

General presentation

La musique aux enfants is an educational project spearheaded by **Maestro Kent Nagano**. It aims to offer children the opportunity to develop their full potential thanks to **intensive music learning**. Studies have demonstrated that learning music has **important beneficial effects** on cognitive, physical, emotional, psychological and social development in children, and that these effects in turn have a positive influence on their **academic achievements** as well as on **all aspects of their lives**.

La musique aux enfants benefits from the expertise and support of numerous **partner organizations**; the principal ones are the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, Université de Montréal and the Commission scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île. In addition to being the initiators of the project, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal offers children in the program very special access to its musicians and its concerts. Université de Montréal contributes to drafting the **educational framework** of the project, along with the **scientific studies** being conducted with the children. Finally, the Commission scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île, besides hosting the project at one of its schools, contributes its experience and expertise in teaching and in the implementation of enriching cultural activities.

This past October, 160 students in **kindergarten and prekindergarten** at Ecole Saint-Rémi Annexe in **Montréal-Nord** began their music education. Two groups of 16 students are part of the research: the *Musique +* group and the *Musique au quotidien* group. Children in the ***Musique +* groupe** benefit from **three hours of music courses per day**. They learn piano, violin, choral singing and rhythm. Children in the ***Musique au quotidien* group**, meanwhile, receive **one and a quarter hours of music per day**. Disciplines taught to students in this second group are piano, choral singing and rhythm. Through this diversified program and the range of cultural activities offered, we are seeking first and foremost to foster in the children the **pleasure** of making music, but also **perseverance, diligence, self-esteem, listening, and open-mindedness**. These values constitute major assets that will enable them to achieve greater success in school, and also to become better citizens, open to the world and engaged. All the other students at the school will have the opportunity to participate in cultural activities that will bring them into contact with music and with the musicians of the OSM.

Music lessons are given by a **qualified team** made up of four piano educators, a violin educator and a choral singing and rhythm educator, under the **supervision** of the program manager. The facilities consist of eight classrooms, an activities area and a multifunction concert hall that can seat up to 100 people. The premises, which have been outfitted thanks to the support of generous partners like Satoko Shibata and Richard Ingram as well as the Marcelle and Jean Coutu Foundation, will be made available to the community when classes are not in session.

Educational program

The educational program of **La musique aux enfants** establishes general objectives as well as objectives specific to each subject taught to students in the *Musique +* and *Musique au quotidien* groups. It is inspired by the École des jeunes program at the Université de Montréal Faculty of Music.

Mission

Our mission is to promote the development of the child's full potential by way of an intensive teaching program of piano, violin, choral singing and rhythm, complemented by an array of enriching cultural activities.

Approach

The overall wellbeing of the child lies at the heart of our teaching priorities. Instruction and teaching activities are tailored to the child's pace of learning according to the situations proposed, with no lowering of the high standards proper to an intensive program. Instrumental practice and practice strategies are supervised at all times by an educator.

General objectives

- Awakening the pleasure of making music and fostering the child's development
- Integrating the basics of complete musical training in the child
- Introducing the child to instrumental technique on the piano and/or the violin, in choral singing and in rhythm
- Offering complementary cultural activities fostering the development of the child's cognitive faculties
- Allowing for the creation of links between the different musical disciplines taught and the content of the academic program proposed by the Québec government's Ministry of Education and Higher Education

Principal disciplines

	<i>Musique +</i>	<i>Musique au quotidien</i>
Piano	private classes 85 minutes/day*	semiprivate classes (2 children) 30 minutes/2 days
Choral singing and rhythm	group classes (4 children/group) 25 minutes/day	group classes (8 to 16 children) 45 to 75 minutes/day**
Violin	group classes (4 children/group) 55 minutes/day*	

*Each teaching period is 20 to 30 minutes long

**Each teaching period is 30 to 45 minutes long

Educational program *(additional information)*

Specific objectives

Piano

The piano course is aimed at developing the skills essential to playing the piano while rapidly introducing the child to the repertoire of the great composers written for young pianists.

