

> SUMMER-IZE YOUR IPOD: The hottest accessories for fun in the sun **p16**

Mac | Life

JULY 2007 NO.6

CREATE

SHARE

ENJOY

WEB



yelp.



MUSIC

A Joyful Noise

Music should be part of all kids' lives—even if you know right away they won't grow up to be the next Yo-Yo Ma, Jimi Hendrix, or Kiri Te Kanawa. And yes, that might mean that you have to listen dutifully to their performances. In the meantime, you can help ensure that there will be fewer missed notes at the next family concert with this collection of children's music apps.

MUSIC ACE DELUXE

Lots of music software for kids trades heavily on the fun factor. Music Ace Deluxe is no different, but underneath the whimsical little conductor avatar is some fairly serious instruction on reading music, musical notation, and the fundamentals of how to make music. Music Ace Deluxe was simple enough for a 5-year-old and easily scalable for our older testers, including us adults. Kids could load it themselves and enjoyed using it.

MUSIC ACE DELUXE

Harmonic Vision
www.harmonicvision.com
Price: \$79.95
Age range: 5 and up
Requirements: Mac OS 9 or OS X

➤ Excellent variety of engaging activities. Challenging for a wide range of music skills.

➤ On the pricey side for what you get.

MacLife **G R E A T**
RATED



Your child chooses an avatar and then jumps into the music to compose a song.



GROOVY MUSIC SHAPES GROOVY MUSIC JUNGLE

There's nothing down-market about this offering at all except for the price. Using kid-friendly icons and avatars to cover sound, pitch, composition, and more, Groovy Music Shapes and Groovy Music Jungle extend a music curriculum beyond what many kids are likely to get in school. The software is easy to use, and although suggested age range for Groovy Music Jungle tops out at 9, our 10-year-old testers were thoroughly entertained.

GROOVY MUSIC

Sibelius
www.sibelius.com
Price: \$69
Age range: 5 to 7 (Shapes),
7 to 9 (Jungle)
Requirements: Mac OS 10.2 or later

➤ High-quality music curriculum for the price. The kids liked it too.

➤ Families with multiple kids have to keep track of multiple software titles.

MacLife **A W E S O M E**
RATED



PIANO WIZARD EASY MODE / PREMIER

The phenomenal Piano Wizard bridges the gap between music, notes, and colors with an interface that will seem familiar to kids. The near-full-size physical keyboard is mirrored by an onscreen keyboard, and as the musical cues move across the screen, kids try to "hit" them in time to one of the many bundled songs. How good is it? Our testers could play the songs they had learned on Piano Wizard on a real piano later that same day—without having to be nagged to do so. Cool.

PIANO WIZARD

Allegro Rainbow
www.pianowizard.com
Price: \$99.95 (Easy Mode with
eKeys), \$199.95 (Premier with
Keystation)
Age range: 5 and up
Requirements: Mac OS 10.2.8
or later

➤ A clever, successful way to teach music. Universal binary.

➤ Finding a place to stash the keyboards.

MacLife **A W E S O M E**
RATED



GARAGEBAND 3

For kids who are music savvy and musical, GarageBand is both a blessing and a curse. It allows them to record every single note of all the music they make and, well, that's the curse part, too. Kids younger than 10 can use GarageBand with some parental involvement. After an initial demo from us, our 8- and 10-year-old testers intuited exactly how to rock the party. Could

they record, produce, and mix a song suitable for airplay? Probably not. But they wanted to try.

GARAGEBAND 3

Apple
www.apple.com
Price: \$79 as part of iLife '06
Age range: 10 and up
Requirements: Mac OS 10.3.9 or
later

➤ Familiar interface. Comfortably intuitive, despite the many controls. Universal binary.

➤ Kids require adult help, especially at first.

MacLife **A W E S O M E**
RATED



PLAY MUSIC TOGETHER

iPlayMusic
www.playmusic.com
Price: \$39.95
Age range: 5 and up
Requirements: Mac OS 10.3.9 or
later, iTunes 6.0.2, Quicktime 7.0.4,
GarageBand 3 or later needed for
GarageBand projects.

➤ Good for older kids. Easy to follow. Universal binary.

➤ Younger kids might feel a bit lost.

MacLife **G R E A T**
RATED



PLAY MUSIC TOGETHER

Whereas the keyboard is pretty kid friendly—or at least more familiar—the guitar is still a bit esoteric. (Which we find strange, given that guitars are cheaper.) In any case, Play Music Together compensates heartily for this by using jovial characters to get kids into the general flow of what they need to learn so they can do something with that guitar other than annoy adults. Though it's recommended for kids 5 and older, we found it a little too sophisticated for our 5-year-old. But our 8- and 10-year-old testers dug it, and have been air-guitaring ever since.

Also try...

Send 4- to 10-year-olds on an animated trip through music history with **Children's Music Journey** (\$69.95, www.adventus.com). Also from Adventus, **Piano Suite Premier** (\$89.95) provides an interactive tutor to guide young pianists through the learning process and offer instant feedback on their playing. **MiDisaurus** (\$19.95, www.town4kids.com/us_ecom) promises to turn your school-age children into music prodigies—we're not so sure about that, but younger kids will have fun hanging with the musically inclined animated dinosaur. For an intro to music composition for kids 5 and up, check out Morton Subotnik's **Making Music** (\$35, www.creatingmusic.com).