



MUSIC TOGETHER®

MUSIC TOGETHER OF THE GREATER ROCKFORD AREA



MusicNotes, MTGRA Newsletter for Parents and Children

Bells Collection, Issue 1, 2009

Obwisana - The Stone Passing Game from Ghana

The featured song for this month is Obwisana. This song originated in the tribal cultures of Ghana many, many years ago. Stones are passed around a circle while the children sing the song. They pick up the stone on first beat and pass it to the next child in the circle on the second beat. If a child misses the stone or gets off beat they are eliminated from the circle, sort of like an American musical chairs game. Of course, children love to create variations of the passing game by making the beats faster or changing the rhythm of the actions.

As in the games of many cultures, there is a purpose to playing. It teaches the musical concepts of beat and melody, but it also teaches responsibility and the social skills needed to get along with other children. The word obwisana translates to something like this: "Grandma, a rock hurt my finger." If a child ran to Grandma saying their finger got hurt in the game, the normal response from Grandma was to say that the child should learn to play the game better and not get hurt.

While you listen to the recording of Obwisana try chanting the words "pick up, pass" to the beat. Then see if you and your child can pass something back and forth while the music plays. Of course you will get wonderfully mixed up, but remember to laugh and enjoy the process, not the perfection. We'll try this game

in class in a couple weeks.

Quick Thoughts about our Musical Play Time

Part of the Music Together philosophy is based on the importance of creative play. We are not here to give a formal, "sit in your place and do as I do/say" class. So what are you and your child getting out of our classes? One answer is that we give guidance for musical play with your child. We want to foster an ongoing love of music and movement by exploring and playing with it. When you bring your child to class you are taking time to play with music, and play time is critical to your child's development.

Brain researchers and child psychologists increasingly emphasize the importance of play in early childhood. It is through play that children can develop muscles, learn how to be a friend, work out fears and fantasies, understand feelings, and learn how to share. When you combine the importance of play with the importance of music, you are doing more than having fun. Researchers believe that when your child actively participates in music they are creating more pathways between the cells in their brains. Furthermore, children who continue to actively participate in music do better in reading and math when they start school, are better able to focus and control their bodies, play better with others and have higher self-esteem.

Philosophers and educators have been telling us for centuries how important play time is. Plato tells us that "play is the work of childhood." Fred Rogers said that "Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is a serious thing." So take time to play, musically and every way, with your child. You'll both be glad that you did. See you in class!

Midway Village Museum Center - Chamberlain Hotel



When we started offering Music Together classes here in early September, the weather was warm and wonderful. Now as we come down the path to the porch, we get quite a different picture. No matter what the weather brings, Midway Village Museum Center always has a lot to offer. Activities in February and March include a winter lecture series, a sock monkey festival, and an Egg Artists' show and sale. Have you considered purchasing a membership to the museum, or checking out the exhibit hall?

The staff here is great to work with. They unlock the gates, shovel the path and parking lot, and turn the heat up before anyone gets there. When you come to the hotel for class, it seems like old friends walking over to sing and visit for awhile in the parlor. It won't be that long until we'll be strolling through the village in our sweatshirts! See you in class, but for now don't forget your scarf and mittens!

Good Tunes

What we've been listening to lately

During this time of year I enjoy listening to music that reminds me that spring is coming! Aaron Copeland's music usually always does the trick, so I've been listening to Appalachian Spring. It's a long piece of music with several sections. My favorite part is the variations on the familiar Shaker melody "'Tis A Gift To Be Simple." The music sounds like flowers are popping right out of the ground. I also like listening to "Hoe Down" by Copeland. That's the "beef – it's what's for dinner" music. Big Band music also keeps the winter blahs away, and makes you want to get up and move. Of course the Bells collection from Music Together is a favorite right now at my house, and I hope at your house too! What else have you been listening to?

Upcoming Events

Valentine fun!

This Thursday, February 12, is our Valentine fun day. Teacher Donna is baking Valentine cookies! If you come to the 10am class, please bring a sack lunch for you and your child. If you are in the 6pm class, please plan to stay a few extra minutes and have a cookie and some juice before heading home. Let's take a few minutes to get to know each other better. See you there!



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