

MAKING WAVES AT DCS



Dexter Students Benefit from Connections with Local Professional Musicians in Classroom Clinics

Dexter Schools is fortunate to be situated in a location where students have access to several universities with outstanding music programs – University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Eastern Michigan University, and more. A number of our band and orchestra directors are graduates of these institutions, and their connections with current faculty and local alumni present a special opportunity for DCS students to learn from individuals who have made a career out of their passion for music.

In January, the DHS Bands invited Dr. Jonathan Smith into the classroom to talk to percussionists about playing and caring for timpani. The band program utilized bond funds to purchase brand new, professional-level timpani earlier this year, replacing a set that was over forty years old. Director of Bands Dr. Ken Moore felt it was important to get a percussion specialist to work with students so they are properly playing and taking care of the equipment. Dr. Smith is a Dexter resident and a percussion staff member at the University of Michigan, as well as a member of both the Jackson and Toledo Symphony Orchestras.



“We are fortunate to be close enough to U-M and EMU to build relationships with many of the music faculty,” shares Moore. “We have had many of them come to class to guest conduct, provide supplemental instruction, and run special clinics.”



Matt Deloria, Director of Orchestras, also recently welcomed a clinician to work with his students while he conducted chair tests (where students perform individually for section ranking). Former EMU Orchestra Director Kevin Miller conducted both DHS concert and chamber orchestra rehearsals, helping students prepare for the upcoming Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association’s annual

Festival in early March.

“It's always a pleasure to work with Dexter High School's student musicians,” says Miller. “Whether they are preparing for Festival or a concert, they seem to always appreciate whatever help I can give them.”

DHS sophomore violinist Crystal Duan had this to say about working with Miller: "It was wonderful having Professor Miller conducting us! It was definitely interesting to see the differences in the conducting style and hear the unique insights on the piece itself. There was also a lot of specific and valuable feedback given on our music which definitely helped with our playing.”



The orchestra program has also had professional cellist and teacher Travis Kulwicki in the classroom this past fall to lead cello sectionals for the Tchaikovsky Elegy. Senior cellist Brock McIntyre is also a private lesson student of Kulwicki, and shares, “As a teacher, Travis is patient and helpful when working through difficult passages. Having him in to help the cello section on this piece definitely made a difference.”

And it's not only high school students who benefit from local clinicians; younger DCS band and orchestra students receive their fair share of professional guidance as well. Last year, Jed Fritzmeier, Director of the Jackson Youth Symphony, spent many rehearsals with the Mill Creek 7th and 8th grade orchestras, which culminated in a performance at their March concert. Staff members from Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp come annually to Dexter Schools to hear both band and orchestra students play and offer scholarships for summer music camps. Local professional musicians and music faculty often come to run sectional clinics for specific instruments from 5th grade and up.

Utilizing the wide network of professional musicians in the area gives our young Dexter musicians access to the world of music outside the school building walls. Students may consider new opportunities with their instrument such as private lessons, extracurricular ensembles, or even a career in a music-related field. By including these fun and educational supplemental activities into the classroom, DCS music faculty helps to foster greater student interest in the arts.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

Band

MSBOA Festival (7th & 8th grade bands) – March 3rd - Chelsea HS

MSBOA Festival (DHS bands) – March 10th – Lee M. Thurston HS, Redford Charter Township

Band Extravaganza – March 19th @ 3:00 p.m. – DHS

Orchestra

MSBOA Festival (7th-12th grade orchestras) – March 3rd – Chelsea HS

All Orchestra/Benefit Concert – March 21st @ 7:00 p.m. – DHS CPA