



Mama Treble Clef Studio – Offers Musikgarten

Address : Lot 3021 & Lot 3205, 3rd Floor, Endah Parade Shopping Complex,
Seri Petaling, 57000 Kuala Lumpur

Tel : 603-95432201

Mobile : 019-2571338 / 019-2212595

Email : rayrocker@yahoo.com

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Their Background and Beliefs



Ms. Alicia - Musikgarten Teacher

"You need to understand how to teach big children, before you can understand how to teach the young ones." Stated Alicia, principal of Mama Treble Clef Studio, and also one of the Musikgarten teachers in the studio.

Everything started when she took up Music Circle, the basic Musikgarten course in around 1996. Having tried out the concept in a kindergarten, and convinced that the concept works with young children, she took more and more of the Musikgarten courses. Now, she is already a certified teacher for the full range of Musikgarten courses!

Now, what makes her so convinced that the concept works? "I'm a piano teacher myself. You must understand that teaching a 3-year-old through normal music classes is impossible. Not even 2 minutes!" Laughed Alicia. "Their attention span is very short.

They will either need their parents to be around, or they will cry or simply run around. So for little kids, it is better to teach in group, with the parents present. It helps them to listen



to instructions."

She goes on. "Actually students nowadays are very smart. You tell them to put their hands on 2 black keys; they understand what you want them to do. But, they are not willing to follow your instructions. 'Why do I need to follow?' They do not understand why they should be sitting here. They do not know how to enjoy music. And they do not know how many instruments are there all around the world; they just know a single one, the piano, because they are sent to piano classes. That's why sometimes they have problem linking the practical part with the theory part."

Examples of Benefits to Children through the Class Activities?



Children love the sound of resonator bar

"Musikgarten helps them to understand music more. They are exposed to at least 2 or 3 kinds of instruments, and the activities are proper for each group. The kids are able to sing the range of songs, and the instruments sizes are within their palm grasp. All these help them to link together rhythm and tonal patterns. And you can see that their rhythmic concept is very good. Normally it's hard to teach young children rhythm, but it's easy to teach Musikgarten kids." Explains Alicia.

So, except helping kids learn music, does Musikgarten help in other aspects too?

"Yes." She answered. "They are more focused. And it also helps build them up socially and emotionally. For example, some kids when they first join in, they just want to observe. They do not join in the activities. Some of them are too attached to the parents. So we don't force them to. Parents usually want to expose their kids more, but they must be patient. And you see in the class, the activities make the kids run in pairs, or in groups. Sometimes they even dance together. All these help the kids to socialize."

I like the part when she pretends play on a fake microphone. She was singing, with 'wa wa' and 'ma ma' in the lyrics. Then she held onto a stick, pretend it to be a microphone. "Oh, there's my microphone. Who wants to try wa wa? Samantha?" She says 'wa wa' into the microphone, then put the microphone near the child's mouth. "Can you say 'wa wa'?"



The child imitated. "Thank you, good try!" She did this with every child.

Alicia continued. "It helps them learn discipline too. You see during the start of class, we will greet everyone. Only when everyone feel comfortable and secure do we start the activities. If anyone cries, the parents will have to calm the child first before the activities start. The teacher has to control the class, to discipline the kids. Otherwise we will be singing to our self!" she laughs. "When the kids try to touch things, we must not give in at least once. We have to train them to understand, and to discipline themselves."

Helps in Future Music Learning? Exemptions?

According to Alicia, exposing children to music at an early age does help shorten their learning curve when it comes to actual music learning. But if you talk about exemptions, it depends on the children.

Their Views on the Role of Parents



"The teacher is only a coach to the parents. The teacher's job is to awaken the children's interest in music. The parents learn from the teacher how to teach the kids, then teach their kids using the same method, with the help of the home materials. And this sometimes awaken the sense of music in the parents too!"

She continues. "However, for the baby and toddler class, the parents must be present." According to

Alicia, during the baby and toddler classes, they will guide the parents on what can be done, what cannot be done, and how to play with their kids.

"What cannot be done?" replied Alicia. "We must not scold the children when they do not follow instructions. They are observing and learning, even if they are not following what you want them to do. We must not force them to follow the class. They will do it when they are ready."



Their Views on Communication between Parents and Teacher

She stresses that communication between the parents and the teacher is very important.

"For the Cycle of Seasons and keyboard classes, the parents may not be in the class. But still, it is important that the parents are aware of what their kids are doing and learning in the class. The teacher should communicate with the parents. For example over here, we ask the parents to join the class once or twice a month. So the parents acknowledge and understand the progress of their children. There will be progress, even though we do not encourage on expectations."

It is a wonder that this teacher actually calls the parents by phone to talk to them about their child's progress, if they are unable to join the class, or arrange for a small talk after the class.

Their Experience in Unusual Situations

When asked about her experience with kids of special needs, she explained. "I've had one autistic student before. The teacher must understand autistic child. We will put them into a more appropriate class, for example putting them into toddler class; even it is not their age group. Then we teach slowly. If the kid is of a mild level, they can join in the normal children. But we will explain to the other kids. You have to understand that other kids will think, how come this kid is so big sized, why is he joining us. We have to explain to them that they are lucky because they are normal. So this will help them to understand, and even help them to learn to be compassionate to others. But sometimes if the autistic level is higher, or if the kid is violent, it is better to involve the siblings, and not other kids, because siblings will be more understanding."

Their Views on Home Materials and Practising

"Yes." Says Alicia. "Home materials are very important. And after you buy it, it is better if you practise it at home. Otherwise, it is similar to going to piano lessons, and having a piano at home, but no practising being done."

Finale

"There should be no expectations on the children when they join in this class." Says Alicia. "Parents who send their children here usually understand that too expecting is not good for their children. The progress will be there, but forceful expectations is not good."