

# PLAYful Musical Environments that Foster Learning:

Listening, Making, and Moving to Music  
in Early Education Settings

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# In Language

Conversation - *easy* to create and improvise  
even by 3 years old!

# In Music

?

Most symphony players do  
not create or improvise.

# Stages of Music Development

(audio)

- Absorption - a 3-month old just listening
- Random Responses - a 5-month old kicking
- Purposeful Responses - eye contact, engaging
- Imitation - not recognizing differences yet
- Assimilation - recognizing differences and correcting using the breath and movement
- Absorption never stops. [Older kids listening live on stage next to Baltimore Symphony players.]

Writing

Reading

**Improvise/Create**

**Thinking/Speaking**

**Listening**  
**Vocabulary**

# Toddler twins chatting

(audio)

Creativity/Improvisation

# Diego's Melody

Diego (9 years old)

$\text{♩} = 108$

Measures 1-9 of the piece. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The bass line is empty.

Measures 10-19 of the piece. The melody continues with eighth and quarter notes. The bass line remains empty.

Measures 20-29 of the piece. The melody continues with eighth and quarter notes. The bass line remains empty.

Measures 30-34 of the piece. The melody concludes with a half note and a quarter note. The bass line remains empty.

# Taste



# Light

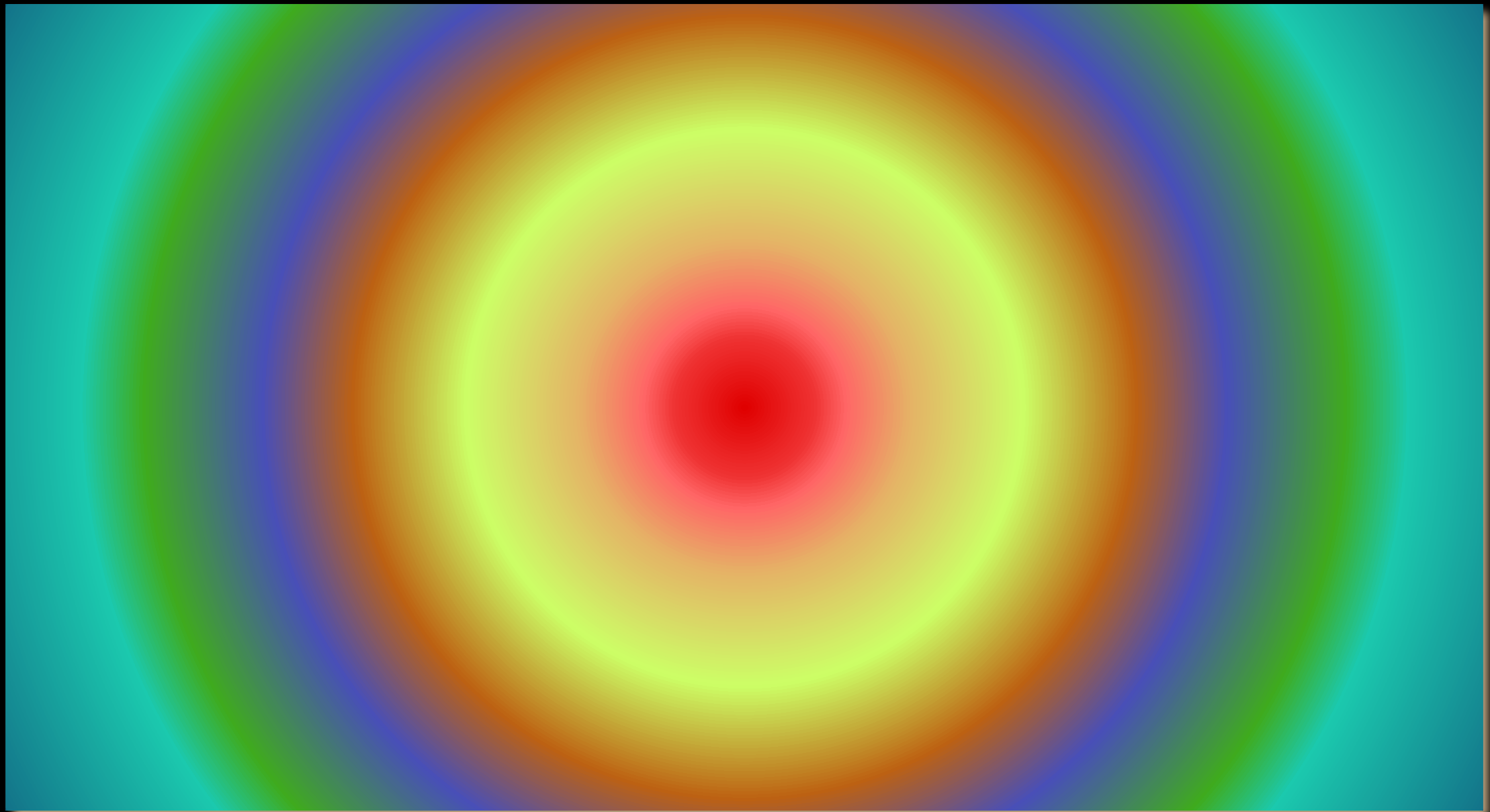




# Touch



# Sound



# Musical “diet”: an analogy

Chicken wings or salmon souffle?

