

Kimball Wiles Wildcats chorus excels at competition

The Kimball Wiles Elementary School Wildcats Chorus competed at a Music USA Festival at Universal Studios in Orlando last weekend and walked away with Straight Superiors, the First Place Elementary Concert Choir trophy, and the Choral Grand Champion Trophy - having the highest score compared to all of the Elementary, Middle, and High School Concert Choirs at the festival.



Music USA Festivals span several weekends in the winter and spring, drawing elementary, middle, and high school performing groups from all over the United States to perform in competitions, or for critique only.

Forty-five non-auditioned choir students from the Wildcats Chorus, under the direction of Carrie Olson, participated for adjudication and competition and earned Superior ratings (the highest on a five level scale) from all three judges for the fourth year in a row, First place in the Elementary Concert Choir Division, and overall Choral Grand Champion.

Kimball Wiles Elementary currently has three after-school performance ensembles for 4th and 5th grade students – the Wildcats Chorus, 4th Grade Orffestra, and 5th grade Orffestra (Instrumental ensembles based on the Orff-Schulwerk approach).

“This has been another great year for our Wildcats,” remarks Olson. “Not only did our choir receive Choral Grand Champion at the Music USA Festival, but this year Wiles had nine students from our ensembles selected as Florida All-State musicians and one student selected for the North Florida Regional Orff Ensemble.”

Over 800 4th and 5th grade students from across the state auditioned for two All-State music ensembles and Regional ensembles this past fall. Five students (the maximum number that can be selected from one school) from Wiles were selected as members of the Florida All-State Elementary Chorus with 200 musicians, four students were selected as members of the All-State Orff Ensemble, with 100 musicians, and another student was selected for the North Florida Regional Orff Ensemble that performed at UF this past November. The nine All-State students travelled to Tampa in January and performed two concerts at the Florida Music Education Conference at the Tampa Convention Center.

In the summer of 2017 the Wildcats Chorus was selected to audition, and performed in the prestigious National Children’s Festival Chorus at Carnegie Hall. In addition, over the last seven years Wiles Elementary has had 49 elementary students selected as Florida All-State musicians. As a result, Olson received a request in the fall from the Florida Elementary Music Educators Association to present a workshop with a panel of experts for other music teachers at the Florida Music Educators Convention this past January.

“We are very thankful to have administrators and wonderful parents at Wiles who are so supportive of the Arts,” said Olson. “I am just thrilled for our students and hope they will continue studying and being involved in music making as they grow. We know that music brings people together, and that is what this is all about. Our Wildcats choir has children and families from all over the world – South Korea, China, Indonesia, Russia, India, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Brazil, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and the United States - all with very different cultures and faiths. I’m very proud of the fact that when you look at our chorus you see such a diverse group of students who come together on a weekly basis to share their voices and create something beautiful together.”

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