



Photos by Damian Mulinix/For EO Media Group

Prior to the start of this month's concert, Madelyn Skillings has a laugh with another girl in her row at the Hilltop Auditorium.

Teacher's 'Maltese Falcon' tribute TAKES FLIGHT

Symphonic standards showcase amazing drum line

By DAMIAN MULINIX
For EO Media Group

ILWACO, Wash. — The Ilwaco jazz band made history last this month. No, it wasn't for the performance of the world's longest oboe solo.

The concert, which was split between the jazz and symphonic bands and performed at the Hilltop Auditorium, featured the premiere performance of a song composed by Ilwaco Middle School teacher Matt Lanka, "A Song for Mr. Archer."

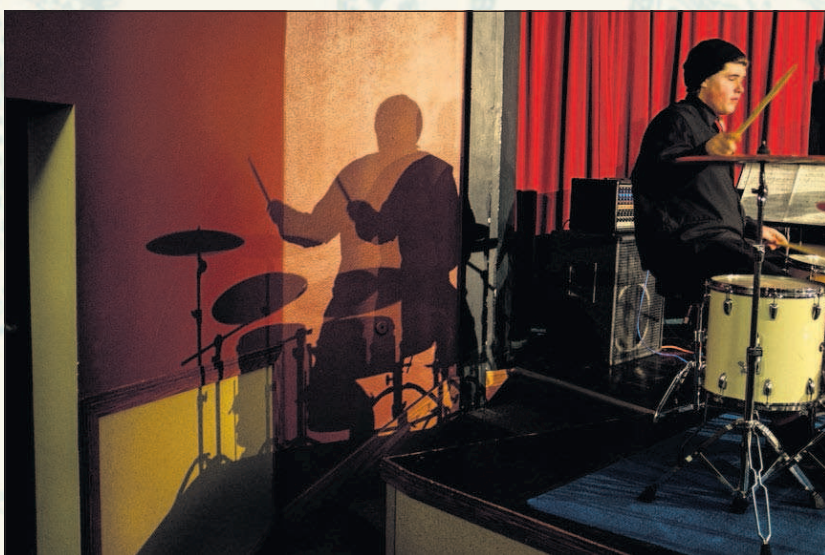
The song, a slow, moody jazz piece, is named for a character who briefly appears in the Dashiell Hammett book, "The Maltese Falcon." The book features famous private investigator Sam Spade, whose partner is Miles Archer.

"And in the first pages of the book Archer is killed in a back alleyway. I wanted to write something that was more 'noir,' for a detective fiction," Lanka explained to the audience prior to the performance. In honor of this, senior Michael Johnson rose to begin the song with a solo while dressed in an overcoat, similar to the one worn by Spade. The solo was one of several for the senior, who said he takes a few different approaches when playing a solo.

"I kind of planned them. On some of the songs they have recommended solos and I look at that in the beginning and see what I can do with those solos," he said after the show. "I'll plan out key parts of the solo, like 'I wanna do this and this in this measure.' But then there's other parts where I feel like doing 'this' now, I'm just going to play that. Just whatever I feel fits at the time."

The drum line

The symphonic band were first to perform and played a set list with vari-



Evan Nation takes a solo during the jazz band portion of the concert.

"If you notice, we have one of the best drum lines around," said Ilwaco High School music teacher Rachel Lake after the song. "They're always excited because they get to play different things. The two crash cymbal players, they don't overpower the whole band. They control it so well."

Evan Nation, who plays drums in both bands, said there is quite a bit of difference between playing the two styles.

"The first big difference is in jazz band we play drums on a kit, while in symphonic band it's all broken up," he explained after the show. "The drumming style is different, because there's more rudiments and hand patterns used on one drum in symphonic band."

Telling a musical story

For the intro to the symphonic band's performance of the song "Covington Square," Lake explained how she challenged the band to come up with a story that the music would tell. They decided it was the soundtrack to a love story.

"They wrote a story about this lovely piece," she told to the audience. "There is a very nice gentleman named 'Wesley' and he is a farm boy. He is walking around Covington Square in Georgia during the early 1900s and he spots a very fine lady named 'Belle.' She is of a higher class, and you hear the interchange between these two when they first meet each other. And then at the very end you hear the wedding. So now that I've told you the story, hopefully you can hear it in the music."

The jazz band finished the concert with probably their strongest performance, a Latin swing called, "Hey Pachuco," which Nation said was his favorite song of the evening.

"It's fast. It's high energy and fun to play," he said, without mentioning the excellent solo he played during the tune.



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Ilwaco Middle School music teacher Matt Lanka receives applause after introducing his composition, "A Song for Mr. Archer," which was performed by the Ilwaco High School jazz band.

ety. They began with hand claps and hand shakers for "Jungle Dance," a more up-tempo piece. This was fol-

lowed by "The Free Lance March" by Sousa, where the drum line of the band had a chance to shine.

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