

Notes

Chad Shippee named Director of Music Education

At its meeting on Tuesday, November 24, the Board of Education named **Chad Shippee** as the district's K-12 director of music education. [Shippee is joining Niskayuna Central School District from the Bolton Landing CSD in Warren County, where he was the instrumental music director and led three bands from grades 4-12.]

The selection process included interviews with three committees comprised of Niskayuna music teachers, parents, students, principals, K-12 academic directors, central office administrators, and Board of Education members.

The process also included a performance component and a final interview with Superintendent **Cosimo Tangorra, Jr.** The district advertised for the position extensively across the state, including through newspapers and online job posting of educational organizations such as the New York State School Music Association.

"Chad brings to our district a strong background in music instruction and a high degree of enthusiasm for working with our students and teachers," Dr. Tangorra said. "He appreciates the exceptional Music Department we have, and promises to provide the collaborative leadership necessary to shape the future of such an accomplished program. I'm pleased to welcome him to Niskayuna."

Shippee has been the instrumental music director in Bolton Landing since 2011. Prior to that, he was an instrumental and general music teacher in Fort Ann in Washington County, also directing bands from grades 4-12 and teaching general music and small group lessons.

"I'm very excited to be joining the Niskayuna team," Shippee said. "This position is surely the pinnacle of my professional aspirations. I have always admired the quality of the music program at Niskayuna and I look forward to working with the fantastic music staff to take it to next level for our students."

Shippee has a bachelor's degree from the Crane School of Music, a masters in curriculum development and instructional technology from the University at Albany, and anticipates receiving his certificate of advanced study in educational leadership this coming May.

He [served as] president of the Washington County Area Music Teachers Association, has led several all-county ensembles, and has been a presenter at New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) conferences.



Article and photo from "Niskayuna Your Schools"
Dec. 2015

DIRECTOR'S DESK

From The Interim Director...

Greetings!

It has been my pleasure to serve as the interim K – 12 Director of Music for the Niskayuna school district for the past four months. I have learned a great deal about the department and the amazing things that are happening here.

The talent and dedication of our students and teachers is awe-inspiring. My visits with classrooms, rehearsals, and lessons have convinced me that the Niskayuna music department is of the highest educational quality, and the accomplishments of all are apparent in both school day and concert settings. I have particularly enjoyed attending performances, not as a parent, as I did many years ago when my daughters were in the program, but as a “behind the scenes” part of this exceptional department. (Some of you may have seen my debut as an up-and-coming rain stick player!)

I would like to recognize the music staff for their patience, trust, and support as I navigated this new adventure. In particular, I wish to thank Mr. Eric Hughes for his leadership within the department and his advice and support while in the role of Teacher Leader during this transition. Also, a special thank you to Mrs. Tracy Koste, the music department secretary for her endless hard work, knowledge, and professionalism over the past four months, as she kept the program afloat and moving forward.

After an extensive search by the district, I am pleased to welcome Mr. Chad Shippee as the new Director of Music commencing January 4, 2016. Mr. Shippee comes to us from Bolton Landing, where he served as the instrumental music director.

He has been a guest conductor and clinician across the state, and brings with him the enthusiasm and energy to lead the department to continued excellence in the future.

Please make him feel welcome and support his efforts, as I know you will.

Thank you for the opportunity to step in during the search for a music director. I wish you a warm and joyous holiday season and a peaceful new year.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Walroth". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Scott Walroth
Interim Director of Music, K-12

From The Director...

Greetings and Happy New Year!

Let me begin by saying that I am overjoyed to be joining the stellar music program here at Niskayuna. Having attended several concerts before my appointment, I have seen the incredible dedication and pride the students take in being members of the bands, orchestras and choirs! The quality of performance is truly impressive. I cannot wait to begin working with the students and teachers to bring the music department to the next level.

In the coming months, my first priority is to get to know you all better. Those of you whom I have already met have been incredibly warm and welcoming. I already feel right at home. I look forward to meeting more of you and getting acquainted with students, teachers, parents, and community members. My plan for the first few weeks is to “hit the ground listening” to learn what makes the music program at Niskayuna so great and also to hear your ideas on how we can continue to grow the program.

MORE FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

From The Director... (cont.)

My educational philosophy is that the students' best interest always comes first. Anything we do as a music program and a community that supports music in our schools should always be in the best interest of the students. As a student, I was inspired by a truly amazing music teacher in the 5th grade that put me on the path to music education and that inspiration was fostered by an equally amazing music teacher through middle and high school. Yes, my fate as a music educator was decided in the 5th grade! I want to see that same kind of inspiration realized by many students at Niskayuna. That is what drives me to work my hardest every day for our students. I know this is a sentiment I share with our inspiring Niskayuna music teachers.

