



Notes

Pensive Thoughts From The President

The days are starting to get longer, and we have come through the holidays into a time of reflection. I think often about the impact of our music program on our students. How does it enrich their ability to perform as adults in the 21st century? How does Friends of Music enhance this? As I attended the concerts through the holidays and January, I saw several things that I think will serve our children well.

Our musicians are learning how to be in sync and meld their music with a large group of people. I love watching them learn how to listen closely to others, and follow the direction of one - to ebb and flow on a musical team. I watched fourth graders begin to learn this, and move a crowd with their performance. These skills will enhance their ability to communicate with their peers, co-workers and supervisors.

Music education improves reasoning skills, memorization, imagination and discipline. Our students develop pride in their performance and achievement. They engage in self-expression, and are able to perform many genres of music, possibly encountering some new ones along the way. These are invaluable skills in making a successful student and a happy person.



Hillside 2nd Grade Students working on their musical



2017 District Band Festival

The role of Friends of Music is to provide outstanding opportunities for our students to excel with the guidance of our talented Nisky faculty.

For example, we provide the opportunity for our musicians to perform in Proctors theatre at various festivals. This is something many of our students look forward to, and is an incredible experience for them. FOM offers our students the chance to audition for summer scholarships in the same manner that they would for state auditions. More recently, our membership approved funding for microphones and stands so that elementary students in two schools could excitedly use them to perform in music class.

These are just a few of the many things that FOM supports. I myself, am looking forward to the manifestation of all the above in watching our upcoming musical, Camelot, and our District Orchestra Festival in March as well as our Jazz fest. It's a great way to wind up this winter and welcome spring.

If you are a member, we thank you. It's such a privilege to be able to do this for our students. If you are not, please consider taking a moment to become a member, and a bigger part of this music program. You can do so on niskryfallom.org.

Enjoy your concert. I am sure it will be wonderful.

Jodi Rossman

President of Friends of Music

DIRECTOR'S DESK

As we celebrate Music In Our Schools Month, there is so much to appreciate and enjoy!

Winter brings our annual musical to the high school. This year it is the Lerner & Loewe classic, "Camelot." Congratulations to the cast, crew and orchestra on an outstanding run! The students' dedication, hard



work and love of performance always guarantees high-quality, memorable performances. Special thanks to the adult volunteers and others who make the musical such a great success.

We are excited to revive our Name-a-Chair Project. See the bulletin in this edition of NOTES to find out how you can support the performing arts at Niskayuna and leave a lasting impression in the auditorium.

The New York State Band Directors Association hosts its annual Symposium in Syracuse this month as well. Four Iroquois Middle School students were selected for the Middle School Honors Concert Band. They are: **Matt Fromowitz**, Trumpet; **Nick Riendeau**, Tuba; **Duncan Wall**, French Horn and **Patrick Yang**, Clarinet. We know they will make us proud. Congratulations on your achievement!

Greg Evans

And since April is also Jazz Appreciation Month we are happy to welcome percussionist **Greg Evans** to work with our jazz students. This is one of our most popular concerts of the year. It features our jazz ensembles and **Studio Singers**. We hope to see you at the District Jazz Fest on April 19 at the high school!

SUMMER SCHOLARSHIP AUDITIONS

Dates have been set for FOM Summer Scholarship auditions. They are: April 27 & 28 at the high school. Contact your child's music teacher for more information. Students in grades 6-11 are eligible.

SUMMER SONATA

Our popular two-week program, SUMMER SONATA will take place July 16-19 & 23-26. Information will be published soon!

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The district is proud to continue two programs for our students that began last year. The first is a series of performances and workshops by the **BRIDGE ARTS ENSEMBLE**. Every student, grades K-8 attended a performance by these NYC-based musicians and the group guest taught at general music classes.

SPAC's CLASSICAL KIDS series is a two-part introductory arts education program about classical music and dance for fifth and sixth grade students. Students are visited each year by a musician from the Philadelphia Orchestra or professional dancers from the Capital Region for a one-hour presentation focused on a specific orchestra or ballet program that will be presented at SPAC during the summer season. An interactive study guide is also provided. Students who attend the performance at SPAC are given a classical Kids Lawn Pass, granting them (and an accompanying adult) free lawn admission to all ballet and orchestra performances at SPAC until they graduate from high school.

