

Students Learn the True Meaning of “Music Appreciation” on Trip to San Francisco Symphony

16 November 2018



Though students aren't known for taking pleasure in getting up early, 30 of them from Monica Ambalal's music class gladly boarded a bus before 8 a.m. on October 18 headed to the SF Symphony (Davies Symphony Hall) to attend a 2-1/2 hour early-morning rehearsal of music by Ravel, Debussy, and Bartok. For many of them, like Alex, it was the first time they had been to the performance of a large orchestra.

“It was a great opportunity to go to a symphony for the first time,” he says. “The mixture of sounds from every instrument came together so smoothly. I really enjoyed it.”

Ms. Ambalal has been taking her students to live performances for as long as she has been teaching music. “Nothing compares to a live orchestra for both aural and visual experiences,” she says. “The students have so many questions when they return about the percussion section, the layout of the violins, the lighting in the hall. Those are things we could never think to talk about just by simply watching a YouTube video.”

She also believes it's important to show her students that opportunities exist in their own communities and that this music is not just geared for the wealthy or elite anymore. “I show our students that young people and people of color are out there singing opera, playing cello at Carnegie Hall, and thriving in conservatories. Classical music is accessible today, and I'm here to guide students in finding opportunities to hear it.”