

MUSICAL PREFERENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: AN ANALYSIS OF MUSICAL AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN'S REPERTOIRE

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Abstract

This article aims to discuss musical preference and children's repertoire in early childhood based on a research with 33 children, aged between 8 months and 4 years old, from the program Music Education for Babies and Children of the Federal University of Bahia, Brazil (2019). In this article we will, initially, present a literature review on the development of musical preference in the early childhood, focusing on how children process and interact with sounds and music. Data were collected through literature review, field diary, questionnaires and video recording. The music classes were held once a week with 50 minutes of duration. During this period, 138 performances were cataloged. The discussion and analysis will focus on the musical and cultural characteristics of the songs performed during the music class, trying to identify how it connects with the children's social and cultural context. The results indicated that the children live in a rich musical environment at home and at school. Although the songs experienced in both contexts come from different genres and styles, they chose traditional children's song for their performances. These songs have strong influences from the main ethnic groups that formed Brazilian culture – Indigenous, Portuguese, and African. From the Portuguese influence we inherited a repertoire formed by simple melodic lines, short melodic intervals, predominance of the major key, anacrusis, and themes about social interactions and daily activities. The indigenous songs bring themes related to the forest, animals, flora, among others. African songs address themes about life, nature and religion. It is common to find words in local dialects such Yoruba and Swahili, and the rhythm is highlighted with a wide variety of percussion instruments. In the conclusion, we discuss how music teachers can contribute to children's musical development, expansion of their repertoire and connecting with their culture.

Keywords: *early childhood, music preference, repertoire*

Introduction

Music, as a social practice, can be experienced in different ways: through singing, listening, playing, and dancing, among others. At the same time, music has multiple meanings and functions in people's lives, especially in the contemporary society. According to Boal-Palheiros, "*...music is accessible to most children and young people in a variety of contexts and listening to music is one of their main leisure activities, at least in western societies. They listen to music in public places and through digital devices, alone or with family and friends*" (Boal-Palheiros, 2006, 305). Adults, family and teachers have a significant influence on providing children with musical experiences and mediating aspects of their cultural environment.

Children, from birth, interact with music in different ways and show preferences for certain types of sounds and music. Several studies indicate that although our interest in music is innate, musical preference is formed since childhood and is influenced by the sociocultural context. Parents generally seek to create an environment rich in musical stimuli, selecting children's music, videos and movies, which will become part of the child's musical repertoire. Later, the school will also add as another musical environment to which they will interact with.

This qualitative study analyzed the musical repertoire of 33 children aged between eight months to four years, enrolled in the project *Music Education for Babies and Children*¹, created by the Music Faculty of the Federal University of Bahia (Brazil). The music class had a specific moment when the children were invited to individually perform a song of their choice to their peers. In this context, during April to June of 2019, were catalogued 138 performances by the children. To identify and understand these musical preferences, a questionnaire was distributed among parents and/or legal guardians. It sought to map the repertoire experienced at home, and other aspects of the familiar musical environment such as: the family's relationship with music, whether the parents or relatives played an instrument or whether the child had one, the moments of exposure to music, including TV programs, cultural activities such as concerts and plays.

Although this research has a broader scope, for this article we are going to make an excerpt, focusing on the development of musical preference, the musical and cultural characteristics of the songs performed during the music class and how this relates to the children's repertoire. We're considering children's repertoire songs/music experienced with the family (at home and at social/cultural events), and songs/music presented in the classroom by music teachers. In the conclusion we offer possibilities for the music teachers to contribute to the children's musical development and consolidation of its identity through the connection with its culture.

¹ Program created by the Music Faculty of the Federal University of Bahia (Brazil) in 1963 with the aim of establish a meaningful relationship between the community and the University. Initially, was intended for with children from 6 to 12 years old and in 1991 started the classes for babies, toddlers and preschool children (0 to 6 years old). By the time that this research took place (2019) the program had 143 children, who were organized in 15 classes.

