**2SHCORCH2023\_Transcript**

- At this time, I would like to introduce the WSMA Orchestra Percussion Ensemble.

[audience applauding]

[mellow percussion music]

[audience applauding]

And now it is my distinct privilege to introduce you to the 2023 WSMA High School State Honors Orchestra and their esteemed Conductor, Robert Hasty.

[audience applauding]

[upbeat orchestral music]

[audience applauding]

[dramatic upbeat orchestral music]

[audience applauding]

- Thank you so much. Thank you so much for your enthusiastic applause. I don't know about you, but that was one of the first classical music pieces that I ever heard as a kid because of "Bugs Bunny"

[audience laughing]

and "Tom and Jerry". But what a great joy it is to bring this music to these kids. So grateful for the association that invited me to work with these amazing students. I really appreciate this association because of the support. All these colleagues who came out on stage, could not have done it without them. I'm so grateful. Another round of applause for those coaches.

[audience applauding]

It's always a challenge to choose music for a group that, first of all, hasn't even put together yet. They didn't exist back in January, so it's always a challenge to pick music. But one of the things that I appreciate about the association, is that I was told that it's very important to the association that we have new music composed by today's most important composers. And we saw the wind ensemble, the honor band perform such great works by composers here today who are sitting down there. It's so great. And so for us orchestra conductors it's a little bit more challenging because we tend to perform a lot of the old music like what you just heard. But I immediately knew who to call when I wanted to find some new music. And it's my friend and colleague, Roger Zare who composed the next piece. And I'm gonna invite him to come to the stage. Would you welcome Roger Zare, the composer?

[audience applauding]

Be careful, don't give him too much applause. Otherwise, composers will still want to, they'll come on stage more often. Okay.

[audience laughing]

But I'm so grateful again to the association that they were willing to bring him. He teaches at Appalachian State in Boone, North Carolina and he just flew in last night, got to work with the kids, and he had a few words. - Well, first thank you to the WSMA for bringing me out here. It's been such a pleasure to work with these wonderful musicians behind me both in June and then in person today.

I grew up always loving, looking up at the sky and looking up at the night sky and just imagining. I loved astronomy. Science fiction was my favorite genre. And I remember watching "Star Wars" more times than I could count when I was a kid. I also remember seeing in the late 1990s the Comet Hale-Bopp flew by and was a really dazzling show. It was bright, it was huge in the sky and it was really inspiring to see things like that which scientists could find, astronomers could find, and then we could all see. And a few years ago, a comet flew by as well. And it was the first time that I was able to see such a bright comet since seeing Hale-Bopp. And it also happened to be in the year 2020 when we were all stuck at home for a good part of that year. And things were not great, but nature put on a show. And this piece is about the journey of that comet from way deep in the outer solar system to flying by the earth, putting on that show and then flying way back out to the outskirts of the solar system. I think this comet orbits the sun once every 7,000 years, if I remember right. So we're not gonna see it again in our lifetimes. And it was very exciting for me to see this. And when I wrote this piece, I think the excitement and the wonderment and the-- the awe that I saw of this celestial body gracing our skies really worked its way into the music from the opening clarinet solo that represents this comet from afar, to all the fast and lyrical lines that happen throughout the piece. So this is, it's a very cinematic piece. Very much inspired by the music that I would hear over and over when listening or when watching movies like "Star Wars". And so this is "Neowise".

[audience applauding]

[orchestral instruments tuning]

["Neowise" composed by Roger Zare]

[dramatic orchestral music]

[audience applauding]

- Thank you so much. We're looking forward to performing this last piece. And I have to echo my colleague who conducted the honor band that this, I know it's for them, but wow. What joy, what joy these students gave me not just for their musicianship, but their for their enthusiasm, their love of music, their love of each other, and wow, I was impressed. Did you know that they had a talent show during camp? I mean, there was this one point where somebody played this beautiful piano solo and then another one just screamed and ran up on stage. That was amazing. Okay, the talent and creativity providing such joy. But I want to thank you guys for giving me the joy this time. Thank you so much.

[audience applauding]

[upbeat orchestral music]

[audience applauding]

[audience cheering]