Appreciating Music as a Foundational Aspect of Creativity

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Synopsis

***Music has the power to enrich lives. Children benefit from observing, listening to, and participating in musical activities. Find out why and how—and also discover what a modern day composer has to say!***

**Music: Why and How**

Whether it’s singing, moving to melodies, composing, playing an instrument, harmonizing, or creating or responding to rhythmical sounds, music can be very impactful. It can enhance aspects of cognitive development (including perception, memory, and aural and language skills), and stimulate interest in the arts, and in creative expression. Music is a form of communication that helps young children recognize and embrace their feelings. Songs for rest and relaxation can sooth kids when they’re stressed or over-stimulated, and upbeat melodies can make them feel happy, confident, and motivated. Music also brings children together for interludes of fun, and pleasurable social interaction. And, at a time when many schools are experiencing cuts in music programs, it is vitally important that learning in this domain not be neglected.

It makes good sense to encourage children to participate in the appreciation and creation of music. Options abound through resource centres, conservatories, community groups, online offerings, concert series, formal or informal lessons, and other gatherings and venues. Parents can and should take the initiative to find programs, resources, and opportunities for kids to engage independently and collaboratively in musical experiences, to sustain involvement over time, and to proactively explore this creative medium.

With all this in mind, I met with Hanne Deneire, an energetic composer who seeks to instill a love of music in children by encouraging them to create their own compositions. Hanne lives and works in Antwerp. We met in Toronto, where we chatted at length about learning, creativity, and child development. What follows here is a distillation of our discussion. By virtue of five questions and answers, I offer a glimpse into what drives musicality for Hanne, and for the many children she inspires.

**Interview with Hanne Deneire**

**1.) You describe yourself as a “visionary symphonist of music and people.” What exactly does this mean?**

*"I like to look toward the future with my imagination, and act on it. ‘Symphonist’ is a more poetic word than ‘composer.’ I do not only write music, I also write programs and models where music is the vehicle to connect, empower, stimulate, and motivate people."*

**2.) How do you help children appreciate music?**

*"In my work, children become composers. Three to seven year olds learn music by making their own piece. It starts from their imagination, stimulating them and motivating them to persist in finding what they want to tell in the language of music. It makes children grow personally, and that is what life is about."*

**3.) Why do you believe that music is so important for creative expression?**

*"Music is a universal language. Throughout the world, musicians, composers, and conductors understand each other. It really is magical.*

*And, when we sing or create music, we use all the parts of the brain: left, right, front, and back. All these parts collaborate. That is very unique! Music is complex; that is, it uses so many aspects of a person’s being.*

*Music is also the only art form that moves in so many different dimensions. A painting stays the same if you look at it five minutes later. Interpretation can grow but the work itself does not change. However, a piece of music develops over time and in space, and each performance is a new creation. Every musician will interpret the music in his or her own way. A composition develops creatively each time it is performed. For a composer that’s an exceptional process—every time. I love that my music is performed and recorded by different ensembles. This makes the creative expression grow."*

**4.) From your experience, what other factors drive children’s creativity?**

*"We have to respect the thoughts and vision of children. When they go to school, we must teach and motivate them, and encourage them to take various points of view on the things they are learning. They are open—they listen and feel. When limits appear, their creativity has to be stimulated. Creativity is driven from within the child, from education, from culture, from surroundings… The challenge is to help children keep the balance."*

**5.) What do you enjoy most about your work with children?**

*"I am happy when I see children so proud of a composition or improvisation they have created. I feel joy when they express themselves with their “fantasy” and are really “in the music”—in another dimension beyond this world. When they create and discover the magic of creation that is inspiring! I know why I’m doing what I do when I see students fulfilled when coming out of their music class or standing on stage and performing their own piece or improvisation."*

**Last Words**

*“ Music is an outburst of the soul.”*

 ~ European Composer, Frederick Delius

Indeed, music has the potential to open people’s hearts and minds. Hanne Deneire, and others who work to inspire children, know the value of unlocking that potential, by nurturing creative expression and composition, and by providing instruction and encouragement. Children are thus able to engage in music, and also experience learning, pleasure, and personal growth.

**Additional Information**

To learn more about Hanne Deneire and her programs (including **House of Music**, and **Children Are Composers**) go to [**https://www.hannedeneire.com/homepage-hd**](http://www.hannedeneire.com/homepage-hd)

For more information on topics related to this article, visit [**www.joannefoster.ca**](http://www.joannefoster.ca/), and see “***Beyond Intelligence: Secrets for Raising Happily Productive Kids***,” as well as “***Being Smart about Gifted Education***” (both by Dona Matthews and Joanne Foster).

Check out Nancy Kopman’s website at [**http://nancykopman.com**](http://nancykopman.com/). Nancy is a musician, composer, performer, and educator who understands that music is an exciting, purposeful, and interactive ticket to creativity, joy, and learning.

Raffi Cavoukian is a musician, and a dynamo in the music industry. Find out more about his decades of experience working with children, including his compositions, videos, concerts, and more at [**http://www.raffinews.com**](http://www.raffinews.com/)

For additional articles on topics about children’s intelligence, productivity, and creativity, check out the column “***Fostering Kids’ Success***” under the education banner at [***The Creativity Post***](http://www.creativitypost.com/)***.***

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