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In this issue: Make Some Noise MENZA 2017 Conference photos, a tribute to Judy Field, The Travelling Marimba, Studying Kodály Concept Music Education in Hungary, an interview with Julie Wylie and more...

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Julie Wylie Musical Play®

Hometown:

I was born in Auckland and later moved to Dunedin, before settling in Christchurch, when I got married.

Tell us a bit about you and your work:

I am an author and composer of children's music. My Sing and Play CD's are inspired by my work with children and the wonderful ideas they have shared with me. I am the founder of the Canterbury Musical Parenting Association Inc and HOD Music and founder of the Learning Through Musical Play Programme at the Champion Centre Early Intervention Trust, Burwood. Prior to setting up my own music school for parents and their children, aged 0-5 years, I lectured in Early Childhood Education at the Christchurch College of Education and was an Early Childhood Music Advisor for the Ministry of Education. I am currently developing music education and research programmes for the Learning Centres of the Christchurch City Libraries and regularly present conference papers and workshops on musical play in New Zealand and overseas. I am very excited about the online Postgraduate Certificate in Play Therapy and Musical Play, which Play Therapist Alex Gosteva and I have co-created together.

What qualifications do you hold?

My qualifications are Mus B Hons (1st class), BA, Dip Tchg, ATCL and AIRMTNZ.

How did you get involved in this type of work?

I discovered the magic of musical play in my childhood and fondly remember a wonderful kindergarten teacher who introduced me to amazing songs and dances, and opportunities for music exploration. I can still see her face shining with enthusiasm as she danced and sang with us. I was also strongly influenced by my family's love of music, and as a child, I delighted in dancing and playing with my sister, while listening to the music of our cousin, the concert pianist Gloria Saarinen. I still have the childhood stool my sister and I would turn upside down and dance around, or use as a pirate ship.

When I had my own children, I continued to learn and play music. I was involved in developing school music programmes and productions at my children's schools, as well as in establishing community education holiday programmes. As a result of the success of these holiday programmes, it was suggested that I further my music career and I started a music degree at Canterbury University when my youngest child was four years old.

After completing my degree, I became a high school teacher and the exciting journey of discovery I went on with my students prompted me to find out more about music therapy. This resulted in a change in direction from high school teaching, to developing my philosophy of musical play for young children and their families, which incorporated the training I did with international music

therapists Clive and Carol Robbins. Studying with Clive and Carol strongly influenced my work, which is a blend of musical play as therapy and education, and helped me to fulfill my dream of being involved in music for children in ways that would help to impart the same sense of wonder, joy and inspiration I felt as a child.

What are some of the skills and qualities important for your role?

It is essential to understand how to follow the child, to match their energy levels and to develop the musical offerings they share. It certainly helps to have a strong sense of humour, playfulness and joy and an absolute passion for music, children and their families. I always try to empower the parents, so that they feel confident and competent in their own musical interactions with their children. It is through relationship based musical play that magical musical moments occur, opening up a world of emotional connections and possibilities for children and their parents.

What have been some essential life lessons you have learnt along the way?

If we want to have musical children, we have to nurture both the parents and their children and develop a sense of music community. Through "musical parenting", parents learn to understand their role in helping to foster their child's musicality as they watch, listen and respond to their child's musical offerings. Parents are able to enjoy relationship based musical play with their children from birth. I use the elements of music in ways that help young children and their parents to understand and feel the power of music, and to incorporate these music elements into their own play. Parents also learn how musical play can be used to support daily routines, take the stress out of difficult situations and help children to regulate their behaviour, engage with others and express their creativity.

What were some of the challenges you've had?

It was in my position as HOD Music in a high school, that I met the biggest challenge of my music career. I needed to bring the music curriculum to life in ways that were interesting, exciting and motivating for all of my students, regardless of their ability.

I have also enjoyed the wonderful challenge of presenting workshops around the world, working with children in Korea, Japan, Lithuania, Finland, Estonia and China. These opportunities have helped me to discover the universal appeal of musical play, which builds bridges of communication across all cultures, offering a non-verbal language for interaction.

