

“WHY DO YOU SING TO ME?”

A CASE STUDY OF FORM AND FUNCTION OF CHILDREN’S SONGS IN THE  
CARIBBEAN DIASPORA CULTURE IN SOUTH FLORIDA

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Thanks to my beautiful, godly wife  
whose love and support has helped  
me to accomplish far greater than I  
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## GLOSSARY

**Diaspora:** a movement or migration from the land and culture of birth.

**Lullaby:** a song typically sung by mothers in a soft and slow fashion with the intent of aiding their child in falling asleep.

**Children's song:** a song created for the specific sub-culture group of children within any given society. Children's songs are typically composed by adults, but are usually performed by both children and adults.

**Caribbean:** a term used to describe and denote a nation or culture that is geographically located in the Caribbean Sea and is anatomically an island.

**Qualitative:** a research design that implements an inductive style of investigation. Focus is given to personal interaction through interviews, observations, and participation.

**Grounded Theory:** a strategy of inquiry based on human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants. The procedure may involve interviewing and observing several participants in order to develop patterns and relationships of meaning.

## ABSTRACT

How does a child gain a musical identity? Music resides in the depths of personhood. Even before birth we are all touched by its power. Music is a language in that it communicates—thoughts, feelings, desires, information, and more. As children grow physically and mentally, they also grow musically. A person’s musical development will be directly influenced by their culture and family.

The following qualitative study looks at the form and function of children’s songs, specifically children’s songs from the diasporic Caribbean culture in South Florida. Twenty-one interviews, including 53 participants, were conducted to see how children’s songs might play a significant role in preserving and developing culture. The data is grounded in the views of the participants, and the individual families and their experiences were prioritized in the final analysis. The purpose of this study was to understand the motivation of children’s songs from various culture groups and the importance that these songs played in the lives of the children. The nuances within a family unit can be extraordinarily diverse, and therefore, the research to follow may be the beginnings of a theory for family and music.

Families use children’s songs for multiple purposes including: preserving cultural heritage, comforting their child, teaching skills and knowledge, and expressing affection. When speaking exclusively of parental motivations for sharing and teaching songs with children, the following classifications have been given: to teach, to affect emotions (including entertainment), to preserve tradition/culture, and to bond or show affection. Family motivations for teaching songs to children appear trans-cultural. Although the styles of music and the language of various cultures may be different, the messages and purposes are often the same.

Ultimately, the role of family and society in a child’s life are incalculable. In teaching their children’s songs, parents not only pass on their culture, but they also pass on a part of themselves. Families attempt to preserve a legacy within their progeny, and parents display their love for their children by filling in the spaces of childhood with fragrant musical repertoires.

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

The soft, soothing lilts of a mother's voice fills the nursery with a resting peace and warmth. Across the globe, mothers sing lullabies at night as they rock their children to sleep. From generation to generation, music is passed down to teach children, and cultural heritage is preserved. But from where do these songs come? Does the lullaby mean the same thing to the child in America as it does to the child in Asia or Africa? And what happens when the Haitian parent sings a traditional Creole cradlesong to her infant while living in South Florida? What is the construction and purpose of a children's song? Music is found in every culture, and children's songs appear to be one form of this universal phenomenon. Although aspects of music vary greatly among cultural groups, humanly universal characteristics may be found among these juvenile songs. The issue is in finding and analyzing consistent patterns to help in understanding just what children's music is and what it means to the different cultures around the world.

The following study is qualitative in nature and seeks principally to investigate the phenomenon of children's songs. This research proposes that children's songs are a universal means whereby adults develop and preserve culture.

Deficiencies in past studies exist primarily in the volume and breadth of those studies. The research is not completely absent; it is just the nature of being a sub-field of a sub-field within academia. Many music educators are active in ethnomusicology, and many of those do study children's music from around the world. However, the existing literature does not focus on how and why cultures around the world create their music for children.

Furthermore, research on how music helps children form a cultural understanding and identity is limited. Many times the very origins of children's songs are shrouded in mystery and legend. Tracking down the composer and motivations of many traditional children's songs

proves more than a challenge since they have often been passed down orally over the generations. Case studies can be enlightening, but only through comparison to other studies in finding the potential trends and patterns in children's songs. Reference to the authors and their research is covered more thoroughly in the literature review section.

This thesis will be of interest to parents, educators, musicians, ethnomusicologists, and any who work with children. This study will be especially insightful for music educators of pre-elementary and elementary children. The research may also aid in music education advocacy by showing the cultural significance of using children's songs to teach and preserve heritage. Music has been shown to be useful in healthy child development. This study gives further indicators that children need to be both sung to and taught songs as a part of their healthy development—physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis investigated how children's songs play a significant role in preserving culture and heritage, especially in families that have immigrated to a foreign country. For the purposes of this introductory study, families of various Caribbean cultures were interviewed, and their songs were analyzed for patterns. I expected to find that families use children's songs for multiple purposes including: preserving cultural heritage; comforting their child; teaching skills and knowledge; and expressing affection. So are there universal characteristics among children's songs? Music does vary greatly among culture groups because they understand and hear music differently. However, some universal traits seem to appear. Investigating children's songs may prove beneficial and enlightening as researchers continue to study the form, function, and purpose of music in society and for the individual.

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<sup>1</sup>Reading to children is encouraged to help develop their interest and skills in reading. Perhaps the same concept holds true in music.

## **Statement of the Problem**

How a child develops an understanding of music and culture is nothing short of a mystery. How do children perceive, interpret, and integrate their surroundings and influences? Just as children seem innately adept for language, they similarly appear equipped for music. A better understanding of how music helps create cultural identity in children will be a great asset to the understanding of both cognitive and kinesthetic, as well as affective or aesthetic childhood development.

## **Need for the Study**

The knowledge is well established that music varies greatly among culture groups. “There is no question but that music serves a symbolic function in human cultures on the level of affective or cultural meaning.”<sup>2</sup> Cultures understand and hear music quite differently. What is less understood is whether or not universals can be appropriately attributed across culture groups. Initially, some universally shared characteristics seem to surface. But speculations are hollow without proper investigation, documentation, and analysis. As research proceeds, consistent patterns in children’s songs may be found, and theories may be developed.

## **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the motivation and formation of children’s songs from various culture groups that have immigrated to South Florida. In this current research project the cultural formation of children’s songs is generally defined as lyrical music composed by adults for the purpose of teaching and preserving cultural heritage in future generations.

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<sup>2</sup>Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 246.

## **Research Question & Sub-Questions**

The central question asked in this research was: What is a theory that explains the process of the motivation and preservation of children's songs from various culture groups around the world now living in another country? More specifically, why do the parents interviewed teach their children songs? In regards to this study, the culture groups were all derived from the Caribbean islands and the diaspora setting is South Florida. Another primary query asks: Do children's songs help to preserve cultural heritage, and if so, how?

Throughout the study several sub-questions were addressed including: What are the motivations of parents for singing and teaching their children songs? What makes a song suitable for a child rather than an adult? What is the purpose of specified songs for children within a given culture? How do these songs help to teach children and preserve cultural heritage?

Many questions of interest further arise within the study: From where do children's songs come? Why and how are children's songs formed across the globe? What is the construction of a children's song? What role should music play in the education of children? Are there universal characteristics among children's songs? What is the primary purpose of a children's song? However, due to the scope of this limited study of South Florida residents, these later questions are only briefly entertained in the final report.

## **Limitations/Delimitations of the Study**

This study was first limited by my own background and biases. I grew up in the foothills of North Carolina and therefore identify primarily with the society and culture in which I am most familiar. The way I dress, the music I listen to, and even the way I think are all affected by my upbringing and environment. Although I cannot rid myself absolutely of bias, I can strive to recognize and adjust for it. Throughout the study I tried to understand my culture in relation to

other cultures and not allow my interpretation of those cultures to be based merely on personal tastes and preferences. Being born to parents of different cultures (Irish-American father; Korean mother) and having traveled to various countries (Canada, Mexico, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Bahamas, Germany, England, France, Italy, Czech Republic, Korea, and Thailand) aided me in my attempt to make unbiased analyses. I also have a minor in Inter-Cultural Studies which helped me to understand that cultures are not necessarily always right or wrong. Rather, they are just different.

Furthermore, the study was limited by geographic location and volunteer participants. The research was conducted within the southern region of Florida consisting of the Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood, and Miami areas (Broward and Miami-Dade counties). Voluntary participants were drawn primarily from my own church congregation (Calvary Chapel), along with other personal acquaintances and recommendations. The scope was also limited in the fact that only participants with a Caribbean background were recruited for this study, thus limiting the availability of different culture groups for participation. Participants recruited for this research trace their heritage to the following nations: Cuba, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Bahamas, Jamaica, St. Kitts, St. Croix, and Trinidad.

Certainly the greatest weakness in this project was the high number of variables that were difficult to account for. Among participants interviewed were married couples, single parents, dependent children, independent children, and families with over ten different ethnic backgrounds. Diversity is important, but without a greater sample population interpreting some of the data becomes problematic.

## **Assumptions**

A common philosophical assumption of qualitative research is that unknown areas of study are best prodded by qualitative means first. Research is best conducted from the bottom-up to help eliminate bias and potentially flawed methods. Theories are built upon described findings rather than prescribed theories. Without preliminary investigation there is no strong basis for the “right” questions. Afterwards, quantitative methods and experiments may be implemented to help solidify conclusions.

## CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

An individual may not know how to define or describe what a children's song is, but they probably know it when they hear it. Yet, what makes a song suitable for a child rather than an adult? What is the purpose of specified songs in culture for children? How do these songs help to teach children and preserve cultural heritage? A review of the literature shows that not much research exists in this particular area. A few case studies have been done on specific cultures. Some comparative studies between adult and children's perspectives discuss such areas as the child's concept of song and the composer's intent of song. Also of interest are reviews of child development and the role of parental guidance, media influence, and culture teaching. "Musical activity in early years settings may often be adult-led, with welcome songs, counting and movement games all providing opportunities for group and individual involvement."<sup>3</sup>

This research was qualitative due to the limited literature in the area of children's songs that are used as a means of cultural preservation. In the ethnomusicological world, John Blacking is often viewed as the first researcher to write specifically about children's music. Also, Patricia Sheehan Campbell is seen as an authority on the subject. Several ethnographies investigate children's songs of specific culture groups.<sup>4</sup> More extensive research has been done with music education for children—purpose, advocacy, success, and development.<sup>5</sup> Studies have also looked

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<sup>3</sup>Sue Robson, *Developing Thinking and Understanding in Young Children*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 2012), 192.

<sup>4</sup>Akosua Obuo Addo, "A Multimedia Analysis of Selected Ghanaian Children's Play Songs," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 129 (1996): 1-28; John Barton Hopkin, "Jamaican Children's Songs," *Ethnomusicology* 28, no. 1 (1984): 1-36; Suchismita Sen, "Tagore's 'Lokashahitya': The Oral Tradition in Bengali Children's Rhymes," *Asian Folklore Studies* 55, no. 1 (1996): 1-47.

<sup>5</sup>Joanna M. Calogero, "Integrating Music and Children's Literature," *Music Educator's Journal* 88, no. 5 (2002): 23-30; Allen Clements, "Minority Students and Faculty in Higher Music Education," *Music Educators Journal*, 95, no. 3 (March 2009): 53-6; Amanda Christina Soto, Chee-Hoo Lum and Patricia Sheehan Campbell, "A University-School Music Partnership for Music Education Majors in a Culturally Distinctive Community," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 56, no. 4 (January 2009): 338-56; Sarah H. Watts, "American Folk Songs for Children: Ruth Crawford Seeger's Contributions to Music Education," *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 56,

into the extent of children's' comprehension and application in music.<sup>6</sup> With all the research in music and education, only a few ethnomusicological studies of children's songs have been carried out.<sup>7</sup>

Both literary and oral investigations add to the forum of understanding what makes a "good" children's song. Not only is knowledge passed down through song but also a sense of identity and belonging within the family and culture. "The social roles of music are richly varied: a young child may encounter live music at home – in lullabies, games, story-telling, ceremonies and dancing – and recorded music through an ever-increasing range of technology. Music can create or regulate mood, encourage group identity and aid memory and communication."<sup>8</sup>

The integration of culture is a human phenomenon that cannot be quickly understood. Descriptions can be given for what and how culture is acquired, but mystery abounds around the "Why?"<sup>9</sup> Anthropologist Alan P. Merriam concludes that "any aspect of any given culture would reflect other parts of it, and this is certainly the case with music."<sup>10</sup> He continues his discourse by noting that

All societies, for example, make distinctions between the social roles of children and adults, which are reflected in music. In almost all cultures, there are special songs sung by children, and these are not ordinarily employed by adults. Game songs, counting songs, language songs, and many others are specific to children, although as he grows

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no. 3 (2008): 238-54; Law Wing-Wah and Wai-Chung Ho, "Values Education in Hong Kong School Music Education: A Sociological Critique," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 52, no. 1 (March 2004): 65-82.

<sup>6</sup>Margaret Barrett, "Modal Dissonance: An Analysis of Children's Invented Notations of Known Songs, Original Songs, and Instrumental Compositions," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 141 (1999): 14-20; Linda A. Hartley and Ann M. Porter, "The Influence of Beginning Instructional Grade on String Student Enrollment, Retention, and Music Performance," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 56, no. 4 (January 2009): 370-84; Randall S. Moore, "Comparison of Children's and Adults' Vocal Ranges and Preferred Tessituras in Singing Familiar Songs," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 107 (1991): 13-22; Steven J. Morrison, Steven M. Demorest and Laura A. Stambaugh, "Enculturation Effects in Music Cognition: The Role of Age and Music Complexity," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 56, no. 2 (July 2008): 118-29.

<sup>7</sup>Amanda Minks, "From Children's Song to Expressive Practices: Old and New Directions in the Ethnomusicological Study of Children," *Ethnomusicology* 46, no. 3 (2002): 379-408; Watts, "American Folk Songs for Children," 238-54.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 192.

<sup>9</sup>Merriam's concept of function.

<sup>10</sup>Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music*, 247.

older the child gives up these songs special to age and moves either abruptly or gradually into the sphere of adult music.<sup>11</sup>

Consider Melville Herskovits's report that in Dahomey, a child is taught a special song to sing with his/her playmates on the loss of his/her first tooth.<sup>12</sup> Also, J.H. Nketia reports that the Ashanti of Ghana have a special song of insult for a habitual bed-wetter.<sup>13</sup> We can see that songs are rooted in culture just as any form of human expression. Ownership of almost everything, including songs, is passed down from father to son in the social system of the Murriny Patha of Australia,<sup>14</sup> and in certain South Seas societies, children learn the important spiritual elements, values, and religious practices of their own culture through musical experience.<sup>15</sup>

Special children's songs are also noted by researchers in the following cultures:

Chinese;<sup>16</sup> Japanese;<sup>17</sup> Arabic;<sup>18</sup> Nootka;<sup>19</sup> Sioux;<sup>20</sup> Ashanti;<sup>21</sup> Australian aboriginal;<sup>22</sup> Venda;<sup>23</sup> Afghan;<sup>24</sup> and Yoruba.<sup>25</sup> These examples show that the ethnomusicological study of children is

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Melville J. Herskovits, *Dahomey* (New York: J.J. Augustine, 1938), 275.

<sup>13</sup>J.H. Kwabena Nketia, "African Music," *AMSAC Newsletter* 3 (1961): 7.

