

# **MOM AND DAD ARE STILL THE MOST IMPORTANT AUDIENCE!**

By. Dr Tim Lautzenheiser

Ask any young musicians who they want to have hear them play, sing, march, etc., and they will tell you, "My parents." Although we are living in a day and age where the family unit is struggling against divorce, economical strains, change in social standards, and a heavy emphasis on the 'I, ME' concept of living, there is still a basic desire to "please Mother and Father." When a young person spends countless hours in preparation for a performance, and a parent is not 'on hand' to support and acknowledge this accomplishment, then something is 'incomplete' for the student.

Granted, parents have all kinds of 'extra duties' to handle and time is certainly at a premium. It is easy to rationalize: missing a booster meeting, promising to make the 'next concert,' pleading 'too tired for any more responsibilities.' We can always find excuses for not going the extra mile, and sure, there will be future booster meetings and certainly other concerts to attend and, perhaps, there will be a surge of energy when we will look forward to extra responsibilities. (DREAM ON!!)

Since 'Mom and Dad' ARE the most important audience, there is much to be gained when they are on hand to witness this musical accomplishment, not to mention what might be lost when they are absent.

When parents are present at a concert it says:

1. They care about me
2. They support me in my musical growth.
3. They think it is important I go the distance.
4. They want to see me attain excellence.
5. The priorities in my life are important to them.
6. I'm worth their time, even though they have other choices.
7. They think my efforts are worthy—and I'm worthy.
8. They recognize my dedication and encourage my learning.
9. They know being there means a lot to me.
10. My performance and their attendance is an expression of our love for one another.

It seems that so many parents think they are just coming to a concert when, in reality, they are attending a performance of their child. We have all seen Mom and Dad give standing ovations to musical performances which left much to be desired. They were not acknowledging the music, they were expressing their heartfelt pride in the effort put forth by their child. The worth of this action in regards to the self esteem of the performers is immeasurable. It means: "All my efforts, all my sacrifice, all my learning was worthwhile. I made a difference—I count." Needless to say the impetus to do even better is planted securely in the mind. And the mind leads itself in the direction of its most dominant thought.

Parent approval is the most potent fuel when it comes to insuring success for any young person. After hearing countless excuses and questioning yourself "Is this really all worthwhile," just keep remembering: for the students, Mom and Dad are still the most important audience in the world.

## **HOW PARENTS CAN HELP AT HOME**

- 1. Show an interest in the music study of your child.**
- 2. Arrange a regular time for your child to practice.**
- 3. Find a quiet place where he can practice without interruption.**
- 4. Help him with his practice as much as possible by counting, studying music texts, etc.**
- 5. Help the student keep a daily record of her practice.**
- 6. Give him a safe place to keep his instrument.**
- 7. Keep the instrument in good repair with reeds, mutes, etc. Every student should have their own metronome.**
- 8. Be very careful with school-owned instruments. The cost of repairs is very high.**
- 9. Help your child to be prepared and on time for each rehearsal and lesson.**
- 10. Even though private study is not required, it is strongly recommended as an extension of the classroom.**
- 11. Make faithful attendance at all activities important.**
- 12. Encourage your child to play for others when the opportunity arises, in the home, at school, church and in the community.**

## **AT SCHOOL**

- 1. Keep a record of the students various musical activities.**
- 2. Notify the teacher if the student is to be absent or tardy at lessons, rehearsals, etc., and explain why.**
- 3. See that he takes his instrument and music to school.**
- 4. Teach him to be punctual at lessons at rehearsals.**
- 5. See that your child keeps up with classroom studies and makes up work he missed.**
- 6. Visit rehearsals and lessons occasionally.**
- 7. Discuss with your music teachers anything that will help them to better understand your child.**
- 8. Attend concerts and other performances whenever possible.**
- 9. Attend Band Booster meetings whenever possible.**
- 10. Volunteer for parent committees.**
- 11. Purchase band sweatshirts, hats, etc., and wear them to all band functions.**

## Music Advocacy's Top Ten for Parents

1. In a 2000 survey, 73 percent of respondents agree that teens who play an instrument are less likely to have discipline problems.

