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News

Trumpeters attempt to blow through Guinness record: Southington Brass Blast raises 'awareness to the importance of music education'

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By Lluvia Mares
staff writer

SOUTHINGTON — More than 300 trumpet players of all levels and ages performed together harmoniously as they attempted to break the world record for the largest trumpet ensemble Saturday.

Although the Southington Brass Blast event did not break the Guinness World Record for the largest trumpet ensemble, co-organizer Marty Semmel said it went better than he could have ever imagined.

The current record, according to Semmel, is held by a group of Bolivians who gathered some 1,100 trumpeters.

"Having all of these trumpet players together at one event was awesome," said Semmel, participant and principal of Southington High School. "I have a 10-year-old daughter who also plays the trumpet, so it was nice to have her playing right next to me."

Participants arrived early to practice together for the first time before performing for the audience.

Each participant was given one of four parts to play from each song, said Semmel. The songs included, "The Star-Spangled Banner," "America the Beautiful" and "Gonna Fly Now," best known as theme from "Rocky."

"It was inspiring," said Betsy Casey, who was there to see the performance. "It was so patriotic, not overwhelming at all, the way the music just blended together was very nice."

Casey said the best part of the show was just watching all the little children performing with their fathers, mothers, and grandparents.

"It was really cool to see them playing together, you could see three different generations together on that field."

Martin London, 13, of Wethersfield said he really enjoyed performing with all the other trumpet players, despite being "bummed out" that they didn't break the world record.

"It was amazing to see a band that big," said Russell London, Martin's father. "It was beautiful hearing all those trumpets just come together so nicely. For as little practice as they had, they did an amazing job."

Event organizer, Eric Semmel said the memory of Frank Hooper, his music teacher when he was growing up in Windsor,

inspired him to launch the Southington Brass Ensemble a year ago as a way for parents to perform music with their children and to raise money for organizations supporting students and musicians. Semmel came up with the idea of the Brass Blast to raise more money. Although the event was free and opened to the public, spectators were encouraged to give a donation and participants paid \$20 to perform. All the proceeds will go to the Mill Foundation for Kids, the Southington High School Band Backers, and the Connecticut Music Educators Association.

"This was not just about breaking a record, it was also a way to bring awareness to the importance of music education, while at the same time raising money for youth in music, and other musical organizations," said Joanne Kelleher, public relations for Southington Brass Blast.

Although Semmel wasn't able to get the 1,200 trumpet players he needed to break the record, he said he will try again next year.

The event was sponsored by the Southington Arts Council and brass instrument manufacturer E.K. Blessing, which donated a trumpet which was raffled off at the event.

For more information on the Southington Brass band or for information of future events, visit www.southingtonbrass.com.

Lluvia Mares can be reached at (860) 584-0504, ext. 7238, or at lmares@bristolpress.com.

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