions of musicality that practitioners across the globe witness in their daily work with young children.

Readers will also discover other crossovers in the text, such as connections between findings obtained in laboratories and those emerging from field-based studies. For example, micro-details obtained from psychological studies that explored musical responses to social and pro-social factors in experimental situations (Soley, this volume) connect with an anthropologist's discussions of social empathy among children participating in an intercultural music project (Pieridou Skoutella, this volume). Although these two chapters are very different in disciplinary orientation, both provide insights into the relationships between musical experiences in early childhood and empathy for others. Another example of a connecting theme between chapters is that of inadvertent harm to children caused by the unthinking application of dominant educational approaches. This theme is revealed through the micro-analyses of conversations and musical improvisation of one child (Kanellopoulos, this volume), and through reflections upon the curriculum and pedagogy imposed on Israeli-Palestinian children in one nursery setting (Gluschkankof, this volume). These two authors write about children in different countries and educational situations, yet move between theory and observations of children's musicking to arrive at critiques of dominant and dominating practices that reveal the subtle operations of power implicit in certain educational pedagogies. These are two examples and there are many more overlaps and links between chapters.

In the next sections, some of the common topics and themes that emerged from the juxtaposition of chapters are discussed. We have encapsulated them under four interrelated headings, namely, *Places and Spaces*, *Music and the Child*, *Identities*, *Being with*, as depicted in Fig. 1.1.

Places and Spaces

Young children's musical experiences take place in a variety of settings, including at home with families, in daycare, kindergarten and schools, specialised community-based programmes like 'mummy-and-me' sessions, and in virtual communities, through the use of ever-evolving digital technologies (Young & Ilari, 2012). One of the most important recent developments in early childhood music that is clearly reflected in this book, is the interest in young children's music within the family and home environment. For a long time the focus centred on musical activity in the preschool setting, day-care or early years schooling, and activity at home was seen as merely peripheral. Now, the tables have almost completely turned and all our authors, in one way or another, address the primacy and richness of children's everyday musical experiences within homes, families and wider socio-cultural environments. Their research is either located in the home, or their discussions

