

Talented Alton musicians offer annual **STRINGSATION** concert

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - The **Alton School District's STRINGSATION** concert has a long-standing tradition and is something music lovers from around the area look forward to each year.

This year's event was held in cooperation with Alton Band and Orchestra Builders in the Alton High School gymnasium, Tuesday, March 22.

Alton High School Orchestra Director and Alton District Instrumental Music Coordinator Laura Plummer said the night was "a lot of fun."

"It was packed," she said. "The Alton School District is very supportive of arts, athletics and all the elective things, plus the core curriculum. This is a cool night and it shows the progression of students all the way to the tops in orchestra at Alton High School. The Alton Band and Orchestra Builders always show such great support every year."



Plummer said it adds a lot to the night to bring the elementary students in to play with the older students.

Nearly 200 elementary string students presented “Mary Lee” and “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” under the direction of Sally Pierce. Pierce also led the Fifth-Grade Honors Orchestra, an after-school string group, in “Lackawanna Locomotive.”

Alton Middle School, led by Julie Carter, performed “Afterthoughts,” “Beethoven Lullaby” and “Turbulence.” Pierce then took the helm of the Seventh and Eighth-Grade Orchestra for “Divertimento No. 2 in D Major” (Mozart), “Fantasy on a Japanese Folk Song” and “The Explorers.”

Alton High School Symphonic Orchestra played a Hampton String Quartet arrangement of Haddaway’s 1993 pop single “What Is Love.”

Plummer led the combined Alton High Orchestras in “March of the Resistance” from Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens by John Williams and “Rosin Eating Zombies from Outer Space.”

Plummer awarded several scholarships.

The evening concluded with over 350 musicians joining together in Beethoven's Ode To Joy.

A 50/50 drawing was held raising over \$240 for ABOB. For more information regarding Alton Band and Orchestra Programs or to support instrumental music in Alton, please visit ABOB.net

Alton Band and Orchestra Builders board member Tom Pullen spoke about the importance of music in the lives of youth.

“This has to be one of my favorite concerts of the year,” he said. “It gives parents and youth alike the ability to see ‘what’s next.’ It’s very exciting to see such rapid progress.

"Music students learn teamwork skills, self-discipline, social skills, responsibility and perseverance. Musicians tend to score higher on the ACT and SAT and they are offered scholarships.”

Pullen continued: “This year, we have 832 youth involved in band and orchestra in the Alton District. But maybe the most striking statistic of all, in the last 10 years, in the Alton District, students who stay in band and orchestra through high school....99.99 percent graduate. We have all read or heard the news that the Hazelwood and other districts are cutting music teachers next year. We would like to thank the Alton District for maintaining this vital resource amid deep budget constraints at a state, city and District level. ABOB raises approximately \$120,000 each year to cover costs not covered by the district and we can only do that because of you.”

Pullen closed by saying: “We believe every kid that wants to play an instrument, has a chance to. It is a life changing experience...ABOB’s goal is to keep music alive in the Alton School District for years to come....”





