

MAPS Band to perform at MSBOA conference

Posted by Ken Grabowski on January 13th, 2019

Posted by Ken Grabowski on January 13th, 2019

MANISTEE — The tradition of excellence for the Manistee High School Symphonic Band under the direction of Andrea Mack will continue on Jan. 25 when they will be performing at the 2019 Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association Music Conference.



Manistee Area Public Schools director of bands Andrea Mack leads the high school band in a practice before the board of education last week. On Jan. 25 the band will be one of the featured groups at the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association Conference at DeVos Hall in Grand Rapids.

Held each year in the DeVos Performance Hall in Grand Rapids, only five

bands are selected to perform by a blind tape audition format. Judges do not have any idea what group's tape they are listening to as they make their selections.

Mack said they will be rubbing shoulders with some pretty exceptional groups at that conference.

“That is what really impressed me as the other high schools who got in are all huge schools,” said Mack. “There is Plymouth Canton, Utica Eisenhower and Jenison. So those are some pretty big schools and good band programs.”

One middle school band will also be performing, according to Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association executive director Charles Bullard. Besides the five bands there will be three symphonies and one jazz band that will perform at the annual conference from band directors from all over the state. Their performance is also open to the public.

“We are one of the smaller schools and we got one of the prime times to perform that day at 10 a.m.,” said Mack. “Usually they stick the smaller schools to a time like 8 a.m., but we are right in the prime time.”

Band members have been working hard preparing for the hour-long performance. Numbers they will be performing include “Letchworth Fanfare,” “Ignition,” “Spangled Heavens,” “Cincinnatus,” “Benediction,” “Waltz No. 2” and “Danse Bohemian.”

For the “Cincinnatus” number Barry Martin will serve as guest conductor, while the “Waltz No. 2” will be conducted by Michael Kaufman.

“I am pretty proud of the kids,” said Mack. “They have risen right up. I was worried how they were going to be after Christmas break, but they came back even stronger, so I know they practiced. We have been working on this music since September and they are still at it.”

Mack said returning to DeVos Hall has special meaning to the seniors in the

band. When they were in the eighth grade band program at MAPS they were selected to perform at the same conference.

“That is pretty cool,” said Mack. “The high school band did go in the past, but it has been a number of years since that has taken place.”

Mack said the reason the band program excels like it does is because of the financial and other support of the Band Boosters and the school district that is covering the cost of the trip and overnight stay in Grand Rapids. She said they have some added benefits for the band while they are down there.

“We are going to leave on Thursday and stop at Shelby High School and play a concert there,” said Mack. “We are also going to a museum down in Grand Rapids and then we are going to go to DeVos Hall and listen to the Grand Rapids Symphonic Band play, which is an adult community group that I used to play in down there.”

Mack said that will be an opportunity for the students to see the hall from both the audience and performer’s perspective.

“I want them to just get used to the space and they will hear a good band that night,” said Mack. “I am pushing the kids really hard, but I want them to realize what the payoff is for it. We are there because we got selected to be there.”

The Band Boosters are also paying for the students to go to Craig’s Cruisers in Grand Rapids to eat and take part in all the activities they have to offer.

“I want this to be fun for them,” said Mack. “The support I got from the boosters, school board and the community has been just outstanding. I really appreciate the support the community for the music program.”