Eric Hughes, Director
Niskayuna Music Department

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NOTES

Rosendale Notes

Rosendale Elementary continues to burst with song, movement, instrumental playing, and artistic expression. **Mrs. Johnston** and **Ms. Komp**, the Rosendale art teacher, are integrating their lessons for second graders focused on an African theme.



Pictured in this edition of Notes are students in their African animal masks getting ready to dance to a jungle beat, “Bele Kawe”, in the music room! Results of this creative collaboration will be on display in March at the high school.

First graders are singing solos for each other with musical games and playing on the new xylophones. Third graders have begun their Beginning Recorder Unit and their enthusiasm is heartening! Fourth grade will

be composing variations on a recorder theme using rhythms on dice. Finally, the fifth grade classes are playing “Pachelbel’s Canon” on recorders, hand bells, and choir chimes. All students were led in a Winter/Diversity Sing-along assembly in late February. **Mrs. Johnston** is excited to lead from the piano this year with a boom mike stand purchased by Friends of Music.

The Fourth and Fifth Grade Winter Concert was a huge success. **Ms. Schmidt** had a lovely selection of pieces for the orchestra including a cello-spinning rendition of “Cripple Creek”. **Mrs. Johnston’s** chorus members sung strongly in two parts. Lastly, **Mrs. Kokernak’s** band took us through the instrument families, wrapping up with a Latin Rock song.

Special thanks to our Rosendale Friends of Music representatives **Mrs. Ogonowski** and **Mrs. Jansson** and their volunteers for our assisting at our January Winter Concert. Thank you parents, families, and members of FOM. Please consider joining FOM today online as our Rosendale membership is down this year.

Mrs. Johnston

Birchwood Notes

Greetings family and friends! Music is alive and well in the music room and lesson room at Birchwood. A special thank you to our classroom teachers of fourth and fifth grades for helping to make our lessons and rehearsals go so smoothly. Our January Winter Concert for Band, Orchestra, and Chorus was delightful. We give special thanks to our new Birchwood Friends of Music representative **Mrs. O’Connor**. We are so pleased to have her support and the generosity of time and resources provided by the Niskayuna Friends of Music.

The art and music classes are collaborating in a project called “Variations on Hot Cross Buns”.

Ms. Schmidt’s string instrument classes, **Mrs. Johnston’s** fourth grade general music classes, and **Mrs. Hart’s** art classes are all working together to help students create from that musical theme and delicious pastry. Results of this creative collaboration will be on display in March at the high school.

Third graders must be mentioned especially because of their enthusiasm for playing their new recorders. **Ms. Banker** and **Mrs. Johnston** cannot teach fast enough for these avid learners. Thanks to our music director **Mr. Hughes** for leading the district in purchasing all recorders starting this year.

Mrs. Johnston

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NOTES

All students in K-5 learned songs of winter, unity and diversity led by **Ms. Banker** and **Mrs. Johnston**. Their preparations concluded in the Annual Winter Sing-along Assembly in February.

A special note of recognition goes to our Birchwood fifth graders as they ready themselves for the long-running tradition of the Birchwood States Fair. In honor of America, the classes will share their state research and present the parents with the song

“Fifty Nifty United States” and a dance featuring the Charleston step called “Twelfth Street Rag”.

To conclude, we want to thank Friends of Music for their generous grant of \$400 to Birchwood music for purchasing audio equipment for the music room and a boom mike stand to lead assemblies from the piano. Their interest and readiness to support the elementary music program is so encouraging!



Rosendale 5th Grade Band

Hillside Elementary

Students are engaging in a wide variety of musical activities at Hillside Elementary School! The students are learning several songs for their monthly Hello Hillside performances. They especially enjoy performing Together We Can Change the World by **Mark Shepard**. Kindergarten and first graders sing and dance to a wide variety of songs as well as perform on a variety of musical instruments including the xylophone. Second graders are working hard to prepare for their spring musical, Sing Me A Story by **Jill** and **Michael Gallina**. Third and fourth graders even write songs and perform them on their recorders! Finally, fifth graders enjoyed a joint music and art class activity in preparation for the Niskayuna Art Show. Music is alive at Hillside Elementary School!

The Fifth Grade Bands from each elementary school performed very successful first band concerts in January. It is remarkable how much they have learned in only a few short months of lessons. Each section was featured in a section solo, which is a highlight of this first concert. **Mrs. Kokernak** and **Mrs. Scherer** look forward to creating more terrific music with this strong class of Fifth Grade Band students!

