



Notes



NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Niskayuna Friends of Music,

Happy Spring! I am so excited that warmer weather and spring concerts are finally here!

Over the last few months, Friends of Music has supported guest conductors and composers to enrich music education at Niskayuna. In April, we welcomed Dr. Weiser from SUNY Fredonia to work with students and conduct the amazing Jazz Festival. This successful event included incredibly talented middle school and high school musicians.

Thank you to everyone who was involved in Mamma Mia! Your hard work definitely paid off as you had the audience out of their seats singing and dancing. Thank you for making us feel like Dancing Queens and Super Troupers.

Niska-Day is back this year! After we cheer for Studio Singers during the parade, come and visit the Friends of Music table at Craig Elementary School. We are very excited to be part of this community wide event.

To the seniors, thank you for leaving your mark on our hearts. Thank you for being incredible role models and friends. You will be missed! We are certain the younger students will want to follow in your footsteps and make you proud.

I wish everyone a fabulous end of the school year. I hope your summer is full of laughter, adventure, and of course wonderful music.

~Sarah Spindler

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

From the Director

It never seems possible that the end of the year comes so quickly... after taking so long to arrive! But May and June are always full of fun, happy events and I hope this spring is no different. Every day that we get to make music together in person is a day to be grateful for and this year is no different in that regard.

The music department welcomed several guest artists and teachers into our schools throughout the year across all grade levels and disciplines. Some examples include the SPAC Classical Kids program, our Virtual Symposium, The PointerCounts and A Sharp Arrangement from the Crane School of Music, guest artist Dr. Nick Weiser (SUNY Fredonia School of Music) for our Jazz Fest, violist Jordan Bak, and more. It is through the generosity of the Friends of Music that our students have access to and learn from a diverse and extraordinary roster of musicians. We are so thankful.

Special thanks go to Tracy Koste, music department secretary, and our leave replacement teachers Kayla Freeden and Samantha Stern. All of us benefit from their professionalism and kindness. Thank you to the custodians in all our schools and especially to high school head custodian Karen Lasher and her staff, without whom much of what we do could not be accomplished.

Please enjoy this special time of year to reflect on the progress all our student musicians have made, and say goodbye to our seniors whom we wish the very best for. We will miss you!

Elementary Instrumental Music

We are happy to resume our usual program for beginners. This spring, 3rd & 4th grade students will learn about orchestra for next year. 4th graders will also learn about our band program. PLEASE NOTE: Students may choose either band or orchestra, but not both. Third grade students who hope to play a band instrument in the fifth grade should refrain from playing a string instrument in the fourth grade.

Virtual Symposium

Thanks to generous grants from FOM we welcomed performers, conductors, composers, producers and others into our classrooms through Google Meets. Professionals from the east and west coasts, and alumni from far away as London shared their knowledge and experience with students in ensembles and MIDI classes.

Noah Prebish and Michael Rudinski (Alumni)	Psymon Spine-Dream Pop Band
Alex Koste (Alum)	Working as an L.A. Producer
Adrian B Sims - Composer	"Energy! for Band"
Dr. Peter Bellino - Trumpet	Trumpet Masterclasses: Warmups and Effective Practicing
Dr. Chris Hernacki - Professor of Trombone Crane School of Music	"Stylistic Chameleon"

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dr. Allyson Keyser Trumpet, SCCC	Brass Quintet Coaching
Dr. Allyson Keyser Brass Division Coordinator SCCC	Preparing for an Audition or NYSSMA
Greg Evans - Professor of Jazz, Ithaca College	Ensemble Coaching (2 Sessions)
Laura Estes - Composer	"Cook Strait Crossing"
Doug Spata- Composer	"City of Steel"
Soon Hee Newbold - Composer	"Warrior Legacy"
Heather Hoefle - Composer	"Mama Sea Turtle"
Dr. Raymond Wise	Gospel music performance
Eunu Song (Alum)	Working as a Global Project Manager for Spotify

Summer Sonata Program July 25-29, 2022

The Nisky "Summer Sonata" music program is a fun, weeklong camp designed for students who are already members of the NCSD bands, choirs, or orchestras. Eligible students who will be entering grades **6-8 for band, choir or orchestra** are welcome. Made possible by the Friends of Music, this exciting opportunity is for students who enjoy music and wish to continue developing their music skills during the summer with Nisky faculty!