<sup>14</sup>Linda Barwick, "Musical Form and Style in Murriny Patha Djanba Songs at Wadeye (Northern Territory, Australia)," in *Analytical and Cross-Cultural Studies in World Music*, eds. Michael Tenzer & John Roeder (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 321.

<sup>15</sup>Urs. Ramseyer, *Soziale Bezüge des Musizierens in Naturvolkkulturen* (Bern: Francke, 1970), 28-31.

<sup>16</sup>Kurt Reinhard, *Chinesische Musik*, Kassel: Roth, 1956.

<sup>17</sup>Elizabeth May, *The Influence of the Meiji Period on Japanese Children's Music*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963.

<sup>18</sup>Artur Simon, *Studien zur ägyptischen Volksmusik*, Hamburg: Wagner, 1972.

<sup>19</sup>Frances Densmore, "Nootka and Quileute Music," *Bulletin 124 of the Bureau of American Ethnology*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution (1939): 229-41.

<sup>20</sup>Frances Densmore, "Teton Sioux Music," *Bulletin 61 of the Bureau of American Ethnology*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution (1918): 492-94.

<sup>21</sup>J.H. Kwabena Nketia, *The Music of Africa*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1974.

<sup>22</sup>Margaret J. Kartomi, "Childlikeness in Play Songs: A Case Study Among the Pitjantjara at Yalata, South Australia," in *Miscellanea Musicologica: Adelaide Studies in Musicology*, ed. Andrew D. McCredie (The Libraries Board of South Australia, 1980), 172-214; Margaret J. Kartomi, "Musical Improvisations by Children at Play," *World Music* 33, no. 3 (1991): 53-65; Richard A. Waterman, "Music in Australian Aboriginal Culture: Some Sociological and Psychological Implications," *Music Therapy* 5 (1956): 40-50.

<sup>23</sup>John Blacking, *Venda Children's Songs: A Study in Ethnomusicological Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 28-9.

<sup>24</sup>John Baily and Veronica Doubleday, "Patterns of Musical Enculturation in Afghanistan," in *Music and Child Development*, eds. Frank Wilson and Franz Roehmann (Ann Arbor, MI: Book Crafters, 1990), 88-99.

<sup>25</sup>Christopher A. Waterman, *Juju: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

potentially a vast field. Research into this sub-field is just launching and currently has only a few key contributors,<sup>26</sup> but the data is growing every year. Linda Pound and Chris Harrison discuss the rising evidence and the importance of studying children's music:

There is good evidence to support the view that we are born musical. Even before we are born, music has an impact on our lives and stimulates our development. From birth, we develop our musical awareness through communication, the expression of emotion and playfulness. In turn, musical activity helps us to develop our capacity to communicate with others, to express our feelings and to play. It is no accident that we use the term 'play' as the main way of referring to someone's engagement in musical activity.<sup>27</sup>

When a young boy informed Patricia Campbell that he woke up every morning with songs in his head, she became increasingly intrigued with the meaning that music held in children's lives. "I began to wonder whether music may be more central to children's lives than it may seem, at least from the perspective of adults—'outsiders' to their culture."<sup>28</sup> The topic carries intrigue indeed. But as Blacking is well aware, something so interesting is not always so easily investigated. "Children's songs are only for children, and so any attempt to unravel what is not immediately obvious strikes many as being a waste of time. When I asked for explanations, I was often told, 'I don't know. Why worry? It's [only] a song!'"<sup>29</sup>

Ethnomusicologists have increasingly "recognized that a society may be divided musically along various lines, and scholars have therefore begun to concentrate on the repertoires and musical behavior of segments of a population."<sup>30</sup> A small sample of songs can no longer be assumed to holistically represent the entire tribe. Interest has increased in various segments of

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<sup>26</sup>Blacking, *Venda Children's Songs*, 28-9; Constantin Brailoiu, *Problems of Ethnomusicology*, trans. A.L. Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 206-38; Patricia Shehan Campbell, *Songs in Their Heads: Music and Its Meaning in Children's Lives*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Kartomi, "Childlikeness in Play Songs;" 172-214; Kartomi, "Musical Improvisations by Children at Play," 53-65.

<sup>27</sup>Linda Pound and Chris Harrison, *Supporting Musical Development in the Early Years* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2009), 18-9.

<sup>28</sup>Campbell, *Songs in Their Heads*, 3.

<sup>29</sup>Blacking, *Venda*, 30.

<sup>30</sup>Bruno Nettl, "Recent Directions in Ethnomusicology," in *The Norton/Grove Handbooks in Music. Ethnomusicology: An Introduction*, ed. Helen Myers (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), 380.

society, particularly minorities such as women and children.<sup>31</sup> “It has long been assumed that there is a children’s music with a style of wide geographic distribution, and recent studies have tested and contributed to this supposition.”<sup>32</sup>

Margaret Barrett uses a child’s perspective theoretical lens. She explores and observes “the strategies employed by a group of musically naïve and pre-literate kindergarten children to notate familiar canonic songs, and original compositions for voice and/or instrument.”<sup>33</sup> She bases her research on the presumption that children begin with a certain degree of both ignorance and understanding of musical composition. Barrett’s study looks not at a “marginalized” group but at one that is just unnoticed. Adults tend to focus on the strategies of other adults and have not seen the need to hear music through the ears of a child. Her study aids in understanding how children view song within the scope of music and lyric. Gaining insight into this dimension adds to an understanding of the overall construction of children’s songs. Furthermore, insight is obtained into the processes of development, cognition, and interpretation.

Barrett’s study adds to previous typologies by selecting a different group of children for comparison. Other researchers, such as Manny Brand, have shown that “Newborn infants’ response to sound is one of their most highly developed abilities. For example, newborns distinguish volume, localize a sound ten minutes after birth, prefer certain sounds to others, acquire auditory discrimination in the first day of life, and can hear who is near them by the

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<sup>31</sup>Catherine J. Ellis, “The Role of the Ethnomusicologist in the Study of Andagarinja Women’s Ceremonies,” in *Miscellanea Musicologica: Adelaide Studies in Musicology*, ed. Andrew D. McCredie (The Libraries Board of South Australia, 1970), 76; Blacking, *Venda Children’s Songs*, 28-9; Charlotte Johnson Frisbie, *Southwestern Indian Ritual Drama* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1989).

<sup>32</sup>Nettl, “Recent Directions,” 380.

<sup>33</sup>Margaret Barrett, “Modal Dissonance: An Analysis of Children’s Invented Notations of Known Songs, Original Songs, and Instrumental Compositions,” *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 141 (1999): 14.

timbre of the voice.”<sup>34</sup> Even more impressive is that humans can hear sounds from about twenty weeks of gestation in the womb!<sup>35</sup> Findings suggest that while children are able to understand and analyze music to a certain degree, when the added element of text is introduced, children tend to focus on this lyrical dimension. “It is suggested that the imposition of text masks children’s capacity to represent their musical understanding.”<sup>36</sup>

Amanda Minks attempts “a cross-cultural review and critique of literature on children’s songs and a discussion of general theoretical directions for studying children in ethnomusicology.”<sup>37</sup> Minks writes with the view that most all studies are comparative studies to another. Recently, “the scholarly study of children’s songs and their musical play has been an important site for staging theories.”<sup>38</sup> Several crucial factors in understanding the diverse perspectives of children are discussed. Minks reviews children’s songs and other expressive practices with established research paradigms and in light of other research or the lack thereof.

More and more, research is delving into the traditionally held assumptions and implications of childhood. “The dated view of children as receptacles that are waiting to be filled by a teacher’s wisdom has been replaced by an awareness of not only the personal history that each child brings to class but also the impact of the environment on a child as he or she grows up.”<sup>39</sup> Some research has yielded substantiation that infants develop certain competences too quickly to be explained by mere learning processes.<sup>40</sup> Infants naturally respond to behaviors and

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<sup>34</sup>Manny Brand, “Lullabies that Awaken Musicality in Infants,” *Music Educators Journal* 71, no. 7 (1985): 29.

<sup>35</sup>Daniel J. Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession* (New York: Penguin Group, 2006).

<sup>36</sup>Barrett, “Modal Dissonance,” 14.

<sup>37</sup>Amanda Minks, “Expressive Practices,” 379.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup>Steven J. Morrison, Steven M. Demorest, and Laura A. Stambaugh, “Enculturation Effects in Music Cognition: The Role of Age and Music Complexity,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 56, no. 2 (2008): 118.

<sup>40</sup>Frank C. Keil, “The Birth and Nurturance of Concepts By Domains: The Origins of Concepts of Living Things,” in *Mapping the Mind: Domain Specificity in Cognition and Culture*, eds. Lawrence A. Hirschfeld and

experiences that suggest they are primed with an intuitive biology, physics, and psychology, and they acquire language so efficiently that they appear to be specifically designed for it.<sup>41</sup>

Music and language have long been associated with one another.<sup>42</sup> Research indicates that the deprivation of music exposure in early childhood development is comparable to the atrophy of speech in children who have been isolated from the human interaction and language use. This theory would explain how some people can assimilate the rules of musical systems without notation or formal instruction.<sup>43</sup> “It seems that children, especially in their pre-school musical activities, in their playground songs, in their creative responses to pop music, and in their intuitive solution to musical problems, acquire some kind of musical ‘grammar’ without any formal instruction.”<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, “there seems to be evidence in the motor and vocal behavior of infants of elementary music-making capabilities...,”<sup>45</sup> but this “musical development” in infancy is scarcely understood.<sup>46</sup>

While music and language can be compared, the issue is not that simple. Blacking explains that “young children’s musical competence does not proceed in all cultures according to some universal syntax related to acoustical complexity, that is, from two- and three-tone ditties to five-, six-, and seven-tone melodies, and from isorhythmic to polyrhythmic and additive rhythmic patterns: it develops in different ways in different musical cultures.”<sup>47</sup> For example, in one culture children may learn songs based upon the simplicity of the songs, but this may not be

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Susan A. Gelman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 234-54; Elizabeth Spelke, “Infant Cognition,” in *MIT Encyclopedia of Cognitive Sciences*, eds. Robert A. Wilson and Frank C. Keil (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 402-04.

<sup>41</sup>Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct* (London: Allen Lane, 1994), 266-67.

<sup>42</sup>Charles Seeger has written much on this subject.

<sup>43</sup>Blacking, *Venda Children’s Songs*, 28-9.

<sup>44</sup>John Blacking, “The Biology of Music-Making,” in *The Norton/Grove Handbooks in Music. Ethnomusicology: An Introduction*, ed. Helen Myers (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), 312.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 269.

<sup>47</sup>Blacking, “Biology,” 302.

true for another culture. Another culture may teach their children more complex songs in order to prepare them for adult song performances. Sometimes no distinction may exist, as in America, where many children are exposed to, know, and sing the same popular songs from the radio as adults do.

Stylistically and structurally, children's songs present a fascinating study. Children's music is often composed of limited range and scale with short, repetitive forms, such as the lullabies of American Indian songs which may be quite short, lasting one or two minutes.<sup>48</sup> Simplicity is common, but not an end all. Much of what is found in children's music can also be found in the adult folk songs from the same culture. So why does children's music typically have a separate style?

Throughout the world, children's music has a number of uses. There are lullabies or other kinds of songs sung by adults to quiet and amuse children; songs associated with children's games and with play; and music, perhaps instrumental, that is itself play. There are songs intended to help children learn their own culture, with the words of proverbs or stories from which one may draw conclusions to guide behavior. And music intended to teach rudiments of musicianship... In most places, it's my guess, on the basis of the modest survey of cultures that the ethnomusicological literature provides, that it seems to be adults who decide how and what children should sing. They teach a separate, distinct style, but one they share for particular purposes.<sup>49</sup>

The present research topic is hardly the tip of the iceberg. Interest in this area of children's songs is found in music education as well as cognitive, biological, and comparative studies. Questions surface as to how children acquire music in the first place, their musical repertoires, and how these two phenomena differ from adults and between cultures. Alan Merriam's survey suggests that children's music learning is largely a developmental phase<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Victoria Lindsay Levine and Bruno Nettl, "Strophic Form and Asymmetrical Repetition in Four American Indian Songs," in *Analytical and Cross-Cultural Studies in World Music*, eds. Michael Tenzer & John Roeder, 290 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>49</sup>Nettl, *Study of Ethnomusicology*, 429.

<sup>50</sup>Reference to cognitive theorists such as Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky is later discussed and may warrant future research for this topic.

leading to the learning of adult music. “The children of the world participate in music-making in various ways, but societies differ in the degree to which they create a separate repertory for children or designate certain songs or pieces as children’s music.”<sup>51</sup>

The literature is left wanting in regards to research on diasporic communities. Of note are Deborah Wong and Su Zheng whose respectable works delve into the cultural displacement of Asian Americans.<sup>52</sup> Also, *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* is a journal series published by the University of Toronto Press which offers a multidisciplinary study of transnational dispersions. *Urban People – Lidé města* is another scholarly journal, but one which focuses on the theories and methods of urban ethnomusicology and the effects of an increasingly industrialized world. The journal is published in the Czech Republic by the Faculty of Human Studies – Charles University. Still yet, the extent of impact to which immigration and globalization has on an individual or society as a whole is greatly uncertain due to the need of more long-term studies in order to make confident conclusions.

### **Cognitive Considerations**

One factor worth noting at this point is the role that cognitive development plays in a child’s musical understanding or thinking. At least two research methods seem to show evidence of children’s musical thinking: “(1) the analysis and discussion of children’s invented notations and (2) observation in which the researcher can take a participant role.”<sup>53</sup>

Often unacknowledged, children are in reality “active, persistent thinkers, driven by a desire to make sense and meaning in their lives, to connect what they know and understand to

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 428.

<sup>52</sup>Deborah Wong, *Speak It Louder: Asian Americans Making Music* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Su Zheng, “Music Making in Cultural Displacement: The Chinese-American Odyssey,” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 3, no. 3 (Winter 1994): 273-288.

<sup>53</sup>Victoria Rowe, “Young Children’s Thinking in Music,” in *Developing Thinking and Understanding in Young Children*, ed. Sue Robson, 2nd edition, 192 (New York: Routledge, 2012).

what they do not yet understand.”<sup>54</sup> All one needs to do is talk with a five-year-old for a few minutes to see just how curious and fascinating a child’s mind is. But from where does the peculiar imagination of a child stem? “The philosopher John Locke, writing in the seventeenth century, was responsible for the idea that children are ‘blank slates’ at birth, waiting to be written on by their experiences.”<sup>55</sup>

Jean Piaget and the philosophy of constructivism emphasizes individual discovery in development. “Born in 1896 in Switzerland, Piaget is often seen as the originator of the field of cognitive development.”<sup>56</sup> He presented a view of children as active learners who must learn through self-discovery and not until they are ready to learn it. And although Piaget’s constructivism has come under increasing scrutiny and challenge since the 1970s, his long-lasting influence in the field of cognitive development is remarkable and undeniable.

On the other side of the spectrum of research is Lev Vygotsky and sociocultural theory or social constructivism which places instruction at the heart of learning. “Born in Russia, in 1896, the same year as Piaget, Vygotsky’s work was little known either inside or outside the country until the 1960s.”<sup>57</sup> He saw children, or human beings for that matter, “as inherently social animals, who could only be understood in the context of their society.”<sup>58</sup> Children are social actors and their childhood is socially constructed. Our lives are always in the context of time, place, and culture.<sup>59</sup> Culture, meaning, “the customs of a particular people at a particular time, and their collective achievements over historical time.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Robson, *Developing Thinking and Understanding*, 1.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 30.