- *Americans Love Making Music – And Value Music Education More Highly Than Ever*, American Music Conference, 2000.

2. 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.

3. A ten-year study indicates that students who study music achieve higher test scores, regardless of socioeconomic background. - Dr. James Catterall, UCLA.

4. A 1997 study of elementary students in an arts-based program concluded that students' math test scores rose as their time in arts education classes increased.

- "Arts Exposure and Class Performance," *Phi Delta Kappan*, October, 1998.

5. First-grade students who had daily music instruction scored higher on creativity tests than a control group without music instruction.

- K.L. Wolff, *The Effects of General Music Education on the Academic Achievement, Perceptual-Motor Development, Creative Thinking, and School Attendance of First-Grade Children*, 1992.

6. In a Scottish study, one group of elementary students received musical training, while another group received an equal amount of discussion skills training. After six (6) months, the students in the music group achieved a significant increase in reading test scores, while the reading test scores of the discussion skills group did not change.

- Sheila Douglas and Peter Willatts, *Journal of Research in Reading*, 1994.

7. According to a 1991 study, students in schools with arts-focused curriculums reported significantly more positive perceptions about their academic abilities than students in a comparison group.

- Pamela Aschbacher and Joan Herman, *The Humanitas Program Evaluation*, 1991.

8. Students who are rhythmically skilled also tend to better plan, sequence, and coordinate actions in their daily lives. - "Cassily Column," *TCAMS Professional Resource Center*, 2000.

9. In a 1999 Columbia University study, 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, 1999.

10. 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.

## Music Advocacy's Top Ten for Students

1. A 2000 Georgia Tech study indicates that a student who participates in at least one college elective music course is 4.5 times more likely to stay in college than the general student population.- Dr. Denise C. Gardner, *Effects of Music Courses on Retention*, Georgia Tech, 2000.
2. On the 1999 SAT, music students continued to outperform their non-arts peers, scoring 61 points higher on the verbal portion and 42 points higher on the math portion of the exam. - Steven M. Demorest and Steven J. Morrison, "Does Music Make You Smarter?," *Music Educators Journal*, September, 2000.
3. Students who participate in All-State ensembles consistently score over 200 points higher on the SAT than non-music students. This figure indicates that students can pursue excellence in music while also excelling academically.  
- Texas Music Educators Association, 1988-1996.
4. Students with good rhythmic performance ability can more easily detect and differentiate between patterns in math, music, science, and the visual arts.  
- "Rhythm seen as key to man's evolutionary development," TCAMS Professional Resource Center, 2000.
5. Students in arts programs are more likely to try new things, and they can better express their own ideas to friends, teachers, and parents. - *Champions of Change*, the President's Council on the Arts and Humanities, 1999.
6. College students majoring in music achieve scores higher than students of all other major on college reading exams.- Carl Hartman, "Arts May Improve Students' Grades," *The Associated Press*, October, 1999.
7. Music students demonstrate less test anxiety and performance anxiety than students who do not study music. - "College-Age Musicians Emotionally Healthier than Non-Musician Counterparts," *Houston Chronicle*, 1998.
8. The average scores achieved by music students on the 1999 SAT increased for every year of musical study. This same trend was found in SAT scores of previous years.  
- Steven M. Demorest and Steven J. Morrison, "Does Music Make You Smarter?," *Music Educators Journal*, September, 2000.
9. A majority of the engineers and technical designers in Silicon Valley are also practicing musicians. - *The Case for Sequential Music Education in the Core Curriculum of the Public Schools*, Center for the Arts in the Basic Curriculum, 1997.
10. Nine out of ten people with instrumental music experience are glad that they have learned to play an instrument. - "Music Ed Survey," *Giles Communications*, 2000.