



Oregon Flutist and GPFS Member Macy Gong Wins NFA High School Competition!

Read below to hear Macy's insights about the event and the music she prepared.



Macy Gong, end on right
Macy is a student of Dr. Sydney Carlson and in
her fourth season with the Portland Youth Philharmonic.

The NFA High School Soloist Competition consists of 8 high schoolers from across the country who were decided by a recorded round of the competition. Each musician had to play the same three pieces, which was a good challenge because I could experience types of music I hadn't played before. The pieces were Marietta Simpson and Evelyn Simpson-Curenton's *Three Spirituals*, Camille Saint-Saëns' *Airs de Ballet d'Ascanio*, and Marco Granados' *El Terco*.

Each piece had its own challenges that encouraged me to vary my playing.

- ❖ *Three Spirituals* is a very modern piece that involves extended techniques and even requires the performer to enthusiastically say "All aboard!" at the beginning, which was the most challenging part for me to prepare.

- ❖ In contrast, the Saint-Saens is a very lyrical and beautiful piece. While it is not the most technically challenging piece, it was difficult to perform it very expressively, and a challenge I had was making musical choices so that my performance wasn't the exact same as every other finalist's.
- ❖ Last but not least, *El Tercio* is an unaccompanied work in an unusual time signature of 5/8. I had a lot of fun preparing this piece, but it requires a lot of endurance because there is no piano accompaniment, so there is no break from the beginning to the end. In addition, there is a part in the middle of the piece where the performer needs to improvise, which was new to me and required a lot of experimenting.

For all three of these pieces, the most important thing to remember is to be creative; in order to make your performance stand out, you have to incorporate a touch of yourself in it.

This competition was an eye-opening experience for me because I was able to hear other talented high school flutists from other states. In addition, because this competition took place at NFA, I had the opportunity to attend the convention and listen to many of my inspirations, such as Jasmine Choi, and I heard so much new music at different concerts.

This year, I am a junior at Oregon Episcopal School, where I am part of the band. In addition, I am playing my fourth season in the Portland Youth Philharmonic, and I'm looking forward to the repertoire planned this year!

Macy Gong