I commend the Friends of Music (FOM) organization for their impressive dedication to music in our schools. If you are not already a member of FOM, I encourage you to consider joining. The organization's support of the music program is like none other I have seen. That parent and community support is vital to providing a world class music education. Thank you!

The music program is clearly a strong and successful one. I believe that programs are either improving, or declining. There is no such thing as status quo. Together, I know that we can continue to grow our beloved music program to create a world class music education for all students. Again, I look forward to meeting and getting acquainted with the fine music staff, students, and community. Thank you all for your continued support of music in our schools.

I hope you all have a warm and happy start to the new year!

Musically Yours,

Chad Shippee

K-12 Director of Music Education

NYSSMA All-State Conference

Congratulations to the students (**pictured below**) who were invited to represent Niskayuna in the All-State Music Conference. Thousands of students auditioned for this honor last spring at solo and ensemble festivals throughout New York State. This year's conference was held December 3-6 in Rochester.



(L-R):Noah Wilkerson (alt.) Jonathan Burstyn (alt.) James Stagnitti, Michael Zhou, Andrew Fraterrigo, Mackenzie Litz (alt.)

Area All-State Music Festival

Congratulations to the Niskayuna high school students who were selected to attend the Area All-State Music Festival held at Saratoga Springs HS on November 20 - 21.

Olivia Canavan	Band
Johanna Friedman	Band
Zion Kang	Band
Andrew Fraterrigo	Chorus
Olivia Kim	Chorus
Zoe Lynds	Chorus
Jessica Seitz	Chorus
Joseph Weaver	Chorus
Elias Assimakopoulos	Jazz
Quinton Cain	Jazz
Kalyana Duggal	Orchestra
Kartik Nath	Orchestra
Michael Zhou	Orchestra
Jack Newton	Orch. Winds

MORE FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

FOM Pie Fundraiser

The Friends Of Music pie fundraiser was a great success this year! We sold and distributed 485 scrumptious Smith's Orchard Bakeshop pies to over 170 people, making it our most successful pie fundraiser yet! Thank you to **Dave & Tammy Apkarian, Ellen Daviero, Kyle Fletcher, Kristin Kennedy, Eileen & Janette King, Florence & Mae Lynds, and Sue Learner** for all their hard work in making our day so successful. A special thanks to **Dave Schmitz** from Price Chopper for the use of a freezer truck to keep all those delicious pies frozen. Thank you to all who purchased pies!

Lori Fletcher,
FOM Pie Fundraising Chair



photo from L. Fletcher

FOM Volunteers at Smith's Orchard Bake Shop

Notes To Parents---We Need Your Help

There is nothing to compare to the live concert experience, for both the performer and audience alike. Performers work hard to present an enjoyable musical experience for everyone. To do this, they must focus on many details, some expected and some not. A performer's intense concentration can be interrupted by little things which may seem insignificant at first glance. The following suggestions can help show added respect to performers and other audience members. Let's help our student musicians do their very best and model the most respectful concert etiquette.

Talking

Talking is distracting to both performers and fellow audience members. Even whispering can be heard during a musical performance.

Electronic Devices

ALL electronic devices -- cell phones, computers, iPods, etc. -- should be turned off and put away during performances. Not only can they be disruptive, but the glow from screens can be very distracting.

Remain For The Entire Concert

Ensembles that perform last on a concert program deserve just as much support and attention as those who perform first. The ensemble order is carefully determined based on logistics and balance. While emergencies or unavoidable conflicts may arise, it is very discouraging to witness the number of concert attendees who leave immediately following a specific portion of the program. Your support of all students is profoundly appreciated. Let's show our children the very best we can in the simple but meaningful gesture of sustained attendance.

By joining together, each student musician in the spotlight, along with the audience at large, will have a more pleasurable concert experience. Thank you for your continued support.

HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

Choral Corner

Happy 2016 and welcome back to what is going to be an exciting latter half of the school year, filled with great music and performance opportunities for our students!!!

