
SYMPOSIUM 11: Children's Self-Initiated Generative Music Processes: Perspectives on Children's Musical Thinking

Symposium: Children's Self-Initiated Generative Music Processes: Perspectives on Children's Musical Thinking

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1. Background

The study of children's generative musical processes has focused largely on the investigation of children's original music-making as vocalists and instrumentalists in response to set tasks completed in experimental and naturalistic settings. These studies have operated from a view of children's original music - making as a component of educational practice, as preliminary to educational practice, and by inference as potentially informative for educational practice. A growing body of studies has sought to examine children's music-making in non-formal music teaching and learning settings, including as a component of children's play and early symbolization.

2. Aims

The contributors to this symposium aim to examine children's self-selected processes for music-making, and resultant musical products and symbolizations.

3. Main Contributions

The symposium shall examine recent research concerning the ways in which children think about their own creative works and music-making and the ways in which their thinking processes unfold in self-initiated contexts.

4. Implications

The symposium holds implications for the ways in which composition experiences in school environments may take into account children's thinking processes about their own works and the varied natures of their working processes.

Revisiting Revision in Children's Composition Processes

Sandra L. Stauffer; Arizona State University, USA

Time: Sat 20 3.30 pm, Stream: D **Proc. Page: 178-178**
Venue: Room G17, Webster Ground

The purpose of this study was to investigate when and how revision unfolds in the working processes of young composers. When and why do young composers choose to revise or not revise as a work unfolds, and when and why do they choose to revise or not revise previous works? Case study records were compiled for young composers participating in an after-school composition lab. Four different types of revision were observed in the young composers' working processes: revision as a work unfolds, revision of a single gesture over multiple compositions, revision of a single work over multiple sessions, and revision of a previously composed work. How and why young composers chose to revisit and revise their works appeared to be related to cognitive and musical development. Whether and how revision occurs may be related to the young composer's proclivity to perceive composing as either a discreet or continuous event.

Vocal Play as Agent of Musical Creativity

Esther Mang; Hong Kong Baptist University, China

Time: Sat 20 4.00 pm, Stream: D **Proc. Page: 179-182**
Venue: Room G17, Webster Ground

Vocal play of young children may provide adults a glimpse of their musical world because these self-generated behaviours have an improvisatory character and are often rich in musical expressions. Hence, analyses of vocal play may deepen our understanding of young children's musical creativity encoded in vocal behaviours. The present study examined evidence for parallels between acquisition of musical and linguistic behaviours, young children's concept of a song, and the development of musical improvisations.

Longitudinal observations were conducted on the vocal behaviours of preschool children in their homes. Speech and singing responses were recorded during child-adult interactions and in different play settings. Recorded vocal responses were analyzed by three judges. Analyses of the vocal plays of children at age 2 showed that they were beginning to make productive distinctions between singing and speaking in ways that more closely resemble that of the adult model. Although some older children had mastered the skill needed to perform songs accurately and to communicate effectively in speech, they may choose to express novel forms of vocal play that purposefully alternate easily between singing and speaking.

Findings suggested that young children were able to transfer to their self-generated music making a variety of language and musical concepts previously introduced to them. Thus, learned language and musical concepts were used as referent for creativity where vocal play served as an agent.

Taking Note: an Exploration of the Function of Invented Notations in Children's Musical Thinking Processes (Ages 4 - 5)

Margaret Barrett; University of Tasmania, Australia

Time: Sat 20 4.30 pm, Stream: D **Proc. Page: 183-183**
Venue: Room G17, Webster Ground

Children's invented notations have been employed as a strategy for examining children's musical thinking and representations of musical knowledge as notators of both their own and others' compositions, including researcher generated musical and 'experimental' tasks. Such research has provided some insights into the nature and diversity of children's musical thinking. However, the function of such activity for them, when initiated by them as a component of ongoing musical endeavour is less clear. Further the relationship of such sign-making to other forms of self-initiated sign-making (e.g. painting, drawing, early writing) is yet to be explored fully. This paper shall interrogate these issues through the presentation and examination of the sign-making activity of a group of kindergarten children across a range of domains.

Specifically, the paper provides a preliminary report on the first year of a three-year longitudinal case-study that aims to investigate the function of invented notation in young children's musical thinking. The study reports on the preliminary symbolic engagement of a sample of children (aged approx 4.5 years at the commencement of the study) as they record their self-initiated musical activity, and their activity in other symbolic domains. Through the analysis of observational, verbal, musical, and artefactual data, the varied meanings children construct through their activity as sign-makers are interrogated. The exploration of the relationships between this early musical sign-making and that in the domains of painting, drawing and early writing provides key insights into children's working processes and their meaning construction.