

Effects of music on the unborn child

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Music can be used to influence people's mood and has been used to attempt to affect the brain of a child in its mother's womb. Some people think that having an unborn child listen to different types of music will have different effects on how the child will grow. Some people believe that music has no influence while others believe that if they introduce their unborn child to classical music the baby will grow up to be smarter than the kid who either listened to other types of music or no music while in the womb.

Studies have been done on how music can affect an unborn, and many different results have come from these studies. Not only can the unborn child actually hear the music, but the child will remember the song even after they are born. ? Music affects attitudes as well as thoughts. According to the book titled *What to Listen for in Music* by Aaron Copland, there are four elements of music: rhythm, melody, harmony, and tone color. Each of these elements are not heard by themselves but are heard together as one sound.

Each part of music has a special and unique way wherewith we interpret and react to it. Rhythm comes first in the musical elements because many historians say that music started with a beating of a rhythm. Whether it was the cavemen with branches or another group rhythm was the first element of music found (Copland, 33). The second element, melody, is second because rhythm is more of a physical motion and so melody is experienced as a mental emotion. The melody is the most crucial part of the music.

It is the only subjective portion of music that the audience rejects or accepts by itself (Copland, 49). Harmony, the third element, is the most sophisticated. The harmony was the most recently discovered and has been

greatly appreciated (Copland, 61). The last element, tone color, is the quality of sound produced by a particular musical instrument (Copland, 78). Aaron Copland later goes on to explain the difference of how we listen to music now compared to how we listened when we were in the womb.

We have little to no say in what we listen to when we were in the womb; we can only enjoy it or kick relentlessly hoping that it will change. ? Some studies have been done by David Tame in his book *The Secret Power of Music*. In it he says “ music has been found to affect the body in two distinct ways, directly on the cells and organs and indirectly by affecting the emotions, which, in turn, influence numerous bodily processes. Sounds projected into liquid media have coagulated proteins. So teenagers have brought soft eggs to rock concerts, hich became hard-boiled — wonder what happens in our own bodies” (Tame, 173)

After reading this, it does make one wonder why we listen to something that can have such a negative effect and be so bad. Most people chose music their parents raised them on or something completely different. Tame later says in his book that people who listen to rock music have led lives that were much more destructive to themselves and to others than people who had listened to classical music. David Tame also did studies on plants and animals and how they respond to the different music.

In a study performed classical music had appeared to bring more produce and better looking flowers than rock music (Tame, 196). ? According to BBC, Dr. Lamont did a study where the same song was played for the last three months of the pregnancy and then was played again after the child was

born, even after they were a year old they recognized the song (BBC, Womb Music: How Will Music Affect oner Unborn Child?). Another study done by Dr. Lamont concluded that “ that there was no evidence that playing classical music to babies helps to make their brains develop.

Dr. Lamont has done many studies for this topic and could be considered an expert. She has discovered much information for example: babies can hear just twenty weeks after conception and can remember a song for at least twelve months, and that babies cannot only remember the songs but they prefer these songs (BBC, Babies Remember womb music). ? Another study was done at theEducationOasis on how music affects babies in the womb, and they said that music does not make a baby smarter but it does prepare it for particular ways of thinking.

The effect the music has does not last long but can be used to do tasks more quickly (Bales). They figured out, through many experiments, that although music did not make the babies smarter it did make their brains ready to learn and grow. The babies who listened to classical music were more ready to learn than the babies, who had listened to country, rock, folk, dance, or nothing at all (Bales). ? Although there is still controversy on whether or not music can make the brain smarter or not, more research has been done to observe the effects of music on newborns.

Researchers from Brigham Oneng University studied the effects of music on thirty-three premature infants in the neonatal intensive care unit at Utah Valley Regional Medical Center in Provo. Cassette players piped voices of men and women singing lullabies into each baby’s ears for forty minutes a

day for four days. When doctors examined the babies on the fourth day, they found that babies who had been exposed to music gained more weight, and had lower blood pressure and a stronger heartbeat than the other (Robledo).

