

Music Concert a warm-up of things to come!

A review by Carolyn Grill '75 (April 2011)

Wilson music director Paul Jolstead directed four groups in a concert April 14 designed to prepare them for an adjudicated festival hosted by Wilson the next day. It was a multi-cultural program, including music with Arab, Irish, Latin and Greek influences, among others. The students made quite an entrance in their black dresses and tuxedos.

The evening started with the Jazz Band, a small group that makes up for it in talent. They played three easy to recognize standards and one unique jazz tune that was more typical of jazz performances. "Easy to Love" was strong, and crisp with a quick beat. The saxes sounded particularly good. They followed with "Georgia on My Mind" with an excellent solo by Joe Runde on the Alto Sax, ably backed up by the guitar, bass and drum players. "How High the Moon" demonstrated the group's talent with rhythms. Kevin Rawls soloed on this piece. The group closed with "Mira, Mira," with a rare but welcome piano solo by Amy Lorber. Zachary Jones on guitar and Alan Bishop on drums also had the spotlight.

Next up was a slightly bigger group, the Chamber Orchestra. These kids just keep getting better and better. With such a small group, only 14 students, all the instruments could be heard. And they were worth hearing! The first song, "Overture to Ruslan and Lyudmila," was a good blend of the three kinds of strings and a good way to introduce the audience to their ability. Stephen Hart on violin played a solo in the next number, "Arabian Dreams." This was a more challenging piece, but they played with authority and expertise. They concluded with a Bach piece, "Organ Fugue in G Minor," a familiar work that sounded good on strings. Because it is like a round, it showcased the four sections of the orchestra well.

Next up was Concert Band, who played noticeably more difficult pieces than last fall. They started with "Rhythm of the Winds," a great start to the set. "The Emerald Isle" followed, with good percussion work that wasn't overpowering. In "Athenian Festival," there were many rests, which the band observed perfectly. Everyone counted well and came in right on time. They finished with "Prairie Dances," a lively work that was the perfect way to end their time on stage. A great performance from start to finish.

The Symphonic Band took the stage to finish the concert, starting with "La Oreja de Oro," a song with strong Latin sounds. This influence was accentuated by the trumpet playing of Fiona Dearth, who played beautifully. An unusual piece, "Lullaby for Noah," was next. It was well done, with all the sections playing their parts well. They finished with a complex piece with three movements that were challenging and disparate in nature. It was another great finish to an outstanding concert.

A plea was made by an orchestra/band parent for money. In the past two years, Mr. Jolstead has scraped together enough money for a new tuba and new euphonium. Since most of the instruments owned by the school were new when the school opened in the late '50's, these two new instruments are a drop in the bucket in terms of what is needed.

The parents were asked to step forward to fulfill Mr. Jolstead's next dream, a new baritone saxophone. The horn currently being played by a member of the Concert Band is original to the school. This year, the player, Kendra Autumn, placed first in the OSAA State Solo Contest for the PIL. It would be great if she could continue her career at Wilson with a shiny new horn, and then pass it on to the next generation. Anyone wishing to help Mr. Jolstead fulfill his dream can take a contribution to the bookkeeper at Wilson and designate it for the band or donate to the Wilson Area Arts Council, which is tax deductible, again designating Wilson Band as the recipient.