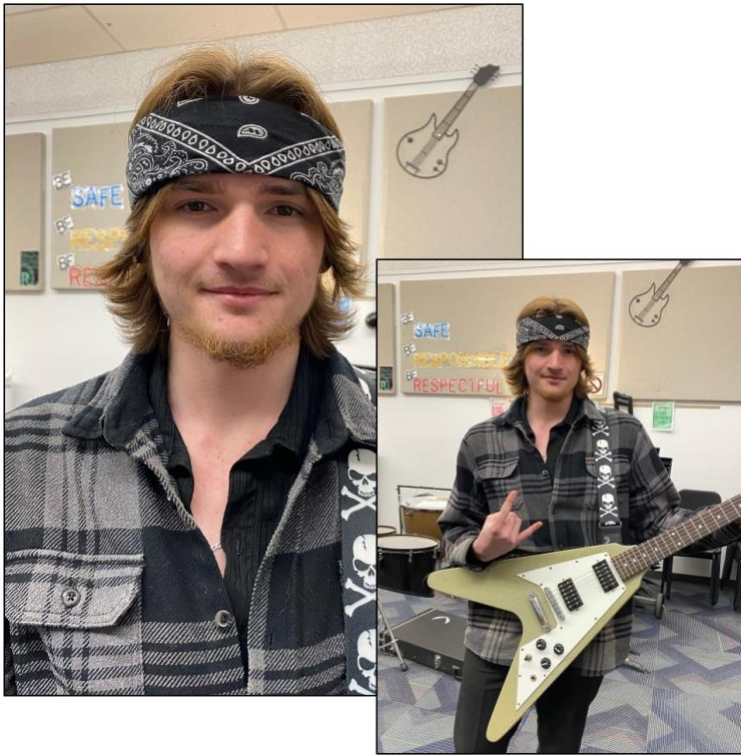


The Paradise Center Presents

Michael Byrd

Noxon School

Spotlight on the Arts – March 2024



Interviewed by Karen Thorson

“Spotlight on the Arts” by The Paradise Center honors and encourages students in the arts by highlighting their talent and acknowledging the support they receive through their schools and teachers.

It is always amazing to hear a student play a musical instrument like a professional performer. That is certainly the case with Michael Byrd, an 18-year-old senior at Noxon High School. What adds to the initial amazement about his talent is that he has only been playing guitar for a year.

Byrd has dreamed of playing the guitar since he was 5 or 6 years old. His dream was given a boost last year when an acquaintance gave him an old back acoustic guitar. He was immediately captivated by the sounds and the process of playing. The fact that the old guitar was less than perfect did not stop him. Now, a year later, he plays a shiny Flying V electric guitar like he has done it all his life.

In addition to natural musical talent, his road to success has been practice, practice, and more practice. He recalls practicing until his fingers hurt, losing all awareness of time. His music teacher at Noxon School, Sari Macarthur, says that he is an amazing student who gives his passion for guitar music the time and energy necessary to master it.

Inspiration for playing the guitar comes from some well-known bands, two of which are of particular interest – Motley Crue and Led Zeppelin. Byrd’s favorite music by Motley Crue is *Home Sweet Home* because it brings a kind of nostalgia that can be magical. He admires Led Zeppelin because they are always creative in their approach to a piece of music. His passion for music is evident when he describes these bands and their influences on him.

Byrd's advice to others interested in guitar music is to start with a basic instrument to determine your abilities and assess your level of interest. Then, he adds, move up to something more contemporary and expensive to continue your musical journey. He advocates not being afraid to live the life you want to live, wherever that may take you.

As a senior, Byrd is assessing next steps. In the immediate future, he wants time to savor family relationships before moving on to professional obligations. Along with two friends, he wants to start a band. When considering a vocation, he is drawn to welding for its creative possibilities and to construction for the experience of taking a bare piece of land and creating a structure.

There is no doubt, with dedication already shown in so many ways, that Byrd will be successful in whatever he decides to do. Undoubtedly, music will always be a part of his life.