Concert Report

Lydia Harner

1. When I looked through the program I immediately recognized the piece “Into the Storm” by Robert W. Smith because we played a lot of his music, including “Into the Storm”, in my high school band. I also recognized the marches and knew what form they would take.
2. I did not notice any pieces that had an extra-musical meaning except for MetroDance. I thought that this piece would resemble a dance but in an electronic way.
3. The program is in order by pieces each band will play. Some bands, for example the Prince Edward County High School Band, played pieces that all have a sound of a different country. Fuqua School Senior Band and Longwood Wind Symphony both played a mixture of styles that did not seem to be in any particular order in the program.

1. Some ritual parts of the concert for all bands was tuning before each performance and horn positions depending on where the director was. The Fuqua School Senior Band also stood up when the director walked onto the stage. Some spontaneous parts of the concert for all three bands was missed notes and missed cues. The Prince Edward County High School Band also moved with the music and seemed to really enjoy what they were playing.
2. I was able to follow the program easily until Longwood Wind Symphony played English Folk Song Suite. I forgot that the song had three movements and thought that they had already moved on to the next song, when in reality they had only moved on to the second movement. Once I realized this, it was easy for me to catch back up to where they were in the program.
3. The last time I attended an event like this was my sister’s high school choir concert over winter break. However, I played in my school’s concert, symphonic, and wind ensemble for seven years. I enjoy listening to live music because you get to see the emotion and excitement that the musicians experience as they perform. It also seems to show more talent, they can’t try multiple times to get it right like musicians do in the recording studio.
4. The instruments that stood out to me in the Fuqua School Senior Band were the flutes, French horns, and percussion. The flute soloist was really good and very in tune. The French horns were also in tune, which is not always an easy thing to do for that instrument. However, their percussion section was loud and, in some parts, overpowered the rest of the band. The instruments that stood out to me in the Prince Edward County High School Band were the clarinets, trumpets, and saxophones. The clarinets and trumpets both had a very clear tone. The trumpets also were not overpowering the rest of the band which surprised me because they are usually a very loud instrument. However, the saxophones sounded a little heavy and out of place compared to the rest of the band. Finally, the instruments that stood out to me in the Longwood Wind Symphony were the trombones and the tubas. The trombones had a clear sound and did a great job of helping to support the tuba during the first movement of English Folk Song Suite. The tube was very strong and loud, which provided a good bass for the rest of the band.
5. The Fuqua School Senior Band played three songs, each with different sounds and tones. The first song was “Bonds of Unity”, which was happy and bouncy. Parts of the song made me feel like I was in Disney World. However, this mood changed the band played “Variations on ‘Scarborough Fair’”. The song was sad, gloomy, and dragging. There was a piano part added to this song which did a great job of setting the mood and accompanying the band. The last song they played was “Into the Storm”. This song mimicked different parts of a storm such as the beginning and the calm in the middle. It was very suspenseful and easy to pick out the different themes the composer was trying to express. The Prince Edward County High School Band also played three songs with each song sounding like it came from a different part of the world. The first was “Amparito Roca”. It was an upbeat march that sounded like something you would hear in Europe. The second song they played was “Filum Vitae”. It was somber and dark, but the underlying tone sounded like it was trying to become happy. Finally, the last song they played was “Malaqueña”. This song sounded Hispanic and sounded like a fun, fast dance. The next and final band to play was the Longwood Wind Symphony. Their first song was “MetroDance” which had a simple rhythm that was passed around the band. It had a very electronic sound which I thought was different than the usual symphonic sound. The next song they played was “English Folk Song Suite”, which consisted of three movements. The first movement was a march called “Seventeen Come Sunday”, which was fast and upbeat. The second movement changed the mood with an intermezzo called “My Bonny Boy”, a gloomy piece with an oboe solo. The oboe gave the piece an underlying sad sound, As the piece continued, it sounded as if it was becoming slightly more happy. The last movement was a march called “Folk Songs from Somerset”. This piece was loud compared to the others and had very bright themes. The next piece that the band played was Of Our New Day Begun. This piece started with a sound of despair and sadness, supported by an oboe that sounded like someone singing and crying. As it continued, powerful outbursts emerged in a theme of overcoming sadness. Finally, the last song the band played was the LU Fight Song. It was an upbeat march with fun words and a catchy melody.
6. Longwood Wind Symphony played a powerful piece called “Of Our New Day Begun” that was written by Omar Thomas, who also guest conducted. In the middle of the piece, he included a part where the band, accompanied by some choir members, sing what he considers to be the African American national anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing”. This song brings more human element and emotion into the piece and is especially powerful because the piece was composed for the victims of the Charleston church shooting.
7. Each band was dressed slightly different, which presented pros and cons to their overall appearance. The girls in Fuqua School Senior Band wore uniformed black dresses while the guys wore black pants and a jacket. This made the band look uniformed and professional from the beginning. In the Prince Edward County High School Band, the girls wore different black dresses and the guys wore black pants with a white or black shirt. This made them look like they had tried to dress professionally, but when they were all put together on stage, it looked a little disorganized. Finally, in the Longwood Wind Symphony, the girls could wear anything black and they guys wore dress pants and a jacket. The guys looked uniformed but the girls looked disorganized, which gave the band an overall unprofessional appearance.
8. The performers did not directly interact with the audience very much but I did pick up on a couple things. The first was that the soloists would stand up at the end of their song to be recognized and applauded by the audience. The second thing I noticed was that the musicians would keep their horns up when they were still playing, even when the music had stopped, to let the audience know that the song was not over. An example of this was when the members of the Longwood Wind Symphony kept their horns up in between movements of “English Folk Song Suite”.
9. As an audience member, it was hard for me to find ways that the performers were interacting with each other. However, from my own experience in band, I knew that they were communicating by tuning to each other at the beginning of each performance and also by listening to other parts during the song so they would know where their own part fit in.
10. Each band played their pieces with different levels of emotion and apparent interests. Fuqua School Senior Band did not show much emotion. They seemed like they were just trying to get through the pieces. Their pieces communicated the ideas of the composer. Prince Edward County High School Band conveyed the dynamics in each piece clearly and were careful to show many different ideas throughout the piece. They seemed to do a good job of blending their own ideas with the composer’s ideas. Finally, the musicians in the Longwood Wind Symphony showed a slight bit of emotion, but clearly convey the dynamics and contrasts between ideas. In their pieces, the communicated the ideas of the composer.
11. Throughout the program I was easily able to recognize dynamics and pulse. Some of this I had learned in my high school band experience but they were things that we had also reviewed in class. Another thing that I was able to pick up on was the emotion brought to the pieces by the instruments. Before taking this class, it was hard for me to pick out different emotions in symphonic pieces but by doing the listening guides, I have been able to get better at picking them out.
12. Overall, I thought the concert was really good. I liked being able to hear the different styles of the three different bands and being able to recognize emotions behind the pieces. Each band had different strengths and weaknesses, which made comparing them in this report easier. I enjoyed going to the concert and hearing the different types and levels of pieces that each band was able to play.

Word Count: 1660