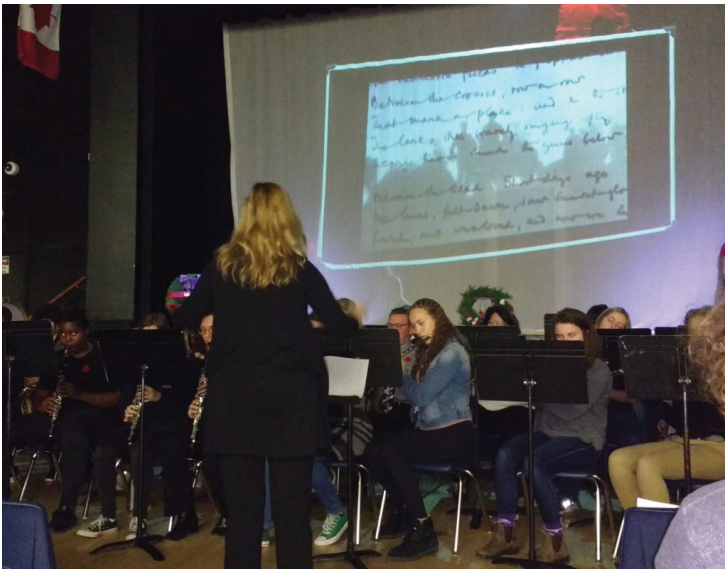


## ?Mending Hearts? a moving musical memorial put on by CDDHS students



Written By MARNI WALSH

Last Friday (Nov. 8) Central Dufferin District High School (CDDHS) students honoured Canada's military men and women with a musical memorial.

?Mending Hearts? highlighted the valiant efforts of the fighting and the fallen, with music performed by the school band as commemorative photos ran on a screen behind them. The music, selected by music teacher and conductor, Andrea Parsons, emphasized the sacrifices made for freedom.

Nov. 8 was a national day to mark Indigenous contributions to Canada's war efforts. In the spirit of reconciliation, CDDHS Vice Principal, Adam Rowden told the audience that ?students had prepared a program to bring light to the contributions made by Canada's Indigenous communities.?

According to Veterans Affairs Canada, 12,000 Indigenous soldiers fought in both the First and Second World War, as well as the Korean War. Despite their noted skill and valour, indigenous soldiers did not receive the same assistance as other soldiers under the War Veterans Allowance Act. Many indigenous veterans - having been absent from the reserve for military duty - found they no longer had Indian status, nor right to benefits available to non-Aboriginal veterans due to Indian Act restrictions.

Student speakers emphasised the theme saying, ? In Canada, we are working on healing the wounds of generations of inequality and discrimination placed upon First Nations peoples by the government of Canada as a whole. Even with this adversarial past, when the call sounded for Canadians to sign up for war, members of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities answered.?

?It's important that we covered, this theme this year, especially during treaty week,? said Andrea Parsons. ?It was important to the students - they wanted to recognize all the people who served and gave their lives for Canada.?

She added, ?The students are always eager to get on board with new ideas, and play unique music that represents everyone.?

She also noted her gratitude for the staff who participated in the band to help guide the student musicians.

The band's first piece, The Drums of the Saamis by Samuel R. Hazo, was a stunning and moving composition featuring percussion

and flutes. As conductor, Andrea Parsons, told the Free Press that Paul Ormandy, a professor at York University, had been working with six of the percussion students over the last month. Their impressive performance was testament to all they had achieved together.

The unmistakable indigenous rhythms of the drums, symbolizing 'bridges of peace,' filled the auditorium with beat as strong and true as the hearts of First Nations people. Drummer Hailey Hewitt from the Micmac Cree Tribe and coach, Paul Ormandy were featured along with flute soloists Katie Waters and Laura Wagstaff.

The 75th anniversary of the WWII Italian campaign, in which 93,000 Canadians, along with their allies, played a vital role, was also a focus of the memorial. Students from CDDHS travelled to Italy last year to visit the battlefields of World War II - to learn and to remember. This section of the memorial included a short film; a poem entitled 'PTSD,' written by student Sara Pluta and read by grade 12 student Nick Ho; and the band's second composition entitled 'Remember,' an Irish ballad, featuring musicians Ella Hawkins, Eden Lloyd, Annie Cameron and Aiden Hunt. Inspired by the folk melodies of Ireland, the students reflected on the ballad, and the composer's dedication to 'all our close friends and loved ones who have left this world...we remember.'