Mrs. Kokernak and **Mrs. Scherer**

Rosendale fifth Grade Band

MIDDLE SCHOOL NOTES

MS Corner

The 8th Grade Band is looking forward to our March 8th Concert and performing along with the High School Concert Band. The students are looking forward to seeing the band that they will be performing in next year. They are also excited to be presenting an exhilarating program of their own, including "Fireflash" by Rob Romeyn, "Images of Ireland" by Brian Balmages, and an arrangement of the music from the "Pirates of the Caribbean" Sequel "At World's End". In addition, we have started working on the Friends of Music Commission for our May Concert. **Mr. Greg Rudgers** has sent us his final draft of "Variance". The piece is wonderfully written with beautiful and thrilling melodies. We can't wait to perform it at our May Concert!

The MS Jazz Band was proud to perform at the December 12th Board of Education Meeting honoring the National Merit Scholarship semi-finalists. This was the third year that the band was asked to perform. The program included Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man", the standard "Lullabye of Birdland" and George Benson's "On Broadway". Thank you to **Dr. Tangorra** and **Ms. Gemmill**, as well as **Mrs. Gagnon** for organizing this opportunity. We look forward to performing at the Art and Music Departments collaboration, Creative Harmony on March 22nd as well as the Niskayuna

Jazz Festival on April 19th. The group will perform with guest artist/clinician and drummer **Greg Evans** from the Ithaca College School of Music. We hope to see you at one of our upcoming performances!

Congratulations to the following band students for being selected to perform at the Schenectady County Music Festival. These students were selected to the All-County Band from students across all Schenectady County Schools along with Voorheesville schools: **Zoe Bisnett, Matt Fromowitz, Maya Healey, Cindy**



Mr. Greg Rudgers

Hong, Ian Klenk, Maddie Lasher, Greta Merrill, Derrick Niu, Tokunbo Oshinowo, Nick Riendeau, Cristina Rojo, Fiona Schlossberg, Caleb Tysz, Keller Wegter-McNelly, Patrick Yang, Lucia Vysohlid.

Philip Pandori

On May 16th the Iroquois 7/8 grade choir will head to the Big Apple! We will tour Lincoln Center and have front row balcony seats to see Bernadette Peters in "Hello Dolly" on Broadway. We are so excited about this musical day! This experience will enrich the chorus' performance of "Hello Dolly" in their next concert.

Dee Steeley

The Suburban Council Music Festival was held in January at Columbia High School. Congratulations to the following students who participated:

High School Orchestra

Avanti Khare Oboe
Derek Wolfe Trumpet

High School Band

Risa Fromowitz Trombone
Christopher Yang Clarinet

High School Chorus

Noah Best Bass
Allison Duguid Soprano
Alyssa Hoogs Alto
Jordan McCann Soprano
Anjalee Modasra Alto
Mark Talattad Tenor

Middle School Jazz

Cooper Filkins Electric Bass
Matt Fromowitz Trumpet
Danny Kelly Drum Set
Derek Niu Trumpet

HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

Choral Corner

Welcome back to what is going to be a fantastic latter half of the school year filled with great music and performance opportunities for our students!!! Congratulations to the following students who sang in the Suburban Council Mixed Chorus on January 12 and 13th at Columbia HS: **Noah Best, Allison Duguid, Alyssa Hoogs, Jordan McCann, Anjalee Modasra** and **Mark Talattad**.

Congratulations to **Shannon Foley** who was accepted into the Albany Pro Musica Artist Apprenticeship Program for talented high school vocalists. Shannon will rehearse with this outstanding choral ensemble under the direction of **Dr. José Daniel Flores-Caraballo** from March through May with a culminating performance of Michael Haydn's Requiem at Troy Savings Bank Music Hall. Shannon will also be paired with a mentor from the chorus! We wish her well in this prestigious musical endeavor. Please visit <http://www.albanypromusica.org> for information on how to purchase tickets.

High school choral students are currently preparing for the NYSSMA Solo Festival at Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk C.S.D. on April 13 and 14 (***NOTE: WE ARE GOING TO A MUCH EARLIER FESTIVAL THIS YEAR AND STUDENTS SHOULD BE DILIGENTLY PREPARING THEIR SOLOS!**). Students are studying works in English, Italian, Latin, French, and German to present to judges from all over the state. During the month of March, there will be weekly time slots available for students to receive extra help and coaching. There will be an opportunity to sing for peers in large ensemble classes for feedback and to help shake any nervousness in anticipation of the performance. Please note that **Mrs. Germain**, our district accompanist, is available to accompany students for a reasonable fee. Students should see her to obtain a contract or email her at mgermain@niskyschools.org.

