Peggy D. Bennett & Douglas R. Bartholomew

SongWorks II

Singing from Sound to Symbol

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Peggy D. Bennett and **Douglas R. Bartholomew** are former elementary music teachers who now teach in university settings. Continuing contact (as teachers and observers) with children and elementary teachers in workshops and school settings has contributed greatly to the perspectives presented in this book. Work with undergraduate music and education majors, as well as with inservice music and classroom teachers, has provided a rich background from which the authors draw principles and procedures for singing from sound to symbol.

Bennett and Bartholomew co-authored the 1997 text, *SongWorks 1: Singing in the Education of Children* (Wadsworth). Both authors have published articles in professional journals on a variety of topics, have been elected to leadership positions in their respective state music education organizations, have taught workshops and courses for teachers in the United States, Canada, and Japan, and are charter members of the not-for-profit organization Music EdVentures, Inc.

Peggy D. Bennett (*Ph.D., University of North Texas*) is Professor of Music and Director of Music Education at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. She is contributing editor of *SongPlay: A Collection of Playful Songs for Ages 4–7* (1995). Author of numerous pedagogical and research articles, Bennett is also an active clinician for educational conferences, universities, and school districts. Honors have included The University of Texas at Arlington's Chancellor's Council Award for Excellence in Teaching and Outstanding Alumna recognition from both the University of North Texas and Ball State University.

Douglas R. Bartholomew (*Ph.D., Case Western Reserve University*) is Professor of Music Education at Montana State University-Bozeman. Bartholomew's research received the award for Outstanding Dissertation in Music Education given jointly by the Music Educators National Conference and the Council for Research in Music Education. He organizes the Montana Elementary Music Forum, which sponsors seminars each summer in Bozeman, and his written work has been published in books, journals, and newsletters.

INTRODUCTION

Building on the Principles of Teaching and Learning developed in *SongWorks 1: Singing in the Education of Children* (1997), this book focuses on music study for children. From the foundational Principles for Teaching and Learning Music to the Mini Lessons for leading children through the study of music, *SongWorks 2: Singing from Sound to Symbol* offers general overviews and specific ways to teach elements of rhythm, melody, and structure that lead to reading, writing, and understanding music.

Several unique features of *SongWorks 2* are worth noting here. First, musical elements are experienced, studied, and notated within a musical context—almost always a song. Care is taken to maintain musicality in performance of even short tonal, rhythmic, or structural patterns. Second, the sequence for proceeding from singing to symbolizing musical sound is quite different from widely accepted practices. The emphasis in *SongWorks 2* is squarely on developing a responsiveness to musical sound through focused listening experiences. Of the hundreds of songs that could be appropriate for situating these study strategies, the study songs used here have been selected for the richness of their musical content and for their roots in the folksong traditions of the North America. These study songs, then, provide the context and the content for progressing from sound to symbol:

- Students with little or no prior knowledge notate whole songs, attending to flow (mapping) and individual sounds (dotting).
- Rhythm, rather than beat, is the initial focus for performance of music through movement.
- Tonal patterns for initial study are DO-centered (MI RE DO; SO_l DO; SO_l LA_l DO; SO FA MI RE DO) as are the majority of folksongs from the oral traditions of North America.
- Throughout the song study process, the teacher is coached to consider the principles and practices of both SongWorks[a] books that shape the quality of interaction between teacher and students and the quality of the musical experience for students.

Third, over 75 Mini Lessons offer specific and general ways to accomplish the principles set forth in both *SongWorks 1* and *SongWorks 2* and the voluntary National Standards for Music Education. The Mini Lessons assist teachers in leading students through a flexible sequence of song study and provide short lesson segments that can be combined with additional musical materials and activities for complete lesson plans.