Aspects of Children's Development of Musical Preference

The cultural and affective aspects play an important role in the children's relationship with music. Their musical preference is also closely related to their cognitive development, that is, their ability to process and understand sounds. This can largely explain their preference for one specific sound, song or music and for repetitions. Therefore, we think it is relevant to present how this process happens, in first place, and then discuss the cultural and social characteristics of the repertoire collected.

Babies come into the world with sophisticated mechanisms to identify and process sound events. In the intrauterine life, it already reacts to external sounds through bodily movements and changes in the heartbeat. With only three days of life, they are able to recognize and demonstrate preference for the mother's voice over the voice of another woman (DeCasper, Lecanuet et al, 1994). Until three months old, the preference is for low notes and sounds, and this will only change at 6th month of age, when they start to prefer higher sounds (DeCasper & Fifer, 1980).

In the first months, the baby starts to interact more directly with the sounds around, imitating, testing and improvising melodies. In the singing of babies, words are rarely used. According to Parizzi (2006), babies *"start to adapt their body movements to the pulse of the music they are listening to and this explains the 'dance' of babies during the music classes when they hear a song"* (p. 43). According to Gordon (2012), throughout the first year of life, babies *"compensate for their inability to sing and speak, listening carefully to music and speech". In this way, "until they are eighteen months old, the more music a child listens to (...), the better prepared they will be to learn to sing"* (p. 307). For this, it is important that the baby's musical environment is rich in sound and musical stimuli.

Parizzi (2006), states that between the ages of two and three, the child *"starts to make attempts to imitate songs heard in his/her environment"* (p. 43). Repetitions in melody and rhythm begin to be noticed, and, although there is still no stable tonal center, you can sometimes observe some tonal coherence within each phrase. These and other characteristics, such as melodic inaccuracy and variations in pitch and duration, were observed in the children's songs during the music classes.

We also noticed that children in the 2 to 3 age range showed more independence when singing, which did not occur in the 0 to 2-year age group. If before they depended more on the adults' voice as a reference, in this new stage it was possible to notice the child's voice in the foreground. From the age of three, children are able to reproduce entire songs of their culture. In the 3 to 4 age group, it was noticed that the children's tuning was still imprecise and was maintained only for certain parts of the song. According to Sloboda (see Parizzi, 2006), the precise tuning of the intervals occurs only later.

Summarizing, singing is a highly complex process, and involves vocalization in infancy, linguistic codes of early speech, enculturation of language and the learning of conventions and symbols associated with this. Advances in technology show that singing is a whole brain activity probably uniquely involving the integration of the musical, speech, visual motor and emotional systems of the brain (Welch, 2003).

Family Environment and Musical Preference

According to Ilari (2003), *“from birth to 10 years of age, the child’s brain is in full development and presents the best ‘conditions’ for learning, the so-called windows of opportunity”* (p. 14). During this period, the responses to stimulation are more efficient. Thus, it is important that the family environment provides a wide repertoire and a variety of musical experiences. Egerman (2019) suggests that *“parents should take every opportunity to spend time with their children and explore the world of music together, while children are still open to new and unfamiliar music (which often means being younger than ten years old). This could be through simply putting music on in the background while the child is playing, however it could also be used as a social activity within the family. Here, parents could play a piece of music at home and then talk to their children about it (i.e. share how everyone in the family experiences the music and discuss, for example, reasons why), or they could take their children to concerts and live music events that create special memories that are remembered positively* (p. 4).

Gordon (2003) highlights the importance of an informal experience in music, in which *“children are placed in every possible way in contact with the music of their culture and encouraged to absorb this music, along with the inherent syntax based on that culture”* (p. 315). In this regard, the family plays an important role in mediating between the child and his/her sociocultural environment. In this research, all parents participating in the survey stated that they had musical moments with their children, singing, listening to CDs, watching DVDs, and attending live music events.

Cultural and Musical Characteristics of Brazilian Traditional Children’s Songs

The results showed that the children involved in this research live in a rich and vibrant musical environment provided by the family and the cultural context. Even though they are surrounded by music from different backgrounds, genres, styles and periods, they have chosen traditional children’s song for their performances. From the 138 performances cataloged, only one – Baby Shark, wasn’t from traditional children’s music.

