



PHOTO BY JEN DZWONCZYK

Concert Orchestra sophomore violinists Faris Madani and Michael Mill play “Don’t Stop Believin’” by Journey.



PHOTO BY JEN DZWONCZYK

Violinists Cate Poliquin, Claire Fulton, Olivia Lin, and Alyssa Kim of the Senior Orchestra perform “I Will Survive” by Gloria Gaynor.

Orchestral Greetings and Farewells

BY ERIKA LI
JUNIOR, LANGLEY HS

For many Langley High School Orchestra students, adjusting to a year of online rehearsals and virtual concerts has been difficult. In regular years, concerts have been the highlight of the school year, with the culmination of months of practice ending in putting on a performance for the whole community to enjoy, not only as a musical experience but as a social gathering: a chance to connect with friends and family.

With the Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts generously opening its venues to local high schools and with social gathering restrictions lifting, Langley Orchestra was able to perform in front of a live audience for the first time since March of 2020, in a venue where they had never played before.

As one of the first local high schools to resume in-person musical performances, Langley Orchestra aimed to present a meaningful and memorable concert for their audience. The theme of the evening was “Sounds



PHOTO BY JEN DZWONCZYK

Langley Orchestra director Dr. McCormick conducts the Philharmonic Orchestra in person for the first time since March of 2020.

of Hope,” a resounding reminder that even through adversity, music will prevail. With an audience of student family members and former orchestra students, the performance

was truly a testament to the unity that music can create, even after a year of separation.

LANGLEY ORCHESTRA had been practicing

Langley High School Orchestra returns to the big stage.

almost entirely virtually before the performance, meaning that for many students, this was their first time playing the pieces side by side with other Langley Orchestra members. But after a few short rehearsals, the orchestras were able to overcome this barrier and put on memorable performances.

For Langley Orchestra’s director, Dr. Scott McCormick, the performance represented something bigger than a typical concert. “After spending an entire year talking to my students over a computer screen, to actually see them live, to see them interacting with each other and the energy that results, and the improvement from taking just a brief rehearsal, meant the world.”

Keeping with the Langley Orchestra tradition of playing popular music pieces at end-of-school year concerts, the performance exuded a casual and welcoming atmosphere, celebrating the beginning of a return to normalcy.

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PHOTO BY JEN DZWONCZYK

Symphonic Orchestra freshman Claire Kim and sophomore Nicolas Kristensen perform “Dream On” by Aerosmith.



PHOTO BY RANIA RAZEK

In a Langley Orchestra first, students were able to perform at Wolf Trap’s Meadow Pavilion, playing a slate of both celebratory and comforting pieces for a live audience.

Great Falls Rotary Announces Music Winners

BY EILEEN CURTIS

Rotary District 7610, which serves the top half of Virginia, made a daring decision during this year of the pandemic: it decided to start a music contest for high school students. Rigorous safety measures were invoked. Students had to present a five-minute video without accompaniment on a private YouTube channel. Then the organizers waited to see if anyone would take on the challenge.

Amazingly, they did, especially Langley High School. The school's music department recognized the special opportunity the contest provided for students sharing their music in a too-silent world. Langley produced half of the entire District's applicants, sending in a wide variety of talent spanning strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion and voice. The Great Falls Rotary then put together a team of independent judges. They evaluated the students on tonal quality, rhythm, style, creativity, and difficulty of the music.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

First place went to Langley High senior Alyssa Kim

Three top winners emerged. In third place was Lily Chopus, a sophomore. She sang "Burn" from Miranda's Broadway megahit Hamilton. Second place went to another sophomore, Sankrith Ramani. He offered up Rachmaninoff's Melodie in E for piano. First place went to senior Alyssa Kim, performing the opening movement from Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto.

Kim began violin in third grade and has studied with DC teacher Lya Stern for the past seven years. She is a member of the American Youth Philharmonic, currently serving as co-concertmaster of their most advanced group. Kim ranked #1 in the 2021 All-Virginia State Orchestra. She went on to win third place in the Rotary District's competition.

Rotary District 7610 started the music contest, joining it to their high school speech contest and middle school essay contest, as another vehicle for reaching and celebrating the achievements of our youth.

Langley Orchestra Spreads 'Sounds of Hope'

FROM PAGE 6

Opening the performance was Langley's Concert Orchestra, performing a rendition of "Don't Stop Believin'" by Journey (arr. Moore). The classic 80s rock hit reflects a message of finding meaning and hope within darkness.

The Symphonic Orchestra then took the stage, performing an orchestral version of the rock ballad "Dream On" by Aerosmith (arr. Ryan). The iconic guitar riffs of the original were replaced by violin playing, giving the piece a melancholy yet intense feel.

