

# Taking flight

## Farmington Harrison makes clean sweep in band competition



Dancing: Yoko Minowa of Farmington Harrison dances a flight of fantasy during the band's performance of "EFX."

BY DIANE HANSON  
SPECIAL WRITER

More than 6,000 spectators packed the bleachers at the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park

stadium Oct. 17 to enjoy the music, drama, dance and color of 25 high school marching bands from across the state.

The pleasantly warm fall day



Accepting: Harrison's Yoko Minowa, Derek Lewis, Meghan Fay accept trophies from Mike Maloney and David McGrath.

was an added boon for the annual Great Lakes Invitational (GLI) sponsored by the Plymouth-Canton Music Boosters.

"This is the biggest single-day fund-raiser we have for the band and very important for our overall budget," said Tom Wysocki, president of the music boosters. "On a day like today, we will probably raise a little over \$20,000." He gave nothing but kudos to the 31 chairpersons and more than 200 boosters involved in organizing and running the huge event. "They did a super job on this."

Bands competed in Flights I, II, III, and IV with seven- to 11-minute programs depicting stories ranging from individuality to flights of fantasy to the civil rights struggle. Besides the marching and music, band members sang, danced and dramatized their programs for the appreciative audience.

The Farmington Harrison Marching Band made a clean sweep of all Flight III awards. Their dynamic portrayal of their program "EFX," a magical, mystical journey through time and space, gleaned the Flight III caption awards for Best General Effect, Best Marching and Best Music. They also captured the first place trophy of all nine bands in Flight III with a score of 74.75.

"I thought our performance was really good," said a proud Mark Phillips, Harrison band director. The band performed at two middle schools and an elementary school the week before GLI while putting more moves and the closer onto their show.

The next few weeks will each include 12 hours of practice for the 118-member band. "We are going to focus on cleaning and getting ready for the next competition before states," said Phillips. The Michigan Competing Bands Association State Finals Competition is scheduled for Nov. 7 at the Pontiac Silverdome.

Livonia Franklin's Marching Patriots performed their program of "Prisoner in Your Mind" with an interesting twist involving a costume change. The 82-member band whipped off their

band jackets near the end of their performance to reveal multicolored T-shirts.

"It's all about the kids being able to express their individuality," explained Franklin Band Director Kristi Jasin. "That's what we're trying to do with the colors and the numbers. You're more than just a number in life; you're a unique individual."

The Livonia band took seventh place in Flight II with a score of 61.3. "We've put so much into the show just in the past two days that it's not quite as polished as we wanted it," said Jasin who plans to do that polishing before the Westland John Glenn competition on Oct. 24.

The Plymouth-Canton Marching Band wowed the crowd with its best exhibition performance to wrap up the invitational at 9:30 in the evening. It was the first time the entire show of "America, Land of the Free," a depiction of America's civil rights struggle, was performed. "I thought this show was, hands down, the best they have done all year," said a pleased David McGrath, PCEP band director. But, he added, the show was by no means complete. The Plymouth-Canton band is well-known for its dramatic presentations and McGrath said there is a lot of interpretation and role-playing to add. Their next competition performance will also be at John Glenn High School.

The PCEP band presented the overall high trophy award to the Reeths-Puffer High School Marching Band. The Muskegon band took all first place awards in Flight II with a score of 83.05. Along with McGrath, other trophy presenters were Dr. Charles Little, superintendent of Plymouth-Canton Community Schools; Mike Maloney, president of the Plymouth-Canton school board; and Judy Mardigan and Darwin Watts, board trustees.

"We're happy to see the school board come out and support an



PHOTOS BY DIANE HANSON

Performing: The Farmington Harrison marching band took the field in the Flight III competition in Plymouth Oct. 17.

event like this," said Wysocki. "They can see there is a broad base of support for the music and the arts in, not only our community, but others around us."

Wysocki hopes to draw even more people from the surrounding communities to next year's show.

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Michael Talbot

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