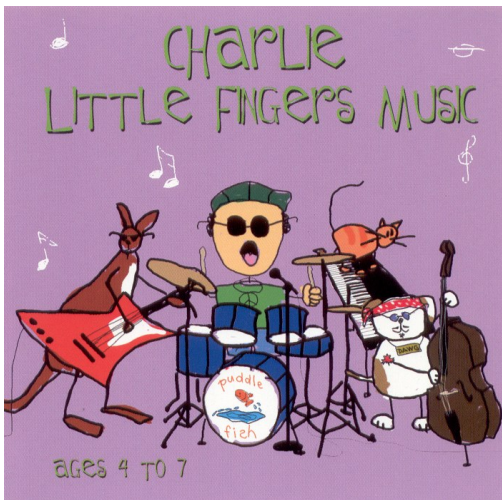


Rockgarden

Review by: Diane Peters, A&E Editor –
Toronto City Parent

Many children's artists try to be cool, try to rock out, but I think Charlie actually does it. It's because he does more than just bring guitars to the music, but the attitude: I'm chill; I play, like it or not, whatever. My kids have particularly responded to this. No, I should clarify; my son got very excited by Charlie's mash of the old Spider Man and Batman theme songs in the groovy "Spidey Batz." That rolled into interest in the whole record, which is succinct with only 10 tracks, and varied in tone and approach without doing that "take you around the world" thing with a reggae song and a country song and the like. Instead, he's got some playful songs, such as "Horse Voice," and "Knees Tummies," which lend themselves to actions. Then there's the rockin' out tunes like his cover of "Dem Bones" and "Shake Your Shakers." And of course you gotta have some heartfelt numbers, and for that we get the singable "Everybody Holding Hands" and the final tugger, "Comfort You Tonight." This one's going onto the iPod.



Little Fingers Music

Review by: Diane Peters, A&E Editor –
Toronto City Parent May 2001

Charlie is a Toronto songwriter, performer and music educator, who specializes in teaching children age 4-7 through his Little Fingers Music program, also the name of his first full length CD of original music for kids. Every track on Little Fingers Music is an experience in music education itself -- sometimes overt, as in the Quarter Note Jam, sometimes cleverly subtle, as in Rise & Shine, which demonstrates the effect of changing tempo. Some songs are richly arranged with a variety of instruments, some are simple and pure focusing on voice and one or two instruments. Children's voices, (his students I assume), are featured prominently as soloists or chiming in on choruses, introducing songs or just giggling or talking.

It is a fun CD that reflects a serious commitment to music and music education.



Playhouse Earth

Review by: Chris Vert

Chris Vert is a teacher with the Toronto District School Board, currently on leave of absence from the Island Public/Natural Science School. In September he began studies towards his doctorate in Education at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education.

Charlie Kert is a Toronto musician and music educator who specializes in “educating” children aged four to seven with his engaging and fun-filled songs. *Playhouse Earth*, his second CD, is an eclectic collection of 22 songs that incorporate pop, folk, and rock influences. The songs are divided into four categories: “Travellin’ Music”, “Teachin’ Tunes”, “Grownin’ Up”, and “Restin’ Time”. Many of the songs are interactive learning games that tie in with some specific expectations in the Ontario curriculum for kindergarten through grade 3 (e.g. “Quarter Rest Jam”, “Spelling Bee”). Opportunities abound for primary teachers to use these songs within music lessons focused on beat, rhythm, melody, dynamics, call-and-response activities, identifying instruments, moving to music, or simply singing along. The subject matter of the songs will interest younger listeners (e.g. dinosaurs, bears) as well as older ones (skateboarding, cell phones).

Children’s voice can be heard throughout the CD, singing, chanting, talking, and playing, engaging listeners and encouraging audience participation. Also heard between and within songs are recordings from Charlie’s answering machine which are either interesting add-ons to the tunes or merely strange interruptions in the flow of the CD, depending on your point of view. Overall, the music is refreshingly different from the vast array of safe, unadventurous “Sing Along with So-and-So” stuff available for primary-level children. Charlie certainly has a way of connection with today’s child without talking (or singing) down to them. Charlie’s music covers selected primary music expectations. Information about his workshops, performances, and music, including curriculum tie-ins is available on his website www.LittleFingersMusic.com