



Winter 2023

Issue #2

Notes

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of Music,

We are so grateful for all of our members and corporate sponsors. You have allowed us to continue our support of music education in Niskayuna. Thank you to everyone who participated in the pie sale. We hope you found this annual fundraiser as sweet as we did. Thank you to the high school choir students who performed in Caroling for CA\$H. It was so incredible to hear beautiful holiday music fill the streets of Old Niskayuna. Finally, a huge shout out to The Broken Inn for their very generous donation.

Because of our community, we have been able to welcome guest artists and bring concerts to the high school. We have provided ukuleles for students along with supporting All-State musicians on their journey. We are so happy to announce that the middle school music field trip to New York City will be back this spring. Finally, we will continue to accept grant requests and provide enrichment opportunities for all students throughout the district.

We have enjoyed all of the concerts from elementary to high school. Thank you to the students, parents, and teachers for your dedication.

Make sure you save the date for our high school musical, *A Chorus Line (teen edition)*. Shows will be Friday, March 3 at 7:30 pm and Saturday, March 4 at 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm. Tickets can be purchased at www.showtix4u.com. You do not want to miss this "singular sensation"!

During the recent Albany Pro Musica High School Choir Festival, students from around the region finished the concert with a powerful piece called *It takes a Village* by Joan Szymko. The lyrics were "*It takes a whole village to raise our children.*" I want to take this opportunity to thank our village. I am glad we are able to come together to support our musicians.

With warmest wishes,

~Sarah Spindler



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Welcome to Music In Our Schools Month!

The music department and Friends of Music are so happy to be back to a full schedule of concerts, festivals and good news. We recently learned that alum James Stagnitti ('16) is nominated for a GRAMMY award playing percussion on a Best Orchestral Performance album. So many of our music graduates accomplish amazing things!

NYSSMA Update:

The Piano festival is scheduled for March 10-11 at SUNY Schenectady. *(Registrations are closed.)* The annual Solo/Ensemble festival will be held April 21-22 at Bethlehem High School. *(Registrations close on February 17.)* Jazz auditions take place in May.

Good luck to all of our participants – we are so proud of you!

A Chorus Line

Performances are scheduled for March 3 & 4. We are happy to present three shows to the public. Tickets are on sale and can be reserved at **WWW.SHOWTIX4U.COM**

District Orchestra Festival

Our annual festival is back! We are happy to present our 6th-12th graders in a special concert on Wednesday, March 15 at 7:00 pm at the Empire State Convention Center.

Schenectady County Music Festival

Congratulations to the following students who rehearsed and presented a concert at Mohonasen High School on Saturday, January 22.

Middle School Choir – **Maryn Gleason, Anvi Ramrakhiyani**

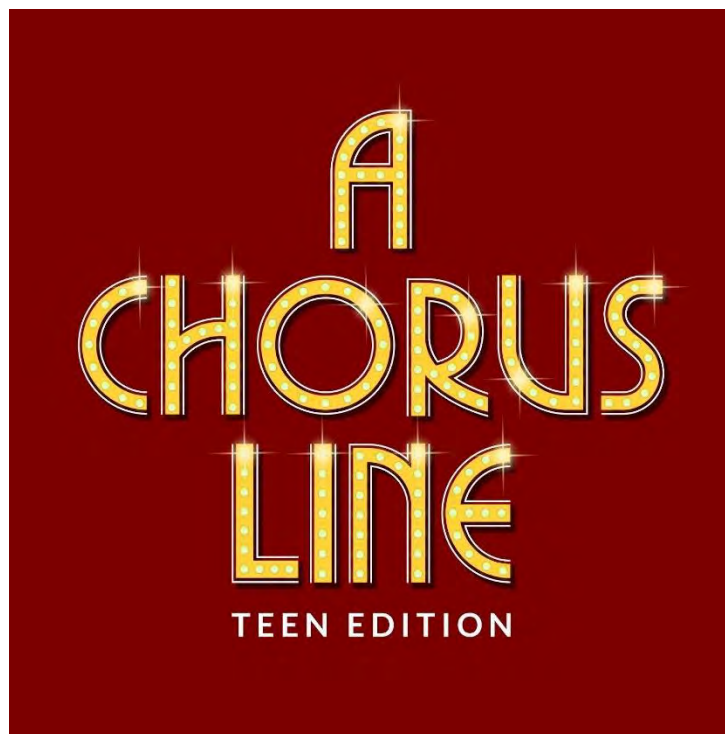
High School Orchestra – **Nathaniel Allen, Sean Calhoun, Zoe Chu, Sophia Connell, Jude Coppola, Evelyn Mok, Isabelle Mok**