Hungarian composer and ethnomusicologist, Zoltán Kodály, is best known for his inspiration of the Kodály Method which is essentially a developmental model for music acquisition and development. Similar to Piaget, a sequence for child development is offered and systemized. Kodály proposed the philosophy that children principally learn music in a universal fashion beginning simply and becoming progressively complex just as in language acquisition.<sup>61</sup>

Jerome Bruner is known for the idea of scaffolding. “Like Piaget, he emphasizes action and problem-solving in children’s learning, but, like Vygotsky, he stresses the importance of social interaction, language and instruction in the development of thinking.”<sup>62</sup> A number of theorists, such as Howard Gardner, propose modularity—“that the mind is organized as a collection of mental modules, or organs, each prestructured for processing different kinds of input, for example, perception or language.”<sup>63</sup>

Urie Bronfenbrenner provides something of a bridge between the constructivists and social constructivists. “The *bio* aspect of his bioecological model recognizes that people bring their biological selves to the process of development.”<sup>64</sup>

Beyond the more technical theories out there, more and more, research is emphasizing “the importance of children’s early interactions with their caregivers for their later emotional and cognitive development” as reflected in the ideas of attachment theory, first outlined by John Bowlby, which include: securely; avoidant; anxious/resistant; disorganized.<sup>65</sup> “Bowlby (1969) suggests that babies need a warm, continuous relationship with a mother figure... What seems to matter most is the responsiveness and engagement of the person involved.”<sup>66</sup> A great example of

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<sup>61</sup>Lois Choksy, *The Kodály Method I: Comprehensive Music Education* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1999).

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 36.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 45-6.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 60.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

the impact of relationship in a child's life can be observed through infant-directed speech (IDS). IDS, commonly known as "motherese," is affectionate speech clearly directed towards an infant. Some studies assert that "because of its rhythm and musical tone 'musical motherese' is preferred by babies and supports them in creating connections between music and vocalization... 'communicative musicality' and the musical tone of these early conversations foster emotional attunement between mother and child.<sup>67</sup> As with all language, here mothers and their infants cooperate in communicating their thoughts, desires, and affections in the most soft and subtle of ways.

Among authors and researchers approach and design varies widely. Nevertheless, "it is clear that in all of them music making in the early years is characterized by experimentation and play with sounds and a focus on process rather than on product, just as children explore all the other materials in their worlds."<sup>68</sup> Swanick and Tillman have attempted to construct a model of musical development that takes into consideration both perspectives of Piaget and Vygotsky. They propose a progression through stages while keeping in mind children's social interactions with peers and with the musical culture.<sup>69</sup> Barrett views the inventing of musical representations as a type of knowledge construction in children. For her, the interaction is the key event—the place where the child and adult meet together as musical partners.<sup>70</sup> Her research has even demonstrated 4-year-old children capable of composing and recording their own music, granted the support and encouragement.<sup>71</sup> Young reinforces the idea of the partnering or scaffolding

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 137.

<sup>68</sup>Roe, "Thinking in Music," 193.

<sup>69</sup>Keith Swanick and June Tillman, "The Sequence of Musical Development," *British Journal of Music Education* 3 (1986): 305-39.

<sup>70</sup>Margaret Barrett, "Representation, Cognition and Communication: Invented Notation in Children's Musical Communication," in *Musical Communication*, eds., Dorothy Miell, Raymond MacDonald, and David J. Hargreaves, 117-42 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>71</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, "Invented Notations: A View of Young Children's Musical Thinking," *Research Studies in Music Education* 8 (1997): 2-14.

adult in a child's musical life. She stresses that music is only music through active listening, and therefore, adults must interact with children in music just as they do in other educational activities. As an ethnomusicologist, Young specifically sees the adult as an active participant in the child's musical thinking and experience. In particular, play becomes a fundamental catalyst in nurturing a child's musical development.<sup>72</sup> "Singing songs, rhymes and games in the nursery can be very valuable in encouraging bonding, memory, language development and communication. Hearing and participating in these activities provides models on which children can base or develop their own musical ideas. It can also help to reflect ethnic identities and variety."<sup>73</sup>

Family, culture, emotion, and creative thinking are all clearly important links in musical development. Research even argues that "children learn to think creatively as a result of being part of a loving relationship from which, in infancy, they begin to see things from two perspectives: their own, and that of a primary caregiver."<sup>74</sup> The importance of a loving, supportive, and secure environment cannot be stressed enough here. A child must be encouraged to and feel safe to ask questions and take risks.<sup>75</sup> "Adult scaffolding, using open-ended questions, speculation and modeling enquiry, may be especially valuable for supporting children in acquiring new knowledge, developing new skills, and making use of these in support of their creative thinking."<sup>76</sup> Some steps for the early years practitioner to ensure effective development are to: "foster creativity, offer alternatives, make links with previous learning, promote

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<sup>72</sup>Susan Young, "Listening to the Music of Early Childhood," *British Journal of Music Education* 12 (1995): 51-8.

<sup>73</sup>Roe, "Thinking in Music," 199.

<sup>74</sup>Robson, *Developing Thinking and Understanding*, 213.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 213.

reflection, provide challenge, and introduce a degree of ambiguity and reflective thinking on the part of the children.”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 231.

## CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

This research represents a qualitative strategy of inquiry because of the many people that I personally interviewed. This study is much more about people than numbers. Therefore, case studies and narratives dominate. The research methods center on questions asked and interpretations of answers given. As with qualitative methodology, the questions posed are open-ended. Worldview follows the route of mostly pragmatism because I am seeking to be as real-world practical as possible. However, themes of constructivism and advocacy/participatory also run throughout the study.

Expected outcomes revolve around the concept of parents wishing to keep their children's cultural heritage intact. I expect that families use children's songs for multiple purposes including: preserving cultural heritage; comforting their child; teaching skills and knowledge; and expressing affection. Because of a lack of abstract thinking skills, children seem to be drawn to the text in songs rather than the music. Granted, children may lack the language to describe what they specifically like about music and therefore are attracted to the simpler lyrics because understanding is related to comfort.<sup>78</sup> Songs may be constructed to help a child's young mind comprehend the songs for memory and practice.

### **Research Design**

As already stated, the research design of this study is qualitative. John Creswell lists some basic characteristics of a qualitative study in which the research "takes place in a natural setting, relies on the researcher as the instrument for data collection, employs multiple methods of data collection, is inductive, is based on participants' meanings, is emergent, often involves

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<sup>78</sup>Future inquiry may also investigate whether or not children are more drawn to specific rhythms and modes.

the use of a theoretical lens, is interpretive, and is holistic.”<sup>79</sup> Qualitative research design is especially beneficial as a preliminary study to future quantitative and mixed-methods research. Qualitative research is able to introduce new topics of study and help advance the needed questions for further investigations.

*Particularity* rather than *generalizability* is the hallmark of qualitative research. However, there are a few discussions in the qualitative literature about generalizability, especially as applied to case study research in which the inquirer studies several cases. Yin (2003), for example, feels that qualitative case study results can be generalized to some *broader theory*. The generalization occurs when qualitative researchers study additional cases and generalize findings to the new cases. It is the same as the *replication logic* used in experimental research. However, to repeat a case study’s findings in a new case setting requires good documentation of qualitative procedures, such as a protocol for documenting the problem in detail and the development of a thorough case study database.<sup>80</sup>

### **Strategy of Inquiry**

The following inductive study implements the strategies of phenomenology with some aspects of grounded theory. Phenomenology is typically used to explore human experiences, processes, activities, and events as described by participants and while comparing data and sampling different groups. Essentially, this strategy of inquiry is “grounded in the views of participants”<sup>81</sup> and is focused on the individual. Phenomenology is a good choice for this particular study, which seeks to understand how families preserve cultural heritage through children’s songs.

Phenomenological research is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants. Understanding the lived experiences marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, and procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning. In this

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<sup>79</sup>John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. 2008), 201.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, 13.

process, the researcher brackets or sets aside his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study.<sup>82</sup>

While the ethnomusicologist fieldworker is often a participant in a phenomenological study, this is not the case here. By focusing on the participants' personal views and descriptions I am able to analyze the data in an inductive and grounded way.

### **Role of Researcher**

Music and culture have been two great passions throughout my life. As an undergraduate my interests only grew as I majored in music and minored in inter-cultural studies. For years I have also worked with children and youth, hoping to pass down knowledge, wisdom, and skills to future generations. In proposing a research topic I naturally wanted to combine these areas of interest. The research site was in the homes of diverse Caribbean families throughout South Florida—mostly consisting of the Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood, and Miami areas. Primarily, I sought out voluntary participants through my church and my workplace, which serves inner-city families of Hollywood. My role was to formulate and conduct interviews with these families and also to analyze children's songs from several different Caribbean cultures.

As in any social research, this study involved people. Thus, ethical issues were anticipated and proactively adjusted for. I was careful as I entered into the lives of people for this study so as not to impose upon their home and time in an unreasonable manner. I attempted to be considerate and forthright with expectations for the duration of the research. Approval for this research was obtained from both the Institutional Review Board and the local South Floridian church which served as a resource pool for recruiting participants. Steps were also taken to ensure ethical considerations were carried out including the careful issue and documentation of participant release forms. Caution was taken to ensure all participation was voluntary and non-

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 13

coerced. Finally, respect and consideration was given to participants' time, personal space, identities, and other private information.

### **Data Collection Strategies**

Strategies for data collection consisted primarily of observations, interviews, and audio-recording materials. However, data was also collected from song list databases. Observations of families' roles in teaching children's songs were conducted to see what and how children's songs are used in culture preservation. In-person interviews were conducted throughout the research process to evaluate family ideologies and culture rationales. Also, audio recordings were collected to further discover and interpret how children's songs are used for cultural intentions. A purposeful sampling strategy was used for individuals who volunteer for study. Procedures for recording information during the data collection phase focused on an observation protocol.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Six procedural steps were used to analyze data: (1) Interviews were transcribed and data was organized and prepared for analysis. (2) By reading through all the data and reflecting on the overall meaning, a general sense of the information was obtained. (3) Detailed analysis began with a coding process as material was organized into sections of data and then categorized. Codes were developed mostly on the basis of the emerging information collected from participants during the data analysis. (4) The coding process was then used to form a description or to identify themes for analysis. A detailed rendering of information about people, places, and events was utilized along with categories of major findings within the qualitative research. (5) The description and themes are represented in the qualitative narrative. A process model is presented in cooperation with detailed discussion of several themes and interconnections among

the themes. (6) The final step of the data analysis procedure was to make an interpretation or meaning of all the data. The question is asked and answered: “What were the lessons learned?”<sup>83</sup>

Findings are compared with the current literature, and new questions are presented for future study. The following table illustrates the steps to analyze data and the steps as they apply to this study:

Steps to Analyze Data	Steps as They Apply to This Study
1 – Organize and prepare the data for analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcribe all interviews.</li> <li>• Document field notes.</li> <li>• Arrange data into different types depending on the sources of information.</li> <li>• Sort audiovisual materials.</li> </ul>
2 – Read through all the data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain a general sense of the information and reflect on its overall meaning.</li> <li>• Organize notes and general thoughts about the data.</li> </ul>
3 – Begin detailed analysis with a coding process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize the material into segments of text before bringing meaning to information.</li> <li>• Label categories with a term.</li> <li>• Develop codes on the basis of the emerging information collected from participants.</li> <li>• Use a qualitative computer software program (MAXqda 11) to help code, organize, and sort information that will be useful in writing the qualitative study.</li> </ul>
4 – Use the coding process to generate a description as well as themes for analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a detailed rendering of information about people, places, and events in a setting.</li> <li>• Generate a small number of themes/categories for the research.</li> <li>• Use themes to build additional layers of complex analysis such as developing a theoretical model.</li> </ul>
5 – Advance how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a narrative passage to convey the findings of the analysis.</li> <li>• Present a detailed discussion of several themes and their interconnections.</li> <li>• Present a process model.</li> </ul>
6 – Make an interpretation or meaning of the data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask and attempt to answer: “What were the lessons learned?”</li> <li>• Include personal interpretation alongside a comparison of information gleaned from existing literature and theories.</li> <li>• Suggest new questions and strategies for future research.</li> <li>• Propose research questions for further investigation and potential qualitative studies.</li> </ul>
Table 1.	

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 189.

## **Verification**

Several reliability procedures were implemented throughout the study including: checking transcripts; editing of document for definition and code consistency; cross-checking and comparing of codes; and using an inter-coder agreement. Furthermore, validity strategies used included: triangulating of different data sources; using member checking to provide accurate findings; spending prolonged time in the research field and using precise, descriptive language in the report; clarifying personal bias; and using peer debriefing and review. Comparisons of previous research and the documentation of any patterns were consistently recorded.

## **Findings**

A narrative approach is used in reporting findings as is typical with qualitative research. The outcome is compared with theories and any general literature on the topic.<sup>84</sup> Conversations were scripted and all recordings properly dated and documented. A combination of personal experiences, current literature, and research questions were utilized for interpretation. The outcome of this study is to introduce and open the door for this specific area of research involving children's songs and culture. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the possibility of universal characteristics in children's songs. Conclusions were revealed in understanding how and why children's songs are formed, as well as how children develop musically and culturally. Regardless, this study hopefully formulates proper questions and directs future research even if staunch cultural conclusions were unable to be made. This qualitative study was conducted in the hope that further hypotheses can be formed for future quantitative or mixed methods research.

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<sup>84</sup>One area of particular interest may be Educational Psychology Theories. The study may prove valuable to theories of Behavioral Psychology and Developmental Psychology.

## CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Fieldwork/Interview Findings

All in all, I interviewed 14 families and seven individuals for a total of 21 interviews and 53 participants—children and adults. By family status, I interviewed 18 mothers, five fathers, 23 dependent children (younger than 18 years), and seven independent children (18 years and older). By culture demographics, I interviewed eight distinct groups found in the Caribbean: Cuban, Haitian, Jamaican, Puerto Rican, Bahamian, Trinidadian, St. Kitts, and St. Croix. For families (including mixed culture families): seven were of Cuban descent, four were of Haitian descent, four were of Jamaican descent, three were of Puerto Rican descent, one was of Bahamian descent, one was of Trinidadian descent, one was of St. Kitts descent, one was of St. Croix descent, and 14 had at least partial American roots. At least 12 families contain a mixed culture home (i.e. American father and Cuban mother; or Dominique father and Puerto Rican mother).

Some key words that I found of interest are listed below with their frequencies:

<b>Word</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Culture	40
Mom	39
Mother	10
Teach	27
Learn	24
Learned/Learning	14/13
Happy	23
Dance	22
Remember	21
Family	19
Church	18
Home	18
Christian	17
Fun	17
Loves	17

Table 2.

## Overview of Songs

Given the Caribbean's close proximity to America and the global influence of English, most participants were very familiar with all the classic children's songs that I knew well such as: the "Itsy-Bitsy Spider," the "ABC's" song, and "Rock-A-Bye-Baby" which everyone in the study seemed to have sung to their children.

Many songs have to do with teaching something. Cubans have a song about how to cook rice, as well as a song about addition—"dos y dos es cuatro." In Haiti the school children learn a French alphabet song, a counting song, and a song naming all the presidents. Puerto Rico has a song to help children memorize their times tables. A song that teaches children how to brush their teeth can be found in Trinidad, and St. Croix has a song about the different colors of the rainbow.

