

Council Rock North Marching Band

Hawaii Tour 2019

Tour Reflections by Wayne Bishop, CRN Band Director

You may have heard that the CR North High School Marching Band recently completed a performance tour of Hawaii. Most likely, you thought, “Wow, what an awesome vacation that must have been,” or something along those lines. While you would be absolutely correct in thinking that Hawaii truly is an island paradise with beautiful panoramic views and much better weather than Bucks County in February, this was much more than a vacation.

First and foremost, this was a performance tour. The primary goal was for students to understand a little of what it is like to perform on the road. This translates to a dizzying schedule, meticulous preparation, and a need for flexibility and adaptability. In less than one week, the Band performed a combined concert with William McKinley HS in Honolulu, participated in a Master Class with Dr. Jeff Boeckman at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, performed outdoor concerts at



Pearl Harbor

the USS Bowfin at Pearl Harbor and the Polynesian Cultural Center on the North Shore, shared a concert with the Royal Hawaiian Band at the Kapi'olani Bandstand in Waikiki, performed on the main stage at the massive Ala Moana Center, and paraded on the dock of the USS Missouri. Each performance opportunity and venue was quite unique, offering a variety of challenges to overcome. Students were faced with vastly different acoustic environments, constantly changing weather (including some gusty winds and brief pockets of

“liquid sunshine”), and even new equipment from one performance to the next. Professional musicians regularly face these sort of obstacles as well, and it was great to see the students rise up and succeed in these situations. Seven performances in six days is no easy task, but this group made it look and sound effortless!

Aside from the musical accomplishments on tour, the students had the opportunity to experience a greater sense of independence than usual for a week. As they quickly learned, this meant a greater amount of responsibility. For many students, this was their



Polynesian Cultural Center

first time flying, their first time away from home for longer than a weekend, and their first time away from their parents for any extended amount of time. As the tour continued, students continued to pick up ways of organizing their daily schedule, setting alarms to keep track of time, making plans with groups to ensure that no one was left alone during “free time” in Honolulu, and generally making sure they were where they were supposed to be with what they needed at the correct time. The Band represented Council Rock with well at the Pearl Harbor, understanding the gravity of the location, and

showing utmost respect for what took place there and what that area means today. The students made such an impression on the students from McKinley High School that we ended up running into a few throughout the rest of our stay in Hawaii including some of our performances, and our hike up Diamond Head Crater.

It is my sincere hope that the students remember what they learned on this tour for the rest of their lives. And while the musical experiences, the life lessons, the memories with friends, and the beautiful sights will be easily remembered, there is one experience that I hope they remember above all else. When the Band performed at the USS Bowfin at Pearl Harbor, they were able to visit the museums,

watch a video including footage from the attack in 1941, and take a ferry ride into the harbor to see the final resting place of the USS Arizona and the corresponding memorial. Throughout the morning, we learned that the average age of the people who lost their lives on the morning of the attack was 18-20. Immediately following learning in-depth about the tragic events of the attack, the students were able to perform a piece commemorating the events of Dec. 7th, 1941 on that very site. I struggle to think of a way to better honor the sacrifices of those who lost their lives at Pearl Harbor than a group of similarly aged students performing a piece dedicated to them.



Master Class at University of Hawaii



Council Rock North and William McKinley combined band



Ala Moana Center performance



Performing at the USS Bowfin, Pearl Harbor