

Sharon Burch's Freddie the Frog

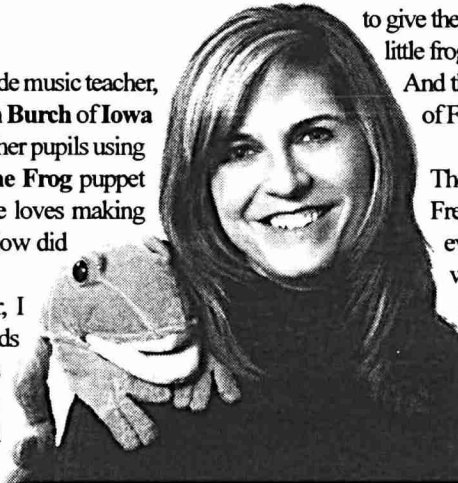
by Maren Schober

Kindergarten through third grade music teacher, clinician, and author, **Sharon Burch of Iowa** makes music come alive for her pupils using her tremendously popular **Freddie the Frog** puppet and resources for the classroom. She loves making music for her children fun to learn. How did all this start?

"As an elementary music teacher, I was intrigued with the various methods the preschool and kindergarten teachers were using to teach **English**," Sharon declares. "They told stories. They used flash cards using pictures to represent the letters of the alphabet. They played games. They colored. They wrote stories. They learned dinosaur names! And it worked!"

"My brain began to spin," Sharon continues. "Why don't we music educators begin teaching the written musical concepts in a similar way at the ages of four and five? Why wait until they are playing an instrument in the fifth grade? Wouldn't it be better to lay the foundation when they were younger and build upon it? I decided there was nothing to lose by trying."

"Borrowing my daughter's frog puppet and using an oversized vinyl treble clef floor mat, I spun a story about a little frog and his adventure on **Treble Clef Island**. The treble clef floor mat was a map of the island where all the events happened. Each significant event or character began with the musical letter of the line or space I was pointing to on the treble clef map. It worked! The children could not wait



Teaching music to grades K-3, Sharon Burch of Iowa uses her Freddie the Frog Puppet to teach musical concepts through puppetry, games and storytelling. "I love making music come alive for my pupils," she says.

to give the little frog a hug! They asked if the little frog would come to music class again.

And that was the beginning of the magic of Freddie."

"Freddie came to every class. The kids wanted to do whatever Freddie wanted to do. And of course, everything Freddie wanted to do was fun and teaching musical concepts while playing. It caused me to wonder how I could duplicate it to make it work for anyone - teacher, parent or grandparent. The solution? An illustrated children's book with a dramatized narration on an enclosed audio CD. A talented team of musicians, a writer, a website designer and an engineer formed to create *The Adventures of Freddie the Frog*."

Sharon introduced Freddie the Frog to her music students in 1995 and discovered the magic of games, storytelling and puppetry in teaching. She authored *Freddie the Frog and the Thump in the Night*, *Freddie the Frog and the Bass Clef Monster*, *Freddie the Frog and the Mysterious Wahooooo*, and *Freddie the Frog and the Secret of Crater Island* as the first of adventuresome stories using fundamental music concepts.

Sharon enjoys sharing her teaching methods at music conferences and clinics with teachers around the globe and teaches general music to the K-3 students in the **Centerville Community School District** in Centerville, Iowa.

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