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Symphony shares love of classics with Nashua students

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Sixth-graders from Nashua's middle schools were treated to a full orchestral performance of Beethoven's "Coriolan Overture" by the Nashua Symphony Orchestra and Chorus on Friday, April 3, at Elm Street Middle School.

"I loved it all," said Allison Kraus, student at Fairgrounds Middle School. "I thought the music was phenomenal."

Fairgrounds Middle School students Kraus, Samarth Desai, Jackie Chea and Emilee McFadden have been taking part in Nashua Youth (h)EARS, a program that brought Nashua Symphony Music Director Jonathan McPhee and a quartet into Fairgrounds, Elm Street and Pennichuck middle schools to educate the students about classical music and how it relates to their everyday school curriculum.

In October, McPhee and his quartet used music to illustrate themes of genre and structure in literature, which the students are studying in their language arts classes, according to Mark Allard, a sixth-grade language arts and science teacher at Fairgrounds. Students read the story of Coriolanus, a Roman general whose tale of tragedy was captured in Shakespeare's play. Beethoven wrote his "Coriolan Overture" about Coriolanus, which was performed by the full orchestra April 3 in Elm Street's Keefe Auditorium."This provided our students with a fantastic

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Nashua Symphony Orche
Jonathan McPhee directs
during the April 3 concert
members of the orchestra
meeting with Nashua sixth
using music to compleme
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opportunity, as well as exposure to something out of their norm," Allard said of the performance. "Our students were prepared for the program, and that made the experience meaningful."

McPhee and the NSO musicians also visited the middle school in January to explore connections between music and mathematics and in March to discover music's range of relationships to social studies.

During the lessons, students learned to feel the emotion behind the composer's music. By the April 3 concert, they were able to tell what section of the symphony symbolized death, moving forward, moving backward, happiness and sadness.

"If you imagine you are in the music, you can tell where the composer was coming from," McFadden said.

Even though some students fell asleep during the performance, it wasn't because they were bored, according to Kraus.

"It was almost too soothing," she said.

Nashua Youth (h)EARS and the concert at Elm Street Middle School was supported by Nashua Rotary Club West, Nashua State Council on the Arts, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation Nashua Region and Christopher Hottel, Nashua's superintendent.

"They looked and sounded good," McFadden said. "I was amazed."

For more information on the Nashua Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, visit www.nashuasymphony.org.



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