

Ensembles resurrect music

by Paul Johnson

Spring brings about flowers, showers, green grass, new life, school plays, and is a particularly exciting time of the year for the music groups at Ramsey. The culmination of the year's work goes toward making good appearances at contests and spring concerts.

Ramsey is fortunate enough to have six outstanding groups: the choir, concert band, varsity band, girl's chorus, orchestra and stage band. The three music directors, Donald Brost, choir and girl's chorus; Robert Hallquist, concert, varsity and stage bands; and James Peterson, orchestra, have all put in an indeterminate amount of time and effort to make up exciting and talent-proving repertoires for their respective groups.

Note that the key word is "exciting" and not merely "good." Music that is performed relatively flawlessly is "good" music, but it takes much more to make a "good" performance exciting. What makes music exciting is expression, vitality, and liveliness on the part of the music group. Music performed with these elements literally comes alive.

The word "concert," to many people, has the connotation of being "nice, but sort of dull." With some bands, choruses, and orchestras this may be the case, but certainly not with any of Ramsey's. Conveying the meaning of the music to the audience is the first objective of Ramsey's directors.

"You've got to communicate with the audience. If you fail to do this, then all the perfectly performed music in the world doesn't mean a thing. You must come through with excitement if you want the music to mean anything," stated Brost, the vocal music director.

He continued, "You can watch a group like the Young Americans and see that they are talented, but do make mistakes. These mistakes are overlooked though because of their vitality and very exciting performance. I've stressed all along the importance of making the music live. It's the only way of getting the message across."

The other directors have done the same and that is the reason the groups have been so successful this year.

The choir's spring concert was held Sunday, April 19, at Central Presbyterian Church in St. Paul. They sang selections of sacred music by a variety of composers. The major work of the evening was R. Vaughan William's "Mass



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in G Minor." It is a beautiful and exciting work, sometimes called "the best piece of choral literature written in the twentieth century." It was written in 1921.

The mass contained a solo quartet, sung by Patrice Guston, soprano; Kathy Harpole, alto; Ed Vivian, tenor; and Pat McGuiggan, bass.

The choir also utilized a brass ensemble, organ, and a string quartet in various selections. The brass quartet and organ played in "O Clap Your Hands" by R. Vaughan Williams and the string quartet and organ performed in "Magnificat" by Niccolò Porpora a piece sung by the girls in the choir. The string quartet and four flutes also accompanied the choir in "Sing Beloved Christians, Sing" by Michele Praetorius.

"The choir did an excellent job," commented Brost after the performance, "and I think the audience thoroughly enjoyed it."

The concert, stage, and varsity bands are now preparing for their spring activities.

The concert and varsity bands will be going to the State Band Contest on May 9. At the District 14 contest, held April 16 at Ramsey, both bands received three stars.

There were twenty soloists and small ensembles from the band who starred in District contest and will enter State-Regional competition.

The bands also have concerts coming up in the near future.

There will be two pop concerts given by the concert band May 15 and 16 at Ramsey. Hallquist prefers to keep the content of the concert a secret but did say, "the concert should be interesting and well worth coming to."

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