

## The Many Benefits of a Music Education

by Kyle Bueschlen and Amy Keus

While we all have different tastes, nearly everyone in the world enjoys music – whether it is by listening, singing, playing an instrument, or even composing or conducting. In school, music is not only an immensely fun and fulfilling subject, but also one that can enrich the lives of students and their education.

Ms. Amy Keus, Secondary School Music Teacher at Nanjing International School, explains why music education is so important and offers learning benefits far beyond the classroom.



### **Academic: Making connections between different subjects**

- Math: Music notation
- English: Interpretation of what we hear through our own lenses

- Science: The physics behind sound
- Humanities: The purpose and context behind music
- Physical Education: The physical endurance and dexterity required to play an instrument
- Drama: The physicality of putting yourself on show as you express your art
- Visual Arts: Painting with sounds instead of painting with colours
- Design: The engineering of how instruments work and knowing how to fix problems

### **Social: Being part of a team pursuing a common goal**

#### **Health**

- Improves memory and improvisation skills
- Musicians learn languages easier
- Improves the visual, auditory, and motor cortices of the brain
- Increases problem solving due to closer links between hemispheres in the brain
- Improved executive functions in the brain
- Increases breath capacity (good for swimmers!)

### **Spiritual and Mindfulness: Slip into the 'zone' as you perform something that transcends everyday life**

"Music creates the perfect balance for a well-rounded student," said Ms. Keus. "In the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP) music, students are learning to become *musicians*. They learn about a composer's artistic intention, stylistic characteristics of performances, and how their process journal can map out their progress as reflective, thinking musical artists."

At NIS, our students have agency over their learning with student voice and student choice built into all our co-curricular

activities. "With music as a co-curricular activity, students are learning to become *instrumentalists*," explained Ms. Keus. "The focus is on building skills that result in exceptional performances. Here, the focus is less on the process and more on the result. Regardless of whether they are a soloist or part of an ensemble, students break down music into small pieces that are practiced until mastery."

By combining MYP and DP Music and co-curricular activities, our students become well-rounded musicians with excellent instrumental skills. NIS offers music programmes and activities starting in Primary School all the way to the end of Secondary, with opportunities in band, advanced orchestra, choir, Chinese drumming, rock bands, and even our signature Conducting Leadership Programme, where select students learn conducting and ensemble management skills.

If you want to join a music ensemble, there is something for everyone if they are dedicated and happy to practice. Some of our ensembles, like choir and drumming, require no musical experience. Others, like band and rock bands, require basic experience. Advanced Orchestra and our Conducting Leadership Programme require advanced skills in music. "Performances at NIS are always unique because they are adapted to the needs of the musicians," said Ms. Keus. "When you experience a musical performance at NIS, you are guaranteed to hear a truly unique, one-of-a-kind experience."

