

## WILSON HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC CONCERT REVIEW (March 19, 2012)

By Carolyn Grill '75

As a prelude to the PIL Music Festival, held March 20, Wilson music director **Paul Jolstead** led his groups in a pre-festival concert on Monday, March 19, 2012.

The evening started with the **Chamber Orchestra**, a small but powerful group that led with Divertimento by Einojuhani Rautavaara. It was an unusual piece, but had a good blend of the five different instruments. A work by Edward Elgar, Serenade in E Minor, followed with a superb violin solo by Concert Master **Jordan Wu**. The orchestra displayed excellent dynamics and phrasing. The final piece for the orchestra was the ambitious Serenade in C Major, by Ernst von Dohnanyi, a repeat from their last concert. It was great then, and was even better this time. Comprised of four movements, the players easily navigated the change in tempos. Solos by violinist **Jordan Wu**, violist **Maia Hoffman**, and cellist **Andy Grill** were the highlights. It was a grand finish to this portion of the concert.

The **Jazz Band** took the stage next, starting with Splanky by Neal Hefti. This was reminiscent of a big band song, melodic and jazzy. **Samantha Mick** on flute provided the solo. **James Markin** on piano, easily heard, and **Ian Kitts** on bass were appreciated. The next piece, Orange Sherbert by Sammy Nestico, was the toe-tapper of the bunch. It featured the strong trombone section. Count Basie wrote the next song, Jumpin' at the Woodside. **Jake Souza** gave a good trombone solo, along with solos by **Ian Kitts** on bass and **James Markin** on piano. The band closed with a composition by local composer David Mills, which demonstrated how well the band played as a group. It was a good ensemble piece.

The **Concert Band** was up next. Comprised of mostly younger students, this group just gets better and better. They started with Toccata for Band by Frank Erickson. The different instruments blended well together in this one, showing a maturity that will serve the musicians well in the future. Gaelic Rhapsody, by Elliot Del Borgo, finished their set, which was a good choice given the season of St. Patrick's Day. The tempo changed several times, but the band executed the changes well. Showing a lot of enthusiasm, the group sounded much bigger than they are.

The showcase of the Wilson Instrumental Music department, the **Symphonic Band**, took the stage next. But first the audience was treated to the debut of a new group, the **Percussion Ensemble**. At the request of the students, Mr. Jolstead worked with interested students outside of class to bring an all-percussion group to the concert. They started with Mambo Schmambo by Chris Brooks. It was fun to hear music without "notes," only beats. With Mr. Jolstead on marimba, (one of two) they finished with Dance of the Swans from

Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite. This was a great rendition of a familiar piece. Unfortunately, the members of the ensemble were not listed in the program. Most of them played other instruments in the band and I would have liked to see who they were.

After the Percussion Ensemble took their seats, the **Symphonic Band** started with a snappy march, Pentland Hills by Maj. J. W. Howe. It was the quintessential band piece, lots of brass and percussion. The next piece, Ginger Marmalade by Warren Benson utilized all the talents of the musicians, incorporating clapping and stomping into the music. This piece was not as melodic as some, but it was still fun to listen to. It seemed like a more technically difficult piece than the other selections. A stirring melody followed, Song of Lir by Fergal Carroll. The haunting ending showed the musicality of the band. The band finished with Norwegian Dances IV by Edward Grieg. This rousing piece was a wonderful ending to a wonderful concert.

This warm-up concert did the trick. At the festival the next day, both the Chamber Orchestra and Symphonic Band performed well and moved on to the state competition level.

**Congratulations to all the musicians, and to their director, Paul Jolstead!**