MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra

2020-21 Evaluation Results

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Key findings

This report provides information about the outcomes and implementation of the MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra (MNYO) for the 2020-21 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.
- All students reported practicing their instrument and liking to do so.

Participating students saw growth in non-musical skills

- According to the MNYO instructor, most students were cooperative in a group setting, followed directions in rehearsals, and demonstrated focus in rehearsals.
- According to the MNYO instructor, most 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 showing leadership skills within the group, improving their ability to focus, and being dedicated to the ensemble.
- Most parents reported that participation in MNYO improved their child's ability to focus on a task, attitude toward school, literacy skills, math skills, and other academic skills.

Participating students enjoy the program and see value in it

- Most students reported that they like the program "a lot" and want to continue in MNYO in the following year.
- All students reported feeling encouraged and cared for by their instructor.

The transition to online rehearsals went smoothly

- All students reported that their families had access to the technology they needed to participate in online rehearsals, and most found the technology easy to use.
- The MNYO instructor reported that participants were able to meaningfully participate through online lessons. While students experienced some challenges related to online rehearsals, including internet connections, audio issues, and a missing social component in rehearsals, they were still able to focus, ask questions, and give and receive feedback.

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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 2020-21 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. Twenty-one youth regularly participated in MNYO in the 2020-21 school year; 38% of these students were alumni of the Ascension Intensive Strings program.

Program changes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

In the 2020-21 school year, the MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra conducted online rehearsals throughout the school year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing guidelines. MacPhail plans to return to in-person rehearsals for the 2021-22 school year.

Scholarships and program funders

The Roderick Cox Music Initiative and the Children's Music Arts Foundation provided scholarships to three MNYO students. 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.

In 2020-21, MacPhail removed the participation fee for MNYO in light of the ongoing pandemic, so all students participated for free. MacPhail plans to keep MNYO free indefinitely.

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 2020-21 school year, two students from the MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra were 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 2020-21 school year, one student from the MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra was awarded the CMAF Scholarship.

Evaluation

Wilder Research worked with 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 2020-21 school year, MacPhail and Wilder Research worked together to collect information on the MNYO program through surveys, interviews, and program records. Descriptions of these tools are listed here according to which component of the evaluation they addressed.

Outcome methods

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. Thirteen MNYO student surveys were completed (62% response rate) by students in seventh to twelfth 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. Fourteen MNYO parent surveys were collected (67% response rate).

MNYO progress report: The MNYO instructor completed progress reports for the spring 2021 semester. These progress reports consisted of open-ended questions about student strengths and suggested areas for development. Seventeen progress reports were collected at the end of spring 2021 (81% response rate).

Implementation methods

Student survey: The student survey (mentioned above) 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 (also mentioned above) asked parents about their satisfaction with the program and their desire for their child to continue in the program in the following year.

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 17 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. All 17 students were reported to have prepared assigned music outside of rehearsals (59% "always" and 41% "most of the time") and to have shown consistent musical progress and growth (88% "always" and 12% "most of the time;" Figure 1). The MNYO instructor also added comments noting the musical improvement they have seen in many of the students, including improved skills in music reading, tone, range, rhythm, and confidence in playing.

Students were asked in an open-ended question about 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 39% of students who responded to the survey reporting they practice "a lot" and 62% reporting they practice "a little" (Figure 2). Additionally, nearly all responding students reported that they like to practice their instrument, with 69% reporting they like to practice "a lot" and another 23% 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, 69% of students surveyed said someone at home encourages them to practice their music "a lot," and 85% said someone attends their performances "a lot" (Figure 4). All 14 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 at least "sometimes" (79%; Figure 5).

Students make progress in non-musical skills

In progress reports, the MNYO instructor described students' non-musical skills, including social-emotional skills. Most students were reported to "always" be cooperative in a group setting (81%), follow directions in rehearsals (94%), and demonstrate focus in rehearsals (77%; Figure 6). A majority of students were reported to have demonstrated leadership in rehearsals "always" (53%).

The instructor reported that most students "always" brought required materials to rehearsals (82%), persisted on tasks even when experiencing difficulty (88%), and demonstrated independent learning (88%; Figure 7). All students "always" demonstrated eagerness to learn.

Again, the MNYO instructor provided feedback about students in progress reports and mentioned positive attributes or improvement in non-musical skills in addition to musical skills. Most commonly mentioned was students showing leadership skills within the ensemble or their sections. Other positive non-musical skill comments included students continued to show enjoyment of music and playing in the group, improved ability to focus, and demonstrated dedication to the ensemble.

When students were asked in an open-ended question what has been valuable to them about participating, about half responded having the opportunity to meet new people, particularly others who like to play music.