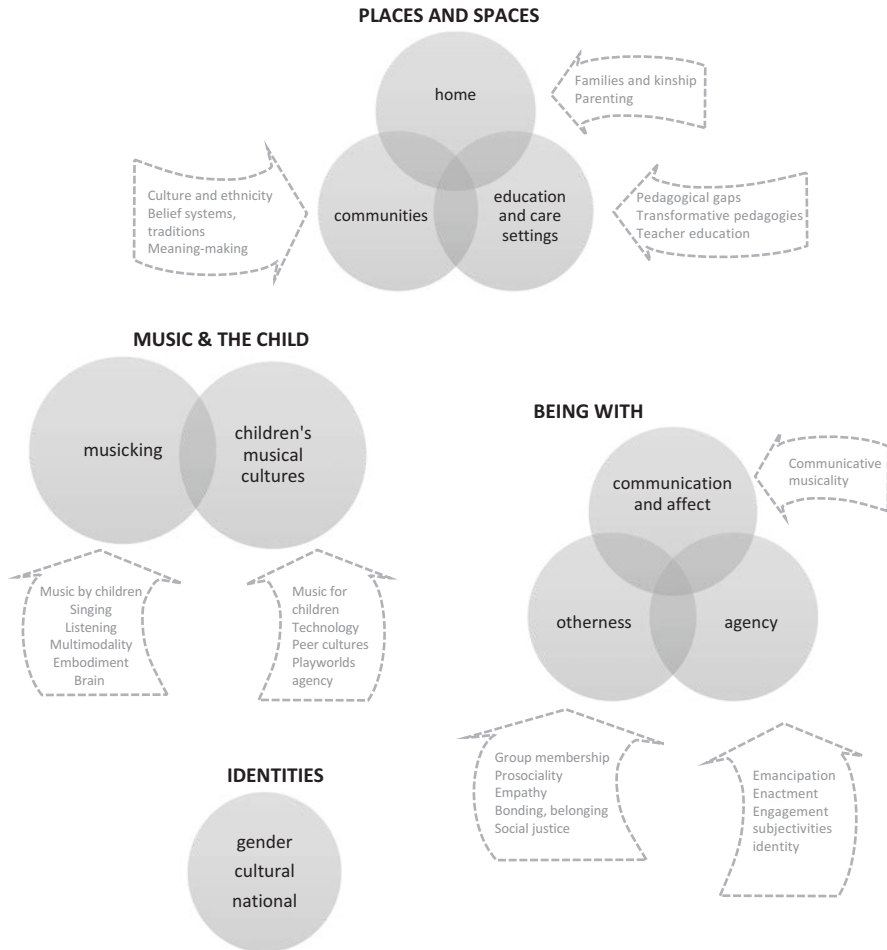


Fig. 1.1 Schematic representation of common topics and themes and their articulations

encompass the children's family musical culture as the crucible of children's musicality and the backdrop to educational activities. These expanded understandings of children's musical lives at home and in wider communities are complementing and extending understandings that have already accumulated in previous decades from studies of children in preschool settings and the more formal environments of music lessons and the research laboratory. We argue that this shift into wider contexts and with children of younger and younger ages has considerably expanded the scope of early childhood music research and expanded our understanding. One consequence is, however, that the earliest years of schooling and conventional music lessons may now be receiving less attention. Hence the value of chapters that focus on children at the start of formal education in contexts such as the school music class or instrumental lesson (e.g., Roberts, this volume).

As research into the home-family environment has developed, so it has expanded into more nuanced dimensions such as musical relationships among siblings, the contemporary family home as a place for solitary music play and the influence of touchscreen technologies on musical activity at home. As Bronya Dean puts it, both the social and material characteristics of the home afford different types of musical agency. In the context of contemporary childhoods, parenting cultures and technological developments (pertaining particularly to privileged children living in post-industrial countries), the many dimensions of home life for young children are changing and having consequent impact on the nature of children's music and musical experiences. In addition, as a place for carrying out research, the home and family life present a number of practical and ethical challenges. In several chapters authors explain how research methods are evolving and adapting to the study of music at home. Methods include enlisting the participation of parents to write diaries and collect photos and video data such as described by Lisa Kooops, Christa Kuebel, Susan Young and Yen-Ting Wu, or having children wear special devices to capture their vocalisations, as explained by Bronya Dean.

A thought-provoking caveat is raised by Tyler Bickford, who suggests that an emphasis on family music can represent a 'domesticating move that encloses children within the family'. This, he suggests, may be counter to alternative conceptions of children as members of communities that exist beyond the home. Thus, in the Westernised nuclear family, cultures of parenting and ideologies of childhood may account for a focus on particular types of childhoods lived at home, that inadvertently lead to reinforcing certain conceptions of musical childhood. Andrea Emberly's chapter can serve as a counter-balance to this risk of a domesticating move, as in the Vhavenda communities that she studied.

Educational Settings, Pedagogical Gaps, and Transformative Pedagogies

In many of the chapters, from whichever direction they start out, the authors arrive at points where children's musicality, musical imaginations and musical identities connect, interact, engage with or even conflict with the musics introduced into their lives by those around them. As seen here, the majority of musical encounters are introduced by the adults in their lives, although other children, siblings and peers also play an important musical role in children's lives. The adults include parents, extended family members, educators, curriculum designers, media producers, professional musicians and commercial music marketers. Authors reflect on these points of contact and on how they introduce new possibilities that allow children's musical imaginations to flourish. There are many descriptions of interactions between educators, parents and a grandparent, and babies and young children that create moments of musical flourishing. These encounters may also introduce

constraints and mechanisms of control (whether intentionally or unintentionally) that contain rigid definitions of gender, race, or social class. Others leave these implications at the discretion of the readers, albeit offering rich accounts of children's musicking in situ. The key dilemma these reflections raise is how to arrive at a rapprochement between children's own identities, ways of engaging, their own musical imaginations, their needs for knowledge and skills as being-becoming musicians (and becoming musicians into their own musical futures) and the musical encounters provided for them by the adults in their lives. And arriving at a rapprochement that embodies the values of equality and social justice that we, as adults, aim to promote.

