

Old Timer

'Old Professor' Tells How To Teach Music to Children

By DAVID TAYLOR MARKE
AP Education Writer

It's easy to teach a child how to understand music, says Kay Kyser. The popular "Professor of the College of Musical Knowledge" maintains that right from the cradle practically every child is musical and it is fairly simple to channel his musical talents into constructive lines as he progresses through the years.

In a recent statement, Kyser observed: "You've seen a youngster shaking his rattles, haven't you? He likes the noise it makes and he learns the fundamentals of rhythm at the same time. Later, when that misguided uncle gives him a set of drums for his third Christmas, the child will give you practically endless demonstrations of just how much he knows about rhythm."

Early Ear
The ability to distinguish between harmony and discord comes fairly early, too, he says. When a baby is learning to sit up, prop him near a piano and watch him swing at the keyboard. At first he'll bang away at a listless of notes every time, but eventually he will make the distinction that he gets a more pleasant tone if he strikes just one key. Later he'll find out that it is even more pleasant when he hits certain combinations of notes.

Nursery rhymes are another important step in the development of musical memory, says Kyser. A child is more likely to be interested in the musical adventures of "Three Blind Mice" than in a Mozart sonata and it is a good idea to let him progress by easy stages.

"When you are buying top instruments, be sure that they are true to pitch," the "professor" advises. "Otherwise they may set the child back in developing an 'ear' for pitch.

With a little guidance you can help the child develop a pleasant tone in singing those nursery rhymes and other simple jingles and sing them with some regard for pitch."

Once he is steady on his feet, rhythm begins to mean something more than beating a drum or kicking against the foot of his crib. Give him music that has a strong, definite rhythm (marches are excellent), and his natural impulse is to dance.

Of course, one of the best ways to teach anything is to make it a part of daily life. For that reason, a parent who is anxious to teach his child music would do well with a phonograph and a good record library. Simple, rather short selections are best for primary instruction. Show the child pictures of the various musical instruments, then point out how they are used in records being played for him.

Arousing junior's interest in the works of great masters is a job that can be done in easy stages, wrote Saint-Saens, for example, wrote "The Carnival of the Animals," which should delight any child. Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite" and Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" are among other compositions which have an immediate appeal to children and serve as a fine introduction to the more ponderous works by the same composers, he says.

There are some excellent records designed especially to help children start early in their recognition of the classics. For instance, there is one illustrated album narrating simple stories against classical music backgrounds. Here the story of Billy Bee is told to the tune of Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumblebee"; the story of the ugly duckling to Saint-Saens' "The Swan."



WATER OVER VENICE — A porter carries a pedestrian across St. Mark's Square, Venice, after a high tide overran the banks of the Grand Canal and flowed into the Square.

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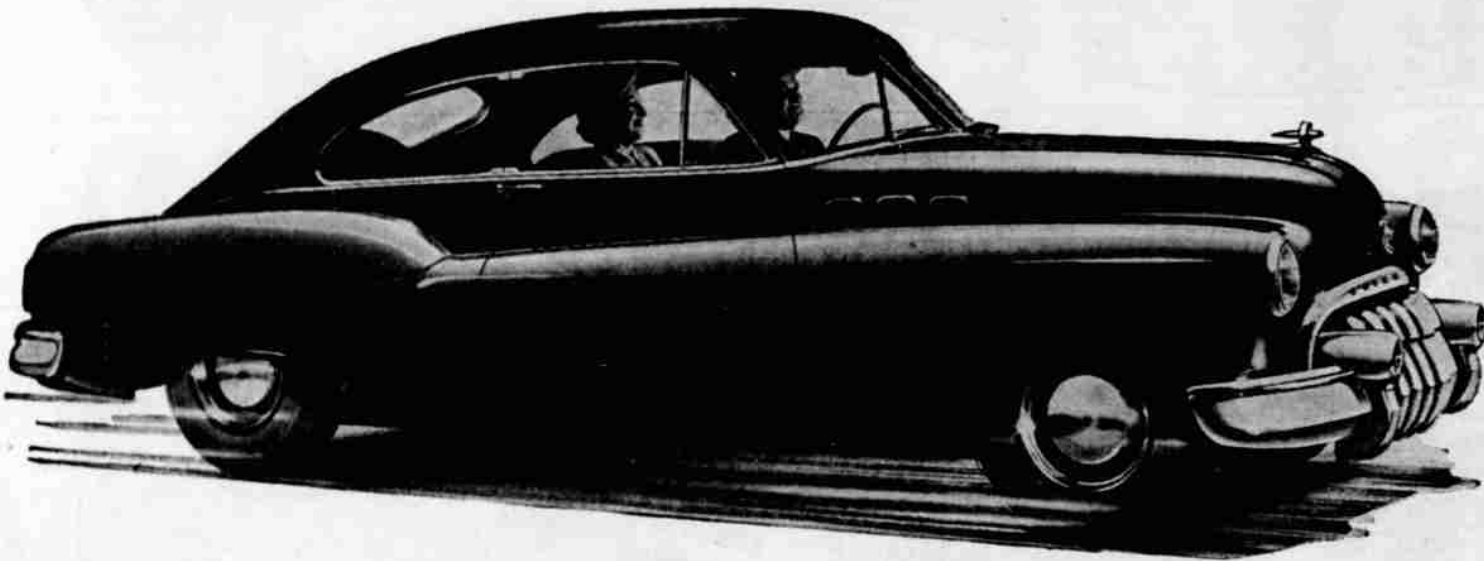
She says her chicken laid an egg weighing just one ounce less than half a pound. It had four yolks, measured 7 1/2 inches around the center and 9 1/2 inches lengthwise.

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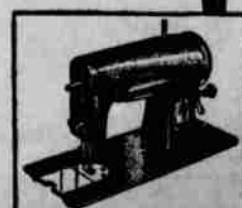
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