Some songs are silly and are meant to make the children laugh. They will often utilize body movements and hand gestures to help children build their motor skills and coordination. Five Cuban families independently recalled a song called "Los Pollitos" or "Little Chicken." The silly song is about a mom who gives soup to a sick chicken. Obviously, many of the fun songs are about animals such as "La Cucaracha" and a song about a cow. Other silly songs from Cuba included: the beeper dance, a song about a girl with white teeth (melody of "Baa-Baa Black Sheep"); "Chino" (melody of "Itsy Bitsy Spider"), a rhyme about bringing meat home from the market; a song about little fingers; and "El Patio de Mi Casa" which is sung in a circle. In the Bahamas a circle song's lyrics state that "There's a brown girl in the rain, tra-la-la-la-la, and she looks like a plump, plump." In St. Kitts a version of "Old McDonald" is meant to engage children and to make them laugh.

Other songs can still contain humor but are used for a more nurturing purpose. Three Cuban families told me about a song that parents sing to their children when they are injured that is loosely translated as: “Heal, heal; butt of a frog; if it doesn’t heal today, it will heal tomorrow.” Another song is meant to comfort a child if they have a mole or freckle on their face that they are embarrassed about. I also often heard about some Cuban lullabies. One that uses the same melody as “Los Pollitos” describes “This beautiful little girl who was born at daytime and wants to be taken on a ride in the stroller to the sweet shop.” A song called “Duermete” means “sleep my baby,” and another lullaby is about dreaming and coming down from the sky. In Haiti a song encourages children to eat by saying that “if you don’t eat there’s a monster.” Sleeping songs and waking up songs are also common in Haiti. Almost every island uses hymns and classic English Bible songs such as “Jesus Loves the Little Children.” In Puerto Rico specifically, one song talks about behaving good for mommy so a “bird can take us up to see Jesus...”

As already noted, some lullabies and nursery rhymes seem to have grim undertones. Those that I am aware of include: “Rock-A-Bye-Baby,” “Ring Around the Rosies,” “Humpty Dumpty,” “Jack and Jill,” and “London Bridge.” I learned from a few families that a common Cuban children’s song relates that “My little hand is burning; it doesn’t have any bones or anything.” Perhaps humans like to make light of heavy things. For example, death is often made fun of so as to ease anxieties about no longer living. Whatever the case, this topic was brought up in several of the interviews. Initially, Alex pondered if it may have been a strange way for people to cope with stress. So instead of wanting to hurt the children, they sing in a happy voice what they are thinking about. Later, he thought out loud, “I realize now that what these certain songs maybe were about may have just been warnings so as they grow up they could retain these

warnings. Man this is pretty primal. You're passing these cautions down from generation to generation that is rooted deep down in their soul in a way."<sup>85</sup>

Interestingly, I found that parents would many times just sing random things and make-up their own songs for their children. Families shared about creating their own songs 15 times within 9 distinct interviews. Eight-year-old Mickie confirmed that his favorite song is one that his mother made up for him. She starts by singing "Good morning to you!" and finishes the song by tickling him. Harrison (16-years-old) also said he used to love the songs that his mom made up for him. George from Jamaica created many songs to help teach his children. One such song was about counting on fingers: "Fingers, I have ten fingers, and so do you!"

## **Some Factors**

### **Dance**

Dance was one the greatest common threads throughout the participants' descriptions of their culture's music. Dance was mentioned at least 34 separate times within 15 different interviews. Aixa, from Puerto Rico stated about her home, "It's a culture that makes music with dancing. They go together. It's like rice and beans."<sup>86</sup> She also went on to talk about how in her culture people do not just listen to music because that would be boring. You have to dance! Angelica expressed the same attitude towards her Cuban music roots: "And I believe that you can't just listen to it and not feel like dancing. It's just that good."<sup>87</sup> Alex coincided with "I don't think there's many people that if you started playing Cuban music that their bodies wouldn't just start moving."<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>Alex, interview by author, Miami, FL, December 5, 2013.

<sup>86</sup>Aixa, interview by author, Hollywood, FL, December 8, 2013.

<sup>87</sup>Angelica, interview by author, Hollywood, FL, December 6, 2013.

<sup>88</sup>Alex, interview.

Several other participants expressed this notion that the music was in such a way that it just made you want to dance. And families talked about how they loved to dance with their children when they were little. The emotional impact of music is discussed elsewhere, but with dance the very tangible effect that music can have on a person's mood can be seen. Paulina described that in St. Croix, "Even if you're sad, if you hear it, you can't help but dance."<sup>89</sup>

### Rhythm/Beat

Connected with dance, for many, the very best aspect of the music from their island is the rhythm or the beat. In 12 interviews, participants referenced the rhythm and beats of the music as some of the best characteristics. The innate favor of rhythm is certainly seen in children. Angelica works with pre-school children, and she can say during their music time that "They don't even know what I'm saying, but they enjoy it anyways. I think they just enjoy the rhythm, the clapping movements, the excitement."<sup>90</sup> Some even described the rhythm and beat as being something personified, as if it is alive and full of energy. It is something within the music that seems to transcend consciousness and inhibitions. It enters and influences the body. Mikie described the phenomenon in his own words: "It's because of the beats. I really like the sounds of the beats... the sound waves go through you" hitting all sides of you.<sup>91</sup> The beats of Caribbean music clearly lend to the dancing component.

As previously mentioned, for many of these cultures, song and dance are synonymous. The music is created for dance, and this is why something like salsa music will often have seemingly random lyrics. "In Cuba the beat is the heart of the song. The music is the message."<sup>92</sup> Across the Caribbean and also time and space, the beats can be the same, just with a different

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<sup>89</sup>Paulina, interview by author, Hollywood, FL, December 2, 2013.

<sup>90</sup>Angelica, interview.

<sup>91</sup>Mikie, interview by author, Davie, FL, December 7, 2013.

<sup>92</sup>Marley, interview by author, Aventura, FL, December 8, 2013.

language. Even for someone who does not understand the language, the rhythm is still appreciated and can be danced to!

### Globalization/International

Globalization is a huge factor in any cultural study and perhaps even more so in an ethnomusicological study. At one point or another, nearly every family expressed the diversity of musics that they were exposed to while growing up. Everyone had access to music from America, and everyone had access to music from the other islands. Whether it was through radio, television, or public venues, everyone was at least somewhat familiar with the music of other countries around them. In fact, many of the islands share the same genres of music albeit with their own unique stylistic twists.

Salsa is found on many of the islands including Cuba and Puerto Rico. Merengue is from Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Soca, Calypso, and Reggae are played in numerous places including: Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, the Bahamas, St. Kitts, St. Croix, and the rest of the U.S. Virgin Islands. Carmen talked with me specifically about the influence of Cuban music in the world today. She said Cubans are very proud of their music and that the music is well-known internationally.<sup>93</sup> Sabrina shared about her husband's musical culture: "A lot of what I find to be so fascinating about the Reggae is the fact that it does link the culture, the African culture, with the Rastafarian religion that was developed in Jamaica, and it brings all that to the modern world, and everybody seems to love it and gravitate to it. All over the world people know Reggae music..."<sup>94</sup> Leonie also said that everyone is "into the Jamaican music."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Carmen, interview by author, Hollywood, FL, December 8, 2013.

<sup>94</sup>Sabrina, interview by author, Hollywood, FL, December 5, 2013.

<sup>95</sup>Leonie, interview by author, Miami Gardens, FL, February 5, 2014.

## Diversity

Along with the international implications comes the sheer diversity among any given society. Just as America has a plethora of musical genres, each island favors many different types of music. Cuba hosts Salsa, Rumba, Son, Reggae-ton, and Folk, just to name a few. Paulina from St. Croix said that back home “there’s a lot of people living there from other islands also so they bring their cultures in also. So we have different kinds of music...”<sup>96</sup>

## Identity

Of the 13 families that were interviewed with their children, all of the children which were born in America stated that they most identified with American music and culture. For many, it is what they truly know although they do still hold at least some degree of identification with their ancestral roots. Even the adults who were born in other countries but have lived in America for a prolonged time usually expressed that they preferred American music now.

Surprisingly, only four of the adults interviewed expressed that they still predominantly identify with their birth country’s music culture. Even Emmanuel, who considers himself strictly as Haitian, still identifies mostly with American R&B and rap. Several participants did explain, however, that when they visit home they can immediately regain the local music. Also, some participants stated that their musical preference was often dependent on their mood and environmental context. For example, Rachel said that when her Cuban family gathers, the music follows the culture. Others felt very comfortable incorporating both cultures simultaneously.

Native Trinidadian Francisco said that he could not just pick Trinidadian or American music: “I wouldn’t give up one for the other.”<sup>97</sup> Alex, although born in New York, stated that “It

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<sup>96</sup>Paulina, interview.

<sup>97</sup>Francisco, interview by author, Hialeah, FL, December 5, 2013.

would be difficult to separate a Latino from his music.”<sup>98</sup> Speaking of the music, Jesús shared, “I mean growing up in Puerto Rico it was always like symbolic of being Puerto Rican almost. It’s like you just identify other people especially here in the United States by it, so when you hear it, you almost assume, ‘Hey, are you Puerto Rican?’ ”<sup>99</sup> So being Puerto Rican seems to be synonymous with listening to Puerto Rican music. Thamarah also shared about how she is able to relate and identify with the Haitian artists.

They’re talking about their life, and it relates to you as a Haitian person. So if somebody who’s never been to Haiti, but is from Haitian descent, you’re listening to the music and they’re talking about their struggles and all the things that they’ve gone through and the things that the people before them have gone through, but they’re putting it in their music, just like a lot of American music. You know, they’re talking about things that they’ve gone through, what other people have gone through before them, but it’s American. And as an American, you can identify it.<sup>100</sup>

### Memory

In 18 interviews, the concept of memory was mentioned about 50 times. In particular, the idea of memory was linked to a nostalgic feeling towards the music of the culture and upbringing. Memories of the holidays and the music played on the islands rushed back to people’s minds as we conducted the interviews. “Well for me growing up here, the best aspect of it is for me, it was always synonymous of the holidays,” shared Marley.<sup>101</sup> She continued that when she heard the music it would always bring back happy memories because she knew it was time to celebrate. In the way that feelings often transcend facts, it was reflected, “I don’t remember all the words, but I can never forget the rhythm and the music.”<sup>102</sup>

Participants believed that one of the most significant things about music is its longevity—that once instilled in a child’s life it is with them forever. Cassandra reminisced about being in

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<sup>98</sup>Alex, interview.

<sup>99</sup>Jesús, interview by author, Aventura, FL December 8, 2013.

<sup>100</sup>Thamarah, interview by author, Hollywood, FL December 4, 2013.

<sup>101</sup>Marley, interview.

<sup>102</sup>Alex, interview.

Haiti when her mom would sing and play songs very loud, just for fun because it reminded her of her childhood too.<sup>103</sup> Chelsea, whose parents are Cuban, reflected on how songs can bring back certain emotions and stories when we hear them again and again.<sup>104</sup> In turn, D shared that she could never forget certain songs that her mom taught her and that she in turn taught her children.<sup>105</sup> Likewise, Janeth said that the Cuban music she grew up with was simply what she knew so she taught it to her kids. “It was familiar to me, and then I guess I brought it back when I had my babies...”<sup>106</sup> With sentiment, her daughter Rachel remembers those songs, enjoyed them, and wants to pass them on as well. She said, “You just remember that stuff forever, and so then it passes on tradition, and then the tradition just keeps on going. I’ll probably teach my kids too.”<sup>107</sup>

For France, hearing some of the old hymns that her dad used to sing in Creole brings tears to her eyes.<sup>108</sup> Now, her 13-year-old son Chris has fond memories of singing and dancing with his mom when he was younger. He doesn’t remember all the words, but he certainly remembers how the songs made him feel.<sup>109</sup> And whenever Helen hears the music of St. Kitts, it makes her miss home even more. She expressed that to her, the purpose of music was to help hold on to the good memories of life like being with friends, picking mangoes, and hiking up mountains. “It’s more of a memory box... it reminds me of things that I did.”<sup>110</sup> Today, she sits and thinks about those days fondly. Sylberlie knows that her home is with her family, but

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<sup>103</sup>Cassandra, interview by author, Hollywood, FL December 4, 2013.

<sup>104</sup>Chelsea, interview by author, Hollywood, FL December 7, 2013.

<sup>105</sup>D, interview by author, Hollywood, FL December 2, 2013.

<sup>106</sup>Janeth, interview by author, Davie, FL, February 17, 2013.

<sup>107</sup>Rachel, interview by author, Davie, FL, February 17, 2013.

<sup>108</sup>France, interview by author, Hollywood, FL November 17, 2013.

<sup>109</sup>Chris, interview by author, Hollywood, FL November 17, 2013.

<sup>110</sup>Helen, interview by author, Hollywood, FL November 27, 2013.

whenever she thinks about Haitian music, she naturally thinks of Haiti and what it was like when they all lived there.<sup>111</sup>

Some songs remind Jesús of growing up—mom playing music in the background, doing laundry, and the kids playing in the backyard.<sup>112</sup> George knows that listening to the old Reggae music takes him back to the events of the day, and Leonie finds herself going back to the old tapes as well. She prefers the older music and to this day loves to remind her family of those songs, bringing back all the fun memories.<sup>113</sup> The other aspect of memory is tied to education and remembering what has been taught, but that is covered in another section.

### Personal Preference

No one interviewed said they hated music. Only three said that it was not very important to them personally. Amazingly, music is one of those obscure, intuitive constructs that we all seem to know and love but can hardly begin to describe why. “I don’t know how to explain why I like it. I just do.”<sup>114</sup>

Most of the adults prefer to listen to the music that they grew up with, whether it was the disco of the 70s, rock of the 80s, or pop of the 90s. Nostalgia for the “old” music was brought up almost 20 times within 11 interviews. “I like the old time music that you can understand and they relate to you what it’s all about.”<sup>115</sup> Leonie especially appreciated how each song represented something in life such as where she was from. Peter, along with several others, listened to whatever was popular in the day. “Like everyone else, our music was the best!”<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup>Sylberlie, interview by author, Pembroke Pines, FL, December 8, 2013.

<sup>112</sup>Jesús, interview.

<sup>113</sup>Leonie, interview.

<sup>114</sup>Nicholas, interview by author, Miami, FL, December 5, 2013.

<sup>115</sup>Leonie, interview.

<sup>116</sup>Alex, interview.

Six participants described their fondness of classic rock. One genre that found interesting popularity to me was that of country music. Six participants were also fond of country music despite being from their respective countries of Cuba, the Bahamas, and Haiti. But one explanation seemed to rise: the familiarity of story-telling within the music. “It’s like stories...I think that’s why I like country music because it’s like telling a story.”<sup>117</sup> Much of the music from the islands is centered around telling a story. Therefore, it makes sense that many people would gravitate towards the American music tradition best known for its story-telling prowess.

What I found and consider to be the most significant aspect in musical preference is in relation to faith and religious beliefs/practices. Not everyone interviewed was strictly a Christian. However, since much of my population surveyed came from my church, most of those interviewed were devoted Christians. This variable alone could greatly influence the conclusions of this research. Eighteen families talked about their faith and beliefs in regards to music nearly forty times.

Seven participants had a particular preference for Christian/Gospel music. Now that Aixa is a Christian and listens to Christian music, her son Sebastian also listens to Christian music. She feels strongly that her role as a mother is to help Sebastian learn the Word of God.<sup>118</sup> Once upon a time, before his faith, lyrics would have never crossed Alex’s mind. But now, as a believer, there is music that he does not wish his children to hear.<sup>119</sup> Catherine, as well, believes in the power of Christ-centered song. “I prefer to teach them more like Gospel music because it tells you about Christ. And you know you can relate to them like tell them about the difference between right and wrong in the world so to prepare them to step out into the environment.”<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup>D, interview by author, Hollywood, FL, December 2, 2013.