What is noticeable is that several authors are warning of gaps opening up between what we now understand about children's own musical worlds, their musical imaginations, subjectivities and rightful heritages, and what is offered to them in educational practice. Avra Pieridou Skoutella expresses this concern head on, writing that the 'gap between educators' pre-determined music lessons and fixed educational 'recipes' and young children's contextual forms of music learning is even wider and deeper and the need to take action is more demanding than is generally assumed'. Some authors painstakingly assemble the evidence and develop theoretical arguments in order to reveal those gaps, while others, like Berenice Nyland and Christopher Roberts, go on to explore pedagogical innovations that can work across them. These authors describe approaches that weave young children's own musical capacities and identities into their educational experiences. Avra Pieridou Skoutella, in particular, explores the skills, knowledge and understandings that educators would require if they were to develop intercultural music programmes. This chapter takes us the furthest in its recommendations for practice, particularly the need for reflective practice that allows educators to explore the emotional dimension of what a change in practice would mean for them.

Music and the Child

A second emergent theme concerns the many ways that children engage with music, whether through self-initiated practices or motivated by an adult (caregiver or teacher) or play partner. Children's musicking and their musical cultures are described from different viewpoints and in a wide range of settings—from the home to educational, care settings and the community at large. Children's musicking, although relational (to use Small's definition) is more centred on the individual child. Moreover it represents but one way in which children engage in their musical cultures. There are other forms of engagement that are common to children from a given group, community or society.

***Music*king**

Young children's self-initiated music-making is difficult to describe and define. When children weave their music-like activity into many other modes of activity, this interweaving defies definitions based on musical elements alone. When, for example, babies and toddlers vocalise, tap, move rhythmically and play peek-a-boo at what point can this time-based, contoured activity be framed as musical in some way? And how can children's growing understanding of how music operates be facilitated within cultural contexts and incorporated into conceptions of their musical learning and knowledge? Many of our authors turned to Small's (1998) concept of musicking as being more appropriate to young children's activity because its expanded conceptions of musical process are able to capture the fluid, multimodal and context-embedded nature of young children's music-making. For Small:

To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing. We might at times even extend its meaning to what the person is doing who takes the tickets at the door or the hefty men who shift the piano and the drums or the roadies who set up the instruments and carry out the sound checks or the cleaners who clean up after everyone else has gone. They, too, are all contributing to the nature of the event that is a musical performance. (p. 13)

It is interesting to read how Small's flexible concept of musicking is adopted by different authors in varying ways across the volume. Lisa Koops, Christa Kuebel, and Amanda Niland use the term musicking when referring to different modes of music-making. Christopher Roberts extends the concept of musicking, suggesting that young children's musickings can have different qualities such as advanced and active (and by comparison, initial and less active). Ingeborg Vestad talks of musicking as something much broader and contextual, and further develops the idea of musicking to arrive at a concept of musickingship.

Three aspects of musicking that emerged from the several chapters are worthy of further commentary in the paragraphs that follow: generating music, singing, and multimodality.

Generating Music

A key aspect of musicking is the spontaneous generation of music (often called 'music production' among music psychologists and neuroscientists) by young children. We purposefully choose the term 'generating' (and not 'making' or 'creating'), because it alludes to both young children's agency and to a set of rules, tacit or explicit, that characterise children's music cognition. In other words, children's musical expressions, from vocalisations to improvisations and gestures, are important expressions of a musical being, whose body, mind, brain, and heart exist in time, space, and culture. The music that young children generate does not emerge in a vacuum, but is deeply interlinked with both the potentials of their brain and body

and to their navigations and negotiations with the multiple environments of their daily lives (see Young & Ilari, 2012). Readers will find many illustrations of this interlinked process as they read about the vocalisations and spontaneous songs described in the chapters by Bronya Dean and Amanda Niland, Leonie's piano improvisations in Panos Kanellopoulos' chapter, and Ingeborg Vestad's powerful description of two boys playing their 'imaginary guitars' in the sandbox.

Singing

As a manifestation of musicking and generating music, singing and its meaning in young children's lives is mentioned in a majority of the chapters. This is no surprise given that songs and singing are rich and important resources in young children's lives (Marsh & Young, 2016). There are multiple illustrations of singing among babies through to 5- and 6-year-olds (e.g., Dean, this volume; Koops and Kuebel, this volume; Niland, this volume), as well as reports on their responses to songs (see Ilari & Cho, this volume; Soley, this volume). The quantity and variety of illustrations also reflect the focus on naturalistic, everyday activity in many chapters and highlight the fact that song is the most accessible musical medium for young children.

