

# born to boogie!

*Alison Swersky takes her toddler Charlie along to a new fun weekly party where babies are encouraged to let their (few) hairs down and shake, rattle and roll...*

Spying the large container emerging from its hiding place, Charlie Benson's eyes light up. He rubs his feet together with obvious glee and, once it is on the ground, he scurries towards it the way a spider might approach its lunch.

He is familiar with the ritual and knows that inside are all the treasures a 15-month-old could ever desire: plastic drums, cymbals, bells and tambourines and the carte blanche to shake, rattle and roll to the grooviest beats in north-west London.

This is Boogie Babies, where future rock 'n' rollers, disco kings and queens and Mozart aficionados are born.

Some start from as young as four months, with the programme designed for all age ranges up to pre-school.

So Charlie was by no means the youngest swinger to let his (few) hairs down and bop to a variety of funky and original numbers, including innovative takes on traditional children's songs, in the 12 weeks his mother (me!) had signed up for.

The sessions, each one about 40 minutes long, were repetitive enough to be familiar, but with variations so as not to become dull.

"This is our aim," confirms Lynsey Becker, one half of the duo that founded the Boogie



Babies concept three years ago.

"Babies thrive on familiarity so while we have some of the same songs every week, which will typically tie into a theme like learning our numbers and parts of the body, we also throw in some surprises.

"It's incredible to see babies that can't wave and can't clap at

the beginning of the term, pointing to different parts of their bodies and stamping their feet at the end."

The way Lynsey and her business partner Stacey Boyne describe the format, it strives to take babies on an exciting journey through songs, stories, puppets, colourful instruments

and bubbles that offers not just the building blocks of music appreciation, but the tools for wider development.

The entrepreneurial mums both come from musical and performing backgrounds and both have young children. Separately, each was inspired to

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start such a baby music group when their children were a few months old, but at the time neither knew the other.

Stacey came up with the Boogie Babies name and started by just having a few close friends, who were also new mums, round every week in her lounge. "They were my guinea pigs," she laughs.

Then Stacey met Lynsey.

"Lynsey knows more people than anyone I have ever met," Stacey says.

"In six months, Boogie Babies went from me and my four friends and our children in my house to having to find venues to accommodate the demand."

Lynsey adds: "I know a lot of people as I have been a popular children's party entertainer since I was 17 years old.

"I do have quite a loyal following as Loopy Loo and this definitely helped to build the Boogie Babies brand at the start, but the mums that have come and enjoyed the classes and told their friends, they are the ones behind the real growth in the business."

Rising demand over the three years has seen the music group go from three classes a week in Radlett to 12 classes a week and new venues set up in Mill Hill, Edgware and Elstree, with plans to set up in East Finchley and Potters Bar early next year. Central London and Chigwell are also on the list.

The team is also growing to accommodate the expansion, with Lynsey and Stacey recruiting staff, all of whom are musically trained and CRB checked.

Boogie Babies parties are also increasingly popular, offering the same innovative and exciting experience as the weekly session for ages from one upwards and themed twists for the older kids, like Mamma Mia. "Each term we are faced with a waiting list of more than 80 mums to place and we find many of our Boogie Babies mums return with their second and even third baby," Stacey says. "I think part of the appeal is that the sessions are dynamic.

"We are continually evolving and work closely with our mothers to get feedback on how we can improve and make it a better experience for them and the little ones."

Perhaps also the attraction lies with the particularly delightful Boogie Babies' creators, who are not conventional Jewish mums and neither are typical of the type



of person that tends to run such groups.

Stacey, 40, and clearly settled down to Radlett domesticity now, still has the air of grunge about her that one can imagine characterised a wilder time in her 20s and early 30s.

A featured vocalist on music producer Jason Cohen's album *Laidback*, she carved out a career as a backing vocalist for Sony records among others and has also done live radio road shows.

Most famous moment: appearing on the same ticket as Peter Andre during the height of his *Mysterious Girl* fame in the early 1990s.

"I just love to sing. I'm always singing. I imagine I can be quite

annoying sometimes because of it," Stacey reflects. "I performed at Gay Pride in front of 20,000 people one year."

But the mother of two says she was ready to move on from "all that" even before she had children. "When I met my husband Steve, I was already writing my own material. I wanted to develop a career as a singer song writer.

"Boogie Babies is fabulous because I get to spend time in the recording studio and fulfil my ambitions in creating original material, for the best and most responsive audience!"

Lynsey's background is completely different. A stage school graduate, the 32-year-old dabbled with the celebrity life for

a while, appearing in a West End show and BBC TV show *Time Busters*.

She also worked on a radio play with *The Crystal Maze* presenter Richard O'Brien among other television and radio work.

"It sounds really glamorous but in truth, there is a lot of waiting around and it can actually be quite boring," Lynsey confides. "I love performing and I'm glad I had the experiences I had, but it was more for fun. I never really imagined that I would go to Hollywood.

"I'm a family girl. I love being a wife and a mum and show biz is not really conducive to that."

But she adds: "With Boogie Babies, I get to use my performing and entertaining skills and my singing voice, without compromising time with my husband and two little girls."

For this mum who knows how long a day can be with a cantankerous toddler, the Boogie Babies ladies can take a bow.

• **For more information about Boogie Babies call Stacey Boyne on 07960 498208 or Lynsey Becker on 07956 306664. Or you can email [info@boogiebabies.co.uk](mailto:info@boogiebabies.co.uk) or visit [www.boogiebabies.co.uk](http://www.boogiebabies.co.uk)**