Behind the Curtain

*Specific Purpose Statement*: To inform my audience about the performing arts.

*Central Idea*: While participating in a performing art can have benefits, there are also drawbacks tied to them as well. Weighing the pros and cons of each art can be an important factor in determining the amount of public funding provided.

Introduction

1. **Gain the attention and interest of the audience:** Let me set the scene: it’s a Friday night, there’s a crisp fall breeze in the hair, but you can’t feel its cool relief on account of the warm glow of the stadium floodlights shining on you from above. The turf beneath your feet is firm, yet ever so slightly malleable under your body weight. The stadium is packed, you have full command of every single patron’s attention. Now, most of the class here has played a sport, so I’m sure you know the amazing feeling of being on the field, ready to show off for friends and family alike. But what if I told you the scene I just described wasn’t for a varsity football, soccer, or baseball game, but rather for the marching band!
2. **Reveal the topic of the speech:** Today, I’d like to delve into the world of the performing arts, and bring attention to a few of the long lasting discussions I’ve heard in my time as part of the community.
3. **Establish credibility and goodwill:** While I can’t speak with personal experience on the discourse surrounding actors, dancers, or singers, I have been a band kid for the last 7 years of my life, and have no intention of stopping for the foreseeable future.
4. **Preview the body of the speech:** In particular, I’m going to cover some of the well documented pros AND cons of being a performer, and talk about some of the budget issues that seem to be plaguing every ensemble across the world.

*Connective*: I will begin by discussing some of the benefits of being a performer.

Body

1. Being a performer has a wide array of benefits.
   1. Learning an instrument, especially as a kid, “has been shown to increase cognitive ability through enhanced neuronal communication between the left and right hemispheres of the brain (Stoklosa, fisherpub.sjf.edu, pg3)

* + 1. This results in a positive effect on learning, memory, fine motor skills, and both verbal and non-verbal reasoning.
    2. All of these effects combine to result in an overall more capable brain in a variety of diverse settings.
  1. Generally, performers have to deal with long hours, lots of people, and very tight deadlines. This teaches them a variety of skills, including but not limited to:
     1. time management,
     2. patience,
     3. how to work efficiently,
     4. and people skills!

*Connective*: although performing comes with a lot of positives, there are also some negatives that may not be so obvious.

1. Many arts have their own inherent physical risks that, while not as extreme as those found in sports or some jobs, are still serious.
   1. Many instruments in marching band can be strenuous to carry
      1. Yamaha’s MQ-8300 Field Corps Series of tenor drums can weigh up to 29.1 lbs, all concentrated on the lower back (usa.yamaha.com)
      2. Sousaphones can weigh up to 50lbs, concentrated on the shoulders
   2. Dancers risk their bodies in a multitude of ways
      1. many dancers develop a negative body image, which can lead to serious problems like eating disorders
      2. Many sequences can put high amounts of stress on the ankles or knees, increasing the risk of sprains or fractures.
   3. In a similar vein, many performers have to deal with being stereotyped just for participating in a hobby
      1. setting aside the obvious band kid example, even within the band ecosystem there are stereotypes for each instrument.
      2. Friends I’ve talked to in theater feel that other people consider them childish for playing characters unlike themselves.

*Connective*: Now that some of the pros and cons have been made clear, I’d like to switch gears and talk about the financial aspect of performing.

1. Many of these activities can be quite expensive, and without public funding, are largely unattainable to the average person.
   1. Musicianship can be very expensive
      1. Some entry level instruments can be cheap, like trumpets ~150$ (Guitar Center’s Stagg WS-TR215 Series Student Bb Trumpet Clear Lacquer Yellow Brass Bell), but some are so costly (Guitar Center’s Ren Wei Shi Model 8000 Cello Cello Only for $2,279.99)

that the only viable option is to borrow one from a school or other organization

* + 1. Legally accessing sheet music can be very costly. A single score for a high school ensemble often costs anywhere from $60-$80 (J.W. Pepper)
    2. Private tutors always cost a fortune.
    3. DCI marching groups cost money to participate in. A local group called *Old Line* requires members to pay ~$1000 in fees before even performing.

B. Theater programs can also be very expensive

1. Paying professional staff like directors or stagehands or coaches costs money
2. depending on the scope of a production, props and costumes can cost a significant amount of money.

C. In many high schools, budget cuts to arts programs are common in favor of other areas.

1. Any money going towards the fine art department is money that can be going to the math department or the science department or any number of sports teams.

*Connective*: [included in “Let the audience know you are ending the speech”]

Conclusion

1. **Let the audience know you are ending the speech:** After covering all both the pros and cons, and providing some insight into the true cost of these programs, I’d like to leave you with this:
2. **Reinforce the audience’s understanding of, or commitment to, the central idea. Make your final concluding statement memorable to your audience:**

Let me take you back to the football field. The bright lights, the audience, the self-confidence, surrounded by people doing the same thing as you and loving every second of it. Now imagine what that scene would look like if the band didn’t have enough money to attract players. Thank you.

**References**

*MQ-8300 Field-Corps™ series - specs - yamaha USA*. YAMAHA. (n.d.). Retrieved March 29, 2023, from <https://usa.yamaha.com/products/musical_instruments/marching/drums/mq-8300_field-corps_series/specs.html#product-tabs>

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*Stagg WS-TR215 series student BB Trumpet*. Guitar Center. (n.d.). Retrieved March 29, 2023, from https://www.guitarcenter.com/Stagg/WS-TR215-Series-Student-Bb-Trumpet-Clear-Lacquer-Yellow-Brass-Bell-1500000257642.gc

Stoklosa, A. R. (2016). *Instruments of knowledge: Music and the brain - St. John Fisher College*. Fisher Digital Publications. Retrieved March 29, 2023, from <https://fisherpub.sjf.edu/ur/vol17/iss1/12/>