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## Frenship student prepares to perform at Carnegie Hall

By RAY GLASS

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Clay Edwards flips through a handful of music compact discs, past the ZZ Top and other professional groups, and finds a disc to play for a visitor.

"They don't sound like a high school band," Edwards says as the living room of his West Lubbock home is filled with music from a performance by Frenship High School musicians, including a trumpet solo by his son, Matthew.

That performance was three years ago, when Matt Edwards was just emerging as one of the top young musicians in Texas. Now the three-time all-state musician, a 17-year-old Frenship High senior, is headed to New York to perform with the 2006 National Festival Orchestra in Carnegie Hall.

"I'm proud he's playing at Carnegie Hall, but, to me, the effort he puts into each performance is no different," Clay says. "Carnegie Hall is a more prestigious place, but I'm proud any time he plays for anybody."

Other Frenship High musicians can appreciate the honor of being selected to participate in the five-day residency program that culminates with a Jan. 16 concert under the leadership of conductor Benjamin Zander.

"That's an exciting opportunity," says percussionist Kyle Billett, also a senior and one of Matt's friends. "It's pretty hard to get into that, so props to him.

"I think it's going to be absolutely amazing to be with outstanding musicians from across the country. People just like him in every single section. I think it's going to be awesome."



Matthew Edwards, a Frenship High School senior, will play Carnegie Hall on Jan. 16 with the 2006 National Festival Orchestra.

Performing in the famed facility has been among Matt's dreams since soon after he began playing the trumpet in the sixth grade.

"Ever since I really discovered I was halfway decent on the trumpet, I've always wanted to play Carnegie Hall," he says.

"I've seen in movies all these famous musicians playing in this awe-inspiring hall. I figured, 'Hey, it'd be really cool to play there, so why not?' "

Music emerged as a major part of Matt's life when he began piano lessons in the first grade. He credits his older sister, Melissa, with helping ignite that passion. She had started piano lessons a couple of years earlier.

"Before I even started lessons, she was bringing home all these cool things you can do on the piano, so I thought, 'I might want to try this,' " he says.

Melissa eventually learned to play the flute, as well, again getting her younger brother interested in other instruments. He selected the trumpet when it came time to sign up for an instrument in the sixth grade.

Frenship High band director Tom SoRelle had tried to steer Matt to the bassoon, but the youngster had other ideas.

"Matt was saying, 'I want to play the trumpet. I want to play the trumpet,'" says Clay, who accompanied his son to choose an instrument at school. "I thought, 'OK, it'd be neat to play something you could play at a party.' "

Denise Edwards, who says both her children were born with musical talent, and her husband arranged for private lessons for Melissa and Matt once their potential became obvious.

"I know nothing about music," Clay says, "But I could tell by the way they played and the way they were looked at by their peers that they had something extra.

"It's no different watching Matt play the trumpet on stage than it is for a father watching his son play a position on the football team. I almost sometimes kind of live through that, because I never was a performer of any type."

Melissa, now a senior animal science major at Texas Tech, describes her brother as quite talented.

"I definitely think he'll be going somewhere," she says, hinting at a career in music.

Matt says he is considering careers as a musical performer or music educator. He will audition for college scholarships at Tech, Baylor University, Southern Methodist University and Northwestern University in the next three months, and also would like to schedule auditions at the University of Michigan and Indiana University.

"My biggest dream has always been to perform professionally for a major orchestra," he says. "I've just got to see what it's like out there. I've just been kind of confined here in the world of high school band. I've never really gotten out into the professional world to see how things really work and see if that's what I want."



Matthew Edwards, second from right, was inspired to discover his musical abilities by his sister, Melissa, second from left. They are the children of Clay and Denise Edwards. Matthew will play Carnegie Hall this month with the 2006 National Festival Orchestra.

Denise says performing seems to come naturally to her son.

"It's his real true love and passion," she says. "He seems to be in his element when he's on stage performing."

Melissa, an all-state musician in her own right, says her brother is extremely motivated.

"I can't even see any stress or tension in him, really, when he's playing," she says. "He knows what he wants, and he will go at any measure to get it. And he's a fun guy."

There is definitely no musical rivalry between the siblings, who occasionally played piano duets as youngsters.

"We're not really rivals in any way," Matt says. "She's a very good musician."

Melissa has another perspective.

"I still have to say I'm probably better on the piano," she says, "But he's better on the trumpet than I am on the flute, definitely."