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Wednesday, April 9, 2008

Fallsmead fourth-graders join BSO musicians in concert

By Melissa J. Brorberg | Staff Writer
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More than 80 fourth-graders joined three oboists from the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra for a musical journey to Ireland as they performed a lilting melody for students and teachers at Fallsmead Elementary School on Friday morning.

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Fingers flew up and down recorders and beat against drums as the young musicians played pieces of a six-minute song called "Irish Fantasy."

The piece was written by Baltimore Symphony Orchestra bassist Jonathan Jensen and based on an Irish folk song titled "The Red Haired Man's Wife."

The Rockville school is one of only five county elementary schools participating this year in a Baltimore Symphony Orchestra pilot called "Themes and Variations," part of the "BSO on the Go" outreach program.

The program involves orchestra musicians visiting the school twice — first to introduce the song and provide sheet music to the students and then to perform with them.

The oboists, part of a group called Trio La Milpa (Spanish for cornfield), named for a Richmond, Va., Mexican restaurant where the group members frequently ate when they played for the Richmond Symphony, first went to Fallsmead on March 3. The students were tasked with learning the song in just a few weeks with help from music teacher Cheryl Smoker.

Gently waving her arms and snapping her fingers, Smoker conducted the young musicians as they joined in on certain parts of the song. The audience of third-grade recorder students, kindergarten students and teachers seemed transfixed during the performance, but burst into



Brian Lewis/The Gazette
 Katherine Newkoman, an oboist with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, works with Fallsmead Elementary School fourth-grader Simon Melamed during a concert at the Rockville school on Friday.

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