High School Band – **Mark Ferri, Evan Frenyea, Emre Geveci, Grady Goldner, Hainuo Hodgkins, Manami (Pic) Kerins, Yun Nuo (Ethan) Liao, Nicolas Marin, Noah Martinez, Lincoln Merrill, Logan Modan, Martin Ryan, Priscayah Singh, Veronica Stein, Carlin Tysz, Lucia Vysohlid**

~Eric Hughes

A CHORUS LINE

***Niskayuna High School
Department of Music***



**Friday, March 3 – 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 4 – 2:00 p.m.
Saturday, March 4 – 7:30 p.m.
(Snow Date: Sunday, March 5 – 2:00 p.m.)**

Pricing

Adult - \$16 Student/Senior Citizen - \$12

ALL SALES ARE FINAL. ALL SEATING IS RESERVED.

www.showtix4u.com

TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE ONLINE UNTIL TWO HOURS BEFORE CURTAIN. Box office opens one hour prior to each performance; however, reservations are strongly recommended.

**Cash & Checks ONLY accepted at the box office.*

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

An interview with Prof. Christopher Neubert, Former Niskayuna HS Director of Music and Musical Director & Conductor of the SUNY Albany Symphony Orchestra



Where did you grow up?

This path I continue on, but I was born in Allentown, PA in 1952. The Neubert family of musicians, as far back as I have knowledge, began with Christian Heinrich (my great-grandfather b.1855, Germany). Then came Richard Wagner (grandfather b.1882), Henry Grim (father b. 1911) and Henry Grim Jr. (brother b.1943), all born in Allentown. My son, Christian Richard was born in 1988 in Port Jefferson, NY. The branches reach much further, but we can keep it somewhat focused on the performers, conductors, and educators included here.

How were you involved in music growing up? Who/what were your inspirations?

I started on the violin when I was 8 (I wanted to play the drums, but my dad insisted that I play violin!). I started my early lessons with him...everyday!

Along with some piano, I started euphonium (and drums!) in 6th grade (though the snare drum was unofficial), double bass in 9th grade (mostly as a jazz player), and viola in 10th grade. I participated in school chorus and Music Theory classes throughout high school. I played in every group I could and participated in festivals—Pennsylvania All-State Orchestra (viola), All-State Band (euphonium), and many others.



Photo 1: My grandfather Richard Wagner Neubert (piano), my uncle Richard Grim b. 1908 (cornet), my father Henry Grim (saxophone) and my aunt Bertha b. 1913 (violin) —taken on the stage at Symphony Hall (also known as the Lyric Theatre) in Allentown PA, (c. 1921). My grandfather played for Silent Pictures at the Lyric and sometimes had my father, aunt and uncle come along. They probably improvised parts from the Piano score.

Photo 2: My great-grandfather and his orchestra playing at an outdoor summer gathering (c. 1900). My great-grandfather Christian Heinrich is to the left (with the double bass—the same bass I use in my studio!) My grandfather is opposite on the right with the violin.

Photo 3: NEUBERT'S Music Masters. I think it was displayed wherever my great-grandfather's orchestra played and later my grandfather used it too.

SPOTLIGHT NEWS

My father was my inspiration (he was my high school orchestra and band director and Principal Violin II for the Allentown Symphony, and Conductor of the Allentown 'Pops'). My older brother, Henry Jr., also started on the violin and spent most of his career—after starting as a high school band director in Northport on Long Island in 1966—as Professor of Double Bass and Wind Conducting at Ithaca College retiring in 2005.