Multimodality

Another theme that threads through most (if not all) chapters is the multimodal nature of young children's musicking. Again, conceptions of multimodality vary from chapter to chapter. Luc Nijs and Melissa Bremmer approach the idea of multimodality through the lens of embodied music cognition (Leman, 2007). Ingeborg Vestad combines a multimodal approach with the concept of affordance. She further argues that interactions are multimodal in nature and this definition ties in well with Small's (1998) idea of musicking being relational. Tyler Bickford, Susan Young and Yen Ting Wu, use multimodality in association with literacy's new communication forms and technology. And although Andrea Emberly and Gaye Soley do not use the term multimodality in their chapters, their descriptions of children's participation in the research process is also indicative of the multimodal nature of children's musical thinking and engagement. Multimodality unsurprisingly, is further supported by brain imaging research, as discussed by Beatriz Ilari and Eun Cho. Altogether, these chapters offer an opportunity for bringing varied perspectives together and redefining multimodality as it relates to young children and music.

Young Children's Musical Cultures: 'Listening' to Children

Taking children's musicking and musical cultures seriously – with assumptions of competence rather than the deficit views often perpetuated by conventional developmental accounts – has become central to early childhood music scholarship,

reflecting moves in the wider field of early childhood studies and education. Many authors reveal and discuss the ways in which they have attempted to understand from the children's own perspective, carrying out research *with* children rather than *on* them. Andrea Emberly offers some clear examples of what can be learned from and about children when they serve as co-researchers. Other authors have adopted observational, ethnographic methods that seek to reveal the realities of children's agentic musical lives with as little disturbance as possible. Yet the careful work of psychologists, neuroscientists, described by Gaye Soley, Beatriz Ilari and Eun Cho, in finding methods to study the non-vocal, and even internal responses of very young children, are no less attentive and respectful, albeit through alternative, experimental methods using advanced technologies.

The importance of attending to children's multiple ways of engaging with music is also at the heart of many chapters. Several authors expand the notion of 'listening' to mean more than simply taking in aural information. Understanding from the perspective of the very youngest non-verbal infants and toddlers presents a particular challenge. Berenice Nyland therefore expands the notion of listening to include a form of receptivity to children that aims to be sensitive to their multimodal engagements. Panos Kanellopoulos and Christopher Roberts both provide scripted conversations with children that reveal their adult efforts to listen to children in order to truly grasp their intended meanings and then to gently prompt, challenge and shift the children's thinking. Thus author/researchers in this book have also taken great care to adopt approaches to young children that will enable them to reveal their music-making, their musical capabilities, and their musical thinking.

Expanded ways of listening and being receptive, challenge the adults to reflect on children's musical actions and their words and come to new understandings that they suggest feed back into how we educate children musically. Luc Nijs and Melissa Bremmer offer some ideas concerning ways to apply embodied music cognition with young children. The activities they propose are grounded on a dynamic exchange between what is proposed by the leading adult (a teacher, caregiver or parent) and the children's responses, which are based on observation and extension. Amanda Niland's chapter offers valuable insights into a similar pedagogical process, as she explains how educators and carers can connect with young children's musical ideas and actions and build on them. While these interactive, pedagogical processes may be familiar practice in other domains of early childhood education, these descriptions of their application to music education practices (still dominated by adult-led, didactic methods), provide exemplary models of alternative practice, much-needed by the field of early childhood music education. Perhaps a good place to start 'listening' to children is through a careful observation of musical play and playworlds.