Students can further their musical aptitude and skills, discover music appreciation and knowledge through conversation, performance and "hands-on" projects.

Classes and ensemble rehearsals will be conducted Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 12 Noon, beginning July 25. The program registration fee is \$150.

Registration forms are available in the District Music Office and at www.niskyfom.org. The forms should be returned to your school music teacher or to the District Music Office at the high school. **Registration deadline is June 24.**

~Eric Hughes



MAKE A LASTING LEGACY



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 contribute to the Name-A-Chair Project. The names of those making a pledge will be engraved on the arms of the new auditorium seats.

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
- ☐ Business: \$250 per chair
- ☐ My contribution can be matched by my employer_____.

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 22-character rows. No messages please - only names of individuals or businesses will be engraved.

Engraving can include graduation dates, such as "Mary Smith, 1999".

Please return by 5/31/2022.

SPOTLIGHT NEWS



Spotlight on Kayla Freeden

Friends of Music interviews **Kayla Freeden**, 5th and 6th Grade Band teacher at **Elementary and Middle Schools**.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Queensbury, NY. Students and the community may know Queensbury from skiing at West Mountain, riding roller coasters at The Great Escape, or eating ice cream at Martha's! I loved growing up in the foothills of the Adirondacks because I was always a short drive from the lake and the surrounding mountains.

How were you involved in music growing up?

Growing up, I was always listening to music in my free time. I loved to sing and put on "concerts" for my family with my sister! I started singing in our school's chorus when I was in fourth grade, then when I was given the opportunity to learn an instrument going into fifth grade, I was assigned the flute! After a couple years of taking flute lessons and performing with our school ensemble, I realized that band was the thing I looked forward to the most at school and started to envision what it would be like to be a band teacher. Not only did I love playing the flute and wanted to learn more instruments, but I loved the social aspect of band, especially the friendships that grew within my lesson group and section just within those first couple of years. By the end of seventh grade, I got a saxophone and started taking lessons over the summer. The following year I auditioned for our school's jazz band, so I could play saxophone in that ensemble and continue to play flute in our concert band. Throughout high school, I continued to play both flute and saxophone in various ensembles, participated in the NYSSMA solo festival and enjoyed playing in the pit for our school musicals. I also continued to sing in chorus and was chosen to be part of our select "Madrigal" group in my senior year.

Where did you go to college?

I attended Nazareth College in Rochester, NY where I earned my Bachelor of Music in Music Education. My primary instrument was the saxophone and one of my favorite experiences during my time in college was rehearsing and performing in saxophone quartets with other students in my studio!

Do you have any favorite extracurricular activities that you want to share?

I enjoy spending time outdoors, especially hiking and kayaking. I'd attribute both of those interests to growing up so close to the Adirondacks and spending most summers camping with my grandparents!

What are your current responsibilities with Niskayuna?

I am currently filling in for Mrs. Karen Scherer while she is on maternity leave and I am responsible for the fifth grade bands at Hillside and Craig Elementary Schools, in addition to directing the sixth grade band and teaching sixth grade flute, clarinet and saxophone lessons.

What are your goals?

One of my current goals is to complete a graduate program to further my education and to upgrade my teaching certification. I've been very grateful over the last several years to be able to get my grounding in a music classroom and I'm excited to take those experiences with me to earn my next degree!

What are your favorite things to do outside of school?

