

[IMAGE]

## Music Soothes More Than the Savage Beast

Research from the University of Hong Kong provides evidence that music soothes more than just the "savage beast," a quote attributed to William Congreve in the 1697 play "The Mourning Bride." If the researchers' findings are any indication, this quote could also refer to the recovery of brain injury patients.

The journal *Neuropsychology* describes a study of a group of 90 schoolchildren (6-15 years of age). Half received musical training in their school's string orchestra between one and five years' duration; the other half obtained no musical training. Verbal memory was tested by reading each subject a word list and checking to see how many words were remembered -10 minutes after the reading and 30 minutes after the reading. The same test was performed again, but with images replacing the words. Children with musical training recalled and retained significantly more words than those without the training.

As far as researcher Dr. Agnes Chan is concerned, the instrument or music type is not as material as the learning process in assisting verbal training. She feels this could be the basis of a new approach to helping those with memory loss after brain injury.

So, think twice before turning off that "noise," your children are listening to (or producing themselves). It may be hurting your ears, but it could also be helping them build better memories.

### *Reference:*

Ho YC, Cheung MC, Chan AS. Music training improves verbal but not visual memory: Cross-sectional and longitudinal explorations in children. S. Chan, Ph.D. *Neuropsychology* 2003: Volume 17, Number 3, pp.439-50.

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