



Making the Gift of Music Work for Your Child: Hot to Avoid Your Child “Dropping Out” from Music Studies

by Rufina Gorin, MA, NCMT, Musical Director, The Gorin School of Music

"The artist is nothing without the gift, but the gift is nothing without work."

- Emile Zola (1840-1902)

I would like to discuss the topic of "dropping out" from music instruction. Mostly the drops seem to happen as a consequence of the lack of maintaining required daily practice, which is a vital ingredient of instrumental learning. Why should this not be a reason for "dropping out?"

Very often parents feel forced to make this decision because "the child does not practice enough" or "the child is not enjoying" the lessons, or just simply because "the child does not want to do it anymore." This reasoning is usually followed with the statement "when he/she will be older we will come back to continue music lessons." I have heard this too many times.... And since I have not been asked for advice, at that point I diplomatically reply, "I understand."

To be honest, considering my experience of more than 40 years in music education, I know that it is rare for kids who drop out of music study to ever come back. And although I say "I understand", at some level I do not understand some adults who are passing on responsibility of making an important decision onto shoulders of youngsters, decisions which will influence children's character and future. Children need guidance and parenting, and adults in their wisdom should make the decisions concerning their kids. Sometimes it is wise to ask a teacher or music educator for a professional opinion, just as we ask a doctor or a lawyer or accountant for advice in the area of their expertise.

It is wise to be tuned in to your child's interests, capabilities and talents; it is wise to have various discussions with your child in this regard to understand your child better, also being able to influence your child, and to make a right decision together.

Any study requires focus, discipline, and consistent practice, and if a child does not possess these qualities and is not willing to develop them on their own, the result should not be "to drop the study" but to help the child to develop them. These are qualities that will lead to success not just in music but in many other realms of life.

My point is this: If at the early age we are allowing the child to drop because of required work, what kind of unconscious message are we sending to this child? What might be the implications of that decision? Discussing with your child from time to time various aspects of learning, talking about your learning experience, or bringing up cases of celebrated individuals are a chance to share with child your thoughts and knowledge at the same time help them to understand that the feeling of wanting to avoid the discipline of practice or give up that they have is not an exception; it is a common fact, so they will not feel inadequate or incapable.

A very good example is Albert Einstein, Nobel Laureate and world most famous scientist. Albert Einstein was one of the greatest minds in world history. Einstein is known as a brilliant physicist who contributed more to the scientific world than any other person. His theories on relativity paved the way for how science currently views time, space, energy, and gravity. In his early years, Albert Einstein's mother was disturbed by how long it took him to learn how to talk. His elementary school teachers thought that he was a foolish dreamer, and one teacher had even asked him to drop out of his class. Young Albert hated sports as a child,

and they made him dizzy and tired, but he made up for his dislike of sports with his love for music. I am bringing up this example as proof that even the most brilliant people need understanding, support and perseverance. There may be good reasons for dropping out, but it is not an action to be taken lightly. Before deciding to drop out, I urge you to reflect deeply on the causes and consequences of that decision. I encourage any parent with a child that is contemplating dropping out to give me a call before that final decision is made. Perhaps together we can make a difference.

About the Author

Mrs. Rufina Gorin, Musical Director, The Gorin School of Music is Nationally Certified Music Teacher (NCMT). In addition, she holds a M.A. in Piano Performance and Pedagogy, Nezin Gogol Music Teachers' Training Institute, Ukraine and a B.A. in Piano Performance and Pedagogy, Music College, Kiev, Ukraine. Currently, Gorin is a faculty member at National Guild Performance Auditions, an adjudicator of CM and National Guild Performance Auditions, Sound of Music Festival, U.S. Open Piano Competition, and others. She has been an active member of the Music Teachers' Association of California (MTAC) since 1981, serving on the Board of Palo Alto Branch since 1988 and as branch president 1993-1995. In 1996, Gorin was elected to the State Board of MTAC and served for four years, completing her tenure there as a Vice President. Previously, she was piano faculty chair and piano teacher at Special Children's Music School, Kiev, Ukraine; Accompanist for Children's Ballet Group, Kiev Ballet Company, Ukraine; and a piano teacher at Junior Music Academy and Conejo Valley Conservatory, Thousand Oaks, CA.

The Gorin School of Music

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We recognize that every student is different, so depending on the music student's age, personality, musical ability and availability, The Gorin School of Music offers a choice of enrolling students in Music Program Track A or Music Program Track B. The rigorous and comprehensive curriculum coupled with qualified, supportive and experienced teachers make the music education learning experience meaningful and exciting for Gorin School of Music students of all ages.

To learn more about The Gorin School of music, visit www.gsm-music.com, call (650)-961-4910, or email us at mmgorin@aol.com.