



Book Review

Hearing – Feeling – Playing: Music and Movement with Hard-of-Hearing and Deaf Children

Shirley Salmon (Editor)

Reviewed by Kimberly McCord

Hearing – Feeling – Playing: Music and Movement with Hard-of-Hearing and Deaf Children

Shirley Salmon (Editor)

Wiesbaden; Reichert Verlag (2008)
286 pp., ISBN: 978-3895006210



Kimberly McCord is Professor of Music Education at Illinois State University. She is the past chair of the ISME Commission on Music in Special Education, Music Therapy and Music Medicine and the founder and past chair of the National Association for Music Education Special Research Interest Group on Children with Exceptionalities. Her research focuses on music assistive technology, collaboration between music and special educators, jazz and improvisational thinking in children.

Email: kamccor@ilstu.edu

Hearing - Feeling - Playing is a wonderful resource for music teachers and therapists who work with children with hearing loss. Working with students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can be challenging for those of us used to relying on the auditory sense when making music. The last book for music educators and therapists devoted to working musically with students with hearing loss was published in 1980 by Carol and Clive Robbins (Robbins & Robbins 1980). However, the classroom has changed dramatically since then, especially with improved hearing aids and cochlear implants.

This book includes twenty-one chapters that focus on using music and movement with children who have hearing loss. General music chapters are the primary focus, however; there are also chapters

that are helpful to choral and instrumental teachers. For example, there is an excellent chapter written by Christine Rocca about the Mary Hare Schools for the Deaf in the United Kingdom and their beginning instrumental music program. Rocca is a teacher of the Deaf and a music therapist at the Mary Hare schools for the Deaf in Berkshire, United Kingdom. Rocca uses the Nordoff-Robbins approach of integrating improvisation into therapy and teaching. Initially improvisation occurs with percussion instruments (some of the more accessible instruments for students with hearing loss), and later students choose flute, clarinet, piano or, they elect to continue on percussion instruments. Improvisation develops self-confidence particularly among children newly implanted with cochlear implants. Rocca found that students do best with

strong, steady beat and bass lines along with predictable harmonic sequences, clear structure and melodic phrasing to accompany their playing and improvisation.

Chapters on music and language address the issue of delayed language in students with hearing loss and methods where music can be used to help support the acquisition of language. Katharina Ferner, a special school teacher and speech therapist, has developed a one-week retreat for families dealing with diagnosis of hearing loss with a child. She offers important considerations for working with families including how to support language acquisition in a child with hearing loss. Ferner reviews six approaches from professionals who use music with children who have hearing loss. In addition, she describes activities used in the family retreat.

The book is filled with strategies for developing 'inner rhythm' - an innate sense of rhythm students with hearing loss possess - and ways through which the music educator can assist students in becoming aware of this inner rhythm they have. Evelyn Glennie, a professional percussionist who is deaf, provides an inspiring foreword to the book and describes learning to hear in different ways including hearing through feeling music in our bodies. This concept is supported by many of the chapter authors. Indeed, Claus Bang, a music therapist and audio speech therapist from Denmark, discusses a type of musical speech therapy technique he developed that uses Orff contra-bass bars to aid children in improving vocal timbre and qualities by learning to perceive sound through the whole body, then discovering how to match vocal pitch by feeling vibrations from the bass bars. I have used this approach successfully with children who have hearing loss, in our university laboratory school. Orff contra-bass bars are one of the most accessible instruments for children with hearing loss. The size of the instrument enables the child to easily place a hand on the instrument that is played with a large mallet. The pitch is low and playing the instrument produces strong vibrations that are not only felt through the hand but through the entire body.

Recent research into music perception is included with application to the deaf population. Naomi Benari, a dancer in United Kingdom, uses inner rhythm as a technique for teaching dance to children with profound hearing loss. Feeling rhythm in the body aids in perceiving auditory rhythm. Dance is accompanied by live music, in particular drums and piano. Benari prefers live music so students can go to the instrument and place their hand on the instrument to feel the vibrations. Benari gives a step-by-step approach to developing inner rhythm through movement with

children. This is an excellent way to develop music perception in children with hearing loss.

The book's contributors are primarily European, and are chiefly practitioners in special schools and programs. However, the strategies and research are current and applicable to all schools and programs.

The book has many photographs that illustrate most chapters. I also appreciate the authors' biographies with their contact information at the end of the book. Salmon is an excellent editor and has recruited authors from a diversity of backgrounds and professions. The book is accessible to both communities of teachers and music therapists. In addition, Salmon has taught at the Orff Institute, Salzburg since 1984 and is director of the postgraduate Special Course. She authors two excellent chapters that are particularly appropriate to general music teachers.

Overall, *Hearing - Feeling - Playing* is a welcome addition and provides music teachers and therapists with new strategies for the inclusion of students with hearing loss in music.

References

- Robbins, C. & Robbins, C. (1980) *Music for Hearing Impaired and Other Special Groups*. New York: Magnamusic-Baton.

Suggested citation:

- McCord, K. (2012). Book review: "Music and Movement with Hard-of-Hearing and Deaf Children (Shirley Salmon, Editor). *Approaches: Music Therapy & Special Music Education*, 4(2), 124-125. Retrieved from <http://approaches.primarymusic.gr>