

Student Reporter

The Orange County School of Arts Conservatory Experience



Jaden Kim

Grade 9
Orange County School of the Arts



The Symphony Orchestra in the "Strings and Orchestra" conservatory performing "Death and Transfiguration" by Richard Strauss.
[Source: Student attending OCSA, Matthew Anderson]

At the Orange County School of the Arts (OCSA), students experience a very different atmosphere compared to your average local high school. OCSA is a middle and high arts school located in Santa Ana, California, with students coming from all over the region. Through car, bus, or even the train, many of the student body take a lot of time and dedication to get to campus. For some, it only takes a car ride of 15-20 minutes from the neighboring city of

Irvine. For others, it is an hours-long trip from Los Angeles or even San Diego.

The school's most highlighted features are its sixteen conservatories, including the Strings and Orchestra conservatory, the Culinary Arts conservatory, the Commercial Dance conservatory, the Creative Writing conservatory, and many others. It is safe to say almost all conservatories have at least one exhibition or a performance of

their work every semester, whether that may be a musical or a gallery of sculptures and drawings. The faculties that head these events and classes are all individual experts in their field, professionals with decades of experience.

From Mondays through Thursdays, students undergo instruction from these teachers after academic teaching. For middle school students, there is one seventy minute class after academic instruction, while there are two for high school students. The school therefore ends much later than the average local high or middle school, with the 7th and 8th graders leaving at 3:25 PM while high school students finish at a much later time, at 4:45 PM.

Despite this extra time spent at school, many surprisingly don't mind. Fiona Luangpraseut, a freshman in the Musical Theatre conservatory at OCSA, explains

that she goes to the school "regardless of the long hours, because it gives an opportunity to work on a passion for art that's not usually emphasized in our society." Others explain they come to the school to be more well-rounded in life in the future.

Evidently, a unique and tuition-free school life like this requires a demonstration that one is proficient enough to take on these kinds of performances and classes. As a result, the school selects applicants who would like to take on the OCSA culture and lifestyle. The auditions, or what the school calls "placement activities," are held every January or February, where different material is required for each respective conservatory. It is truly exciting to know that while in class, everyone is extremely talented in their own respective field. It is what makes OCSA unique and stand out from everyone else.

Student Reporter

Teaching English to Rural Students



Jessica Kim

Grade 11
Christa McAuliffe Academy of School of Arts and Sciences High School



Teaching the students over winter break helped them not only with their English skills, but also to better prepare for High School. [Source: Author, Jessica Kim]

Studying can be a bore to some, but not to the students of Gucheon Middle School in Cheongsong, South Korea! The graduating class of 2022 was eager to come to school during winter break to listen to a special English class. I was astounded at their passion for learning and their warm personalities.

From December 28th to January 7th, I taught English to two middle students at Gucheon Middle School. It was meant to

be a short-term class for students living in rural areas where it is difficult to attend academies or get information about high school. Before their winter break, I contacted the school and asked if I could teach English classes and give high school tips. Thankfully, the school gladly gave me the opportunity, and I was allowed to teach the graduating class.

The class focused on reading English and preparing for the College Scholastic Ability Test

(CSAT). Although the duration was not that long, the students absorbed many skills and tips during the 8 meetings. Each session was 3 hours: two hours were spent on reading English and one hour was spent on high school tips. On the last day, the students got to experience a practice CSAT. The reading classes were designed to orient the students to the types of problems that would be on the college entrance test, as well as high school exams.

During the high school tips classes, I explained the main differences between middle school and high school: the grading system, activities that look good on transcripts, preparation for high school tests, and more beneficial tips. My two years at a foreign language high school made sure that I could provide strong and helpful information to freshman high school students. From the students' eager posture and faces

during the classes, I knew they were ready for high school. Although I have spent a lot of time being surrounded by top-level students in the past, I have never been to a place where education was treated like a valuable experience.

One student told me, "Going to a big high school makes me really nervous, but I am trying to prepare by studying more hours than I did in middle school." Since preparing for high school is difficult in rural areas, I naturally thought that the students would not be prepared. However, the students were already equipped with a ready mindset, and all they needed was a nudge in the right direction. The English teacher of the school said, "What you are doing is really a talent donation!" I was glad that I could help others to learn by using my talents, and I was thankful to the school that gave me this valuable experience.

Student Reporter

LA Rams' Players and Fans Celebrate the First Playoff Game



Jonathan Kim

Grade 10
Culver City High School

It was with 12:12 remaining in the third quarter of the Arizona Cardinals versus Los Angeles Rams Wild Card Game that told the whole story of what had been the most highly anticipated NFL playoff matchup of the weekend. And no, the play that took place just a few minutes into the second half of the game hadn't been a game-deciding throw or a critical interception that would define the winner — the Rams were already up 21-0 at that point and wouldn't relinquish that lead — instead it was a 40-yard throw that looked rather simple from wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr.

At that point, a wide receiver for the Rams had thrown for more passing yards than Kyler Murray, the starting quarterback for the Cardinals, encapsulating this team's colossal failure under the bright lights of the playoffs.

The last of the six one-and-done wild card games the NFL had hosted that weekend took place on Jan. 17 at the recently



The Los Angeles Rams held a 7-0 lead against the Arizona Cardinals late in the first quarter at the recently opened SoFi Stadium, which has a revolutionary 70,000 square foot video board above the field.
[Source: Author, Jonathan Kim]

opened SoFi Stadium, home of the Los Angeles Rams and Chargers. The 12-5 Rams, by virtue of their superior record, were able to host the 11-6 Cardinals, whose 4-6 record in their last ten games, despite starting the season 7-0, had already foreshadowed the team's playoff struggles to come. For the Rams, however, facing the Cardinals was more than just any ordinary matchup; it was the first playoff game at SoFi Stadium. The \$5.5 billion venue opened in September of 2020, both architecturally and visually one of the most

impressive stadiums in the league, with a state-of-the-art, 70,000 square foot video board held up and connected to the roof above the field.

These brilliant, aesthetically pleasing stadium features only complemented the Rams' dominant display of football on the field, improving the intense stadium atmosphere for fans and players. With star quarterback Matthew Stafford at the helm, as well as NFL's best wide receiver in Cooper Kupp, the Rams' offense

excelled from start to finish.

Led by the trio of star players with Aaron Donald, Jalen Ramsey, and Von Miller, the defense for the Rams was just as superb as they neutralized Kyler Murray's usual elite playstyle. With the Rams playing at home, the fans' continuous cheers and chants and the artificial speaker noises reverberated throughout the stadium, energizing Rams players and giving them a psychological advantage to best the Cardinals.

All Rams fans rejoiced as their team dominated the opponent in front of approximately 70,000 passionate fans at SoFi Stadium. However, the Rams' ultimate goal is to win the Super Bowl come February 13, which coincidentally will be hosted at SoFi Stadium. Winning the season's final game would be only more magical for the Rams in a year where they not only won their first ever playoff game at SoFi, but could also just be the second team ever to win a championship in their home stadium.