Childhood songs are an intrinsic part of a child’s life. After birth, they are soothed by their mothers with lullabies, and play with singing toys. In the same way, children’s musical games are present in all cultures and are shared through the oral culture. They include singing, moving, dancing, gesturing and imaginative thinking, like in the *wheel plays*. According to Silva (2016), the Brazilian games use melodies that vary from a single note to the full scale; the rhythmic games, without melody, have the recited word as their main element; and the rhythmic-melodic and melodic-rhythm games comprise the repertoire that combines both forms, with a greater or lesser predominance of melody or rhythm.

For the ethnomusicologist Hortélio (2012), the traditional childhood music is a song to be played with and it represents our first language. The practice of singing toys promotes the sense of belonging and nourishes the development of the cultural identity. The strength of a people’s identity depends on the exercise of its culture, on

the knowledge of its history, and presupposes a broad and detailed effort in search of their identity.

Brazil was colonized by Portugal and, thereupon, our traditional children's songs have a strong influence of the Portuguese culture. From them we inherited a repertoire formed by simple melodic lines, short melodic intervals, predominance of the major key, anacrusis, and the themes are often about social interactions and daily activities. The use of the quatrain is also an important characteristic inherited from Portuguese songs (Giacometti, 1981).

According to Silva (2016), from the indigenous tradition we inherited traditional children's songs with themes related to *"hunting animals, domesticating birds, monkeys and lizards, making and playing with the bow and arrow, making small boats"* (p. 32). There are many tales about these themes too, with animal voices and nature sounds. Currently, more than 160 languages and dialects are spoken by indigenous peoples in Brazil. There are songs entirely in the indigenous dialect, and there are songs in Portuguese, with some words in the dialect of the tribe from which it originated.

Regarding the musical aspects, there are a predominant use of few notes and almost no tempo variety during its performance. The rhythm is binary or ternary and sometimes they alternate in the same verse. Each tribe has its specific musical instruments, predominantly wind or percussion, made of materials found in nature.

African culture is a large part of Brazil's identity. Salvador (the capital of biggest state of the northeast region Bahia, which was the first capital of colonial Brazil) concentrates the largest black community outside the African continent. The city has a unique and vibrant culture that can be experienced in the arts, music, dance, literature, gastronomy, fashion, religion, among others. The African influence on Brazilian children's songs is marked by different rhythms, complex patterns with syncope and polyrhythm. These rhythms are played with wide variety of percussion instruments and require good coordination. The traditional songs also have a melodic and harmonic plurality, with themes about life, religion, nature, resistance, traditions and faith; it is common to find words in local dialects such Yoruba and Swahili (Silva, 2016).

It's important to mention that the traditional African languages don't have a word that specifically means *music*, meaning a melody sung and/or played outside the context of dance and social fraternization. Movement, dance, singing and rhythm are inseparable expressions. There is no audience, the musical event is experienced by all the people present. Sodr  highlights that currently, *"due to the influence of western culture, the words 'muzik', in Kenya, and 'musiki', in Cameroon have been incorporated"* (Sodr , 2010, 19).

During this research some songs were performed one or more times by the children at the music class. The song *Alecrim Dourado* (Golden rosemary), was performed 13 times. It's a good example of a traditional children's song for its simplicity and expressiveness. This song is originally from Portugal and was included into the Brazilian traditional repertoire with a few adaptations. The theme is about nature, a rosemary, but also mentions a beloved person. The Brazilian version of the lyrics (see Table 1 and Figure 2) is very similar to the original, with some substitutions and adaptations.