Because we have worked for over 25 years with the principles and practices detailed here and have seen the satisfying results of approaching music education in this way, we wrote *SongWorks 2*. Our vision is that teachers and children may experience the vitality possible as the beauties of music and the mysteries of music notation are unfolded in an environment of mutual respect and musical sensitivity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Teachers borrow, create, and adapt ideas to customize their classrooms according to their own teaching goals and students' interests and needs. Sometimes these changes occur in a moment; sometimes they develop over time. In some instances, giving credit for an idea or activity is easy, because the borrowing and adapting is fresh and clear. In other instances, teachers lose track of the genesis and the metamorphosis of classroom strategies.

In *SongWorks 2,* credit that is known is given. Not giving credit may mean that we lost track of an idea's adaptations or that we take personal responsibility for what is presented here, rather than that we are overlooking someone. So, to all our teachers, students, colleagues, family, and friends who read *SongWorks 2* and see that your ideas have shaped aspects of our thinking and teaching, "thank you!"

Little of this book would be like it is without the supportive, constructive, and inspiring influence, early in our careers, of Mary Helen Richards. Much of our understanding of music teaching and learning can be traced to her pioneering work. Similar recognition is due to our teaching partners of over twenty years: Sr. Fleurette Sweeney, Dr. Anna Langness, and Betty Hoffmann. The symbiotic relationships we have had with these four women have shaped our lives and our teaching in ways that have guided the writing of this book.

For the helpful and constructive reviews of this manuscript, we thank Dr. Marty Stover of the College of St. Catherine and Professor Susan Kenney of Brigham Young University. Also, members of Music EdVentures who contributed their classroom materials have enriched our book with their work: Gina Adoff (Montana), Pam Bridgehouse (Oregon), Cathy Gilstrap (Colorado), Linda Gordon (British Columbia), Sandi Kovatch (Minnesota), Anna Langness (Colorado), Paige Macklin (Minnesota), Sandy Murray (British Columbia), Kate Smith (British Columbia), Vicky Suarez (Texas), Terolle Turnham (Minnesota), and Marilyn Winter (Montana).

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Our acknowledgments would not be complete without recognizing our spouses, Harley Quick and Patty Bartholomew. We are most grateful for the love and patience they have shown us throughout writing the several versions since 1992 of both *SongWorks 1* and *SongWorks 2.* The quality of life we enjoy with Harley and Patty has made it possible for us to bring life to our books.

P. B. & D. B.
Bozeman, Montana
July 1998

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STUDYING MUSIC

Why Do We Value Music?

All of us have experienced the power of music. Though we may not be able to explain or understand what that power is, music has the ability to transform us, at least for a moment, whether we are alone or with others.

- *Do you recall a time when music brought an emotion to you that you were not already experiencing?*
- *Do you recall an event at which music set the tone and united the people?*
- *Has there been a private time when you chose music that would create within you a specific mood or reaction?*
- *Are there some types of music that consistently bring you joy?*
- *Is there a piece of music that has such strong negative connotations that you avoid it?*
- *Would you say that music creates more positive than negative reactions within you?*
- *What would you miss if you were never to hear music again?*

The function, and consequently the value, of music can be categorized in several ways: emotional expression, aesthetic enjoyment, entertainment, communication, symbolic representation, physical response, enforcing conformity to social norms, validation of social institutions and religious rituals, contributions to the continuity and stability of culture, and contributions to the integration of society (Merriam 1964). From another perspective, music's value can be seen from the social, cognitive, and affective dimensions of our thinking and learning.

With all the pleasures that music brings, perhaps none is more poignant than seeing it build a bridge, between individuals and among groups, when no words are needed. Watching music inspire a handicapped child to speak, sing, or move, sensing the joy and commitment of a bride and groom as they listen to their wedding music, or grasping the significance of a musical performance by an ensemble comprised of youth from antagonistic countries shows music as a language – a connection and communication – with a message that is beyond words.

WAYS TO VALUE MUSIC	
Social	Music provides connections between people, identifies people within a social framework, and coordinates social function. Through these connections, music fosters a sense of community among groups of people.
Cognitive	Music reflects the potential of human thought. It provides pure symbolic form to develop and practice skills in listening, analysis, assimilation, abstraction, and in general, disciplined thinking and attending. Music is a form of intelligence and non-verbal knowledge.
Affective	Music provides ambiance for times alone and with others. It can tap into our deepest emotions and extend our range of feelings. No words are needed to experience these feelings and sensations that can lead us to ponder mysteries and wonders, both great and small.

