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## Folsom, Concert Mar.07



At a time of the morning when most of us are reaching over to hit the snooze buttons on our alarm clocks, the students in the orchestra at Huntington Middle School are tuning up their violins and getting ready to play. Rehearsals begin at 7:05 a.m. "I'm just happy that the kids are dedicated enough to come out that early. It shows their desire to work," says Rob Folsom, Huntington English and Music teacher and leader of the school's orchestral programs. The results of such tremendous dedication can be heard next Wednesday, March 14th, when the orchestra gives a performance in Huntington Auditorium at 7 p.m.

The orchestra at Huntington is a string orchestra, made up of just violins, violas, cellos, and basses. Actually, there are at present no basses, and there is a shortage of violas, as well. No matter, the orchestra plays on – and wins awards for its playing. Last year, in its first year of competition at the Music in the Parks Festival in Anaheim, the Huntington Orchestra took two First Prizes: in the string orchestra category; and in the overall orchestral category. Not bad for an orchestra in only its seventh year of existence. Huntington had no orchestra when Mr. Folsom was hired to teach English there in 1998. The orchestra had been eliminated twenty-five years earlier. When principal Gary McGuigan decided to revive the orchestra in 2000, Mr. Folsom eagerly took on the task. Having played the violin professionally as a freelance musician and as a member of the Pacific Symphony and the California Philharmonic he was a logical choice to lead the orchestra. Mr. Folsom grew up in a musical household. His father, who was his first violin teacher, studied with Jascha Heifetz. His grandfathers were also musicians – one a jazz saxophonist, the other a tenor who sang in the movies with MGM musical star Kathryn Grayson. Mr. Folsom has recently recorded a CD playing the electric violin, called "Music for the Soul." The album features melodies he has always loved, not necessarily songs written for his instrument, but that he "always thought would sound good on the violin." Mr. Folsom brings that same passion to his work with the students in the orchestra. "The string orchestra is an ensemble that has a strong repertoire of music written for it, especially from the baroque period: Bach, Vivaldi and Handel" says Mr. Folsom. Next Wednesday, the orchestra will also play more contemporary works, such as John Rutter's popular "Suite for Strings," as well as selections from "Phantom of the Opera" and "Pirates of the Caribbean." So come hear the award-winning Huntington Middle School Orchestra on March 14th. Huntington Auditorium is located at 1700 Huntington Drive. Admission is free.