<sup>118</sup>Aixa, interview.

<sup>119</sup>Alex, interview.

<sup>120</sup>Catherine, interview by author, Miami Gardens, FL, February 5, 2014.

Andy understands too, that music is powerful and is deeply spiritual because it was created by God. “There’s obviously a spiritual context to it.”<sup>121</sup> Music hits a spiritual component of man. It is innate and you can see it all throughout the Scriptures. France loves to sing from her Haitian Hymnal. Her dearest memories are of hearing her parents singing classic hymns such as “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” and “How Great Thou Art.” She informed me that “When you sing, you pray twice to God.”<sup>122</sup> Her son Chris is following in the same steps. He believes that music is something that describes you and even makes your personality. The type of music listened to shows what kind of person the listener truly is. He continued to explain that we listen to what we want to hear. So if someone listens to Christ-filled music, then that person may very well be Christ-filled themselves.<sup>123</sup> Jesús and Marley want to make sure that the songs they teach their children send the right message and begin teaching them about Christ.

For George and Sabrina’s family, their whole spiritual journey began as a direct result of being invited to a Vacation Bible School and falling in love with the songs. Enamored by the fun and uplifting songs, the family started their spiritual journey together. Leonie loves to listen to Gospel music at home and will play the songs over and over again because they hold so much meaning to her. The songs give her the strength to continue fighting on through all the “craziness” of the world.<sup>124</sup> Paulina’s family only plays Christian music in the home.<sup>125</sup> Peter and Desiree think it is vital to teach their children discernment when it comes to music so that they can recognize what exactly they are listening to—to know when it is appropriate and when to turn it off.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>121</sup>Andy, interview by author, Davie, FL, February 17, 2014.

<sup>122</sup>France, interview.

<sup>123</sup>Chris, interview.

<sup>124</sup>Leonie, interview.

<sup>125</sup>Paulina, interview.

<sup>126</sup>Peter and Desiree, interview by author, Hollywood, FL, February 16, 2014.

## Influence

Most, if not all, of the parents expressed concerns for their children in regards to the musical culture of this current generation. Catherine expressed deep concern that the music today only teaches children to do bad things.<sup>127</sup> Ann Marie's solution was to try and shelter her son completely from secular music.<sup>128</sup> Francisco gave this insight: "It's definitely a medium or a channel to give information to kids, so I guess it comes down to what information are they getting through the music."<sup>129</sup> If teenagers are listening to music full of inappropriate activities, those are the children who start to emulate what's given, as opposed to something else.

In contrast, the Christian families felt that perhaps the only way to expose their children to wholesome music was through the church. A few of the children revealed that church and Christian radio were the extent of their musical knowledge and exposure.

## Sources

The community appears to be a prominent venue in a child's life for musical awareness. Growing up in Hialeah, a predominantly Cuban area, Angelica and Chelsea said that Hispanic music was played everywhere. They reminisced of the Salsa music playing in all the local convenience stores. Musicians would be singing and playing at the corner café. "It's like, nowhere [that] you went in those places was quiet... You were always hearing stuff around."<sup>130</sup> On several of the islands—the Bahamas, Trinidad, St. Kitts, and St. Croix in particular—Carnival is the culmination of the entire year's music. Carnival is a huge celebration for everyone on their respective islands where there is non-stop music, dancing, and partying

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<sup>127</sup>Catherine, interview.

<sup>128</sup>Ann Marie, interview by author, Hollywood, FL, December 5, 2013.

<sup>129</sup>Francisco, interview.

<sup>130</sup>Angelica, interview.

throughout the duration of the festival. Sylna shared that in Haiti the local taxi services or “tap-taps” would display giant speakers and play deafening music up and down the streets.<sup>131</sup>

At least ten families shared specific experiences of singing and learning songs in a school setting. Children learned a variety of songs including silly, fun songs to dance and play with, but children were also taught culturally significant songs such as the national anthem.

The number one source of music exposure came in the form of multi-media. Every family questioned had utilized some type of media for music whether it was the radio, a CD player, or an MP3 player. Many families would often listen to the radio in the car or at home. Some families would perpetually leave the music playing in the home as background noise. Peter and Desiree were particularly amused to think of an old lullaby CD album that they wore out because they played it so often for their two young boys.<sup>132</sup> Some families also enjoyed listening to music while doing chores around the house or while doing homework. Shaniah has taken particular notice of the music that plays on her mother’s ringtone.<sup>133</sup>

The second primary source for music shared by families was their parents. Although this personal outlet was less frequent than multi-media, it naturally appears to have had a greater impact on people. Rarely could interviewees recall not hearing and learning at least some music from their parents/guardians, and now many of the parents sing the same songs to their children that their parents sang to them. Chris still remembers waking up most mornings and hearing his mom singing in Creole or her singing while cooking supper.<sup>134</sup> For some, however, a musical inclination and appreciation seems to come from nowhere and no one except perhaps above. Of

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<sup>131</sup>Sylna, interview by author, Pembroke Pines, FL, December 8, 2013.

<sup>132</sup>Peter and Desiree, interview.

<sup>133</sup>Shaniah, interview by author, Hollywood, FL, December 4, 2013.

<sup>134</sup>Chris, interview.

Puerto Rican descent, Sabrina expressed that her 12-year-old son has another level of music inside him that was not taught. It seems inherent.<sup>135</sup>

## **Analysis**

### **Distinctions: Tone, Beat, & Content**

The differences between songs for children and songs for adults are a paradox. They are both known and yet mysterious, apparent and yet difficult to explain. So though we do try and describe it all, we also take the time to simply sit back and enjoy the music. Clearly, some music is created specifically for children. Several participants stated that the music is obviously different. This ability to distinguish is practically intuitive and seemingly universal. But what is that distinction? Overall, the consensus of the interviewees came down to a difference in three main areas: the tone, the beat, and the content.

Tonally, participants described children's songs as easier to sing and having a higher pitch. Perhaps the most obvious distinction is observed in the voices. Children's music is typically sung and recorded by children voices—cute and high. Adults perform adult music. Another aspect, for example is found in lullabies, which are often soft and sweet for lulling the child to sleep. The melody or pitches fall in line with a simple rhythm and do not stray far from the center tone. Many children's songs do not even implement an entire octave, which makes the music much easier to sing along with. The tone and melody was also described as being happy. Screaming is not heard in children's music. The overall sound and tone of children's songs helps to add to the consistency and structure a child needs while growing up. Routines and traditions, which can help children prepare to wake-up or fall asleep, are established through these songs.

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<sup>135</sup>Sabrina, interview.

In describing the beat, some participants used words such as wilder, louder, and rougher when referencing adult songs. Children beats were described as being sweet, mellow, soothing, relaxing, and softer. Although many children’s songs can be very upbeat and exciting, the overall feel of these songs are usually light in nature. Also, whereas adult songs can have a great variety of rhythms and beats, children’s songs tend to center around a few simple rhythms—such as not using syncopation or beats smaller than eighth notes. The rhythm was also described as being very bouncy with a bobble-head feeling.

The subsequent transcription shows three common children’s songs.<sup>136</sup> These songs can be observed to have very simple melodies with considerable step-wise motion and very straight-forward rhythms. Very few, if any, interval leaps are employed, and the timing utilizes predominantly single-beat notes within a simple meter. See Figure 1 below:

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<sup>136</sup>Songs in order: “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” derives its tune from a French melody first published in 1761 and later arranged by Mozart. The “Happy Birthday” melody is attributed to the 1893 song “Good Morning to All” by Patty Hill and Mildred Hill. “The Alphabet Song” was first copyrighted in 1835 by Charles Bradlee and attributed to Louis Le Maire, an 18<sup>th</sup>-century composer.

Figure 1.

The image displays three distinct musical pieces, each consisting of three staves of handwritten notation.   
Piece 1 (top) is in common time (C) and features a melody with a circled starting note and a fermata over the final note.   
Piece 2 (middle) is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and includes a circled starting note.   
Piece 3 (bottom) is in common time (C) and also features a circled starting note.   
Each piece concludes with a double bar line.

In terms of content, the lyrics are the main focus.<sup>137</sup> The language is often different in terms of age-level. Children's songs will use fewer and simpler words than may be found in

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<sup>137</sup>See page 59 for text examples of some Caribbean counting songs.

adult songs. The songs will be much easier to memorize so that they can be sung often and at any time. Repetition and rhymes in children's songs are commonly catchy and contain an innocence about them. Furthermore, whereas children's songs often have something to teach children, an adult song is often for the sake of the song itself. An adult song can simply be for listening. The message of the adult song is very different, covering many diverse topics without having a purpose of teaching something in particular. They may be about life, love, relationships, politics, traveling, and other themes that have no meaning for the child.

Adult songs are often about the individual singer's background and experiences. The music is about sharing the writer's life. Children's music has a much simpler focus, and the composers of children's songs are not necessarily attempting to have the children understand or relate to them personally. Children's songs are often more for learning a skill in school like a language. The message can be more uplifting, loving, or caring towards a child as opposed to adult songs that can have very negative or depressing themes. Whatever the message, the song is directed toward the audience in an assumed way. Children's songs talk about age-appropriate topics such as eating fruits, playing with toys, going to school, and dancing. Jesús and Marley talked about how music is very influential in the molding of young minds. They expressed that children are like sponges that absorb everything; so, the chosen music must have a positive message.<sup>138</sup>

Frequently, the concept of appropriateness and maturity came up with regards to adult music as compared to children's music. For example, profanity is not used in children's music. Parents found numerous musical selections that were simply not suitable for their children. Some participants even said that adult music is corrupt and that the lyrics are often over-sensual and

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<sup>138</sup>Jesús and Marley, interview by author, Aventura, FL, December 8, 2013.

contain explicit language. Regina communicated that she and her husband always screen a song first before they allow their child to listen to it.<sup>139</sup>

On the other side of the spectrum are the songs that transcend age. Jesús described that much of Hispanic music is actually endearing to both young and old. Salsa music is relatable because the beat of Salsa has never really changed, only the presentation, such as the use of embellishing instruments. So, he concluded, Latin music is a common thread that people all grow up with regardless of generation.<sup>140</sup>

#### Purpose/Motivations

In my research and fieldwork I have decided to categorize songs as having two primary purposes or motivations: songs for the mind and songs for the heart (or a mixture of the two).<sup>141</sup> In other words, the intention of some songs is to communicate intellectually, while other songs intend to communicate emotionally. Either way, the purpose of music is to communicate. It is a way of connecting with each other and the world. As an aside, Christians could very well claim a third category of songs which I would define as songs for the spirit—songs intending to communicate spiritually, in most cases for the worship of God.

Songs for the mind can be organized as either: teaching something or sharing history, preserving culture, and/or story-telling. Songs for the heart can further be classified as either: entertainment or affecting emotions, inspiring, and/or persuading. Again, within these categories, songs may overlap or contain elements of several strata. When speaking explicitly of parental motivations and purposes for sharing and teaching songs with children I have found four main

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<sup>139</sup>Regina, interview.

<sup>140</sup>Jesús, interview.

<sup>141</sup>Although this is an etic classification, it is highly influenced by the emic descriptions given by participants.

classifications: to teach, to affect mood (including entertainment), to preserve tradition/culture, and to bond.

Again, music communicates. It can communicate thoughts and feelings. Participants discussed the way that music can communicate a message 32 times. Cassandre talked about how much of the music from Haiti describes the peoples' lives and situations. The songs are about poverty, hardships, and freedom.<sup>142</sup> Sylna also described how the people express themselves through music especially with regards to government. They may not talk about it in conversation, but they will certainly write a song about it.<sup>143</sup> Reggae from Jamaica is also well-known for its tradition of singing about current events, personal experiences, and what is happening in life. "Most of the time it describes who they are, where they come from, their experience, and what they've been through."<sup>144</sup> Leonie concurs that there is just something in the music and that the lyrics are trying to tell you something.<sup>145</sup>

Francisco shared that the music from Trinidad is often humorous involving considerable play on words. "They'll make jokes in the lyrics that will have political satire..."<sup>146</sup> The songs are funny, but they have deeper meanings to them, and this is how the people address different issues in society. Music can communicate either positively or negatively. "If you use music to teach a certain culture, but then the culture that they are promoting is very, very negative, well then you have a problem. Because then you are institutionalizing this very important way to reach people with negative information... It sets the tone for a society."<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>142</sup>Cassandre, interview.

<sup>143</sup>Sylna, interview.

<sup>144</sup>George, interview by author, Hollywood, FL, December 5, 2013.

<sup>145</sup>Leonie, interview.

<sup>146</sup>Francisco, interview.

<sup>147</sup>Andy, interview by author, Davie, FL, February 17, 2014.

Participants shared over 60 statements, about education and development, especially as it applies to children’s music. Peter applied this idea in a more general statement: “I think that music teaches. It can definitely pass on values and things or reinforce. And because it is able to cross all boundaries, meaning that anybody could listen to any kind of music as long as they could have access to it. And in the U.S. and with technology we actually do. I think it does play a role in their [children] lives.”<sup>148</sup>

Participants alluded to music as sharing something—history, culture, personal experience—30 times. Alex remembers the historical lessons taught to him by his parents.

My parents would always tell me that the reason Cubans were so proud to be Americans and embraced that, at least the one’s that came in their generation for sure, is because they know what it is not to be free. That freedom is something we take for granted... And I think that that leads to some seriously inspirational music. It’s not just music for the sake of music.<sup>149</sup>

Angelica thinks it is very important to pass down this history too. She said that one of her favorite parts of music was in learning the rich history, such as when Cuban slaves would use different codes in their songs.<sup>150</sup> Also, Grace, only 14-years-old, expressed how music can help in understanding the cultures of other people even when we have never been to their country. “I think that hearing different songs from different cultures you also kind of meet the people too in a way.”<sup>151</sup>

Paulina finds the St. Croix Calypso genre very creative in the ways the artists write about current events.<sup>152</sup> The lyrics talk about daily life, and the musicians share their life stories through song. They will write a song about anything that happens, and then it becomes a part of history. It is a part of telling the story of the individual artist and the islands.

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<sup>148</sup>Peter, interview.

<sup>149</sup>Alex, interview.

<sup>150</sup>Angelica, interview.

<sup>151</sup>Grace, interview by author, Hollywood, FL, December 8, 2013.

<sup>152</sup>Paulina, interview.

Desiree hopes that as her children grow older they will understand just how privileged and blessed they are by listening to music of their people's history. She believes that music is a great way to express what has happened in the past and that it will be a good teacher for her boys. She wants to "give them more as they grow older, and exposing them more to the lifestyle that we had in Jamaica as opposed to the lifestyle that we have now, because there's a big contrast between the two things. So it will get them to appreciate what they have here because as my husband said it's a commentary. Reggae is a commentary of what they experience from day to day."<sup>153</sup>

Sylna shared how music reveals a person's background, culture, and homeland. She talked about how Haitian people experienced considerable struggles especially to gain their independence and how many of the songs talk about gaining freedom. The music reminds her children of how they got their freedom.<sup>154</sup> Along the same lines, Thamarah reveals, "But Haitians, you know, they talk about the war and how the slaves took over and all that, and so all that would be in the music." She also shared about how music is a form of art, a form of expression, and how history is embedded in it. Music teaches history: "I think music has a lot of history in it, it has a lot of pain, it has a lot of lessons, a lot of wisdom."<sup>155</sup>

Participants spoke 34 times about entertainment. Janeth discussed how music can easily redirect children's attention, to help calm them and to entertain them when they want to do something they are not supposed to.<sup>156</sup> Francisco shared his belief that there must be a reason that people gravitate towards music.<sup>157</sup> It gets their attention. For Regina and her family, "It gets

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<sup>153</sup>Desiree, interview.