Outside Performances:

- Nearly 90 (WOW!) **High School Choral** students joined together in song at Niskayuna Town Hall's 5th Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony on December 3. They also enjoyed cookies and hot chocolate donated by Shop Rite after a performance in the gazebo.
- Concert Chorale** sang for the eighth graders at Van Antwerp M.S. on December 14 during their access period to show them what being part of the H.S. choral program is all about. Thank you to **Mr. Rakoczy, Mr. Purington, and Mr. Perez** for so graciously hosting.
- Studio Singers and Bel Canto Voices**, along with student instrumentalists raised **\$2400** during their Caroling for CA\$H fundraiser on December 4!!!! Student quartets strolled through Old Niskayuna in Victorian costumes singing carols and collecting funds for the Niskayuna Friends of Music. The day culminated with a group performance at Union Café. *Many thanks to the parents who helped transport and chaperone students, to **Jessica Hollenback** at Union Café for providing the concert venue (along with cookies and hot cocoa!) and to FOM for providing lunch for the student volunteers. Also, a special thank you to **Gloria Vassolas** and (alumni parent who steamed/ironed dozens of costume pieces for the event) **Christina Flaspohler** (for making and donating bonnets and a cloak, along with letting us borrow from her own costume collection)!!!!*
- Please join us for Creative Harmony, an evening of collaboration between the art and music departments on Thursday, March 22. Students from the choral program will be performing Italian art songs and arias in a recital format in the art wing of the high school. Additionally, **Mrs. Wallimann's** Drawing and Painting classes will be showcasing paintings and illustrations inspired by the recordings of the music performed at the recital.
- Look for **Studio Singers** on Saturday, May 19 at Niska Day, first performing on a float in the parade and then kicking off the day in the entertainment tent on the Craig School grounds at noon.

MORE HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

Thank you for continuing to support the Niskayuna music program and for encouraging your motivated, hardworking, talented children who participate in it! We hope to see you at one of the many concerts in May that celebrate the culmination of a school year filled with growth and musical enrichment.

HS Band News

Christina Pizzino-Catalano



The HS Concert Band is looking forward to their next concert on March 8th. We are especially excited to be performing for the 8th Grade Band in this concert. As most of the 8th Graders will be moving on to the Concert Band next year, we have planned an exciting program for them including: Selections from "Moana" and John Mackey's "Lightning Field". The students will also really enjoy Julie Giroux's "The Bonsai Tree" and our Rock and Celtic influenced opener "Quad City Stomp". We look forward to this "mini band fest" in March!

Philip Pandori

We are proud to announce a unique collaboration with the department of Art & Design: Come see "Creative Harmony" March 22, 5:30-7:00 in the Nisk-Art Gallery at the high school. Thank you to FOM for hosting a special reception.

Niskayuna Music Department Hosts Schenectady All-County Festival

On January 26th and 27th, the Niskayuna Music Department had the honor of hosting the Schenectady County Music Association District Festival. This festival featured approximately 300 students from Cobleskill-Richmondville, Rotterdam-Mohonasen, Schalmont, Schenectady, Scotia-Glenville, Voorheesville and Niskayuna School Districts. The concert included Middle School Band, Orchestra and Chorus as well as High School Jazz Ensemble.

Kyle Gengo, a guest from the Williamsville School District, conducted the Middle School Band. This ensemble was chaired by Nisky Faculty member, **Phil Pandori**. The Middle School Chorus was conducted by **Mary Abba-Gleason**, an educator in the Voorheesville School District and an active performer in the Captial Region. The Chorus was chaired by Nisky Faculty member, **Jake Purington**. Chaired by **Jennifer Bee** of the Schenectady School District, the Middle School Orchestra was conducted by **Mark Lewis**. **Mike Giannetta**, a guest from the Oyster Bay – East Norwich School District, conducted the High School Jazz Ensemble. The Jazz Ensemble was chaired by Schalmont Faculty member, **Show Mission**.

