

ENRICHMENT

# MIM brings live music to schools

BY MIKE BLOEBAUM  
*Special to The Union*

What happens when kids are exposed to live classical music in school?

Student Charlie commented, "I liked E. Grieg because it was exciting." Caleb explained, "I liked to listen to Mozart because he is a great composer." And Lana chimed in, "I also liked Mozart because I like him."

Children do love all kinds of music, including classical, but unfortunately their opportunities to experience it in school are limited these days. That's why Music In the Mountains (MIM) presents "Music Live" to Nevada County's K-8 schools, bringing children face-to-face with professional instrumentalists performing a wide range of pieces.

The free program is funded by Music in the Mountains' education program. In the school year that ended in June, MIM presented eight concerts at seven sites, exploring music from Bach and Mozart to Scott Joplin. At Deer Creek, Hennessy, Alta Sierra, Cottage Hill, Clear Creek, Ready Springs and Lyman Gilmore, students were treated to an hour of information-filled performances.

The kids are involved, truly interested and often inspired. Student Emree says, "I want to play the violin and piano. I'm already right now playing the recorder, but I really feel like you guys inspired me."

Mark Vance, MIM's education coordinator, is passionate about the "Music Live" program.

"This is an opportunity to give kids an experience that many have never had - seeing live musicians playing wonderful music."

That passion is also shared by the organization as a whole and its education committee, and the professional musicians themselves. A string quartet featuring Nevada County professional musicians Richard Altenbach and Nancy Hill on violin, Melinda Rayne on viola and David Eby on cello, performed during the last school year.

As part of the program, Vance and the musicians share information about the composers and the pieces and demonstrate features of the instruments. Students might learn that Thomas Jefferson was a fan of his contemporary, Mozart, who would send him new pieces that the violinist-President would play in a string quartet like the one performing for the kids.

"I like the Mountain King," says student Aiden. "I also liked the cello player because he does the lowest note."

Evelyn says, "I think it's interesting that the bows are made of horse hairs like a paint brush."

Each year brings a different combina-



Submitted photo

MIM school performance.

tion of instruments. Coordinating musicians' schedules with the time and schedule requirements of the schools is not an easy task and Vance works closely with the office of the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools to set things up. The results are clearly worth it.

Children conduct imaginary orchestras or play invisible violins and move to the rhythm of the music, involved in a world they rarely hear. Hands shoot up when they recognize the music from the movies or advertisements, such as the theme from "Pirates of the Caribbean."

"Music education is such an important facet of our mission," said Sherry Bartolucci, president of the MIM board of directors. "We

rely to a great extent on donations to keep these youth programs available and growing. So much is due to the continued ongoing support that comes from our wonderful community."



Submitted photo

Children engaged at a Classic Concert.

