

MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra

2017-18 Evaluation Results

Author: Emma Connell



DECEMBER 2018

451 Lexington Parkway North | Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-280-2700 | www.wilderresearch.org

**Wilder
Research**
Information. Insight. Impact.

Key findings

This report provides information about the outcomes and implementation of the MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra (MNYO) for the 2017-18 school year. A few key findings are presented below.

MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra

Participating students saw growth in musical skills

- Participants commonly reported feeling more confident in playing music and approaching new pieces of music, as well as learning to play music within a group.
- Students frequently noted growth in specific musical skills, such as learning more about vibrato, intonation, and counting.
- Students regularly practice their instrument; 95 percent reported practicing either “a lot” (57%) or “a little” (38%). Seventy-one percent reported liking practicing their instrument “a lot.”

Participating students enjoy the program and see the value in it

- All students reported liking the program and learning new pieces of music. Most (91% each) reported liking performing and learning to play their instrument.
- Ninety-one percent of students reported wanting to participate in MNYO in the next year, and 93 percent of parents reported wanting their children to do so.
- Students reported liking their instructor, feeling their instructor cared about them, and understanding their instructor as they taught.

Participating students saw growth in non-musical skills

- Participants reported making new friends and learning more about teamwork by participating in MNYO.
- Parents reported that participation in MNYO improved their child’s attitude toward school; literacy, math, and other academic skills; and ability to focus on tasks.

Contents

Program overview	1
Evaluation	2
Outcome evaluation key questions	2
Implementation evaluation key questions.....	2
Methodology	3
Outcome	3
Implementation	3
Results.....	4
Outcomes	4
Issues to consider	6
Figures.....	7
Survey Instruments	10

Program overview

The 2017-18 school year marked the second year of the MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra. Formed in 2016 as a destination for students who aged out of the Ascension and Harvest Programs, MNYO has formed a community of young musicians from numerous schools in Minneapolis and the surrounding area. MNYO is a tuition-free ensemble, however to confirm participation, students are asked to pay a \$50 participation fee if they're able. 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. 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-seven youth regularly participated in MNYO in the 2017-18 school year.

Program funders include The Curtis L. Carlson Family Foundation, Minnesota State Arts Board, Patrick and Aimee Butler Family Foundation, Carolyn Foundation, George Family Foundation, and Aroha Philanthropies.

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?

This report describes the methodology and findings of the evaluation.

Methodology

In the 2017-18 school year, MacPhail and Wilder Research worked together to collect information on the 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. A total of 21 MNYO student surveys were completed (78% 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. Fifteen MNYO parent surveys were collected.
- **MNYO Progress Report:** Progress reports were completed by MNYO instructors for each participant at the end of the fall 2017 and spring 2018 semesters. These progress reports consisted of open-ended questions about student strengths and suggested areas for development. Twelve progress reports were collected at the end of fall 2017 and 26 progress reports were collected at the end of spring 2018.

Implementation

- **MNYO student survey:** The student survey (mentioned above) additionally asked students about their satisfaction with the program and their relationships with their music instructor.

Results

Outcomes

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

Students make progress in their musical skills

When asked how MNYO has helped them progress in their musical skills, students most frequently said that they felt more confident in approaching new music, which includes feeling more comfortable with sight reading, and knowing that while new pieces are difficult and intimidating, practice will make it so that the piece is eventually easy to play. Beyond this, participants spoke about learning to play music within a group setting, and learning about physical techniques in playing, including handling the instrument and fingering (Figure A1).

Students regularly practice their instrument

According to the student survey results, most students said they are taking the time to develop good practice habits. Fifty-seven percent of students practice their instrument “a lot” and 38 percent of students practice “a little” (Figure A2). Additionally, 71 percent of students indicated that they like practicing their instrument “a lot” and 24 percent like it “a little.” Relatively fewer students indicated that they did not practice (5%) or did not like to practice (5%). All MNYO students and their parents said students had a place to practice at home (Figure A3).

Parents encourage students to practice at home

Parents of participating students were involved in their music education. Overall, 81 percent of the students surveyed said someone at home encourages them to practice their music “a lot,” and 71 percent said someone attends their performances “a lot” (Figure A4). All MNYO parents who completed a survey indicated that they encourage their child to practice at home and that someone at home comes to their performances (87%) or sometimes comes to their performances (13%; Figure A5).