Why not both?

And then add Thai food,

chocolate covered ants,

and sushi, too!

# Everything you need to know about music:

Tones

Rhythm

Melody

Harmony

Expression

Timbre

# Tonal Content and Context

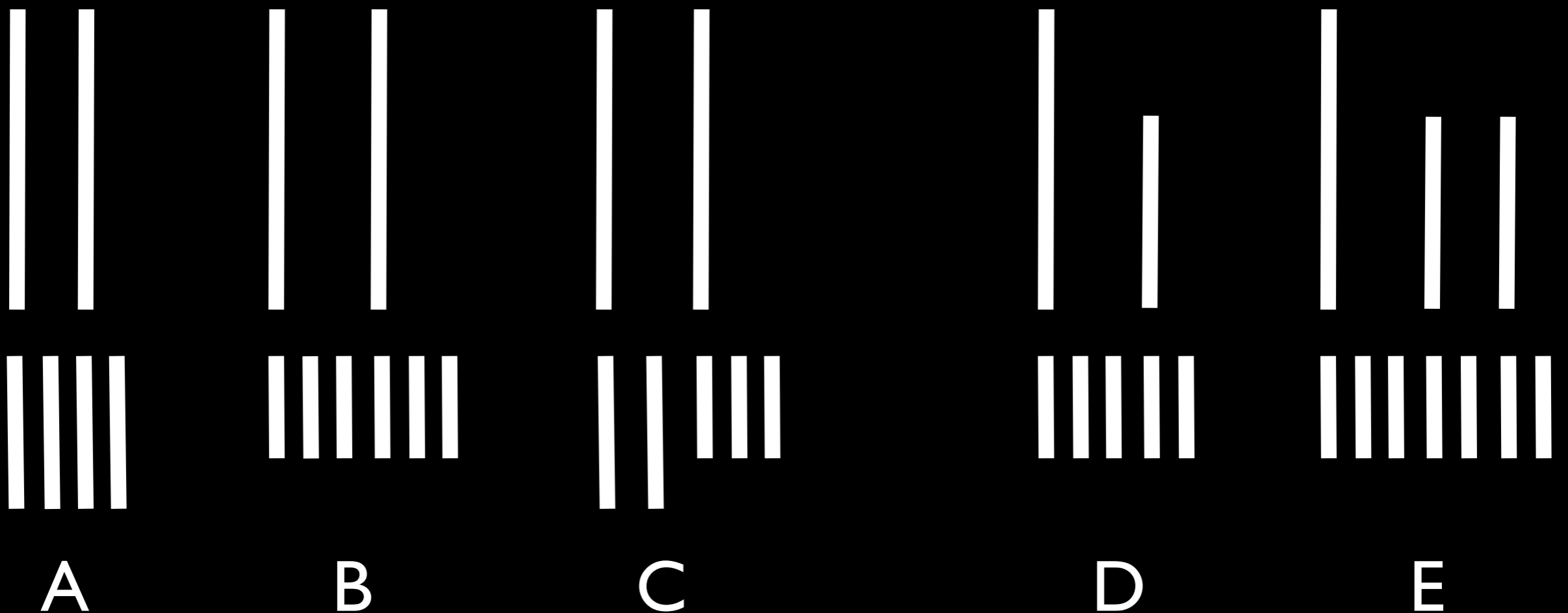
Melodies are made up of tones and rhythms. Tones need a place to end called a “resting tone.” This provides context.

Once understood in the voice and ear, the resting tones can be named:

DO, RE, MI, FA, SO, LA, LA, TI

# Rhythm Content and Context

**Rhythms** make sense when there are two kinds of beats: **BIG beats** and **little beats**.  
This provides a context for rhythms.



# The biggest pieces missing in early childhood music education:

- one-on-one interactions
- musical conversations
- spontaneous music making  
with no agenda but to **PLAY**

***MUSICALLY***

The biggest piece to try to eliminate during music playtime?

TALKING

Talking distracts the child's aural learning brain from the musical components.

Talking and noise short-circuit music learning.



# Takeaways:

- Just be musically playful with children —and with yourselves too. Spontaneously.
- Interact individually with children—tonally and rhythmically.
- Play great music and be expressive.
- For babies and toddlers, get into their world. Don't always be trying to bring them into yours.
- Sing, dance, play, be happy, and just have fun!

This vision is a tall order, but

\*Remember, it's for the children.

\*Take it one small musical interaction at a time.

\*When in doubt, just remember to sing, chant, move, and dance!

# how **babies** think



Alison Gopnik • Andrew Meltzoff  
Patricia Kuhl

"MANY FASCINATING THEMES, THE FRUIT OF SKILLED AND TIRELESS  
OBSERVATION IN RECENT YEARS, OCCUR IN THIS BOOK." SUNDAY TIMES

# Thank you!

## Please be in touch.

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Music to move to: playlists on Spotify

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