

Is Your Child Capable of Composing Music? Maybe the next Mozart?

We've all heard of them. Child prodigies who begin composing music at some ridiculously young age. For instance, history reports that Mozart was writing minuets by the time he was five years old. Amazing. At five years of age, I'm not sure that I knew the difference between my finger and my thumb and I certainly wasn't composing music.

Now there is no doubt that the fact that Mozart was composing music by the age of five does not prove that any of the rest of us ever could compose music, but a number of studies conducted over the past fifty or so years indicates that most children can begin composing music as long as they are given both guidance and opportunity.

True, in the vast majority of the cases the end product is not going to rival anything that Mozart put out, but just because you (or your child) may not be the best there ever was at composing music doesn't mean the attempt is not worth the effort. If we follow that reasoning why would a child learn to walk or run when he or she knows he could never walk or run as well as, say, Michael Jordan? Why would they learn to talk if they knew they could never speak as well as Bill Clinton or Ronald Reagan?

Similarly, imagine if Mozart's parents had not given him the opportunity to be exposed to music and then the formal training that gave him the tools to begin composing music. The world would be a poorer place without the input of this musical genius.

In Mozart's situation, he began formal training on the keyboard at the age of four and within a year he was composing music - though I'm sure that it wasn't of the caliber of his later works. In the case of the average child, however studies have shown that if given the opportunity and the education (i.e. instruction on an instrument, a little bit of music theory, etc) average children can begin composing music somewhere around the age of nine.

Give your child the opportunity and training he or she needs to begin composing music. In most cases it will develop their mind, round out their education, and give them a creative outlet. Eventually, however, of all the children composing music who might not have otherwise, the next Mozart will spring and if it's your child, the world will thank you. And if not, at least your child has been exposed to some good music and had his or her mind stretched a bit.

I am extremely thankful that my parents had the good sense to expose me to music by way of piano lessons starting when I was about 7. And even though it didn't "take" until I was an early teenager, when it did I had the background in music theory and technique to where I could progress rapidly from then on. And while I'm a country mile from Mozart's class, I do well enough to enjoy my self and make a living in music.

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About the Author

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