When did you know you wanted to go into music?

I never thought of anything other than music as a career. I completed my undergraduate degree at West Chester University in 1974 (BS Music Education, Conducting/Viola major) and graduate degrees at Ithaca College in 1975 (Master of Music, Conducting/Double Bass major) and at Long Island University in 1987 (PD in Educational Administration).

Tell us about the early days and some memorable moments of the Niskayuna music program.

Well, I only know of the 'early days' from what colleagues shared (mostly from Paula Brinkman). But I can tell you about the years 1998—when I started in Niskayuna—to my retirement in 2010. Oh, and on the way—from 1975 when I started my career as a high school band director on Long Island (Rockville Center and then, Port Jefferson, where my son Christian is a Strings/Orchestra Director) to becoming a high school Orchestra Conductor at William Floyd in 1988 on the Island and then Director of Music in Auburn, NY 1991—my career in performance and educational music was in 'high gear' the whole way!

My most memorable moments are collaborating with students and fellow educators every day! But some of my favorite performances were (are) our **Niskayuna musicals** (though I love them all, so far, my favorites are *Titanic*, *Les Mis*, *Follies*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Phantom of the Opera*, and this year's *A Chorus Line*). I also have wonderful memories of our **Masterworks Gala's** as Conductor of the Symphony Orchestra (*Beethoven Sym. No. 9*, *Mozart Requiem*, *Alexander Nevsky* (Prokofiev), *Carmina Burana* (Carl Orff), *Brahms' Requiem*, *Chichester Psalms* and *Candide in Concert* (Bernstein)) from 2005-2010. It was such a pleasure to collaborate with Paula Brinkman and Christina Catalano, Directors of our wonderful Chorale, and Eric Hughes as Producer. The **Annual PRISM Concerts** from 2000 to 2010 were also a lot of fun working with Eric, Dave Fisk and Brian Mooney. These End-of-Year concerts featured not only the Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Strings and Jazz Ensemble, but also showcased the incredible individual talents of our music students.

As a former Director of Music, what has it been like to see a program you shaped continue to grow and evolve?

Exciting! And I am thankful to Eric and Christina for inviting me back each year to conduct our musicals. I am privileged to still be a small part of such an outstanding music education program here at Niskayuna.

What are the important aspects you need to consider in your role as Music Director for our annual musicals?

It is of utmost importance to work closely with Director Hughes and Vocal Director Catalano. **Score study** is paramount and securing the right musicians to fully realize the composers'/ authors' intent is a must. It is very important to become completely immersed in the characters and the dramatic 'flair' that brings the show to life! Being a hopeless romantic helps a bit, too. When asked what is my favorite music to conduct/perform—Classical? Jazz? Rock? I have done it all... My answer is Broadway Musicals! If you get it, you get it.

What are your experiences in the music world outside of Niskayuna?

Well—so many. I played my first professional 'gig' when I was 13 (on the drums!) and it has never stopped. I have played in and conducted so many shows' pit orchestras—it is a very long list to remember. My first professional conducting experience was as Music Director for the Civic Theatre in Allentown, PA in 1972, and conducting the

SPOTLIGHT NEWS

Training Orchestra for the Allentown Symphony that same year. I was Music Director for the Crackersport Equity Summer Theatre in 1974. One year before *A Chorus Line* opened on Broadway and a couple of cast members from Crackersport made the cast! I was named Conductor of the Allentown Symphony 'Pops' following my Father (1980-1986). I was Founder and Conductor of the Port Jefferson 'Pops' 1986-1991 on Long Island.

Being the Band Director at Port Jefferson HS (1979-1986), I loved our Concert Band, Jazz Ensemble, and somehow became really well known as the Marching Band Director of the 'Royal Brigade', winning all sorts of competitions. I have guest conducted a variety of Regional and State Festival Orchestras and Bands throughout the Northeast through the years. I joined the Music Faculty at The College of Saint Rose in 2000 and served as Professor of Double Bass and String Education, taught classes in Music Theory, Ear Training, Jazz and Rock History, and conducted the College Orchestra (2005-2010) and the Wind Ensemble (2010). I retired from Saint Rose in 2015.