<sup>154</sup>Sylna, interview.

<sup>155</sup>Thamarah, interview.

<sup>156</sup>Janeth, interview.

<sup>157</sup>Francisco, interview.

us in a goofy mood.”<sup>158</sup> They sing a lot in the home, and especially if Mickie has had a hard day, they sing and get silly. Mickie feels that music is just really fun and “gets your brain out of the way, and you can do whatever you want to with it.”<sup>159</sup>

Marley remembers her mom singing to her, “just to entertain me, just to get me to stop crying, or just to take my attention away from whatever I was fixated on.”<sup>160</sup> Shaniah would sing Disney and Nickelodeon songs at school to entertain herself while sitting bored at her desk.<sup>161</sup> As noted earlier, even when a person does not understand the music, it can still be fun to listen and dance to. Of course, everyone agrees that at the end of the day, the music from their island is simply fun, interesting, and enjoyable.

As far as affecting emotions, inspiring, or persuading, participants gave about 70 references. Many commented how music could lift the spirit and create happiness. In fact, those being interviewed used the word happy or happiness a total of 30 times. Some mentioned that music is simply a way of life and that it touches the emotions deeply. Angelica said music is something people can always turn to throughout their lives. “I think music is a way of inspiring kids... We are so motivated to have dreams and to fulfill them.”<sup>162</sup> And Chelsea further discussed the power of music: “Music brings joy and happiness, and happiness heals.”<sup>163</sup>

Daniel talked about how a songwriter’s emotions can be revealed through a song, and in turn, a person’s emotions, whether sad or happy, can be affected by the music.<sup>164</sup> Janeth described her time serving in Children’s Ministry and how music could even stop fights. “The

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<sup>158</sup>Regina, interview.

<sup>159</sup>Mickie, interview.

<sup>160</sup>Marley, interview.

<sup>161</sup>Shaniah, interview.

<sup>162</sup>Angelica, interview.

<sup>163</sup>Chelsea, interview.

<sup>164</sup>Daniel, interview by author, Hollywood, FL, December 8, 2013.

joy that it gives the kids just to hear a song... it just changes their mood.”<sup>165</sup> Paulina also saw this importance: “Music is very important because to me once you put the music on, the kids change their mentality. They could be fighting; they could be doing something; and as soon as you put the music on they’re distracted.”<sup>166</sup> You can see their faces change right before your eyes.

Francisco explained how music engages children in learning that which they normally would not learn through a lecture approach because “You retain something better if you are passionate about it, and music makes you passionate.”<sup>167</sup> Sylna said “I think it’s important because some music is really motivating, or like push you, or make you think that you can do this, or that you can actually do better.”<sup>168</sup> And her daughter Sylberlie summarized how music can have different impacts on a person and their emotions: “Some music makes you happy, some music makes you think.”<sup>169</sup> Within this category I would also place celebratory songs such as those for holidays and birthdays.

Many parents saw songs as an important tool in teaching their children language. Ten references were made about using songs to help teach language. “When I sing these Spanish songs, it is with some weird intention to get them to learn Spanish.”<sup>170</sup> Besides alphabets and languages, children’s songs are used to teach numerous skills including: counting and math, colors, presidents, cleaning, cooking, bathing, days, months, years, body parts, and Bible passages.

The response I received from participants concerning children’s songs existing for the purpose of teaching was remarkable. Indeed, the purpose of teaching was mentioned in every

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<sup>165</sup>Janeth, interview.

<sup>166</sup>Paulina, interview.

<sup>167</sup>Francisco, interview.

<sup>168</sup>Sylna, interview.

<sup>169</sup>Sylberlie, interview.

<sup>170</sup>Alex, interview.

single interview. The rationale behind using music for teaching is at least two-fold: it makes learning more fun, and it makes learning more memorable. The word “remember” was used 27 times throughout the interviews. Along with many others, Cassandre commented that music “makes learning fun” and easier to remember such as when they had to memorize the Haitian presidents.<sup>171</sup> D reflected back on her scholastic years when “Everything was about song.” She learned about colors, how to count, and the multiplication table by singing. Now with her granddaughter she sees music as even more vital for a child’s development. She sees music as being intrinsically tied to memory and has noticed that her granddaughter playing keyboard has helped her in other areas such as math. “I think it has a big impact because I feel that kids who learn how to sing or if you sang to your child from the cradle they tend to be smarter.”<sup>172</sup>

Rachel felt that it was the music which best helped her to learn Spanish growing up.<sup>173</sup> Her father Andy explained that because music stimulates the brain and because songs can be catchy, they get stuck in memories. For him, education is “the reason” for music.<sup>174</sup> For many others, like 13-year-old Shaniah, music can help them to focus. “Well, when I’m listening to music, I can concentrate better.”<sup>175</sup>

“Through music you can teach colors, you can teach them shapes, and they’ll understand it better through music. And you’ll get a child to recite something easier through music.”<sup>176</sup> Desiree adds, “I think that you learn quicker when you listen to music as opposed to reading or doing anything else. You learn to sing. It’s catchy. The rhythms are catchy so you learn the

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<sup>171</sup>Cassandre, interview.

<sup>172</sup>D, interview.

<sup>173</sup>Rachel, interview.

<sup>174</sup>Andy, interview.

<sup>175</sup>Shaniah, interview.

<sup>176</sup>Paulina, interview by author, Hollywood, FL, December 2, 2013.

words easier.”<sup>177</sup> The beats, for example, in music can help children understand numbers and give them an interest in writing and rhyming.

Jesús is a middle school math teacher, and he expressed that he uses music all the time to help teach the students. He often changes the lyrics of popular songs to help in his lessons because students seem to connect with music so easily.<sup>178</sup> George and Sabrina know that music plays a role throughout their children’s lives. “It teaches the kids how to live, what to look for, how to move around, how to trust, and teaches them about their country.” Over the years they have used educational programs too, such as Sesame Street, as a continuation of their musical education.<sup>179</sup> Francisco summarizes with this statement: “As a children’s song it is either teaching something or repeating something that as an adult we take for granted.”<sup>180</sup> For example, children’s songs can teach: how to tie shoelaces, how to smile when saying good morning, or how to shake hands when introduced. The songs contain fundamental life lessons that adults have already been taught.

Another important facet of using music to teach relates back to the spiritual context. Songs can teach things about God, the Bible, morality, and values. Catherine felt quite motivated in this regard. “I prefer to teach them more like gospel music because it tells you about Christ. And you know you can relate to them, like tell them about the difference between right and wrong in the world so to prepare them to step out into the environment.”<sup>181</sup> Plus, sometimes it is easier for children, or anyone for that matter, to learn about spiritual truths and the Bible through song rather than by only reading Scripture.

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<sup>177</sup>Desiree, interview.

<sup>178</sup>Jesús, interview.

<sup>179</sup>George and Sabrina, interview.

<sup>180</sup>Francisco, interview.

<sup>181</sup>Catherine, interview.

Complementing the educational aspect of children's songs is the cultural aspect.

Teaching and preserving culture is the primary focus of this project, and it is certainly a primary focus of many parents for their children. The idea of preserving culture was observed 53 times, and the words "culture," "tradition," and "heritage" were referenced an astonishing 60 times throughout the interviews. Even as a young 14-year-old boy, Nicholas realizes the importance of passing music down from generation to generation. "So you can keep them going... so it doesn't die down."<sup>182</sup> Almost everyone I spoke with expressed that it was important for him or her to pass on culture and traditions.

Cassandre mentioned that she desired for her children to hold on to at least some of their Haitian culture and to not become too Americanized. "I would love for my kids personally to learn those songs, because I don't know, if they do grow up in this country, I want them to have a part of their culture too."<sup>183</sup> We all seem to have a fondness for our own culture, and so we want to pass that culture on to our children. Since the music was special for us and gave us good memories, we desire the same thing for our kids. Similarly, Chelsea said she intends to teach her children's songs to "keep their culture and everything alive so it passes on from generation to generation. And it brings so much expression, like when you feel when you hear a song it brings back emotions and stories." She and her husband believe it will be very important to sing to their children in Spanish.<sup>184</sup>

Carmen talked about how family reunions were a great way to share with her kids their family's culture. She also said that she teaches her children Cuban songs "so that they have that with them because I think that has meaning, and it's a part of my culture, and I love to pass that on to them, and hopefully they can pass that on..." because it is important for them to know

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<sup>182</sup>Nicholas, interview.

<sup>183</sup>Cassandre, interview.

<sup>184</sup>Chelsea, interview.

about their mom and her family.<sup>185</sup> Her son Daniel also talked about how music helps people to learn about cultures, and her husband Chris had an interesting insight into Cuban culture. He described Hispanic music as something that crosses multi-generational boundaries in a way unlike American music. The whole family can appreciate Salsa music, because the music transcends generations, and this helps to keep the family ties strong. The family keeps the music going, and the music keeps the family together. It is a very intriguing partnership where music connects the multiple generations and vice versa.

But even when the parent's culture is not readily accepted, a necessity is still observed. D shared, "I think it's important to pass that on, even if you pass it on and they don't take it..." She trusts that it is good to share Bahamian music even if they laugh, and who knows, one day they may sing it to their children, because surely they will remember.<sup>186</sup> Rachel expressed that she wanted her children to be exposed to Cuban music and culture no matter what. "You just remember that stuff forever, and so then it passes on tradition, and then the tradition just keeps on going. I'll probably teach my kids too."<sup>187</sup>

Francisco shared that he wants to pass down Trinidadian tradition, just to remind his children where they came from. Unfortunately, he knows little to nothing about his grandparents' Portuguese culture, and he does not want that to happen in his family.<sup>188</sup> Sabrina also felt that she had lost a connection with her grandmother because of language, so she wants to use music as way of bridging the connections of her Puerto Rican roots and her children's lives.<sup>189</sup> Her 13-year-old son Sulemani noted that music helps him and his brothers to understand what kind of

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<sup>185</sup>Carmen, interview.

<sup>186</sup>D, interview.

<sup>187</sup>Rachel, interview.

<sup>188</sup>Francisco, interview.

<sup>189</sup>Sabrina, interview.

culture their parents came from.<sup>190</sup> Helen's grandfather was a steel band player, and so she now wants her children to be familiar with that heritage.<sup>191</sup>

Music is about connecting with generations. "It's just something that's you and that it's unique to you."<sup>192</sup> Regina holds that it is important to pass on culture and traditions so that her son sees more to life and knows his roots.<sup>193</sup> Marley added, "I think it's important to preserve the culture, like even as we're having this conversation. You know we aspire to be parents one day, and I'm realizing how important it is to sing them the songs that we grew up with, so that it kind of goes back to their roots and their heritage." They see music playing a substantial role in the lives of their children, especially with them growing up in a Spanish culture but surrounded by a competing American culture. She said about preserving their culture that it is "to give them a piece of our heart."<sup>194</sup>

Although two of Leonie's three children were born in America, they all still relate to Jamaican music, and they also pass on the Jamaican music to their children.<sup>195</sup> "The thing is that we raised them the way we were raised, essentially..." said Desiree of her parenting, "I use the Bible also because we were both raised in Christian homes. We both went to church and that kind of thing. So that's how I raise them, and they're kind of raised in the Jamaican way."<sup>196</sup>

Emmanuel talked about the significance of celebrations such as Haitian Independence Day. To him it shows how much a Haitian is to respect his or her culture.<sup>197</sup> His sister Sylberlie added that being of a particular culture seems to automatically connect you to people to the point of almost being awkward. She can relate to other Haitians just because they are Haitian, and it

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<sup>190</sup>Sulemani, interview by author, Hollywood, FL, December 5, 2013.

<sup>191</sup>Helen, interview.

<sup>192</sup>Jesús, interview.

<sup>193</sup>Regina, interview.

<sup>194</sup>Marley, interview.

<sup>195</sup>Leonie, interview.

<sup>196</sup>Desiree, interview.

<sup>197</sup>Emmanuel, interview by author, Pembroke Pines, FL, December 8, 2013

does not matter if they know you, if people know you are Haitian they will just come up and talk to you in Creole.<sup>198</sup>

Sharing music with their children helps many parents to pass on culture particularly through listening to the sounds. “Since we were Haitian we listened to Haitian music...” Thamarah is able to teach her children about the history of Haiti because the people had to use rudimentary instruments and the music was very grassroots. They just had to use whatever they could get their hands on, so she can explain—oh that was the wood blocks, that was a spoon and trash can lid. Thus the music becomes very much an identity. When certain songs are heard they are immediately identified as Haitian!<sup>199</sup>

When a parent wants to change the mood of his or her child, music may be the best way. As previously mentioned, music can have a tremendous impact on making a person feel happier and helping them to have fun. Another aspect of touching a child’s emotions is in helping to sooth, to comfort, and to calm them. Around 30 references were made to this type of singing. Especially when helping a child fall asleep, parents use songs commonly referred to as lullabies.

Parents expressed that their motivation for singing to their child might be to pacify them and help them stop crying. “Singing to my granddaughter, my motivation is to calm her.”<sup>200</sup> Many parents would sing lullabies to their children to help them fall asleep, and sure enough it would work. Helen used to hum a few hymns to her children, and it would help soothe the hungry babies and even settle their heartburn or indigestion.<sup>201</sup> Regina recalled a song that her mother sang to her about a birthmark on her face so that she would not feel embarrassed to go to

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<sup>198</sup>Sylberlie, interview.

<sup>199</sup>Thamarah, interview.

<sup>200</sup>D, interview.

<sup>201</sup>Helen, interview.

school.<sup>202</sup> Every night at 8:00 PM in Puerto Rico, a lullaby is nationally televised. “Bubbles” the doll sings to let the children know that it is time to go to bed. Loosely translated, the song tells the children to “Go to sleep, go to sleep, you had a fun day. It doesn’t matter what bed, big or small, all that matters is that you’re loved and that God loves you. Now go to sleep.” It helped to create a structure for the children to follow every night in order for them to prepare for bed.

Marley also reminisced that to hear her mom sing was soothing and that it would always help her when she was feeling fussy.<sup>203</sup> Parents also shared how the lullabies were always connected with other signs of affection such as hugs, kisses, and saying “I love you.”

Expressions of using music as a means to bond or show affection were stated over 20 times within 12 interviews. Participants described that children’s music offers an atmosphere or an environment of love. Many stated that for them, singing children’s songs was an intimate, bonding experience. For many a mother, the very purpose of singing to her child was in order to show affection. “I make up songs for him—‘this is my cute little baby, mommy loves you a lot, mommy loves you for good.’”<sup>204</sup> Carmen agreed that, for mothers, singing is a special bonding moment with their children. “I think it’s universal... it’s that sweet, that connection. I think moms sing more to their kids than dads across cultures.”<sup>205</sup>

Jesús also talked about the intuitive connection that transpires between parent and child through song. He believes that bonding mechanisms such as “motherese” are in fact universal.

There’s a connection you make with your parents and stuff, you know, like a soothing kind of thing, like picking up a kid when they’re hurt and just hugging them or whatever, and just saying something to them to kind of calm them. So I guess there’s that aspect of it... kind of like a bonding thing I guess. I mean you don’t do that with anyone else. I’m not just gonna go up to some random kid that I have no relationship with and start singing

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<sup>202</sup>Regina, interview.

<sup>203</sup>Marley, interview.

<sup>204</sup>Aixa, interview.

