



Notes

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

“Education in music is most sovereign because more than anything else, rhythm and harmony find their way to the innermost soul and take strongest hold upon it” -Plato

As I welcome you to the 2019-2020 School concert year, whether you have a budding musician, your child is trying a second instrument, joined a choir, or is a seasoned instrumentalist getting ready to graduate, anticipation is in the air. Our Fall concert season has started, and we are excitedly prepping for the holidays. Friends of Music is woven through all the grades supporting our faculty, students and programs – from Kindergarten through our seniors. We have just provided funding for a program that will put ukuleles in many of our elementary schools. We had funded the world drums too five years ago, and it's nice to be able to enhance our elementary school programs. As President, the value of supporting a music program Kindergarten through 12th grade is such a privilege.

We are still looking for a treasurer for next year, an accountant to help us with our taxes, and a vice president. Let any of our Board of Directors know if you are interested in these positions. We welcome more liaisons in all our schools, for more hands make joyful company at concerts. Liaisons are some of the most important roles we have as volunteers.

Have a wonderful Holiday Season, and if you bought some of our Mourningkill Pies, enjoy! Thank you.

-Jodi Rossman

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year. The music department faculty is working hard to deliver the best education possible to our students and build upon the wonderful success we've enjoyed over the years.

Many students spent their summer immersed in music activities. FOM scholarship winners and others took advantage of great opportunities including private study, our own Summer Sonata program, the School of the Performing Arts at Proctors, Temple University and many more. We look forward to the training and skills they bring with them this school year.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER LEARNING

Mrs. Catalano	Taught @ Nisky Summer Sonata & St. Rose A Capella
Peter Bidoshi	Bristol Hills Music Camp
Evan Bray	Bristol Hills Music Camp
Timothy Burgess	Bristol Hills (Choir, Band), School of Performing Arts at Proctors: <i>Les Misérables</i> (percussion)
Michelle Chan	Proctors Broadway Jr. Camp
Emma Cornish	Park Playhouse (<i>Newsies</i>), Orlando School of Dance Intensive
Pallavi Datta	School of Performing Arts at Proctors: <i>Les Misérables</i> (violin)
Jessica Dinius	Ran worship for kids at Grace Fellowship
Gloria Doudoukjian	Led choir at church camp (St. Vartan)
Mary Dutcher	Niskayuna Summer Sonata
Millie Ellenbogen	NYC Ballet at SPAC performing <i>Coppélia</i>
Matthew Esposito	Bristol Hills Music Camp
Matt Fromowitz	Bristol Hills Music Camp
Caleb Gascoyne	Bristol Hills Music Camp
Landon Greene	Bristol Hills Music Camp
Jesse Hoogs	Piano Recital
Taryn Klein	Orlando School of Dance Intensive
Adriana Lawton	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i> at Not So Common Players
Ella McDonnell	School of Performing Arts at Proctors: <i>Les Misérables</i>
Greta Meril	Bristol Hills Music Camp
Madalyn Montgomery	Choreography for Not So Common Kids Camp: <i>Shrek Jr.</i>
Emma Nobes	Niskayuna Summer Sonata
Gabby Pizzolo	Young Women's Composers Camp at Temple University
Faith Potter	Bristol Hills (choir, 2 orchestras, advanced guitar, 2 jazz bands)
Nick Riendeau	Bristol Hills Music Camp
Cristina Rojo	Bristol Hills Music Camp
Caroline Skrebutenas	Young Women's Composers Camp at Temple University
Emily de Soyza	SCCC Musical Theater Children/Tween Camp
Anna Taylor	Singing lessons with Mrs. Catalano
Caleb Tysz	Bristol Hills Music Camp
Karys Veach	<i>Heathers the Musical</i> , <i>Beauty and the Beast</i>
Anna Vinciguerra	Niskayuna Summer Sonata
Daniel Watson	Music Director at VBS
Calvin Wetzel	Bristol Hills Music Camp
Kaylee Whelan	School of Performing Arts at Proctors: <i>Les Misérables</i>
Jacob Yanoff	Bristol Hills Music Camp
Bella Zonderman	Pennsylvania Ballet Summer Intensive

Concert Series

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

www.niskyschools.org.