What were some of your music experiences from your own school education that have stayed with you?

I remember the day at primary school when I knew I was going to be a musician. I enjoyed all of the music opportunities that school offered, including singing in choirs and playing the piano in assemblies and high school musicals.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JULIE WYLIE (CONTINUED)

Any advice you would like to pass on to other teachers?

Musical play requires a strong understanding of children's musical developmental ages and stages and an understanding of, and ability to, improvise freely and incorporate music therapy techniques. Many of the songs, or ideas for songs, on my recordings have come directly from children themselves. Students and young children frequently have superb music ideas and imagination and I believe teachers need to go on a musical journey with their students that involves appreciating, listening to, and learning from, each other, as their ideas are brought to life.

What inspired you to work in this area?

Ever since I discovered the power of musical play as a young child, my life has been enriched by music. Working with young children aged 0-5 years and their families, as well as high school and tertiary students, and a lifetime of parenting, being a grandparent and working closely with highly experienced therapists in an Early Intervention Programme at the Champion Centre, have inspired my work in this field.

What are the rewarding aspects of being involved?

I experience great joy seeing children develop the ability to listen, watch, wait and wonder; through musical play. A sense of wonder is the key to a child's learning. It is a pleasure to watch children grow and develop through musical play, which is the first language of children and based on an innate understanding of calming, regulating, joyful, relationship based play. It is very freeing, because there is no right or wrong way to play and I have shared a multitude of magical moments with children, students and parents, during my career.

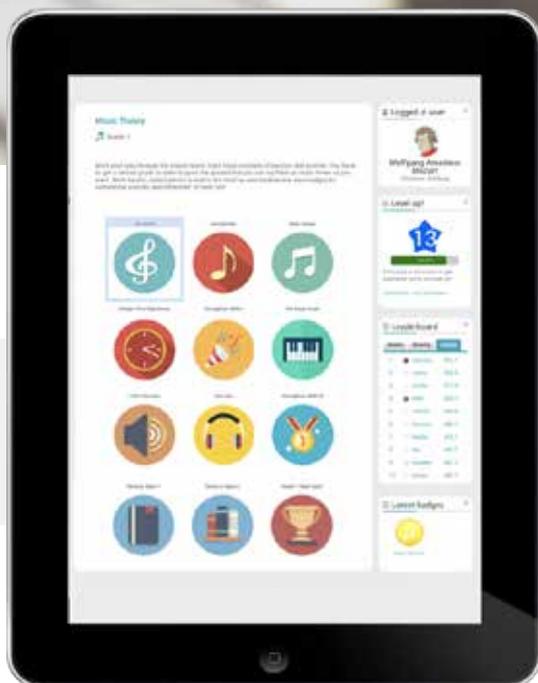
I love the sense of music community that is built through my work with children and their families. My website juliewyliemusic.com and Musical Play Facebook page facebook.com/juliewyliemusic enable me to connect with colleagues, former students, parents, teachers and therapists, in New Zealand and overseas. They also provide a wonderful forum for sharing and exchanging musical play ideas.

I am grateful to David Sell, members of Canterbury Musical Parenting, Helen Willberg, Kate Holden, Dr Suzanne Court, Dr Patricia Champion, Dr Susan Foster-Cohen, teachers, my students and their parents, and many others, who have been inspirational in the way they have continued to offer opportunities, encouragement and guidance in my career. Music is my passion and my life.



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NURTURING THE COMPOSERS AND MUSICIANS OF THE FUTURE: MUSICAL PLAY FROM BIRTH

- Julie Wylie

Long before birth, the foundations are being laid for the emergence of the newborn as a social, musical, play partner. The elements of music - sound, rhythm and movement - play a crucial role in the physical and psychological development of the unborn foetus. A baby is born musical, able to recognise the mother's voice, and is an equal play partner with the mother in the communication process from the very beginning of life. Mother and child are "as tightly organized as well-matched musicians... in a duet" (Trevarthen, 1987).