One of my favorite things to do outside of school is play one of my favorite video games - *Animal Crossing*! Decorating my island, fishing, and gardening in the game helps me to relax after a long day. I also love spending time with my cats, Deku and Astro. They are both Bengals, which means they are very active cats! They were leash trained as kittens, so we'll take them on walks where they love to climb trees and explore different trails!

Do you have any advice to students studying music now?

My advice to students studying music now would be to find out what makes them excited about music! There are going to be things you're required to study in school or private lessons, but I think it's important to explore and remember that music is a form of individual expression. Whether that's finding (or composing) an arrangement of your favorite video game theme and learning to play it on your instrument or seeking out local concerts to attend, make the most out of your music education by including your individual interests and know that your teachers are here to help and guide you!

Do you have any advice to students who want to pursue music as their career?

My advice would be to be proud of the progress you make as a musician. It's so easy to get caught up in comparing yourself to others because being a musician involves that element of competition, whether it's seating auditions, college admission, or job opportunities. Some of that is healthy, because it can be a motivator to improve your own musicianship, but don't let it consume your perspective on your own progress and how far you've come with the work you've put in!

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NOTES

Hillside Elementary

Music is alive at Hillside Elementary School! Students continue to sing, dance, play and create! After all, that's what it's all about! Students are learning a variety of songs for their monthly Hello, Hillside! celebrations. We sure enjoy singing! Kindergarten students recently enjoyed performing on instruments to represent different characters from some of their favorite folktales. 1st graders are learning how to play the xylophone and are beginning to accompany their singing. 2nd graders are performing patterns of sound on the xylophone, while singing some fun folk tunes. 3rd graders recently enjoyed learning about world music. We really enjoyed singing the "Italy song!" 4th graders are performing on the xylophone and are accompanying their singing. 5th graders enjoyed learning about Latin American music and had the opportunity to perform on a variety of percussion instruments. Our 4th and 5th grade chorus students are working hard to prepare music for their spring concert. We hope to see you there!

A special thank you to the Niskayuna Friends of Music for supporting our talented students and staff. We thank you for providing us with the resources necessary for music making!

~Sarah Sanson

Elementary Bands and Orchestras Prepare for their First Concert

The 5th Grade Bands and Orchestras across the District look forward to performing their first live concert together. After recording a video concert in January, this springtime concert will feature their first live performance in front of an audience on the High School stage this year. The groups started to rehearse together at the end of April and are putting together different instruments for the first time. The music programmed will consist of a nice variety of traditional favorites. The students are very excited to perform on the High School stage for their family and friends!

- *Glenclyff Concert – Monday, May 23rd – **Amanda Baker & Phil Pandori**
- *Birchwood Concert – Wednesday, May 25th – **Brenda Hartman & Sue Kokernak**
- *Rosendale Concert – Thursday, May 26th – **Brenda Hartman & Sue Kokernak**
- *Hillside Concert – Tuesday, May 31st – **Amanda Baker & Kayla Freeden**
- *Craig Concert – Wednesday, June 1st – **Kayla Freeden & Stacey McClenon**



Craig Woodwinds and Percussion

MIDDLE SCHOOL NOTES

6th Grade Band Meets Heather Hoefle



The Sixth Grade Band recently welcomed composer Heather Hoefle to a rehearsal for the Music In Our Schools Month Virtual Symposium. Students participated in a Q&A where Mrs. Hoefle discussed what it's like being a musician and composer and told us more about her composition, *Mama Sea Turtle*, which will be featured on our upcoming spring concert. Mrs. Hoefle shared pictures of the *loggerhead sea turtle* that inspired her work, led students through an activity where they were asked to describe what type of music they would write inspired by other types of sea creatures, and provided great advice for our young musicians about creating good practice habits. We would like to thank Friends of Music for making this opportunity possible!