Featured this year will be:

All-District Band Festival at Proctors Theater – March 11

Jazz Festival – April 1

High School Musical

We are proud to announce our upcoming production of **Disney's The Little Mermaid**, which will be held on February 27 - 29, 2020. Auditions take place in November and tickets go on sale in December.

MORE FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

NEW YORK STATE SCHOOL MUSIC ASSOCIATION

2 students were selected as participants or alternates for this year's All-State Conference to be held in Rochester. Congratulations on this honor!

Josh Wang, Cello, String Orchestra

Benjamin Yao, Snare drum, Wind Ensemble

Alternates are: **Jenny Kang**, Violin, **Benjamin Yao**, Timpani and Mallets, **Benjamin Yao**, Jazz Drum set, **James Zilberman**, Double Bass.

NEW FACULTY

Marilyn Brown (General Music Faculty) earned her Bachelor of Music in Music Education at the Crane School of Music, SUNY Potsdam. She also received an MA in Education from the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Mrs. Brown most recently taught music at St. Gregory's school in Loudonville. We are excited to welcome her to teach at Iroquois, Van Antwerp and at the high school. Many of you may recognize Mrs. Brown from her years of service to the Friends of Music and as a member of the community!

Rebecca Farrell (General Music Faculty) earned her Bachelor of Music in Music Education at the Crane School of Music, SUNY Potsdam. She also received a Performance Certificate in Voice. She is the winner of the Julia Crane Award and spent the summer in Jamaica as a music education supervisor at a primary school in Portland. Ms. Farrell teaches all the general music classes and chorus at Birchwood. Please welcome her to Niskayuna!

Julie Wilson (General Music Faculty) is a graduate of the Crane School of Music with a Bachelor of Music in Music Education. She received a master's degree in Education and Technology from the University of Buffalo. Mrs. Wilson comes to us from the Waterford Halfmoon Union Free School District where she was the vocal and general music teacher. At Iroquois she teaches general music classes, conducts the 6th and 7th/8th choirs and also directs our select middle school ensemble *Mezzo Voce*. We're thrilled to have Mrs. Wilson join us!

MUSIC ENRICHMENT

Our students have several festivals to look forward to this year including the Area All-State Music Festival, Schenectady All-County, Suburban Council, the New York State Band Directors Association, and our own **Band Festival at Proctors Theatre** and **Jazz Fest** at the high school. Students are encouraged to look for applications and ask their directors for information.

Other opportunities include NYSSMA, the Empire State Youth Orchestras and many others.

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

We're proud to announce our upcoming production of **Disney's The Little Mermaid**, February 27 - 29, 2020. Auditions take place in November and ticket sales begin in December.

MAKE A LASTING LEGACY

NAME-A-CHAIR

I am happy to report that we've revived our Name-A-Chair project, which first began in the early 2000s. Everyone is invited to make a pledge and receive an engraved brass plate inset on a chair in the high school auditorium. Since all of the district's music performances happen in this space, we want it to be as outstanding as possible and funds raised through this project will directly benefit the auditorium.

Have a great year!

-Eric Hughes



The Name-A-Chair Project

In order to ensure the future success of the Niskayuna Performing Arts Programs, the community members, parents and businesses are invited to donate to the Name-A-Chair campaign. The names of those making a pledge will be engraved on the arms of the new auditorium seats. The 1,000-plus seats in the auditorium will have engraved brass plates inset on the wooden arms. Your engraving will remain for the life of the auditorium.

What is the Cost?

The minimum donation is \$150 per chair arm for individuals and families or a minimum of \$250 for businesses. This donation is tax deductible.

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

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:

SPOTLIGHT NEWS

Spotlight on Abigail Luther

Friends of Music is thrilled to welcome all of our new music teachers to the district. In this issue we highlight **Abigail Luther**, general music teacher and choral director at **Glenclyff Elementary School**. Ms. Luther teaches all levels of music from kindergarten through fifth grade.