Their research shows that music can help strengthen premature babies; however, these researchers still have yet to figure out if music can improve a child's intellect. It is hard to study the intelligence level of babies when they cannot talk or write. When studying three and four year olds these researchers have found out that if the child plays an instrument that the child is better at math and special thinking (Robledo). “ One goal should be to cultivate a love for music in one child, not to create the next Mozart. It should be about having fun and exposing one child to new sounds and rhythms” (Robledo).

My mother listened to two genres of music when I was in her womb: eighties rock and R&B. I would kick and dance for her when she played the rock music and she used R&B to put me to sleep. It worked as a one year old too; my mother has videos of me kicking and screaming for joy when she played AC/DC, Bon Jovi, the Beastie Boys, Duran Duran, Journey, Whitesnake, and U2. Whenever either of my parents wanted to put me to sleep, they would play Prince, Stevie Wonder, Al B. Sure, Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross, Soul II Soul, or Earth, Wind, and Fire. These genres have had an impact on my upbringing.

Like most children I stuck to what I knew when it came for me to buy my first compact disk. The quote “ The apple doesn't fall far from the tree” applies very much so to me as it does to most children when they pick what they like

and what they do not; I chose a nineties rock and alternative. I liked bands that were like the bands that I listened to in my mother's womb, but I also liked having my own music to like. The music I chose sounds similar to the music my mother would have me listen to, but it was something my dad would not sing every word to, so I liked it.

My dad is not the best singer, so if I can only get a hum then my music is more enjoyable. ? A year or two later, my mother was pregnant again. This time she was told by the doctors that her baby was to be born with many brain defects. She looked for many ways to keep her unborn baby from being born with the brain deficiencies. She had watched on the local news that babies were being born with an unbelievable intelligence from their mothers playing classical music while the unborn baby was still in the womb.

There was another mother whom had said that the doctors had told her that her baby was supposed to be born with brain effects but her baby was born with no defects at all and she thanked her lucky stars on classical music. My mother thought it was worth a try since music was not thought of to hurt a baby's brain. While she had classical music on headphone around her womb, she had rock music on a second pair for her and me to enjoy. My brother was born with some brain deficiencies; he is a slow school learner but is extremely fast at learning musical instruments. If one gives him an instrument in five minutes he will learn how to compose sound, in fifteen he knows notes, and in thirty he can play a song from memory.

In everything else my brother is slow at learning and is slightly dyslexic. My mother thought the classical music had helped, so when she was pregnant

again she had the new unborn baby listen to classical music as well. This one was born with terrible eye sight, deaf in one ear, dyslexic, and on the verge of being mentally handicapped. Classical music through a personal study has shown to have no intellectual effect on the unborn child. Every now and again a “ musical genius” is born. These children are extremely gifted in music and can play, compose and understand music with an unimaginable capacity.

Although, some may imagine that we cannot measure musical greatness or potential in children before they discover it themselves. There is a way. In the book titled Musical Ability in Children by Arnold Bentley, he describes ways that we can test the musical ability and potential in children. After all, he says “ musical ability is primarily a mental ability. ” He goes on to tell how to test children, but he says that this can be a difficult task especially if the children are not old enough to handle the challenge of the tests (Bentley).

According to these studies, there are too many variables to consider when having a child and exposing them to the different array of music that we have today. For example, the child may be born already a genius and the classical music could impair his way of thinking, there are also some disabilities a child can be born with that music just will not be the fix, the baby may reject the music altogether because the baby still remembers what has happened before in the premortal life and knows that he should be listening to a different type or knows a better type for him to listen to. Music is a stimulant.

We listen to it in hard times either to make us feel better or to truly understand what the artists are saying because now we understand what they mean. We try to understand everything that we listen to, but it is sometime hard to pick up the message the artists wanted to get out in the way they present it. Music is a powerful thing that should not be taken lightly it can create emotions and pictures in our mind.

Music is not something that goes away either. Once one hears a song it can be stuck in one's mind for a very long time. Even after many years of not hearing the song it can still come back to the front of one's mind, much faster than a memory. Music is power, and to play it to unborn children increases the parent's power over the child by what the parents choose which music to produce for the child.