



Michel Andray

## Learning with music at the CEM in Lausanne

By Michèle Laird

Lausanne - 29 May 2009 | 17:21

**The Centre d'Enseignement Musical in Lausanne is a school that breathes music. Originally founded as a music academy in 1991, it has grown into a fully-fledged and officially recognized private school for children from 2 to 16 years of age. The CEM uses music as a springboard for learning and combines the academic curriculum with the arts.**

The Centre d'Enseignement Musical is in fact a constellation of three schools housed in two apartments right in the heart of Lausanne. At the end of the school day, it serves as a centre for music and dance, offering an extensive variety of classes from classical instruments to jazz, from ballet to hip hop, with official diplomas and certifications in most disciplines.

That is in fact how the CEM started. But parents, pleased to find a nurturing environment that sparks a child's creativity, encouraged the owners to start a real school. Now, tiny tots from the age of two onwards attend the pre-school Baby Art School, followed by the Music Art School that accompanies them all the way through to a first level secondary school diploma. English is the second language and the teachers speak German, Italian and Spanish as well.

The educational programme is fully certified, although it clearly distinguishes itself from the local public school system by using music as a learning accelerator. Academics take place in the morning, creative activities and sports in the afternoon. Each student is required to learn an instrument and many take up dance as well.

" We have put in place a global education system where music plays an integral part" says the juvenile-looking Michel Andrey, a former professional violinist, pianist and composer who founded the school with his mother, a qualified teacher and teacher trainer. " We started by providing music classes, but were soon asked by parents to extend the programme to become a day school."

" We were a Tower of Babel from the very start" chimes in the warm and ebullient Mrs. Andrey senior " which is why we work closely with the parents to make sure that the children are held, but happy. There are currently 20 nationalities for 30 students!"

" This is my dream school" wrote a young Finish girl who has now returned to her country. Michel Andrey recognizes that families from Nordic countries or from Russia and Hungary tend to be better tuned to the benefits of music. " In Switzerland, music is considered to interfere with learning, not reinforce it, but our belief is that the opposite is true. Reading, for example, can be helped by singing songs. Furthermore, it has a therapeutic effect" he adds.

How about some Bach to wash down the calculus, or a spot of Mozart to lift away the tediousness of memorizing historical data? The CEM applies the belief that music is a neurotransmitter that allows students to learn without even realizing it.

Children can stay the full day, from 8h to 18h and even 20h if needs be, with a lunch break during which they are offered Fourchette Verte meals, a " green fork" label that guarantees

nutritional quality. " We function like a life centre for children, where they are coached, guided and educated in small groups. We are also enormously responsive to requests" say Mrs Andray as if to underline how different the CEM is to the local public school system.

This is a school where children are encouraged to say what they think and where striking a beautiful chord on a violin is more important than tying a shoe lace. " We never say that it's the wrong moment to ask a question. If a student is not doing well, we consider that it's the teacher's fault, not the child's" Michel Andray declares emphatically. " And if a teacher leaves after a year, it's my fault..."

As a teacher training centre, the school is certified by eduQua. The quality of the management has been recognized by The Swiss Association for Quality and Management Systems (SQS). The environment is not particularly impressive; the rooms are basically the kind you find in anyone's flat in a densely populated urban area. But the teachers fill the volume with their care and attention, each one giving " 150 percent", so the place feels welcoming and the students seem happy and focussed. " We are all passionate about what we do" the Director says convincingly.

The CEM is a member of the Lake Geneva Swiss Private Schools association, as well as the Swiss Federation of Private Schools (SFPS).

Centre d'Enseignement Musical

Avenue Louis-Ruchonnet 57

1003 Lausanne - CH

T : +41 21 312 12 77

Email: [info@musicem.ch](mailto:info@musicem.ch)

Web: [www.musicem.ch](http://www.musicem.ch)