



# Music in Our Lives: Rethinking Musical Ability, Development and Identity

*Gary E. McPherson, Jane W. Davidson, Robert Faulkner*

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Why do some children take up music, while others don't? Why do some excel, whilst others give up? Why do some children favour classical music, whilst others prefer rock?

These are questions that have puzzled music educators, psychologists, and musicologists for many years. Yet, they are incredibly difficult and complex questions to answer.

'Music in our lives' takes an innovative approach to trying to answer these questions. It is drawn from a research project that spanned fourteen years, and closely followed the lives of over 150 children learning music - from their seventh to their twenty second birthdays.

This detailed longitudinal approach helped the authors probe a number of important issues. For example, how do you define musical skill and ability? Is it true, as many assume, that continuous engagement in performance is the sole way in which those skills can be developed? What are the consequences of trends and behaviours observed amongst the general public, and their listening consumption.

After presenting an overview and detailed case study explorations of musical lives, the book provides frameworks and theory for further investigation and discussion. It tries to present an holistic interpretation of these studies, and looks at their implications for musical development and education. Accessibly written by three leading researchers in the fields of music education and music psychology, this book makes a powerful contribution to understanding the dynamic and vital context of music in our lives.

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