

MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra

2019-20 Evaluation Results

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NOVEMBER 2020

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Key findings

This report provides information about the outcomes and implementation of the MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra (MNYO) for the 2019-20 school year. A few key findings are presented below.

Participating students saw growth in musical skills

- The MNYO instructor reported that all students saw growth in their musical skills.
- Students reported that their participation helped them learn new music, improve their musical skills, and strengthen their ability to perform in a group, specifically.
- All students reported practicing their instruments.

Participating students saw growth in non-musical skills

- According to the MNYO instructor, all students were cooperative in a group setting, followed directions in rehearsals, and demonstrated focus in rehearsals.
- According to the MNYO instructor, all students brought required materials to rehearsals, persisted on tasks even when experiencing difficulty, and demonstrated eagerness to learn.
- The MNYO instructor reported that students had grown in non-musical skills, including being more driven, taking more initiative and serving as leaders within the group.

Participating students enjoy the program and see value in it

- All students reported wanting to participate in MNYO again in the following year; all parents also wanted their child to continue to participate.
- All students reported feeling encouraged and cared for by their instructor.

The transition to online rehearsals went smoothly

- Students and parents reported that the transition to online rehearsals went well; they reported that their families had the required time and materials to do online rehearsals.
- Students noted that while the transition forced them to work together in new ways, they found a way to effectively rehearse together.

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Program overview

MacPhail Center for Music's School Partnerships enrich the lives of young people and their families in Minnesota by providing in-person or live online instruction in partnership with Minnesota schools. MacPhail staff work with school music educators and administrators to develop customized programs that provide relevant and compelling music education to strengthen student learning. These programs are individually designed for each school to ensure custom supports are in place to enable children and youth to succeed.

The 2019-20 school year marked the fourth year of the MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra. It was formed in 2016 as a destination for students who aged out of the Ascension and Harvest Programs, which are a part of the MacPhail Center for Music's School Partnerships programming. MNYO has formed a community of young musicians from numerous schools in Minneapolis and the surrounding area. MNYO is a tuition-free ensemble, and the program provides instrument assistance to students in need.

MNYO's weekly rehearsals include full orchestra rehearsals, instrument-specific sectionals, and bucket drumming. There is a strong emphasis on community and inclusion; the program is focused on serving students who often do not have access to music education and learning. It is also inclusive of students with varying levels of musical skills. MNYO includes numerous performances in and around the community, including a performance partnership with the Minnesota Orchestra. A twice-yearly, day-long retreat has been added to the program calendar to help build community and to keep continuity during the summer. Additional summer opportunities are available to MNYO students as well. Thirty youth regularly participated in MNYO in the 2019-20 school year; 75% of these students were alumni of the Intensive Strings program.

Program changes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The first cases of COVID-19 in Minnesota were diagnosed in March 2020; following this, Governor Walz issued a stay-at-home order, and public schools transitioned to distance learning. With this, the MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra transitioned to online rehearsals as well.

Scholarships and program funders

The Roderick Cox Music Initiative and the Children's Music Arts Foundation provided scholarships to two MNYO youths. In addition, the MNYO program receives funding from The Curtis L. Carlson Family Foundation, Minnesota State Arts Board, Patrick and Aimee Butler Family Foundation, Carolyn Foundation, George Family Foundation, and Aroha Philanthropies.

MNYO participants who received scholarships in the 2019-20 school year will continue to have funding for the 2020-21 school year. The MacPhail Center for Music hopes to increase the number of scholarships available to students in future years.

Roderick Cox Music Initiative Scholarship

The Roderick Cox Music Initiative (RCMI) began in 2019 as a program to nurture the next generation of musicians and conductors through music scholarships granted over three years to underserved youth of color in the Twin Cities. Each scholarship is given to a student who aspires to have a future in classical music. Funds from the RCMI are designated for summer camps, instrument repair/purchases, advanced training programs, private lessons, and mentorship by Roderick Cox and professional musicians in the area. The goal of RCMI is to help make the pathway for young musicians of color a little easier by alleviating some financial burden, and providing the necessary networking and training needed to be a successful musician. In the 2019-20 school year, one student from the MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra was awarded the RCMI Scholarship.

