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The Irish Times - Monday, February 18, 2013

Experts say studying music will not make you better at other things

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DICK AHLSTROM in Boston

Studying music can change the brain but don't count on it to raise IQ. If you are making your child take music lessons to make them smarter it will be a waste of money, a session at the AAAS meeting in Boston has heard.

Two experts from Canada discussed issues surrounding the notion that having a talent for music might also make you better at other things.

Benefits

What benefits there were were more likely related to wider issues, said Prof E Glen Schellenberg of the University of Toronto. He pointed to studies related to music and mental abilities, which found those doing music did better at school.

“Music can change you a bit but kids that take music tend to do other activities and come from better-off families, where you may also see a higher IQ,” Prof Schellenberg said.

Overall these children did better at school but there was no evidence to say it was down to the music. It was equally difficult to decide whether a given child would excel or fail at music, according to Prof Daniel Levitin of McGill University in Montreal.

“If you are looking for the genes that contribute to behaviour, you need to be able to measure that behaviour. We don’t have a good measure for musicality.”

Musical ability

Tests used for decades in schools to predict musical ability were given to members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Prof McGill added.

More than half scored badly for musical ability, so clearly a different measure was needed. “I do believe we are all musical, just like we can be athletic, but there do seem to be people who just don’t get it.”

There was no doubt, however, that music was fundamental to humankind. Some of the oldest human artefacts found are bone flutes and the remnants of drums dating back 50,000 years. “There is no society that we have discovered that did not have music.”

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FabioGentile

Everything is in your DNA, smart or stupid, yes we all have the ability to learn, but the top minds are all down to breeding, It's not about money is evolution. And parents need to help to make learning enjoyable so as the child develops so does his/her IQ. Biggest secret to a clever child is PARENTS time love and acknowledgement. And a positive attitude.

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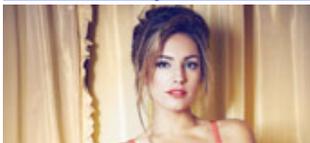
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