~Kayla Freedon, 6th Grade Band

Seventh Grade Band Performs New York Premiere

The Seventh Grade Band is looking forward to the Spring concert on Thursday, May 5th at the High School. The theme of the music selected for the band is *"Bodies of Water"*. The program will start off with *March Saranac* by John O'Reilly which is an exciting march named after Saranac Lake in the Adirondack Mountains. The second piece brings the listener on an adventure on the ocean named *"Scenes from an Ocean Voyage"*. The first movement entitled *"Into the Great Blue Sea"*, paints a picture of a crew casting off and venturing out to the open sea. This movement features the clanging of an antique ship's bell followed by a beautiful melody played by the clarinets and horns which simulates the ship cresting the gentle waves. The second movement, entitled *"Prowling Shark"*, begins with an ominous melody introduced by the low brass and reeds and the final movement simulates the playful frolicking of a pod of dolphins. The final piece on our portion of the concert is *"Cook Strait Crossing"* by Laura Estes. Throughout history, Cook Strait has been named one of the most treacherous bodies of water in the world separating the North and South Islands of New Zealand. The band had the amazing opportunity to meet Ms. Estes on a live google meet and she gave an overview of her process of composing a piece of music. Ms. Estes informed the band that the performance you will hear this evening is the New York Premiere of Cook Strait Crossing. The band would like to thank the Friends of Music for funding this amazing experience!

~Sue Kokernak



7th Grade Band



Brooklyn McDonald Playing the Ship's Bell

HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

Choral Corner



Excerpt from "Sing" as
sung by The Carpenters

Performances may be wrapping up, but students will be finishing the year loudly and proudly with karaoke performances in their large ensemble groups! Some students have elected to perform live for their classmates, others are providing a prerecorded video to share with their fellow choral singers, and some are submitting a video recording for only Mrs. Catalano to view as per their comfort level. Students are allowed to sing any song that is school appropriate, whether pop, jazz, musical theater, country, rock, classical, rap, metal, reggae, original compositions...you name it! Duets amongst classmates are also allowed and students may accompany themselves on piano, guitar, ukulele, or whatever instrument they so choose!

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE NISKAYUNA FRIENDS OF MUSIC FOR PROVIDING THE GRANT FUNDING TO SUPPORT TO HAVE ONE EXTRA SESSION WITH DR. RAYMOND WISE.

Students in A-Chaired Taste elected to study Dr. Wise's treble arrangement of the spiritual "I'm Gonna Sing When the Spirit Says Sing" and then had a virtual session in May to receive performance notes and tips. A-Chaired Taste will perform this piece as part of their program on the May 18th concert.

*Please see the March 2022 issue of *NOTES* for further details on Dr. Wise's visitations and instruction, as well as his biography.

CHORAL UNIFORMS

- Students in ***Bel Canto Voices and Studio Singers*** will receive their order forms for uniforms in the fall, upon returning to school.
- **ALL USED BEL CANTO VOICES and STUDIO SINGERS' UNIFORMS THAT WILL BE SUBMITTED FOR RESALE MUST BE DRY CLEANED AND TURNED IN BY FRIDAY, JUNE 17.** Students can bring uniforms to the choir room before classes end on June 10 (or when they are in for testing), or you can drop uniforms at the front entrance of the HS. Any uniform that is stained, damaged or in poor condition will not be accepted for resale and will be discarded. Any uniform turned in for resale that does not have the correct paperwork attached in order to contact the seller will be donated to the Friends of Music. Paperwork will be emailed home to parents/guardians, given to students and is included in this issue of NOTES.

*With the change in the Niskayuna HS Concert Attire policy (concert black), we are no longer accepting old Concert Chorale, Ladies First or Choir uniforms.

HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

Outside Performances:

~Look for **Studio Singers** at the Niska Day Parade on **Saturday, May 21**. The students will be performing on a float so generously provided by the town and will kick off the day on the Craig School Grounds in the Entertainment Tent at noon!