Parents were satisfied with how MNYO has helped students in non-musical skills as well. They reported that MNYO had improved their child's ability to focus on a task (93% reporting it did so "a lot" or "a little"), attitude toward school (79%), literacy skills (79%), math skills (72%), and other academic skills (79%; 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 85% of the 13 students that responded in the survey saying they like the program "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. Nearly all students reported that

they would like to continue in the program in the next year (92%, Figure 10). Similarly, nearly all surveyed parents also reported that they wanted their child to continue to participate in the program in the next year (86%).

When asked what they would change, most students said nothing. A few did mention having more performances. Just over 60% of students that completed the survey said they liked to perform "a lot," with another 31% saying "a little" (Figure 9).

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 13 students reported that their instructor encourages them to do well in their music "a lot" and that they feel like their instructor cares about them "a lot" (Figure 11). Nearly all students reported that they understand their instructor when they teach them new things "a lot," with the remaining 8% saying "a little" (92%).

Students were able to transition to online rehearsals smoothly

Students were asked questions about the transition to online rehearsals. All 13 students reported they "strongly agree" or "agree" that their family had access to the technology necessary for online rehearsals, while 85% agreed that the technology used for online rehearsals was easy to use (Figure 12). Students also indicated that MacPhail provided support in their transition to online rehearsals when needed.

The MNYO instructor was also asked to comment on students' ability to participate in programming online. For about half of the students, it was noted that they were able to participate well online or felt comfortable using the technology to participate. Students were still able to focus, ask questions, and give or receive feedback. It was noted that there were a few struggles, such as issues with internet connection, audio, or missing the social component of being in-person.

Issues to consider

The data indicate 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.

- Continue to provide opportunities for students to meet and socialize with others through MNYO, and consider expanding opportunities for socialization among participants. Students commonly reported that the ability to meet others who have similar interests was one of their favorite aspects of participation in MNYO.
- Identify opportunities for more students to demonstrate leadership in rehearsals; about half of participants were reported to "always" demonstrate leadership in rehearsal, which could likely be increased if students are given clear leadership opportunities.
- Consider increasing the number of MNYO performances over the course of the year; students reported that performing is one of their favorite aspects of participation in the program.
- Continue to provide technical support as needed for program participants; all students reported that they were satisfied with the technical support provided by MacPhail for online rehearsals. However, there were a few students who struggled with internet connection, audio, or missing the social component of being in-person, according to the MNYO instructor. Periodically asking students about how they are doing in class could be helpful in informing how the delivery of the lessons can be adjusted promptly.

Figures

1. Instructor report of students' musical skills

	N	Always (4)	Most of the time (3)	Sometimes (2)	Never (1)	Mean
Student prepares assigned music outside of MNYO rehearsals.	17	59%	41%	0%	0%	3.59
Student has shown consistent musical progress and growth.	17	88%	12%	0%	0%	3.88

2. Students' report of practice

	N	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No
Do you practice your instrument?	13	39%	62%	0%
Do you like to practice your instrument?	13	69%	23%	8%

Note: percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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

	Par	Parents		dents
	N	Yes	N	Yes
Do you (Does your child) have a place to practice at home?	14	100%	13	100%

4. Students' report of encouragement from home

	N	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No
Does someone at home encourage you to practice your instrument?	13	69%	31%	0%
Does someone from home come to your performances?	13	85%	15%	0%

5. Parents' report of encouragement from home

	N	Yes	Sometimes	No
Do you or another adult from home attend your child's music performances?	14	71%	7%	21%
Do you encourage your child to practice at home?	14	100%	0%	0%

Note: percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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

	N	Always (4)	Most of the time (3)	Sometimes (2)	Never (1)	Mean
Student is cooperative in a group setting.	16	81%	19%	0%	0%	3.81
Student follows directions in the rehearsals.	17	94%	6%	0%	0%	3.94
Student demonstrates leadership in rehearsals.	17	53%	29%	18%	0%	3.35
Student demonstrates focus in rehearsals.	17	77%	24%	0%	0%	3.76

Note: percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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

	N	Always (4)	Most of the time (3)	Sometimes (2)	Never (1)	Mean
Student brings all required materials (method book, instrument, etc.) to rehearsals.	17	82%	18%	0%	0%	3.82
Student persists on tasks even when experiencing difficulty.	17	88%	12%	0%	0%	3.88
Student demonstrates eagerness to learn.	17	100%	0%	0%	0%	4.00
Student demonstrates independent learning.	17	88%	12%	0%	0%	3.88

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	Don't know
Attitude toward school?	14	50%	29%	14%	7%
Ability to focus on a task?	14	64%	29%	7%	0%
Math skills?	14	43%	29%	14%	14%
Literacy skills?	14	36%	43%	14%	7%
Other academic skills?	14	36%	43%	7%	14%

