

NOT so silent SOLO

Senior Stephanie Blais reflects on her opportunity to carry on the tradition of singing the famous song at the Winter Concert

Almost every choir kid and parent knows about *The Lord Bless* song that everyone holds hands for and sings together at the end of every concert, but the *Silent Night* solo, performed only during the Winter Concert every year, was a cherished tradition held in the Westlake choir program.

In December, senior soprano Stephanie Blais was thrilled to be selected to sing the familiar song.

"It's a beautiful solo that was really fun to perform," Blais said. "The audition was very comfortable. One day during class, Mr. Snouffer just asked anyone who wanted to try out to gather around the piano."



Stephanie Blais, 12

Choir members who auditioned sang the song as a group with director Ed Snouffer accompanying them and then sang the solo individually.

"All choir tryouts are generally not stressful because everyone supports and encourages one another," Blais said. "When you feel comfortable, it's easier to sing confidently."

Once the directors decided on Blais, they recognized her in class.

"I immediately got congratulated by my peers," Blais said. "My friends were really excited for me."

Even though senior Catherine Kent also tried out for the solo, she showed lots of love toward Blais once the soloist was announced.

"Catherine really put herself out there and sounded great, and when they announced I had gotten the solo, she was happy and excited for me instead of being disappointed that she didn't get it," Blais said. "She's very selfless and is always putting others first."

Because of the fame of the piece of music, the senior believed she had a lot to accomplish with the solo.

"People expect to be blown away by this solo, so I had to bring a lot to the table," Blais said. "In the end, I did my best and made my mom cry, so I guess I did all right."



sydney imhoff



racic fernandez

sing it loud

While waiting for the underclassmen to show up, junior Lana Picone strums her guitar and sings with her squad, Squad Famous. The upperclassmen arrived at Mo Ranch a day early and prepared for their "buddies." "Our squad was super fun," Picone said, "and we had a great theme and fun people that were into it."

season's greetings

Sporting a Santa hat, senior Walker Register grabs the microphone and belts the song *Winter Wonderland* at the Winter Concert on Dec. 4. "I felt a lot of motivation to really sell the performance," Register said. "I mean, I'm Walker."

some & MORE

fresh sounds

"I was put in classes with people who I wouldn't be in classes with otherwise, and I've met some of my closest friends."

Andie Giles, 9

"Choir has allowed me to make new friends and has taught me to work hard for what I want."

CC Gruber, 10

"Choir has helped me make a lot of friends I never would've expected to be friends with."

Chase Ernst, 9

"We get to really bond with the girls in our sections. We know when to be serious and when to joke around and have fun."

Julia Flowers, 10

"I have made a lot of friends in choir, and it has helped me grow in my singing abilities."

Emerson Stack, 9

"The choir room is full of trust and friendship, not to mention wonderful music. Music is magic, especially with Westlake."

Lucas Revering, 10



audrey sutter

all-stars

With All-Region Choir auditions coming up, sophomores Varsha Gopal, Tara Kyaw and freshmen Emma Booth and Sanjana Likki rehearse the song *Gloria in Excelsis*. "I had a great time doing choir this year," Booth said. "It was fun to be around others who have the same passion."



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MO COMPETITION

Fighting in a game of tug-of-war, junior Cal Ussery and senior Charly Hibler lead Squad Ninja to victory against Squad Lifeguards at Mo Ranch. "This was my third year at Mo Ranch, and it's great because every underclassman is paired with an upperclassman so everyone gets to know each other," Ussery said. "My favorite part about being in Squad Ninja was having an awesome group with cool costumes."

it's our THING

all for one

1 Given the opportunity to sing a solo at the Winter Concert on Dec. 4, senior Eugene Gase performs *Celebrate Me Home* by Kenny Loggins. "As you can imagine, I was pretty terrified," Gase said, "but knowing that the choir teachers put their trust in me was really awesome. It was one of the most fun experiences of high school for me."

2 During one of their holiday season public appearances, the Madrigals perform carols in the Texas State Capitol rotunda. Both the Madrigals and Chamber Women took time to sing in venues all over Austin during the holiday season. "The acoustics were amazing in the Capitol, which made the music sound even more beautiful than it already was, and there was a really cute group of little kids touring the Capitol who stopped to listen to us for a little while," senior Nicole Jefferson said. "I felt really happy to be a part of such a special event." **3** Partners senior Ellise Johnson and junior Ben Roberts dance together while singing *Almost Like Being In Love*. "I really enjoyed being a part of Madrigals," Roberts said. "I love the jazz songs we perform, but we also get to do contemporary chamber music, Christmas carols and songs in other languages."



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