Children's Music and Arts Foundation Scholarship

In 2006, the Children's Music and Arts Foundation (CMAF) gave its assets to MacPhail Center for Music to establish a permanently endowed fund to support the work of MacPhail. The Children's Music and Arts Fund of MacPhail Center for Music was made possible with the generous support of Charlotte and Arsham Ohanessian. Ohanessian, born in an Armenian community of Baghdad, Iraq, became a generous philanthropist in his adopted home of Minnesota. In retirement, he continued playing the violin and reading ancient poetry. Ohanessian befriended Tom Keller and Chris Clouser, founding board members of the Children's Music and Arts Foundation, and subsequently directed a portion of his legacy to the foundation. The dream of Clouser and Keller was to provide financial assistance for elementary and high school students in need of help to continue their music studies. Today, the fund provides essential support for all need-based awards offered to qualified MacPhail students. In the 2019-20 school year, one student from the MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra was awarded the CMAF Scholarship.

Evaluation

Wilder Research worked with the MacPhail program coordinators to develop an evaluation design for the program. The evaluation includes outcome and implementation components and gathers qualitative and quantitative data to answer the following research questions.

Outcome evaluation key questions

- To what extent does student participation in MNYO affect student musical skills and knowledge?
- To what extent does student participation in MNYO affect student non-musical skills (persistence, motivation, leadership)?

Implementation evaluation key questions

How well is MNYO being implemented? What aspects of the program can be strengthened or improved?

Evaluation question related to the COVID-19 pandemic

How well did MacPhail support students and their families during the shift to online rehearsals?

This report describes the methodology and findings of the evaluation.

Methodology

In the 2019-20 school year, MacPhail and Wilder Research worked together to collect information on the MNYO program through a variety of surveys, interviews, and program records. Descriptions of these tools are listed here according to which component of the evaluation they addressed.

Outcome

- Student survey: The survey gathered information on students' attitudes about school and music education. It also asked about parental support they received in their musical education. MacPhail staff collected passive consent from parents of participating students. Five MNYO student surveys were completed (17% response rate) by students in sixth to eleventh grade.
- Parent survey: The survey gathered parents' perspectives on their child's practice skills, their own involvement and encouragement at home, the impact of music lessons on their child's education, and whether they want their child to continue music lessons. Eleven MNYO parent surveys were collected (37% response rate).
- MNYO progress report: The MNYO instructor completed progress reports for the spring 2020 semester. These progress reports consisted of open-ended questions about student strengths and suggested areas for development. Twenty progress reports were collected at the end of spring 2020 (67% response rate).

Implementation

- **Student survey:** The student survey (mentioned above) additionally asked students about their satisfaction with the program and their relationship with their music instructor, as well as what support they received from MacPhail as they transitioned to online rehearsals.
- **Parent survey:** The parent survey (mentioned above) also asked parents about the support they received from MacPhail as they transitioned to online rehearsals.

Results

Outcomes

Students show improvement in musical skills, have good practicing habits, and want to continue developing their skills

Students make progress in their musical skills

The MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra instructor completed progress reports for participating students; within these progress reports, they were asked to report on students' musical progress and growth, as well as students' practice outside of rehearsals. While 55% of students were reported to have prepared assigned music outside of rehearsals, all students were reported to have shown consistent musical progress and growth (Figure 1).

Students were asked in an open-ended question how their participation in MNYO has helped them progress in their musical skills. Students reported that their participation has helped them learn new music and musical skills generally, and that they have gotten better at playing within a group because of their participation.