Next, the Philharmonic Orchestra performed "Difficult Year" by British rock band Keane (arr. Hunter). While the song was released back in 2019, the lyrics seemed most fitting for the past tumultuous year, with the lyrics of the original song closing off with the words "it's been a difficult year, I just wish we'd been together to face it." The orchestral version of the song carried similar tones, with a comforting and uplifting feel.

Afterwards, Langley's Senior Orchestra performed "I Will Survive" by Gloria Gaynor (arr. Reed). Senior musicians celebrated their determination and perseverance after a year of virtual learning and missing out on typical senior year experiences. It was a bittersweet performance, as it marked both the

first and last live concert that seniors would play in for the year. For many seniors however, the concert ended the school year on a high note. "It was great to have the opportunity to perform in person one last time" noted Chris Ross, a senior violist in the Philharmonic Orchestra.

FOLLOWING the Senior Orchestra's performance, as a surprise for Dr. McCormick, the senior class performed an original piece as part of their senior gift. Composed and arranged by senior cellists Keon Parastaran and Misha Somogyi, the senior class performed "A Tribute to Doc" with the surprise appearance of Mr. Adam Willett, Langley Orchestra's former Assistant Director, who conducted the piece. For seniors, the piece was both reminiscent and comforting, bringing back fond memories of their time in Langley Orchestra.

The whole slate of performances projected a message of hope, perseverance, and unity.

The performance was a welcome breath of fresh air for student musicians, after being cooped up at home for so long. "It was so much fun to have a concert and see my orchestra friends after the past year of virtual

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Kathleen J. Murphy, Candidate for the 2021 Democratic Primary, Member of the House of Delegates District 34, resides in McLean.



Jennifer Adeli, Candidate for the 2021 Democratic Primary, Member of the House of Delegates District 34 resides in Great Falls.

Candidates in the 2021 Democratic Primary for HD34

Meet Jennifer Adeli and Kathleen J. Murphy (Incumbent).

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Voting began for the 2021 Democratic Primary on June 8. That includes candidates for Member of the Virginia House of Delegates District 34 that encompasses McLean, Great Falls, and parts of Vienna and Loudoun County covering 22 precincts.

Incumbent Kathleen J. Murphy and Jennifer Adeli are running in the Democratic primary for Virginia House of Delegates District 34 on June 8, 2021.

In a request for comment by the Connection, Murphy said that she had been the Delegate representing the 34th District for the past seven years. "I'm not doing this to or for myself. I am committed to representing the issues important to the people who live here, and I am proud of my record of achievement," she said.

According to Murphy, she has been involved in politics almost her whole life. She was married to a member of Congress and fought for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. She worked on local and presidential campaigns as well as working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Charlie Wilson.

She handled legislative affairs at The United States Agency for International Development, an independent agency of the United States federal government primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid and development assistance.

MURPHY served as a Senior Advisor on international trade issues at Commerce during the Clinton Administration. She is the Vice Chair of the House Democratic Caucus.

Discussing the top three issues of importance Murphy hears from District 34 constituents, she said, "Transportation, gun safety and education. I have been a leader in the House on all three issues. For me, this is a full-time job. I make it my business to be out in the communi-

ty talking to the people who live and do business here."

According to Murphy, her brother was murdered, so she started the Gun Violence Prevention Caucus. She said, "I will continue to be a leader on gun violence prevention measures.

Murphy added that she would continue to focus on transportation issues, support the business community as they recover, and "make sure we deal with the challenges our schools and children face as we fight to recover from COVID."

To learn more about Kathleen Murphy, including all bills she sponsored, visit Kathleen J. Murphy (Virginia) - Ballotpedia.

JENNIFER ADELI in a request for comment by the Connection, said she is a small business owner and government consultant. Supervisor John Foust appointed her to Fairfax County-Falls Church Community Services Board, and she is serving in her second term. She chairs the Fiscal Subcommittee overseeing the department's \$200M+ budget.

Adeli started her career on Capitol Hill for the late Congressman Bob Matsui (D-Sacramento). She developed a passion for constituent services, focusing on education and student loan legislation. After obtaining her MBA from Georgetown University, Jennifer returned to government service and worked for Arthur Andersen and Booz Allen Hamilton. She consulted with federal agencies such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, delivering high-quality customer service to Medicare recipients.

Adeli is the immediate past Chair of the Dranesville District Democratic Committee. There she spearheaded the modernization of fundraising and communications.

Discussing the top three issues of importance she hears from District 34 constituents, Adeli said, "Criminal justice

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School Board Member's Post Ignites Pro & Con Reactions

FROM PAGE 4

stration outside Jackson Middle School. Starting at 5 p.m., FCSB held a closed meeting inside the school, part of its Hybrid Regular Meeting. Two polarized protest groups formed outdoors in front of the school.

