



MUSIC TOGETHER®

Parent Notes ♫

TONAL AND RHYTHM PATTERNS

One of your child's most frequent responses to the music on the recording is a reaction to the tonal and/or rhythm patterns. Because the patterns are short, they act as a catalyst for inducing a special attentiveness and a meaningful response to the music. Furthermore, these patterns are performed on a syllable that fits naturally into the speech patterns of even the youngest child. Perhaps since they have no language barrier to overcome when they sing these tonal or rhythm patterns, children can spontaneously respond to them with ease.

Experience with tonal- and rhythm-pattern interactions is extremely important to children for understanding the orderly arrangement or syntax of tones and rhythm inherent in the music of our culture. Syntax in music is analogous to syntax in language. Syntax in language is the orderly arrangement of the words in a sentence. We understand the syntax of our language when we say "the big blue ball" rather than "the blue big ball."

When a very young child speaks single words, an adult or older sibling will interpret the meaning and respond with an extrapolated version of the communication. For example, a child says, "juice." Mommy says, "Oh, are you thirsty? Would you like to drink some juice?" The child is hearing a whole sentence stimulated by her expression of an essential part. This type of verbal interaction is a powerful reinforcement and is of utmost importance if the child is to teach himself language.

Tonal and rhythm patterns are like those single words. They are the parts of music, the building blocks that a child can understand and use to make her own music. Similarly, when we sing entire songs or recite entire chants, we are creating the whole of music, the orderly arrangement of tones and rhythm. When a child performs a pattern or fragment of a song and we respond with our own patterns or by singing the rest of the song, we are providing an essential interaction that stimulates and enables children to continue the process of playful self-instruction that is so important during their primary music development.



TRY THIS AT HOME!

Try modeling the rhythm and tonal patterns at home, with and without the recording. You might even make it a dinner table game for the whole family. You can make up patterns yourself and enlist your spouse or an older child to repeat them after you. Then, try switching roles so you repeat the patterns they create. If your younger child joins in with his own "Ba, ba, ba," repeat it back to him the same way he expressed. This encourages him to try it again!