
PART II

HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR CHILD'S CREATIVE ABILITY

HOW CREATIVE ABILITY IS DESTROYED

Creative ability is extremely easy to destroy. Most of the destruction is unintentional, caused by a parent's lack of knowledge regarding the initial appearance of creative ability in a child. There are very few parents who would not love to encourage every talent or ability their children demonstrate, but because they don't understand these initial artistic expressions parents are most often responsible for the destruction of them.

Here are some examples:

1. "Stop banging on the piano"
2. "Try to draw between the lines"
3. "What is that a picture of?"

Children often begin their creative musical expression with their voices. Children love to sing or hum while they're playing games. A young child, confronted by a piano will almost always be drawn to explore it. At this age, 2-5, a child's small muscle control will be undeveloped and so he will at first use palms rather than fingers to make sounds. Thus, the banging sound and the parent's response "stop banging on the piano." The child will then be quickly discouraged from further creative exploration. If left alone to explore the child would eventually develop that muscle control and would probably begin creating melodies. If the child were encouraged to explore through musical games, his development would increase rapidly and his ability would dramatically improve.

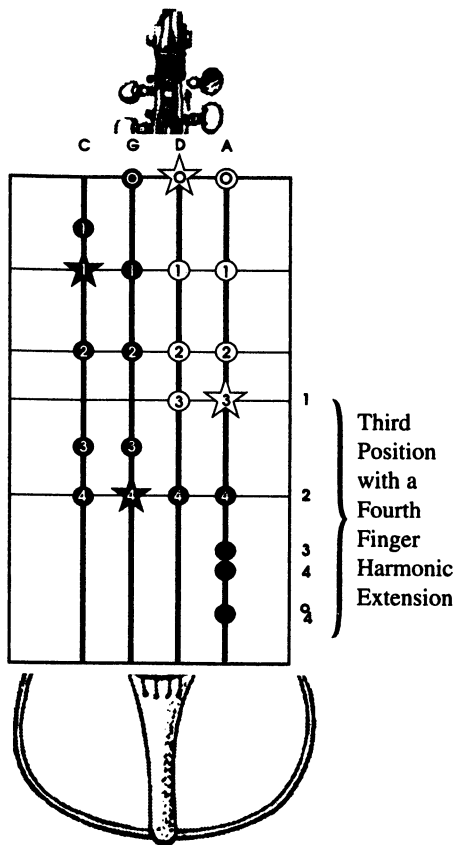
A good comparison is to language. A baby makes sounds, "gaga, googoo," etc., before he says his first word. Those sounds are responded to by his mother and father with love and comfort. When he says his first word "mama, papa" etc., there is a great celebration and more love and comfort. His basic needs are answered whenever he speaks. Now, just suppose that, rather than love and attention, the baby's first sounds and words were greeted with angry shouts or that he was put away in a room by himself and ignored. That child's development would be severely stunted and he might have great difficulty learning to speak. Fortunately, most parents respond to their babies the first way and most children learn to speak beautifully by the age of five. Unfortunately most parents respond the opposite way to initial artistic expressions, ignoring or criticizing these crucial first steps.

It is clear that the reasons for this stem from certain myths of creative genius. We all know that Mozart was a child prodigy. What most people don't realize is that nobody plays Mozart's early music. Why? Because it isn't very good! Mozart's early expressions were childlike. He probably even started with a few bangs like most children. Somehow people came to believe that if their child didn't immediately play beautiful melodies and harmonies, that child was without creative musical ability. That's like saying, "if my baby doesn't create a Shakespeare-like sonnet with his first words he'll never be a poet." Of course, we all know that's ludicrous.

