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SAMA monthly

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INSTRUCTOR CORNER

The Soundtrack of Identity: Finding Yourself in the Notes

Have you ever heard a song and felt like it was written specifically for your life? Songwriters often tap into universal human experiences, turning their personal stories into mirrors for our own emotions. Where words fail, music prevails. It serves as a tool for social connection and personal validation, helping us carve out independence as we transition from adolescents into adults. My own musical foundation was built in the passenger seats of my parents' cars, shifting from the soulful, heart-wrenching power ballads of Keyshia Cole and the expansive electronic worlds of Madonna to the aggressive, engineered chaos of Slayer.

These early sonic imprints don't simply stay in the past; they evolve with us, forming the bedrock of our adult identities. By curating our own soundtracks, we aren't just listening to songs. We are actively shaping the narrative of who we are.

This process becomes especially meaningful in the wake of profound loss, when music stops being background noise and becomes a tool for survival. I first understood this at nine years old, when my father passed away and music became one of the few things capable of holding my grief.

The summer of 2011 stole my twenty-eight-year-old father and replaced my childhood with a heavy, grinding stone in my chest. While my classmates fretted over summer reading lists, I stood in a graveyard, feeling the warm June breeze as the smell of burning propellant filled the air during my father's three-volley salute. I watched the earth swallow one of the few people who had helped guide me through life. That day, the world stopped being a playground and became a labyrinth of grief, leaving me feeling like an adult trapped in a child's body, with no words to explain the ache inside me.

The silence after the burial was deafening, filling the space where my father's voice used to be. I began spending my nights gazing at the moon, desperate for a signal, a flicker of anything that might bridge the distance between the earth and wherever he had gone. In that state of restless searching, I found Bruno Mars' "Talking to the Moon."

His voice echoed the ache I couldn't name. As the melody unfolded, the song became my private bridge to the sky, offering a haunting kind of comfort in the uncertainty of praying to a light that couldn't answer back. Overwhelmed by the raw emotion in his vocals and the simplicity of the melody, I found myself returning to the song again and again. In the repetition of the chorus, I began to find words for my grief. The song wasn't just another track on a playlist; it reflected a version of myself capable of surviving loss. By giving my pain an outlet through music, I began the slow, quiet work of piecing my identity back together.

Music can provide young people with a sanctuary where they can explore the turbulent, often unspoken changes of growing up. When a song resonates, it does more than entertain; it validates emotions that might otherwise feel impossible to express.

Finding a reflection of my fractured self taught me that music can be more than a source of comfort. It can become a catalyst for healing, helping us make sense of experiences that might otherwise feel impossible to bear. Our musical tastes and connections are not always accidental. They can reveal what moves us, what hurts us, and who we are becoming.

Ultimately, taking the time to know yourself is a radical act. In a world that demands we be anyone but ourselves, recognizing what moves us is one way to reclaim our humanity. Music gives us the courage to look inward and sit with our reflections, reminding us that our depth is not a burden but part of what makes us whole.



Download the SAMA app!

iPhone App

Android App

STUDENT OF THE MONTH

"Andy N.

is a down-to-earth, outstanding musician who plays both piano and violin at a high level. Andy thrives on positivity and always gives back more than he gets. He is always open to learning in new ways and goes above and beyond expectations to play a monumental piece such as Chopin's Ballade in G.



Juan Arreguin
Piano Instructor

STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS




Congratulations to **Alisynne M.** and **Scarlett K.**, students of Khadijah Enriquez, for being selected from a small group of CCSA students to perform an opening number for the Foreigner concert at the Tobin!

Scarlett also made 2nd chair in TMEA Region and will be advancing to Pre-Area!




Congratulations to **Haley H.** and **Nathan H.**, students of Khadijah Enriquez and Jake Ramirez, for making it into the TMEA Region Choir, with Haley placing 5th chair and advancing to Pre-Area!



Congratulations to **Josie T.**, student of Taylor Mendoza, for being cast as Jane Banks in Wonder Theatre's production of Mary Poppins Jr.!



Congratulations to **Charlee G.**, student of Khadijah Enriquez, for performing in Wonder Theatre's production of Matilda this past summer, which was nominated for Best Overall Production at the Alamo Theatre Arts Council Awards!



Congratulations to **Jocelyn Z.**, student of Taylor Mendoza, for being cast as Penny in her school's production of Honk! Jr. and also as an ensemble member and the Police Officer in Wonder Theatre's production of Mary Poppins Jr.!



Congratulations to **Saydee R.**, student of Khadijah Enriquez, for being cast as Violet in her school's production of Alice in Wonderland!



Congratulations to **Raaid A.**, student of David Rueda, for earning a spot in the TMEA Region 29 Orchestra for viola!



Congratulations to **Natalie D.**, student of Khadijah Enriquez, for being selected for YOSA's Rising Star Fellows, earning 16th chair in the TMEA Region 29 Treble Choir as a first-time participant, and placing 7th chair in the TMEA Region Orchestra for viola! She'll also be performing with the Region 29 Treble Choir in early November!

UPCOMING EVENTS

WINTER RECITAL	NOV 6	**Winter Recital Sign-up** opens on Nov 6 at 2pm →
	NOV 7	**SAMA Bands performing at** Pearl Farmers Market 312 Pearl Pkwy · 11am - 1pm
	NOV 8	Paul Dattner's Birthday
	NOV 19	Daniel Paquot's Birthday
	NOV 21	**SAMA Bands performing at** Castroville BBQ 1303 Lorenzo St, Castroville · 5pm - 9pm
	NOV 22	Khadijah Enriquez's Birthday
	NOV 23-28	**SAMA will be closed** Monday, Nov. 23 through Saturday, Nov. 28 **for Thanksgiving Break.**

MARINE CORPS RESERVE
TOYS FOR TOTS

Spread the Joy This Holiday Season!

SAMA is partnering with Toys for Tots to help bring holiday cheer to children in our community. Donate new, unwrapped toys at SAMA **now through December 5th** to help make the season brighter for local families.

