

## Polka Dot Train Studio, Sungai Buloh



Polka Dot Train Studio is housed in two first-floor shoplots in Taman Bukit Rahman Putra, Sg Buloh, Selangor. Ms. Siew Ling (Chong), the founder and principal met us with full-on excitement and we started our interview in a café located below her studio.

Ms Siew Ling came across as a very enthusiastic and passionate music educator. She began to share with us how her journey in becoming a music educator specialising in early childhood first started. Below is an excerpt of our interview with her.



**Kiddy123:** What ignited the spark in you to begin your journey as an early childhood music educator?

**Siew Ling:** It all began because of my love for my family comprising of my then year-old son and loving husband. I decided to put my family first before my career, so I gave up my 10 years' profession as an auditor at a multinational accounting firm to spend more time with my family. My initial plan was to start a kindergarten of my own so that I could guide and nurture my young son.

Being an ethical and professional person, I promptly obtained a diploma in the Montessori method of education. However, I quickly realized that running a kindergarten may not enable me to fulfil my dream of an ideal family life. Luckily for me, I was fortunate enough to have had the

opportunity to obtain a music education in music theory and practical piano when I was young, completing my studies at the grade 8 level after 12 years at the age of 19 years old. I thought with my basic musical knowledge I could seek to offer my services as a piano tutor around my area.

**Kiddy123: How did the idea to start Polka Dot Train Studio come about?**

**Siew Ling:** While working as a piano tutor, I discovered that the children coming for lessons were not well prepared. I realized that what worked for me 25 years ago cannot be implemented for children of the new 21<sup>st</sup> century. As a mother myself, I began to realize that knowing music and knowing children were not one and the same. I needed to understand how children learn music. I believe all children love music and with a proper method, every child will have the potential to unlock the musician in them.

My search for a reputable and recognized early childhood music education method led me to Musikgarten USA. After a year of training, I began offering age appropriate music classes for children from birth to 9 years old in music studios, kindergartens as well as community centres. Within 2 years, I felt confident enough to start my own studio, which I named as Polka Dot Train Studio.

**Kiddy123: Can you tell us about Musikgarten?**



**Siew Ling:**

Musikgarten is a music program that will help develop the skills, abilities and talents necessary for a child to be truly musical. Music activities are used to foster development of the whole child - mind, body and spirit - and to promote music at home through the use of family materials.



In Malaysia there are 4 levels of the Musikgarten program being taught. At every level the emphasis of the program is on being musical, singing, dancing, listening and moving to music, learning Tonal and Rhythm patterns and using simple instruments.

What distinguishes Musikgarten from other early childhood music program is its keyboard levels. It is a unique level that bridges the children from just singing, dancing, listening and moving to new areas of musical expressions via reading, writing, composing and playing the keyboard instrument.

**Kiddy123: How does it benefit the students?**

A solid Musikgarten education will provide the students a foundation for sustained musical development. Movements such as rocking, bouncing infant students, walking and jumping with our toddler students and finally playing games and dancing helps refine the students coordination, sense of beat, phrasing, development of rhythm and meter. Singing helps students to learn to discriminate sounds and build a vocabulary of patterns and styles. Musikgarten babies, toddlers and young children play simple percussion

instruments in every class. Playing instruments will increase our joy of making music while refining the student's movement as well as understanding of beat, meter, pitch and phrase. During Musikgarten classes, students will hear, speak and play rhythm and tonal patterns. At some point, music literacy finally begins to emerge and the students will want to learn how to write and read these musical patterns. Musikgarten children are now ready for the next level of development. They have fallen in love with music, have a mind full of musical thoughts and have established the body control needed to master an instrument, be it piano, violin, guitar, drum, bass or ukelele.

Once the interview ended, Ms Siew Ling gave us a guided tour of her studio. Though occupying 2 shoplots, there were only 5 teaching rooms in total. Unlike many other music studios, Ms Siew Ling's teaching rooms are spacious and equipped with well-tuned and properly cared for instruments.



Of the 5 rooms, the most admired is the room which could also be converted into a performance stage. Ms Siew Ling believes that the joy of music-making should be shared and what better way to share than to have informal recitals on Sunday afternoons for family members and friends. Everyone, no matter their age or their level of accomplishment are allowed to perform on the grand piano.



