The Analysis of Children's Music in Selected Primary Schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

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Abstract

Singing is one of the most important of all musical experiences. Infact, it could be considered the heartbeat of the music program in the primary years. Almost every child can learn to sing, unless there is a physical defect in the vocal mechanism. Children's music comes in different dimensions. They sing in their mother tongue, or the one they learnt in school, at times they invent their own songs. Music is a veritable tool for teaching children e.g multiplication table, letters of the alphabets can be learnt through children's music. Music is part and parcel of children's education as they play in group and socialize with music, they learn games and rhyme. When a child begins to sing, the child becomes more active in participating in children singing games and rhyme. This paper, aims at music used in the classroom setting. The methods used in the collection of the children's music include library and direct contact with primary school children. With this collection of children's music, primary school teachers will have a repertoire to lay hands on.

Introduction

Children respond to music at a very tender age. As they grow older, their love for music increases, especially when musical concepts are planned to develop their musical skill. The age bracket in consideration refers to primary school age (6-11yrs). It is at this age that their love for music grows stronger.

According to Rozmajzl and Michon (2000) singing is one of the most important of all musical experiences. In fact, it could be considered the heart beat of the music program in the primary years. Children love singing, but at this stage, they cannot sing in harmony, the love they have for music often makes them want to shout at first, but if they are guided and encouraged they can sing in tune. Children understand each academic subject better when music is used in teaching it. According to Rozmajzl and Michon (2000) children grow in their love for music and become increasing more secure working with musical concepts and skills when musical activities are well planned for successful completion.

At times children's songs have silly words and much rhyme. Music plays a prominent role in children as they respond and communicate through this medium.

Whether listening, singing, playing, moving, or creating music, musical experiences are prominent in the lives of children. They themselves, as well as their spokespersons-parents, guardians, and teachers attest to this fact. (Campbell, cited in Campbell and Kassner (2010).

Most children's musical facts has to do with their brain, the nerves, the muscles and mental calculations. As they sing they move their body, their legs and hands to the rhythm of the music e.g. games songs.

Children play all sorts of games-musical, rhythm, acrobatic, mental alertness, physical exercise which aim at developing them as members of their communities. Okafor, (2000).

Characteristics of Children's Voice at the Primary School Level

The quality, range, volumes, and flexibility of children's singing voices differ from those of the adult. A child's singing voice is light and clear in tone. The volume of correctly produced tones is usually soft, not exceeding mezzo-forte in it's dynamic volume. In fact, it is almost impossible for children to perform songs at a fortissimo level or louder without straining and possibly damaging the vocal mechanism. The most comfortable singing range of children's voices during primary years is usually limited to an interval of a sixth. Because of the high, flutelike quality of the child's voice, the use of the head register or head voice is desired.

Objectives and Guidliness for Singing at the Primary Level

The following objectives will give direction to the development and use of the singing voice at the primary school or basic 1-6 pupils or students level. Young students should be able to:

(1) Hear and repeat a short melody accurately and expressively.
(2) Develop some control in the quality of sound used when singing.
(3) Sing a wide variety of songs in many styles.
(4) Demonstrate knowledge of rhythm, melody, form,
(5) Demonstrate the ability to sing accurately a variety of harmony, dynamics, tempo, and tone colour through singing. Melodic intervals, using their accompanying hand signs.
(6) Sight read the notation of simple songs, Rozmajzl and Alexander (1999)

Developing the Child's Voice

Singing is a phenomenon for all ages, it begins and is nurtured in childhood. According to Campbell and Kassner (2010), children begin to sing at or before the stage at which they acquire speech-at a time before they may even be attracted to the media. As early as infancy, children begin to discover their vocal capabilities, they start making musical sounds. As they

play, they explore sound with the vowels and consonants that they have heard before.

The quality of children's voices reflects a combined innocence, playfulness, and energy that benefits them. At the age of four and five, children begin to discover the difference between their singing and speaking voices. Their singing may shift from light, airily sound to a playground yell for lively songs.

As children learn to sing a repertoire of songs, they also acquire rhythmic and melodic fragment that they use in their own musical play and invented songs. Children may continue to sing as they do at play, in their lower chest range, unless their head voice is developed, particularly through pitch-matching exercises.

Children's Music/Analysis

Children music are those music children love to sing, it could be a nursery rhyme, poem or the one they compose and sing among themselves during their playtime. Here are some children's music.

