

# Why Ragazzi?

## Why should your boy sing in a chorus?

- Choral singing trains children's brains to **truly multitask** – they have to sing the right words and pitches, in the right rhythm and tempo, all while watching the conductor for cues and listening to their neighbors for blend.
- Children who sing in choruses get **significantly better grades**.
- Parents of singers report their children have good **memory**, good **homework habits**, and high levels of **creativity**.
- Parents also report their children are **better team players** and have **more advanced social skills**.
- An overwhelming majority of these parents date improvements in these areas to when their child joined a chorus, and also say their child's **ability to manage his/her emotions** and read the emotions of others improved after they became choral singers.
- Educators agree that singing in a chorus can help make students better participants in groups, help develop stronger social skills, lead to better emotional expression and management, **improve overall academic performance**, help instill self-discipline and punctuality, and more.

Source: <http://www.chorusamerica.org/advocacy-research/chorus-impact-study-executive-summary>

See also **CBS Sunday Morning**: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SCgVTMx0qg>

(the segment about children begins at 2'44")

## Why boys?

- The **artistry** that boy singers are capable of is astonishing. They don't have the experience of adults, and yet they are fully capable of **skilled, nuanced, and deeply moving performances**.
- Boys' voices are unique – there is no vocal sound like that of an accomplished boy soprano. Before a boy's voice changes to tenor, baritone or bass, the quality of his voice becomes increasingly different from a girl's. As boys mature, but before the voice fully drops, **a rich tone develops that is unique to boys**. This period of high vocal range and unique color is one reason why so many **vocal traditions throughout the world** cherish boy choruses and soloists.

## Why a boys chorus?

- Girls dominate mixed-gender choruses in America. Girls “do” chorus better than boys – they can focus longer, follow instructions better and keep rules in mind. Boys in mixed gender choruses often get called out for just being boys.
- Even if they begin evenly balanced, the number of **boys will dwindle to 25% or less** as they come to believe that singing is “girl stuff.”
- In a boys chorus, they are with their peers and will work and compete toward the same goals. **Gender issues transform themselves** from liabilities to strengths.

## Why Ragazzi Boys Chorus?

- **We speak “boy!”** Our boys may sing like angels, but they're still boys.

- Ragazzi has more than **30 years of experience** taking untrained boys from all walks of life and leading them to be good singers, good musicians, good students and good citizens.
- Ragazzi is a **complete program** – vocal training, ensemble singing, music theory, movement and showmanship. Our alums are musicians and performers, not just singers.
- Ragazzi's rehearsals are almost all in the early evening, leaving afterschool hours free for **sports and other activities**.
- Ragazzi's internationally respected co-founder, Joyce Keil, leads **our experienced and capable faculty**. All of our directors have years of experience as singers, conductors and educators. We even have directors who are Ragazzi graduates!
- In addition to its own concerts and recitals, Ragazzi frequently performs with **other top-notch Bay Area groups**, including the San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Symphony, Opera San Jose, West Bay Opera, Symphony Silicon Valley, Masterworks Chorale, and Stanford University Symphonic Chorus.
- **Ragazzi tours internationally**. Past destinations include the Baltics, South Africa, Cuba, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, Quebec and British Columbia, Spain and Portugal, the British Isles, Russia, Eastern Europe, Italy and Japan. The chorus has also toured to Minnesota, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Louisiana, Arizona, New York (Carnegie Hall), Vermont and Southern California.
- Ragazzi boys have an excellent opportunity to become national and regional **Honor Choir** members with Ragazzi sponsorship, attending conferences and workshops all over the US.
- Ragazzi's **summer camp** is a **fabulous experience** for the boys. They spend up to ten days at a lovely campus just outside Healdsburg CA, learning new repertoire and dance routines, advancing in the theory program, cementing friendships and enjoying outdoor activities. Our Camp Director is an experienced educator and administrator.
- About half of Ragazzi's Camp counselors and almost all of our tour chaperones are **Ragazzi graduates**. They know the program inside and out and are deeply committed to our values, our goals and the boys. They also serve as role models for how to balance college and career with a deep love of singing.
- **Ragazzi rocks!** And folks, and jazes, and pops ... our repertoire covers all of Western music, from medieval plainchant and Baroque fugues to **the Beach Boys and Queen**. But we don't ignore other traditions—we also sing music from **all over the world**, in the original languages. Expect your boy to come home singing in Japanese, Urdu, French, Yiddish, Latin, Arabic, Maori, Swahili or all of the above!
- Ragazzi offers your boy the chance to learn the art of singing **in a supportive environment** where he can hone performance skills, experience the joy of creating music and learn firsthand the value of **leadership, teamwork, commitment, and self-discipline**.
- Ragazzi will give your boy two **invaluable life lessons**:
  - Learning that effort and perseverance in the face of small failures leads to strong, resilient young men.
  - A genuine sense of self-esteem; all the more powerful because it's earned—the old fashioned way.