

音樂的奇妙功效

The miraculous power of music

最近，美國一項有關音樂的研究報告指出，學習樂器有助孩子們加強在詞匯和語言表達的能力。看到這些報導後，家長們是否也急不及待為孩子報讀樂器班？音樂對孩子帶來的正面影響是不容置疑的，但如何能恰到好處地把音樂灌注在孩子生命中，又是家長們需花心思研究的一門課題。

A study in the US reveals that learning how to play musical instruments helps children to strengthen their vocabulary and language ability. After hearing about these reports, parents must be eager to enroll their children in a music course. It is unquestionable that music can only have a positive impact on children, but it will be a matter of how we are going to bring this into our children's lives.



對不少家長來說，讓孩子學習樂器是給他們接觸音樂的不二法門。但專家提醒大家，在為孩子報讀樂器班前，應先聆聽他們的意見，看孩子是否真的願意和有興趣去學習。報讀課程後，也需多留意孩子的行為和情緒。若孩子開始表現得抗拒上樂器班，便要跟他們多作溝通，瞭解背後原因；切忌盲目逼使其繼續學習，以免他感到無助、被孤立，繼而產生挫敗感和自卑感，最終弄巧反拙，得不償失。此外，家長亦需注意時間分配，別把時間表安排得太緊湊。這樣，孩子才會把音樂視為一種享受，而非災難。

除了學習樂器外，聆聽音樂也可幫助舒緩情緒，令孩子心

情更放鬆。普遍情況下，柔和的音樂和較慢的歌曲能讓孩子的心境平靜一些；而節奏明快的音樂便能令小朋友心情較興奮，情緒也會較高漲。要注意的是，一首歌曲能否達到預期成效，很多時受到孩子的「個人經歷」影響。舉例說，若小明兒時常在媽媽懷中聽着《搖籃曲》，那麼每當聽到此曲，他便會感到很有安全感；相反，若他的父母總在爭吵時播放此曲，這首歌便會讓他感到不安。

在專業領域上，音樂的功效同樣備受肯定。近年來，音樂治療在本港愈來愈流行，其涵蓋的範圍很廣，能幫助孩子面對和處理各類問題，當中包括：生活變遷/調整（如父母離異或親人逝世）、焦慮症、厭食症、創傷經驗、情緒困擾等。透過這些治療，孩子的心理質素便得以改善，在過去不少案例中，孩子經治療後都變得

更開朗，社交能力亦得以提升；在沒有心理壓力下，學業成績亦會有所進步。當然，這些效果都是因人而異，並沒有絕對標準。

讓孩子接觸音樂的原因有很多，而最終的出發點還不是為了孩子。若然他們對音樂是有天分的，自然會在過程中感到滿足和愉快，家長在悉心栽培的同時，不妨多跟他們聊天，一同分享學習路上的喜與悲；倘若孩子的天分不在音樂，閒來跟他們聽聽兒歌也會是一大樂事。音樂更有助患有情緒病和學習障礙的孩子面對和處理生活上的各樣困難，相信只要恰當地讓孩子接觸音樂，我們便能漸漸領會它神奇的功效了。

For many parents, encouraging their children to learn musical instruments is one of the simplest and best ways to expose them to music. Meanwhile, parents are advised to listen to the opinions of your child even if you have already decided to have them learn a musical instrument. It is important to see if the child is really willing and interested in learning how to play an instrument. After they are enrolled in the course, parents also have to pay attention to their behaviour and emotions. If the child begins to refuse going to class, parents should try their best to find out the reasons why. Never force the child to continue the class, or they could feel helpless and isolated, developing a sense of failure and inferiority. Moreover, parents should also pay attention to the allocation of time, do not make your child's schedule too tight. This way your child can view music as an enjoyment, and not a disaster.

In addition to learning instruments, listening to music can also help ease mood swings and make children feel more relaxed. In most cases, soft music and slow songs can offer children a peace of mind; whereas fast-paced music drives them to be more excited and motivated. One point that should be noted is that, whether a song can achieve the expected "results" very much depends on a child's "personal experience". For example, if John was always sleeping in the arms of his mum while listening to the "Lullaby" song, the song would then give him a feeling of security. On the other hand, if his parents play this song whenever they argue, then the song would only give him a feeling of insecurity.

The effectiveness of music was also recognized in the professional field. In recent years, music therapy has become more popular in Hong Kong and the scope is really broad. It has been proven that music therapy can help children address quite a lot of problems; these include: life changes/adjustments such as parental separation or death of loved ones, stress management, eating disorders, traumatic experiences, depression and so on. Through the treatments, the mental health of children would improve. There have been some cases in the past where after the therapy, not only did their social skills improve, they also became more cheerful. And with their pressure eased, their academic performance improved too! Bear in mind though that the effects of the therapy vary according to different children.

There are many reasons as to why parents try to expose their kids to music, but no matter what the reasons are, the ultimate goal is for the sake of their children. All in all, your children will be satisfied and happy whenever they practise the instrument if they really enjoy it. In the meantime, parents are suggested to accompany them as much as possible, instead of simply paying their tuition fees. In contrast, if the children are not interested in learning music, you can simply listen to some relaxing songs with them during your time alone together. Moreover, for children with mood swings or learning disabilities, music can help to relieve their stress. Let's believe in the power and magic of music!



與一般樂器班相比，音樂治療有何特別之處？

一般而言，音樂治療師會非常着重與小朋友的交流和互動，也會鼓勵他們作曲、填詞，並嘗試透過這些創作，深入瞭解他們的內心世界。治療師也會利用音樂來吸引小朋友一起唱歌和交談，藉此練習發音，慢慢改善他們的說話能力。治療師也懂得因應不同樂器的特點來為小朋友進行治療，如與患有自閉症的孩子溝通時，會以結他來輔助，因為結他能讓治療師與孩子面對面而坐，拉近彼此的距離。

Compared with general music classes, what are the special features of music therapy?

In general, music therapists focus more on the communication and interaction with children. Sometimes, they encourage children to compose songs and lyrics. Then the therapists would try to have an in-depth understanding of the child's inner world through these creations. They would also make use of music to encourage children to sing together, in order to practise their pronunciation; and gradually improve their speaking skills. Music therapists can also spot the special characteristics of various instruments and adopt them for treating different children. For instance, when handling the case of autistic children, they prefer using the guitar to assist in getting the child to communicate, as it allows the therapists to sit face to face with them; hence, narrowing the distance between them.