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West Word

Web Exclusives



Orchestra combines with feeder schools for festival

w Mary Basic
Business Manager



Katz

Orchestra Odyssey, an orchestral music festival featuring musicians from West and its five feeder schools, kicks off two weeks of performances for the orchestra and director Steven Katz.

The Orchestra Odyssey will be held Wednesday, Jan. 6, at 7 p.m. in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium.

“Eighth Concerto in D Major,” by J.S. Bach, will be performed by eight graders from all schools, along with West’s concert and philharmonic orchestras; “Boulevard of Broken Dreams,” by Green Day, “Dramatic Essay,” by Mark Williams, and “Dragon Dances,” by Soon Hee Newbold, will be performed by all the junior highs together in a “mass orchestra,” Katz said.

The finale, “New World Symphony,” by Anton Dvorak, will be performed by the West orchestra ensembles.

“We pack those kids in,” Katz said. “It will be amazing having 220 players, playing at one time.”

Tony Porter, a professional cellist and conductor, will serve as guest conductor for the Odyssey.

Participating schools will include Park View, Fairview, Lincoln Hall, Lincoln and Culver.

The Orchestra Chamber Music Festival will be held Thursday, Jan. 14, at 7 p.m. in the music wing.

The top orchestra students from philharmonic and symphonic orchestras will perform in small ensembles: quartets, trios, quintets, etc.

Twenty-one pieces will be played, including those pieces by Wolfgang Mozart and Ludwig von Beethoven, augmented by modern jazz and Beatles tunes.

“We are doing popular tunes as well as classical,” Katz said. “Chamber music is a great way for students to become independent; it is one person per part, [and] each person will be playing a different part. You need to count like crazy and listen to each other.”

Jennifer Lee Stuart and Laura Kim, both alumnae and orchestra directors, will be the judges. They will critique the students, give them feedback and evaluate them, Katz said.

To encourage independence, Katz said, adults working with the students will be coaches, not conductors; no one will conduct the students.

The orchestra will begin rehearsals after winter break, and the performance will be also be the students’ final exam, Katz added.