BUCKLE MY SHOE

One, Two, Buckle my shoe
Three, Four, Knock at the door
Five, Six, pickup sticks
Seven, Eight, lay them straight
Nine, Ten, a big fat hen.

The children are learning how to count numbers, they have learnt numbers one to ten

SEVEN DAYS

There are seven days
There are seven days
There are seven days in a week
Sunday, Monday

Tuesday, Wednesday
Thursday, Friday, Saturday.

With this song, children are learning the days of the week; as they sing along, with others, unknown to them, they have learnt the seven days of the week.

The music starts with an anacrusis, it is in the key of D major, with time signature of $\frac{3}{4}$

HAPPY
We are H A P P Y
We are H A P P Y
We know we are
We are sure we are
We are H A P P Y

As children sing this song, they are learning how to spell the word "happy".

The music starts with an anacrusis, it is in the key of G major, with time signature of $\frac{4}{4}$

JOHNBULL
Johnbull my son
I sent you to school
to learn how to spell your name.

The music is in D major, with time signature of $\frac{6}{8}$

ROW YOUR BOAT
Row, Row, Row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
life is but a dream.

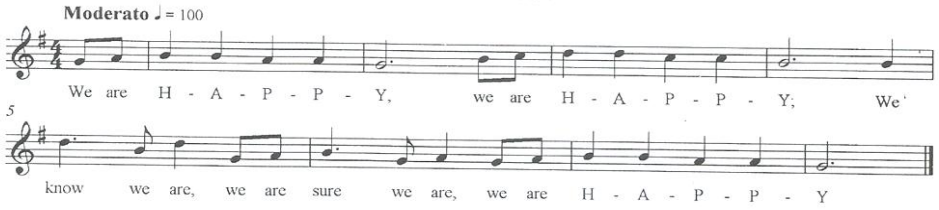
As the children sing the rhyme, they swing their hands.
The music is in F major with a key signature of $\frac{6}{8}$

EARLY IN THE MORNING

This is the way I brush my teeth,
brush my teeth, brush my teeth,
this is the way, I brush my teeth
early in the morning.

