



Sesame Family Newsletter

The nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street and so much more

September 29, 2004



For Parents

Making Music Together

by Jordan Brown

Getting some kids to "sing...sing a song" isn't so easy.

Featuring:

- A Little Night-Night Music
- An Impromptu Concert In The Park
- The Beat Of A Different Drummer
- Flashback

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Games and More: Happy birthday, Zoe and Telly!

Party on with two of your favorite monsters.

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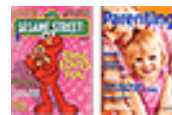


From the Workshop



[How do you say "Sesame Street" in Mandarin Chinese?](#)

Sesame Store



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Making Music Together

A LITTLE NIGHT-NIGHT MUSIC

When my son Finn was a newborn, I loved singing him to sleep. Sometimes I crooned classic lullabies such as "Hush Little Baby." Other times I'd lure him to the land of nod with gentle ballads like "Edelweiss," "Bridge Over Troubled Water," "Beautiful Boy," and "Young at Heart." Even after my son had fallen asleep, I sometimes continued for a while, hoping--in that silly sentimental dad way--that my melodies would soothe his soul, and send him sweet dreams.

Now that Finn is almost 4, his reaction to my singing is not



DO RE MI! 1, 2, 3!
[Climbing the scales one note](#)

quite the same. No matter what song I start to sing, Finn usually pleads, "Don't do that, Daddy!" Even if I attempt to sing the same song that my son enjoyed moments before on the CD player, I'm out of luck. While no one would confuse my voice with Frank Sinatra's, I can carry a tune, and used to sing in school musicals and choirs. I don't mind relegating my singing to the shower or solo walks outside, but I wish that Finn and I could share the joy of singing together. As it stands now, I think that the day when he and I will do a duet of "Me and My Shadow" is still a long way off.

I realize that being contrary and rebellious is part of what being a preschooler is all about. Nevertheless, my wife Ellen and I think something else is going on here. At some level, Finn is aware that he's a "late singer." He's physically coordinated, creative, smart, and talented. But singing, for him, is another matter. When he notices other kids sing as effortlessly as they breathe, he might wonder, "Hey, why can't I do that?"

Finn's struggles are not all that surprising given that he didn't start speaking his first sentences until he was about 2 and a half. Over the last month or so, it seems as though Finn is gradually getting more comfortable with singing. When he plays quietly at his table, Ellen and I will often overhear him singing sweetly to himself or to D.W., his baby doll. To support and encourage these efforts, we try to incorporate fun musical games into his playtime.

at a time.

ANIMAL SING-ALONG
Help your child learn about tempo as you keep time with favorite toys.

ROCKIN'
Get in sync with your child's music tastes.

AN IMPROMPTU CONCERT IN THE PARK

Finn might protest when Ellen or I sing, but he gets excited to hear other kids sing. Last week, I had the pleasure of accompanying Finn on a playdate with his friend Thomas. Thomas loves many of the same things Finn does: trains, balloons, rockets, trucks, swimming, water fountains, and good ol' running. Towards the end of a rousing time in the park, Finn and Thomas were weary and ready for lunch. Just before we left, we wandered by a section of raised concrete in the middle of lawn. Thomas perked right up, and asked his babysitter, "Hey, there's my stage. Can I sing some songs?"

Thomas hopped up on the make-believe stage, while we sat on the grass to listen. Thomas grabbed a pretend microphone and launched into "Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah" followed by "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'." Finn sat attentively, laughed when Thomas hammed it up, and even applauded at the end.

TIMMMBRE!!!
Explore different sounds through play.

PIANO AND FORTE--THE DYNAMIC DUO!
Learning the difference between soft and loud.

Later that afternoon, Finn and I were watching the TV show Miss Spider's Sunny Patch Kids. While the characters usually don't sing, on this particular day, Finn's favorite arachnid, Squirt, burst into a heart-felt ballad, as his father strummed along on a guitar. When the song reached its climax, Finn got incredibly giddy and squeezed my arm. "Daddy, Squirt is singing so loud" he said. I wouldn't be surprised if by this time next year, Ellen, Finn and I will be able to sing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" as a round.

