



Institute for
Excellence in
Writing

Listen. Speak. Read. Write. Think!

info@IEW.com • 800.856.5815

Recitals, Recitation, and Theatre: Performances in Preparation for Life

By Andrew Pudewa

DO YOUR CHILDREN TAKE MUSIC LESSONS? Ours did. Although their musical talents are vastly different, all three had music as part of their daily agenda, and my husband and I were subject to hours of cacophonous strains while the boys prepared for recitals and concerts. With friends and family politely smiling through piece after piece, it was those recitals that motivated the hours of practice. A few years later, two of our boys laid aside their musical instruments for great books and other exploits, while our middle son continued his studies and is currently coaching other students as a private music instructor. Just last week he held a recital for his students. Amazingly, his musical education has come full circle.

While there are not many other subjects in which students have an opportunity to show off their tricks and talent like they do with music, there are a few: spelling bees, math Olympics, and essay contests. Have you considered, however, that one of the best ways to prepare your students for a winsome and successful future is by their participation in communication recitals? I'm referring specifically to two areas of public communication: theatre or speech and debate. While the latter is a noble and worthy pursuit, our journey found us on the pathway of theatre, and what a delightful time it was! Starting with the anxieties of auditions and ending with accolades and applause, all our boys loved their time in theatre. As their mother, I loved the opportunities performance provided to add to their character and build their communication skill set. Yes, theatre is a fantastic venue to demonstrate public speaking proficiency. Plus, it was much easier to convince my family to attend their performances than a piano recital!

Character traits developed and skills honed:

- Not everyone can be a star; every role is an opportunity to grow and gain experience.
- When you are the star, remember the little people, especially if they are your brothers.
- Lift your chin. Open your mouth. Project!
- Memorize your lines early. Recite often.

- Follow directions, and pay attention to where you are going.
- Face the audience and be expressive!
- In a pinch, PBJ and ramen works as dinner.
- Hard work is immensely satisfying.

Where are our boys (men) today? The eldest (engaged to be married this June) graduated from Biola University's Torrey Honors Institute and is a top-performing salesperson for a travel agency. When he can, he travels to the countries where he books travel and participates in short-term mission trips. Our youngest, also engaged to be married, but in May, recently graduated from university through the assistance of [CollegePlus](#) and is just starting his career in business management. Our middle son, the musician, teaches private music lessons in piano, guitar, and saxophone, along with other wind instruments, and performs both as a soloist and in groups, including the Sunday morning worship team. All are excellent writers, thanks to IEW. And all are friendly, engaging, and confident speakers, thanks, in part, to the role theatre played in their lives.

I encourage you, therefore, to consider expanding your students' writing skills by allowing them to perform. Start by entering them into essay contests! Many are for teens, but I've seen some for adults and young children. As we find out about contests, we post them on our IEW Facebook page (facebook.com/excellenceinwriting). Just as students gain confidence in "telling back" their stories from key word outlines in front of siblings and peers, or in poetry recitations, they can similarly prepare for public speaking, debate, and the theatre! Not only will such events help to mold their character and hone their speaking and communication skills, they will also prepare them to be winsome and thoughtful men and women.



The Walker Boys in *Les Misérables School Edition*® Biola Youth Theatre, 2003

info@IEW.com • 800.856.5815

© 2017 by The Institute for Excellence in Writing. The above article is available at IEW.com for your personal use or for distribution. Permission given to duplicate complete & unaltered.