Students regularly practice their instrument

All students reported practicing their instrument outside of rehearsals, with one of five students who responded to the survey reporting they practice "a lot" and four of five reporting they practice "a little" (Figure 2). Additionally, four of the five responding students reported that they like to practice their instrument, with two of five reporting they like to practice "a lot" and another two of five reporting they like to practice "a little." All MNYO students and their parents said students had a place to practice at home (Figure 3).

Parents encourage students to practice at home

Parents of participating students were involved in students' music education. Overall, three of the five students surveyed said someone at home encourages them to practice their music "a lot," and four out of five said someone attends their performances "a lot" (Figure 4). All MNYO parents who completed a survey indicated that they encourage their child to practice at home and most reported that someone at home comes to their performances (91%; Figure 5).

Students make progress in non-musical skills

In progress reports, the MNYO instructor described students' non-musical skills, including socialemotional skills. All students were reported to be cooperative in a group setting "always," to follow directions in rehearsals "always" (80%; Figure 6) or "most of the time" (20%), and to demonstrate focus in rehearsals "always" (65%) or "most of the time" (35%). Seventy-nine percent of students were reported to have demonstrated leadership in rehearsals "always" (63%) or "most of the time" (16%).

The instructor reported that all students brought required materials to rehearsals "always" (65%; Figure 7) or "most of the time" (35%), persisted on tasks even when experiencing difficulty "always" (85%) or "most of the time" (15%), and demonstrated eagerness to learn "always" (80%) or "most of the time" (20%). Ninety-five percent of students were reported to demonstrate independent learning "always" (75%) or "most of the time" (20%).

The MNYO instructor provided feedback about students in progress reports. Most commonly, the instructor discussed positive non-musical attributes of the students or discussed the ways in which they had grown in their non-musical skills and abilities through the course of their time working together. These reports included notes that students were driven and independently took initiative, that they were leaders within the group, and that they were enthusiastic in their participation.

Students were asked in an open-ended question what has been valuable to them about participating in MNYO beyond their musical growth. Students reported that they had gained friendships, enjoyed performing for an audience, enjoyed playing within a group, were able to meet different musicians and learn more about different types of instruments, and enjoyed how much support their parents provided.

Parents were satisfied with how MNYO has helped students in non-musical skills as well. They reported that MNYO had improved their child's attitude toward school (100% reporting it did so "a lot" or "a little"), ability to focus on a task (100%), math skills (76%), literacy skills (72%), and other academic skills (100%; Figure 8).

Implementation

Parents and students are satisfied with the program and would like students to continue participating and developing musical skills

Parents and students are satisfied with the program

Students were satisfied with their experience with the MacPhail program, with all students saying they like the program "a lot" and that they like to perform "a lot" (Figure 9).

To assess their motivation to continue developing their musical skills, students were asked if they wanted to continue in MNYO the following year. All students reported that they would like to continue in the program in the next year (Figure 10). All surveyed parents also reported that they wanted their child to continue to participate in the program in the next year.

Students were asked why they wanted to continue in the program in an open-ended question. Almost all responded by saying that participating in MNYO was fun, and one student noted that it encourages them to practice their instrument and become a better player. When asked what they would change, students suggested making the program year-round and allowing participants an opportunity to try a different instrument.

Parents were asked if there were other instruments MNYO should offer through the program. Three parents indicated they would like other instruments to be offered, and suggested piano and guitar. One parent suggested that MNYO offer jazz ensembles.

Students report liking their instructor and would like to continue lessons with them

At the end of the school year, MNYO students were asked in the student survey about their relationship with their instructor. All students reported that their instructor encourages them to do well in their music "a lot" (Figure 11). All students reported that they understand their instructor when they teach them new things "a lot" (four of five) or "a little" (one of five), and that they feel their instructor cares about them "a lot" (three of five) or "a little" (two of five).

Students were able to transition to online rehearsals smoothly

Students and parents were asked questions about the transition to online rehearsals. All students reported they "strongly agree" or "agree" that the technology used for online rehearsals was easy to use and that their family had access to the technology necessary for online rehearsals (Figure 12). Students also indicated that MacPhail provided support in their transition to online rehearsals.