Musical Play and Playworlds

Looking back, the focus of much scholarship in the late 1990s and into the 2000s was to argue for the importance of children's self-generated musical activity within child-centred conceptions of music learning. It would seem that the rationales for children's learning through musical play are well enough established in theory, even

if less established in practice. From this firmer foothold, there is now scope to develop, expand and refine our understandings of children's musical play and the pedagogies it calls for and the chapters ahead provide plentiful and richly descriptive examples. Berenice Nyland extends music play pedagogy between daycare workers and babies by adopting and adapting the Swedish play scholar Gunilla Lindqvist's pedagogical approach of playworlds. For Amanda Niland, Corsaro's (1992) theory of interpretive reproduction provides a lens through which to analyse children in a preschool setting creating their own local music cultures through song play. Similarly Claudia Gluschkof notices Palestinian-Israeli children playing with song in ways that subvert the dominant culture, calling upon post-colonial theory to develop her arguments. Avra Pieridou Skoutella encourages forms of musical play that will foster intercultural connections between children living in different European Mediterranean countries and finds inspiration in the Aristotelian idea of *mimesis*. The newly arrived touchscreen technologies enabling new forms of musical play at home among girls, are described in Susan Young and Yen-Ting Wu's chapter.

Identities

Young children's musical experiences and the opportunities afforded to them to exercise musical agency are directly linked to identity construction, our third emergent theme. Children derive meaning as they engage with music in multiple ways and as they generate their own music. An assumption of many scholars in early childhood music is that such experiences are profound, and may create a lasting impression later on (e.g., Davidson & Emberly, 2012; Trevarthen, Gratier, & Osborne, 2014). The authors in this book write about many aspects of children's identity construction, in and through music. Two identity-related themes prevalent in this volume are culture and gender. These obviously intersect with other social categories of difference such as ethnicity, race, nationality, religious background, age and generation.

Gender Identity

In several chapters, an aspect of gender identity through music emerges from discussions of other topics. These various discussion points serve to remind us how musical practices can include powerful signifiers of gender.

Unguided free play, although the mainstay of practice in early childhood education contexts, may serve to reinforce stereotypical behaviours. Drawing on their background experiences, young children often re-enact popular music performances in their play. Amanda Niland describes an observation of girls wearing fairy wings who were singing and dancing. Their performance prompted the boys to take up an inflatable guitar and loudly pronounce 'boys' music'. The boys were declaring and 're-presenting' a gender division that is present and emphasised in pop music. This

observation relates directly to Ingeborg Vestad's discussion of the gender-based interpretive frames that we may unwittingly bring to bear in our responses to girls or boys making music in playful situations. Claudia Gluschankof is also presented with a dilemma when she observes children's self-initiated music play that reproduces rigid male/female social roles. On the one hand, the song play provides Palestinian-Israeli children with a vehicle to subvert the linguistic and cultural dominance of the Israeli-Hebrew curriculum but on the other hand it reinforces the separation of male and female roles within Arab society. Thus, chapter authors arrive at the challenges faced by educators in deciding whether and/or when to intervene in children's free play and if so, how. There are thoughtful equations to be made between allowing children freedom (and agency) and actively steering them towards what is desirable for the wider society in terms of equality and social justice (Biesta, 2014).

Along similar lines, Susan Young and Yen-Ting Wu acknowledge that their case study children are all girls. This gender-biased selection was unintentional; only girls were volunteered to participate in the study by their parents. However this gender bias is likely to be a reflection of Chinese parenting values in relation to daughters and sons. It is interesting to note that music technology is characteristically a masculine-biased activity, yet the everyday accessibility of touchscreen technologies generate, among girls predominantly, forms of sing-along activities that draw heavily from the gender-essentialist princess and fairy themes of Disney popular culture (Young & Wu, this volume).

This present-day emerging yet secondary focus on gender contrasts with the 1990s when issues of gender in music education enjoyed a short-lived period of theory-inspired academic activity. This, to us, signals a return to gender as a topic of importance in early childhood music scholarship after it has been side-lined for many years. What is interesting is that the issues around gender have emerged from observations of children's self-initiated music play and are therefore brought to the fore from an empirical rather than theoretical viewpoint—in contrast to the 1990s when the motivator was arguably more theoretical.

Cultural Identity

It is perhaps not surprising, given current global intensities around issues of national identity and diversity, that many of our chapters address what it means to have a sense of belonging to a particular cultural group and how that can manifest through musical practices. As Gaye Soley argues, 'Indeed, a large body of evidence suggests that music is used as a marker of one's social history and social identity and affects perception of others'. Moreover race and coloniality receive much attention in this volume. This attention reflects broad changes in the concerns of education and, in many countries, the increasing political control of education.

The wider political and social environments within which authors are working clearly influence their perspectives and the topics they have chosen to write about. In