

The Value of Arts in Culture

LaMurl Morris
Fine Arts Director

The culture of a society is reflected in its music, art, drama, literature and dance. Behaviors, belief systems, political and social concerns, traditions, and language are seen in the arts of past and present societies.

At Prince Avenue Christian School, when our fine arts students learn about various composers, writers, and artists, they gain an understanding of what life was like during that time period and in specific geographic locations. History, science, literature, religion and language begin to come alive as students realize how all these disciplines are interconnected. For example, in Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*, the writer condemns the societal class structure and exposes the effects of numerous political revolutions on the country. In addition to these topics are the underlying themes of the struggle between good and evil, redemption, and pride. Many of our high school performing arts students read the book to prepare for our musical production of *Les Miserables* last spring. During the rehearsal process, we had many discussions about French history, politics, culture, and spiritual principles and truths. Information they learned in other classes began to make sense in the context of this literary work that they brought to life on stage.

Another important aspect of arts and culture is in regard to evangelism. An understanding of the people to whom we minister is essential for effective ministry. Many of our seniors recently returned from their mission trip to Honduras. Since Beverly and David Shivar know the history and spiritual climate of the villages and how to relate to the Honduran people, our seniors were better prepared to minister. The seniors experienced the joy of bringing



another person into the saving grace of Jesus Christ. The type of outreach in Honduras would not be effective or well-received in a country such as Estonia, a country which was formerly part of the Soviet Union. Because they were formerly under control of a communist government, the Estonians are generally suspicious of anything that has to do with religion. Therefore, the gospel must be subtly delivered through avenues such as drama and music, just as we were able to do when some of our Fine Arts students visited that country last summer.

Through the arts, and through their creative expression of truth as they know it, students are able to ascertain God's faithfulness through the ages and learn to articulate His redeeming love to people around the world.