

## **Communicative Musicality and Synrhythmia**

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An infant communicates with caregivers through jointly created narratives of emotions and intentions. These narratives are not created through word meanings, but through the dynamic gestures of voice and body that inter-dependently arise during an interaction. Trevarthen has called this process 'synrhythmia' – the expression of mind states over an "emotionally regulated intersubjective frontier" through rhythms of expressive body gestures and vocalisations (Trevarthen et al 2006). These narratives of expressive vocal and body gestures are possible due to our innate skill for 'Communicative Musicality' (Malloch 1999; Trevarthen & Malloch 2000). Gestures of Communicative Musicality carry particular 'vitality contours' ("feeling flow patterns") of meaning (Stern 1985; 2000), and can lead to co-ordinated companionship between the communicating partners.

Communicative Musicality consists of three aspects: *pulse*, *quality* and *narrative*. Pulse is the regular succession of discrete behavioural events through time, allowing a person to anticipate what might happen and when. Quality consists of the contours of expressive intensity moving through time – a vocal contour, for example, will consist of dynamic elements of loudness and timbre. Pulse and Quality combine to form Narratives of expressive meaning. These 'musical' narratives allow adult and infant to share a sense of sympathy with each other in a shared sense of passing time. While our ability for Communicative Musicality is evident in adulthood in our creation and appreciation of music and dance, Communicative Musicality is not music and dance. It is the ability to engage and sympathise with the humanly shaped passage of time, and contributes to our sense of connection with and understanding of others.