



Beckendorff Junior High School band students



The Cougar Stars are an award-winning dance team

Taylor High School's
Burial at Thebes



Eliza Coleman and Ben Crook
in a Mariner Production



RISING STARS

Local Students Shine Brightly in Katy ISD Fine Arts Programs


By Natalie Cook Clark

You don't have to travel to New York City to see a stage filled with talented artists. Culture and art take center stage in Katy ISD, with students set to perform everything from theatrical musicals to symphonic concerts. From Cinco Ranch High School's *Thoroughly Modern Millie* to Taylor High School's performance of the Shakespeare classic, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, to the laugh out loud funny Comedy Sportz Teams at each high school, there is truly something for everyone in Katy.

The Fine Arts Collaboration

"We are all similar in many ways and then different in others," explains Seven Lakes Choir Director Shannon Carter when discussing what makes his choir stand out among the other schools. Carter enjoys working with the students and the teachers at Seven Lakes and attributes the fact that they all get along to their success as a department.

Like many of the high schools, Seven Lakes' choir teams up with the other fine arts departments to put on collaborative performances. Most recently, they joined up with the band, orchestra, and dance team for the Holiday Extravaganza, which served as a fundraiser to next year's collaborative musical. While fun and exciting, Katy ISD's fine arts programs bring so much more than that to students, helping them to build on their artistic skills through unique and meaningful experiences. As a Katy student myself, I was involved in *Pacesetter's*, theater, and choir at Taylor High School. My involvement in these programs helped me learn the importance of dedication and time management, which are skills still proving beneficial to me today.



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Cinco Ranch Orchestra earns national recognition



Seven Lakes High Schools Women's Chorale

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Cinco Ranch High School's Bravo Show Choir performs at various events and performances



Katy High School's Marching Band at the district championship game

Aspiring Artists

Student Jonathan Luna of Mayde Creek High School knows his time as a four-year member of the school choir will pay off in much the same way. He reflects back on his experience in fine arts as being great and inspirational. "It has helped me to be more dedicated to what I want to do," Luna says. The aspiring musical theatre major and performer attributes choir to helping him find his love for music and performance. He plans on attending Ithaca College in New York to study musical theater and is proud and grateful for his solid start with excellent Katy ISD fine arts programs. "It has been a real privilege to be a part of," Luna says. Carter sees first hand the benefits of students being active in a fine arts activity. "Every year I read reports and hear the students' standardized tests scores and I'm always amazed," he says. Since students must maintain a specific grade point average to perform and be active in any fine arts program, they learn the importance of grades and how to effectively manage their time to achieve their goals.

From Musicals to Recitals

While enriching students' lives, Katy ISD's fine arts programs create a rich cultural experience for the community, in a cozy setting close to home. Local students shine brightly in several productions during the winter holiday season, when students are set to take the stage in a plethora of productions. At the beginning of each year, check with each high school to see if they have plans for a musical. Most campuses plan major performances every other year, since they are often costly and time consuming. In January, you can catch the popular musical *Bye, Bye Birdie* at Morton Ranch High School and see the tremendous effort students and teachers make to ensure an evening of fantastic entertainment. In the spring, a

year of hard work culminates with students' end-of-year concerts and performances, where they showcase their talent and growth. If you love dance, attend a spectacular spring show performed by one of Katy ISD's dance teams. This is a great time to see the winning routines and pay tribute to the outgoing seniors.

Building a Talented Future

The arts are alive and thriving in Katy, with students ready to perform smash hits filled with heart and hard work. Real life lessons like this make it possible for students like Luna to achieve their dreams in musical theater and beyond, and audiences to catch the first glimpse of a rising star. From a school stage to the silver screen, all of Katy may one day see students such as Luna proudly representing his hometown on a red carpet, much like Katy High School alumna Renee Zellweger. KM

NATALIE COOK CLARK is thrilled to be back in her hometown of Katy and writing once again for Katy Magazine. The Baylor alumna lives with her wonderful husband, Stephen, and her dog, Oscar.

Katy is Tops for Music Education

Katy ISD was named one of the "Best 100 Communities in the U.S. for Music Education" by the American Music Conference. AMC is a national non-profit educational association dedicated to promoting the importance of music, music-making and music education to the general public.



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Taylor Pacesetters holiday toy drive for KCM



Almost 30 Mayde Creek High School choir students advanced to the UIL choir regional competition

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Taylor HS theater students Samantha Darnell, Laura Smolik, Randi Grza, and Susannah Bayliss



Taylor Pacesetters dance team

Katy Must Sees

Don't miss these fine arts performances at a school near you.

UPCOMING WINTER SHOWS

Jan. 14 & 24

Lord Nelson Mass Concert

Taylor High School
THS PAC

7 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. respectively
Performed by the THS Chamber
Strings and THS Choir.

Jan. 18 & 29, Feb. 4 - 6

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Taylor High School
THS PAC, 7:30 p.m. (Jan. 30 at 2 p.m.)
Tickets are \$8 for students and \$10
for adults.

Jan. 28 - 29

**How to Succeed in Business
without Really Trying**

Mayde Creek High School Musical
MCHS PAC, 7 p.m. (Jan 30 at 2 p.m.)
Tickets are \$10 for students and \$15
for adults.

January 21 - 23

Bye Bye Birdie

Morton Ranch High School Musical
MRHS PAC, 7 p.m. (Jan. 24 at 3 p.m.)

Feb. 2

Belles' Kick-a-Thon

Morton Ranch High School
MRHS Competition Gym
7 p.m.

Feb. 4 - 6

Thoroughly Modern Millie

Cinco Ranch High School Musical
CRHS PAC,
7:30 p.m.
Tickets range from \$10-\$15.

Feb. 4 - 6

My Fair Lady

Katy High School Musical
KHS PAC,
7 p.m.

Feb. 6

**Orchestra and Chorale
Masterworks Concert**

Seven Lakes High School
SLHS PAC
8 p.m.

Feb. 9

Mid Winter Band Concert

Morton Ranch High School
MRHS PAC
7 p.m.

Feb. 18

**Taylor HS 30th Anniversary
Celebration**

Presented by the THS Fine Arts Dept.
THS PAC
7:30 p.m.

Feb. 23

Orchestra Concert

Katy High School
KHS PAC, 7 p.m.

Feb. 25

Cinco Sings

Cinco Ranch High School
CRHS PAC
7:30 p.m.

Feb. 26

Cinco Sings Finals

Cinco Ranch High School
CRHS PAC
7:30 p.m.

March 1

Jazz Band Concert

Katy High School
KHS PAC, 7 p.m.

March 1

Full Orchestra Concert

Morton Ranch High School
MRHS PAC
7 p.m.

March 9

Choir Concert

Morton Ranch High School
MRHS PAC
7 p.m.

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