Another unusually huge room is reserved for Musikgarten classes. The room is brightly painted and equipped with the most interesting percussion and Orff / Bar instruments for use by the students. Many small keyboards are placed along the wall for group keyboard classes and also to free up space for movement activities.

By the end of our visit, we were so inspired by Ms Siew Ling's passion. Undeniably her passion and her drive are what made Polka Dot Train Studio lively and strong for 12 years. Though we believe Musikgarten is an exceptional program, there is no denying that it is Ms Siew Ling's love for children and music that makes Polka Dot Train Studio stand out from all other music studios.

Find out more about [Polka Dot Train Studio, Sungai Buloh.](#)

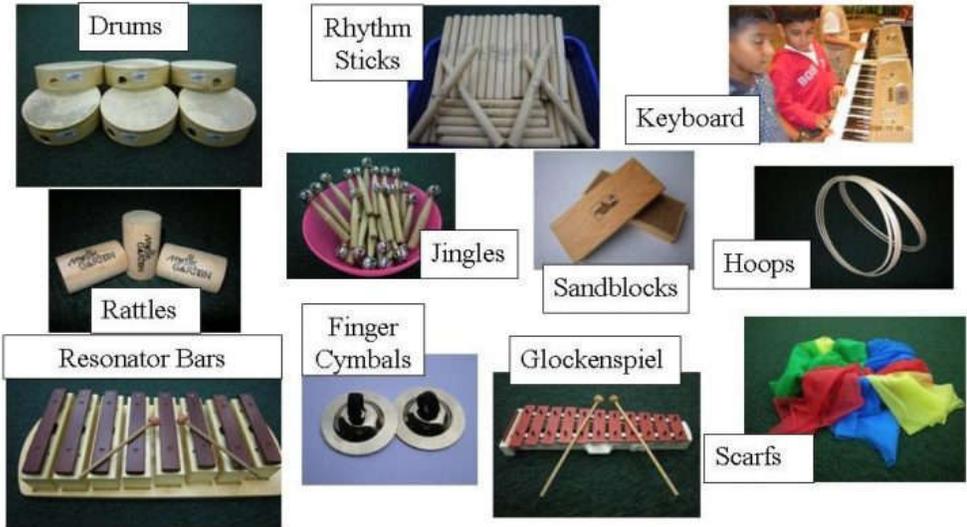


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## *Description*

“**Teaching Music, Understanding Children**”. This is Musikgarten, a respected music and movement program that awakens and develops inborn joy and talent for making music in infants, toddlers, preschoolers and young children. As an Authorised Music Centre for Musikgarten Malaysia, Polka Dot Train Studio offers a spectrum of music classes from birth to 9 years. We begin with **Family for Babies** and continue through to **Music Makers at the Keyboard**, the last module in the Musikgarten program that allows a young child to step across an important bridge from general music learning to instrumentals skill.

### **Musikgarten modules offered are:**

Family Music for Babies ( 0 – 18months)

Family Music for Toddlers (18months – 4 years)

Cycle of Seasons ( 4 – 5 ½ years)

An Introduction to Music Makers at the Keyboard (5 ½ - 6 years)

Music Makers at the Keyboard Years 1 – 3 (6 – 9 years)

In addition to Musikgarten, Polka Dot Train Studio also offers instrumental lessons for children and adults in Piano, Violin, Drum, Guitar, Bass and Ukelele. Polka Dot Train Studio's main priority is to instill a love for music in children and adults. However, in the event an assessment of playing skills is requested by parents and adult students, we have a wide range of music examination boards whom we have partnered with in recent years ; namely ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal School of Music), Trinity Guildhall, RockschooL, ANZCA (Australia & New Zealand Cultural Boards) and LCM (London College of Music).

Since our music lessons are mostly conducted using the English medium and also due to requests from parents, we conduct english language classes from elementary to advanced level from age 7 and above. Our TESOL qualified teacher is a consultant for EFL International Education Group, which provides TESOL certification and various enrichment programs for individuals and companies.

All lessons are conducted by qualified and experienced teachers; especially Musikgarten lessons which are conducted by a teacher with 14 years of teaching experience.

### **Opening Hours**

Monday - 4:00PM to 8:30PM

Monday - 7:45PM to 9:00pm (Sri Damansara Clubhouse)

Friday - 1:30PM to 9:30PM

Saturday - 8:30AM to 6:30PM, Sunday - 9:30AM to 6:00PM