

Tag Day play: North band members say thanks to community

BY TIM SMITH
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Twirling cellos and a spirited work-in-progress atmosphere permeated North Farmington High School's auditorium during final rehearsals for the Oct. 26 Tag Day Concert.

On the morning of Monday, Oct. 25, North band director Carl Gippert passionately led the orchestra's run-through of "Kumbaya" and a medley of highlights from the 1970 musical "Grease."

"It's a visual thing; sometimes it can look boring (on stage) if they're just sitting up there," said Gippert, with a laugh, talking about the hardly accidental twirling cello routine.

Also not accidental: Gippert's energy and vigor as he led the musicians through the play set. During a reminder about the proper way to handle a bow, the acclaimed director's arms were pumping. His tennis-shoe-covered feet were stomping.

Gippert got as good as he gave, because the students really got into the rehearsal.

Later that morning, Gippert directed the concert band's rehearsal.

All aspects of North's band, taking in 275 students, were featured in the Tag Day performance.

The concert is always a special one, Gippert said. But this year's was even more so.

Part of the concert was videotaped for inclusion in a Michigan Humanities Council video to be made available to all Michigan schools and band directors.

Songs were recorded, also for the humanities council, to perhaps find their way onto a future compact disc.

Songs scheduled for recording were: "Kumbaya," from the



Noteworthy: North's Lisa Levick plays violin in the orchestra during Tag Day rehearsal.

■ They march ... in the aisles, up on the catwalks. It's something to see.

STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BEZLER

Carl Gippert
—North Farmington High School band director

orchestra segment of the concert: "Safari," "Songs of Nyassaland" and "Kilimanjaro: An African Portrait," from the symphony winds portion.

After the practice, senior violinist Susan Bartus said she was looking forward to the Tag Day Concert being recorded.

"I think it's cool, it's interesting," Bartus said. "Not every orchestra gets the opportunity to be heard all over the state."

The concert included sets by the North orchestra, concert band, symphony hand and symphony winds band.

Preconcert selections were performed by the high school's brass ensemble.

And intermission was highlighted by a 20-song set by the North marching band. Among performed tunes: "Come Sail Away," "Raider Fanfare" and

"Smoke on the Water."

Describing how the marching band would enter the auditorium, Gippert said they were to "double-time it in from the entrance and come up in the aisles, up on the catwalks. It's something to see."

Gippert said the Tag Day Concert originated 13 years ago by Douglas MacQueen, who was North's band director at the time.

"It's to thank the community for their support throughout the year," Gippert said.

Concert costs were defrayed by \$2,000, raised in a can and bottle drive Saturday, Oct. 23 organized by the booster club.

Both Farmington and Harrison high schools also will hold their own Tag Day concerts.



Tune-up: North Farmington High School band director Carl Gippert leads an orchestra during rehearsal for the recent Tag Day Concert.

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