Table 1. Lyrics of the song “Alecrim Dourado”

<i>Portuguese version (original)</i>	<i>Brazilian version</i>
Alecrim aos molhos – Rosemary in bunches	Alecrim Dourado – Golden rosemary
<i>Alecrim, alecrim aos molhos</i>	<i>Alecrim, alecrim dourado</i>
<i>Rosemary, rosemary in bunches</i>	<i>Rosemary, golden rosemary</i>
<i>Por causa de ti choram os meus olhos</i>	<i>Que nasceu no campo sem ser semeado</i>
<i>Because of you my eyes cry</i>	<i>Who was born on the hill without being sown</i>
<i>Ai meu amor, quem te disse a ti</i>	<i>Ai meu amor, que me disse assim</i>
<i>Oh, my love, who told you</i>	<i>Oh, my love, who told you</i>
<i>Que a flor do monte é o Alecrim</i>	<i>Que a flor do campo é o Alecrim</i>
<i>That the flower of the hill is Rosemary</i>	<i>That the flower of the hill is Rosemary</i>
<i>Alecrim, alecrim doirado</i>	<i>Alecrim, alecrim miúdo</i>
<i>Rosemary, golden rosemary</i>	<i>Rosemary, small rosemary</i>
<i>Que nasceu no monte sem ser semeado</i>	<i>Que nasceu no campo perfumando tudo</i>
<i>Who grew in the hill without being sown</i>	<i>Who grew in the field, perfuming everything</i>



Figure 2. Melody of the song Alecrim Dourado

The melody of the first stanza is simple and in a stepwise motion. The refrain has an ascending interval of a major sixth and the melody descends in intervals of a third. The tonality is C major with the harmony starting with the dominant chord.

In addition to Portuguese, Indigenous and African influences, children's songs of oral tradition had European influences from the 19th century onwards, when Brazil opened its ports to immigrants from several European countries. Thus, there was the assimilation of new ways of playing musical games, especially nursery rhymes, riddles and choice formulas. Another contribution was the words in new languages, which underwent changes and adaptations to Portuguese. According to Silva (2016), it is interesting to observe that the adaptations of the text to what the child understands is the most common occurrence in the childhood repertoire. The solutions that were found to replace misunderstood terms, or those which are not part of their vocabulary, are very creative.

Aim and Questions of the Research

The main goal of the research was to investigate the musical preference and map the repertoire of 33 children aged between eight months and four years. The secondary goal was to catalog the songs chosen by the children to perform in the music class; map the musical environment of the children in the family life, and analyse the musical and cultural characteristics of children's repertoire. Therefore the research questions were:

- *What songs are the children performing in the music class?*
- *Where do they come from?*
- *How does it relate to their family and cultural environment?*
- *What are the musical characteristics of children's repertoire?*

The music teachers' team is formed by students from the Music Education undergraduate course of this University. This is an important locus of practice for training and pre-service music teachers. They work in pairs, where one is a more experienced, and the other, less experienced. This methodology is based on collaborative teaching and peer learning approach (Green, 2008). During the planning they must negotiate and make decisions regarding contents, activities and repertoire for the classes. This requires abilities such as open communication, confidence, empathy, responsibility, negotiating power and epistemological views.

The methodology used for the music classes is based on the C(L)A(S)P Model (Swanwick, 2003). The main goal of the program *Music Education for Babies and Children*, regarding the children, is creating opportunities to experience music through singing, listening, playing musical games, moving, improvising and performing. An additional goal is to learn the basic music elements through musical activities and a broad music repertoire of traditional children's songs, Brazilian popular songs and world music. A special attention is paid to the development of creativity. The activities are always related to the semester theme and to the repertoire. They are conceived to be developed both during classes and at home, in order to reinforce the contents learned in class and provide an extra element in the relationship between parents and children.

The structure of the lesson plan and the sequence of activities are maintained throughout the semester and, therefore, are quickly internalized by the children, reducing anxiety and fear of the unknown, since they already know what will happen next. The lesson plan is organized in 12 parts: moment of free experimentation on instruments, welcome song, and circle song with body movements, sound exploration of a novelty instrument, singing the musical scale, rhythmic text, song with instruments, free moment, music appreciation, relaxation, children's performance and a goodbye song.

