

## Germany, Media Prize "LEOPOLD" Good music for children, 1997 - present

LEOPOLD is a media prize as well as a mark of quality for music on CD, MC, and CD-Rom that is specially recommended for children. LEOPOLD was introduced in 1997. Since then, the competition to win the LEOPOLD distinction is held every other year. The project initiative is the work of the *Verband Deutscher Musikschulen* (German Music Schools' Association - VdM) with support from the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

### Background

A common belief is that a person's musical experiences early in life determine one's relationship with music in later years and even contribute to one's overall personality development. Intensive musical experience is linked to the power of speech, intellectual and emotional capacities, creativity and social skills. The type of music to which a child is exposed plays an important role.

Children might be exposed to music in a family setting, a playgroup, music education or during children's concerts that encourage direct involvement with the activities on stage. In reality, the bulk of exposure to music experienced by most children is through media, including radio, TV, cassettes and CDs. Even the youngest generation of consumers is not spared from the barrage of products touted by publishers and the audio-visual industry. It is within this climate that the VdM wishes to help educators and parents alike to navigate their way through the crowded commercial market for children.

### Concept

Without prejudicing certain genres or styles of music, LEOPOLD distinguishes productions that are clearly intended for children. A jury of independent experts representing different areas of the music world selects the nominees. The jury judges products on artistic merits, creativity, originality and technical quality. Evaluations may also consider the means used to accompany the actual music, such as books or sheet music. The VdM indicates the prizewinners and recommended titles by way of its seal of approval as well as in a brochure.

The project is based on the premise that recognition of the LEOPOLD seal can help simplify the process of choosing from a huge range of products. Consumers can look for the LEOPOLD seal in the record shop, music shop and the library. Staff from music schools, kindergartens and primary schools can use the LEOPOLD seal as a type of orientation device when searching for music for play or educational purposes. Professional journals, radio and TV can also offer LEOPOLD as a service to their audiences. Furthermore, LEOPOLD's quality criteria serve to stimulate improvements and set forth guidelines for the entire range of children's music.

The project's scope expanded in 1999 after a partnership was established with WDR3, West German Radio's cultural channel. WDR3 also uses the well-known children's programme 'Papageno' to offer the project an opportunity to include a children's jury (since 2001).

### Objectives

This project aims to improve the quality of music for children, to act as a resource in choosing specific productions and thus make a positive contribution to children's musical experiences.

### Description

Every two years, the jury nominates works selected from the musical submissions. The winner of the LEOPOLD is kept under wraps until the prize-giving ceremony. During the gala event, featuring live performances, four additional LEOPOLDS are awarded and nine other titles are recommended. LEOPOLD winners are recognisable by the seal *Gute Musik für Kinder* – LEOPOLD Medienpreis des Verbandes deutscher Musikschulen ('Good music for children – LEOPOLD media prize from the German Music Schools' Association'). They also receive a certificate and a LEOPOLD statuette made from acrylic glass. Titles chosen by the jury receive the



'Good music for children – LEOPOLD media prize from the German Music Schools' Association' distinction and are included in a catalogue.

2001 marked the first year in which children participated in the selection. The WDR3 children's radio programme 'Papageno' invited a group of upper level grammar school students to act as jurors and award the 'Poldi' Children's Prize. Together with their teachers, a series of lessons was planned in which the students helped establish the criteria for evaluating the submissions, listen to the nominated productions, compare and discuss the selections and finally support their arguments in a jury report. The children gave an explanation of their project in a live interview on stage during the awards ceremony.

### **Organisation**

VdM partner organisations are the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the West Germany Radio network WDR3.

### **Publicity and products**

Seal of approval and a catalogue listing all of the prizewinners and recommended works (see <http://www.musikschulen.de/seiten/projekte/uebers.htm>). Radio broadcasts on WDR3.

### **Results**

From the start, the prize has been a much sought after distinction in the recorded music branch. The LEOPOLD catalogue currently includes 35 productions, and it should be noted that quality is continually increasing.

### **Information**

For additional information, please contact:

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You can also find further details on the VdM website. Surf to <http://www.musikschulen.de> and click on the *Projekte und Initiativen* button, then click on the *Medienpreis LEOPOLD* button.