

Choir Class -- a Win-Win

Listed below for your review are just a few of the many facts (and interesting quotes) regarding on-going music education and its many positive effects. On occasion, parents or students express concern about the wisdom of continued enrollment in junior high and high school choir in light of other academic and/or athletic pursuits--and/or when there is no future plan for a music career.

Regarding athletics, we can only say that we work extremely hard to accommodate our TCA athletes and so far, we have been successful in making it possible for them to benefit from the value of music education while simultaneously supporting them in their athletic pursuits. In fact, the majority of choir students are involved in athletics, as well as music.

Regarding academic pursuits, the following information does a good job of speaking to the concern about academics, particularly in light of the fact that TCA's vocal music curriculum takes a comprehensive approach to the study of music.

Benefits in High School

- Students who have arts-rich experiences in school do better across-the-board academically and they also become more active and engaged citizens, voting, volunteering, and generally participating at higher rates than their peers (*Catterall, Dumais, and Hampden-Thompson, 2012, p.5*).
- When faced with a problem to solve, students in music and the arts produce more possible solutions, and their solutions are more creative, according to a nationwide study. *N. M. Weinberger, "Arts Education Enhances 'Real Life' Personal Skills," MuSICA Research Notes, Spring 2000.*
- Students in the arts are found to be more cooperative with teachers and peers, more self-confident, and better able to express their ideas. These benefits exist across socioeconomic levels. *The Arts Education Partnership, (From a Columbia University Study) 1999.*
- A ten-year study indicates that students who study music achieve higher test scores, regardless of socioeconomic background. *Dr. James Catterall, UCLA.*
- Students at risk of not successfully completing their high school educations cite their participation in the arts as reasons for staying in school. Factors related to the arts that positively affected the motivation of these students included a supportive environment that promotes constructive acceptance of criticism and one where it is safe to take risks. — *From The Role of the Fine and Performing Arts in High School Dropout Prevention, 2002; Barry, N., J. Taylor, and K. Walls*

Benefits For College

- On the 2012 SAT, students who participated in music scored an average of 31 points above average in reading, 23 points above average in math, and 31 points above average in writing. *College Board SAT, 2012 College-Bound Seniors: Total Group Profile Report.*
- The College Entrance Examination Board found that students involved in school music programs scored 107 points higher on the SAT's than students with no participation. *Profiles of SAT and Achievement Test Takers, The College Board, compiled by the Music Educators National Conference (2002)*
- Texas students who participated in the All-State music programs have scored consistently higher than the state and national averages for the mean SAT score (27% and 22% respectively in 2012) (*Texas Music Educators Association, 2013*).

Benefits For College

- College admissions officers continue to cite participation in music as an important factor in making admissions decisions. They claim that music participation demonstrates time management, creativity, expression, and open-mindedness. *Carl Hartman, "Arts May Improve Students' Grades," The Associated Press, October, 1999.*
- The College Board, in a publication about college admissions, states, "preparation in the arts will be valuable to college entrants whatever their intended field of study."- *Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need To Know and Be Able To Do, The College Board.*

Benefits For Life

- Employers identify creativity as one of the top five skills important for success in the workforce (*Lichtenberg, Woock, & Wright, 2008*).
- Musicians are better able to sustain mental control during memory and recall tasks, most likely as a result of their longterm musical training (*Berti et al., 2006; Pallesen et al., 2010*).
- Students who can perform complex rhythms can also make faster and more precise corrections in many academic and physical situations, according to the Center for Timing, Coordination, and Motor Skills. *Rhythm seen as key to music's evolutionary role in human intellectual development, Center for Timing, Coordination, and Motor Skills, 2000.*
- Learning in the arts nurtures motivation, including active engagement, disciplined and sustained attention, persistence and risk taking. It also increases attendance and educational aspirations. — *From Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development, Arts Education Partnership, 2002*
- The musician is constantly adjusting decisions on tempo, tone, style, rhythm, phrasing, and feeling – training the brain to become incredibly good at organizing and conducting numerous activities at once. Dedicated practice of this orchestration can have a great payoff for lifelong attention skills, intelligence, and an ability for self-knowledge and expression. — *From A User's Guide to the Brain, May 31, 2003; Ratey, John J., MD*
- Studies have found that the corpus callosum of musicians is thicker and more fully developed than in other people, reinforcing the idea that music enlarges existing neural pathways and stimulates learning and creativity. The planum temporale, located in the temporal lobe of the cortex, is also more pronounced in musicians. This area of the brain appears to be associated with language processing and might also "categorize" sounds, suggesting a perceptual link between language and music. Studies like this, notes science writer Richard A. Knox, are "part of a growing body of evidence indicating that human brains are designed to process, appreciate, and eventually create music – an activity whose importance for the species scientists are only beginning to appreciate in biological terms."
"Music of the Hemispheres," James Shreeve, Discover, October 1996, "Sweet Taste in Music May Be Human Trait, Harvard Study Finds," Richard A. Knox, Boston Globe, September 1996 *Note: There have been follow up studies done more recently (2009), indicating that this information is still up to date, but since the new studies are delving into more specifics, this is still the primary data.

A good portion of this research was gathered via American Music Conference but there are several other sources represented, as well as many other ways to search out similar data.

(The underlining for quick reference is ours)