

Computer games inspire children to learn musical instruments

Children are being inspired to learn a musical instrument after playing music-based computer games.

Last Updated: 2:20PM GMT 05 Dec 2008



Hitting the right note: Children are being encouraged to take up real instruments after learning them virtually, a new study suggests

About 2.5 million British youngsters have been inspired to progress into 'real' music-making after playing musical console games like Guitar Hero, Singstar and Rock Band.

The new report by the UK's largest music charity Youth Music states that these games are having a dramatic effect on children taking up an instrument for the first time.

The research found that 19 per cent of young people said they now play an instrument because they were inspired to do so after playing a music-based console game.

Of the 12 million young people in the UK, aged between three and 18, more than half play music games on computer consoles.

Andrew Missingham, a music industry expert who carried out the report, said: "The music games are popular because they are family friendly and inclusive.

"And it is this take-up of the games that is credited with the take up of musical instruments, the development of transferable musical skills and even the development of performance confidence.

"This research for the first time shows conclusively that young people are

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being inspired to make their own music by games that first piqued their interest."

The SingStar franchise hit 12 million unit sales in April 2008.

Playing music games help young people develop confidence in performance, and introduce many of the skills required to play other instruments - such as dexterity, inter-limb co-ordination, hand-eye co-ordination, pitch and rhythm.

The limits of console games means people turn to real instruments.

Christina Coker, chief executive of Youth Music, said: "We have established that there is a huge potential audience of new musicians and music-makers out there playing these games. "Now, we and others in the music education community, should be capitalising on that interest and encouraging young people to take up real instruments. "But we should also be thinking about how we can incorporate consoles and games into 'traditional' music education and be more open to embracing these tools in our teaching."

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
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