Currently, in addition to conducting our Niskayuna shows, I serve as Conductor of the Symphony Orchestra at The State University of New York at Albany, where I have been since 2008. I also am an active NYSSMA Major Organization and All-State Strings Adjudicator (since 1980), and maintain an active Applied Teaching Studio (The Neubert Studio) in Saratoga Springs where students study Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass, Conducting and Music Theory in preparation for careers in Performance and Educational Music.

Favorite activities other than music?

Spending time with my family—I enjoy golf, skiing, beach and boat, and being 'out and about' in Saratoga Springs, Port Jefferson on Long Island, and heading South to Hilton Head Island.

Any advice for students studying music now?

Enjoy the opportunity to be involved in the arts through music! Take your study seriously enough to contribute to the best of your ability. Practice every day! Focus more on how you play (or sing) rather than what you play or sing. The more technical development you have, the more you will enjoy making music. Work on Rhythm if you are not naturally good at it. When you are rhythmically confident, the Notes will follow. Your Sound will mature. Your Phrasing will be beautiful. Your Mind, Heart and Soul will soar!

Any advice for students who want to pursue music as a career?

If you **really** love music and think you have the talent (yes, it is true that some have to work harder at it than others), to become a successful performer, composer/arranger, conductor, music business manager, recording engineer or educator (this one is the most challenging of all; you must love working with young people!)—then **give it a go**. Prepare every audition to the very best level you can. No matter what area of music you want to pursue, getting accepted to a music school requires an 'acceptable' level of proficiency in your performance area (Instrumental/Voice/Piano). The special focus areas come later. (And be ready to go to Graduate School!)

Be sure to study Music Theory/Ear Training during your pre-college years. Your school music teachers and conductors are an excellent resource for information about being successful in the business. Talk with them about their experiences. Also, in addition to your 'in-school' ensembles and group lessons, be sure to study with a private applied teacher(s) outside of school. Immerse yourself in music completely—this is a must. (*What??!! You thought this would be easy?*) If you want to be a music educator, get a head start by studying other instruments (and piano and singing) even if only a little bit, so you won't become overwhelmed by the rigors of college level study. And lastly, and always: **Practice!**

FOM PIE SALE: THANK YOU!

Thank you, wonderful Niskayuna community, for buying pies and tea breads, and ensuring the 2022 Winter Holiday Sale was a huge success. The Friends of Music appreciate:

- the Mourningkill Farms Bakery for their continued partnership;
- Principal Coleman and Niskayuna High School for approving use of the Old Cafe on delivery day;
- Kitchen manager Robert Depot, and assistants Wendy Grates and Joann Bedell for preparing the freezer space;
- the fabulous custodial team of Karen Lasher and Brian Kent for their help unloading and sorting over 250 baked goods and setting up our pick-up location; and
- our delivery day volunteers: Michele Boretti, Soma De, Holly Johnston, Amy Majewicz-Hefley, Carey Merrill, Gina Murray, Chris Nobes, Katrine Rush, Peter Sandvik, Sarah Spindler, Rebecca Stashower, Bridget Kelly Stein, and Michele Tibbitts-Esposito.

It truly is the sweetest fundraiser in town, and we appreciate your support of music education in our schools!

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CONCERTS



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NOTES

Birchwood Elementary News

Big things are happening in music at Birchwood! We celebrated our first in-person Winter Concert on January 11th, and we could not be prouder of our 4th & 5th grade students! It was such a treat to have the whole school back in the gym to watch our in-school concert assembly, and the 4th graders thoroughly enjoyed their first time on "the big stage" at the high school. All three of our ensembles gave wonderful performances on our concert day, and we're all excited for them to blow us away at our Spring Concert in May! Our students in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade all started playing recorders this month. This unit has made our 3rd graders extremely excited to begin their instrumental ensemble experiences in 4th & 5th grade. Our 2nd graders were superstars in our "*Gingerbread Rock*" show in December: fun fact—this was their very first live performance in elementary school! Our 1st graders also celebrated their first live performance of elementary school in November at our Thanksgiving Celebration. Kindergarten has been having a blast learning all about musical opposites, learning so many songs, and having *all* of the dance parties. We're looking forward to what the rest of the New Year has in store for us at Birchwood!