<sup>205</sup>Carmen, interview.

random lullabies to him, you know. That'd be really weird... it's a really intimate kind of connection with your parents.<sup>206</sup>

Continuing with this concept of family relations, George identified the "connection" as being the most important. "Let them know, here, here I am."<sup>207</sup> And his wife enlightened that "before they could even speak, they could hum" so music actually becomes a way of connecting and communicating long before the spoken language.<sup>208</sup> Desiree recalled the values that her children learned through music. "Like I remember parts of their lullabies as kids had to do with trust. So that they would always know that I would always be there."<sup>209</sup>

### Text Examples

Several similarities can be seen from the following Caribbean counting songs. Since these texts are meant to be sung, they all will follow a rhythmic cadence. Most of the songs rhyme or utilize a syllable pattern, and although some of the songs count up, many of the songs teach numbers by counting down. The songs describe a gradual loss of something. So, they don't just teach numbers; they often teach addition and subtraction.

Figure 2.

One, two, I makin' calaloo-stew!  
Three, four, Don't peep by de kitchen door!  
Five, six, Don't give me no tricks!  
Seven, eight, Why yuh can't wait?  
Nine, ten, Chile, I go tell yuh when!<sup>210</sup>

Mosquito one,  
Mosquito two,  
Mosquito jump in de ole man shoe;  
De ole man cry,  
De ole man cry,  
De ole man cry like a little chile.

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<sup>206</sup>Jesús, interview.

<sup>207</sup>George, interview.

<sup>208</sup>Sabrina, interview.

<sup>209</sup>Desiree, interview.

<sup>210</sup>Bahamas

Mosquito three,  
Mosquito four,  
Mosquito light on a big pawpaw;  
De pawpaw swell,  
De pawpaw burst,  
But it didn't stop de mosquito thirst.  
Mosquito five,  
Mosquito six,  
Mosquito jump up on some bricks;  
De bricks fall down,  
De bricks fall down,  
An' pin mosquito to de groun'.  
Mosquito seven,  
Mosquito eight,  
Mosquito now full of fiery hate.  
Mosquito nine,  
Mosquito ten,  
Mosquito bite two fat ole men.<sup>211</sup>

Seven little boys playin' wid wooden bricks,  
One run away,  
An' den there were six.  
Six little boys playin' near a hive,  
A bee stung one o' dem,  
An' den there was five.  
Five little boys playin' on de sea-shore,  
A wave splash over one,  
An' den there were four.  
Four little boys peltin' stones in a tree,  
A stone knocked out one,  
An' den there were three.  
Three little boys eatin' a stew,  
One choke heself,  
An' den there were two.  
Two little boys havin' lotta fun,  
One went an' lose heself,  
An' den there was one.<sup>212</sup>

Ten little green bananas hangin' on a line,  
A bird eat one, dat left nine.  
Nine little green bananas swayin' in de breeze,  
They all turn yellow,  
An' one a dem sneeze!  
Eight little yellow bananas lookin' up to heaven,

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<sup>211</sup>Trinidad.

<sup>212</sup>Cuba.

One couldn't take de squeeze,  
 An' dat left seven.  
 Seven little yellow bananas grabbin' at sticks,  
 One miss he grip,  
 An' dat left six.  
 Six little yellow bananas happy to be alive,  
 De bird eat another one,  
 An' den there was five!  
 Five yellow bananas hear the birds caw,  
 One fall 'pon de groun',  
 An' dat left four.  
 Four yellow bananas now in tree,  
 One slide off,  
 Den there was three.  
 Three yellow bananas getting' a good view,  
 One tumble down!  
 An' dat left two.  
 Two yellow bananas bright in de sun,  
 A chile start eatin',  
 An' dat left only one!<sup>213</sup>

Ten rats smell a cat,  
 De cat snatch one,  
 De other nine run.  
 One drown in a rive.  
 De eight start to holler.  
 One climb a coconut-tree,  
 Bawlin', 'Yuh can't catch me!'  
 Seven rats runnin' on a wall,  
 One slip an' fall.  
 Six rats rush in a sack,  
 One stick in a crack  
 An' sprain he back.  
 Five rats jumpin' in de dark  
 One dash out when a dog bark!  
 Four rats in a safe hidin' place,  
 But one show he face.  
 Three race out quick!  
 One too tired an' sick.  
 Two rats run under a donkey-cart,  
 But one was too smart.  
 Dat leave one  
 Who didn't want to run,  
 So de cat catch he,  
 An' dat's de end of dis furry story.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>213</sup>Jamaica.

## CHAPTER 5 – SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary

As I originally suspected, music seems to play a vital and multi-faceted role in children’s lives. In general, music purposes to communicate—thoughts, feelings, desires, information. Children’s music is no different; it is just more directed and specified. Music is used by adults to help children to learn, to develop emotional and mental health, to bond with their caregivers, to have fun, to affect mood, and to preserve cultural heritage.

The primary distinction I observed between “children” songs and “adult” songs was that of intention and content. Children’s songs tend to purpose to instruct children or to create a bonding experience. In contrast, adult songs will carry many different motivations. Parents seem to sing to their children for one simple reason: they love them. Loving parents love to sing to their children, and the children love to be sung to and with. Parents desire to comfort and soothe their children when they are upset. They also desire to entertain their children and to make them happy. Parents want to teach their children and to bond with them. Music appears to be one of the most intuitive ways of accomplishing these goals. Singing to children follows right along with the concept of “motherese” or infant-directed speech.

Although caution should be taken when making universal assumptions based upon such a limited report, I believe that children’s songs have at least “near-universal” aspects, mainly the aspect of intentions. Assuredly, consistency has been observed in this research project. Carmen from Cuba stated with confidence that she felt the motivations behind parents singing to their children was universal.<sup>215</sup> It is that sweet connection which exists between parent and child. So most children’s songs across cultures seem to share at least one of the motivations listed earlier.

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<sup>214</sup>Virgin Islands

<sup>215</sup>Carmen, interview.

Though the styles of music and the language may be different, the messages and purposes are often the same.

Beyond that, the outcomes also appear to be similar. When a parent seeks to show their child love and affection through singing a lullaby, the child in turn will feel love and affection. Unlike speech, which is easily misunderstood, music communicates through eerily precise means exactly what is intended.

By contrast, whatever can be said about universals can also be said about individuality. The uniqueness of each person and each family is undeniable. In the end, the individual is all that matters when making a choice. A person can choose to identify with any culture or sub-culture. They can sing or not sing to their children for any number of reasons, and ultimately, a person's faith can dramatically alter everything that a society holds as normal.

### **Conclusions**

For some time I have been interested in the effects of immigration on culture. For example: How does living in Florida now affect the lives and cultures of those from another country? Coincidentally, the Caribbean culture seemed like a very natural choice for my field research. It was very practical given my current setting and circumstances, but it was also quite meaningful for me in a personal way.

My spiritual motivations follow suit with some of my personal motivations for this research project. I have many Christian brothers and sisters from the Caribbean Islands, and I have a heart for the many different types of people around the world. God has a heart for the nations, and therefore, so do I. I have done past missions work in the Caribbean, and I desire to learn more about the cultures so that I may be a better witness among the people groups. Music and dance are major common threads among the Caribbean Islands, and they are also two of my

passions. I believe music and dance are two phenomenal tools in sharing the gospel. Wherever I am, I want to be sharing the love of God, and currently, I am in a predominantly Caribbean area; so, I have sought to take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about the Caribbean, its people, and its musical culture.

Now I come to the end of this project and can say that I have accomplished what I purported to do. Yet, so much more needs to be done! My research and fieldwork has brought me a long way from where I started, and I have concluded that we are a very social people, living in a social world where we try to make sense of it all and sense of each other. We are relational beings perpetually in a state of communication. Other than perhaps the written or spoken language, music is the most bizarre and beautiful and meaningful way in which we God-created creatures attempt to share our lives, our stories, and our voices. After music, interestingly and humorously, food was mentioned as being the next best representation of a culture.<sup>216</sup> So we sing, and we eat, and that is what many people view as culture. Sounds simple, but the underlying implications are astounding—near incomprehensible. To eat is so basic. We do it every day barely thinking about it because it is so necessary. As food nourishes the body; so music refreshes the soul. Music is so common that we sometimes forget we are even listening to it. However, its worth is invaluable, and we instantly know when we have heard a masterpiece that money cannot buy.

As Thamarah of Haitian roots shared with me, “Whatever song they’re doing it’s about them, it’s about experiences; it’s about whatever the life situation is at that moment. When a Christian person is singing a song about God it’s a song about how God brought them out, or just

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<sup>216</sup>This information was volunteered in five separate interviews.

something that is personal or relates.”<sup>217</sup> We as individuals are our culture, and so the music is not just about sharing our culture but also about sharing ourselves.

As humans, we all want our lives to have meaning. We search for significance, and we want to be remembered. We do not want our legacies to simply die out and be forgotten. To lose our heritage is to lose a part of ourselves. In preserving music and culture we are preserving a part of us in our children. This is the motivation, that whatever brought meaning into our lives would continue to live and give meaning in the lives of others. So yes, children’s songs are a means for developing and preserving culture, but more than that, they are a means for developing and preserving the individual.

### **Recommendations**

A tremendous amount of work and research can still be done on this topic of children’s songs. Another qualitative study with a more narrow focus would be worth researching—perhaps only interviewing participants from Cuba or a Spanish speaking island. Diversification was definitely present in this study to a fault. A more productive study might employ a mixed methods plan that surveys a greater population of participants. A larger survey would aid in understanding and accounting for the variables.

Concerning the use of music in the lives of children, I recommend this: do it. Never underestimate the power of music. Any parties interested in the outcomes of this research should be able to take away at least this one thought: relationship means everything. The greater the relationship, the greater the impact will be in the child’s life. The more the child feels loved, safe, and secure, the more the child will take away from secondary motivations. Implementing

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<sup>217</sup>Thamarah, interview.

children's songs will be optimized by the affection in which they are used—to teach, to nurture, to develop and preserve culture. Let them know they are loved by using music.

## APPENDIX A

### Audio & Other Children Resources

Barchas, Sarah. *Bridges Across the World: A Multicultural Songfest*. Sonoita, AZ: High Haven Music, 1999.

Bartels, Joanie. *Put On Your Dancing Shoes*. Los Angeles: Purple Frog Records, 2001.

Beall, Pamela Conn and Susan Hagen Nipp. *Wee Sing Around the World*. New York: Price Stern Sloan, 1998.

Buchman, Rachel. *Jewish Holiday Songs for Children*. Cambridge, MA: Rounder, 1993.

Coleman, Rachel de Azevedo. *Singing Time Songs: V. 1-3*. Salt Lake City, UT: Two Little Hands, 2002.

Daria. *Beautiful Rainbow World*. Riegelsville, PA: DariaMusic, 2007.

Ho, Minfong. *Hush! A Thai Lullaby*. New York: Orchard, 1996.

Jenkins, Ella. *Multicultural Children's Songs*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Folkways, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Sharing Cultures with Ella Jenkins*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Folkways, 2003.

Jordan, Sara. *Celebrate the Human Race: Multicultural Songs and Activities for Children*. Niagara Falls, NY: Jordan Music Productions, 1993.

Keeler, Patricia A. *Drumbeat in Our Feet*. New York: Lee and Low, 2006.

Kono, Erin Eitter. *Hula Lullaby*. New York: Little, Brown, 2005.

Manning, Maurie J. *Kitchen Dance*. New York: Clarion, 2008.

Marmaluk-Hajioannou, Daria. *I Have a Dream: World Music for Children*. Riegelsville, PA: Dariamusic, 2009.

Mattox, Cheryl Warren. *Shake It to the One That You Love the Best: Play Songs and Lullabies from Black Musical Traditions*. El Sobrante, CA: Warren-Mattox Productions, 1989.

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## APPENDIX B

### Recruitment Letter Template

Date: TBA

Request for Participation in Master's Thesis Research: "Children's songs"  
From Liberty University's Graduate School  
1971 University Blvd.  
Lynchburg, VA 24502

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the Ethnomusicology department at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study about cultural impact on children's songs. The study seeks to gain understanding into the form and function of children's songs within Caribbean families who now reside in South Florida, as well as the dynamics of teaching music to children.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to coordinate with me a time and place to conduct an interview. During the interview you may be asked to perform a song(s) while I observe and take notes. The interview and observation may be audio-video recorded and transcribed. You may freely accept or reject any of the above requests to answer questions, perform songs, or to be recorded. The interview and observation should take approximately two hours. After initial data analysis, you may be requested to participate in a second interview lasting approximately one hour. Your name and cultural background information will be requested as part of your participation in this study. You will then have the choice to either be identified or use a pseudonym in the actual reported study. No personal, identifying information will be disclosed to any parties other than myself the researcher.

To participate, you may contact me to schedule an interview. At your discretion, interviews may take place on the phone, by computer, or in person. Also at your discretion, interviews may take place in private (such as your home) or public (such as a library or park) setting.

An informed consent document is attached to this letter and can also be provided to you at the time of the interview. The informed consent document contains additional information about my research and your potential role in that research. Please review and sign the informed consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Finley W. Walker  
Graduate Student - Ethnomusicology

## APPENDIX C

### Consent Form – Adult

Title of Study: *Children's songs: Music as a Means of Cultural Development and Preservation*  
Principle Investigator: Finley Walker  
Liberty University  
Academic Department: Ethnomusicology

You are invited to be in a research study exploring why parents teach culture songs to their children. You were selected as a possible participant because this study seeks to understand why a group of parents from the Caribbean teach songs to their children, and you meet the research criteria. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Finley Walker, a student in the Department of Music pursuing a Master of Arts degree in Ethnomusicology.

#### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to explore the personal reasons that individual, migrant families pass down songs to their children. Research questions include: (1) Why did these selected families teach their children songs? (2) What are the selected family's personal feelings towards their cultural heritage and their desire to pass that culture down to their children in regards to song?

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

- Agree to meet with me in person for an interview discussing your background, culture, and music. During this period, I may also ask that you perform a song and allow me to observe. If you feel uncomfortable with this request, you may freely decline. The interview will take no longer than two hours.
- Agree to either a private or public meeting space in order to conduct interviews. You may either accept or reject to hold meetings in your home.
- Agree to be available for video-audio recordings. Both interviews and song performances may be recorded. You may accept or reject any requests.
- Agree whether or not to use your real name or a pseudonym in the final research document.
- Agree to have a follow-up interview if deemed necessary. Interview will take no longer than one hour.

#### **Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:**

Risks are minimal and do not require anything extraneous or outside the norm of everyday activities. Risks may include:

- The primary constraint is that of time and personal space. You will be asked to make time and space available for interviews.
- By law, the research is required to report any instances of child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others.
- You may choose to terminate participation in this study at any time.

The benefits to participation are primarily societal benefits. This study will be of interest to music educators and any who work with children. Music proves a beneficial realm of study for understanding culture and childhood development. The Participant may also receive personal credit for their participation in the final report if they so choose to be acknowledged.

### **Compensation:**

You will not be compensated in regards to this research project.

### **Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

All data, including any recordings, will be secured on my personal computer which is password protected. No one will have direct access to the data except myself. participants may request personal data. The Faculty Advisor will also have access to data as requested, but not in any way that will breach confidentiality. All data will be used solely for the purpose of this study and will be erased when no longer needed to complete the study.

