



Young Edumusic – Offers Musikgarten Program

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Their Background and Beliefs



Ms. Karina - Musikgarten Teacher

It was all through a friend **Musikgarten** was introduced to Karina. Her journey began when she took up a Musikgarten course in 1998. In 1999, she started her career in teaching Musikgarten in an international school and since then has taught Musikgarten songs and activities to almost 1,000 children.

"They have demonstrations with real kids and parents during the training" stated Karina. "I found the program really helps to build musical concepts in children and they really enjoy it".

Karina has been going for reviews held by Musikgarten Malaysia. "The reviews give you new ideas and different approaches in teaching Musikgarten. We're helped to keep improving. We have to return for a review at least once a year".

Living with a family where both parents love music, and Karina herself is a piano teacher, she believes strongly in the program.

"It's a program where the sky is the limit. We can do lots of activities with the songs. It's a very flexible program allowing us to inject ideas of our own into it and you'll never get bored." Then teachers must be creative enough to inject their own ideas? "There's no targeted course plan to complete like in school. If the children are not ready for a certain activity, we modify but of course, all these are done based on the basic syllabus."



"Why I believe that Musikgarten helps?" With 6 years of experience, I'm curious on what makes her keep on believing in this program. "For example, there's a student who started since she was 4 months old and now she's all ready 3. In the beginning she was very reserved and showed little enthusiasm, but now the child is cheerful and joins in the singing! Her mother is very thankful that she sent her to this program. You have the satisfaction when you see them progress. You see them open up and able to voice out what they want", she explained passionately.

According to Karina, teachers are just facilitators in the class. They give instructions to the children and usually are the ones that do the singing. "But when the children grow up and parents need not be in class, they are able to join in the singing with ease. These children are usually 3 and a half years old and above."

Examples of Benefits to Children through the Class Activities?

Karina explains, "It helps them in learning to socialise. For example, when they are given a scarf to play with, they are encouraged to play with their friends. This helps them socialise with one another."

And it helps to build self-esteem and initiative in the children too. "They learn how to take and understand instructions. They learn to tell their parents what they would like to do and express themselves confidently. You see, in class, I will ask each child 'what would you like to do?' and everyone respects and do what the child wants to do. This builds their self-confidence. They are not afraid to voice out what they want".

It's true that during the class, Karina asked each child to give his or her choice of movement on most of the activities. From the first activity of singing hello to everyone, to the last

activity of singing goodbye. "Charlotte, what do you want for goodbye?" She always asked and addressed every child by name and no child is left out.



Playing scarf with thier lovely child

"It's total development , from the brain right down to their motor skills. For example, the children learn to socialise, focus in their listening skills and build on their creativity. It's not just music. As you can see, it also helps them in their developing language skills from the songs they sing."

And parents benefit too! "Besides bonding with the children, parents also learn to be more musical. After some time with Musikgarten, parents who were initially shy will start to join in the singing. And they also have the chance to learn to be more sociable. There's a father who always sings in class".



Helps in Future Music Learning? Exemptions?

"Exemptions in later music learning?" Karina stated. "There's the keyboard program under Musikgarten. If the child completes the program, he or she can go to the stage of grade 1 or 2 in piano playing."

Wow, this is fast.

"They are already learning to do scales during the keyboard classes. I have a 5 year old already learning that."

Their Views on the Role of Parents

"To ensure that the child behaves, not running around for example. And to help them if they are too young to take instruments on their own. Also, parents act as role models to encourage the child to participate. However, Asian parents are usually shy. We hope that they will have a change of mind and join in the dances and singing more spontaneously".

So, parents must be in the class.

"It's a great time for the children and the parents as they have this special moment to bond. Nowadays, most parents are very busy, they don't have much time for their children. You know the bond happens, for example, when they sit on their parents' laps, or when they sing, rock or dance together."

And sure enough, there was a bonding time when the teacher and parents sang a lullaby, while the parents rocked the children on their laps. After the session, Karina encouraged the children to give their parents a kiss.



Their Views on the Children

Karina believes that children learn through play. I believe in this too. "This program appeals to those who have a broader sense of thinking. Those who can accept new concepts. Asians are normally more academically inclined. When they come in and see dancing and singing, they are not sure if this is the right music class for their kids. Children's business is to play. If you take that away from them, they'll be very miserable. Why not give them the joy of learning music through play?"

And she tries her best to adapt to the development of each child. "If a child comes in, for example, already 3 years old, the child will be put into the appropriate group. However, if a child is already 4 years old, but still clings to mommy, then the child might be put into



a younger group first. It's all based on the maturity of the child."

Their Experience in Unusual Situations

When asked about hard-to-handle situations, she stated. "Once when I was teaching in a kindergarten, the children got distracted when they saw some people walking about. We need to be skillful in steering their attention back to the group. And there are situations when a new child joins in, and begins to cry unceasingly, instead of getting distracted, we have to go on with the class. The parents will have to take him out of the classroom to calm him before coming back in. We want everyone in the class to have their attention focused." And she has had experience with an autistic child. "Music is something to be enjoyed by every child. It's a gift that all should have. And this is a very good program, especially for children with special needs. I've had an autistic student before and he was able to follow the lessons quite well, and now he has even started learning to play the piano!"

Their Views on Home Materials and Practising

"We have a special family pack for each stage. When they return home, they can reinforce the purpose of the program. Yes, it is compulsory to buy the materials. It is no point if they come here to just sing and dance, and then go home. With the materials, parents can play musically with their children. Even when they're too busy, at least they can play the CD in the car, over and over again. The children will know how to sing the songs after a while. But as I say, I can only encourage them."

Finale

Karina hopes that people will come see what the concept is all about. "Don't take it as an academic concept. It helps children a lot. They become more observant, disciplined and well-mannered."