9. Students' report of satisfaction with program components

	N	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No
Do you like MNYO?	13	85%	15%	0%
Do you like to perform?	13	62%	31%	8%

Note: percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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	13	92%	8%	0%
Parents	14	86%	7%	7%

11. Students' report of relationship with MNYO instructor

	N	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No
Does your instructor encourage you to do well in your music?	13	100%	0%	0%
Do you understand your instructor when he or she teaches you new things?	13	92%	8%	0%
Do you feel your instructor cares about you?	13	100%	0%	0%

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.	13	46%	39%	15%	0%	0%
My family has access to the technology necessary for online rehearsals.	13	62%	39%	0%	0%	0%
MacPhail provided support in my transition to online rehearsals.	13	23%	54%	0%	0%	23%

Note: percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

MacPhail Center for Music

Parent Survey

Dear Parent/Guardian,

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.

Child's name (optional):	Child's grade: _				
Relationship to child:					
What musical instrument does your child play?					
\square^1 Violin \square^2 Viola \square^3 Cello \square^4 Bass	☐ Percussion ☐ 6 Brass				
\square Woodwind \square Other, please describe:	_				
				es	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
		Yes	Someti	mac	No
					+
3. Do you or another adult from home attend your child's music perform	ances?	3		2	1
4. What is the best way for MacPhail staff to contact you with information written note)? ———————————————————————————————————	on about your child (for exa	imple, p	hone, en	nail,	
Has participation in MNYO helped to improve your child's	a	lot li	ittle	No	Don't Know
5. Attitude towards school?				1	8
6. Ability to focus on a task?				1	8
7. Math skills?			= + =	1	8
8. Literacy skills?		3	2	1	8
9. Other academic skills?	[3	2	1	8
10. Would you like your child to continue with MNYO music program next and a large sequence. 11. Are there other instruments you would like MacPhail to offer in its program of the large sequence. 12. Would you be interested in joining a booster group? (This is a more involved.) 13. Please add any additional comments or concerns you have about the	rogramming?		ho'd like	to be	3

Thank you!



MacPhail Center for Music

MNYO Student Survey

This survey will ask you questions about you and the online MNYO rehearsals you participated in this semester. We are interested in your honest thoughts and ideas, so there are no right or wrong answers. As a thank you for your time, we will send you a \$5 gift card after you complete the survey."

Your answers are important. Please indicate how much you agree with each of these statements and fill out all parts of the survey.

Name:			Grade:	Date	:			
1. What instrument do you play?								
Please check one for each question			Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	e No			
2. Do you like MNYO?			3	2	1			
3. Does your instructor encourage you to do well in	?	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 like learning to play your instrument?	3	 2	1					
9. Do you like learning new pieces of music?	3	 2	1					
10. Do you practice your instrument?	3	 2	1					
11. Do you like to practice your instrument?		3	2	1				
12. Do you like to perform?			3	2	1			
13. Do you have a place to practice at home? 13. The second of the seco								
Please check one for each question	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable			
 The technology used for online rehearsals has been easy to use. 	4	3	2	1	-8			
15. My family has access to the technology	4	3	 2	1	-8			

4

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assistance with the online rehearsals when I

16. MacPhail provided me support and

8-

needed it.				
17. What has been valuable to you about participation	ating in MNY	0?		
18. What would you change about MNYO?				
19. Would you like to continue in MNYO next yea	r?			
☐¹ Yes ☐² Maybe ☐³				
Why?				

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY!!



MNYO Progress Report | Completed by Music Instructor

St	tudent's name:	Grade:		Date:				
St	tudent studies: \square^1 Violin \square^2 Viola \square^3 Cello \square^4 Bass \square^5 \square^7 Other, please describe:	Percussion \Box] ⁶ Brass	□ ⁶ Woodwind				
	tudent attended out of MNYO rehearsals.							
Ple	ease rate the student's preparation for and behavior during clas	ss. Always	Most of the time		Never	Not applicable		
1.	Student brings all required materials (method book, instrument etc.) to the group lesson.	t, 🔲 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	1	9		
4.	Student follows directions in rehearsal.	4	3	2	1	9		
5.	Student demonstrates eagerness to learn.	4	3	2	1	9		
6.	Student demonstrates focus in rehearsal.	4	3	2	1	9		
7.	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	1	9		
9.	Student demonstrates leadership in rehearsal.	4	3	2	1	9		
10). Student demonstrates independent learning.	4	3	2	1	9		
	Please comment on the student's ability to participate in the online setting (ex: ability to focus, technical abilities, ability to receive feedback and instruction, etc.)							
Α	dditional teacher comments:							

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