The element that made this Festival so successful was the volunteers. We had Niskayuna Music Department Faculty Members, Friends of Music Parents and our own Niskayuna High School student volunteers. With the collaboration of these groups, we were successful in hosting and producing an enriching program and experience for our young musicians throughout the Schenectady County area!

See list on page 9

MAKE A LASTING LEGACY



The Name-a-Chair-Project

In order to ensure the future success of Niskayuna Performing Arts programs, community members, parents, and businesses are invited to contribute to the Name-a-Chair Project. Chair arms will include brass plates that can be engraved for those making a pledge.

Our Goal

We'd like to kick-off our campaign with 100 seats engraved! Contributions will support improvements in the auditorium to enhance the acoustics on stage, sound technology, and lighting for the audience. They also make great graduation gifts or to recognize a special musician in your life.

What Is The Cost?

Each plate is \$150 for individuals and families or \$250 for businesses. We are a 501(c)3 organization and your employer may match your contribution.

Name_____

Address_____

Phone_____

Please check one:

- Individual/Family @ \$150 per chair plate
- Business @\$250 per chair plate

Please send this form with your check (made payable to Niskayuna Friends of Music) with "Name-a-Chair Project" written in the memo section to:
Niskayuna Friends of Music, Niskayuna High School, 1626 Balltown Road,
Niskayuna, NY 12309

Line 1:

Line 2:

There are 44 characters including letters, spaces and punctuation available per plate, divided into two rows. No messages please - only names of individuals or businesses will be engraved. Engraving can include graduation dates, such as "Mary Smith, 1999".

SCHENECTADY ALL-COUNTY FESTIVAL

Audrey Biller Clarinet
Zoe Bisnett Clarinet
Matt Fromowitz Trumpet
Maya Healey Horn
Cindy Hong Clarinet
Ian Klenk Percussion
Madeline Lasher Bass Clarinet
Greta Merrill Flute
Derrick Niu Trumpet
Tokunbo Oshinowo Trumpet
Nick Riendeau Tuba
Cristina Rojo Clarinet
Fiona Schlossberg Trombone
Caleb Tysz Trumpet
Lucia Vysohlid Tuba
Keller Wegter-Mcnelly Bassoon
Patrick Yang Clarinet
Jessica Arul Soprano
Matt Choi Baritone
Emma Cornish Soprano
Audrey Corsi Soprano
Taylor Cross Alto
Emily De Soyza Alto
Matthew Esposito Baritone
Mia Etkin Alto
Christian Francisco Baritone
Alexandra Gallo Soprano
Gianna Guido Soprano
Sara Harrow Soprano

Lucy Hart Soprano
Ryce Hazard Baritone
David Henson Baritone
Jack Hoke Baritone
Isabella Martinez Alto
Henry Mccann Baritone
Ella Mcdonnell Soprano
Emma Mclear Alto
Evan Meisner Soprano
Maddie Mills Alto
Logan Modan Soprano
Millie Modasra Soprano
Ella Moskov Soprano
Emma Nobes Soprano
Madison Norris Alto
Emily Persaud Soprano
Kimberly Persaud Alto
Mathena Rush Soprano
Aiylin Rutnik Alto
Owen Rutnik Baritone
Jack Ryan Alto
Benjamin Smith Baritone
Connor Smith Baritone
Katherine Sumner Alto
Olivia Achcet Jazz Trumpet
Emily Baker Jazz Trombone
Tyler Bobbitt Jazz Alto Sax
Quinton Cain Drumset
Keenan Dugggal Jazz Trumpet

Risa Fromowitz Jazz Trombone
Derek Wolfe Jazz Trumpet
Joseph Quinn Double Bass
Ratna K Bandaru Violin I
Samantha Cerezo Violin I
Cecilia Christian Cello
Hayley Elsbree Violin I
Caleb Gascoyne Viola
Landon Greene Violin Ii
Rojan Javaheri Violin Ii
Cedar Kos Viola
Yuto Kuraseko Violin Ii
Arthur Leung Violin I
Kristal Lin Violin Ii
Katherine Makrin String Bass
Dylan Marshall Cello
Titilayo Oshinowo Violin Ii
Nicholas Petrillo Cello
Austin Remillard Violin Ii
Amira Salem Viola
Samy Sathiyaseelan Violin Ii
Sabriela Spencer Cello
Sophie Spindler Cello
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OUR TALENTED MUSICIANS



3rd grade Hillside students hard at work with their new recorders



Hillside 4th grade students singing Together we can Change the World



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