

ISAAC'S WORLD

by

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## ABSTRACT

*Isaac's World* is an electronic piece featuring audio samples of my son, Isaac, a three-year old, Brazilian and American citizen who speaks both Portuguese and English.

Through this composition, I attempted to capture and musically evoke a child's sense of personal experience, growth, and development, using Isaac's diverse vocal sounds, including English and Portuguese words spoken by Isaac. The title of the composition, *Isaac's World*, is a result of my endeavor to artistically illustrate not only Isaac's experience thus far as a curious toddler, but also the new world awaiting future generations of our family, descendants of Isaac, the first American-born child of our lineage.

DEDICATION

To Isaac, my son.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I “give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!” With my music, I “make a joyful noise to the Lord!” (Psalm 106:1; 100:1)

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## COMPOSITION

*Isaac's World*, available in audio format, is an electronic piece featuring diverse vocal sounds of my son, Isaac. Much like a timeline, the composition unfolds chronologically, with each of its three sections, representing individual stages of Isaac's life. The first represents his life in the womb (from the beginning to 2'26"); the second represents the time from birth to the time his first words were spoken (2'26" to 5'42"); the third and final section (starting at 5'42") is focused on the time from when Isaac learned to speak to the present.

Besides using Isaac's vocal sounds throughout the composition, the first section also features Isaac's heartbeat, recorded while in his mother's womb. In this first section, I intended to represent his cells being formed and multiplied, his development, as well as times of great physical activity, and times during which he was at rest. At the beginning of the second section, at 2'26", his crying sound represents his birth, and his name spoken in English and Portuguese, as well as fragments of the American and Brazilian national anthems, evoke Isaac's dual citizenship. In addition to featuring distinct and clearly identifiable pitches, this section also features the sounds of Isaac being breastfed, crying, laughing, and other vocal sounds that were rhythmically treated to evoke Isaac crawling, walking, and playing. Starting at 4'14", a transition to the third section represents Isaac's brain processing words. Then, at 5'42", his first word *mamãe*, mom in Portuguese, is presented, and the last section begins. The utilization of words in both the English and Portuguese languages, as spoken by Isaac, emphasizes the diverse cultural mixture of Isaac's experiences. Although this section is mainly word-based, the combination of

these languages provides expanded opportunities for exploration of rhythms and contours as influenced by the inherent traits of each language. After the diverse words from Isaac's vocabulary are explored sonically, at 7'20", the word *Isaac* becomes prominent, and pitches are incorporated again into the composition through the melody that arises from the background, and which uses the same melodic contour from the word *Isaac* (G downward glissando to D). At 7'27", harmonic, rhythmic and thematic materials, presented previously in the first and second sections, are brought back and restated along with the words leading to the ending of the piece. Since the name *Isaac* means "laughter," the sound of Isaac's laughter is also a significant motivic element of the composition.

The tools which I used to create this electronic work include a condenser microphone, an audio interface, and synthesis software Logic Pro X. Compositional matter consists of extant audio recordings and recent recordings of my son Isaac. The composition's source material was manipulated in Logic Pro X to create varied pitches, articulations, rhythms, textures, and timbres that were used as my palette of musical elements. These elements were further developed, in order to produce both vertical and horizontal sonorities in a multidimensional space. Some of the Logic Pro X tools and plugins utilized include EXS24 (Sampler), Flex Time, Flex Pitch, Pedal Board, Bass Amp, Pitch Shifter, Delay Designer, Stereo Delay, Arpeggiator, and Space Designer. Other procedures in Logic Pro X involve audio and MIDI editing, automation, and extensive bussing of audio/auxiliary channels.

The following table lists the words, used either in whole or in part, throughout the work.

English	Portuguese	Info / Translation
Airplane	Avião	
Alabama	—	
Apple	Maçã	
Baby	—	
Ball	Bola	
Banana	Banana	
Basket	—	
—	Batman	
—	Brinquedo	<i>Toy</i>
Car	Carro	
—	Carne	<i>Beef</i>
—	Cebolinha	<i>Brazilian comics character</i>
Chicken Nuggets	—	
Daddy	Papai	
—	Feijão	<i>Beans</i>
—	Frango	<i>Chicken</i>
—	Gosta	<i>I like</i>
Grapes	Uva	
Happy Meal	—	<i>McDonald's kids meal</i>
I love you, daddy	—	
I love you, mom	—	
Isaac	Isaac	<i>Both pronunciations</i>
Jack-Jack	—	<i>Character from The Incredibles movie</i>
—	Jogo dos Marios	<i>Super Mario Bros game</i>
Lego	Lego	
Lucas	Lucas	<i>Isaac's new brother</i>
—	Macarrão	<i>Pasta / Spaghetti</i>
Mom	Mamãe	
—	Mônica	<i>Brazilian comics character</i>

English	Portuguese	Info / Translation
—	Os Incríveis	<i>The Incredibles</i>
—	Pão Orange	<i>King's Hawaiian Roll</i>
—	Papai, eu quero escrever	<i>Daddy, I want to write</i>
Peppa Pig	—	
Piano	Piano	
—	Por que?	<i>Why?</i>
Roll Tide	—	<i>Rallying cry for the Alabama Crimson Tide</i>
Superman	—	
Talking Tom	—	<i>iPad game</i>
—	Vovô Edi	<i>Grandpa Edi</i>
—	Vovó Fátima	<i>Grandma Fátima</i>
—	Vovó Graça	<i>Grandma Graça</i>
—	Vovô Natan	<i>Grandpa Natan</i>

The diagram below represents the form of the piece.

FIRST SECTION life in the womb		SECOND SECTION from Isaac's birth to the time his first words were spoken			THIRD SECTION from when Isaac learned to speak to the present			
Intro	Development in the womb	Birth	Growth	Transition	Speaking	Transition	Restatement	
Cells being formed and multiplied	Times of great physical activity, and times during which he was at rest  Predominantly, a rhythmic section using mouth sounds and the heartbeat sound	Crying, American and Brazilian National Anthems	Sounds of Isaac being breastfed, crying, laughing, and other mouth-originated sounds  Evokes Isaac crawling, walking, and playing	Isaac's brain's neurons processing words	Words only	The word "Isaac" + the resulting pitches based on the word "Isaac"	Words + Pitches  Harmonic, rhythmic and thematic materials presented previously in the first and second sections	
0	0'25"	2'26"	2'47"	4'14"	5'42"	7'20"	7'27"	8'00"