

**Book Review**  
*Hearing-Feeling-Playing*, by Shirley Salmon, editor<sup>1</sup>  
Reviewed by Susan Wheatley

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Shirley Salmon's most recent publication is a collection of fascinating and informative articles about the impact of music and movement with hard-of-hearing and deaf children. It is a collection of "best practices" found in Europe today, and offers numerous strategies to benefit hearing-impaired persons of all ages. *Hearing-Feeling-Playing* is divided into four sections containing personal memoirs, theoretical essays, pedagogy strategies, and selected field studies. Shirley Salmon, a long-time expert on the teaching of hearing-impaired and special needs students, is currently the interim director of the Orff Institute in Salzburg. The purpose of her book is to "address, inform and inspire" teachers, parents, and the "experts themselves" – persons with hearing loss.<sup>2</sup>

The book begins with a forward by world-renowned percussionist, Evelyn Glennie. Professor Salmon formed a relationship with Glennie, a concert artist with profound hearing loss, and conducted an impressive interview with her about ways of perceiving music.<sup>3</sup> In *Hearing-Feeling-Playing*, Glennie explains how she processes sound with her whole body. "There is no question in my mind that to experience music only through the ears is like eating your food without any indication of what it tastes like..." she says. "For me personally, I have to open up every fiber of my being to be a giver and receiver of sound."<sup>4</sup>

What makes Salmon's text so enjoyable is that she catches the interest of readers right away in Part I, "Viva la Musica," with personal testimonies from three individuals with hearing loss – Helga Wilber, Elke Bartlmä, and Paul Whitaker. Each gives an

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<sup>1</sup> Shirley Salmon, editor, *Hearing-Playing-Feeling* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Reichert Verlag 2008, Paperback 2009): 224 pages. ISBN-10: 3895006211, ISBN-13: 978-3895006210.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*:12-13.

<sup>3</sup> Readers can find a transcript of this 2003 interview at:  
[https://www.taubenschlag.de/cms\\_pics/glennie\\_interview.pdf](https://www.taubenschlag.de/cms_pics/glennie_interview.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Evelyn Glennie, "Forward," *Hearing-Playing-Feeling*: 7-8.

inspirational account of how their passion for music shaped their own professional lives. Readers will find themselves immediately engaged by these stories and eager to delve into the more theoretical chapters that follow.

Part II, “Theoretical Principles” is comprised of four essays. Two of them, by German theorists Georg Feuser and Sigrid Köck-Hatzmann, chronicle the philosophies of Mimi Scheiblauber, a pioneer of music and movement teaching with severely handicapped children. Scheiblauber (1891-1968) was the first advocate for the practice of integration with special needs children (called inclusion in our contemporary schools). During her lifetime, Scheiblauber taught rhythmic gymnastics at a special education school in Zurich. Köck-Hatzmann gives tribute to Scheiblauber’s movement strategies with “deaf-blind” students as well as to Anne Sullivan’s work with Helen Keller. She concludes, “It is up to us to open up possibilities so that development can become reality.”<sup>5</sup>

Part III, “Practical Principles,” and Part IV, “Fields of Practice,” offer contemporary strategies and case studies by numerous experts in music and dance therapy for persons with hearing loss. For example, Salmon offers ways to use music as a form of dialogue with deaf children. Claus Bang writes about his musical speech therapy with deaf, hearing impaired and multi-handicapped children in Denmark. German music therapists, Wolfgang Friedrich and Marion Honka have developed a solfege sign language for teaching songs. Toronto music therapist, Lois Birkenshaw-Fleming describes her auditory-verbal therapy designed to improve deaf children’s speech through rhythmic patterns and song.

In terms of case studies, Shirley Salmon outlines the creative potential of play-songs to develop social skills, physical coordination, and emotional expression with primary-aged, hearing impaired and special needs children. Also included in these final chapters are innovative practices from music therapists around the world. Readers will learn about interventions with early learners, tips to use Orff music therapy following cochlear implants, activities with music and language for families of the hearing impaired, and music therapy for teenagers at the Mary Hare School in Great Britain. Finally, in a heartwarming story by Wolfgang Stange, director of the AMICI dance

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<sup>5</sup> Sigrid Köck-Hatzmann, “Development on Realities that Open up Possibilities,” *Hearing-Playing-Feeling*: 69.

company in England, he tells about his experience in Sri Lanka creating a dance with Tsunami survivors, some deaf, some with Downs syndrome. Stange writes, “I was astonished by the musicality of the deaf.”<sup>6</sup> He convinces us that if we, as teachers, allow ourselves to be more open to ways of experiencing things, we may unlock our own deep-seated misconceptions about the musical abilities of the hearing impaired.

Shirley Salmon’s book can be highly recommended for use as a textbook for college courses that deal with strategies for teaching music to persons with special needs, a requirement that is now a standard in all U.S. teacher preparation programs. Perhaps, the drawback of the book for American educators is Salmon’s own limitation, which was to survey mostly European perspectives. But readers should not allow this to curb their interest. Salmon’s book well exceeds its goal to inspire and inform readers worldwide about the ways that music and dance can maximize the potential of all students with profound hearing loss.

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About the reviewer – Susan Wheatley is Professor of Music at Indiana University of Pennsylvania where she teaches music education methods courses, class piano, and a survey course on “Women Who Compose.” She is a member of the Pittsburgh Golden Triangle chapter of AOSA.

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<sup>6</sup> Wolfgang Stange, “Inclusive Dance Theatre,” *Hearing-Playing-Feeling*: 274