How the brain develops depends first on the child's imaginative and passionate curiosity and hope for experience that makes satisfying sense and second on their responses to the sympathy of loving company. In healthy families, a baby forms a secure attachment with her parents as naturally as she breathes, eats, smiles and cries. Her parents notice her physiological/affective states and they respond to her sensitively and fully. Beyond simply meeting her unique needs, however, her parents "dance" with her. Hundreds of times, day after day, they dance with her. Within this dance of interaction, there is a confident momentum in joint play between parent and child. They swing together in perfect synchrony. From birth, a contented and lively baby can entertain with "projects of moving" that are felt by mother and father to be interesting "stories", and the baby can imitate the expressions of others and exchange them with variation in expression and dialogue (Trevarthen 2016).

In my music classes for parents, caregivers and young children aged zero to five years, I regularly see and hear babies moving and calling with an innate sense of movement, rhythm and melody. Parents interact with

their babies by patting, clapping, bouncing and massaging them with deep pressure, as they watch, wait for, and listen to, their offerings. We have different sized drums set out on the floor for the babies who have reached the crawling stage and week by week changes occur in their musical play. Up to about six months of age, the interactions focus on parent/child relationship-based play. When the babies are about seven months old, they start to notice each other. They crawl away from their parents and join other children, patting and playing on the drums in the middle. The parents sit in a supportive music circle, joining their babies in a "bluesy" music interaction. I follow the babies as much as possible. We copy the leader's pitches, gestures, expressions and actions. The babies take delight in singing a note or notes, chuckling with joy as we imitate their offerings. By the age of one, some babies love to take the lead. They bounce, clap and play in time and enjoy captivating the audience with their musical offerings. There are other babies who like to sit back with their parents and observe. Parents learn playful musical strategies that they can incorporate into daily routines with their children at home. For example, sung instructions can help children to anticipate what they are going to do next, facilitating seamless transitions between activities.

The essence of musical play is to follow what the children are choosing to do, structuring the moment through the use of the elements of music. Children naturally begin to incorporate these elements into their own musical play. For example, one three year old in my classes is able to sing all the nursery rhymes, changing specific words to make the songs uniquely his own. Another three year old creates dances with a clear sequence of actions, for songs like "Humpty Dumpty". This has become a favourite



Enjoying musical interaction

NURTURING THE COMPOSERS AND MUSICIANS OF THE FUTURE (CONTINUED)

partner dance in which all the children have a hoop and dance with their parent or caregiver. The children in this music group delight in having Sam and his mum as their leaders for the "Humpty Dumpty Dance". Many of the songs on my recordings are inspired by the children's musical ideas.

In all of my musical play classes, I use the fifth or dominant note of the scale, as the calling note to get the children's attention. Even the youngest babies start singing this fifth note to command attention. The fifth note acts like a musical question and must inevitably resolve to the musical answer; the tonic note. In the C major scale, the dominant note G resolves back to the tonic note C.

Today (13th of February 2018), in my musical play class for three and a half to four year olds, it was a beautiful morning and the children were full of energy and buzzing with excitement. They started running away, delighting in having me accompany their movements on the piano as I sang about what they were doing. I started singing on the fifth note and using a descending 5,3,1 chord, with calypso syncopated rhythm, I sang "We've got a problem. We've got a problem. The children keep running away!" This was repeated and I sang "We hope they'll come back today. They keep on running, in a circle. The children are running away. They keep on running, all together and we hope they'll come back today." A child giggled and answered by singing a tuneful "cha, cha, cha". All of the parents were laughing and smiling with delight, enjoying the joyful game, as I matched the children's energy levels, gradually slowing the activity down and whispering for them all to come and sit down.



Toby Buckner, Julie's grandson, aged 12 years



Julie facilitating a Musical Play session

NURTURING THE COMPOSERS AND MUSICIANS OF THE FUTURE (CONTINUED)

This busy activity was followed with a slow, calming activity in which the children sang my "Down at the Beach" song using shells, driftwood and stones. Children then experimented with the rough, smooth, high and low sounds of their natural materials and followed the sung instructions to put the shells in the bowl and the stones and rākau in the basket, when we had finished.

