



Backstage

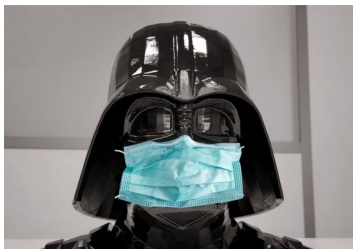
October 2022

“If a composer could say what he had to say in words, he would not bother trying to say it in music.”

–Gustav Mahler

BACK ON STAGE

It was a joy to see an enthusiastic audience return to the Union High School Performing Arts Center for our October 16 concert after a 29-month pandemic-related hiatus. Thank you for cooperating with the “Masks Required Indoors” message from Darth Vader and for your generous contributions towards our future



concerts. We hope that Vader won't have to return for future concerts.

The decision to require mask-wearing was made by the SWWS Board of Directors after considering the Evergreen School District COVID-19 policy, Washington state health department guidance, consultation with a local infectious diseases physician, and current precautions by local and regional performing musical groups. Unlike the school's weekday population, our audience includes many older adults and people with immunocompromising conditions. We chose not to check vaccination status or enforce social distancing. As of Oct. 6, only 64% of the county has completed a primary series of COVID

vaccinations. The musicians and conductor are fully vaccinated and boosted.



UNEXPECTED MAGICAL MOMENT

We all learned during the October concert that wireless emergency alerts from the Clark Regional Emergency Services Agency are broadcast despite your cell phone being silenced. Good to know. The Nakia Creek fire rapidly expanded that afternoon and Union High School was abruptly placed into Level 1 “Be Ready” status. The alert sounded between musical numbers per concert etiquette.

NEW SWWS MUSICIANS

Welcome to our new musicians:

Joy Yuzuriha (clarinet)
Owen Evans (saxophone)
Zack Mautz (percussion)
Chloe Pierce (percussion)
Brea Pierce (string bass)
Danny Ramirez (bassoon)

Many thanks to the student musicians who

performed with us in October:

Jack Ormson (Mt. View High School)
Daniel Lindsay (Union High School)
Kaytie Twelves (Union High School)

3 TRUMPETS, 3 FLUTES, & 3 CLARINETS

In a March 2022 publication titled “Impulse dispersion of aerosols while playing wind instruments,” researchers videotaped and measured aerosol clouds emitted when musicians took in a breath from an e-cigarette and then played loud, soft, high pitch, and low pitch notes on their instrument. The flutes generated the largest aerosol cloud extending 1.88 meters in front of the instrument and in 3 different directions from the mouthpiece, keys, and end opening. In contrast, the trumpets averaged 1.2 meters frontward and the clarinets averaged 1.0 meters frontward. The sound generated also changed due to the higher density of smoke as compared to air. While interesting, it's not clear whether these findings will impact public health recommendations.

<https://doi.org/10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0262994>



Southwest Washington Wind Symphony free show on tap in Camas

Group to perform program of mostly light, breezy tunes

By Scott Hewitt, Columbian staff writer Published: March 2, 2023, 6:00am

The Southwest Washington Wind Symphony has had a tougher time coming back from the coronavirus pandemic than most performing groups. It's a 50-piece ensemble composed almost entirely of lung-powered horns and woodwinds with no strings. "Wind symphonies and concert bands, like choirs, we just blow aerosols around," said group president Pete Boule. "We had to get to a place where we were comfortable with that. I didn't want a concert to become a super-spreader event."

The national coronavirus pandemic emergency is set to expire on May 11. But there are still more than 400 COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. every week, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

So the audience at this Sunday's free concert by the Southwest Washington Wind Symphony will still be asked to wear face masks, Boule said. "We hope we can loosen up in the future, but for now we are still requiring that," he said. "Over half our audience is retirement age or above and they'll be coming in buses. There'll also be a lot of school kids. We have this combined, diverse audience. We're trying to keep everybody safe."

The group's first return to performance, an informal concert in spring 2022, brought back some of the magic, Boule said. "That feeling of making something of beauty after a couple of years away — it was really wonderful," he said. A fall 2022 concert was an even bigger success, except for the few musicians who dropped out because of new vaccine and booster requirements to participate. "This has been the struggle," Boule said. "A small percentage had issues with that. On the other hand, many more musicians are back because of that requirement."

Many players in the 50-piece Wind Symphony are older folks with the kinds of medical conditions that could turn a case of COVID-19 into something serious, according to Colleen Chun, a member of the group who's also a retired epidemiologist. She advised Boule and the symphony board on safety. And about 80 percent of the group's members are music educators who work regularly with kids in classrooms, Boule said. He didn't want to expose them to any more disease risk, he said. That's why he stuck with the vaccine and booster requirements.

Boule said the program for this Sunday's concert will be light and breezy, except for a piece by contemporary American composer Julie Giroux called "My Soul to Keep," which is dedicated to everyone touched by gun violence. Guest vocalist mezzo-soprano Sarah Maines of Portland will sing "My Soul to Keep" and "They Can't Take That Away from Me," the George Gershwin classic. The program also includes "Jupiter" from "The Planets" by Gustav Holst, "The Seal Lullaby" by Eric Whitacre and more. Patrick Murphy is the conductor.



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May 2023



Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien. [Perfection is the enemy of the good]
— Voltaire (French writer and activist, 1694-1778)

PRE-CONCERT MARCH 5, 2023

A Saxophone Ensemble from Mountain View High School warmed up the crowd in the lobby prior to our March 5 concert (right).

CLARINETIST EXTRAORDINAIRE

The SWWS mission statement includes “to encourage and support music education in the public schools with special emphasis on wind band music appreciation.” We walked that talk well when clarinet virtuoso Matthew



Nelson from the University of Louisville visited for our May 21 concert. In the days prior to the concert, he taught clarinet clinics at La Center Middle School (35 students), Evergreen High School (~60 middle and high school students), Heritage High School (15 middle and high school students), Mt. Solo Middle School in Longview (20 middle schoolers), and University of Portland (4 students from Portland and Vancouver, top photo). He impressed the students, parents, and music educators with his congenial teaching style and expertise. Everyone learned about Fast Air, Finger Breath Exercises, Abdominal Breathing, Embouchure Improvements, and Playing Efficiently. At the concert, he literally blew everyone away with his clarinet performances which you definitely should view again when the concert video link is posted to our website (<https://www.swwindsymphony.org/about-us.html>). His albums are available on Apple Music. For more information, see matthewphillip-nelson.com



PRE-CONCERT MAY 21, 2023

Union High School’s Clarinet Choir performed in the lobby prior to our May concert and wowed the crowd with their harmonious sound and the opportunity to see a bass clarinet and contra-alto clarinet up close (right).

THANK YOU!

The SWWS Board, musicians, and volunteer support staff would like to thank our audience for their enthusiastic return to our concerts after the pandemic hiatus. We are planning concerts in the future with your continued support. Save the Date: Oct 15, 2023.

