



STAFF PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH CARPISCH

Watch now: Guest composer Elliot Del Borgo (at left) teaches band and orchestra students at Harrison some body language to look for from conductors. Tenth-grade student Kyle Chamberlin (at right) listens to Del Borgo's presentation to the orchestra. Chamberlin plays the bass drum.

Maestro...

New York composer shares his talents with Harrison students

BY TIM SMITH
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Harrison High School musicians usually perform from sheet music. But recently, they had a unique opportunity to work in tandem with an actual composer.

The composer, Elliot Del Borgo, worked with students in Harrison's symphonic band, symphonic orchestra and wind ensemble, all directed by Mark Phillips. One of Del Borgo's 500 published works, *Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night*, was performed on stage in the auditorium — which, incidentally is still being refurbished.

Student musicians Greg Brooks and

Teresa Elsey, both seniors, were impressed with having the chance to work with Del Borgo, who currently is professor of music emeritus at the State University of New York.

"He taught our group that tempo is one of the most important parts (of a composition)," said Brooks, who plays clarinet in the symphonic band. "He can tell you exactly what he wanted and what he was thinking when he wrote it. It was nice to see the conductor."

Elsey, who plays viola in the symphonic orchestra, noted that "it's interesting to see where the music comes from."

Usually, student musicians don't have such insight into what a piece should sound like, Elsey said.

"When you play a person's music, you guess what you think the composer wanted," she explained. "But when the composer is actually there, and tells you, that helps."

Up on stage with the symphonic band, Del Borgo showed that he knows how to communicate with today's youth, throwing in some one-liners between instructions.

Alive and well

"Not all composers died 200 years ago," Del Borgo said. "A few of us are still alive."

During a break between sessions, Del Borgo said he was in the metropolitan Detroit area to teach students at Walled Lake Western High School. A teacher

contacted other nearby schools which might be interested in Del Borgo adding steps to his itinerary and learned that Harrison was interested in having him visit.

"It's very valuable for a composer to actually see the students play the music because we learn something," said Del Borgo, an award-winning member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers who wrote for the 1980 Olympics in Lake Placid, N.Y.

"When I write something, I hope it works. But when I see them play the music, I can see what's effective or not."

In other words, a song might seem to be logical at the time it is written, "but when you see it performed, you see how there could be some problems."

Just from his brief sessions alone, Del Borgo said he was able to pick up that Harrison students showed great intensity, creativity and musical flexibility, as well as inquisitiveness.

"A lot of them (asked about) the process of composition," Del Borgo continued. "I use a computer and a synthesizer. That's very important to these kids because of the technology that's available today."

Another plus for the Harrison students, Del Borgo said, is "they're very mature players, they're accomplished."

Phillips said his students received an invaluable first-hand primer of how compositions take shape. "He really works well with the kids and they really responded."

INKWELL

First science fair



Honors: Berna Ravitz, Wood Creek principal, talks to awardees.

Wood Creek Elementary School held its first annual Science Fair in April. Over 60 students from kindergarten to fifth grade participated in the event sponsored by the Wood Creek

PTA

Classrooms toured the fair and students had an opportunity to show their projects to their classmates and teachers during the day and to family members in

the evening.

All participants received a certificate of participation and a blue ribbon.

Hillside visits Warner

On Sunday, May 7 from 1-4 p.m., third grade students from Hillside Elementary School will act as docents for tours of the Governor Warner Mansion. The

entire Farmington community is invited to attend free of charge.

Student docents will be stationed around the mansion with regular adult docents assisting them. Complete tours of the

mansion take approximately 30 minutes. In addition to tours of the mansion, other activities will include dancing and games on the lawn.

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9:00 a.m. Status Meeting
10:00 a.m. Marketing Meeting
11:00 a.m. Committee Meeting
12:00 p.m. Parent-Teacher Meeting
1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting
2:00 p.m. Technology Meeting
3:00 p.m. Finance Meeting
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