- Posture, approach to the keyboard (position of hand and arm)
- Acquisition of theoretical elements and basic techniques (technical exercises in game form, scales, arpeggios, exercises and little studies)
- Introduction to the parameters allowing for musical expression (nuance, tempo and articulation)
- Development of playing by ear through the learning of folk pieces
- Creation of melodies with harmony (exploration of composition)
- Learning piano repertoire first by way of methods and secondly through the study of the classical piano repertoire

Violin

The violin course is aimed at developing the skills essential to playing the violin, thereby awakening in the child a concern for sound quality and intonation.

- Balanced posture, dynamic and relaxed handling of the violin and the bow, movements on the neck (gradual introduction to vibrato and to changes of position)
- Learning folk pieces by ear
- Work on intonation and sound quality
- Ensemble playing (one-part pieces, and possibly two-part pieces at some point in the second year)

Choral singing and rhythm

The group sessions in choral singing and rhythm make use of an active approach to music that connects the body's natural movements, the music's artistic rhythms and the child's imagination and thinking skills. This dynamic approach encourages interaction between the study of theory, knowledge acquired on the instrument, and development of musical improvisation.

- One-part songs (introduction to two-part songs during the second year)
- Reading music (rhythmic and melodic notation)
- Rhythm (Dalcroze Method and Orff percussion)
- Active listening to pieces from the classical repertoire

Complementary cultural activities

The proposed cultural activities foster the development of the child's cognitive faculties.

- Public performance
- Family activities and activities within the community
- Participation in Orchestre symphonique de Montréal rehearsals
- Mentoring program with musicians of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal
- Educational workshops in Montréal museums

Scientific study

- **Partnership** between the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, the Commission Scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Île and Université de de Montréal
- **Multidisciplinary research project** (Faculty of Music, Faculty of Education and Faculty of Medicine)
- Research running for **three years**, with evaluation of the children's development over the medium and the long term

Objectives of the research component:

1. Evaluation of the impacts of the musical program on the following abilities:
 - a) preconditions for learning to read and write (French)
 - b) number concept (mathematics)
 - c) motor skills (fine and gross) and preconditions for handwriting
2. Observation of possible correlations between certain evaluated skills and abilities related to musical performance
3. Analysis of the evolution of family-school relations.

Form of the study:

- The research consists of the study of three groups of children at Ecole Saint-Rémi Annexe and Ecole de la Fraternité, in Montréal-Nord, who are receiving musical instruction customized as "regular" or "intensive."
- The evaluations are carried out by research assistants specifically trained according to each area of study, and the analysis will be performed by members of the scientific committee and their teams. Parents also collaborate by filling out questionnaires on aspects of behavior. They will accompany the children to various OSM activities organized in the framework of the music program.

Scientific committee: Nathalie Fernando, Vice-dean, Faculty of Music; Louise Poirier, Dean, Faculty of Education; Pascale Lefrançois, Vice-dean, Faculty of Education; Serge J. Larivée, Vice-dean, Faculty of Education; Marie-Noëlle Simard, assistant professor, Faculty of Medicine, School of Rehabilitation; Maxime Lataille, Head of special projects, Education, OSM.

The objectives of this project are 1) to ensure that **quality musical education is accessible to children from disadvantaged areas**, 2) that the program be integrated within the school curriculum, and 3) to encourage **an increase in the presence of music education in Québec schools**.

Québec schools that include an artistic orientation are few in number, and fewer still offer a music concentration. The programs are moreover offered at different levels and rarely to preschoolers, but rather to primary grades two and three. The research project involving an intensively music-oriented prekindergarten/kindergarten will make it possible to assess the impact of music learning at an early age on children's aptitudes (or development), thereby offering potential prospects for the implementation of relevant music teaching programs.

Donors and partners

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