



On Tuesday, December 12th, the Advanced Band members took the Middle School Auditorium stage from 5pm-8:10pm for their Annual solo/ensemble night. There were 39 different performances in 5 minute time slots and all of the 68 members of the Advanced Band participated in preparing for this event.

Gary McCurdy (aka The Tubadour), former Washington band director, judged students giving them a rating and verbal comments at the conclusion of their performances. It is an unusual event from the standpoint that audience members can stay for all 39 performances or they can pick and choose to watch only one or a few performances.

It all starts in November when students choose their own groups and the only limitations are that the performing groups have to be a solo, duet, trio or quartet. The exception to this is the percussion ensemble which had 8 members. After choosing the members of their group, the next step is selecting music. Most of the music is selected by students with guidance from Mr. McClenahan and/or private instructors. A majority of the music chosen is Holiday/Christmas or pop/movie music, but there are also many traditional instrumental pieces, standards and folk songs as well. Some are accompanied by parents, some by their instructors and some play along to recorded accompaniments.

Mr. McClenahan commented, "This is one of the most challenging and valuable projects students do all year in band. Students play parts independently and they have no director in front of them to keep them together. It's also interesting to hear how they make some uncommon combinations of instruments work. In the end, they grow a lot and become better independent players. I also like the fact we always have 100% participation and they feel a sense of responsibility to their group."

The students were rated on a scale from I+ being the highest and III- being the lowest. The ratings earned by this year's groups were:

I+ =6

I =21

I - =6

II+ =5

II = 0

II - = 0

III+ =0

III =0

III - =0

WMS Annual Solo/Ensemble Night

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