

LUTHERAN MUSIC PROGRAM

HOME OF THE
LUTHERAN SUMMER MUSIC ACADEMY & FESTIVAL

Alumni Survey Report: Executive Summary Lutheran Music Program, 2011

Prepared by Beth Burns, Executive Director based on data submitted by Dr. Matthew Bernthal, Dr. Matthew Brown, and Dr. Rich Harrill, University of South Carolina College of Hospitality, Retail, and Sport Management and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Travel & Tourism Industry Center – July 15, 2011

“During LSM, I experienced the four happiest weeks of my life. I grew musically and spiritually. I made amazing friends and got a taste of what college life is like. I absolutely loved LSM. Instead of being homesick, I was ‘LSM sick’ when I returned home.”

METHOD

With grant funding from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Lutheran Music Program commissioned a comprehensive research study of individuals who attended the Lutheran Summer Music Academy & Festival between 1982 and 2010. The principal researcher first conducted in-depth interviews by telephone with seven LSM alumni. The interviews lasted an average of one hour each, and were transcribed and analyzed for thematic content using qualitative data analysis software.

This data informed the development of meaningful and relevant survey questions. After three series of edits with LMP management staff, surveys were mailed April 18-19, 2011 to 2,252 individuals. The response rate of 12.3% ensures that data in this survey is, according to our researchers, accurate with a 95% confidence interval.

The survey was structured to measure the impact of LSM in three areas:

- Musical development
- Faith formation
- Community building

Our researchers reported that they have rarely had the opportunity to deliver such consistent good news to a client. Data from the survey may be dissected by many factors – age, gender, geography, instrumentation, religious affiliation – but for the purposes of this executive summary is presented in overall attitudes.

“LSM was a wonderful experience for me. I think the best part of LSM is how completely dedicated the faculty and staff are to the program. Their excitement and limitless energy spread and made the month fly by. LSM was a wonderful experience at which I grew musically and spiritually. I will never forget my 3 summers at LSM.”

MUSIC - Attitude

- 94% of respondents believe that LSM is effective or very effective at positively transforming the lives of its students.
- 77% strongly agree that LSM is a high quality music experience, with 96% agreeing or strongly agreeing that LSM is a high quality music experience.
- 92% agree that LSM faculty members are gifted teachers and 92% agree that LSM faculty inspire musical passion in their students. 92% leave LSM more energized about music than when they arrived.

MUSIC – Higher Education

- 89% of LSM alumni participated in a large ensemble in college.
- 85% rated LSM as an effective collegiate preparatory experience.
- 21% of LSM chose to attend a college because of an LSM faculty member or ensemble conductor.
- 54% of our alumni are music-related majors (undergraduate) and 73% have a music-related minor.
- 59% credit LSM with having a very strong positive influence on their decision to pursue a music related major or minor in higher education; and 91% credit LSM with influencing that decision.

MUSIC - Vocation

- 79% agree or strongly agree that LSM nurtures the next generation of church musicians.
- 59% of our alumni instrumentalists have performed in a volunteer capacity within the past year; 60% of our alumni vocalists have performed in a volunteer capacity within the past year.
- 64% of our alumni have participated as a vocalist in worship during the past year and 53% have participated as an instrumentalist in worship during the past year.
- 36% of our alumni organ students have played the organ in a worship service in a paid capacity during the past year.

“I cannot speak highly enough about my experiences at LSM. Truly life-changing. My time there definitely had an effect on my faith (positive) and my career path, even though I am not a regular church musician. I find myself longing for worship services at LSM, even over 20 years later.”

“Some of the best memories of my life are of LSM. I still keep in touch with many friends I made at LSM. LSM truly gave me a great appreciation for the music and liturgy of the Lutheran Church. I hope the teaching and learning goes on until the end of the age! It is at LSM that I discovered I had a God given gift. Soli Deo Gloria!”

FAITH FORMATION – Attitudes

- 83% strongly agree or agree that LSM is a welcoming faith community.
- 80% strongly agree or agree that LSM is effective at engaging youth in worship.
- 63% strongly agree or agree that LSM helped connect their interest in music with their personal faith.
- 70% strongly agree or agree that worship at LSM strengthened their faith.
- 89% believe that LSM is extremely effective or effective at maintaining Lutheran liturgical worship traditions.
- 85% believe that LSM is extremely effective or effective at enhancing appreciation for Lutheran liturgical worship traditions.

FAITH FORMATION – Higher Education

- 55% of LSM alumni attended a Lutheran college as an undergraduate and 21% went to the Lutheran college at which they attended LSM.

FAITH FORMATION – Vocation

- 64% believe that LSM is extremely effective or effective at inspiring careers as church musicians.
- 28% believe that LSM is extremely effective or effective at inspiring careers as pastors.
- 78% believe that LSM is extremely effective or effective at preparing youth for musical leadership roles in their home congregations.
- 67% believe that LSM is extremely effective or effective at increasing overall youth involvement in the church.
- 62% of alumni were inspired toward a lifetime of service to the church by LSM.

“LSM is the reason I am a professional church musician.”

“LSM is a treasure for the Lutheran Church.”

“LSM was the single greatest summer experience of my life. I would not be the person I am today without LSM. The people, community, worship, faculty, classes, and mentor experiences made a huge impact on my life.”

COMMUNITY – Attitudes

- 88% strongly agree or agree that LSM is a personally life enriching social experience.
- 83% strongly agree or agree that LSM builds students’ social skills.
- 88% strongly agree or agree that LSM is a nurturing community.

COMMUNITY – Higher Education

- 85% strongly agree or agree that LSM is an effective collegiate preparatory experience.

“Looking back now, I realize that though I didn’t know it at the time, my summers at LSM were an important part of shaping who I am today. Everything about the experience was positive and I’m so glad I went.”

FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

- 42% of LSM alumni are “very willing” to attend an LSM musical event within a 2-hour driving distance from their home.
 - 74% are “willing” to do so.
- 28% of LSM alumni are very willing to attend an LSM social event within a 2-hour driving distance from their home.
 - 50% are “willing” to do so.
- 22% of LSM alumni are very willing to attend the Lutheran Summer Music Academy & Festival for special alumni events.
 - 45% are “willing” to do so.
 - Geographic proximity matters.
- 42% of LSM alumni are very willing to promote LSM within their home congregation.
 - 63% are “willing” to do so.
- 17% of LSM alumni are very willing to support LSM with a financial contribution.
 - 38% are “willing” to do so.
 - 67% would choose to support the LSM scholarship fund; 26% general operations.
 - 49% would choose to give by check; 47% would choose to give online.

“This program must continue – there are so many students who have yet to share in this life-changing experience.”