

## The Value of an Education in Music

For centuries, music and art have been recognized as disciplines, on equal footing with mathematics, language, and the sciences as regards the development of mental process. More recent research has shown that the study of music and in particular, performance on an instrument, actively involves more of the domains of the brain than any other discipline. Instrumental music, especially within an ensemble such as band or orchestra, is the purest form of mental activity. It requires more of the brain to be utilized than any other activity we experience in formal education. Dealing with the demands of ensemble performance and individual performance simultaneously requires that the performers manipulate visual symbolic information, interpret visual instructions from a conductor, analyze and synthesize aural information being received constantly, exhibit manual skill with the instrument, regulate their volume level and style of playing in concert with several other performers, and many other factors that all combine to become “making music.”

I can cite all of the statistics that exist regarding the effects of music on the development of the brain, but that might just sound like a band director trying to justify his own existence in many people’s eyes. Instead, I would like to present what many philosophers, thinkers, and leaders have expressed regarding the value of music. (*from the September/October 1993 BDGuide*)

**PLATO:** “Music training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul.”

**SHAKESPEARE:** “The man that hath no music in himself...let no such man be trusted.”

**ERNEST BOYER** (*President, Carnegie Foundation*): “Music gives us a language that cuts across the disciplines, helps us to see connections and brings a more coherent meaning to our world.”

**PAUL HARVEY** (*Broadcaster/Commentator*): “Our schools tend to refine intellects but neglect to discipline emotions. For anyone to grow up complete, music is imperative.”

**GREGORY ANRIG** (*President, Educational Testing Services*): “The things I learned from my experience in music in school are discipline, perseverance, dependability, composure, courage, and pride in results. Not a bad preparation for the work force!”

**JOSEPH M. CALAHAN** (*Director of Corporate Communications, Xerox Corporation*): “Arts education aids students in skills needed in the workplace: flexibility, the ability to solve problems and communicate, the ability to learn new skills, to be creative and innovative, and to strive for excellence.”

**CLIFFORD V. SMITH** (*President, General Electric Foundation*): “GE hires a lot of engineers. We want young people who can do more than add up a string of numbers and write a coherent sentence. They must be able to solve problems, communicate ideas and be sensitive to the world around them. Participation in the arts is one of the best ways to develop these abilities.”

**SHIRLEY YOUNG** (*VP, Consumer Marketing Development for General Motors*): “The Japanese consider the study of music important for their engineers. Playing a musical instrument involves discipline, creativity, and conceptualization. These attributes, added to engineering talent, help produce results that are not only functional but also harmonious in every way. Music reaches across cultures and needs no translation.”

**Music is not only Important...it’s Essential!**