

# Note PERFECT

Just how important is music to your child's development? Mark Kebble finds some interesting answers when talking to Cala Records founder, Geoffrey Simon



**I**t was the most wonderful thing. My niece, barely a year old, having a tantrum in the back of our car on a long journey visiting relatives. Wanting to put the much vaunted Baby Music to the test, we put on Baby Harp – and watch open-mouthed as she very quickly falls into a very contented sleep.

'That's our unique baby music formula,' smiles Geoffrey Simon, the man behind Baby Harp and a host of other releases on babymusic.com. 'It's this combination of incredible richness made by a large number of instruments, playing to the right sound and in a very relaxed, laid-back manner. There is no tension in their playing, therefore no tension in their sound, but there is still this deep, glorious richness – that combination is the magical thing.'

It has proved to be a combination that babies (and many adults) have been very open to since the first Baby Music release in 2006. Today it forms part of Cala Records, which acclaimed conductor Geoffrey founded in 1990. The website babymusic.com has taken things a step further and looks at how music can aid a child's development.

'Sending babies to sleep is one thing, but you want music to do other things: you want to stimulate them,' Geoffrey says. 'There is the baby Mozart phenomenon, where there is all this talk that playing music to your baby will make him or her cleverer. Music is good

for you.' What you will find on the website are a host of resources that start young, but gradually build up in difficulty as the child gets older, almost as if that child is growing up with babymusic.com. 'We want them to,' nods Geoffrey.

Having travelled the world to learn his craft – from growing up in Australia, to studying in America and coming to England to teach – Geoffrey has seen first-hand the desire of parents to ensure

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their children have the opportunity to experience music. 'When I first started teaching here, the state started supporting music less, but what sprang up from this was the need to meet demand from parents – and from this emerged community music programmes. There is an outlet for talent.'

It's remarkable to see how much music can help to shape an individual. Chatting to Geoffrey, we cover off such subjects as research connecting musical participation to better school behaviour and how achievement in music helps



develop self-esteem. What's more, unlike a lot of things in our lives that are supposedly good for us, music is fun – and as my niece testifies to, incredibly relaxing also. We will be keeping a close eye on her development accompanied, of course, by Baby Music. ●

❖ To find out more information about Baby Music, visit [babymusic.com](http://babymusic.com)