The first step of the research was to catalogue children's personal repertoire performed in the music classroom. During the moment of performance, all the children are invited to perform a song of their choice to their peers. They are free to dance or play an instrument. The accompanying person (the adult that brings the child and stays with her/him during the class; they participate together in the class activities) encourages the children to participate in this moment. In the 0 to 2-year age

group, the adult sings for them, and the baby frequently responds with some bodily movement or babble.

In the classroom, performance must have a broader meaning, far from the expectation of technical and virtuosic performances and much closer to expressiveness, commitment, meaning and, above all, personal involvement. However, whatever the level of complexity, it is necessary to strive for achieving the best artistic quality so that the result is significant, expressive and relevant (França & Swanwick, 2002).

Methods and Sample

This research was qualitative with a descriptive approach, used to observe, catalogue, describe and analyse the characteristics of a phenomenon, establishing relationships between variables (Dencker, 2000). In this case, we catalogued the title of the songs presented by the children at the performance moment and analysed the data from the questionnaires about the family's musical environment. Then, we analysed the repertoires and their cultural and musical characteristics.

Data were collected through bibliographic research, field diary, questionnaires and video recording. During the literature review we selected and studied articles on topics such as musical cognition, cognitive and musical development of children, starting from the new-borns to 4-year-old children, musical preference in early childhood, musical and cultural characteristics of Brazilian traditional songs among others.

The classes were given by two pre-service music teachers, both on the 7th semester of the Music Education undergraduate course. During the period, the music teachers had weekly meetings with the advisor and coordinator of the program, for planning and mentoring. The classes took place from April to June, 2019. In this period, a total of 32 lessons were given to the three groups. The music classes were held once a week with 50 minutes of duration. The children participating in the research are from three different classes, grouped by age: 0 to 2 years old (10 students), 2 – 3 years old (10 students) and 3 – 4 years old (13 students).

From the 33 questionnaires distributed, only 21 were answered. The questionnaire contained 18 open questions about children's musical experiences with the family: when or at what time (on which occasions) the child listens to music, how it happens, the presence of a musical instrument in the house (of a family member or the child's home), the family's musical repertoire and preferences, music devices that the children have access to, and how the choice is made when buying or accessing this material, activities that involve music (in addition to music classes), moment of the class that they like best, among others.

According to Dencker (2000), the survey involves the direct interrogation of people whose opinion about the problem under study is important, then, through quantitative analysis, to reach conclusions corresponding to the collected data. This approach uses quantitative analysis and allows the generalization of conclusions to the total population and thus to the universe surveyed. In this context, data is more descriptive than explanatory.

Research Results

The research used the phenomenological-hermeneutic approach to analyse the parents' narratives and perceptions about their musical environment and practices. During the occurrence of the phenomenon intended to be studied, the researcher must keep an opened mind to the understanding and interpretation of what may appear. According to Esposito (1994), throughout history different meanings have been assigned to the word *hermeneutics* and are now considered as an understanding and interpretation that allows us to search for the meaning of work as a human production, from the context in which it is shown.

During the study, music teachers were encouraged to ignore preconceptions and understand that the results do not necessarily need to correspond to a previous expectation of the researcher. For Rios (2006), this does not require 'neutrality' from the researcher, nor does it consider it possible to do so. So, if the researcher is part of the knowledge production process, he/she needs to assume an attitude of availability and honesty, considering his/her responsibility in this process. It is always a person who carries out the investigation: considering knowledge as having a historical ethos, science takes place in the context of human relations.

The phenomena under the research (words, gestures, actions, symbols, signs, texts, artifacts, works, speeches, etc.) need to be understood. That is, research consists of capturing the meaning of phenomena, knowing or unraveling their meanings. Understanding presupposes an interpretation, a way of knowing its meaning that doesn't happen immediately; which is why we need interpretation (hermeneutics). According to Fazenda (2008), hermeneutics is understood as inquiry or clarification of assumptions, modalities, and principles of interpretation and understanding.

