

# A Grammy for Grangeville?

- **December 3rd, 2009**
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By Kerri Sandaine of the Tribune

High school music department is a finalist in special categories



Grangeville High School's music program, including the concert band, is nominated for ...



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GRANGEVILLE - When you think of the Grammy awards, Grangeville High School's music department is probably not the first thing that pops into your mind.

That could change next spring if the rural Idaho school is successful in its bid to bring home a prestigious award associated with the Grammys.

The high school music department, led by teacher Kathy Stefani, has made the list of finalists in two "Grammy in the Schools" categories. A panel of music educators and professionals determine the award winners, which will be announced in March.

"It's pretty much the coolest thing ever," said Amber Farmer, 17, choir president. "We're the smallest school that got nominated so it's really amazing."

Grangeville's music department is a finalist in the Enterprise Award category, which recognizes efforts made by schools that are economically underserved. It also is in the running for the Signature School category, which honors schools for outstanding music education programs. The Grammy Foundation, based in Santa Monica, Calif., oversees the awards and application process.

"I actually won it in the early '90s when I taught at Council, Idaho," said Stefani, who is in her fourth year at Grangeville. "I didn't know the Grammys had school categories until then."

The Grammys are presented each year by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences of the United States for outstanding achievements in the music industry. The top names in the business are honored at a televised event, but the schools program isn't part of the broadcast, Stefani said.

She doesn't know who nominated Grangeville's music department, but she suspects it stems from the band's visit to Disneyland last year. Promoters of music festivals conducted there may have submitted the high school's name after seeing Grangeville perform, she said.

After being nominated, Stefani had to submit a lengthy application on behalf of the department to be considered as a finalist. She and the 110 students in the program were recently notified they made the cut.

"I think it's pretty exciting," said Tanner Haage, 16, band president.

Grangeville is the only Idaho school on the Signature School list. Other Northwest finalists are in Portland and Salem, Ore., Seattle and the Spokane Valley. The schools that win will receive monetary awards.

The 100 finalists had to submit recordings and more paperwork after advancing to the next round.

"I sent it off last week, along with a list of all the songs every class has done during the past calendar year so they can judge the level of difficulty," Stefani said. "It took a tremendous amount of work and the kids helped. Whether we win or not, it was amazing just to step back and see what we've done. "

Farmer and other students credit their teacher with the music department's success.

"Mrs. Stefani has really grown the program," Farmer said. "When I was a freshman, there were like 15 people in band and now there's 50. She helps us grow as performers."

"She puts us in front of every town gathering," Haage said. "She gets us out in public."

In addition to performing at local events, the students and Stefani say they're looking forward to representing the community in the Grammy in the Schools contest.

"The kids understand their first priority is to sound good for Grangeville," Stefani said. "They're just outstanding. We have a lot of fun."

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