

groups of BSO musicians into schools for classroom-based music instruction. This year, musicians have made 77 appearances at 38 county schools. The BSO began playing at the Music Center at Strathmore when it opened in 2005.

The trio had first visited March 3 to present Themes and Variations, a special program this year in which musicians visit five county schools to introduce a musical theme and leave sheet music for students to learn on recorders with their music teacher. The musicians then return to play the music with the students in front of the student body.

The other schools involved in the pilot program are Judith Resnick Elementary School in [Gaithersburg](#), Seven Locks Elementary School in [Bethesda](#), Travilah Elementary School in [North Potomac](#) and Damascus Elementary School.

In addition to this spring's visits to Fallsmead, the trio had visited the students last year, when they were in third grade, to present a program that introduced various instruments. "We feel really, really thrilled that they're able to come here two years in a row," said Smoker, who was one of Sandy Lisicky's students 14 years ago.

The trio members said they enjoy going into schools for the BSO On-the-Go program because they can connect with students.

"They're going to ask questions," Michael Lisicky said. "When you go to a concert, you can't ask questions."

The experience, he added, "is intimate."

At Fallsmead, students practiced a piece called "Irish Fantasy," by BSO bassist Jonathan Jensen. During rehearsal sessions, the students performing simpler variations stood at music stands behind the trio, and those playing more difficult parts sat on the floor in front of the musicians.

"We're going to put this piece together, so we're going to go right to work," Michael Lisicky said. "So the rule today is only playing when we ask you to."

Once the students had practiced their parts several times with the trio, they played the piece for the third-graders and kindergartners, staring intently at their music, glancing up at the musicians and Smoker for their cues.

For Allie Titus, 10, performing was a bit nerve-racking, mostly because she moved from [Germany](#) just a month ago and didn't have as much experience as the other students, who have been playing the recorder since third grade.

"It's kind of hard figuring out where you put your fingers the first time," she said.

Ten-year-old Robby Pine said the rehearsal helped him become more confident as he performed for his schoolmates because he could hear how he and the other fourth-graders improved as they practiced.

"It really was fun to do this," he said. "It really was a once-in-a-long-time chance, and only the fourth-graders get to do it."