Students were asked what went well when transitioning from in-person to online rehearsals. Students commonly said that the platform was easy to use and that it was easy to get connected to their section or the full group. Students also reported that it was very clear to them what assignments were and what they should be working on during rehearsal and that it encouraged them to practice outside of rehearsal time.

When asked what was challenging about transitioning to online rehearsals, students offered a variety of different answers. They noted that the quality of the sound was poorer, that it was difficult to tune, and that they weren't able to ask specific questions about the music. A couple of students noted that that they had to figure out entirely new ways to practice because of the inability to meet inperson, and one student noted the difficulty of not being able to interact with their peers in person. Students were asked what suggestions they had to improve online rehearsals in the future; most commonly, they did not have concrete suggestions for improvements. Those who did make suggestions said that the group could try playing new and different music.

All parents reported that they "strongly agree" or "agree" that the transition to online rehearsals was smooth, that their family has the necessary technology to do online rehearsals, and that MacPhail provided support in transitioning their family to online rehearsals (Figure 13). Ninety-one percent of parents reported that adults in their household had the time available to help their child with online rehearsals.

Issues to consider

The data indicates that MNYO is a positive experience for its participants. Students enjoy participating in the lessons, are practicing at home, enjoy support from parents, and want to continue in the program. Parents are positive about the impacts of MNYO on their children and want them to continue.

Based on the results available to date, the following are a few points to consider in future planning for the program. MacPhail leaders and staff may have already made adjustments in some of these areas.

- Consider ways to work with students and parents to encourage more practice at home, as the instructor reported that only 55% of students were practicing their music outside of rehearsals.
- Identify opportunities for more students to demonstrate leadership in rehearsals.
- Continue to identify new music for students to perform, as many indicated that was an enjoyable part of their participation and something they missed during the transition to online rehearsals.
- Continue to find ways for students to interact with one another in person in safe ways during the pandemic; a couple of students noted that not being able to see one another in person was challenging.

Figures

1. Instructor report of students' musical skills

	N	Always (4)	Most of the time (3)	Sometimes (2)	Never (1)
Student prepares assigned music outside of MNYO rehearsals.	20	30%	25%	45%	0%
Student has shown consistent musical progress and growth.	19	95%	5%	0%	0%

2. Students' report of practice

	N	Yes, a lot (3)	Yes, a little (2)	No (1)
Do you practice your instrument?	5	1/5	4/5	0/5
Do you like to practice your instrument?	5	2/5	2/5	1/5

3. Parents' and students' report of practice space at home

	Pare	ents	Stud	lents
	N	Yes	N	Yes
Do you (Does your child) have a place to practice at home?	11	100%	5	100%

4. Students' report of encouragement from home

	N	Yes, a lot (3)	Yes, a little (2)	No (1)
Does someone at home encourage you to practice your instrument?	5	3/5	2/5	0/5
Does someone from home come to your performances?	5	4/5	1/5	0/5

5. Parents' report of encouragement from home

	N	Yes	Sometimes	No
Do you or another adult from home attend your child's music performances?	11	91%	0%	9%
Do you encourage your child to practice at home?	11	100%	0%	0%

6. Instructor report of students' non-musical skills, pt. 1

	N	Always (4)	Most of the time (3)	Sometimes (2)	Never (1)
Student is cooperative in a group setting.	20	100%	0%	0%	0%
Student follows directions in the rehearsals.	20	80%	20%	0%	0%
Student demonstrates leadership in rehearsals.	19	63%	16%	21%	0%
Student demonstrates focus in rehearsals.	20	65%	35%	0%	0%

7. Instructor report of students' non-musical skills, pt. 2

	N	Always (4)	Most of the time (3)	Sometimes (2)	Never (1)
Student brings all required materials (method book, instrument, etc.) to rehearsals.	20	65%	35%	0%	0%
Student persists on tasks even when experiencing difficulty.	20	85%	15%	0%	0%
Student demonstrates eagerness to learn.	20	80%	20%	0%	0%
Student demonstrates independent learning.	20	75%	20%	0%	5%

