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Opinion

OUR VIEW: Keep the music alive

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Something quite remarkable happened Saturday at Southington High School.

More than 300 trumpet players of all levels and ages performed together harmoniously as they attempted to break the world record for the largest trumpet ensemble.

But the Southington Brass Blast wasn't just about winning a line or two in the Guinness Book of Records for the largest trumpet ensemble, an honor still held by a group of Bolivians who gathered some 1,100 trumpets, according to our reporter Lluvia Mares.

"This was not just about breaking a record," said Joanne Kelleher, public relations for Southington Brass Blast. "It was also a way to bring awareness to the importance of music education, while at the same time raising money for youth in music and other musical organizations."

It's no secret that the arts and, especially, music education has been threatened in central Connecticut and, indeed, throughout the country as educators and budget cutters struggle to provide a well-rounded education while meeting the demands of mandated standardized testing.

But we — and those who turned out Saturday — believe these cuts to music and the arts are a mistake — even if you're not a fan of brass.

Students in high-quality school music education programs score higher on standardized tests compared to students in schools with deficient music education programs, regardless of the socioeconomic level of community, according to VH1's Save the Music Foundation.

In fact, music enhances the process of learning, according to R.R. Konrad, author of *Empathy, Arts and Social Studies*. "The systems it nourishes, which include our integrated sensory, attention, cognitive, emotional and motor capacities, are shown to be the driving forces behind all other learning."

Moreover, the participants in Saturday's event would have you know that it's so much more.

It's a dad getting to play with his daughter, grandparents sharing the music with grandchildren, and teenagers given the opportunity to perform with peers from throughout the region.

And our young musicians go on giving, sharing their talents with the entire community throughout the year. These are the people who provide the music during Memorial Day parades and other patriotic events, and, later in life, to serve their fellow citizens by bringing to life holiday and religious traditions, entertaining seniors and performing in community fundraisers.

If we take the music away, who will play for future generations?

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