Hopewell Elementary has the ‘Blues’

BY DEBbie HIGHTOWER

TRINITY — Blues resounded in Hopewell Elementary School gymnasium, but no one was frowning. Terry MunCannon, Mike Thomas and Steve Headen brought music — and history — during a recent visit to the school as part of a Blues in the Schools program. During the Nov. 24 performance heads bobbed, toes tapped and hands clapped.

“We just want them to learn and have a good time,” said bass guitarist Headen.

MunCannon and his wife, Janice, collaborate as V-Muse Productions to bring programs such as Blues in the Schools to the Piedmont area. With sponsorship from John and Malinda Ferree and Sam Ramsey of Chic-fil-A Hopewell Elementary School was the first Randolph County School to host a Blues in the Schools program.

By a show of hands Hopewell students indicated that some were familiar with rock music, others with country music but almost none of them knew anything about the Blues.

Between songs MunCannon brought students knowledge from the ground up on the music genre.

“The Blues were born in the north Mississippi Delta area after the Civil War,” MunCannon explained. “The Blues contain elements of African American tunes and church music. To begin with, it was not written down but was passed down from person to person.”

Sometime around 1890, the Blues emerged as a distinct African-American art form. The field hollers and black spirituals often sang by workers were a way to pass the time but often contained hidden messages.

The clear voices of all three band members rang out during a field holler in which no instruments are used.

Well, who’s that writin’?
John the revelator.

Who’s that writin’?
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Blues

from the front page

MunCannon and his wife Janice MunCannon collaborate as V-Muse Productions to bring programs such as Blues in the Schools to the Piedmont area. Here, MunCannon demonstrates the use of the lap steel guitar, which resembles the sound made by an organ. He told students that in years past the instrument was used by churches who couldn’t afford an organ.

Musician Terry MunCannon and his wife Janice MunCannon collaborate as V-Muse Productions to bring programs such as Blues in the Schools to the Piedmont area. Here, MunCannon demonstrates the use of the lap steel guitar, which resembles the sound made by an organ. He told students that in years past the instrument was used by churches who couldn’t afford an organ.

Budget cuts, a lot of times the first thing to get cut is music and the arts,” said MunCannon. “I’ve been involved in Blues in the Schools for more than a decade. Usually about 80 to 90 percent of the kids have never seen a live performance. After today’s performance we reached our 4,200th child. That really makes us happy.”

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