

Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

10th Mountain Division Band entertains, educates Fort Drum students in support of Music in Our Schools

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- Members of the 10th Mountain Division Band took center stage March 28 in front of an audience of Fort Drum home school students and community members in celebration of Music in Our School Month.

During the performance, each musician spoke about their instrument and demonstrated the sounds it makes. They also talked about places they visited or deployed to, before the group played music inspired by those stories. Attendees also heard the story of "Ferdinand the Bull," accompanied by music from Bizet's opera "Carmen."

"This is an awesome way for us to connect with the community and represent the Army to young people," said Sgt. 1st Class Kirby Oliver. "It's always fun to play for kids."

Oliver said she was the same age as some of the audience members when she discovered her passion for music.

"Music was everything to me when I was growing up," she said. "It's how I found structure and meaning from a young age, and it shaped my entire life and my whole career."

Oliver first played the trumpet in fourth grade but switched to the French horn – her favorite instrument – the following year. Outside of school, she played with local youth orchestras where she learned to perform at a high level.

"That was a really big part of my musical development, but it all started in school," she said. "It provided me the foundation, the starting ground, for me to progress."

After the performance, students met with the band members to learn more about their profession and their love of playing music.

"I started playing music in the third grade," said Spc. Catherine Minnier. "One of the biggest reasons for me is that it was a social thing. I joined because of my friends, and these are friends I still have today. Music really brought me into a great group of people."

She started playing cello at first but then picked up the clarinet in the fourth grade.

"And I've been playing clarinet ever since," Minnier said. "First it was a lot of school concerts, and then I did marching band and orchestra in high school."

Minnier said she enjoys talking about music with students and having an opportunity to share her experience going from student to Soldier.

"This is particularly important for me because I was never the best at clarinet as I was going through school," she said. "So, I'm so happy to be able to share my love and joy of music to students who are younger or closer to my age. It goes to show that even if you aren't the best when you start, you can still work really hard and have a great career."

Annabella Taylor attended the performance with her parents and younger sister.

"It was a lot of fun," she said. "I liked when they played the 'Bluey' song. I thought the band was really cool."

Jessica Morales attended the performance with her son and daughter.

"I thought the whole thing was great," she said. "It was really interactive and centered toward children, especially the choice of music."

Morales said music is incorporated into her children's education at home, where they have a piano and other things for them to play. It also helps that her husband is a percussionist in the 10th Mountain Division Band.

“Music is a universal language that can bring people together all across the world,” Morales said. “I think it’s an important part of our lives, so we should use it to teach and help children grow.”

Music in Our Schools began in 1973 as a statewide advocacy day in New York. Since then, it has grown across the U.S., and it is recognized by the Department of Defense Education administration.

“This event was a collaboration of the 10th Mountain Division Band, the Woodwind Ensemble, School Support Services and a homeschool parent, to ensure our Fort Drum homeschool families were able to partake in a musical performance for the Music in Our Schools Month,” said Wendy O’Sullivan, Fort Drum school liaison officer. “Home schooling is an educational option for Fort Drum families, and we encourage parents to work with our office for assistance with state guidelines, resources and activities.”

The 10th Mountain Division Band supported five Music in Our Schools performances in March. They are preparing for several more outreach events during Month of the Military Child in April.

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Media with questions regarding this press release should contact Fort Drum Public Affairs, Katie Wright at katherine.e.wright12.civ@army.mil

Photo Captions:

FD Concert1: A Woodwind Ensemble from the 10th Mountain Division Band entertained and educated the audience during a Music in Our Schools Month performance March 28 inside the Multipurpose Auditorium. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

FD Concert2: Audience members listen and recognize the familiar songs played by the Woodwind Ensemble from the 10th Mountain Division Band during a Music in Our Schools performance March 28 inside the Multipurpose Auditorium. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

FD Concert3: A Woodwind Ensemble from the 10th Mountain Division Band entertained and educated the audience during a Music in Our Schools Month performance March 28 inside the Multipurpose Auditorium. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)