Hifler (1992, 202) characterizes the value of music in this way:

> Music is the universal language – a link between people who have no other form of communication. It even helps us to understand ourselves when it brings out an emotion that was too deeply buried. Music was meant to be an integral part of our lives. A familiar tune can sweep us back to another time or another place that we thought was lost. It is the harmony that helps us blend the old with the new and dilutes a bitter memory. Few important events are without music. Bands have rallied us to patriotism, hymns have helped us to be reverent, and the sweet song of a small child can cause a tenderness to come on the hardest heart. The Cherokee calls it, *di ka no gi dv*, the music of the spirit – in the turtledove, in the mockingbird, in the gurgling stream.

Calling music a "universal language" is problematic: primarily because, according to several criteria, music is not a language, and because we do not all share and value the same music. The sentiment expressed, however, through the common statement, "Music is a universal language," indicates the enjoyment of music and communication through music that has occurred regardless of language and cultural differences. In these cases, the meaning of the statement cogently overshadows the inaccuracy of terms.

Music is a valued part of every culture known. Rarely do we encounter people who do not love music or at least recognize its power. To argue the value of music, then, seems unnecessary. What is necessary, though, is building a case for *studying* music.

Why Study Music?

The value of music is rarely questioned in our society. The value of studying music, however, is.

To begin considering "Why study music?" it seems important to address the question of "What *is* music?" Because our ideas for what constitutes "music" may vary substantially from one another, it is reasonable to assume that the differences existing in the definitions of music may affect our propensities for supporting its study. The definition of music in any complete sense has proved troublesome for many authors. In its broadest sense, *music is a combination of sounds that in some way involves a human element.* Unlike sounds that are simply acoustical phenomena, musical sounds infer a human dimension, both in the creation (or organization) of and in the response to those sounds.

The human dimension that distinguishes nonmusical sounds from musical sounds includes a purposeful element in their creation or an interpretive element in how they are perceived.

Responsiveness, then, is a key element in constructing meaning for the term "music." Our responsiveness to a combination of sounds that we consider to be music might result from any number of aspects of those sounds we hear, from the subjectively imaginative ("I *like* that!" "What a great song!" "That is a beautiful work of art!") to the objectively scientific ("This piece modulates to the relative minor and back again." "What we heard was an early example of a piece in sonata-allegro form." "Bach's treatment of the fugue offers us extraordinarily complex counterpoint in this chorus.") As you consider the chart on Ways We Respond to Hearing Music, consider the times, places, and contexts in which you may have experienced specific reactions within this range of response.

PRINCIPLE 1 ← These marginal citations refer to the Principles of Teaching and Learning Music stated on pages 19-40 or the National Standards for Music Education stated in Appendix A.

WAYS WE RESPOND TO HEARING MUSIC

Like/Dislike	"I love all country music."	We focus on what we like or dislike with little thought as to why the music appeals to us or does not.
Conforming	"*Everybody* likes that music. It's cool!"	We like certain music because others like it or because it is the popular or accepted thing to do.
Imagery, association	"I always picture a waterfall in a lush forest when I hear that music."	We imagine landscapes or graphic visions as we associate the music with inspiring scenes.
Memory, reminiscence	"They're playing our song." "That reminds me of . . ."	We recall past experiences, either specifically connected to the song or related to the spirit of the song.
Effect on behavior	"I can't concentrate while that music is playing!" "I think I finish shopping more quickly when they play that peppy music."	We notice our responses to music at work, in stores, in offices, at home.
Activity	"There is no way I can sit still when I hear that music."	We feel like dancing or moving as we listen.

