

MUSIKGARTEN

Family Music for Infants and Toddlers Music and Movement Classes for Newborn Babies? (Come on, get real, you're probably thinking.....)

Absolutely! Research indicates that fetuses in utero hear and respond physically to sounds as early as the fourth month of pregnancy. By the time they're born, they recognize



their mother's voice and respond to other sounds they heard while in the womb – their father's or siblings' voices, and yes, even music!

Think of this: In order to learn to understand and speak their native language, a newborn infant hears as many as 17,000 words a day for several months before they indicate they understand a single word. And they continue to listen for many more before they can begin to speak those words back to us. But make no mistake – they are lis-

tening and absorbing and processing and assimilating absolutely everything they are exposed to! Imagine what would happen to infants who were never spoken to during the first year of life, who never heard their native language? They certainly wouldn't become the verbal creatures they need to become as toddlers!

Music is simply another language – communication through sound. We know that humans are innately musical beings – one need only look at archaeological findings and cave-dweller paintings to learn that music has played a significant role in human culture from the most prehistoric ages on. And just as with any other language, infancy and toddlerhood are the most receptive years developmentally to learn the language – but if it isn't used, it's forgotten. Music used to be an integral part of any comprehensive educational curriculum, but has been greatly reduced in the later 20th century. Sadly, today's children who aren't encouraged to use their innate language of music can lose touch with that "inner voice." Currently, it's not uncommon to find those who believe they "don't know how to sing." They lost touch with that inner voice.

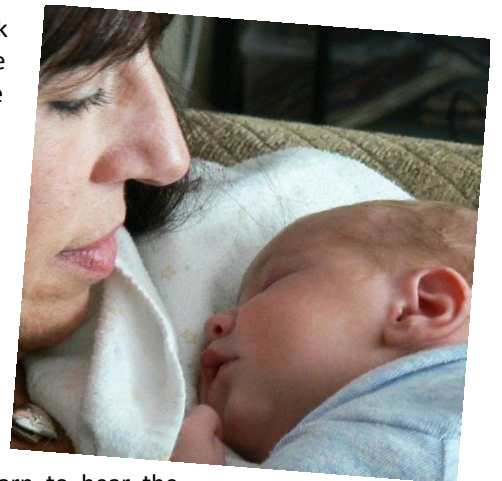
WHY MUSIC FOR BABIES?

The **Musikgarten** curriculum is based on Edwin Gordon's theory of how human beings learn language. It begins with simple absorption and assimilation through hearing, as early as pre-birth. In **Musikgarten** classes, the infant, being held by the mother, hears the mother and those around her singing. They feel the pulse of the rhythm as Mom gently taps, bounces, or strokes her child during each song. As they listen, their brain collects and processes the information in exactly the same way that they absorb the sounds and meanings of their native language – they are laying the groundwork to becoming literate beings and musical beings!

Musikgarten incorporates lullabies, rocking songs, bouncing songs, classical music and gentle games like Peek-A-Boo, and continues passing down the oral tradi-

tions of folk songs like "Hush Little Baby," "Twinkle Little Star" or "My Bonny Lies over the Ocean."

Rhythm patterns and tonal patterns are also incorporated so that infants learn to hear the difference between major, minor and modal sounds, and duple and triple rhythms.



WHY MOVEMENT FOR BABIES?



The ear serves two functions in human development: certainly, that of hearing which enables the infant to take in information and develop the ability to organize sounds into meaning, followed by learning. However, the ear has another function also important to human development: vestibular function. The inner ear plays a crucial role in the development of balance, coordination, depth perception and spatial relationships, posture,

etc. (This is why people get carsick – the fluid in the inner ear gets agitated by the vehicle's exaggerated motion.)

We know why young children love swing sets, merry-go-rounds, see-saws, turning somersaults and cartwheels, or spinning round and round until they get so dizzy they fall down giggling! This is their body's way of telling them innately what it needs to develop properly – stimulation that develops the vestibular function of the inner ear (plus, it's fun!). **Musikgarten** incorporates lots of gentle rocking motions, light bouncing, gentle limb manipulation and dancing in mom's arms into its infant movement patterns to enhance the development of the vestibular function of the inner ear.

WHY INSTRUMENTS FOR BABIES?

Musikgarten incorporates the use of instruments early on – manipulated at first with Mom's guidance until the child has developed enough coordination to begin to play on his or her own. **Musikgarten** is a very holistic and nature-oriented program that incorporates organic materials as much as possible into its program: round hoops, rattles, jingle sticks, drums are all made out of soft woods, perfectly shaped for very young hands. Brightly colored sheer cotton scarves are used in peek-a-boo and other games. Discovery activities incorporate items such

as water, flowers, pinecones, feathers, stones, etc. All these items contribute to hand-eye coordination, but also to an extended appreciation of our natural organic world.



MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL.....

The **Musikgarten** experience is for the joy and celebration of music as a family-bonding experience! While the social interaction with other babies is a wonderful side benefit of these classes, the primary focus is the relationship between the baby and its caregiver. The **Musikgarten** instructor simply serves as a model, a facilitator, in guiding the caregiver/infant couple through the activities and songs. Each couple is given a family packet including a book, a CD of the music, and some instruments so that

they can make music together as a family as part of their daily lives. It's a fabulous way to enhance the post-birth bonding process, and many parents find it helps them reconnect to their own "inner musical voice" as well!

Classes beginning in Merced in Fall 2008 through the Stribling Nelson Music Studio:

www.musikgarten.org/snmusicstudio

Musikgarten curriculae includes various classes for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, young children up through 9-year-olds!

MUSIKGARTEN: Come for the education – stay for the fun!