

Striking a Common Chord

by Allison Harrell

*Young musicians express themselves at the Music Conservatory of Frisco
photo by Chris Fritchie*

MUSIC LESSONS ...“I think the reason that Frisco is so rich with so many music and arts activities is because of the wonderful community that we have here,” says Chris Duncan, Executive Director of Frisco’s Music Conservatory of Texas (MCOT). “Parents are obviously very interested in wanting these kinds of extra, educationally-based activities for their families and for themselves.” Now in its 11th year, MCOT offers a unique experience to North Texas families in several respects, according to Ms. Duncan. “We’ve been here the longest, and I think we’re the biggest – we have a 7000 square-foot facility with 28 teaching rooms.” Another unique feature of MCOT is the availability of group lessons. “When a parent comes in for the first time, they often really don’t know what their child is interested in,” explains Ms. Duncan. “One thing that we’ve been doing here since we started is offering an experience for students in a small group setting – usually six to eight kids, depending on what we’re teaching. This is great for students and parents who are not sure what direction their child wants to go.” Ms. Duncan says that group lessons are a great starting point for kids, allowing them to build foundational knowledge of their chosen instrument in a social setting that is fun and interactive.

“We have had families who have been with us for five or six years who say they never would have started if not for the group experience that was available for them. If you think about it, kids do things in groups,” says Ms. Duncan, “They love the social atmosphere and they are comfortable in that. we devised a curriculum for the class that makes our groups easy for the student to have some one-on-one time with the teacher and have their group activities as well. It’s very inviting for them to start out that way and then they can branch out and do any other instruments they want or go into private lessons from there.” MCOT offers private lessons for piano, guitar, voice, violin, drums, bass guitar, flute and trumpet. For students who would like to take a “test drive” before committing to a specific instrument, MCOT offers four “Quick Start” lessons, a unique opportunity for some short-term, one-on-one instruction. Explains Ms. Duncan, “We make it easy to come in and do four trial lessons for students who might be wondering if they want to do guitar lessons or ongoing voice lessons, for example. But the coolest part is that they can also book a Quick Start series as a coaching session.” Ms. Duncan says that these coaching sessions are a great offering for kids who might need a little help with an upcoming school talent show or performance.

“If they need a little extra help with a song they are singing or something they’re playing; maybe they need to know how to do stage moves or handle a mic; the Quick Start series is perfect for that.” As students progress to ongoing, private lessons, Ms. Duncan says that a popular add-on is MCOT’s Star Power Band Series, which moves students into rock, jazz or classical bands. “We keep these Star Power band kiddos busy,” says Ms. Duncan, explaining that the MCOT facility is designed to double as a high-quality performance hall. “We put on professional ‘lights, camera, action’ kind of events for the students to get up on stage. We also broadcast live on the Internet for students who might have family members that are out of town.” And while Music Conservatory of Texas has been in Frisco for over a decade, Ms. Duncan says that residents should be on the lookout for changes taking place this month. “Since we’re entering our 11th year, we are updating our name and logo to reflect a more contemporary look. Get ready for Frisco School of Music!” Ms. Duncan says that while fundamentals such as the school’s curriculum, instructors and location will remain unchanged, the name and logo change will provide a bit of a “face lift” to the school...

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