



Youth Honor Chorus

Russell Seaton led the 170-voice Youth Honor Chorus in concert at the conclusion of the ArtsTime conference in Tukwila on March 24.

It was a memorable experience for the fifth- and sixth-grade students from 63 schools who participated. "The most important things I learned," said Olivia, "was how to blend with a large group and being able to meet others who like to sing as much as I do."

"I learned that practice makes perfect," said Christy, "and singing with people you don't know is fun and enjoyable."

Madison said, "The most important thing I learned was to sing strong, even if it's a mistake. Don't let the audience think it was a mistake, just an interesting solo." She added that she will remember the music the most. "*Chante Forte* is still stuck in my head!"

"It was hard work, but worth it! We looked (and sounded) terrific!" said Abigail. "Not only that—my whole family was so proud!"

Nancy Nole, YHC manager, and director Russell Seaton speak to the enthusiastic audience at the concert.



Following the concert, Russell Seaton poses with the members of the Youth Honor Chorus for a formal picture. The group was so large that not all could fit into the photo.



WMEA Elementary Representatives meet in March



Elementary representatives from 13 of WMEA's regions, along with reps from Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze and WMEA board members met for lunch during ArtsTime. The purpose of their meeting was to define their roles, share what is happening in their regions and brainstorm possibilities for upcoming regional meetings. (You can read more details on page 45.)



Gerard Schwarz shares stories with the guests at the *Backstage* event. He has served as chair of the YME Board since its inception. However, this week, conducting the All-State Orchestra has made him feel like "an insider," he said.



Libby Concord, a music major at UPS and former All-State musician, tells the audience things she remembers from her All-State experience in 2002. Like Brendan Hammond, the other UPS student who spoke, Libby said since she came from a small school, what she appreciated most was being able to play in such a big group, with strong musicians. She was also delighted to see this year's All-State Band conductor, Linda Moorhouse, who was conductor of the All-State Band Libby played in.

Backstage with WMEA All-State

On March 25, 172 enthusiasts had an opportunity to observe the dress rehearsals of the All-State groups, enjoy a meet-the-conductors luncheon and sit in a special reserved section at the concert. The event, held in the Wheelock Center at UPS, was the first-ever sponsored by the Young Musicians Excelling (YME) fund. Thanks to the UPS School of Music and its director, Keith Ward, for their support throughout this effort.

Don Clausen welcomed everyone and introduced three former All-Staters. Lesley Moffat, music teacher at Jackson High School, said being in All-State and All-Northwest 25 years ago helped shape her life.

Each of the All-State conductors spoke to the crowd. They talked about what a great time they had working with the students during the week, how well prepared the students came to the rehearsals and what good kids they are. After the short program, those in attendance had an opportunity to visit with the conductors before walking back to the fieldhouse for the concert.



The WMEA All-State Gala Concert was held March 25 in Tacoma. Performing were 560 students representing 220 schools. The band performed first, followed by the choir and orchestra. It concluded with the combined groups performing Carmen Dragon's arrangement of "American the Beautiful" with Gerard Schwarz conducting. It reminded those members of the 1960 All-State groups in attendance of their concert 47 years ago, when Carmen Dragon, himself, conducted the finale.

Several students have shared memories of their All-State experiences. Over and over, students said this was the best musical experience they have had.

Many echoed the sentiments of one student who wrote: "To eat, sleep and rehearse with a large group like this just gave me a wonderful, exhilarating feeling that anything was possible. There I was, surrounded by people who had the same interests and goals as I do. It really felt like a musical utopia. And everyone was so friendly. I know that this is a taste of the real world of music, and activities like this inspire me to continue on so I can enjoy similar events."

Praise for the conductors

The students had high praise for their conductors. "I remember most André Thomas' inspirational thoughts and attitude toward the music," said Ryan. "He was such an amazing director, the practices never seemed that long," added Elyse.



André Thomas directs the All-State Choir during the first rehearsal of the morning and then during the concert. Dr. Thomas, who teaches at Florida State University, also directed the All-Northwest Choir in February.

The choir sang "Domine, Ad Adjuvandum Me Festina" by Il Padre G. B. Martini, "Ave Maria" by Javier Buisto, "Dance of the Zalonga" a Greek folk song arranged by Carrol Barnett, "Crossing the Bar" by Gwuneth Walker, "Sigh No More Ladies" by René Clausen and two of Dr. Thomas' compositions: "I Dream a World" and "I'm Gonna Sing."



"Dr. Moorhouse connected with us," said Kelsey. Chris said, "I enjoyed the intensive rehearsals, Dr. Moorhouse's conducting and teaching style, and the camaraderie of the group as a whole." Elliot added, "Dr. Moorhouse was an awesome conductor; I learned a ton from her."

"Working with Maestro Schwarz was an honor and privilege that surpassed anything I could have imagined," said Ian. "The lessons he left us with apply not only to the instruments we play on, or even the orchestras we perform with, but carry forth to permeate every day of our lives and our futures."

Students gain from the experience

"Though different communities speak different languages, everyone can adopt music as a universal language," said Frank. "This was a learning experience that equipped me with useful tools that I can apply in my classroom to make my high school choir more successful."

"All-State changed my life. I'm serious!" said Ellora. "Living in a small town, I know almost everyone. Arriving the first day and not knowing anyone was scary as heck. But after a while, I began to know people. The weekend taught me amazing people skills...It also made me a better musician...It was satisfying and humbling to be sitting amongst such phenomenal young artists. I plan to major in music in college and, hopefully, play professionally. All-State reassured that dream; it secured my desire to play, it enhanced the joy of performing and it strengthened the love I have for music."

Andrew said, "One thing that a lot of people said at All-State was how amazed they were with all of the wonderful musicians there...I made so many new and wonderful friends. A new friend of mine said she wished 'this could be a school where we could go to class, but all of us were still in this one choir.' This was an experience of a lifetime."



WMEA All-State Band, Orchestra and Choir



Linda Moorhouse, directs the All-State Band at its rehearsal and in the gala concert. Dr. Moorhouse, who is from Louisiana State University, also directed the 2002 All-State Band.

The band performed "Fanfare of Wakakusa Hill" by Itaru Sakai, "Symphonic Dance No. 3" by Clifton Williams, "Their Blossoms Down" by Samuel Hazo, "Rikudim" by Jan Van der Roost, "God of Our Fathers" by Claude T. Smith and "Sabres and Spurs" by John Philip Sousa.

"The energy was so high during rehearsal, despite long practice hours, and it showed through in the end," said Emily. "Our final performance literally gave me goosebumps!"

"When listening to us, you would say, 'Wow! That's amazing,'" said Xuan. "But when you play as one of us, you'd say 'Wow! I'm amazing!'"



Gerard Schwarz conducts the All-State Orchestra in rehearsal and at the concert. Maestro Schwarz, music director and conductor of the Seattle Symphony, has invited the All-State Orchestra to play in side-by-side concerts with the SSO May 5 and 12. The orchestra performed "Mars" and "Jupiter" from "The Planets" by Gustav Holst and the "Finale to Symphony No. 5" by Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky.