



For more news, visit us at www.niskyFOM.org

Fall 2015
Issue 1

Notes

Thank You For Being A Friend

Greetings and welcome to the concert! If you are reading these words, I know you are probably sitting in the auditorium, waiting for one of our spectacular concerts to begin. I'm glad we have this time together and happy I can tell you a bit about Niskayuna Friends of Music (FOM). If you already know about FOM, that's great! If you are like I was, at the beginning of my children's music careers in the Niskayuna School District, and don't know what FOM is, please keep reading. I very much want to share what FOM is and what we do.

You already know what an amazing and wonderful music program we have at Niskayuna. I am hopeful that you have seen (and will see) the positive influences that music brings to the lives of your student(s). One of the things that makes the music program strong in Niskayuna is US—the parents, the grandparents, the faculty, the administration, the community sponsors, and the students—all of us, FRIENDS OF MUSIC. By supporting FOM, by giving our time, our talents, our energy, and our resources, we are able to support our students and their love of music. Since 1961, our community's support of music education and Friends of Music has been tremendous. We are proud of our students, proud of our music program, and proud of our schools. Niskayuna has been a "Best Community for Music Education" since 2014 and we are grateful.

Our fall membership drive is going strong. You have probably received a membership brochure in the mail, in your student's backpack, or at a Back to School Night. Membership chair **Jodi Rossman** and the FOM school liaisons have been working to invite as many families as possible to join Friends of Music and support the mission of advancing music education in the district. We'd love to have your support!

Through the generous support of our members and community sponsors, FOM invests in outstanding

music opportunities. We bring in guest artists to do special master classes for our student musicians. We fund enrichment projects that enhance the music education of our students. We give scholarships to support our student musicians. We host an outstanding district-wide concert every year. (This year's concert is Choral Festival, on March 9, at beautiful Proctors Theater.)

Personally, my family supports FOM because of the inspirational work it does. In this time of ever increasing standardized instruction, the arts, and more specifically music, have never been more vital. Music enriches lives. Music gives life purpose. Music is fun! We are deeply appreciative for everything the music programs have given our children and our community. We are pleased we can support FOM. I hope you will join my family and me in supporting FOM and the important work that we do!

If you haven't had a chance to send in your membership form yet, please pick up a brochure at a concert or visit our website at <http://niskyfom.org>. Thank you for being a Friend of Music.

Yours in music,
Mindy Whisenhunt, FOM President



Photograph by Tammy Apkarian, Birchwood Liaison

DIRECTOR'S DESK

Greetings!

The new school year has begun and already there are so many wonderful program accolades and student highlights to celebrate. As the Interim Director of Music, I am honored to have the opportunity to be a part of this wonderful community of student musicians, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators. We are excited to begin the search for a new director this fall and anticipate the successful candidate will assume the leadership role in January.

We are grateful for the outstanding support afforded us by our generous community members who value the arts and recognize its important role in a child's well-balanced education and overall development. Through the continued and generous support of our families, and the entire educational community, the coming year promises to be an awesome one for our students and music program at Niskayuna.

On behalf of the Department of Music Education, have a wonderful year!



Scott Walroth
Director of Music, K-12

NYSSMA All-State Conference

Several students were selected to participate in this year's conference December 3-6 in Rochester. Congratulations to:

Michael Zhou, violin (Symphony Orchestra)

Andrew Fraterrigo, bass (Mixed Chorus)

James Stagnitti, mallet percussion (Symphonic Band)

Kudos also to the following students named as alternates:

Mackenzie Litz, double bass

Jonathan Burstyn, bass

Noah Wilkerson, euphonium

James Stagnitti, snare drum and timpani

NYS School Boards Association

The high school Jazz Ensemble was chosen to perform in New York City for the NYSSBA Annual Convention. The group played in midtown Manhattan on October 18. Afterwards, they enjoyed a trip to the Museum of Modern Art. Great job!!!

Concert Series

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us in concert to celebrate the many successes of our students and faculty in our four-part Concert Series this year. All concert event information may be found on our district website at www.niskyschools.org.

Featured this year will be:

All-District Choral Festival at Proctors Theatre –
March 9

Jazz Festival – April 20

High School Musical

This year's exciting musical production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* will be held
February 25-27.

Tickets go on sale in January

MORE FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

New Faces, New Places!

We are very pleased to have **Elizabeth LeRoy** join the music faculty this school year. She is teaching general music part-time at Glencliff and a special needs class at the High School. Beth received her BA in Jazz Studies with a piano concentration from Indiana University and her Certificate of Advanced Study in Music Education in 2011 from the College of St. Rose. She brings a wealth of experiences to the district, including twenty-five years of private piano teaching, playing with the National Touring Company production of "Annie" at Proctors Theatre, and working as a Kindermusik Educator.

Congratulations to **Sue Kokernak (right)** who filled a part-time role in general music and worked with students with special needs last year. Sue is now a full-time instrumental teacher at Birchwood and Hillside Elementary Schools and the director of our 6th grade band. Sue works with sixteen instrumental groups at Van Antwerp as well. We are very excited to have Sue working with our students in this new capacity.



Farewell and Welcome

Please join me in wishing our former accompanist and music librarian, **Julianne Port**, a heartfelt thank you for the many years of beautiful music she shared, accompanying our students at concerts, recitals, and important events. It is our pleasure to welcome **Maria Elmer (left)** as she joins the music department in this role. Maria received her Bachelor of Music Degree from Nazareth College in Rochester, NY in 2010. She brings a wealth of experience as an accompanist for Schenectady County Community College as well as from other organizations in the Capital Region. Most recently, she directed the Schenectady Light Opera Company production of "Legally Blonde," held at Proctors Theatre in Schenectady. We are excited that Maria is now a part of our Nisky music community.



Nisky Orchestra Teacher CASDA Presenter

At the 16th Annual Capital Region Music Educators Symposium on October 22, 2015, **Stacey McClenon**, Grade 7 Orchestra Director and instrumental teacher at Craig, Hillside and VA, will present a workshop focusing on strategies to encourage students to practice their instruments at home. The workshop, titled "How to Increase Student Motivation," offers an assortment of practice charts, tips for parents, and ideas on how to include technology into practice to increase motivation and skill development. Congratulations to Stacey for being selected to help other music educators motivate their students.



MORE FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Summer Sonata

Summer Sonata was a huge success this year! The High School was filled with music in late July, as over fifty music students, grades five through nine, participated in the two week program. Niskayuna music teachers, **Mr. Fisk, Mrs. Fitzmaurice, Mrs. McClenon, Mr. Pandori, and Mrs. Pizzino-Catalano**, led the students together in a camp choir and separately in various ensembles. Another component of the program involved music appreciation classes, where students learned a range of topics including world drumming, improvisation, music history, and dance. Other highlights from the camp included playing Jeopardy, and enjoying great snacks, provided by FOM. The camp concluded with a noontime concert, a luncheon reception hosted by FOM, and a visit from the ice cream truck. It was a rewarding program, and we look forward to its continued success in the future!

-Stacey McClenon

Niskayuna Students in Local Theatre

The upcoming Schenectady Light Opera Company's (SLOC) youth production of ***Beauty and the Beast*** will include seven Niskayuna students. Congratulations to **Alex Burgess, Alex Cherry, Sawyer Harrington-Verb, Miller Lawton, Caitie LeCours, Fiona Leonard, and Randall Marr**. The performances will take place December 4 - 13, 2015. For more information, please visit www.sloctheater.org.

Shannon Foley will be performing with the C-R Kids production of ***American Idiot*** in November. For more information, please visit www.CRKids.org.

Congratulations to **Jad Jacob** who recently performed with SLOC in ***Legally Blonde***, which took place late September to early October.



Students at the Summer Sonata

Friends of Music wants to thank the many parent and student volunteers who made this program run so smoothly! Thank you to **Ellen Daviero** for the fabulous organization of snacks for the Summer Sonata Program. Thank you to the following for help with the set up and clean up: **Ingrid Amberger, Carol Blood, Tamesa Casella, Annette DiGioacchino, Terri Dutcher, Tasha Ferguson, Aline Gianfagna, Diane Hartig, Josie Hartig, Marcia Lawton, Varvara Meshkov, Barbara Montgomery, Jodi Rossman, and Nicole Sinton.**

HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

Choral Corner

Welcome back singers! The Studio Singers and Bel Canto Voices, after only nine rehearsals, kicked off the 2015-2016 school year with an impressive concert at Back-to-School Night on October 1.

There will be many more wonderful and challenging opportunities in the year ahead. The Choral Festival will take place on March 9 at the historic Proctors Theatre in downtown Schenectady. Also, we are very excited to welcome the accomplished **Dr. Daniel Gordon** as our guest conductor in early March. A professor at Southeastern University in Lakeland, Florida, he will bring an expertise and unique perspective that will undoubtedly inspire the students during his visit.

This year holds many educational and entertaining vocal events both inside and outside of school!

We are very excited to have twelve students accepted into the Empire State Youth Chorale! They are as follows: **Shannon Foley, Andrew Fraterrigo, Sabrina Gumphier, Jad Jacob, Gus Jones, Olivia Kim, Ethan Schalekamp, Zoe Schlesinger, Jessica Seitz, Julia Sexton, Paul Tan, and Joe Weaver.** The group will sing at the "Melodies of Christmas" performances at Proctors Theatre in December.

Upcoming Performances:

- Ladies First, Choir, and Concert Band will present a lunchtime Thanksgiving concert on Monday November 23 at 12:15 p.m (**PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE IN DATE AND TIME**) in the HS auditorium. All family, friends, and community members are invited and are encouraged to arrive a few minutes early to sign in at the front desk.
- An Evening in History will be presented as a collaboration amongst the Social Studies and Music Departments on Monday January 11 at 7:00 p.m. in the HS auditorium. This evening will commemorate the end of WWII. Attendance is mandatory for all students in the HS choral program.
- Please mark your calendar for Monday December 14 (December 21 snow date) as Studio Singers and Bel Canto Voices will be participating in FOM's annual Caroling for CA\$H fundraiser. Student quartets will stroll through Old Niskayuna in Victorian costumes singing carols and collecting funds for FOM. The day will culminate with a group performance on Upper Union Street at 7:00 p.m. ***We are in need of battery powered candles, lanterns, and especially batteries. Any parents who would be willing to chaperone by providing a vehicle for students to warm up in can contact Mrs. Pizzino-Catalano at cpizzino-catalano@niskyschools.org. Chaperones are needed that evening from 4:45 p.m. to 8:00 p.m..***

In continuing with the tradition started in 2008, Ladies First will sponsor a reception after their first concert on October 29. This year, the ladies will offer Austrian themed foods in conjunction with their performance of ***The Sound of Music***. Please join us in celebrating the kick off of the school year, fall, and a connection between music and culture!

C. M. Pizzino-Catalano

MORE HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

Summer Activity Roundup

The Niskayuna Music Department is proud to acknowledge the many talented high school students who participated in a variety of music activities this past summer.

Kamryn Almas – One week dance workshop at SHIP North

Noah Best – Broadway Jr. at Proctors Theater

Emma Bour – Recorded songs for an EP

Kendall Brake – Berklee College of Music Vocal Summit and Five-Week Performance Program

Alexandra Burgess – Bristol Hills Music Camp, Shenendehowa Summer Adventures (*Legally Blonde*)

Caitlin Denney – *Aladdin* at Proctors Theater

Gina Downey – AAB Ballet in Purchase, NY

Lacey Farina – Performed in *The Music Man Jr.* at the Glove Theater and *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* with Family Players of Northeastern NY

Shannon Foley – Hartt School of Music Summer Vocal Institute: Musical Theatre Intensive & *Rent* at C-R Kids Productions

Veronica Forth – MAPLE at Pyramid Lake

Lauren Gabriele – Performed Italian arias/art songs at the Saratoga Race Track for Italian-American Day

Sawyer Harrington-Verb – Bristol Hills Music Camp, Song leader at Eisner URJ Camp

Olivia Kim – Western U.S. Music Camp at Colgate University (scholarship recipient)

Miller Lawton – *Addams Family* with Performing smART's

Payge Lecakes – NYSSA Ballet Intensive Program in Saratoga

Fiona Leonard – Broadway Camp at Proctors Theater

Zoe Lynds – Performed at her aunt's wedding in France & studied jazz voice privately

Randall Marr – C.I.T. at Bristol Hills Music Camp

Catherine LeCours – *Odyssey* (Youth Opera) at Glimmerglass Festival

Jordan McCann – College of St. Rose Pre-College Choral Program Experience

Samuel O'Connor – Shenendehowa Summer Theater Camp (*Shrek*)

Samantha Percy – Studied at the School of American Ballet in NYC

Emily Petralia – Took a songwriting class

Emily Rzonca – Took a three week dance workshop at Orlando's

Nicole Salo – Broadway Jr. at Proctors Theater

Ethan Schalekamp – Performed "Hallelujah" and "You Raise Me Up" at Camp Fowler

Jessica Seitz – Performed Italian arias/art songs at the Saratoga Race Track for Italian-American Day

Santino Sementilli – Sang & Tap Danced at Proctors Theater with Orlando's Dance Studio

Julia Sexton – Bristol Hills Music Camp

Lucy Skrebutenas – Took workshops on film acting and improvisation

Jack Szemansco – Niskayuna Summer Sonata Music Camp

Eliana Yanoff – Pre-College Experience and Broadway Boot Camp at the College of St. Rose

MIDDLE SCHOOL NOTES

Middle School Music Spotlight

Greetings and happy autumn everyone. Exciting things are happening in our Middle School General Music curriculum. Students are finishing up our Introduction to Guitar (8th Grade), Percussion Ensemble Compositions (7th Grade) and Pentatonic Melody Compositions (6th Grade). It is motivating as a teacher to see students use the skills from the previous years culminate in creating their own music. And what great music it is!

On the choir side of things, students are busy preparing for our Community Day as well as our Halloween Assembly where the 7/8 Choir and 6 Choir will be featured, respectively. Rehearsals are under full swing and we look forward to seeing many of you at both our required and extra performances throughout the fall and early winter.

Auditions are completed for our Middle School Select Choir, Mezzo Voce. Bravo to all students who auditioned! Be on the look out for a performance of these fantastic middle school singers coming soon!

Looking forward to seeing you all soon as our Concert Series gets under way!

-Mr. Purington

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NOTES

Birchwood and Hillside students are participating in music activities that include vocal/rhythmic warm-ups, songs, creative movement/dance, listening activities and/or recorder instruction. The music curriculum often includes songs and activities that are based on the grades' social studies and/or language arts curriculums.

Last year, each of the elementary schools received a set of world drums with funds from Friends of Music. Please consider becoming a FOM member. FOM is a valuable parent group that provides financial support to our music programs.

-Michelle Sausa-Gatta, NBCT



"I would teach children music, physics, and philosophy; but more importantly music, for in the patterns of music are the keys to learning."

Plato

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NOTES

Rosendale Elementary School is alive with song, dance, and instrument playing. The new kindergarten students started the year by bringing instruments and noisemakers of all kinds from home to share in class. What wonderful sounds they made! First graders are having fun playing small xylophones and dancing to the “Sneaky Snake.” Second graders are dancing a polka and jamming to the song, “Aiken Drum.” Third graders (**See picture**) combined world drums with other instruments to recreate a popular song from Ghana. World drums again rang out as the fourth graders played “Alley-O.” We are very grateful to Friends of Music for our new drums! Finally, the fifth grade is learning instruments of Latin America and folk songs of Mexico. October has ushered in the seasonal themed tunes as well as patriotic songs in honor of Veteran’s Day.



Third graders at Rosendale playing world drums



Fourth graders at Birchwood playing world drums

A new playground is not the only place for playing at **Birchwood Elementary School**. Inside the school, the beautifully equipped music room provides a wonderful place to play while students learn a variety of instruments, including boomwhackers, xylophones, world drums, and recorders. Boomwhackers are colored tubes that come in varying lengths and produce different pitches in a fun, new way. The school district recently supplied the school with three new xylophones, which offer a wonderful hands-on opportunity to create rhythm. Last year, FOM outfitted Birchwood with 17 world drums of various sizes and hues. Fourth graders from Birchwood are shown playing the new world drums and singing (**See picture**). The third through fifth graders, with the support of their families, are learning to read music as they play recorders.

Our pride is not limited to the activities in the music room, but also extends to our fine chorus. Fourth and fifth graders are practicing during school to prepare for their January concerts. They are singing rounds to begin coordinating harmony parts. We look forward to hearing everything they are preparing for us!

-Mrs. Johnston

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Congratulations to our FOM summer scholarship winners who used their award for enhanced music study during the months of July and August.

Elias Assimakopoulos
Olivia Canavan
Michael Commerford
Caitlin Denney
Shannon Foley
Lauren Gabriele
Zoe Lynds
Kartik Nath
Spencer Rockwell
Jimmy Stagnitti
Tia Amberger
Abigail Auster
Blayze Chittenden

Ross Engelmeyer
Matthew Fromowitz
Risa Fromowitz
Alise Hale
Joseph Henson
Kalin Kochner
Adelaide Leung
Madalyn Montgomery
Annika Waskiewicz
Rebecca Schecter
Dylan Stella
Jack Szemansco
Jacob Yanoff



Remember to...
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Eric Amberger

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Sam Salem

Congratulations to the following Nisky students who were selected to join the Empire State Youth Orchestra.

As a regional organization, ESYO attracts students from over 75 public and private schools throughout eastern New York State and western New England. Returning and potential members must pass a competitive audition for their positions. ESYO students range from 4th through 12th grade. The nine performing ensembles rehearse weekly with professional musicians as conductors and coaches. A season's schedule includes over 30 concerts, requiring over 600 hours of rehearsal time.

Olivia Achcet	Repertory Orchestra	Violin
Elias Assimakopoulos	Repertory Jazz Ensemble	Trombone
Elias Assimakopoulos	Youth Orchestra	Trombone
Faith Borkowski	Repertory Orchestra	Violin
Dana Braga	Repertory Orchestra	Cello
Quinton Cain	Youth Jazz Ensemble	Jazz - Rhythm - Drumset
Sam Calos	String Ensemble	Violin
Elisabeth Chillrud	Repertory Orchestra	Cello
Konrad Drzymalski	Repertory Orchestra	Violin
Ross Engelmyer	Youth Orchestra	Bass
Siarra Feliciano	String Ensemble	Violin
Henry James Fernandez	Youth Jazz Ensemble	Tenor Saxophone
Johanne Friedman	Repertory Orchestra	Euphonium
E. Conor Graham	Youth Jazz Ensemble	Bass
Joanna Guo	Youth Orchestra	Violin
Kristina Handy	Repertory Orchestra	Trombone
Zion Kang	Repertory Jazz Ensemble	Trombone
Avanti Khare	Repertory Orchestra	Oboe
Lina Kim	String Ensemble	Violin
Minji Kim	String Ensemble	Violin
Min Gon Kim	Youth Orchestra	Violin
Ian Klenk	String Ensemble	Bass
Christina Lau	Youth Orchestra	Violin
Myung Joo Lee	Youth Orchestra	Cello
Arthur Leung	String Ensemble	Violin
Lydia Liang	Youth Orchestra	Violin
Kristine Lim	Youth Orchestra	Violin
Mackenzie Litz	Youth Orchestra	Bass
Skylar Litz	Youth Orchestra	Viola
Brandon Liu	Repertory Orchestra	Viola
Bryan Liu	Repertory Orchestra	Cello
Derek Liu	String Ensemble	Violin
Samantha Liu	Youth Orchestra	Violin
Emma Mahony	Repertory Orchestra	Horn (French Horn)
Kartik Nath	Youth Orchestra	Violin
Paul Pacheco	String Ensemble	Viola
Victor Schingo	Repertory Orchestra	Violin
Aidan Singh	Repertory Orchestra	Violin

ESYO (CONTINUED)

Grace Smith	Repertory Orchestra	Horn (French Horn)
Josh Tso	String Ensemble	Viola
Christopher Yang	Wind Orchestra	Clarinet
Patrick Yang	Wind Orchestra	Clarinet
Benjamin Yao	Repertory Percussion Ensemble	Percussion
William Zhang	String Ensemble	Cello
Bryan Zhou	Youth Orchestra	Violin
Michael Zhou	Youth Orchestra	Violin
James Zilberman	Repertory Orchestra	Bass

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.



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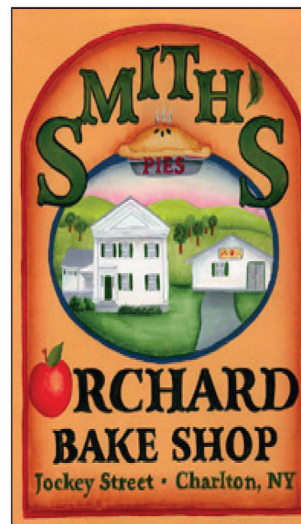
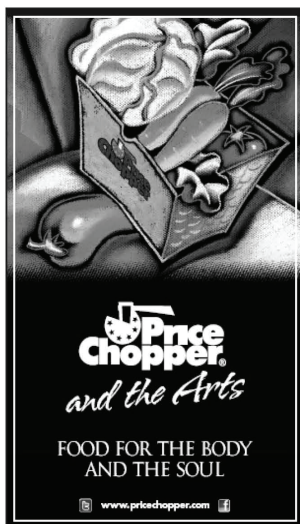
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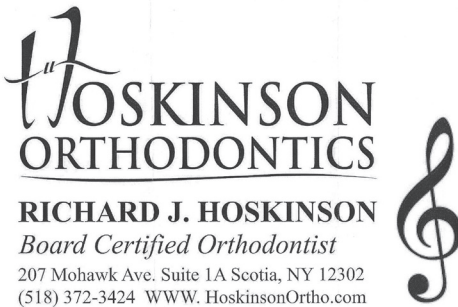
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