

Harley Nefe and Rachel Kleeen
2/21/2020

Concert Band performance showcases world premiere of student composed piece

The Hayes School of Music had their first Concert Band performance of the semester Feb. 17 from 8-9:30 p.m at Rosen Concert Hall in the Broyhill Music Center.

Director of Bands John Stanley Ross and Graduate Assistants of Bands and Orchestras Joe Conti and Chris Tkacik conduct Concert Band, a spring semester one credit hour course that is non-audition based.

“It is open to all students and faculty at Appalachian State who play band instruments or want to play, or music education majors who want to play a secondary instrument — anyone who really wants to keep music and band as a part of their life — this is the outlet for them,” Conti said.

At the concert, the band performed five pieces of music they have been rehearsing on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6-7:30 p.m.

“I’m just so proud of them,” Conti said. “This band has just stepped it up like crazy.”

One piece in particular was composed by senior music performance major Terrell Cordice.

“I had a premiere of my first piece ever last February, and it was a huge success. So, I wanted to start a new piece of contrasting style and texture,” Cordice said. “I also wanted to push myself to try things harmonically that I hadn’t tried in the past.”

Tkacik said the first time he heard Cordice’s music was when Tkacik was auditioning at App State in spring 2019, when Cordice composed a piece for the Wind Ensemble.

“I heard it, and I was just blown away because I couldn’t imagine a student here had composed that,” Tkacik said. “It was so detailed and driving. It was an exciting piece.”

Cordice said he wrote the piece for the Concert Band slowly over the course of a year.

“It was a busy and difficult time in my life, so I wanted to convey that in some way,” Cordice said.

Tkacik said he was excited when he heard from Conti that Cordice composed a piece specifically for Concert Band because he knew Cordice’s music was “super quality.”

“The first time I heard (the Concert Band piece), it was drastically different than his previous piece because it was very slow,” Tkacik said. “I saw the kind of markings in the piece, and my first thought of it was, ‘I wonder how this is going to sound; this looks very odd.’ But, the students in the Concert Band were able to breathe some sort of special life into it. They really dug deep and pulled out all of the details that I think Terrell was going for when he wrote it.”

Cordice said he enjoyed working with the ensemble, as he would attend rehearsals to hear the band and talk the ensemble through sections.

“I was able to see them grow and develop as musicians as they rehearsed my piece,” Cordice said. “I was also able to see places in my music that worked and places in my music that didn’t work. It’s always a vulnerable experience to share your music with people, and whether or not it’s accepted or rejected is definitely a struggle for composers.”

Despite the vulnerability, Cordice said “It’s always best to step outside of yourself and be thankful for the musical experience.”

After the concert, on Feb. 19, the Concert Band began rehearsing for the second and final performance for spring semester.

“If people thought they experienced the last concert, then they are going to think that they didn’t experience it, because this next one is truly both a musical and really an emotional journey through the entire concert,” Conti said. “I think the audience is really going to leave feeling like they don’t even know what happened, that it is both emotionally exciting and wonderful, but also memorable.”

Junior commercial photography major Shelton Toverud plays the saxophone in Concert Band, and this is his second semester in the ensemble. Toverud said he encourages people who are interested in joining Concert Band.

“Even if you don’t have an instrument, the school of music has tons that you can borrow,” Toverud said. “It’s a really good time; you’re never singled out. I would really encourage anyone who has played music — even if they haven’t played before — anyone who is interested in being in a concert setting to come to Concert Band.”