~**Bel Canto Voices** will once again provide music for the Memorial Day Ceremony at the high school on **Thursday, May 26 at 10:15 am**.

~**Studio Singers** will be reinstating their final examination Cabaret Concert on **Tuesday, June 14 in the Little Theater at 10:30 am**. Students will present duets, trios and ensembles from standard jazz, pop and musical theatre repertoire. Please give yourself ample time to sign in at the front desk (ID required) and make your way to the Little Theater if you are coming from off grounds. All families, faculty, and staff members are welcome to attend.

Notes of Thanks

To the Niskayuna Friends of Music: THANK YOU for your continued support of our school music program. Your generosity goes far above and beyond the visible and generous financial contributions that bring in so many wonderful enrichment programs. You also support our students, staff, and community in numerous other ways and we are lucky to have such an incredible organization standing side-by-side with us!

To the Niskayuna Music Faculty and Staff (including our director of music education, Mr. Hughes): your work and creativity in teaching music through a pandemic is noteworthy. Thank you to Ms. Luanne Hawk and Ms. Maria Germain for collaborating as our accompanists this year.

To all of the graduating seniors: CONGRATULATIONS and thank you for your commitment and enthusiasm throughout your high school choral enrollment. I hope to someday have the opportunity to invite you back to participate in an alumni chorus. Please keep us updated on your whereabouts and keep music in your heart.

The last challenge that I pose to anyone reading this excerpt is that you encourage a child, friend, colleague, or peer to return to the music program if they have had to take a pause. The wonderful thing about chorus is that it isn't a competition, but a team that will always be there for you, even if you needed to step away for a moment. You are always welcome to rejoin – we will be waiting with open arms!

See you in the fall as the air becomes crisp, the apples ripen, and get ready for another year of music and learning in this community.

C. M. Pizzino-Catalano

~Christina Pizzino-Catalano
Director of Choral Studies, Niskayuna H.S.

HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

Choral Uniform Sale

ALL UNIFORMS DUE BY FRIDAY, JUNE 17

***ALL UNIFORMS MUST BE DRY CLEANED.**

ANY ITEMS THAT ARE RIPPED, STAINED, OR ARE IN POOR CONDITION CANNOT BE SOLD BACK.

Student Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Parent E-mail _____

Phone # _____ Selling Price _____
(leave this line blank)

***ENTER SIZE on blank line – CHECK TAG ON UNIFORM FOR SIZE**

SIZE

Bel Dress Hemmed? YES / NO
(circle one)

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HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

HS Orchestra

On Wednesday, April 13th, the Niskayuna High School Symphony Orchestra hosted a masterclass conducted by award-winning Jamaican-American violist Jordan Bak. He coached three student soloists along with the whole orchestra- Faith Borkowski (violin, on "*Recitative and Scherzo*" by Fritz Kreisler, Eujeong Choi (cello and orchestra, on "*Andante Cantabile*" by Piotr Tchaikovsky), and Sophia Barnes (bass, on "*Scherzo*" by Reinhold Glière).

All the student performers did an amazing job! Jordan brought everyone's playing to the next level with his insightful comments and joyful enthusiasm for performing. Thank you, Friends of Music, for making Jordan's visit possible with an enrichment grant!

From Jordan's website:

Jordan Bak is building an exciting international career as a trailblazing artist, praised for his radiant stage presence, dynamic interpretations, and fearless power. He is frequently in demand as a concerto soloist, recitalist, chamber musician and educator. Only the third violist to earn the Artist Diploma from The Juilliard School, Jordan Bak holds a Bachelor of Music degree with academic honors from New England Conservatory and a Master of Music degree from The Juilliard School, where he was awarded the prestigious Kovner Fellowship.



HIGH SCHOOL NOTES



Congratulations to sophomore Eujeong Choi, who recently performed the solo part of the complete "*Cello Concerto in E Minor*" by Sir Edward Elgar with the Empire State Youth Orchestra. The performance took place at the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall and Eujeong did a fantastic job!

