



A Lifelong Love of the Performing Arts

THE GIFT OF MUSIC truly is the gift that keeps on giving. Much more than just an extracurricular pursuit, music and the arts provide a lifetime of positive benefits to those who participate. This is true now more than ever before as scientific evidence proves that an education in the arts makes better math and science students, enhances language and reasoning skills, bolsters spatial relationships and contributes significantly to a child's overall intellectual development.

As the largest musical school in the area, the Frisco School of Music (FSM) provides many opportunities for residents to reap the plentiful rewards music has to offer. In business since 2000, first under the name of the Music Conservatory of Texas, the school has evolved over the last 12 years to reflect the growing community and local families who have a high level of commitment to music and arts education. Owners Steve South and Chris Duncan are so dedicated to bringing quality music and arts education to the area that they have expanded their operation, opening a licensed performing arts preschool and kindergarten on the

7,000 square foot campus. And while the programs are run separately, the focus of both is the same: to provide a top-quality education, while fostering a lifelong love and involvement in the performing arts.

THE FRISCO SCHOOL OF MUSIC

As Frisco's oldest music school, the Frisco School of Music has given lessons to over 5,000 students, more than any other school in the city. Boasting a current enrollment of over 600 students, the school features 28 teaching studios, a performance area that seats up to 125 patrons and over 30 professionally trained teachers. Offering the widest range of music lessons available in one location in the area, the school provides instruction in piano, guitar, violin, flute, trumpet, bass, drums, viola, voice and even the ukulele. "What really sets us apart is the fact that all of our music teachers are university and/or professionally trained musicians with performance experience," said FSM co-owner, Chris Duncan. "They are dedicated to learning about your personal musical goals and helping you achieve them, whether you are a young child trying

lessons for the first time, or an older student preparing for a career in music. However, we aren't strictly for the younger set, we offer lessons for adults of any age as well," she adds.

The school also offers group lessons for beginning musicians. "Although it may seem unusual to begin music lessons in a group setting, we have found them to be very successful," said Ms. Duncan. "Small group lessons teach the basics and are very cost effective way to figure out which direction you want to go." And while the group is a great place to start, FSM's private lessons provide instruction that is tailored to each student's interests and abilities. It's this type of personalized attention that drew Jay Kurian to the school when looking for a place for his son to play guitar. "The staff works hard to make an individual plan for each student and while we looked at other schools, we found the professionalism, structure and curriculum of the Frisco School of Music to be top-notch across the board," noted Mr. Kurian. He says his son, who has been with FSM for five years, has not only become a good musician, but

has gained confidence through the program as well. "It has been an incredible experience for my son and he has grown a lot by being involved with the school."

One of the most popular programs at FSM is the Star Power Band Series. Students, in addition to having a private lesson, meet weekly with a group of other students to form an actual band. Each band chooses a name, selects songs, practices and performs together at concerts that FSM hosts each year. In addition to the numerous concerts, students also get the chance to perform in FSM's Rising Star Competition. "Think American Idol for all instruments," says Ms. Duncan. "Students are judged on their performance, stage presence, 'wow' factor and musical excellence—it's very exciting."

TJ Schoeneberg, mother of 11-year old Conor, says her son loves being a part of the Star Power program. "He is having a blast in the band and is also learning about teamwork and commitment by interacting with his fellow band members," said Mrs. Schoeneberg. Not only that, Conor is excelling in the program, winning this year's Rising Star Competition in his age group for his drum performance. "I'm so pleased with how well he is progressing and I can't say enough about the talented staff and the quality programs the school offers," said Mrs. Schoeneberg.

THE MUSICAL ART SCHOOLHOUSE

Opening its doors in 2009, the Music Arts Schoolhouse (MAS) is a unique preschool program blending traditional kindergarten readiness concepts with music dance, theater, visual arts and music. "We wanted to create a program where students could experience instruction in each of these creative disciplines on a daily basis," said



Ms. Duncan, who also serves as the school's executive director.

Ms. Duncan believes that one of the keys to the school's success is the quality faculty the school has selected, beginning with Michelle Tormos, the director of MAS. Mrs. Tormos, a licensed preschool director, brings 16 years of preschool experience to

the performing arts and music curriculum, which is what sets MAS apart from other preschool programs. Students engage in one hour of professionally taught instruction in music, theater, dance and art each day. The MAS students also have the opportunity to showcase their knowledge of the arts through four major performance events each year. The performances include an art gallery, music concert and dance concerts with professional costumes, so the pupils can show their parents all of the new things they are learning in the program.

"Children excel in a learning environment rich with many daily activities that stimulate the creative part of learning," affirms Ms. Duncan. "Our goal is to help children maintain a wide-eyed enthusiasm about learning with the freedom to express themselves through the arts." And judging by the success of both the music school and preschool, it seems they have assembled the perfect ensemble to do just that.

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MAS. Mrs. Tormos is quick to credit the rest of the school's faculty as equally important to the program's success. "The preschool teachers, in addition to meeting all of the state qualifications to teach, are specialists in their area of artistic discipline. They are all really amazing at what they do."

The MAS program offers a half-day (morning or afternoon) program for

preschool children ages three, four and five and a kindergarten program for ages five and up. There are three- and five-day classes available, with an extended day option as well. The current program includes 60 students, with 15-16 children per class and two teachers in each room. The preschool features a traditional curriculum focused on the concepts of kindergarten readiness. The MAS kindergarten program expands this base of knowledge, advancing the students at developmentally appropriate stages. "We strive to provide a structured but fun environment, giving students a beginning educational experience that is enjoyable and full of enrichment," adds Mrs. Tormos.

A big part of that enrichment comes from