



Backstage

April 2020

“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything.”

- Plato

ETHEREAL EXPRESSIONS

Those of you who arrived early for our March 1 concert were treated to a pre-concert exhibition by the Union High School Brass quintet (pictured above; Chase Williams, Steven Nguyen, Anthony Felix, Scott Stevison, and Rhys Peerinboom) which qualified for the State Solo & Ensemble Contest sponsored by the Washington Music Educators Association. Unfortunately this competition has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic so competitors will now have more time to practice. Good luck to all!

WIND BAND MUSIC

The SWWS mission includes the statement "to educate the audience and community on the cultural, historical, and musical significance of the symphonic band." Performed at our March 1 concert, the Julie Giroux composition "In My Father's Eyes" fulfills that purpose. It was originally written for The Alabama Winds and memorializes the 4 young girls who were killed in 1963 during the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham in an act of racial

terrorism. The church was a gathering place for Martin Luther King, Jr. and other leaders of the civil rights movement. The arrangement includes 4 female voices, representing the 4 girls, and a cello. While SWWS has had vocal soloists in the past, this concert was the first appearance of a vocal ensemble.



Vocalists: Jan Boulé, Kimberly Claassen, Amanda Dickenson, Sheli Morrell,



Guest Conductor: Mark Lane, Cellist: Karen Schulz-Harmon

WIND MUSICIANS & LUNG FUNCTION

Do wind-instrument players and singers have better pulmonary function (simply put, measurements of lung volume capacity and velocity of exhaled or inhaled breath) than others? This is an intriguing topic of casual discussion among wind-band musicians. A study attempting to address this appeared in the medical journal *Chest* in 1985. Investigators compared pulmonary function tests in 48 wind instrumentalists and 34 singers with a control group of 31 string or percussion instrumentalists. There was no significant difference between the groups even when corrected for age, sex, height, weight, years performing, smoking, and presence or absence of cough. This study was unable to show that years of practice improved pulmonary function because it did not have test measurements earlier or prior to the start of musical training for comparison. Training does improve control of respiratory and throat muscles and probably (hopefully) delays deterioration with advancing age. <https://doi.org/10.1378/chest.88.2.201>