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Reagan Symphony Orchestra Hosts Young People's Concert

The Ronald Reagan High School Symphony Orchestra hosted the Reagan Elementary School Cluster of seven schools and 1300 students for the Young People's Concert. The Elementary Schools include Canyon Ridge, Hardy Oak, Las Lomas, Stone Oak, Tuscany Heights, Vineyard Ranch, and Wilderness Oak.

Reagan launched the Young People's Concert in 2000 as part of a Northeast ISD initiative to provide an opportunity for elementary students in each cluster to hear a live performance of Symphonic music. Reagan Director of Orchestras, Sixto Elizondo, says, "An event like this can be a major motivating factor for an aspiring young musician. As part of our presentation, we encourage all students to pursue a form of extra-curricular activity because involvement in such activities provides students opportunities to create critical outlets for self-expression and cultivates environments to develop life skills like social interactions and self-discipline." Not only did Reagan cluster students attend the concert, but a former student of Mr. Elizondo's was in the audience as music teacher himself. Wilderness Oak Music Teacher, Jose Benites, attributes much of his desire to pursue a musical career to Mr. Elizondo. "Music is a way to be creative and expressive," said Benites, "the music program here at NEISD and teachers like Mr. Elizondo, make music so much fun and allow students to express themselves through their instruments or vocals."

Under the theme of "Music of Other Worlds," the Symphony Orchestra played four pieces for the young audience. The Symphony Orchestra consists of a 46-member string section complimented by 20 band members playing 14 instruments. Each of the compositions is inspired by discovery or exploration of new and exciting places and include Music from the Movie "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them" composed by James Newton Howard and John Williams and "Symphony No 9 From the New World" composed by Antonin Dvorak among others. Mr. Elizondo adds, "The study of music can have multiple positive influences on a student's success because it encompasses physical skills, aural training, and critical thinking. It is an honor to introduce this music to the young students in our cluster."

The nationally recognized and award-winning Ronald Reagan High School Orchestra is comprised of seven performing ensembles, two full orchestras and five string orchestras, with total student enrollment of 210. The Reagan Orchestra program offers education, performance, competition, and community outreach opportunities to the students. Students perform six concerts annually, often partnering with other Reagan Fine Arts programs, for the community to include the middle and elementary school cluster, senior living facilities, special

events, and other outreach initiatives. The Reagan Orchestra has even traveled abroad to perform in high profile opera houses and theaters as well as participated in globally recognized orchestra clinics. The Reagan Orchestra has a longstanding tradition of excellence in performance, competition, and service under the direction of Director and Teacher, Sixto Elizondo IV.