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Majesty of Music

The piano is one of the most influential and beautiful instruments of the world. Also one of the most beneficial. The piano has been a part of history for centuries. Women were often divided by those who could and could not play the piano, as those of higher class were taught from young ages to play. The piano has a long history but that history has led to multiple benefits of all kinds. Knowing how to play the piano helps the musician mentally, physically, emotionally, and socially in their life. While other instruments are just as rewarding as the piano, the piano is definitely one of the most beneficial. Mark Meritt, in his article about playing the piano, said, "The benefits are truly profound, and far more than what we may often think about" (Meritt 1). I come from a family of pianists on both sides, both my grandmothers have taught piano to people for years, and I have been taking lessons from both of them for over half a decade. I have experienced the multiple benefits of the piano first hand and anyone who has played an instrument for any length of time will know these benefits as well.

Development is a part of life whether mental, physical, emotional, etc. Playing an instrument like the piano helps mental development. Blake Cooper, in his article "Playing Piano is Rewarding and Makes you Happy," says, "it stimulates several different areas of the mind" (Cooper 1). Playing the piano is not just playing keys. It involves being able to read sheet music and understand the multiple parts of reading and playing music. Many studies done by

multiple universities and organizations have proven that students who play the piano have higher scores in subjects like math than their peers who don't play. Playing the piano involves the musician being able to focus for a long period of time and helps develop the brain's ability to focus and concentrate on the subject at hand. Blake Cooper also says that sight reading the sheet music for the piano is "akin to knowing or learning a foreign language" (Cooper 1). To read the sheet music and play the notes that are seen just by sight is a difficult task to do and it gives the brain a workout.

Brain development is a key factor in growth but so is emotional development. Any musician will tell you that playing an instrument can make you happy, calm, and relaxed. When your fingers glide across the smooth, cool keys of a piano it can bring a sense of serenity and familiarity. When you have played an instrument for years, it becomes familiar and easy and can give you a sense of peace. The sensation of completing a difficult song and playing it correctly can give a sense of accomplishment. For some people, the feeling that comes with that accomplishment can boost their confidence. Meritt said, "It's an opportunity to communicate and get in touch with yourself. To develop your abilities and feel a sense of confidence, accomplishment, achievement, self-esteem. To release your emotions, inspire and express your creativity, and learn more about who you really are," (Meritt 1). Emotional development is maybe one of the hardest because of how difficult it can be to get in touch with your emotions. Playing an instrument like the piano can help center yourself and reach an emotional awareness not found by those who don't play.

Physical development and benefits are a given with any instrument but especially with the piano. Your fingers need to be quick and agile to play harder and faster songs. The dexterity

gained from learning to play the piano keeps finger agile as you get older. Playing the piano also increases independent hand coordination as the eyes are focused on reading the music and each hand must play an individual part of its own. For children, the piano can fine tune their motor skills, making their fingers and hands less clumsy and their grips more firm and sure. The physical benefits aren't just for the hands, but the ears and eyes too. Cooper mentions that men are not born with a good sense of pitch. He says that, "When you begin to play the piano, you guide your ear to hear tones and pitches relative to one another" (Cooper 1). Developing that sense of pitch can be useful for further careers in music. The sense of pitch and tone can develop so well that the musician can tell just by hearing if they got a note wrong in the song they are playing. Eye-hand coordination also increases with playing the piano as the pianist has to read the music and have their hands in the right place on the piano playing the right notes.

Social benefits are just as important as emotional, mental, and physical. Just learning to play an instrument and playing it in front of anybody is interacting socially in an event. Social and emotional benefits for the piano run hand in hand. The feeling of accomplishment when completing a difficult song can boost self-confidence and help people become more outgoing and involved in other activities. Perhaps one of the most important aspects of playing the piano is dealing with the feelings of disappointment and failure. When messing up a song in front of an audience there can be a feeling of self disappointment and failure. These feelings will be there when messing up at anything in front of an audience. The thing about playing the piano is that messing up can be a given and the pianist learns to not dwell on it and instead learn from it and move on. Learning to do that can be very helpful in future similar situations. Meritt says, "Music is also, and importantly, an opportunity to learn from mistakes — and an opportunity to learn

about mistakes and how to handle them constructively" (Meritt 1). The act of actually performing in front of an audience also helps deal with stress and anxiety from performing in front of an audience. When you are playing a song in front of a group of people the performer gets used to the stress of being on a stage in front of others. Sporting tournaments and giving presentations become easier if the person involved knows how to play the piano because they have had experience in dealing with and processing the stress and fear of public performance, or public speaking.

The majority of people in my family have experienced these benefits and more by playing the piano. The history of the piano goes back farther than most people realize, as do the benefits brought to the players of this instrument. Thousands of people throughout history have experienced them and no doubt thousands more will throughout the future. Learning to play this beautiful and rewarding instrument will open many doors for the future. Learning how to play the piano helps the musician mentally, physically, emotionally, and socially in their life. Once you start playing, it will be with you for your entire life. Meritt says "When you take on music, it will be with you through your greatest triumphs and tragedies" (Meritt 1). Whether you start as a young child, a teenager, or an adult, these benefits are all the same and all equally as important in life as anything else. People are constantly looking for ways to entertain and occupy themselves. They are bored, unmotivated, and wanting for something to do that can be fun and useful. What better way than to learn to play one of the most rewarding and beneficial instruments in the entire world?

Works Cited

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