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

Students were satisfied with their experience with the MacPhail program, with all students (100%) saying they like the program “a lot” or “a little” (Figure A6). All students reported that they liked learning new pieces of music, 91 percent reported that they liked learning to play their instrument, and 91 percent liked to perform “a lot.”

To assess their motivation to continue developing their musical skills, students were asked if they wanted to continue in MNYO the following year. Ninety-one percent of students reported wanting to continue in the program, and the remaining 10 percent said they might want to continue in MNYO (Figure A7). Ninety-three percent of MNYO parents reported that they wanted their child to continue with the program the following year, and 7 percent said they might want their child to continue.

Most students said they would like to be in the program next year. In an open-ended comment on the student survey, these students often stated that the program was fun and that they provide a good opportunity to learn their instrument (Figure A8). When asked what they would change, students most frequently said they did not know or did not have any recommendations to provide (Figure A9). Some students suggested changes to be made to the scheduling of the sessions, the instruments available to play, and the music selection.

Students make progress in non-musical skills

Students were asked in an open-ended question what else has been valuable to them about participating in MNYO. Most frequently, students noted that they made new friends and enjoyed working with their peers within the orchestra (53%; Figure A10). Students also reported learning more about effective team work and how a group of people can get along with one another.

Parents were satisfied with how MNYO has helped students in non-musical skillsets as well. They reported that MNYO improved their child’s attitude toward school (86% reporting it did so “a lot” or “a little”), ability to focus on a task (100%), math skills (93%), literacy skills (93%), and other academic skills (100%; Figure A11).

Implementation

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

At the end of the school year, MNYO students were asked about their relationship with their instructor in the student survey. Overall, most students felt their instructor encouraged them to do well in their music “a lot” (91%) and cared about them “a lot” (76%). Seventy-one percent of students indicated that they understood the instructor “a lot” when new things were taught (Figure A12).

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.

- Continue to offer a variety of new pieces of music to the orchestra; all students reported liking learning new pieces of music “a lot.”
- Explore ways to make new material easier to understand for students, as 29 percent of students reported understanding their instructor “a little” when they teach new things.
- Continue to provide time and space for participants to meet one another and grow personal relationships; meeting new friends and learning how to work with them was a major theme that participants spoke about.
- Consider ways to foster relationships between MNYO participants and their instructor; 24% of participants reported thinking that their instructor cared about them “a little.”

Figures

A1. Students' report of musical progress

How has MNYO helped you progress in your musical skills? (N=21)	%
Confidence in approaching new music	19%
Improvements in playing in a group	14%
Physical components of playing (handling the instrument, fingering, etc.)	14%
Learning new music and chords	14%
Other	33%

Note. Open-ended responses were coded into the above themes. "Other" includes comments that MNYO was challenging, that participants learned a little bit of everything, and participants simply stating that they are better.

A2. Students' report of practice

	N	Yes, a lot (3)	Yes, a little (2)	No (1)	Mean
Do you practice your instrument?	21	57%	38%	5%	2.5
Do you like to practice your instrument?	21	71%	24%	5%	2.7

A3. Parents' and students' report of practice space at home

	Students		Parents	
	N	Yes	N	Yes
Do you (Does your child) have a place to practice at home?	21	100%	15	100%

A4. Students' report of encouragement from home

	N	Yes, a lot (3)	Yes, a little (2)	No (1)	Mean
Does someone at home encourage you to practice your instrument?	21	81%	14%	5%	2.8
Does someone from home come to your performances?	21	71%	19%	10%	2.6

A5. Parents' report of encouragement from home

	N	Yes	Sometimes	No
Do you or another adult from home attend your child's music performances?	15	87%	13%	0%
Do you encourage your child to practice at home?	15	100%	-	0%

A6. Students' report of satisfaction with program components

	N	Yes, a lot (3)	Yes, a little (2)	No (1)	Mean
Do you like MNYO?	21	91%	10%	0%	2.9
Do you like learning to play your instrument?	21	91%	10%	0%	2.9
Do you like learning new pieces of music?	21	100%	0%	0%	3.0
Do you like to perform?	21	91%	10%	0%	2.9

Note. Totals may equal more than 100% due to rounding.

A7. Parent and student desire to continue with MNYO

Would you like (your child) to continue with MNYO next year?	N	Yes	Maybe	No
Student	21	91%	10%	0%
Parents	15	93%	7%	0%

A8. Student report of why they'd like or not like to continue in MNYO

Would you like to continue in MNYO next year? Why? (N=20)	%
Yes - It's fun or enjoyable	85%
Yes - It's a good opportunity to learn	25%
Maybe – Dislike some aspects of the program	5%

Note. Open-ended responses were coded; students could have reported more than one theme, resulting in a percentage higher than 100.

