



MINNECHAUG REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Hampden - Wilbraham Regional School District

621 Main Street, Wilbraham, Massachusetts 01095

(413) 596-9011



NEW ENGLAND
ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOLS
AND COLLEGES
1963 1975 1980

Robert A. Johnson
Principal

John K. Logan
Assistant Principal

Gary B. Petzold
Administrative Assistant
Student Activities

Dear Fruteland,

November 30, 1995

For the second year in a row, you have been a major component of my Blues unit for high school juniors. Your classroom workshop personally touches these students in a way few other performers can. They are impressed with your intimacy, professionalism, and musicianship. Your personal stories and obvious research into the history and roots of the genre cram a delicious amount of understandable information into their heads.

So many come to the classroom saying, "I'm not much of a blues fan" or "I don't want to hear sad music." However, they leave smiling and newly converted to the music. Your stories about Leadbelly, Robert Johnson, W.C. Handy, B.B. King, Muddy Waters, T-Bone Walker, and Louis Jordan exposes the students to the styles and lives of these players. Your expertise on the guitar allows you to illustrate Delta, ragtime, Piedmont, West coast and Chicago styles. Your modern interpretations of the songs they listen to cements the ties of Blues to today's music.

Upon reflection, many have written in journals, "I was surprised at how much I liked the music you played and the stories you told" and "The blues will be a part of what I regularly listen to and I have you to thank."

The quality of you as a dedicated educator is obvious in that after four draining 40 minute workshops in a row, you found the time and energy to perform for the educationally handicapped students because you did not want them to feel left out. The laughter and joy you brought to that isolated world is proof of your overall message, the blues heals. In addition, your evening performance each year has drawn over 100 members of the community into the world of the blues you love so much.

I can think of no stronger Blues in the Schools program than a teacher unit augmented by your workshops. The only drawback for me is that 40 minutes is not nearly enough time!!

As my students wrote, thank you for everything you brought into their lives!

Sincerely,

Art Tipaldi

Minnechaug Regional High School
Wilbraham, Mass. 01095