Considering the performances of children from the three classes, 138 individual performances were catalogued. Of these, 52 were songs performed only once, 18 were songs performed twice, and 68 performances were songs performed three or more times. Thus, we can say that 62% of the total performances were repeated songs, suggesting the appreciation for repetition, a well-known childhood characteristic.

Studies by Zajonc (1968) and North & Hargreaves (1999) have already demonstrated that we are inclined to like music to which we have been exposed before. In Zajonc's (1968) research, participants increased their preference for a stimulus when it was presented more often. According to Egermann (2019), this happens for two reasons. The first is about the comfort of familiarity, knowing that there are no negative factors associated with that experience. The second reason has to do with learning music patterns and schemes through repetition, which means that when we listen to music, we are probably unconsciously predicting what will happen next in the music. Knowing music well, we can reduce the number of errors in forecasts, which can be perceived as useful and pleasant.

Results

The analysis of children's repertoire showed specific characteristics and was divided into school repertoire (music class) and home repertoire (outside of school). Although children experienced a wide variety of music in both contexts, the songs chosen for

their classroom performances, except for one, were Brazilian traditional children's songs. This choice shows children's appreciation for simple and repeating melodies. Such songs use short melodic intervals, very simple rhythms, and a large amount of repetition of musical phrases (Trehub & Trainor, 1993). In the same way, Schellenberg and Trehub (see Ilari, 2002) suggest that babies have a certain preference for simple harmonies as opposed to overly complex harmonies, which in a way justifies the use of songs with very simple accompaniments when teaching babies.

A. The music class repertoire

The music class repertoire included welcome and goodbye songs, instrumental music, didactic songs highlighting a specific musical element, Brazilian folk songs, Brazilian popular songs, and traditional music from around the world. The semester theme was *Singing the World*, and the goal was to create opportunities for students to appreciate, learn and explore music freely, so that they are active subjects in the musical learning process, in a playful, integrative and socializing way. Among the main characteristics of the music class repertoire, we highlight the cultural diversity, variety of genres, musical instruments, timbre and harmony. We also highlight the importance of rhythm for the music education process.

In addition to songs from the world, we used songs from the Brazilian oral tradition as a way of highlighting and recognizing foreign influences. By experiencing music from different cultures, they might learn to appreciate and understand the culture of their own country. The children might be more likely to show interest in those cultures and they might be more likely to educate themselves about them (Egermann, 2019). In this sense, Swanwick (2003) recalls that only when provoked by encounters with cultural practices from other places, do we pay attention to musical 'accents', including our own.

B. The family musical environment

According to the data collected from the questionnaires, children spend a considerable amount of time experiencing music passively by themselves on digital devices. During this activity they listen/watch songs from cartoons or children's movies (TV and streaming services), and songs from DVD's produced by groups focused on making music for children. Parents said they rely on children's programs as entertainment and learning. The selection is made through internet search, school recommendations, and visit to bookstores, gift from family members or suggestions of other mothers with babies or children in the same age group. Among the factors that determine the repertoire are programs aligned with ethical values and principles of the family, the child's preferences and songs that belong to the affective memory of the parents.

The data also showed that the repertoire experienced by the children in the home environment included family musical preferences, formed by popular genres such as rock, reggae, samba, jazz, blues, and classic music, among others. Gordon (2000) adds that recordings for adults are not only adequate, but also recommended, and the more keys, metrics and times the children know, the better.

All the parents say they share musical moments with their children. The duration of the interactive music experiences with the child in the 0 to 2 year age group was 30 to 45 minutes per day (100% of the answers). It was interesting to observe that this time increases in the 2 – 3 year age group: more than 60 minutes per day (75% of the answers). This may be related to the child's more active music making as they grow up. According to Gordon (1989), during the *acculturation* stage the baby is collecting and absorbing music, and from the age of two, the child can already develop the *imitation* stage, reproducing and coordinating what they hear with bodily movements. This increase in children's active music making can explain why it requires more time of interaction. Then, at the age of 3 – 4 years, we observed that the time dedicated to shared music experiences decreases again, taking from 30 to 45 minutes per day (in 50% of the cases). This does not mean a decrease in the quality of music making, but it may indicate that children in the *assimilation* phase have already acquired more control and coordination of their movements. This acquired autonomy also allows children to have musical experiences by themselves (Gordon, 1989).

