

LOCAL NEWS # TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT # WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2016



SCHOOL & FAMILY

# CARNEGIE HALL PROJECT WOWS

900 music students Link Up with TSO to make a joyful noise

AMANDA KARIOTH THOMPSON  
COUNCIL ON CULTURE & ARTS

As the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra tuned up, nearly 900 students shifted in their seats, getting settled for their musical debut. They had reason to feel fidgety. These young performers were about to play with professional musicians, and the repertoire was prepared by none other than Carnegie Hall.

For the past several months, third-, fourth- and fifth-graders at 15 schools have participated in the Link Up program. Developed by Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute, this music education project pairs elementary schools with community orchestras in locations all across the country. This year, Tallahassee welcomed the project into music classrooms thanks to a partnership between the Foundation for Leon County Schools and the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra.

"The Carnegie Hall project allows really interactive education opportunities to take place," said Maestro Darko Butorac, the conductor of the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra. "If we were trying to do this from scratch it would be very, very difficult for us."

Link Up program coordinator and retired music teacher Carol Ann Mathews was grateful for the high-quality curriculum.

"Carnegie Hall supplied everything. Every child got a beautiful workbook with a glossy cover and colored pages," she said. "The teachers got a curriculum and extensive online materials. The Foundation for Leon County Schools provided the recorders, and the students get to keep them."

Those materials were the starting point for an intensive learning process through which students and teachers focused on a variety of objectives. Along the way, students gained a variety of skills including how to sing and play the recorder, analyze and interpret the structures of melody, explore instrument families, compose and notate new works, develop imaginative capacities and make personal connections to the music. The culminating activity was an interactive performance with the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra in Ruby Diamond Concert Hall.

Students were eager to show off their new skills, and Woodville elementary fourth-grader Brooke Peterson was particularly moved by the experience.

"I think all this is very inspirational for every kid in here. I've enjoyed all of the process and trying to learn," Brooke said. "Even though it took a long time, it was all worth it. Once you've had this experience you will never forget it."

Peterson's music teacher, Hope Crisher, emphasized that point.

"The students learned how important practice is and that things aren't always easy the first time around. It

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MICHAEL COPELAND  
Students performed with Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra during the Carnegie Hall Link Up program. The Foundation for Leon County Schools provided the recorders for each student to keep.

A CUT ABOVE

## Barber hangs up her clippers after 53 years

CLAUDIA MCINNIS ANDERSON  
SPECIAL TO THE DEMOCRAT

When it comes to barbering, Etta Ruth Crump Jefferson is a cut above. After more than 53 years of cutting hair in Tallahassee, Jefferson will hang up her clippers and retire at the end of this month. A celebration in her honor will be held Saturday starting with a commemorative ceremony from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. and a reception afterward from 3:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the commons area beside Dickey's Barbershop, 315 North Macomb St.

Many customers and colleagues have come to love Jefferson. They all agree she has special talents and a personality unlike any other. "She's down-to-earth and can relate to anyone — even the youth. She likes to laugh and is high fashion. I've picked up some style tips from her," says Rashod "Goat" Akinsanya, who works alongside Jefferson in Dickey's Barbershop. "You can just tell that she's comfortable in a barbershop. She's cool with me."

Jefferson, daughter of the late Elmer and Carrie Crump, first began working in Your Way Barbershop under the supervision of owners Perman Arnold and Solomon Dennis. As the first black female barber to work in a shop surrounded by all males, Jefferson recalls many people often questioned Arnold about his mo-

tives for hiring her. "He would always say, 'We wanted something that no one else had in Tallahassee.'"

Arnold and all others in the shop treated her with the utmost respect, and she honed her skills and learned from them.

"The owners acted professionally and required everyone else to do the same. They came to work every day dressed in slacks, a shirt and a tie," Jefferson remembers. "And I had to wear nice clothes, too."

Despite criticism and questions about having a female employee, Arnold never wavered or buckled under the pressure, and Jefferson eventually became an es-

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CLAUDIA ANDERSON  
Etta Ruth Jefferson is retiring after 53 years.

### Retirement celebration

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# Orchestra

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was important for students to see what you can achieve with practice and dedication.”

Pineview fourth-grader Kaneisha Houston was one of only a few dozen students to join the orchestra on stage. From her vantage point, she said “it was amazing to see all the instruments play.” The Link Up curriculum features several composers, and Kaneisha’s favorite was Beethoven. She learned that “he didn’t care about the rules and he made songs even though he was deaf.” He faced challenging obstacles and “he overcame them through music.”

Beloved local musicians Del Suggs and Avis Berry joined Carol Ann Mathews as the event’s emcees, and together they moved the students through the material that they had learned. Though the culminating experience was exciting for everyone involved, Mathews said that “this was never designed to be a performance by the children.” Instead, “it was designed to give children an experience of coming to a concert hall and playing with a symphony. It helps them become good listeners, appreciate music and know that music can always be part of their lives. Music is for everybody, and there is not a human on the planet that music doesn’t affect in some way. It’s just that universal.”

*Amanda Karioth Thompson is the Education and Exhibitions Director for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area’s umbrella agency for arts and culture (www.tallahasseearts.org).*



MICHAEL COPELAND

**A student plays the recorder with Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra. 5**