

EDITOR'S NOTE

The papers published in this issue are the result of the *Child and the Book* conference *Magic of Sound: Children's Literature and Music*, held in Podgorica from 15 to 17 May 2023. The conference was organised jointly by three units of the University of Montenegro: the Faculty of Philology, the Music Academy and the Faculty of Fine Arts.

The initial idea for organising this conference arose from the recognition that literature and music are deeply rooted in our physical, emotional and intellectual experiences and that they frequently intertwine in myriad ways. However, the relationship between the two has not been explored to a sufficient extent. Music and sound play a crucial role in how language functions, how meaning emerges, how our bodies respond to and shape experience, and how we learn and develop. In both subtle and overt ways, music operates within poetry and prose, graphic narratives, drama, games and play, and folk culture, in addition to more explicit musical contexts, such as popular and classical music, opera, musical theatre and music education. And yet, despite music and literature being “sister arts” with shared origins, their relationship – particularly within children’s culture – has rarely received sustained critical attention. While scholars of children’s literature tend to be more comfortable engaging with perspectives from visual studies, they often shy away from, or fail to recognise, connections with the field of music.

By organising this wide-ranging conference, which brought together 127 researchers from 25 countries worldwide, we sought to address these gaps in the scholarly treatment of the relationship between the two arts. This issue presents a selection of papers originally delivered at the conference, chosen for their quality, innovativeness and strong pedagogical grounding.

In the first section, the articles explore music in picture books, focusing on metaphors, movement and multimedia connections. Rosy-Triantafyllia Angelaki (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), in *The Orchestra as a Metaphor in Illustrated Children's Books*, demonstrates that music can function as a means of fostering understanding, appreciation of diversity and social skills in multicultural societies. Eivind Karlsson (Oslo Metropolitan University) shows how the picture book *What Does the Fox Say*, illustrated by the renowned Norwegian author Svein Nyhus, is not merely a spinoff of the popular music video *The Fox* by Ylvis, but an autonomous and innovative work of art, whose rich iconotext can be fully appreciated only through close analysis and

picture book theory. Diana Zalar and Tea Sesar (Faculty of Teacher Training, University of Zagreb) analyse the innovative picture book *Piccola con piccolo*, which, through the story of a gifted young girl, contrasts formal musical instruction with improvisation and promotes the freedom of musical creation. Jennifer Miskec (Longwood University) and Željka Flegar Jopp (University of Osijek) examine the picture books of Corinna Luyken, characterised by an improvisational, musical and embodied creative approach in which rhythm, movement and “bodily poeticizing” invite readers to reflect on creativity and human relationships. Christos Charakopoulos, Georgia Karantona and Tasoula Tsilimeni (University of Thessaly) investigate sound-enhanced multimodal picture books from *The Story Orchestra* series, which combine text, illustration and music to introduce young readers to Tchaikovsky’s ballets, with sound functioning not merely as accompaniment but as a key element in understanding melody, narrative and emotional nuance. Finally, Inês Costa (University of Aveiro), in *Which Came First, the Song or the Picturebook? Merging and Recreating Literature and Music Across Media*, analyses three Portuguese children’s picture books that combine literature and music, exploring how different media (books, songs, video clips and musical inserts) shape the representation and reception of stories, increasing their visibility and appeal.

The second section of this issue brings together articles that examine musical elements in young adult novels, often in relation to cultural, ethnic, and multimedia contexts. Carmen Nolte-Odhiambo (University of Hawai‘i–West O‘ahu) argues that children’s and young adult literature frequently reflects a Western, linear, and segmented conception of time, whereas Indigenous Hawaiian songs, stories, and traditions – such as *mo‘olelo* and *mele oli* – offer alternative temporal perspectives that affirm non-linear understandings of life. Vladimira Rezo (University of Zagreb) analyses three Croatian young adult novels in which rock music functions as a key motif in the protagonists’ coming-of-age processes; each novel employs a different narrative strategy, addresses a different age group and belongs to a distinct genre (the performance novel, the novel of music criticism and the musical diary/*Bildungsroman*). Maria João Lopes (University of Aveiro) examines musical references in three contemporary Portuguese young adult novels, demonstrating that these references are not merely decorative but actively contribute to character development, thematic depth and the expansion of the reading experience, showing how music shapes meaning and identity in youth narratives. Caroline Starzecki (University of Rouen) analyses how Lemony Snicket’s *A Series of Unfortunate Events*

employs music – particularly the accordion – as a symbolic and structural element that shapes the narrative and enables multilayered storytelling, while Lemony Snicket himself functions as a multidimensional author-narrator-character who orchestrates the story in a manner akin to a musician.

The third section includes contributions that explore music as a means of representing ethnicity, cultural identity, or emotional experience. Marianna Missiou (University of the Aegean) examines, through the lens of imagology, how music in the *Asterix* comics shapes and reinforces ethno-cultural stereotypes while simultaneously inviting their critical reassessment. Åse Marie Ommundsen (Oslo Metropolitan University) investigates the power of music in processing war-related trauma by analysing Ukrainian songs – most notably “*Oi u luzi chervona kalyna*” – which function as vehicles for emotional expression, collective consolation, protest and national identity.

The fourth section brings together studies of musical performance and dramatisation for children. In *Musicals for Children*, Mira Brajčić, Tea-Tereza Vidović Schreiber and Daniela Petrušić (University of Split) examine how musicals, through the integration of song, dance and acting, can be effectively used in educational work with preschool children, particularly in puppet performances in kindergartens, as children’s participation in the creative process fosters cognitive, social and emotional development. Marija Frendo (University of Malta) explores, across three different cultural contexts, the adaptation of fairy tales into the musical genre, demonstrating how such transformations support learning as well as children’s emotional and cognitive development, especially among those from disadvantaged and marginalised backgrounds.

The final section of this issue addresses translation and intercultural aspects of music. Maureen Hosay (University of Antwerp and Ghent University), for example, analyses the picture book *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury, focusing on its musical – or aural – dimension as a key element of read-aloud practices, as well as on translation strategies such as rhythm, rhyme and linguistic choice, which shape the sonic quality and performance of the picture book for an audience.

As the contributions discussed above demonstrate, the aim of this issue has been to explore further possibilities for the “tandem reading of musical and literary works” (Kramer 1989, 161) within the field of children’s literature, thereby offering new contributions to literary-musical studies in response to the culturalist turn in the humanities. We are confident that this issue of *Folia Linguistica et Litteraria* will inspire

further research into this highly compelling and unjustly underexplored topic.

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