Earlier that day, the cease-fire took effect to end the violent 11-day conflict. Associated Press reported: "At least 230 Palestinians were killed, including 65 children and 39 women, with 1,710 people wounded, according to the Gaza Health Ministry... Twelve people in Israel, including a 5-year-old boy and 16-year-old girl, were killed."



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON / THE CONNECTION
Protestors outside of the FCPS Board Meeting on May 20, 2021

UNDER THE EYES of Fairfax County school officers, organizers occupied the dual-walled entry with a wide staircase leading to the cordoned-off and protected front doors to the school and its adjacent patch of grass. At times, the larger group in support of Omeish grew dense, numbering upwards of 100 individuals. Mostly masked, they rallied together with signs signs that read, "Abrar is

an equity champion" and "Melanie Meren, you do not represent us." They chanted following the lead of Mariam Abou-Ghazala of Fairfax and others who yelled into megaphones, "Freedom of Speech. You cannot impeach."

The smaller group, many challenging Omeish and opposing critical race theory (CRT), numbered approximately 30 individ-

uals with a handful wearing masks. Waving U.S. flags, they played loud music attempting to drown out the other demonstrators' chanting. At times, they advanced in unison up to and into the larger group supporting Omeish.

"The Fairfax GOP is trying to remove her [Omeish] from office. That is affecting the entire community and not just her. We're trying to create a platform to raise awareness for our issues," said Omar Elbaba, 15, of Vienna.

"This is clearly an Islamophobic smear campaign to delegitimize her [Omeish's] position... and what she brings to the table ...What a world we live in where an elected official cannot pray for her people," said Shayma Al-Hanooti, FCPS graduate and Arlington Public School teacher.

"This is freedom of speech," said Hala Abdelaal of Fairfax, Class of 2015 Thomas Jefferson High School. "This is our Constitution." After multiple failed attempts to get comments from the smaller group, Leslie Sandler of Fairfax Station agreed. "Fairfax

County Public Schools is not the place to have political rhetoric. We're here for our children," she said.

School Board member Omeish was one of the last to comment at the Fairfax County School Board Meeting. Omeish said she took pride in a community where all come to the table and can have a dialog, a place to "confront courageously the differences that come to the table."

"I understand that for many Jewish families, my constituents, that they share a deep and sacred relationship with Israel... I've been able to listen and dialogue with, and I want to continue to listen. The loudest thing I want to be heard today is that I want to listen...because that is how we move forward, and that is how we grow."

"Anti-Semitism is a real and growing threat that must be addressed in our schools, our country, and our world. And conflating the criticism with that only harms those of us seeking to advance justice and diverts our focus," said Omeish. "We must choose to step up and to ensure that we don't allow those seeking to sow hate and division to capitalize on our disagreement... We can and must fight these things together, anti-Semitism, racism, Islamophobia and especially that which is couched as a response to oppression of all kinds together." Video FCPS School Board Meeting 5-20-21 3:19:40-3:29:43.

Candidates

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reform, increased teacher pay, and protecting the environment." She added, "Many voters are not aware that there is a Democratic primary, so our objective is to spread the word about how important it is for voters to have a voice as we pick our party nominees."

Asked what issues she plans to bring to the Virginia legislature that constituents may not be aware of change-need, Adeli said that with her Master's in

Business Administration and background in government consulting, she is focused on what no longer serves us in the post-COVID recovery and what to make permanent.

"I am very focused on supporting workers during the recovery, such as enabling W-2 employees who work from home to deduct their expenses from their state tax returns," she said.

For more information on Jennifer Adeli, visit Jennifer Adeli - Ballotpedia.

Langley Orchestra

FROM PAGE 7

learning," said Bianca Harris, a junior violinist in the Symphonic Orchestra. "The concert was amazing and it was great to get to play for an actual audience."

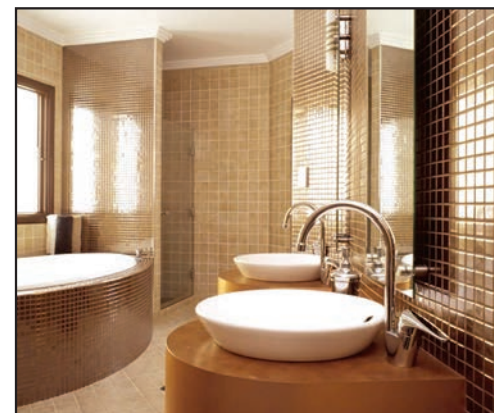
For Langley Orchestra students and audience members alike, the performance was an unforgettable experience, mark-

ing the beginning of hopefully many more live performances as normalcy begins to return. As for the graduating seniors of Langley Orchestra, the concert was one last farewell and a sendoff to their bright futures ahead. Ultimately, Langley Orchestra left a resounding message: music truly is the sound of hope.

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