

## **Musical Gifts: Composing Songs for Children**

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**Symposium moderated by Anna-Marie Higgins**

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This symposium emerges from workshops in which student teachers examined themes found in songs written by Froebel. The initial task was to make his *Mother Songs and Games* and his *Children's Songs* available for classroom use by teachers who might find notated music difficult to decipher. Using *Musescore*, the students produced interactive music scores and sound files for the Froebel College Moodle. A discussion arose about the appeal of the songs, their singability and Froebel's purpose in creating them. An over-arching research question was posed: "How are the songs relevant in our classrooms?" Three linked papers describe an evolving research process from song classification and arranging, through the creation of a dedicated wiki page to newly-composed Froebelian songs. Criteria for song writing were set: Froebel's songs would be referenced; the lyrics would have a sense of fun; their melodies would not over-stretch the children's range; the linking of the songs to a story, poem or picture would be important as would the integration of the songs with another curriculum area; children would be able to perform the songs in a group; Kodaly hand signs and other actions would support the performance; the accompaniment would not be restricted to keyboard instruments and the student teacher would be an active participant in the singing. Findings are derived from the participants' reflections as well as video clips of classroom testing, performance of songs and notated scores with sound files generated in the project. Plans for the ongoing development of the project are proposed.

**Key words:** classroom singing, actions, composing, lyrics