

Recollections from the Eighth Grade Recorder Consort: Tour Day

Now in its 19th year, the Eighth Grade Recorder Consort was founded by and continues to be directed by Middle School Performing Arts Department Chair Deb Southard. The members of the 2016-2017 ensemble are: Yasmin Ahuja, Ellie Banbury, Caroline Cannon, Cara Conrad, Tara Capers, Jessica Chang, Maxine Gilligan, Nicollee Hammer, Isabel Hsieh, Sophie Laye, Aubrey Lennon, Abby Rutherford, Sarah Scott, Kaisal Shah, Louisa Wang, Yasmine Wazni, and Violet Webster. Read their recollections of tour day here.

Isabel Hsieh: I think having a tour day is important because it gives you an opportunity to share your music with others. It's one thing to learn the music and play it for yourself, but I think music is meant to be performed for others. With tour day, you have a chance to do that. I also valued that we all came together as an ensemble on Friday. It was really beautiful when everyone was singing together on the bus, and lunch was also fun. The same is true for being in Recorder Consort in general. Not only was it a chance to play music together, but also we really bonded together as a group. Thank you so much for letting me be a part of the ensemble. I really enjoyed it.

Cara Conrad: I learned that when you're traveling with fellow musicians, you must work together to get everything unified and also to play your pieces. My favorite part of the tour was going to Family Connections and playing for all the kids. I loved being with this group of girls because we always worked together, through the good and the bad. Thank you!

Sophie Laye: This tour day was a fun experience. I learned that many people enjoy listening to our music and that it really brings the consort together. I valued the joy that the music brought to all the people that were listening, especially the little kids that were so happy to hear songs that they were familiar with like "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" and "Uptown Funk." To be in this ensemble meant a lot to me. I think that it brought me closer to many of my friends and allowed us to come together with others that we would not normally hang out with. Overall, I think that I had a positive experience.

Yasmine Wazni: During Recorder Consort Tour Day, I have learned that we have really expanded our repertoire throughout these two years, since we were able to play such a large variety of songs during tour. Something I valued on Tour Day was being able to visit so many places that I haven't before, even though they are in my hometown. What I experienced was that no matter how young or old a person, they always appreciate music. Being a member of the ensemble has given me something to say that I am part of, and recorder becomes my third instrument adding to ukulele and piano. Thank you, it has been a great experience!

Kaisal Shah: During the past two years of playing recorder, I've learned a lot about not only playing the instruments, but about myself and my classmates. It was such a good experience to work together and play music together, and I think that this group did a very good job with that. Whenever anyone needed help playing or understanding anything, one of us would always be there. Tour day was a great way to conclude our time together, and also to share our music with the community. We met so many people who all loved to hear us play. I could especially see this when we were playing for the seniors, but the kids were really engaged in the playing as well. We also had a lot of fun playing together, which made it even better. From singing at the piano before class, to performing at Masterworks, to Violet's milkshake exploding all over her, we had a blast when we were playing as well as when we weren't. Thank you so much for this amazing experience that I will never forget.

Sarah Scott: From tour day, I learned that playing music for people brings them joy and happiness. When we were at the senior home, when we sang for them, one of them started to cry, and it made us feel good inside knowing that we made someone's day. From this ensemble, I have valued good music, good fun, and memories surrounding all the people in the group.

Ellie Banbury: Recorder ensemble has become so important to me for so many reasons. First off, I love recorder and always have, the group of girls in this ensemble has become so close from when we first started and the connection will always rein. It is important that we take a whole day to tour so that we can share our accomplishments with other people outside of HB. Recorder is one of those instruments that is thrown under the bus so it is important to show people how it is still alive and can be amazing.

Nicollee Hammer: I love Recorder tour day because wherever we go, I get to see the people smile when they play, and I can tell that they enjoy it. During these tour days and bus rides, I have also grown closer to my fellow classmates. I will always remember Violet spilling her milkshake and so did most other people, too, but then again me drinking two milkshakes was also a very crazy story. I hope you keep doing these tour days for the recorder ensembles in the future because they are so much fun and you learn many new lessons and gain great experiences.

Louisa Wang: When I was given the opportunity to be a part of ensemble, I was honored, but frankly only saw it as a meaningless extracurricular class. From then to now, I have learned how wrong my thinking was. I've gained so much from recorder such as new friendships, memories, repertoire, and a new perspective of how music can affect people. One of the major parts of recorder ensemble is Recorder Tour Day, a day to go out into the community to share music to different schools and organizations. This particular time that we went on tour day, I found myself seeing how much music means to my classmates and I. We as a group went to all of these places to perform to so many children, seniors, or staff that helped to make it possible. One of the best parts about this is looking up while we play, and seeing all

of the reactions to our performance. Every time, I see a different expression: a child dancing, a teacher clapping along, a woman rocking back and forth to the song. I see young minds being inspired; I see elders singing along to our song. This feedback has shown what all of us gave to the community as an ensemble that day: wonder, inspiration, and contentment. Since the first tour day we had, I've always been in awe about the fact that we give to the community that we live in. That made us closer as a class and as friends, because we all have the power to give music with this ensemble and our extensive repertoire. At the end of the day, recorder ensemble will be one of those parts of middle school that our group can look back on and reminisce about the wonderful memories and experiences we had together. I am so glad that I was a part of that.

Caroline Cannon: Tour day was so much fun and I had a great time! It was so much fun spending time with my friends and it was nice playing all of the pieces we had learned. It was very fun to see how our music can impact all ages. When we first went to US it was amazing to hear them singing along to "Best Day of My Life." Also, it was great to see the little kids at the Shaker Family Center clapping along and having fun. At the Shaker Family Center, I got to see some of my old caretakers, which was very fun. From the little kids we switched right over to playing for the elderly people at the Woodlands and it was very interesting to learn the stories of two wonderful women. One lady was a teacher for Cleveland's public schools and was very interested in what I was learning right now and what I wanted to do in the future. I really think we made her day. Tommy's was a very interesting, delicious and fun experience filled with spills, singing and delicious food. I really had a great time with my friends. Last but not least, Gesu. That was our last performance ever, and it felt pretty special to me. We have all come such a long way since only a year ago! It was hilarious to see the kids call me "taco girl," and I have a feeling that nickname will stick. The chapel was probably my favorite place to perform because of the wonderful acoustics, and I had a blast with those kids. It's been such a wonderful year with this ensemble, and it was great to see how far we have come.

Maxine Gilligan: Recorder tour day was an amazing experience for me personally. Not only did I learn more about performing on the recorder, but I also learned how amazing it is to be able to perform in front of the children and elderly that we did. I felt really happy being able to do that for them, and I think that they all really appreciated our performance. I will be sad to have to leave the ensemble because it was a lot of fun participating in it. I think that it is one of the major things that I will miss about eighth grade.

Violet Webster: On tour day, I learned a lot. When we went to the Woodlands, I learned enjoying and playing music has no expiration date. We had people in their 80's singing along with us. I also learned that young children are some of the best audiences because they will only give you a response if they really liked your music, because they haven't been taught to be polite. It can give you some great feedback. Finally, I learned I should never get milkshakes on Friday the 13th, even if it is my birthday! Thanks so much for a great year!

Jessica Chang: Recorder Tour Day was a great bonding time for people in the class, which I liked. It was very relaxing, as well, like a day off. I think we all enjoyed playing for the people there, especially at the Woodlands. Being in this ensemble really widened my repertoire for the recorder and taught me a lot about the interesting history of the instrument.