

# MAKING WAVES AT DCS



## Mill Creek 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Orchestra Students Perform First Concert

On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, Mill Creek 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade orchestras performed their first concert of the year at the DHS Center for Performing Arts. For the 7<sup>th</sup> graders, this performance marks the first time since beginning to play their instrument they have performed together on stage for an audience.

In 2019, when the current 7<sup>th</sup> graders were beginning the second half of their 5<sup>th</sup> grade year, COVID-19 caused schools across the nation to close. At this point, these students had only five months of in-person instrument instruction. Classes were virtual for the first half of the 2020-2021 school year and even when students were able to return to buildings, students who were not home-based attended only eight face-to-face classes.

Remote music instruction is difficult enough for young musicians who have been playing their instruments for several years. Live ensemble playing is almost impossible (due to internet lag), and even individual instrument instruction is challenging when teachers cannot be present to help with fingering and bow placement. But for students who have only just started learning their instrument, remote learning came at a critical time in their musical development.

However, through the perseverance of DCS orchestra directors Matt Deloria and Alison Campbell, who spent countless hours learning new software and restructuring lesson plans for virtual (then hybrid) learning, these students were nonetheless well-prepared to perform their first concert on a large stage. Their program included *Rigadoon* by Henry Purcell, *Appalachian Hymn* by Soon Hee Newbold and *Christmas Fiddlers on the Housetop* arranged by Frank J. Halferty. But it was perennial favorite *Dragonhunter* by Richard Meyer that showcased the young musicians' joy of playing together. *Dragonhunter* is performed each year, and is often named the students' favorite piece with its exciting medieval motif.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra also performed to great applause. Their program featured *G Dur (Etude)* arranged by Cesar Aviles, *Small Overture* by Bob Mathews, *Dos Fuegos* by Robert Sieving, *Dance of the Toy Flutes* by Tchaikovsky and arranged by Richard Meyer and *Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer* by Johnny Marks and arranged by Bob Cerulli.

Ms. Campbell shared the following congratulatory words with her students:

*"Congratulations to both Mill Creek Orchestras on a fantastic concert!! You worked incredibly hard to perform this music, and it feels wonderful to be back on stage again. I am so proud of all of you, and am so honored to be your orchestra teacher. Bravo to all!"*

Thank you for sharing your music, Mill Creek orchestras – keep up the great work!