Focus on Rhythm	"What a great beat that song has!" "That rhythmic motive appears throughout Beethoven's symphony."	We feel or recognize a particularly exciting or driving rhythm, tending to tap our foot or move in time to the music.
Focus on Melody	"Why can't I get that tune out of my head?" "That melody is nearly a perfect inversion of a famous folk song tune."	We recall a favorite song, or we are drawn to a melody that is easy to sing and remember.
Focus on Words	"Those words tell the story of my life!" "The text of this piece is similar to the libretto of the opera The Barber of Seville."	We feel a connection to the words that describe feelings, experiences, or relationships.
Focus on Style	"On long drives, baroque is the only music for me!" "Jazz is such intellectual listening; following all the chord changes and improvisational solos fascinates me."	We quickly categorize music that fits a particular idiom or performance style (rock, baroque, jazz, easy listening).
Focus on Performer	"I've always wanted to see and hear him in concert, because I love watching him perform." "It will be interesting to see how his performance of the Prokofiev compares to the performance of last year's guest artist."	We feel a connection to a performer because he or she is a friend, a favorite singer or instrumentalist, or a famous concert or recording star.
Focus on Instrument	"I've always loved listening to trumpets. I played one in junior high." "The timbre of the oboe is beautiful to me, but I'm not so fond of the more mellow timbre of the English horn."	We may feel a connection because we once played the featured instrument, know someone who does, or like the sound quality of that instrument.

- *Can you recall a time when your responses to music tended to fall into one of the categories in the chart?*
- *Can you recall a time when your responses to music changed due to the context in which you were listening?*
- *Describe an experience for which your knowledge or background about the music being heard or performed shaped the quality of experience.*

While our enjoyment and appreciation of music is a fundamental aspect of music experience, the study of music allows us to enrich and deepen our enjoyment of music and our understanding of ourselves as thinking, feeling, and sharing creatures.

In general, none of the responses listed in the chart is better than another. Some are more closely connected with the *sounds* of music, but clearly people respond to music in all these ways. Why then, if all these responses are appropriate and worthwhile, should we study music?

When people have studied music, they have alternative ways of expressing and describing their reactions and responses to it. By offering responses that include specifics about what was heard, a person who is informed about music shows a broader picture of the history, theory, compositional techniques, and structures that constitute a song or musical work. *Many types of responses are important, valid, and valuable.* Yet it is also important to recognize the distinction between "what is" and how we *feel* about "what is" when we assert our personal judgment in answering the question "What is music?"

Enjoyment of music can be deepened by focusing attention on the music and developing our understanding of and responsiveness to it. Understanding music can help us understand our enjoyment of it, but it also furthers our understanding of ourselves as human beings, capable of creating and appreciating this uniquely human thing we call music.

By itself, music study may not be of value. There is no particular benefit or necessity in

PRINCIPLE 1

- knowing the names of notes on a staff.
- being able to recognize repetitions in a musical work.
- being able to identify music according to style.
- being able to read music.

If we over-emphasize the more objective musical responses to the extent that other responses to music are devalued and diminished, we risk losing the very heart of music.

Knowledge and skills like those listed are valuable only to the extent that they make our musical experiences more rewarding. Being able to read music, when it permits us to participate more freely in musical experiences and when it lets us explore music more deeply, is obviously something to pursue. But if studying music in order to read music is only a drudgery, why bother?

Music study can be focused on two kinds of musical knowledge, knowing music and knowing about music. Knowing music is not the same as knowing about music. Knowing music refers to actual music making and music listening. The knowledge that results is derived from direct contact with musical works and performances. Knowing about music is one step removed. It is knowing the background, theory, science, history (and so on) of musical works and performances. When music study is focused on knowledge *about* music, it runs the risk of becoming disconnected from actual musical experience. When music study is focused directly on and grounded in experiencing music, critical contact with the motivating and satisfying aspects of direct musical involvement is maintained.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with learning *about* music, but it needs to be in service of increasing our appreciation and understanding of music itself, not just the history, terminology, theory, or science of music.

PRINCIPLE 2

Is it possible to maintain the social and affective powers of music and the delight in performing and listening to it *as we study it*? For those of us who teach