

CHILDREN'S MUSIC

Hitting the Right Notes

How do you encourage a youngster's interest in music?

A COOING BABY ISN'T JUST CHARMING THE people around her—she's also taking the first steps toward singing, says Donna Brink Fox, the Eisenhart Professor of Music Education and a specialist in teaching music to young children.

She's also the director of the Eastman Community Music School's Early Childhood Music Program.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this fall, the program has helped introduce a generation of Rochester's tiniest tots—they can enroll at just four months old—to the wonders of music.

Fox offers a few tips to parents, grandparents, and others who'd like to share their love of music with the children in their lives:

Let kids know how much you enjoy music by responding to what you hear, not just listening passively: sing along, dance, and move to the music. For infants especial-

ly, it's nice to help them sway and twirl in ways they can't do alone.

Listen to a variety of musical styles, but keep the experience simple. Dense lyrics or orchestration can be hard for children to process. Choose music that's unfussy and gives listeners the impetus to move.

Encourage musical play with toys and found objects—even a pot and a wooden spoon works, if you're game for it—and cheer on their efforts or play along, taking turns and responding musically. "It's what jazz musicians do," says Fox.

For preschoolers and younger kids, music is best approached as play. Few children are receptive to the structure of formal music lessons before age six or so.

Show kids music is something you value. Spending time on music lets them know it's important to you.

—KATHLEEN MCGARVEY



PIANO COMPETITION

Michigan Maestro

OVATION: Pianist Allen Yuan acknowledges the audience after winning the Eastman Young Artists International Piano Competition for his final-round performance with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. The 17-year-old from Farmington Hills, Mich., was one of 22 teenage pianists from China, the United States, Canada, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan who took part in this summer's annual competition. For more, visit <http://tinyurl.com/36q5uo8>.

