



# Junior Hoedowner

Volume 4, Issue 11

January 2010

## Music Inspires: An Interview with the Beckman-Saito Sisters

The following interview by Michelle Harvey appeared in the October/November issue of True North Parenting Magazine, and is used with permission. (Part 2 of 3) (Continued from December.)

MH - Do you ever use these skills in your other studies?

Mia - Yes. There are so many parts of math. We learn to work with equations and graphing certain points. It is like music where there is rhythm and intonation. The parts seem separate but when you put them all together they work out. And if I don't spend time on the facts that are hard, it will come back later and be a problem.

Jan - What I see that maybe the girls don't is discipline in practicing. I think it gives them a longer attention span.

Bob - You develop a tremendous ability to focus and remain attentive when you practice hard for a couple of hours over and over again.

In a 1997 study by Dr. James Catterall at UCLA, reports showed that music-making students get higher marks in standardized tests than those with no musical involvement. Mia and Kiarra practice for more than an hour each day. This is in addition to their homework schedule. Both the girls perform very well in school and receive high grades. Their parents, though, invest many hours assisting with homework, school projects, and music practice. It is what they do as a family.

MH - What makes the difference for you two? Why do you think you are successful?

Mia - I think it is practicing for long periods of time

and focusing on one thing.

Jan - Plus, we started the kids on violin at 3 years old. We also started taking them to concerts when they were young. They had to get used to the fact that they might not be interested in something but they have to sit there.

MH - What have you sacrificed as a family?

Mia - I had to choose between playing volleyball and music. It was too much. At first I was sad to give up playing on a team. But then I realized that music would probably take me further than volleyball would.

MH - Do you feel different than other kids?

Mia - A lot of people don't understand why we have to practice so much when we are already good. I always tell them what my dad said. Music is a lifelong process where you are always learning.

Kiarra - Kids don't really say a whole lot to me about it. I don't feel different.

The enrichment that music brings to a young person's life goes beyond understanding scales. As stated in a 2004 report in Forbes Magazine, music exercises parts of the brain useful in mathematics, spatial intelligence and other intellectual pursuits. "With music lessons, because there are so many different facts involved-such as memorizing, expressing emotion, learning about musical interval and chords-the multidimensional nature of the experience may be motivating the IQ effect," said E. Glenn Schellengerg, of the University of Toronto at Mississauga.

MH - Clearly the rewards are so much more signifi-

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1)

cant than the challenges. What are the personal rewards?

Mia - Well I know that it is enriching my life and I know that I am doing something productive with my life... It is also a time when I get to express who I am through my playing.

Gum Tree Canoe: Here is a cute little ditty that you will enjoy. There are two versions on Youtube by John Hartford, Gumtree Canoe - John Hartford <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkVAK60IqzQ> and/or John Hartford - Learning To Smile -10 Gum Tree Canoe <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOA86MeCrro&feature=related>

## Gum Tree Canoe

I'll sing you a dit - ty a sweet lit - tle song. It will take just a mo - ment, it won't keep you  
long; I will sing of the days when our love was so new. And we sailed down the Mur - ray ri - ver boys, \_  
\_ In a gum - tree ca - noe. We rowed, we rowed, o'er the wa - ter so blue. Like a  
fea - ther \_\_\_ we would float a - long \_\_\_\_\_ In a gum - tree ca - noe. \_\_\_\_\_

<http://sniff.numachi.com/pages/tiGUMTREE%3btGUMTREE.html>

Gumtree Canoe

I'll sing you a ditty a sweet little song  
It will just take a moment it wont keep you long  
I will sing of the days when our love was so new  
And we sailed down the Murray River boys  
In a gum tree canoe

Chorus

We rowed we rowed o'er the water so blue  
Like a feather we would float along  
In a gum tree canoe  
My hand on my banjo my toe in my oar  
I work all the day and I sing as I go  
At night time I turn to my Julia so true  
And we sail down Murray River boys  
In a gum tree canoe  
I once left the river and went on the land  
To set myself up as a cocky so grand  
But the life didn't suit me it made my heart sore  
So I went to the Murray River boys  
And my Julia so true

Printed in Gumsuckers' Gazette April 1963

The song was sent to Frank Nicholls of the Billabong Band in WeMelbourne in 1957. Frank Nicholls wrote "It was sent to us by Mrs J. Wilson, who we met at one of our functions. The song was remembered by members of her family who learned it from Freddie Bolton". The Folk Lore Society of Victoria collected another version from Max Dyer of Benambra. Warren Fahey recorded Jim Cargill singing a version which is on Larikin record Bush Traditions .

This song from Simon McDonald. MG