~Rebecca Farrell

Craig Elementary Band News

Craig Band students had a TERRIFIC assembly on January 25th! They have worked extremely hard and sounded wonderful after only a few short months on their instruments. We celebrated with an Ice Cream party and look very forward to our second and final concert in May. We will be bringing back a classic rock medley that the band premiered back in 2018. The Medley includes *We Will Rock You*, *Crazy Train*, *Iron Man*, and others!



Craig Band at a Rehearsal



Craig Band Ice Cream Party

~Phil Pandori

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NOTES

Hillside Elementary News

Students are engaged in a variety of musical activities at Hillside Elementary School! They are continuing to learn several songs for their monthly Hello, Hillside! celebrations. Students recently performed the tune, *"Together We Can Change the World,"* for their January Hello, Hillside! celebration.

Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd graders, sing and dance to a wide variety of songs. 1st and 2nd graders enjoyed using a parachute to perform along to the *"Russian Dance"* from the *Nutcracker*. 3rd, 4th and 5th graders are learning how to play the recorder. They are working incredibly hard. 4th and 5th graders participate in a choral experience, singing a variety of songs. They recently performed in the Hillside Winter Concert. They sounded lovely! The halls are alive with the sound of music.

Many thanks to the Niskayuna Friends of Music for continuing to support our young musicians! We appreciate all you do for us.



~Sarah Sanson

Glencliff Elementary News

Students are participating in a wide variety of musical activities at Glencliff Elementary School. Kindergarten and 1st graders danced and sang their way into the new year, 2nd graders created their own compositions, 3rd graders explored music around the world, and our 4th and 5th grade band, chorus, and orchestra students just completed their first concert of the year in January! While recorder playing has been paused for years, it is returning this year! 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders are very excited. There will be squeaks and squawks—I mean, beautiful music, soaring through the halls of Glencliff. 2nd grade is learning about the instrument families through their exploration of Peter and the Wolf. 1st grade is beginning their journey as a composer as they practice writing their music symbols. Kindergarten is rocking out with classroom instruments, reading, dancing, and singing. There is never a dull moment in the music room at Glencliff!

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NOTES



~Abigail Luther

MIDDLE SCHOOL NOTES

Iroquois General Music

We are so proud of our 6th-8th grade students! They have worked hard and completed their Musicals unit, Baroque Music History through 20th/21st century of Western Art Classical music, notation unit, composing final drafts, and keyboards in less than 5 weeks! Phew!

In the keyboard unit, we are playing students' choices of 4 parts, by order of difficulty, to put together everything they've studied. The parts are arranged by Mrs. Johnston to "*Pocketful of Sunshine*" in A minor by British pop star, Natasha Bedingfield. The classes will play their 4 parts out loud together and these parts have richly layered harmonies. Also, they will progress to play together in real time to the recording of the Bedingfield song. Private piano students will "test out" these patterns, and receive a copy to keep of the full sheet music to "*Pocketful of Sunshine*."

In our grades 6-8 Music Concepts class, students have worked on Do Mi Sol, posture, breathing, and vocal warmups. They made a homemade tambourine and a percussion book for their Percussion Unit.

MIDDLE SCHOOL NOTES

Lastly, they made a video of their teamwork, using parachute choreography to move and dramatize Edvard Grieg's classical piece from the Romantic period, "*In the Hall of the Mountain King*." Their growth in skills and daily participation are unmatched. It is a pleasure to teach them and work with such passionate and professional teacher assistants.



~Holly Johnston

7th Grade Band Dives into New Music

The 7th Grade Band is working towards a new program for the Spring Concert season. After having a very successful first concert in December, the group is spending some time sight reading and learning new rhythms and key signatures.

