

Tacoma, Wash. -- Can exposure to classical music help a child do better in school? One Tacoma mom says "Absolutely! "And she should know. She is also the conductor and music director of the Tacoma Symphony Orchestra.

Called a conductor of "unquestionable strength and authority" by no less than The New York Times, Sarah Ioannides has brought glamour to Grit City and a passion for classical music that's infectious.

"Come to concert hall and experience getting really engaged in a piece of music and what's happening on stage because it's not just listening," she says. "It's watching."

On the podium she may be the maestra but on the playground she is Mommy. Ioannides is raising three small music lovers who all come to concerts and who are all learning to play instruments .

"I'm the Number one advocate (of children getting exposed to classical music)", she says. "I see how kids latch on to music."

As a child of divorced parents, Ioannides spent hours and hours learning to play instruments of all kinds.

"Music for me was a safe place and was a fantastic, exciting safe place," she says.

And by music she means classical music.

"No New Kids on the Block phase for you then?" asked reporter Saint Bryan.

"Um New Kids on the Block? What do you mean?"

"I just meant was there ever a phase when you were listening to New Kids on the Block and boy bands?"

"Oh Well my brother would always tease me. He would say you don't know anything about pop music"

Ioannides found everything she needed in the classics. So we asked with what three albums should we start our collection.

"OK The first one coming to mind would be Mendelssohn Italian Symphony. One of the most uplifting and fun, lively pieces. Wake up in the morning and play that!

"Secondly take a slow movement of Brahms Symphony G Major Symphony No 2. That cello soloing at the beginning. Aw! There's nothing more heart rendering and pulling than that beautiful opening of the second movement

" Let's see number three. How about Starvinsky's Petrushka? Also uplifting ballet music .Just so much energy that it gives you. What a piece of music! What a story!