Sophomore Eujeong Choi, 15, is principal cellist of Niskayuna H.S. Symphony Orchestra as well as the Empire State Youth Symphony Orchestra. She studies under Dr. David Bebe. She has won a number of awards and accolades, including first place winner in the New York Laureate International Music Competition (2021), first place in the Prima Volta Music Competition (2021), and first place in the American Protégé International Music Talent Competition (2021). She was also a finalist in the New York International Classical Music Competition (2021) and Uel Wade Scholarship Music competition (2021), where she won \$5000 in scholarship money.

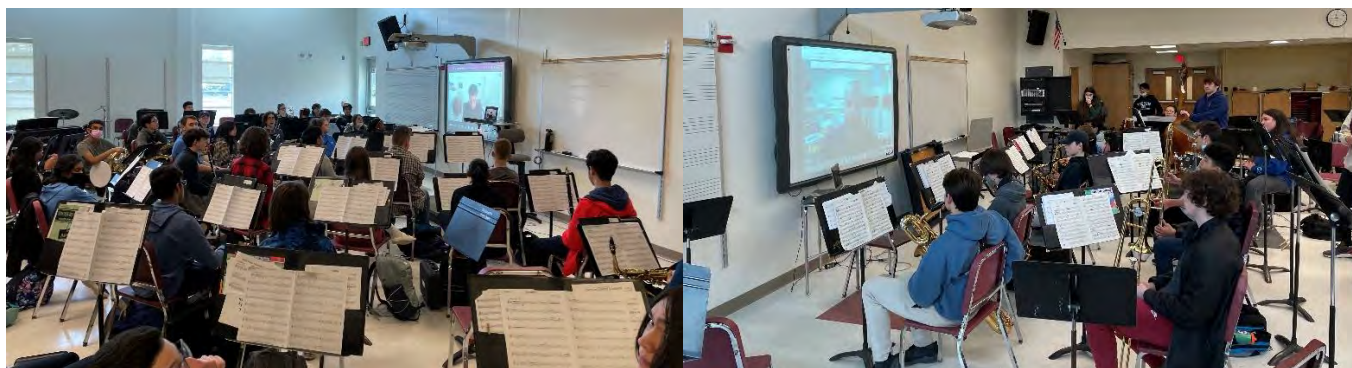
Here she is pictured playing the Elgar with her accompanist Dan Foster at Carnegie Hall.

~Brian Mooney

HS Concert and Stage Band

Members of the Concert Band and the Stage Band, as well as Mr. Pandori's brass lesson students, had various opportunities to work with guest clinicians during the month of March as part of our Virtual Symposium for Music in Our Schools Month. The Stage Band was visited (virtually) by Greg Evans, Assistant Professor of Music Education, Jazz Studies, and Drum Set at Ithaca College. The students worked on "*Cute*" by Neal Hefti - a piece they later performed at the District Jazz Festival on April 6th. Trumpet students in the Concert Band worked in person with Dr. Peter Bellino - the director of ESYO Youth Jazz and a local trumpet pedagog. Brass Quintet students worked with Dr. Allyson Keyser - Professor of Trumpet at SUNY Schenectady - on two pieces of music they later performed at our first ever Chamber Concert on March 24th. Low Brass students in the Concert Band worked virtually with Dr. Christopher Hernacki - Professor of Trombone at the Crane School of Music - in a masterclass called "*Becoming a Stylistic Chameleon*". Finally, the entire Concert Band was visited (virtually) by guest composer Mr. Adrian Sims. Students performed his piece, "*Energy!*", for Mr. Sims and were given the opportunity to ask questions about careers in Music Education, Performance, and Composition.

HIGH SCHOOL NOTES



~Philip Pandori

JAZZ FEST



~Eric Hughes

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Best Wishes to the Class of 2022!

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.

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Niskayuna Friends Of Music



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