8. Parents' report of impact of MNYO participation

Has participation in MNYO helped to improve your child's	N	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No
Attitude towards school?	10	40%	60%	0%
Ability to focus on a task?	11	46%	55%	0%
Math skills?	8	13%	63%	25%
Literacy skills?	7	43%	29%	29%
Other academic skills?	9	33%	67%	0%

9. Students' report of satisfaction with program components

	N	Yes, a lot (3)	Yes, a little (2)	No (1)
Do you like MNYO?	5	5/5	0/5	0/5
Do you like to perform?	5	5/5	0/5	0/5

10. Parent and student desire to continue with MNYO

Would you like (your child) to continue with MNYO next year?	N	Yes	Maybe	No
Student	5	100%	0%	0%
Parents	11	100%	0%	0%

Note: Percentages were added for student responses to allow for comparison, but results should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of responses.

11. Students' report of relationship with MNYO instructor

	N	Yes, a lot (3)	Yes, a little (2)	No (1)
Does your instructor encourage you to do well in your music?	5	5/5	0/5	0/5
Do you understand your instructor when he or she teaches you new things?	5	4/5	1/5	0/5
Do you feel your instructor cares about you?	5	3/5	2/5	0/5

12. Transition to online learning; student perspective

	N	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
The technology used for online rehearsals has been easy to use.	5	2/5	3/5	0/5	0/5	-
My family has access to the technology necessary for online rehearsals.	5	4/5	1/5	0/5	0/5	-
MacPhail provided support in my transition to online rehearsals.	5	2/5	1/5	0/5	0/5	2/5

Note: A "not applicable" option was only available for the question "MacPhail provided support in my transition to online rehearsals."

13. Transition to online learning; parent perspective

	N	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The transition to online rehearsals was smooth.	11	64%	36%	0%	0%
My family has access to the necessary technology to do online rehearsals.	11	82%	18%	0%	0%
Adults in my household have the time available to help my child with online rehearsals.	11	55%	36%	9%	0%
MacPhail provided support in transitioning my family to online rehearsals.	11	55%	46%	0%	0%

MacPhail Center for Music

Parent Survey – PAPER VERSION (administered online)

Dear	Parent/	'Guardian,
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We hope that your child's involvement in the **MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra (MNYO)** has been rewarding. In order to better serve your child and make improvements to our program, we would appreciate your feedback on your child's experience. Thank you.

Student's name (optional):	S	Student's grade:	
Relationship to student:			
School:			
What musical instrument does your child play?: \Box^1 Violin \Box^5 Percussion \Box^6 Flute \Box^7 Clarinet \Box^8 Trombone	l² Viola □³ Cello	⁴ String bass	
			 •••

			Yes	No
1. Does your child have a place to practice at home?			2	1
2. Do you encourage your child to practice at home?			2	1

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
1. The transition to online learning was smooth.	4	3	2		
My family has access to the necessary technology to do online rehearsals.	4	3	2	1	
Adults in my household have the time available to help my child with online rehearsals.	4	3	2	1	
4. MacPhail provided support in transitioning my family to online rehearsals.	4	3	2	1	-8

5. What's one suggestion you have to improve online rehearsals in the future?

6. Please describe any other feedback you have about online rehearsals:

	Yes	Sometimes	No
7. Do you or another adult from home attend your child's music performances?	3	2	1

8. What is the best way for MacPhail staff to contact you with information about your child?

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Something else, please describe: _____

Has participation in MNYO helped to improve your child's	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Don't Know			
9. Attitude towards school?	3	2	1	8			
10. Ability to focus on a task?	3	2	1	8			
11. Math skills?	3	2	1	8			
12. Literacy skills?	3	2	1	8			
13. Other academic skills?	3	2	1	8			
 14. Would you like your child to continue with MNYO music program next year? ¹ Yes ² Maybe ³ No 15. Are there other instruments you would like MacPhail to offer in its School Partnerships program? ¹ Yes, please list: <u>2</u> Maybe ³ No 							
 16. Would you be interested in joining a booster group? (This is a more hands-on parent group for more involved.) Image: Constraint of the second seco	for those	e who'd l	ike to b	e			
17. Please add any additional comments or concerns you have about the MacPhail music progra	am.						