A9. Student recommendations for MNYO

What would you change about MNYO? (N=21)	%
Nothing/Don't know	62%
Logistics/Scheduling	10%
Instrument selection	5%
Music selection	5%
Other	24%

Note. Open-ended responses were coded into the above themes; students could have reported more than one theme, resulting in a percentage higher than 100. "Other" includes having a larger orchestra, not playing buckets, and "equal seating."

A10. Other valuable aspects of MNYO

What else has been valuable to you about participating in MNYO? (N=19)	%
Working with peers	53%
Other non-musical skill improvement (including learning about effective teamwork)	16%
Increased access to music	5%
Concerts	5%
Other	21%

Note. Open-ended responses were coded into the above themes. "Other" responses typically focused on musical skills they learned.

A11. Parents' report of academic skills

Has participation in the MacPhail music program helped your child improve his/her...	N	Yes, a lot (3)	Yes, a little (2)	No (1)	Mean
Math skills?	14	64%	29%	7%	2.6
Literacy skills?	14	57%	36%	7%	2.5
Attitude towards school?	14	57%	29%	14%	2.4
Ability to focus on a task?	14	57%	43%	0%	2.6
Other academic skills?	14	64%	36%	0%	2.6

A12. Students' report of relationship with MNYO instructor

	N	Yes, a lot (3)	Yes, a little (2)	No (1)	Mean
Does your instructor encourage you to do well in your music?	21	91%	10%	0%	2.9
Do you understand your instructor when he or she teaches you new things?	21	71%	29%	0%	2.7
Do you feel your instructor cares about you?	21	76%	24%	0%	2.8

Survey Instruments



Transforming lives and enriching the community through music education

MacPHAIL NORTHSIDE YOUTH ORCESTRA (MNYO) | MID-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

Student Name: _____ Instrument: _____
Teacher Name: _____ Contact: _____

Student strengths:

Areas for development and suggestions for at-home support:

Additional notes:



MacPhail Center for Music
MNYO Student Survey

Name: _____	Grade: _____	Date: _____
--------------------	---------------------	--------------------

School: _____

1. What instrument do you play?

Please check one:	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No
2. Do you like MNYO?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹
3. Does your instructor encourage you to do well in your music?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹
4. Do you feel your instructor cares about you?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹
5. Do you understand your instructor when he or she teaches you new things?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹
6. Does someone at home encourage you to practice your music?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹
7. Does someone at home come to your performances?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹
8. Do you like learning to play your instrument?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹
9. Do you like learning new pieces of music?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹
10. Do you practice your instrument?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹
11. Do you like to practice your instrument?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹
12. Do you like to perform?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹

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

¹ Yes

² No

PLEASE TURN OVER TO COMPLETE



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

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

16. What would you change about MNYO?

17. 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

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.

Student's name (optional): _____ **Student's grade:** _____

Relationship to student: _____

School: _____

What musical instrument does your child play?

¹ Violin
 ² Viola
 ³ Cello
 ⁴ Trombone
 ⁵ Oboe
 ⁶ Flute
⁷ Percussion

	Yes	No
1. Does your child have a place to practice at home?	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹
2. Do you encourage your child to practice at home?	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹

	Yes	Sometimes	No
3. Do you or another adult from home attend your child's music performances?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹

4. What is the best way for MacPhail staff to contact you with information about your child (for example, phone, email, written note)?

Has participation in MNYO helped to improve your child's...	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Don't Know
5. Attitude towards school?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁸
6. Ability to focus on a task?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁸
7. Math skills?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁸
8. Literacy skills?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁸
9. Other academic skills?	<input type="checkbox"/> ³	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/> ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁸

10. Would you like your child to continue with MNYO music program next year?

¹ Yes ² Maybe ³ No

11. Please add any additional comments or concerns you have about the MacPhail music program.

Thank you!

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Sarah Drebelbis, Roque Diaz, and Katie Condon 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:

Walker Bosch
Jen Collins
Marilyn Conrad
Edith Gozali-Lee
Bunchung Ly
Ryan McArdle
Denise Rodriguez
Melissa Serafin
Kerry Walsh

Wilder Research, 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.

451 Lexington Parkway North
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-280-2700 | www.wilderresearch.org

Wilder Research[®]

Information. Insight. Impact.

