

In tune with the needs of South African children

Dynamic mother and daughter team, Anna Coetzee and Dr. Lydia Dreyer have turned a passion for music and children into an entrepreneurial music programme for children aged one to six.

The seed for what is today ***Music for Our Little Ones*** was first planted when Anna, then a relief lecturer at Potchefstroom University, where she had attained her Bachelor's degree in music, began looking for ways to share her love of music with her young daughter Lydia. The result was an innovative South African music programme aimed at three to six year olds.

Years later, Lydia, who was studying psychology at the University of Stellenbosch, approached her mother about presenting these programmes in the area. What this first 'franchise' showed was a very real need, particularly for their authentic South African programme, which not only nurtures a love and appreciation for music, but also enhances the child's intellectual, emotional, social, motor and concentration skills – which in turn contributes to a positive self image. As interest grew, so did a business vision and in 2000, the SA Music and Appreciation Development School officially opened its doors.

For both Anna and Lydia, the motivation behind their school is the same as Anna's all those years ago: exposing young children to every aspect of music and helping them develop a passion for it as well as enhancing the child's total being by using music as a medium. As Lydia explains: "Music and sound is an intrinsic part of us. It's a universal characteristic that is intertwined with our inherent desire to communicate and needs to be constantly nurtured to optimize both our development as human beings and the way we interact with others".

Anna adds; "The fact that music is no longer a compulsory subject at school, means that it is imperative that we instill a love of music in our little ones. It helps to develop their total being by engaging in all aspects of the natural musical abilities we're born with."

Another reason for starting their business has been to empower women who are passionate about children and music and would like to earn an income, while still maintaining a flexible schedule. There are currently around 25 franchises nationwide and as these 'Maestros' (or business owners) can testify, their initiatives have met with resounding success.

Cape Town-based Tania de Clerk started her music school in January 2006. "Three years spent working in the corporate world, accompanied by many late nights and braving more than my share of traffic jams, made me start to dream about a lifestyle that allowed me to enjoy life more", she says. "The day my path crossed with the SA Music Appreciation and Development School I knew it was time for a new challenge. Owning a *Music for Our Little Ones* music school has given me the opportunity to run my own company, live for my love of music and make a difference in the lives of children". Tania has grown her music school to such an extent that she now employs three ladies on a part-time basis to assist her in teaching the 200 or so children that are currently enrolled in her *Music for Our Little Ones* school.

Karen Mitchison runs her music school in Durban North and echoes Tania's sentiment; "Not only has becoming a music school owner made me financially independent, it has also enriched my life by allowing me to spend quality time with my own children in the afternoons." She adds; "It is also a joy to see how this programme enriches the lives of children who otherwise would not have easily been exposed to music at such an early age."

For more information about business opportunities or a music school in your area, please contact Anna Coetzee on 083 452 0486 or Lydia Dreyer on 083 458 8439, e-mail musicsa@samusicsschool.co.za or visit www.samusicsschool.co.za.

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The SA Music Appreciation and Development School offers therapeutic music and movement programmes – **Music for Our Little Ones** – for children aged 1 to 6 years. The combined experiences gained by Anna Coetzee, who holds a Bachelor of Music degree, and psychologist Dr. Lydia Dreyer, together with their passion for music and children, led to the establishment of the SA Music Appreciation and Development School, specifically aimed at South African children and the world in which they live.