Thank you!



MacPhail Center for Music

MNYO Student Survey - PAPER VERSION (administered online)

Name:	Grade:	Date:

School: _____

1. What instrument do you play? (drop-down list with options)

Please check one:	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No
2. Do you like MNYO?	3	2	1
3. Does your instructor encourage you to do well in your music?	3	2	1
4. Do you feel your instructor cares about you?	3	2	1
5. Do you understand your instructor when he or she teaches you new things?	3	2	1
6. Does someone at home encourage you to practice your music?	3	2	1
7. Does someone at home come to your performances?	3	2	1
8. Do you practice your instrument?	3	2	1
9. Do you like to practice your instrument?	3	2	1
10. Do you like to perform?	3	2	1

11. Do you have a place to practice at home?

D² No

1	Yes
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online rehearsals.

Please check one: Strongly Strongly Agree Disagree disagree agree 12. The technology used for online rehearsals 4 3 2 1 has been easy to use. 13. My family has access to the technology 4 3 2 1 necessary for online rehearsals. 14. MacPhail provided support in my transition to 4 3 2 1

15. What went well when transitioning from in-person rehearsals to online rehearsals?

Not

applicable

8-

16.	What was	challenging	about tra	ansitionina [·]	from in-pers	on rehearsals	to online	rehearsals?
-								

17. What's one suggestion you have to make online rehearsals better in the future?
--

18. How has MNYO helped you progress in your musical skills?

19. What else has been valuable to you about participating in MNYO?

20. What would you change about MNYO?

21. Would you like to continue in MNYO next year?

□ ¹ Yes	² Maybe	□³ No
Why?		

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY!!

MacPhail CENTER FOR MUSIC

MNYO Progress Report | Completed by Music Instructor

Student's name:	Grade:	Grade: Date:						
Student studies: ¹ Violin ² Viola ³ Cello ⁴ String bass ⁵ Percussion ⁶ Flute ⁷ Clarinet ⁸ Trombone								
Attendance: Student attended out of MNYO rehearsals.								
Please rate the student's preparation for and behavior during cla	ass. Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	Not applicable			
1. Student brings all required materials (method book, instrume etc.) to rehearsals.	nt, 🔲 4	3	2	1	9			
2. Student prepares assigned music outside of MNYO rehearsals	. 4	3	2	1	9			
3. Student is cooperative in a group setting.	4	3	2		9			
4. Student follows directions in the rehearsals.	4	3	2		9			
5. Student demonstrates eagerness to learn.	4	3	2		9			
6. Student demonstrates focus in rehearsals.	4	3	2		9			
 Student has shown consistent musical progress and growth. Please describe: 	4	3	2	1	9			
8. Student persists on tasks even when experiencing difficulty.	4	3	2		9			
9. Student demonstrates leadership in rehearsals.	4	3	2	1	9			
10. Student demonstrates independent learning.	4	3	2		9			
Additional teacher comments:								

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Roque Diaz and Anna Ostroushko from MacPhail Center for Music for all of their work in this evaluation.

The authors would also like to thank the staff at Wilder Research who contributed to this evaluation:

Anna Alba Jessie Austin Walker Bosch Amanda Eggers Edith Gozali-Lee Bunchung Ly Julia Miller Margaret Peterson Mandi Ward Wilder Res9,koo00ouearch, a division of Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, is a nationally respected nonprofit research and evaluation group. For more than 100 years, Wilder Research has gathered and interpreted facts and trends to help families and communities thrive, get at the core of community concerns, and uncover issues that are overlooked or poorly understood.

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