

Neilburg Composite School Hosts ‘Battle of the Bands’

May 10, 2010

The second annual ‘Battle of the Bands’ was held this past Friday at Neilburg Composite School. Five school bands from around the Northwest School Division and the students of Neilburg School took part in what was essentially an all day conference for students that focused on music, music performance and the music industry.

Sessions were held all morning long on a variety of topics aimed at both performers and novices alike. Goat FM programme director, Grant Biebrick, spoke about the careers available in the music industry and sessions were held on beginning guitar, singing and song writing, hip hop and belly dancing, and singing in harmony. Students were able to test their musical knowledge in a quiz game, and also were able to take part in sessions run by an Edmonton band that had come to deliver a special concert.

That band, ‘Scantly Clad and the Well Dressed Men’, made up of current and former students from the Grant MacEwan University music program, first spoke to students about how to get started in music, and then ran a special session aimed at advanced players. Following the morning’s activities they delivered an impressive 40-minute concert of original, high energy, funk and rock tunes.

In the afternoon students were treated to 20-minute concerts by bands from Neilburg, Paradise Hill, Loon Lake, Maidstone, and Lashburn schools. This afforded the audience a very different musical experience from the typical music festival because none of these high school band programs follow a traditional concert band model. Each of the 5 bands was a mixture of guitars, bass, drums, keyboards and vocalists, and their repertoire was drawn entirely from current contemporary music. The bands performing typically featured 10 to 12 members in a high-energy show.

After each set the bands were adjudicated by 5 professional musicians, who delivered detailed critiques that combined analysis with many helpful suggestions for the performers.

Exciting sets were delivered by all of the bands. Neilburg’s band got a positive and raucous crowd response with their cover of ‘What I Like about You’ a tune that they had also played at Telemiracle this past year. The band from Paradise Hill did a wonderful up-tempo cover of the Bob Dylan/ Johnny Cash classic ‘It Ain’t Me Babe’ during their set, with Amanda Wourms delivering an outstanding vocal performance.

The Ernie Studer School band from Loon Lake was very polished and, fronted by the fine vocals of Lisa Levesque-Osiowy and Jaida Freeman, delivered exceptional versions of ‘Scars’ (a cover of a Papa Roach tune) and Shania Twain’s ‘Feel Like A Woman’. In this last tune both the musical and the performance aspects came together perfectly as the band loosened up.

The ten member Maidstone High School Rock Band went on stage next, and, shaking off the pressure of the previous three groups, ripped into a rousing rendition of 'Head over Heels.' Led by the dynamic vocals of Brenna Banks, Lisa Wright and Renee Kenyon the song featured a high-energy piano solo by Julie Maxwell and a crowd pleasing bass solo by Taylor Doepker.

The afternoon came to an end as Lashburn High, backstopped by the solid drumming of Teague Smith, delivered stellar performances of Out Kast's 'Hey Ya', the Black Eyed Pea's 'I Gotta Feeling', and Coldplay's 'Viva La Vida'. They finished their set with a sparkling version of 'Mother Mary' -originally by the Foxboro Hottubs.

All of the bands would like to extend their sincere thanks to Neilburg Composite School for hosting a marvelous day, to the judges for their helpful comments, and to all the presenters for the superb sessions.



Nick Williams, Jenna Walde, Danyka Hiar



Corey Hiar, David Nas, Nick Williams, Jenna Walde, Danyka Hiar
Background- Magan Boyle, Arlee Walde