Congratulations to the following students who will sing in the Suburban Council Mixed Chorus on January 15 and 16: **Noah Best, David Buhrmaster, Lauren Gabriele, Catie LeCours, Zoe Lynds, Mariah Mizbani, Delia Ofori, and Santino Sementilli**

Congratulations to the following students who will sing in the Schenectady All-County Jazz Choir on January 29 and 30: **David Buhrmaster, Lauren Gabriele, Zoe Lynds, Santino Sementilli, Jack Sczeman-sco, and Paul Tan.**

Outside Performances:

- **Studio Singers and Bel Canto Voices** recently performed at both middle schools, **Van Antwerp** on November 24 and **Iroquois** on December 11. We thank both schools for so kindly receiving the singers and for their great enthusiasm as audience members.



photo by L. Fletcher

Bel Canto Voices perform at Van Antwerp



photo by L. Fletcher

Studio Singers perform at Iroquois

- **High School Choral** students joined together in song at Niskayuna Town Hall's 3rd Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony on December 6. After a performance in the gazebo, the group enjoyed cookies and hot chocolate.
- **Choir** performed at Glen Eddy for a receptive and appreciative group of residents on December 14. In addition to our traditional group performances, there were two songs performed by individuals. **Paul Tan** offered a beautiful solo performance of Franz Schubert's *Ave Maria*, and **Michael Commerford** sang hit pop number "Walkin' in Memphis." Afterwards, the performers mixed with the concert attendees and enjoyed refreshments.
- **Ladies First** sang at the Niskayuna Community Center on December 15. After their concert, the ladies offered gifts to the attendees during a holiday sing-a-long.

MORE HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

Choral Corner (cont.)

- **Studio Singers and Bel Canto Voices**, along with student instrumentalists, raised nearly \$1500 during their Caroling for CA\$H fundraiser on December 14. Student quartets strolled through Old Niskayuna in Victorian costumes singing carols and collecting funds for Friends of Music. The day culminated with a group performance at Union Café on Upper Union Street. **Many thanks to the parents who helped transport and chaperone students, to Union Café for providing a concert venue (along with cookies and hot cocoa!), and to FOM for providing lunch for the student volunteers.**
- Members of **Concert Chorale** volunteered their time to sing carols at the Niskayuna Co-op on December 18.

See you on March 9 at the amazing historic Proctors Theatre in March for the district wide Choral Festival!!! Thank you for the privilege of working with your children!!!

C. M. Pizzaro - Catalano



Congratulations NHS Jazz Ensemble

The Niskayuna Jazz Ensemble was selected to play at the 2015 NYS School Boards Association Conference. The group played an hour set during the opening conference reception (see pictures on right), prior to Soledad O'Brien's keynote speech. Their performance was well received by NYS school board members in attendance. Afterwards, the group enjoyed a trip to the Museum of Modern Art, which included seeing a one of a kind Picasso sculpture exhibit. The group was grateful to Friends of Music for subsidizing their lunches and museum visit!

-Mr. Fisk



"You can survive without the arts, but it might not be worth it".

Ralph Waldo Emerson



photos from NYSSBA via P. Lanotte

MIDDLE SCHOOL NOTES

Iroquois has been busy this fall with both general music classes and choir! Eighth graders just completed their "Noteflight" technology music writing projects. It is always amazing to see the creativity and musicianship of our students. There were several outstanding compositions, including an amazing arrangement of "Over the Rainbow" by our own **Jennifer Lin**. Kudos on their projects!

photo by Sam Salem



Iroquois 6th grade choir

The 6 and 7/8 grade choirs just finished their first concert season. Both are working hard in preparation of the upcoming Choral Festival in March and are excited to perform at Proctors. On May 11, the group will head down to NYC to visit Radio City Music Hall and to see the production of **Wicked**. The choir will then be performing some of the **Wicked** songs in their May concert!

Former Iroquois student and choir member, **Richard Gatta**, has landed his first Broadway role! He is opening in March alongside **Steve Martin** in **Bright Star**. Congratulations and best wishes to him!

-Mrs. Steeley

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NOTES

Rosendale Elementary resounded with singing as the entire school honored Veterans Day with a PTO sponsored K-5 music assembly. A special visitor, the RPI Cadets Color Guard, presented the flag ceremonially for the students, as Mrs. Johnston sang the National Anthem. The entire student body then sang the songs, "America", "This Land is Your Land", and "You're A Grand Old Flag." The fourth and fifth grade chorus tied it all together with the harmonies of a partner song, "Sing A Song of Peace/This Is My Country." We thank the **Rosendale PTO** for their support of the music program. We are also grateful to them for giving the students an opportunity to honor their flag and to thank our servicemen and women with letters, gifts, and songs.

