

Navy Band Southeast Makes an Impact on Future Musicians

by MU2 Michael Jenkins

Navy Band Southeast (NBSE) held clinics with schools in northern Florida and central Arkansas as part of a clinic series between February and April 2013. These clinics were designed to reach out to musicians at all ability levels from middle school students at the very beginning of their musical development to high school and collegiate students with a full range of scholastic music education.

On February 5, 2013, LT Mark Corbliss, MU3 Andrew Cummings and MU3 Jason Lucker traveled to Clay High School in Fleming Island, Florida to conduct a clinic with the Clay High School band. Like many Navy musicians, these three members of NBSE are former music educators and are very capable clinicians in part because of their musical skill but also because of their ability to communicate well with school-age students.

MU3 Cummings was able to play alongside the high school students during rehearsal and help them in various ways. "As a former music educator, it was great to get back in the classroom and work with high school students. They were really enthusiastic." he said. "I sat next to a saxophone player that was a senior and I was able to show him alternate fingerings and other technical things that he had never learned before."

During the clinic, LT Corbliss and MU3 Lucker worked with the brass sections and showed the students a different musical perspective, both as guest conductors. "It was a real pleasure to watch MU3 Lucker work with the students. A concise and poised conductor. I find guest conducting to be very exhilarating. You must give them something musically concrete and within their grasp so that they can walk away from the rehearsal feeling amped up about what just happened. I enjoy the challenge very much and am always disappointed at how quickly the rehearsal time passes."

MU2 Antonio Garcia traveled to Searcy, Arkansas, outside of Little Rock, to perform at Harding University, his Alma Mater. He performed as a guest soloist with the university's wind ensemble and gave a lecture at Harding about careers in music. He also conducted six clinics in local junior high and high schools during his week-long tour in the area between February 18th and February 22nd, 2013.

The wind ensemble concert at Harding was primarily for the School of Music faculty and students but was also well attended by the public. In attendance were the Dean of the School of Music and the Chairman of the College of Fine Arts. "The highlight was getting to solo with the Wind Ensemble but also just to go home and play for people I haven't seen in about ten years. It was awesome," recalls MU2 Garcia.

"The opportunity to lead clinics with the younger students was very rewarding as well. In a small town in the middle of Arkansas, a lot of times kids don't get to hear what an instrument is supposed to sound like so the directors mostly just asked me to play for them and talk about how to get the instrument to sound the right way. We were always focused on fundamentals." The clinics ranged in scope from MU2 Garcia working with just the low brass sections, presenting to entire classes and even

working one-on-one with a Freshman trombone player enrolled at Harding University who was interested in following a career path similar to Garcia's.

NBSE's spring clinic series concluded with a joint concert with Keystone Heights High School on April 30, 2013. Located about 45 miles southwest of Naval Air Station Jacksonville in Keystone Heights, Florida, the Keystone Heights Band is directed by retired Senior Chief Musician Charlie Propper. Mr. Propper was a member of NBSE at his retirement in 2005, worked with NBSE's current Senior Enlisted Leader, MUCS Kenny Oliver, and was in college with NBSE's Director, LT Mark Corbliss.

"Charlie has been like our Sea-Daddy for the Jacksonville area," said LT Corbliss regarding the support Mr. Propper has given NBSE over the last seven years since his retirement. "I remember going to a Duval County music educator's conference and hearing a teacher say that what the Navy band accomplished in two hours would have taken two weeks without them. It was someone I hadn't even met before but he heard about us from Mr. Propper." Mr. Propper is a great advocate for Navy music and is a regular participant in alumni events.

NBSE conducted a clinic for the students in preparation for their upcoming Festival performance and rehearsed twice with the students at the school leading up to the joint concert on April 30, 2013. According to Mr. Propper, the students at Keystone Heights High School benefitted greatly from the professionalism and musicianship that NBSE was able to convey in just a short time working with the students. After hearing MU3 Cummings perform the saxophone solo in Frank Ticheli's *Amazing Grace*, the student soloist who performed it in the concert was inspired to practice with renewed enthusiasm and it showed during the concert.

"I feel that Clinics and Master Classes with young area musicians are some of the most important components of our community outreach mission. Where else can students see, firsthand, a group of the Navy's finest professionals performing their assigned duties. The enthusiasm of both the sailors and the students is highly evident in both the rehearsals and performances. We feel that we have made a strong start this spring and that next year will bring more opportunities for collaborative efforts throughout the surrounding counties."