One piece the band is enjoying and hoping to perform in the spring is a piece called "*Night Fury*" by Carol Brittin Chambers. This piece was premiered in Texas in 2016. The music paints a picture of a mythological time period full of dragons, castles and other legendary creatures. It's a great learning piece for the band because it features dotted quarter note rhythms throughout the melody and counter melody parts. It also features time signature changes from 4/4 time to 3/4 time with syncopated solos in the percussion section. Carol Brittin Chambers is a big fan of movie soundtracks and you can definitely hear the film score influence in her writing!



7th Grade Band

~Sue Kokernak

HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

Choral Corner

Last year you may remember that the Niskayuna Friends of Music provided a grant to fund a three-part series where Dr. Raymond Wise, faculty of Indiana University in Bloomington (Professor of Practice in the African American and African Diaspora Studies department and instructor of courses in African American music) gave virtual instruction to students on the performance of spirituals and gospel repertoire (history, tips on performing, and direct coaching of his arrangements). We are currently revisiting these videos during choral classes to give more authentic and informed performances. On February 2, Concert Chorale will perform Dr. Wise's arrangement of "*I Got a Robe*". In 2010, Concert Chorale first learned this piece at the Gospel Festival at Hartwick College in Oneonta, NY under Dr. Wise!

HS choral students will soon be preparing for the NYSSMA Solo Festival at Bethlehem HS on April 21 and 22 (***NOTE: WE ARE GOING TO AN EARLY FESTIVAL THIS YEAR AND STUDENTS SHOULD BE DILIGENTLY PREPARING THEIR SOLOS!**). Students are studying works in a variety of languages to present to judges from all over the state. During the month of March, there will be weekly timeslots available for students to receive extra help and coaching. There will be an opportunity to sing for peers in their large ensemble classes for feedback and to help shake any nervousness in anticipation of the performance.

Congratulations to senior **Emma Nobes** who has been accepted to the prestigious All-Eastern Chorus. Emma will attend rehearsals in Rochester in April and the experience will culminate with a concert at Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre.

Congratulations to sophomore **Lily Graham** who performed with the Empire State Youth Chorale in "*Melodies of Christmas*" at Proctors Theatre, the fundraiser for the Melodies Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders at Albany Med.

Congratulations to **Lily Graham, Lauren McLearn, Elizabeth Ogonowski, Mathena Rush, Sophie Spindler, and Vivianne VanHoesen** who performed at Albany Pro Musica's HS Choral Festival at SUNY Albany on January 21. These students were accepted out of hundreds of applications from over 30 schools. You may have seen *The Daily Gazette* article about these students on January 19.



HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

Heartiest congratulations to **Mathena Rush** and **Sophie Spindler** who have been invited to attend the Pro Musica International Choral Festival in July 2023 at Queen's University in Kinston, Ontario. Transportation, tuition, and room & board for this week-long festival will be covered by grants from APM's generous donors!

Outside Performances:

- 65 (WOW, more than half the program) **High School Choral** students joined together in song at Niskayuna Town Hall's Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony on December 9. They enjoyed candy canes and hot chocolate after a wonderfully attended community performance (worth extra credit for Q2)!
- **Studio Singers and Bel Canto Voices** raised **\$2000** during their Caroling for CA\$H fundraiser on December 5! Thank you to the parents/guardians who helped transport students as well as Jessica Hollenback at Union Café for providing cookies and hot cocoa. We also thank Mrs. Spindler (FOM president) and Mrs. Boretti (FOM treasurer) for their time and effort in organizing this fundraiser. Finally, thank you to FOM for providing pizza to the students who volunteered.
- **Choir** will be visiting Kingsway Apartments on **February 9** (students will go during their regularly scheduled class time) to sing a program of songs for the residents and join together in a sing-a-long!

*Students are able to receive community service credit/volunteer hours for the events listed above. Please see Mrs. Catalano for verification or to obtain signatures for paperwork, if needed.

- **AN EVENING IN HISTORY** is BACK on **Monday, March 20 at 7:00 pm** (note that the time is earlier than HS concerts)! This year the social studies and music departments will come together to commemorate the 19th amendment, studying the historical period surrounding women's suffrage in the United States.