One great thing about music education is it enhances the educational experience, as it connects with other subjects. In fact, this is one of the National Standards for music education. At **Birchwood**, the music program has been making a number of curricular connections at every grade level. First grade students learned and beautifully presented Thanksgiving songs at their classroom feast. Our second graders' Gingerbread Communities Unit have been supported by gingerbread story songs. Fifth graders, who studied Latin America, used Latin instruments and Mexican folk songs to enrich their learning. First graders are now learning the science of sound in music in alignment with the new Science Standards. What better place to experiment than in the well-equipped music room. Also, the fourth graders are dancing to, drumming, and singing Native American songs to coordinate with their Iroquois unit. These are just a few examples of the level of commitment and collegiality enjoyed here at **Birchwood** as we strive for the best in all our subjects and the arts.

-Mrs. Johnston

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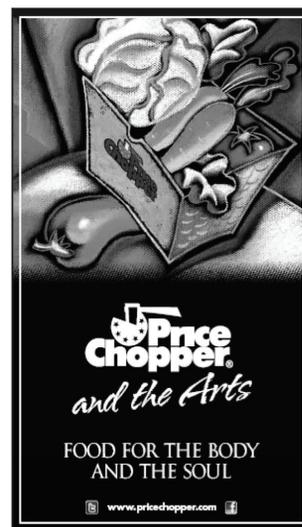
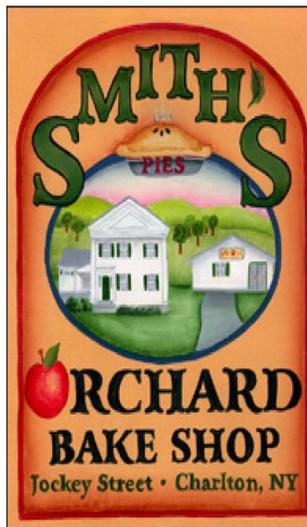
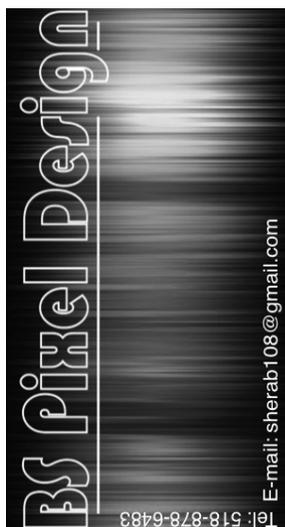
Sam Salem

Parillo Piano Competition

The Schenectady Symphony Orchestra is pleased to announce the 2016 Parillo Piano Competition to be held on Saturday, April 30 at Schenectady County Community College. Applications can be downloaded at our website, www.schenectadysymphony.org, and are due no later than February 15. The competition is open to all piano students 12 years of age and older from the greater Capital District area. The elective piece is the Schumann Piano Concerto in A minor, 1st movement.

The Schenectady Symphony is eager to encourage, nurture and inspire the finest young pianists in the Capital District. Winners will be awarded cash prizes and will perform at a joint recital with the winners of the Stefan Competition for instrumentalists. Especially promising young artists will also be considered for additional performance opportunities. Recent past winners, Ryan Reilly and Christopher Reynolds, were invited to perform full concerti with the SSO. Both went on to pursue musical study at Juilliard.

Masako Yamada
Chair of the Parillo Piano Competition
VP of Musical Operations
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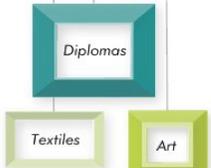
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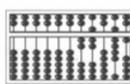
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Joseph...Dreamcoat

MATINEE MAGIC ~ BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR

Niskayuna High School Auditorium . Saturday, February 27th . 11:30a -1:00p

Take part in a Behind The Scenes Tour of our production of JOSEPH...! With a special Backstage Pass you gain access to a fun pre-performance experience!

The package includes:

- An up-close look at our unique set
- A chance to be on-stage in full lights
- Visit our make-up and dressing rooms
- Work with cast members and learn a dance from the show

Followed by Matinee Magic in our lobby:

- Refreshments
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Students ages 6-13 are welcome. A Backstage Pass is \$5.00 per student. One (1) parent or guardian may accompany his/her child on the tour free of charge. Backstage Passes should be ordered by mail, will be held at the Box Office, and can only be picked-up on February 28th. Any remaining Backstage Passes will be sold at the door, but reservations are strongly encouraged as space is limited.

Please note: Joseph...Dreamcoat tickets are sold separately and are **not included** in the Backstage Pass. For ticket information, please visit www.niskyschools.org or call Tracy Koste at 382-2511 ext. 21710 for more information.

MATINEE MAGIC ~ BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR

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