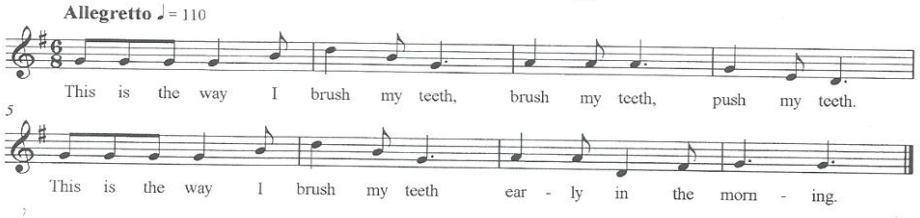
NO. 1

We Are Happy



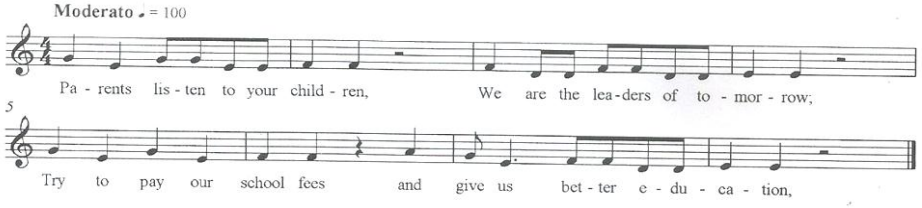
NO. 2

Early in the Morning



NO. 3

PARENTS LISTEN TO YOUR CHILDREN



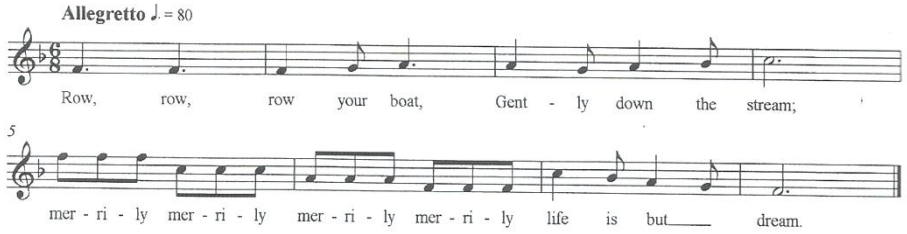
NO. 4

ONE, TWO TIE MY SHOE



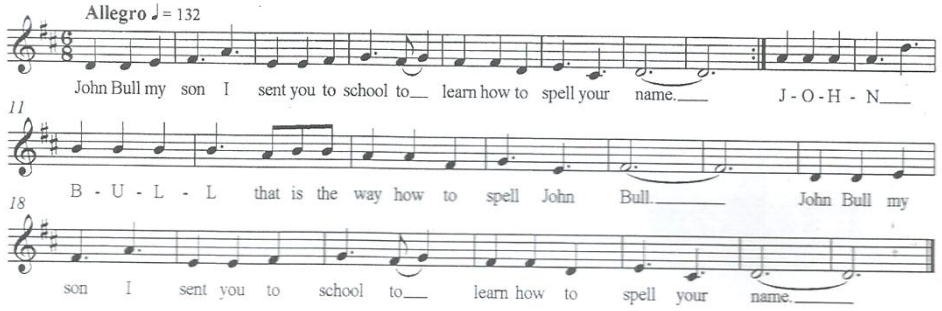
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ROW YOUR BOAT



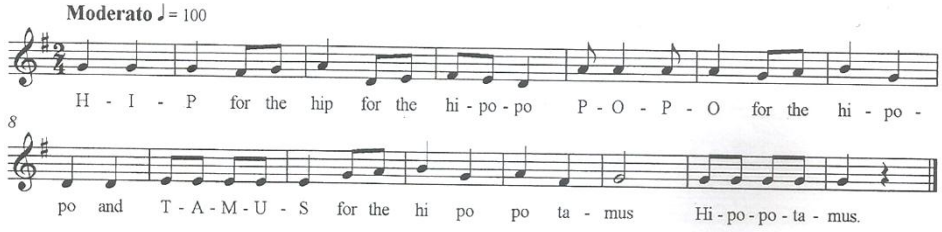
NO. 6

JOHN BULL



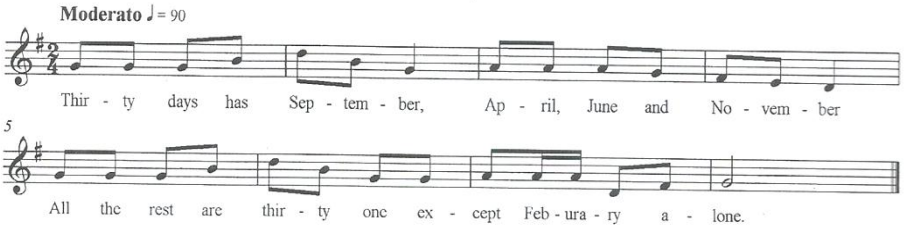
NO. 7

HIPOPOTAMUS



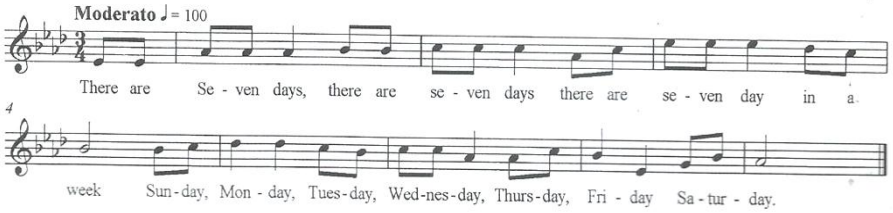
NO. 8

30 Days



NO. 9

THERE ARE SEVEN DAYS



NO. 10

NIGERIA IS MY COUNTRY



Conclusion

As children sings, they tend to demonstrate and wing their hands to imitate what they sing. Most of the songs they sing bring joy and, happiness to them. Many children's songs that are performed in school premises during recess are Oriented towards actions and games. The movements of these songs after a release for pent-up energy may serve memory cue for learning the words of the songs. The songs provide an avenue for challenging children's energies towards meaningful movement, Campbell and Kassner (2010: 127- 128).

From the foregoing, it is obvious that children should be given the opportunity to develop their musical skill by encouraging them, with well organized music programmes. With children's music at the primary school level, music teachers at that level should live up to the task, by becoming a channel to guide and develop children musically in a way that will be beneficial to them, the school and the larger society.

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