Ms. Luther, who is originally from Killingworth, CT, has been in the greater Albany area for six years; four of those years she spent as a student at Saint Rose where she graduated in 2018 with her Bachelor of Science in Music Education. The fall after her graduation, Ms. Luther worked part time as a music teacher at Glenclyff and the High School where she taught self-contained music classes for students in grades 9-12.

Ms. Luther's main instrument is voice. Early on she displayed a passion for singing. When she was eight years old her mother offered her the choice of getting private lessons or joining a choir; she chose the choir. Ms. Luther relates, "The choir turned out to be more of an investment than my mom thought it would be!" Ms. Luther was invited to join the United Girls' Choir, the top girls' choir in New England; she ended up traveling with them all through New England, the Midwest, Canada, China and Puerto

Rico. Ms. Luther credits her time with the Choir (as member and a leader) as one of the most rewarding things she has ever done. She remarks, "The Choir was always about being the best you could be both musically and as a person. We were all there to work together to make something beautiful, and when everyone was so kind, supportive, and encouraging, how could you not be?"

Ms. Luther has a long history of giving back to her community. She participated in many different community outreach programs while in college; she volunteered with the Urban Launch Program, Refugee and Immigrant Support Services of Emmaus (RISSE), Habitat for Humanities and Reach out Saint Rose. During her sophomore year spring break, she traveled to Florida as a volunteer to paint houses for people in need. In addition to all of her volunteer work in the community, Ms. Luther also found time to participate in college ensembles and extra-curricular positions that focused on music; she was a section leader for Chamber Choir, Masterworks Choral, President of Golden Notes, and Vice President and Treasurer of the American Choral Directors Association.

Ms. Luther currently lives in Schenectady. She is thrilled to be working in Niskayuna, a district where music is so valued. She offers this advice to her students: "Always try. You don't need to be perfect, but you do need to put in some effort and you will get better."

In her free time, Ms. Luther finds intense pleasure in balancing checkbooks (she loves math!), reading, taking walks and going on hikes and napping. Her passion for music and for teaching is absolutely infectious; her motivation for becoming a teacher was to help other people find their passion. It is clear that Ms. Luther has found her passion; "my favorite thing is music", she says, "I've had it through every transition in life – it has always had a great place in my heart." In addition to singing, Ms. Luther also plays the piano and guitar and teaches voice and piano lessons at two different studios in our community. Please extend a warm greeting to Ms. Luther when you next see her!

-Kristin Bidoshi

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NOTES

Glenclyff Elementary

The halls are alive with the sound of music at Glenclyff! We are hard at work learning songs and sign language for our upcoming Good Morning Glenclyff. Kindergarten and First graders are exploring their singing voices through group games and solos. Second and Third graders are delving into pitched percussion with the xylophone. Fourth and Fifth graders are beginning their instrument lessons and chorus class to prepare for their winter concert in January.

In the Orchestra room, fourth graders are exploring their new instruments in lessons. They are focusing on their playing position and bow holds for a beautiful sound while learning to play notes on the D string using their left hands. Fifth graders are continuing to hone their skills. This year, they are learning first position notes on all strings and will perform more challenging repertoire. Fifth grade students are practicing for the Winter Concert, which will include an arrangement of *Star Wars*.

In the Band room, fifth graders gleefully squeaked and squawked to find every noise their instrument could make. They are now filling the hall with familiar tunes played on their instruments. We look forward to hearing what the band will play for us this year at their first winter concert!