Drawing is the same. Often a child's first drawings are unrecognizable to adults (just like his first words or sounds). They are crude or rough because the child cannot control his movements very well. Also, the perspective of a child is different from that of an adult. Confronted by a drawing by a child the adult will often respond "what is that a picture of?" The child is hurt by the adult's failure to see what he sees and is easily discouraged. Mendelowitz suggests a better question would be "Can you tell me about it?" This will encourage the child to talk about the picture and will reward his effort to communicate artistically with the adult. Again, the first drawing will not look like a Renoir or a Picasso or a Van Gogh.

Exercise #4

CD Track
5



① **Key: D major** (Student may use open D and A strings, and fingers 1, 2 and 3 on D and A. The second finger should be placed touching the third finger as it is in the Twinkle Variations of Suzuki, Book One.)

Advanced Finger Pattern: Add to the basic pattern 1, high 2 and raised 3 on the C and G strings. Use a lowered first finger instead of open C.

Clicks: 4

② **Basic Instructions:**

Using the finger pattern for D major (above) the student may play anything he wants. He cannot make a mistake since it is his own creation. The instructor should never interrupt the student once the playing has begun, (even if the student is using the wrong key or finger pattern). Upon completion, compliment the student and repeat the exercise three to four times. If there is any confusion regarding the finger pattern, explain it again between repetitions.

③ **Advanced Instructions:**

Exercise #1: Match the rhythms of the melody without playing the same notes. Maintain these rhythms in the middle section which has no melody.

Exercise #2: Improvise staying always on the opposite string of the melody in the first and third sections. Though there is no violin playing this melody, you will be able to tell which string to play on by listening carefully.

Exercise #3: Create a rhythm much slower than the one in the melody and maintain it while improvising. It may help to imagine, sing, and/or clap the idea first.

Exercise #4: By now you have heard this exercise a number of times and realize that the first and third sections contain a melody while the second section does not. The harmonic pattern of the first and second sections is exactly the same. Try to improvise an accompanying figure to the first and third sections. For example: a rhythm that matches the left hand of the piano (the lower part), or a part played pizzicato. In the second section create your own melodic part.

④ **About the Music:**

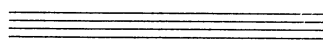
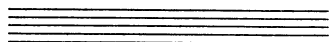
This piece is similar to the song form of exercise #3. It also has three sections with the middle section deleting the melody. It has a few differences however, one being the much quicker tempo. The other difference is in the form of the piece. Each of the sections has two distinct parts, an A and a B. They are played as follows: AAB aab AB (the third time the A occurs only once).

⑤ **Listening Questions:**

#1 - One section of this piece has no melody. Which section is it?

⑥ **Answers:**

#1 - The middle section.



Exercise #27

CD Track
28

① **Key: Mode of E Phrygian** (Use the finger pattern for the key of C with the following addition: Begin and end the piece on the note E, first finger on D. See diagram.)

Advanced Finger Pattern: Use the advanced finger pattern for the Key of C, beginning and ending the piece on the pitch E. (See stars on the diagram.)

Clicks: 3

② **Basic Instructions:** Using the finger pattern for the mode of E Phrygian (above) the student may play anything he wants. He cannot make a mistake since it is his own creation. The instructor should never interrupt the student once the playing has begun, (even if the student is using the wrong key or finger pattern). Upon completion, compliment the student and repeat the exercise three to four times. If there is any confusion regarding the finger pattern, explain it again between repetitions.

③ **Advanced Instructions:**

Exercise #1: Create a rhythm which works well against the solo viola part and repeat it as an accompaniment figure. In the middle section play a melody in a free rhythmic style, and when the viola solo returns switch back to your original accompaniment figure.

④ **About the Music:**

This little piece is in the style of a Spanish dance in E Phrygian. When the viola drops out, the A section is repeated harmonically, the pianist improvising using the same chord progression. The form is therefore A a A.

⑤ **Listening Questions:**

#1 - What is the form of this piece? (Hint: Could you sing the viola part over the middle section?)

⑥ **Answers:**

#1 - A a A. The middle section is a harmonic repeat of the first and last sections.

