

# Student's violin abilities 'Crystal' clear

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Managing Editor

For some, music is black and white, circles and lines, or keys and bows. But for others, like sophomore Crystal Qi, it brings a splash of color to life.

Qi is among those who have learned first hand the importance of music. At age 15, Qi already has become an accomplished violinist.

For the past two years, the young musician has won many awards in prestigious music competitions, including first in the Grandquist Geneva Competition, second in the Society of American Musicians Competition and third in the Musical Festival in Honor of Confucius Competition.

According to Qi, these competitions have shaped her as a musician.

"Competing gives me more opportunities to improve and an idea of what I'm missing in my playing," Qi said.

Qi first became involved in music when she started playing the piano at age six. Later, she picked up the violin and evolved from a mediocre violinist to a passionate musician.

Qi recalls her lack of emotion when she first started playing the violin.

"I didn't have any feeling when I was little. I just got the idea that I wanted to play violin, and my dad started teaching me to play," Qi said.

However, as her music career progressed, Qi discovered the value of her talent.

"Now I can never imagine my life without playing the violin. I think of music as something really deep and personal," Qi said.

Along with Qi's talent and dedication to the violin, she is part of a musical legacy. She is the third generation of serious musicians, and her parents, Angela Wang and Guangzhi Qi, both currently teach music.

Qi's father believes that the way she was raised impacted her view of music.

"She has grown up around music so that now music has become a part of who she is," Guangzi Qi said.

Both of Qi's parents have been very supportive of her talent and accomplishments and have helped her hone this talent.

"When she started, she was shy. But through working hard and with the help of natural talent and good technique, she has gained confidence. We always support her," Wang said.

In an effort to expand her musical perspective, Qi attended both the Pilzen International Music Academy and the Bowdion International Music Camp in Europe last summer.

"In Europe I was forced into an environment with only music. All I could do was practice and listen to others play, so I learned how to apply a lot of new things into my own music," Qi said.

Currently, Qi is trying to apply her own individuality



Logue photo by Jessica Feng

**HIDE AND STRING.** Sophomore Crystal Qi is an accomplished violinist and has won many prestigious awards.

to the classic pieces of the great composers.

"I want to achieve my own unique feeling when I play so that I can be different from everyone else," she said.

As for the future, she aspires to make her musical talent into more than a hobby.

"I would like to perform professionally and possibly be in a quartet," Qi said. "I want to travel the world and play my music."



Logue photo by Melissa Fioretto

**GAME TIME.** Sophomore Dori Harkin plays the popular game *Guitar Hero* while sophomore Michelle Joos watches. One advantage of a competing game, *Rock Band*, is its variety of instruments for multiplayer use.

## Rock Band overtakes Guitar Hero

Jennifer Lee  
Staff Writer

Palms sweaty from the strong grasp of the guitar, heart pumping to the rhythmic beat of the drums, and ears popping from the voice transforming this noise to music—this is the *Rock Band* experience.

Available on PS2, PS3 and Xbox 360, *Rock Band* has taken interactive gaming to the next level. Since its release in November, gamers of all ages have been recreating the thrill of rock-and-roll music in their own homes.

Now in its third installment, *Guitar Hero* initiated the instrumental-gaming revolution. Instead of a full band, *Guitar Hero* is limited to the guitarist. Senior Keelin Josif compares the two games.

"*Rock Band* dominates *Guitar Hero* because *Guitar Hero* only allows two people to play, so it's not fun in a group atmosphere," Josif said. "On *Rock Band*, you can have fun with four people, so it's more social."

Sophomore Michael Rumps agrees, but also adds that *Guitar Hero* has the edge on songs.

"The *Guitar Hero* songs are more fun, but the idea of an entire band makes *Rock Band* better," Rumps said.

Because of the new variety of instruments from which to choose, including the guitar, bass, drum set and vocals, Rumps has a difficult time selecting his favorite.

"For me, the fundamental choice will always be the guitar, but the most fun and challenging are the drums," Rumps says.

Josif, however, has a clear winner for her favorite instrument.

"I love the drums because it's totally different from *Guitar Hero*," Josif said. "I've never played before, so playing on *Rock Band* is the closest I can get to playing the drums."

Junior Michael Gyetvay agrees with Josif's choice.

"I like the drums because it's challenging," Gyetvay said. "I've also played the drums before and the drums on the *Rock Band* are the most realistic instrument."

Although great fun, Gyetvay has several complaints about this game.

"I don't like how at the end,

*Rock Band* goes to harder levels," Gyetvay said. "I always fail at expert, so I can't beat the game. And sometimes, when you strum the guitar, it doesn't match what's on the screen, so you have to strum earlier."

Rumps also says the new instruments are problematic.

"The new guitars are pretty bad. I think the company should change the guitar because so many people are having difficulties with the guitar," Rumps said. "I recently sent one in because there were so many problems with it."

Josif has another complaint with the *Rock Band* guitar.

"It's not realistic for the guitar because you're just pushing buttons, and there are no strings," Josif said. "It's more realistic for singing because you just have to match the pitch."

Despite these setbacks, be forewarned: *Rock Band* may immediately cause an addiction that may distract students from their studies during the school week.

"I've played every day since I bought [*Rock Band*]," Josif said. "I always play when I have free time or when people are over."

## Valentine's Day loses one tradition, maintains another

Katie Cannon  
Staff Writer

Walking down the busy halls in mid-February, everything is a blur of red, white and pink. Cupid hangs from the ceiling, and valentines are handed out in the halls. In past years, Valentine's Day usually brought Vocal Valentines as well, but the tradition now has been eliminated.

Fremd choir director Robert Green says several reasons influenced the decision to end Vocal Valentines, which were songs performed by the choirs and delivered to students during class.

"I strongly believe in trying new things," Green said. "We reorganized the choirs, so it was a good year to change."

Additionally, attendance became a concern because students were missing a day of class to perform.

"I've been asked to reduce the time students are out of school," Green said. "[We are] trying to find an alternative, which may or may not be a good change. Maybe we'll have a little coffee house performance or some sort of showcase where we can present"

Prior to their elimination, Vocal Valentines served a purpose in developing the choir. Students were separated into groups and were in charge of organizing practices and rehearsing on their own time.

"Students practiced more for Vocal Valentines than any other time of the year," Green said. "It built leadership. Students need to learn to harmonize. I think my students as a whole are disappointed [that this was cancelled]."

Green is not sure why the student body came to embrace the Vocal Valentines, commenting that students are not always very supportive of the arts.

"Do students just like to have class interrupted by the Vocal Valentines, or does it actually contribute to the school morale?" Green asked. "In some ways I'm hoping the students will rise up [to support Vocal Valentines]."

Junior Michelle Lombardo, who has sent and received these Valentines, is disappointed that this tradition has been cancelled.

"I heard that they were cancelled, and it made me really sad," Lombardo said. "They were so fun!"

Vocal Valentines have become a tradition to the point that freshmen have heard about them.

"I heard they were a lot of fun," freshman Alwina Liu said. "It sounded pretty cool."

Although students may miss Vocal Valentines this year, the matchmaker survey, provided by the computer club, will still be available for purchase for \$2 on Feb 13-14. The money raised will go toward school activities like Writers Week.

The surveys, which are usually filled out during English class, are also popular among students. Sophomore Jenny Chiang got her survey last year and is planning to get it again.

"It was really funny, especially the aftermath—people asking each other who they got," Chiang said. "The day after I got my results, I was comparing with my friend, and I saw that her worst enemy was on the top of her most compatible list."