-Abigail Luther

Rosendale Elementary

Rosendale Elementary is alive with song, movement and instrument playing. We are thankful to our Niskayuna community voters and school board for adding a second music class each week for Kindergarteners. They are enjoying more songs, movement, and delightful content. First graders are ringing the triangles to "America" and learning to read notes with hands-on rhythm bags. In second grade music classes, students are becoming experts on the percussion family and will compose a short piece for their favorite instrument in the music room. Third graders are playing our beautiful family of xylophone instruments and are learning to sing in rounds. Fourth grade music class is integrating with the NYS history unit about the Iroquois nation. Homeroom parents have made a feather attachment for the students' drums and recorders. Mrs. Johnston attended the Saratoga Native American Festival and learned new, more authentic steps from a master dancer Daystar Rosalie Jones. Fifth grade classes are learning the instruments of the orchestra in music class and in the computer lab on Brain Pop and on Dallas Symphony Orchestra.com. Additionally, they are completing a study on George Gershwin, an American composer who accomplished much in his 38 years. The Rosendale Chorus has a sign-up genius for two visitors per rehearsal as we get ready for our winter concert. Finally, the whole school is preparing patriotic songs for our Rosendale Veteran's Day Assembly.

Special thanks to our Rosendale Friends of Music Co-Liaisons **Mrs. Murray and Mrs. Stashower!** Thank you parents, families, and members, of FOM.

-Holly Johnston

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NOTES

Hillside Elementary

Students are engaged in a wide variety of musical activities at Hillside Elementary School! Hillside students are learning several songs for their monthly Hello, Hillside! performances. Students performed *Hello to All the Children of the World* by Martin Kerr and Kate Millie for their opening Hello, Hillside! Students learned to say and sing “hello” in several different languages. Kindergarten and first graders sing and dance to a wide variety of songs, including *Jim Along Josie*. First graders enjoy performing on a variety of percussion instruments, including tambourine. Second and third graders accompany their singing on xylophone. Fourth graders are learning new notes to perform on their recorders. Fifth graders are exploring World Music Drumming. Fourth and fifth graders are working hard to prepare for their January Chorus concert! Music is alive at Hillside Elementary School!



-Sara Banker

Birchwood Elementary

All of Birchwood is working very hard to prepare for our Veterans Day Assembly that is coming up on November 8th. The students are learning songs, making decorations, and taking leadership roles so that we can make our Veterans feel very welcomed! We are looking forward to having a wonderful & music filled year!

-Rebecca Farrell

Elementary Bands Get Off to a Great Start

Our five elementary bands have gotten off to a great start with lessons!!! It is tremendously rewarding to see and hear the first sounds that a new class of band students can produce. A big thank you goes out to the parents for their assistance with practicing and their overall help with getting this program off and running. Although, embarking down the road of learning a new instrument takes commitment and work, “playing” is a lot of fun! This is a talented group of fifth graders and **Mrs. Kokernak, Mr. Pandori, and Mrs. Scherer** look forward to a wonderful year of music making with this artistic group of students.

Mrs. Susan Kokernak, Elementary Bands at Birchwood, and Rosendale

Mr. Philip Pandori, Elementary Band at Glencliff

Mrs. Karen Scherer, Elementary Bands at Craig and Hillside

HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

Choral Corner

Welcome back to all choral students, families and anyone who supports music and the arts at Niskayuna!

Studio Singers and **Bel Canto Voices** have already shared their progress having performed on October 10 at Back-to-School Night. Members of these honors choral ensembles began preparing music on their own after receiving an assignment via mailing in late-August.

Social Media

Any parent can sign up for text message reminders through the website www.remind.com (or via the smartphone app). Simply search for **Choir, Concert Chorale, Ladies First, Bel Canto Voices, Studio Singers** or your child's voice lesson group to receive information about concerts, voice lessons and other helpful reminders that will be sent directly to your phone or e-mail via the automated system.

For photos and videos, please follow **Mrs. Pizzino-Catalano's** school Instagram account, **Sing4ursupprrr**, for occasional postings about what students are doing inside the classroom!

Choral Uniforms

Choir, Concert Chorale and Ladies First members were uniformed at the beginning of the school year. Any student who still owes payment for their uniform (past due on September 21) should submit their check made to Niskayuna Friends of Music and bring it into the music office. All clothing should be hemmed to the proper length and pressed for performances. Dark, closed-toe dress shoes should be worn with each outfit.