THE BEAT OF A DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Finn may be reluctant to sing, but he's always loved making music in other ways. As a baby, he got a kick out of banging pots and pans. Now that he's older, he has fun playing a percussion guessing game. He beats out the rhythm of a favorite song then asks us to guess what it is. Sometimes he keeps it simple, like the "Hello" song from camp. Other times he gets more sophisticated, such as the Beatles' rendition of "Twist and Shout."

Finn experiments with sounds on a variety of musical instruments. On the piano, he gives demonstrations on the difference between quiet and LOUD. On the guitar, he compares the sound of finger strumming with using a pick. Given Finn's penchant for putting things together and taking them apart, we knew he'd love the Saxoflute. What's a Saxoflute, you ask? It's a toy instrument that is made up of fifteen colorful plastic pieces that can be assembled in different ways to create different-shaped wind instruments.



SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE YOUR SHEKERE!

This African instrument is traditionally made from a gourd, but we used a water bottle.

CARDBOARD KAZOOS

Kids love to play the pied piper on a homemade instrument!

FLASHBACK

Recently, when I shared some of Finn's early musical experiences with my mother, she remembered a story from my childhood. I was about 5 years old, and had expressed an interest in music. I enjoyed noodling on the piano, and listening to classical music records. So when famous pianist Van Cliburn gave a concert with the local symphony orchestra, she got us tickets.

My mother was a little worried that I'd be fidgety during the concert, but as it turned out, my attention stayed focused on the stage. Since we were sitting in the first row of the balcony, I was able to keep time with the music by tapping my fingers on the railing. At the end, my mother asked me what my favorite piece was. I replied that I loved the song when everyone stood up. At first, my mother thought I was talking about one of the encores. Eventually, she discovered that my favorite piece was the very first one Van Cliburn played--The Star Spangled Banner!

Jordan Brown

Sesame Workshop



PIANO LESSONS: A KEY TO LEARNING

[Music training at an early age, specifically piano instruction, can pay off.](#)

RAFFI OR PAVAROTTI?

[Kids may be capable of advanced music appreciation.](#)

Weekly Trivia

DID YOU KNOW. ..that Telly's Triangle Lover's Club has two slogans?It's true!The slogans are:

- 1."Not Just Your Average Shape!"
- 2."With Three Sides You're Bound to Love One of 'Em!"

FROM THE WORKSHOP

How do you say "Sesame Street" in Mandarin Chinese? Say "Zhima Jie" (jheeema-jay). In China, Zhima Jie promotes critical thinking and positive social skills with a special focus on aesthetics. Zhima Jie is among the many examples of critical work that Sesame Workshop is doing on behalf of children around the world. And as a nonprofit organization, Sesame Workshop puts the proceeds from the sale of its products back into Sesame Street here at home as well as projects like Zhima Jie and other unique adaptations around the globe. Your purchases truly make a difference in the lives of children, and we thank you for your support.



[Learn more about our international work.](#)

COMMENTS? QUESTIONS?

[Tell us what's on your mind.](#) Kindly note that we are unable to respond to every email received.

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

Sesame Workshop is a nonprofit educational organization making a meaningful difference in children's lives around the world. Founded in 1968, the Workshop changed television forever with the legendary Sesame Street. Today, the Workshop continues to innovate on behalf of children in 120 countries, using its proprietary research methodology to ensure its programs and products are engaging and enriching. Sesame Workshop is behind award-winning programs like Dragon Tales and Sagwa, The Chinese Siamese Cat, Pinky Dinky Doo and ground breaking multimedia productions in South Africa, Egypt and Russia. As a nonprofit, Sesame Workshop puts the proceeds it receives from sales of Sesame Street, Dragon Tales and Sagwa products right back into its educational projects for children around the world. Find the Workshop online at www.sesameworkshop.org

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