If you withdraw from the study, all files/recordings linked to you will be immediately deleted.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University, Calvary Chapel, or the Principle Investigator. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is Finley Walker. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [fwalker@liberty.edu](mailto:fwalker@liberty.edu). The Faculty Advisor for this study is Katherine Morehouse. She can be contacted at [kmorehouse@liberty.edu](mailto:kmorehouse@liberty.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

- I agree to be audio-recorded for the purpose of this study.
- I agree to be video-recorded for the purpose of this study.
- I agree to be recognized by my legal name in the final report of this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(If minors are involved)*

Signature of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**IRB Code Numbers:** 1693.102113

**IRB Expiration Date:** October 21, 2014

## APPENDIX D

### Consent Form – Child

Title of Study: *Children's songs: Music as a Means of Cultural Development and Preservation*  
Principle Investigator: Finley Walker  
Liberty University  
Academic Department: Ethnomusicology

Your child is invited to be in a research study exploring why parents teach culture songs to their children. Your child was selected as a possible participant because this study seeks to understand why a group of parents from the Caribbean teach songs to their children, and your child meets the research criteria. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Finley Walker, a student in the Department of Music pursuing a Master of Arts degree in Ethnomusicology.

#### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to explore the personal reasons that individual, migrant families pass down songs to their children. Research questions include: (1) Why did these selected families teach their children songs? (2) What are the selected family's personal feelings towards their cultural heritage and their desire to pass that culture down to their children in regards to song?

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree for your child to be in this study, I would ask your child to do the following things:

- Agree to meet with me in person for an interview discussing your child's background, culture, and music. During this period, I may also ask that your child perform a song and allow me to observe. If you feel uncomfortable with this request, you may freely decline. The interview will take no longer than two hours.
- Agree to either a private or public meeting space in order to conduct interviews. You may either accept or reject to hold meetings in your home.
- Agree to be available for video-audio recordings. Both interviews and song performances may be recorded. Your child may accept or reject any requests.
- Agree whether or not to use your child's real name or a pseudonym in the final research document.
- Agree to have a follow-up interview if deemed necessary. Interview will take no longer than one hour.

#### **Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:**

Risks are minimal and do not require anything extraneous or outside the norm of everyday activities. Risks may include:

- The primary constraint is that of time and personal space. You will be asked to make time and space available for your child to be interviewed.
- By law, the research is required to report any instances of child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others.
- You may choose to terminate your child's participation in this study at any time.

The benefits to participation are primarily societal benefits. This study will be of interest to music educators and any who work with children. Music proves a beneficial realm of study for understanding culture and childhood development. The Participant may also receive personal credit for their participation in the final report if they so choose to be acknowledged.

### **Compensation:**

You and your child will not be compensated in regards to this research project.

### **Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

All data, including any recordings, will be secured on my personal computer which is password protected. No one will have direct access to the data except myself. participants may request personal data. The Faculty Advisor will also have access to data as requested, but not in any way that will breach confidentiality. All data will be used solely for the purpose of this study and will be erased when no longer needed to complete the study.

If you withdraw your child from the study, all files/recordings linked to you will be immediately deleted.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child's participation will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University, Calvary Chapel, or the Principle Investigator. If you decide to allow your child to participate, your child is free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is Finley Walker. You and your child may ask any questions you have now. If you or your child have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [fwwalker@liberty.edu](mailto:fwwalker@liberty.edu). The Faculty Advisor for this study is Katherine Morehouse. She can be contacted at [kmorehouse@liberty.edu](mailto:kmorehouse@liberty.edu).

If you or your child have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent for my child to participate in the study.

- I agree for my child to be audio-recorded for the purpose of this study.
- I agree for my child to be video-recorded for the purpose of this study.
- I agree for my child to be recognized by his or her legal name in the final report of this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(If minors are involved)*

Signature of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**IRB Code Numbers:** 1693.102113

**IRB Expiration Date:** October 21, 2014

## APPENDIX E

### Assent of Child to Participate in a Research Study

**What is the name of the study and who is doing the study?**

The name of this study is “Children’s songs: Music as a Means of Cultural Development and Preservation” and the principle investigator is Finley Walker.

**Why am I doing this study?**

We are interested in studying why individual families teach their children songs.

**Why am I asking you to be in this study?**

You are being asked to be in this research study because we would like to know your personal thoughts and feelings on any songs your parents have taught you.

**If you agree, what will happen?**

If you are in this study you will be asked some simple questions about your experience in learning songs from your parents. If you agree, you may also be audio-video recorded.

**Do you have to be in this study?**

No, you do not have to be in this study. If you want to be in this study, then tell the researcher. If you don’t want to, it’s OK to say no. The researcher will not be angry. You can say yes now and change your mind later. It’s up to you.

**Do you have any questions?**

You can ask questions any time. You can ask now. You can ask later. You can talk to the researcher. If you do not understand something, please ask the researcher to explain it to you again.

Signing your name below means that you want to be in the study.

---

Signature of Child

---

Date

Principle Investigator: Finley Walker

[fwwalker@liberty.edu](mailto:fwwalker@liberty.edu)

Faculty Advisor: Katherine Morehouse

[kmorehouse@liberty.edu](mailto:kmorehouse@liberty.edu)

Liberty University Institutional Review Board,  
1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515  
or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

## APPENDIX F

### Interview Questions

#### Parents (adults)

- How would you describe the music of your country/culture?
- What kind of music do you prefer to listen to?
- What do you think is the best aspect your country's music?
- How do you think your country's music expresses the culture?
- Did your parents teach you any songs while you were growing up? What were they?
- What was your favorite song growing up? Why?
- What purpose do you see in teaching children songs?
- What role do you think music has in children's development, growth, and education?
- Have you or do you teach your children any songs? What is your reasoning and motivation for doing so?
- Did you sing any lullabies to your children when they were very young?
- What role do you think music serves in preserving cultural heritage in your children?
- How would you describe your children's ability to learn new songs?
- Would you mind singing a song you learned for me?

## **Interview Questions**

Children (minors)

- Do you like music? If so, what do you like about it?
- What can you tell me about the music of your family's country/culture?
- What is your favorite kind of music?
- Has music taught you anything about your family's culture? If so, what exactly?
- Have your parents taught you any songs? What are they, and how did your parents teach them to you?
- What is your favorite song? Why?
- Why do think learning music/songs is important?
- Do you like learning and singing new songs?
- Would you mind singing a song you learned for me?

## APPENDIX G

### **Participant Families**

1. France & 1 child (Haiti)
2. Helen & 3 children (St. Kitts)
3. Paulina (St. Croix)
4. D (Bahamas)
5. Cassandre (Haiti)
6. Thamarah & 1 child (Haiti)
7. Alex & 2 children (Cuba)
8. Francisco (Trinidad)
9. Harrison (Cuba)
10. George, Sabrina & 3 children (Jamaica & Puerto Rico)
11. Angelica & Daniel (Cuba)
12. Regina & 2 children (Cuba)
13. Chelsea (Cuba)
14. Carmen & 2 children (Cuba)
15. Aixa and 1 child (Puerto Rico)
16. Sylna & 4 children (Haiti)
17. Jesus & Marley (Puerto Rico & Cuba)
18. Leonie (Jamaica)
19. Catherine (Jamaica)
20. Peter, Desiree & 2 children (Jamaica)
21. Andy, Janeth Fernandez & 2 children (Cuba)

## APPENDIX H

### Interview Summaries

- France & 1 child (Haiti):
  - France comes from a very devout Christian home. Therefore, the music she grew up with and now continues to listen to is Christian. This was interesting since it shows that an individual's faith or religious beliefs may very likely supersede any cultural distinctions and values. In other words, for France and her family, being Christian was far more significant than being Haitian.
- Helen & 3 children (St. Kitts):
  - Helen talked about the musics of calypso and soca from St. Kitts as being very relaxing and soothing. She still enjoys listening to the music from her Island, but her children have not really integrated their mother's music with their own musical preferences. All of the children were born in Florida, and all of them in turn, prefer the music that they heard in the community such as hip-hop.
- Paulina (St. Croix):
  - Paulina is from one of the U.S. Virgin Islands where calypso is the dominant musical style. She describes it as very lively and happy, with lyrics that talk about daily life and current events. Like other Christian participants, Paulina is greatly influenced by her faith and prefers to listen to Gospel music.
- D (Bahamas):
  - D is from the island New Providence of the Bahamas. She has four children and told me that most of the songs she sang and taught to them were traditional English and American songs. She would sing songs to teach her children things such as their multiplication tables. Along with American influences, calypso was mentioned as focusing on story-telling.
- Cassandre (Haiti):
  - Cassie is from Port-au-Prince, Haiti where merengue and kompa music are predominant. She described the music as very upbeat, poetic, and expressive. She grew up learning many of the old French songs and believes that children's songs are about motivating kids to do something.
- Thamarah & 1 child (Haiti):
  - Although Thamarah has spent most of her life in America, she still holds to her Haitian roots. She likes how the songs of Haiti talk about real life. Today, Haitian music is rarely listened to in the home, but she still hopes to preserve a cultural heritage in her children through some of the Haitian music influence.
- Alex & 2 children (Cuba):

- Alex was born in Manhattan, New York, but both of his parents are from Cuba, and Spanish was his first language. He believes that Cuban music is soulful and has a strong purpose. Living in America, he has grown to really like country music. Although his children do not speak Spanish, he has proactively taught them Spanish songs and desires for them to keep some of their Cuban roots. He has sung many traditional Cuban songs to his children as they have grown up.
- Francisco (Trinidad):
  - Freddie grew up in Port of Spain, Trinidad, with his mother and three older brothers. The primary musical genres there are calypso and soca which he describes as lively, upbeat, and many times humorous. He sees music as a medium or a channel for information, and that children will emulate what is presented to them. He also says that children's songs commonly repeat or teach something that adults take for granted.
- Harrison (Cuba):
  - Harry was born and raised in Florida, but his father is from Cuba. Because Harry unfortunately did not grow up with his father, his identification with Cuban culture is very limited. His mother would sing to him many songs and lullabies in English. He describes children's songs as having lighter lyrics. Today, Harry prefers to listen to Christian rock music.
- George, Sabrina & 3 children (Jamaica, Puerto Rico, & Dominica):
  - George was born in Kingston, Jamaica, and mostly likes culture music. He discussed the styles of reggae, ska, and newcomer D.J.'s. George described the music as very upbeat dance songs with a prevalent bass. He also talked about the jukebox and how it helped to create a culture of community in Jamaica. His wife, Sabrina, was born in New York. Her mother is Puerto Rican and her father is Dominic. She talked about the salsa music and its ability to make you happy. The family communicated the importance of the message in the music and that music is a connection between thoughts and people. Raising their children in America, they have mostly taught their children American songs, but they do still listen to a lot of Jamaican and Puerto Rican music in the home.
- Angelica & Daniel (Cuba):
  - Angie and Danny's father is from Havana, Cuba. Angie was born in Little Havana and grew up in Hialeah, Florida, which are both major Cuban communities in South Florida. She described Cuban music as very urban and something that you have to move to the beat with. As far as children's music goes, she said that the songs were cute and used a high voice. Growing she has learned both English and Spanish songs which she now teaches the children she works with. She says that music is a way to inspire. Danny has been less influenced by Cuban music and personally prefers dub-step.
- Regina & 2 children (Cuba):

- Regina was born in Miami, and her parents are from Cuba. She and her husband have one son, but they also often take care of her niece. She talked about the musical genres of Salsa and Son in Cuba. Regina loves singing to her son and hopes that he retains the Spanish influence. She and her family also enjoy making up songs. She says that music communicates thoughts in a special way and that music is culture.
- Chelsea (Cuba):
  - Chelsea was born in Hialeah, Florida and lived there until she was seven-years-old. Her dad was born in Cuba, and her mom was also born in Hialeah. Although she technically grew up in America, Chelsea truly grew up in a Cuban environment. She spoke of the dance musics Salsa and Merengue, who they are exotic, passionate, energetic, and full of life. She and her husband hope to pass on these traditions to their children.
- Carmen & 2 children (Cuba):
  - Carmen was born and raised in Cuba until the age of seventeen. She expressed how children's songs seem to be directed toward educational purposes. She also stated that many children's songs tell stories and that there are light and happy in tone. The family also discussed how Cuban music seems to transcend generational boundaries. The music moves across the generations and helps to maintain strong family ties. So the music connects or bridges the multiple generations and vice versa.
- Aixa & 1 child (Puerto Rico):
  - Aixa grew up in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and she visits the island at least twice a year with her family. Her son enjoys the visits, however, he does not have a taste for the music. He prefers the music he hears in America. Nevertheless, Aixa has taken the initiative to sing to her son and at least teach him some of the Spanish songs from Puerto Rico.
- Sylna & 4 children (Haiti):
  - Sylna was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. She speaks French, Creole, and English. Her two oldest children were also born in Haiti and speak Creole. The two children moved to America in 2004, and she soon followed in 2005. The two younger children were born in Florida, and the cultural distinction between the pairs of children is very evident. Sylna described the Compas music of Haiti as energetic and having a plethora of instruments. She still enjoys listening to some of the music from Haiti in her home so that the children still get a little exposure to the styles and beats.
- Jesús & Marley (Puerto Rico & Cuba):
  - Jesús grew up in Santurce, Puerto Rico, and lived with his mother, father, brother, and sister. Marley grew up with her Cuban mom and grandpa in Hialeah, Florida. The primary musics of Puerto Rico are Salsa, Merengue, and Reggaeton which all have a constant beat, are lively, and utilize numerous instruments. Cuban music

also incorporates Salsa and Merengue with considerable percussion and wind instrument sound while displaying a very up and bold beat. Both Jesús and Marley were familiar with the same children's songs. They reminisced over songs about little animals such chickens, frogs, and birds. They also had songs that taught them about body parts and numbers. Interestingly, with each of these songs there were always corresponding hand motions. The couple said that singing to kids is an intimate experience where a parent bonds with their children. They also said that children connect through music because music serves as a common thread through which all ages can relate. Furthermore, they offered insight on how music can create a healthy routine for bedtime, and how it is strongly tied to memory, helping children remember things learned.

- Leonie (Jamaica):
  - Leonie was born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica, with four brothers and two sisters. She has three children: two boys, 41 and 37, and one girl, 32. Leonie expressed that she mostly likes oldies music from both Jamaica and America. She does not really enjoy the current generation's music and believes that there are too many negative messages. Music should have wholesome lyrics and a positive message.
  
- Catherine (Jamaica):
  - Catherine grew up in Kingston, Jamaica, with her two sisters and one brother. She has three girls ages 30, 22, and 18. She mostly listened to reggae and calypso growing up but prefers gospel music today. She also enjoys listening to the church music from here in America now and wants her children to listen to gospel music as well. For Catherine, music's importance is almost solely based upon her Christian faith.
  
- Peter, Desiree & 2 children (Jamaica):
  - Peter lived in Kingston for 24 years before moving to America. Desiree also lived in Kingston, first for 16 years, and then for 2 years. They have two boys, 13 and 12, both of whom have visited Jamaica. Both Peter and Desiree love the music from Jamaica, but their children seem to prefer the music from America. Peter and Desiree often played a lullaby CD for their children when they were young.
  
- Andy, Janeth Fernandez & 1 child (Cuba):
  - Andy grew up in Queens, New York, with his Cuban family. Janeth was born in Holguin, Cuba, and immigrated to the United States of America at eighteen. They have two children including a 24-year-old who was born in Hialeah, Florida. Janeth actually listened to a mixture of musics as a youth in the 70s and early 80s. She heard all the Cuban and Spanish music, but she also listened to a lot of disco and rock. She learned many songs growing up which she has now passed to her children, and which her daughter wishes to pass on to her children as well. Andy emphasized the importance of music in the role of education.

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