Please stay warm with great music in your lives and see you in May as we begin serenade you into summer!

C. M. Pizzino - Catalano

~Christina Pizzino-Catalano



HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

High School Adapted Music Class

Perhaps some of you read in the last Friends of Music newsletter that our Adapted General Music class received a Friends of Music grant of \$340.00 to purchase ukuleles. Together with the student president of Live Expressions and three other students in the HS Music department as buddies and tuners, the Ukulele Unit began after the December vacation! These students have learned holding and caring for the instrument, strumming with felt picks, and their 1st chord. I wish every member of Friends of Music could have seen them opening the box of a new ukulele! Parents are pleased to see these children having a strings instrument opportunity for a lifetime when some were not in a place at a younger age to do beginning Departmental Ensembles. We are proud of two of the students in our class who are playing in the HS Band. The support from Mr. Hughes and the Band faculty have been invaluable for these families. With the help of their teacher assistants and the two peer buddies, this whole class is excelling.

Ukuleles have been marked on the frets for color-coded chord positions with car striping tape. Thank you to my Strings Faculty colleague Brenda Hartman for helping us find the car striping tape. And thank you again for the Enrichment Grant!



~Holly Johnston

Concert Band News



The High School Concert Band is excited to perform in the February Concert Series! We have planned an exciting program including a programmatic piece, *The Witch and the Saint*, and a spooky spin on the traditional concert march, *Marche Diabolique*.

We look forward to the May Concert Series where we will be premiering a brand-new piece written by renowned composer and educator, Greg Rudgers. Mr. Rudgers previously wrote a piece for our 8th Grade Band back in 2018 (*Variant*) when his grandson, Caleb, was in our program. Now he is returning to write a brand-new piece while his granddaughter, Carlin, is in the Concert Band. We are hoping to bring Mr. Rudgers in for a visit and, if the dates work out, he may be able to guest conduct the group at the concert as we premier *Face in the Clouds*.

HIGH SCHOOL NOTES

Congratulations to the following Concert 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 as well as Voorheesville: **Evan Freneyea, Emre Geveci, Grady Goldner, Hainuo Hodgkins, Yun Nuo (Ethan) Liao, Nicolas Marin, Noah Martinez, Lincoln Merrill, Martin Ryan, Priscayah Singh, Veronica Stein, Carlin Tysz, and Lucia Vysohlid.**



Stage Band News

The High School Stage Band has been working diligently on their concert repertoire for the February 2nd Concert! The group is performing a couple of Jazz Standards including *Afro Blue* by Mongo Santamaria and *The Blues Walk*, famously recorded by Clifford Brown.

We look forward to kicking off Mr. Bloom's *Evening in History* when it returns to our auditorium this March. We will have some guest singers with us and it promises to be an exciting program opener!



We also look forward to our annual Jazz Festival in April. Our guest artist, Dr. Eric Binder, is a world-renowned drummer, educator, percussionist, composer, and author. He currently serves as Drumline and Jazz Ensemble Coordinator for Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois after holding the same role previously at Robert Morris University. In addition to his role as the Lakers Drumline Coordinator, Dr. Binder also serves as a faculty member and Jazz Director of Waubensee Community College, and is a private lesson instructor at Chicago's Harold Washington College. Dr. Binder will be working with all of the Nisky Jazz groups during the first week of April with a culminating concert on the 6th.

~Phil Pandori

FRIENDS OF MUSIC/MEMBERSHIP



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Open

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Jessica Brennan

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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NOTIFY US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE if you are becoming/renewing your sponsorship, so your logo is included on our website and in all publications. Donations to Niskayuna Friends of Music are tax-deductible to your business. Email any questions to: Sarah Bilofsky at: **niskyfomcorpsponsor@gmail.com**.

Two ways to submit your Sponsorship Payment:

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*Please include both **color** and **black and white** versions of your logo or business card, if possible. This allows us to fully optimize your logo for both online and print publication. Thank you!*