

Breck orchestra program experience reflection by sophomore, Genevieve Weiler

If you count this school year, I have been in the Breck orchestra program for six years. It sounds like a very long time but in reality, it feels like just yesterday when my 5th and 6th grade orchestra was playing "A Christmas Carol" and I was still learning how to sight-read. Instead of actually reading the notes, I would just write what finger to use over every single note in the piece. It was a good system, but as we started to play more and more complicated pieces, I was forced to actually learn how to read the notes.

Now, more than half a decade later, my sight-reading and ensemble skills are substantially better due to my involvement in the orchestra program. Although my private repertoire has been a big part of this improvement, I attribute the majority of my sight-reading and ensemble success to being in Ms. Laureano's various orchestras. There's a level and rate of learning that comes from being in class four times a week that can't be replicated through individual practice, and it improves your playing in every respect. Watching my classmates as they go through the orchestra program with me, I can see an extraordinary improvement in them as well; not only is orchestra a place where we can make great music (and have fun doing it), but also it improves our individual skills in the best ways.

Not only is the orchestra program at Breck incredible in itself; it has evidently helped its members achieve excellence in many other facets of their academic life. Among all the inspirational quotes, comics, nerdy musical jokes, and performance posters all around Ms. Laureano's room, there is a program booklet from our school's award-winning science research team. The front of the booklet has a picture of the whole team; some of the most distinguished students at Breck, and Ms. Laureano has written over almost every student's head the instrument that they played. This is a great example of how music enriches one's academics; it was no coincidence that almost every one of those students was somehow musical, and was also a successful student. Music enhances your learning skills, your ability to remember and memorize, and produces committed, studious people: the kind of people that excel in school.

The Orchestra room may be one of the loudest rooms in the building but the Orchestra itself is a peaceful place. Although learning the music can be a lot of work, orchestra is never a source of stress, which sets it apart from almost every other class at Breck. It's a place for like-minded people to assemble and create music, and creates a culture that improves everyone's musical skills, everyone's mood, and provides a close-knit community of people who simply love music. Ms. Laureano and her program has impacted everyone that has come in contact with it, and hopefully will continue to do so for years after I graduate.