



Pioneer High School Bands

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN U.S.A.



A Word (or two) from the Editor

Well, here we are, in March, amidst the Winter That Will Not End. But, before you despair and/or load up to go groundhog hunting, know this: Nothing will warm your winter-ridden psyche like drinking nice, piping hot coffee out of a Pioneer High School Band mug! Nothing. You can go to Puerto Rico, Cancun, Rio, whatever – go ahead if you must, it's not a problem – but none of that can hold a candle to my purple speckled band mug. And at eight bucks, there's no better bargain to be had. Try it – you'll be amazed at how foolish you'll feel for spending all that money on Mojitos in the Riviera when an eight-dollar mug was all you really needed. Trust me. Mugs are for sale at most PBA concerts. Buy yours at Bands in Review, the Concerto concert, or Picnic Pops!

In other news, we're gearing up for a busy couple of months. The kick-off to this next interval is, of course, the Band Gala at Zingerman's (please see the article on that which follows for additional details). Then there are the auditions for Concert and Symphony bands – make sure

your kids keep their chops up! Then there are the Bands in Review concerts, and the Symphony, Jazz and Concert Band trips and the Bandquet to boot. In light of all this, I think it's probably a good thing that the great outdoors are frozen solid. How else would we have time for all this excellent music-related stuff if we were additionally tempted to step outside even momentarily? A: we wouldn't. So, stop gazing wistfully at your bicycle, your Frisbees, and your snappy new swim trunks; instead, grab your shawl and your union suit, and settle in for another 8 weeks of great music. A fair trade at twice the price, I say!



Come to the Band Gala at Zingerman's!

**Wednesday March 12
6:30 – 8:30**

This is it, folks, the “it” party you've all been breathlessly waiting for. The Band Gala is a cocktail reception at Zingerman's Roadhouse, where you can mix and mingle with other band fans, alumni and parents, sip a nice drink, and listen to outstanding performances by selected groups from your Varsity, Concert, Symphony and Jazz bands. In addition to the music, there will also be a raffle for an Instant Wine Cellar. So, buy your raffle tickets at the door!!!

I know a little bit about this last part – our house is one of two at which wine donations have been getting dropped off. There is a LOT of wine to win, and there are some REALLY nice bottles in the mix. I have been exercising tremendous restraint in not sampling a few of these, just, you know, to make sure they're okay. You can thank me for my restraint if you win. *Please turn to page 2.*

Don't miss the Band Gala!

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...MEANwhile, tickets to the gala itself are \$45 each, which includes a glass of wine or beer and plenty of good cheer. This is an awesome event, and a great opportunity to show your support for our band kids and the entire Pioneer Band program. Order your tickets online from links posted on the Gala Web Page:

<http://www.aapioneerbands.org/calendar/gala.html>

or get in touch with Helen Starman (hstarman@comcast.net) for details.



Bandquet

April 29th

6:00pm

The Bandquet is the annual end-of-all-the-major-stuff-associated-with-band celebration (not, you know, including Picnic Pops, which is one of the AFTER-the-end-of-all-the-major-stuff-associated-with-band events). This celebration is to recognize each and every band member for their efforts and contributions to their bands over the year, and includes fun stuff like awards, slideshows, and the annual skit put on by the seniors. Now, my kid insists, loudly, that it's a student-only situation, but I'm pretty sure that in reality, non-embarrassing parents like you folks are welcome to attend. Maybe if I stop with the propeller beanie, I'll be able to go this year. We'll see...



BANDS IN REVIEW

Saturday March 22, 7:00 pm @ Pioneer
Tuesday March 18 @ Huron High School



This is a showcase of all Ann Arbor Public School's band programs, and features performances by both Middle School and High School bands. It's really a great way to spend some time – not just because the music is good, which it is, not just to listen to your band member play, which is always cool, but also to get a sense for the sorts of musicians that are “on deck”, poised to become Pioneer Band members themselves. I've gone to this event for the last three years running, and it's fun to see the development of talent and organization from the Middle Schools through the various levels of the high school bands. Of course, it's always great to stay until the end and get blown away by Pioneer's Symphony Band, but that's just the partisan in me talking. The other bands are awesome, too!





District Band Festival Report

I was fortunate enough to have a moment between driving kids to soccer games which allowed me to attend the MSBOA Band Festival held on March 1st at Pioneer. What a hoot! Similar to the Solo and Ensemble Festival held earlier this year in Livonia, this event (instead of solos and ensembles), featured full bands and orchestras playing before the adjudicators.

The music was excellent, as usual from the attending programs, but the highlight for me was the Sight Reading event. This is really where you come to realize the high level of musicianship associated with these programs. With time and practice, you gotta figure that you can teach more or less anybody to play more or less anything. A principle which explains country music, for example. However, plop a roomful of teenagers in front of music charts that neither they nor their conductor have EVER SEEN BEFORE, and unless these cats are good - really, really good - it's going to sound like street repairs. Needless to say, the Pioneer bands nailed it right out of the chute – it sounded fantastic; I'm still flabbergasted that it can be done at all, let alone done this well. Kudos to the bands and Mr. Leach – well deserved 1's all around!