The results of this study showed that the situations when music is experienced with the family vary:

"Sometimes we lie in the hammock and sing" (J.L.);

"At night, bedtime is usually accompanied by lullabies" (M.R.);

"Sunday when dad picks up the guitar and sings/plays for us" (B.G);

"Before dinner or when he is in a bad mood" (F.H);

*"Sometimes, when waking up, when taking a shower, when brushing our teeth,
when we go to concerts and theatres" (A.B.);*

*"At home we have moments where we play in 'band',
alternating the instruments" (O.D.).*

When listening to songs, children usually interact by singing, dancing or playing an instrument. They have musical instruments at home; the most common is the tambourine, drums, toy guitar, rattles, shaker eggs, among others.

According to the data collected through the questionnaires, children react in different ways to the parent's favourite music: they dance, laugh, observe, sing, recognise and rarely reject. Younger children demonstrate that they like the music through body movements and vocal sounds. In these cases, music works as an element of catalysis in the process of forming bonds, strengthening existing links and helping to create new ones. This could explain children's joy while listening to their parent's favourite music. The emotional bond shared with grown-ups and the fact of seeing the adults happy when listening to their favourite repertoire, make children 'absorb' and share this feeling.

For Parizzi (2006), *"baby's musical behaviour with the intention of attracting people's attention can be considered an initial form of expression of their social identity as a member of a group"* (p. 41). Trevarthen (see Parizzi, 2006) adds that when a six or seven-month-old baby recognizes a song and moves with it, it is as if he/she was being identified by its name, as if he/she was showing his/her 'social self' in the affective

sphere of his/her family life. Regarding this aspect, Egermann (2019) points to the growth of social identity as another influence on the development of the musical preference, since the more similar two people's music taste is, the more likely these two people will bond, because they are likely to share similar human values.

Agreeing with Burnard (2013), *"singing is a unique form of embodied knowing and a vital experience in all cultures. The experience of singing alone and together is natural and enjoyable for all people and offers opportunities to inspire creative musical expression. Coming together to sing is a form of peace-making, a spiritual journey and a powerful way to connect and release the musical imagination in ways that are personal and social, instructive and playful, and communal and collective"* (p. 69).

For some children, performing for the class presents a great challenge, even when accompanied by an adult, and requires the development of emotional skills to overcome shyness and apprehension. During the research we realized that it is important to create a welcoming environment that provides trust and encouragement. This can bring the group together and promote music learning.

Conclusions

1. The children's personal identity is developed through interactions with social groups, with the environment (neighborhood, city), culture, among others. Music is an important tool in mediating the relationships with others, with the world and yourself. Our connection with culture promotes a sense of belonging and sharing musical preferences can strengthen bonds, bringing people together. This can be observed in the adolescence, when social groups can be formed according to the shared genre and music style.
2. The results of this research suggest that sharing your musical preference through individual performances for the class can benefit the musical, social and cognitive aspects of children's development. According to parents, among the changes observed during the research were: greater sociability, interest in learning new songs and playing an instrument aiming to present this in the music class, more pleasure in singing, taking initiative in memorizing song lyrics, improved verbal communication, interest in rhythms and dancing, among other things.
3. Parents and teachers must work together for the development of the child's musical preference. According to the questionnaire survey results, the parents who participated in this research were interested in providing their little ones with the best conditions and opportunities for learning. Teachers should cultivate a good relationship with them, asking for and welcoming repertoire suggestions. They should also promote a rich and diverse musical environment in music classes, sharing with the families the repertoire used in a classroom, so that they can be experienced at home several times. Finally, we believe that sharing musical experiences with family and classmates through individual performances can strengthen the affective bonds, promote mutual understanding, develop musical abilities and create memories that can last a lifetime.

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