Empire State Youth Chorale

Six students have been accepted into the Empire State Youth Chorale and will sing at the "**Melodies of Christmas**" performances at Proctors Theatre in December. Congratulations to **Amelia Allen, Emma Edwards, Lauren Lanotte, Faith Potter, Daniel Watson** and **Keller Wegter-McNelly**!

Upcoming Performances:

- **Ladies First, Choir, and Concert Band** will present a Thanksgiving concert on **Monday, November 25 at 1:45 p.m.** in the H.S. 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.
- **ALL H.S. CHORAL SINGERS** are invited to share their voices on **Sunday, December 8 at 5:30 p.m.** at the Niskayuna Town Hall for the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. Cookies and hot chocolate will be served and this will be an extra credit/makeup opportunity!
- Please mark your calendar for **Monday, December 9** (December 16 snow/cold date) as members of **Studio Singers** and **Bel Canto Voices** will be participating in FOM's annual Caroling for CASH 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 and/or lanterns. Any parents who would be willing to chaperone by providing a vehicle for students to stay warm in can contact Mrs. Pizzino-Catalano at cpizzino-catalano@niskyschools.org**

MORE HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

Choral Corner (cont.)

(timeslots range from 4:45-8:00 p.m.). Any parent or student who would be willing to donate or sew/make an article of clothing for the event would be welcome to do so (we are especially in need of cloaks)!

- **Concert Chorale, Bel Canto Voices, and Studio Singers** along with **Chamber Strings, Jazz Ensemble, and Symphonic Band** will perform at the annual holiday assemblies scheduled for **Wednesday, December 18** (Thursday, December 19 snow date). The performances begin at 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. Any family members or friends who would like to attend are encouraged to arrive a few minutes early to sign in at the front desk.
- **An Evening in History** will be presented collaboratively between the Social Studies and Music Departments on **Monday, January 13 at 7:00 p.m.** in the H.S. auditorium. This year's program will commemorate *Woodstock* (1969-1970) through historical speech and song. Attendance is mandatory for all students in **Choir, Ladies First, and Concert Chorale**. **Stage Band and Concert Band** will also be joining in this year's collaboration!

In continuing with the tradition started in 2008, **Ladies First** will sponsor a reception after their first concert on **October 30**. This year the students will offer foods of Spain, Mexico and Latin America in conjunction with their study of "Antigua Canción" sung in Spanish. Please join us in celebrating the kick off of our first concert series and a connection between music and culture!

C. M. Pizzino - Catalano

-Christina Pizzino-Catalano

HS Stage Band

The High School Stage Band was thrilled to perform at the Board Meeting on October 22nd. Thank you to Mrs. Gagnon and Dr. Tangorra for this special invitation. We look forward to our first formal concert on November 7th alongside the High School Concert Band. We also look forward to many performance opportunities this year, including Evening in History (showcasing the years 1969-1971), our District Jazz Fest in April (with guest Artist and Trombonist Alan Ferber), and our annual performance at the Niskayuna Town Hall Gazebo in June.



HS Concert Band

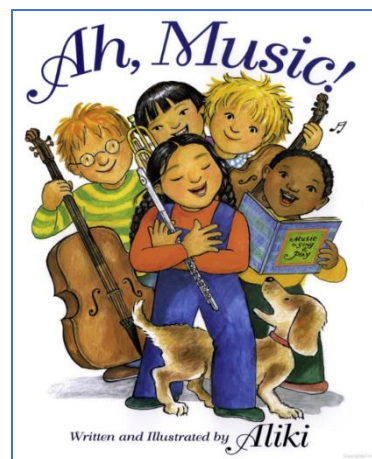
The High School Concert Band has made lots of progress since our first rehearsal in early September. We are excited to perform our first concert on November 7th alongside the High School Stage Band. We are thrilled that this is a Band Festival year in Niskayuna, and we have some exciting repertoire to showcase the band on the Proctor's Stage in March - you won't want to miss it!

