

Zach Bryan burns it up in Lincoln

by Ashton Kirkendall



Performing on stage at Pinnacle Bank area, in August, Zach Bryan entertains an excited crowd.

Zach Bryan is a huge artist right now with the *Burn, Burn, Burn* tour just coming to an end and the *Quittin' Time* tour just being announced. At Southern Valley, many students enjoy country music and are joining in on the excitement. I was lucky enough to get tickets to his *Burn, Burn, Burn* performance in Lincoln. His performance at the Pinnacle Bank Arena on August 29, 2023, was a scorching success.

I arrived at the venue two and a half hours before the doors opened so I could be closer to the stage; however, the line was ridiculously long with many other concert goers hoping to get close to the stage. When the doors opened, the venue did not have a solid plan to deal with the crowd. It was chaotic with fans arguing and cutting the line, providing a frustrating start to the event. After all the lines, I ended up being at least 20 feet from the stage. I got to the spot we ended up staying all night by 7:00. Waiting for three hours through the chaos was 100% worth it.

The openers, Trampled by Turtles, took the stage at 8:00 and performed for about 45 minutes. I had actually never heard of them before that night, but I really enjoyed the blue grass country blend of their performance. One of the band members played a banjo which caught my attention and was intriguing. My favorite song, "Wait So Long," was the last one they performed. The openers helped get the crowd energized for the main act to follow.

The stage crew worked intensely for about 30 minutes to get set up for Zach Bryan. The energy from the crowd was insane, and that's putting it lightly. After the short wait, Zach Bryan took the stage while the crowd screamed wildly. The excitement of him walking out and the reality of seeing him in person was unreal. Because of the stage positioning, he came out playing "Open The Gate" as he walked from the back through the crowd. The stage was in the middle of the floor area with a string of lights looping around it. As Bryan performed, he made sure to cover all

sides of the stage so the whole crowd could share the experience.

This is the type of performance that I would love to see again, and something every country music loving student should go see. Between the music selection, getting to hear some songs from Bryan's new album, and being able to see an up and coming artist as the opener, it was a memorable experience. The energy of a live performance is something that can't be duplicated by a music video or Spotify.

By the end of the concert, I could confidently say \$130 for the ticket was worth it. This concert was one of the coolest things I have experienced, especially having a pit ticket. Fans will have the opportunity to see him (possibly again) as Bryan is scheduled to perform in Omaha on April 29 and 30, 2024. You won't want to miss your opportunity to see the *Quittin' Time* tour. It would be an amazing way to end the school year.

The impact of music in the classroom: Read this and listen

by Ellora Whitney

Music is something that has an impact on everyone daily. Whether you're shuffling through your Spotify playlist, or struggling to skip a YouTube advertisement, music affects you or your surroundings. Well, almost always. There's one place in particular where music doesn't reach, and that's in the classroom. Most classrooms don't allow students to listen to music while working on homework. The only reason seems to be how much of a "distraction" music is seen to be by some teachers. Though from my experience, I don't believe this to be true.

For a while now, I've grown accustomed to listening to music while working on schoolwork at home. I've found it helps me focus more on a singular subject. When it comes time to work on homework, instead of focusing with the voices of my family in the background, I can simply slip in my earbuds and instantly focus better. I've even found this work with just one earbud in. The music still mutes out the noise around me. If the music isn't blaring in your ears, it can provide a kind of white noise background which allows your brain to focus more on the task at hand.

In Mrs. Jorgenson's art classes at school, there is always music playing. At the beginning of the year, she handed out papers for students in each of her classes to write school-appropriate music suggestions. Then, these songs are added to a class playlist. Each school day, that period's personal playlist fills the room with music while students work. There are never any complaints from the students. Everyone seems content with the idea that, while working, there is a catchy tune playing that will soon be well-known by the entirety of that class. When I tell you it is easier to concentrate on the task at hand, I'm not lying. I often find myself so engulfed in what I'm creating in art that, when the clean-up bell rings, it feels like it has only been 10 minutes rather than 45. It is exciting when a familiar song plays, especially if you were the student to add it to the playlist.

In classrooms where music is present, students know it is a helpful tool that leads to success. I am not the only student who has noticed the benefits. Southern Valley sophomore, Stephani Martin, said, "Music helps me destress and is calming while I'm working." The building is filled with students who would both enjoy and benefit from listening to music throughout the day.

For middle and high schoolers, just being allowed to listen to the music of their choice whenever the teacher finds it to be appropriate would be an effective way to motivate students. Daily tasks become less dreaded with the addition of music. According to the article "Evolving Technology in Musical Education" from deptofsound.org, "Music enhances the process of learning. The systems they nourish, which include our integrated sensory, attention, cognitive, emotional, and motor capacities, are shown to be the driving forces behind all other learning." More classes at Southern Valley should allow students to listen to music in school because it will benefit learning.

There are, of course, certain times when listening to music should not be an option, like during a test. In general, though, teachers need to identify the times when integrating music into their classroom would be beneficial. Listening to music can help students memorize important information. In his book, *Driven to Distraction*, associate clinical professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, John J. Ratey, said, "Music is a powerful tool in galvanizing cognitive processes such as memory, attention, and focus." Simply, music can help students learn more efficiently.

If a teacher doesn't feel comfortable with the idea of a student listening to the music of their choice, teachers can make a class playlist to use during downtimes or play songs without lyrics to help students focus. According to a study conducted by the University of Birmingham, listening to music can increase productivity by up to 15%. Classical music, in particular, is very effective at improving productivity. It has a calming effect on the brain which can help reduce stress and anxiety and also leads to increased grades in school.

Music is for more than just the art room. It can and should be integrated into all classrooms. Music is, in fact, far from the distraction some believe it to be.

Upcoming dates:

Christmas Break for Students: December 22nd-January 3rd

NSAA Moratorium: December 23rd to December 27th

