

Students wowed by renowned violinist

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

The students at Sisters Elementary School were mesmerized by the talents of rock-concert violinist Aaron Meyer at a special assembly held on Tuesday, March 15. The assembly was made possible due to Sisters Folk Festival (SFF).

Sisters Folk Festival is partnered with the Music Education Workshop out of Portland, and they work with the Oregon Music Hall of Fame, who connected Brad Tisdel, creative director of the SFF, with Meyer.

Meyer is working in a statewide program that goes into schools. He demonstrates the violin, utilizes technology as a teaching tool, and shares about the science of sound. Aaron played original pieces on both the acoustic and electric violin, and explained the difference in violins to

the students. He also played through electronic pedals to create different kinds of sound.

Meyers is a classically trained violinist and has played the violin since age 5. Aaron debuted with the Philadelphia Orchestra at age 11, and over the course of his career has soloed with major international symphony orchestras, and has performed for many world leaders and dignitaries.

He lives in Portland with his wife, Renee, and performs, teaches, composes original music and conducts music education programs in elementary and middle schools around the region.

Students were engaged and attentive and clapped enthusiastically after each song. Third-grade students Holly Madron and Cooper Merrill commented on the experience.

Madron said, "I liked learning about the two

different violins and how they worked. When he played I danced to every song because of the beat and rhythm. They were fast and it was like a party."

Merrill said, "I thought the assembly was so much fun. I like how his music was kind of jumpy. I liked how he explained things, too, like how he could repeat notes, and how he used the fun box to make notes sound more electronic."

Principal Becky Stoughton said, "Sisters Folk Festival wrote a grant in partnership with the Sisters School District, and we're supposed to model what good arts/education programming looks like. We are part of the Studios (sic) to School grant and are one of the 18 projects going on around the state that has been funded by the Oregon Community Foundation (OCF)."

Stoughton added, "We're



PHOTO BY BRAD TISDEL

Rock-concert violinist Aaron Meyer played at an elementary school assembly to demonstrate the instrument and share the science of sound.

trying to open up kids to arts education, whether it's visual, musical, or performing arts. We want to give an experience to the kids that they don't normally get and build a love for arts, and have them be able to express themselves in different ways."

Tisdel shared with *The Nugget* what it means for

kids to be exposed to such talented artists: "Guest artist opportunities like this provide exposure to music and science, which inspires kids to dream. Through these Studio to School grants we plan to bring more opportunities like this, including developing a strings program to the Sisters School District."

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