



Saint Viator Symphonic Band to Perform Student's Original Composition

April 26, 2010



Jonathan Metzinger conducts the band during a recent rehearsal.

Saint Viator senior Jonathan Metzinger of Prospect Heights has arranged music for some of the ensembles at his high school, and even for the Metropolis Youth Symphony in Arlington Heights.

But on Sunday, the Saint Viator band will debut his full-scale symphonic work, "Escapades," composed in honor of the Rev. Louis Querbes, founder of the Clerics of St. Viator, during their yearlong celebration of his life, 150 years after he died.

The original composition is just one of the highlights of Saint Viator's Spring Fine Arts Fest, which opens at 1 p.m. Sunday, May 2 at the school, located at 1213 E. Oakton St. in Arlington Heights. Admission is free.

Successive highlights include performances by the choral ensembles, the Orchesis dance troupe, Viatribe, the resident comedy club, and by the jazz band, which traditionally closes each concert.

During the festival, patrons also will be able to see samples of the visual arts, including students' award winning works in painting, photography, ceramics and sculpture.

In composing the anniversary piece, Metzinger started at his piano, he says, before moving to the computer, where his orchestration became notated into sheet music.

"I wanted it to be dramatic and inspirational, with some heroic themes," Metzinger says. "There are recurring themes and patterns, but overall, it's very textured, which is what I wanted."

On Friday, Metzinger conducted band members himself as they rehearsed the piece before Sunday's concert. Typically, he plays French horn in the band, but as conductor, he encouraged them to play bolder during its opening passages, before sustaining their notes during the more expressive, haunting sections through its ending.

At the conclusion, his classmates burst into applause, and senior trumpeter Mike Sroka of Wheeling jumped to his feet to cheer him.

"It's just amazing for someone in our class to do that," Sroka said. "It was hard to get it at first. The dynamics are difficult and there are some pretty technical parts, but once you get it, it hits you."

Junior Jack Nuelle of Mount Prospect agreed, adding that band members were surprised when they first tackled it.

"The overall depth impressed us," Nuelle said. "There is so much scope and depth to the work. It's just a nuance piece, with so many different layers. It's a testament to his talent."

Officials at Indiana University's Jacob's School of Music agreed. Metzinger learned last month that he had been admitted into their highly selective composition program, of which less than 10 students per year are admitted.