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Bass, how low can you go?

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South End native Joe Higgins walked away the champion of the 13th annual David Lapin Competition held last weekend at the Community Music Center of Boston (CMCB).

The competition drew about 37 music students from the Greater Boston area, and when the dust had settled, Higgins, an 18-year-old senior at the Boston Latin School, was selected as the best musician of the group.

Performers in the competition each play a different instrument — some play piano while others play trumpet — but Higgins walked away victorious playing a slightly unusual instrument, the double bass. It's the "lowest [instrument] in the string family," he explained.

Higgins, a life-long South Ender from West Concord Street, began playing the double bass in seventh grade. He started out "not knowing what the bass is, [but] my mom said that it's cool," he said.

Over the years, as he got better, he learned to love the instrument. "I've devoted a lot of time to it ... it's basically the biggest thing I do in life," he said.

Higgins said the David Lapin Competition, named after CMCB's executive director, is a good showcase for the Center's students. While the young bass player has competed in the competition for several years, this was his first win. To get the win, Higgins played two movements from a sonata written by Henry Eccles.

Now the high school senior is in the midst of getting acceptance and rejection letters from colleges, and while he's still deciding which college to attend, he's strongly considering the University of California at Berkeley.

The double bass is a large instrument that is found in classical music, jazz and other genres, but Higgins said he enjoys performing in a large orchestra, surrounded by eight to 10 other basses, playing grand pieces of music.

As for the double bass, "[I] encourage other [people] to pick up the instrument because it's under represented," he said.