Musical play enables us to follow the child, opening up an imaginative, magical world of possibilities. It nurtures the parents and helps us to build a sense of music community. It can support daily routines, take the stress out of difficult situations, and calm and regulate the brain, thereby helping children to learn self-calming strategies such as waiting, watching, listening and following instructions. As there is no right or wrong way to play, musical play helps children to engage meaningfully with others, to develop a sense of self, to communicate and to express their creativity.

Children learn through their senses. This week, a Christchurch Playcentre shared a drawing on a blackboard done by a child who described his picture in musical terms. The big round scribble patterns represented a grizzly bear. The little rhythmic marks that went across and up to the top of the picture, represented the actions of a little mouse. The whole picture was set out like a musical score that could be played using a range of natural, or percussion instruments.

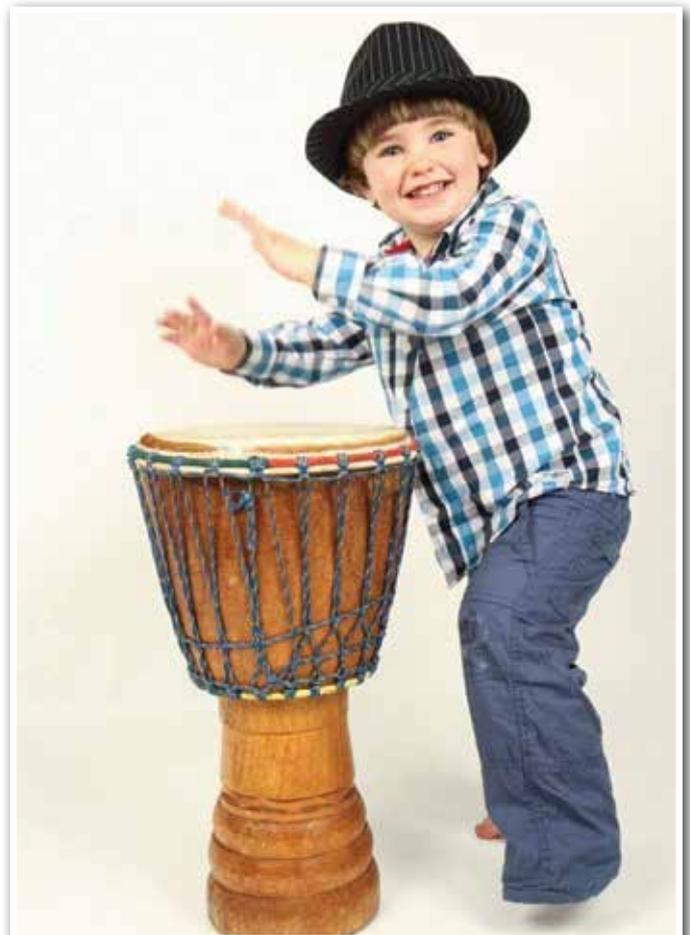
It is exciting to have worked with a whole generation of musical players, many of whom are now leaders in orchestras, choirs and jazz bands, making a career from music. Louise van Tongeren (nee Shand), one of my music children from the age of six, has sung on all of my CDs and is a jazz musician with a music degree. She now brings her own very musical boys to my music classes. Another one of my music children, Thomas Eves, is now Principal trumpeter with the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. He is teaching trumpet to my grandson Toby Buckner who was Principal trumpeter in the New Zealand Secondary Schools' Symphony Orchestra in 2017 and again this year. Musical play is my passion. Nurturing parents and children through music, and seeing and hearing children take off musically, from a very young age, is what drives me. Musical play enables all children to communicate in rich and powerful ways, because music is the first language of the child and a non-verbal language of the emotions.

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Engaging in Musical Play together



This three year old is able to sing a great many nursery rhymes, changing specific words to make the songs uniquely his own.