-Phil Pandori

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Music is rhythm.
Music is melody.
Music is feeling...
and oh, so much more.

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SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS AND ESYO

FOM Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to our FOM Summer Scholarship winners who used their award for enhanced music study during the month of July and August.

Peter Bidoshi	Grade 10	Saxophone
Angella Chen	Grade 8	Piano
Eujeong Choi	Grade 8	Cello
Pallavi Datta	Grade 9	Piano
Matthew Esposito	Grade 9	Percussion
Jenny Kang	Grade 12	Violin
Daniel Kwon	Grade 8	Clarinet
Lauren Lanotte	Grade 11	Voice
Arthur Leung	Grade 8	Violin
Madelyn Montgomery	Grade 12	Voice
Lucia Vysohlid	Grade 8	Tuba
Mika Wilbur	Grade 8	Saxophone

Congratulations to the following Niskayuna 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 twelve 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.

Meredith Adams	Concertino Strings	Violin
Ratna Kartheeka Bandaru	String Orchestra	Violin
Sophia Barnes	Symphony Orchestra	Bass
Faith Borkowski	Symphony Orchestra	Violin
Vidhu Bulumulla	String Orchestra	Violin
Josie Calareso	String Orchestra	Cello
Sean Calhoun	Concertino Strings	Violin
Samuel Calos	Symphony Orchestra	Violin
Aurojit Chakraborty	Repertory Jazz Orchestra	Trombone
Timothy Chen	String Orchestra	Violin
Eujeong Choi	Symphony Orchestra	Cello
Pallavi Datta	Repertory Orchestra	Violin
Tanmay Goel	Wind Orchestra	Alto Sax
Jenny Kang	Symphony Orchestra	Violin
Providence Kang	Youth Jazz Orchestra	Alto Sax
Kevin Kwon	Symphony Orchestra	Violin

ESYO (CONT.)

Christine Lee	Symphony Orchestra	Violin
Arthur Leung	Symphony Orchestra	Violin
Kairui Liu	Repertory Orchestra	French Horn
Lucas Lynch	Youth Jazz Orchestra	Drums
Reilin Lyu	String Orchestra	Violin
Kyle Markham	Repertory Orchestra	Cello
Sydney Markham	String Orchestra	Violin
Kim-Le Tran	Symphony Orchestra	Violin
Josh Tso	Symphony Orchestra	Viola
Simran Utturkar	Concertino Strings	Viola
Duncan Wall	Symphony Orchestra	French Horn
Joshua Wang	Symphony Orchestra	Cello
Calvin Wetzel	Youth Jazz Orchestra	Trombone
Melinda Wetzel	Repertory Orchestra	Oboe
Claire Wusterbarth	String Orchestra	Violin
Nathan Yan	Repertory Jazz Orchestra	Tenor Sax
Patrick Yang	Symphony Orchestra	Clarinet
Benjamin Yao	Youth Percussion Ensemble	Percussion
	Symphony Orchestra	
Jessica Zhang	Repertory Orchestra	Flute
April Zhang	String Orchestra	Violin
William Zheng	Symphony Orchestra	Trombone

Thank you All who participated in the Friends of Music Pie Sale!

It is your tremendous support that allows the Niskayuna Friends of Music (FOM) to sponsor quality education, enrichment and scholarship programs.

We hope you enjoy your home-baked pies throughout the rest of the Fall season and have a lovely Thanksgiving Holiday!

GE Foundation Matching Gifts Program

FOM has joined the list of charitable institutions that are supported by the GE Foundation Matching Gifts Program. Through this program, individual contributions of \$25 or more from employees and/or retirees are matched dollar for dollar. Eligible gifts may be registered online on our *membership page* or by phone at 1-800-305-0669.

Niskayuna Friends of Music is a wonderful organization of volunteers providing their time, energy, and funds for the Music Department. Would you consider joining at <https://niskyfom.org/?> You can also scan the following QR Code as a direct link to joining Friends of Music.



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