



FALL ISSUE 2025

Notes

Notes From the President

Dear Friends of Music,

Welcome back! As we begin our fall concert series, we already have so much wonderful music news to share.

The Niskayuna Music Department provides endless opportunities for our students to play, perform, participate, and share their love of music, and Friends of Music strives to support our teachers and students in accomplishing their goals. This summer, through your generosity as Friends of Music members, we were able to sponsor our annual Summer Sonata with over 50 students in grades 6-8 attending the program. In September, our high school choral students had the opportunity to work with guest artist Brigid Brady from The American Musical and Dramatic Academy College of the Performing Arts and we were thrilled to learn that this year's high school musical production will be *The Wizard of OZ*! We are so proud to announce that eight of our high school musicians were accepted into All-State, and nineteen were selected for Area All-State. Looking ahead, we are excited to share that the district-wide Orchestra Festival will take place at Proctors Theatre in March and that students in grades 6-12 will have the opportunity to work with a guest conductor. And as the holiday season approaches, be on the lookout for our Bel Canto Voices and Studio Singers caroling through the streets of old Niskayuna!

We could not do our work without your help. Please consider becoming a friend of music or supporting our organization through a corporate membership by visiting www.niskyfom.org or stopping by the FOM table at any of the concerts. Our most delicious fundraiser, our Pie and Tea Bread Sale, is also up and running. These treats from Mourningkill Farm and Bake Shop are perfect for holiday entertaining or as gifts. Orders will be accepted through Small Business Saturday, 11/29. We are also excited to offer our annual apparel sale. Friends of Music merchandise makes an amazing holiday or birthday gift for the musicians you love. Visit our website, www.niskyfom.org, for information on how to order.

If you are interested in becoming more involved with Friends of Music, please consider attending one of our monthly meetings. We are also currently seeking volunteers to chair our Pie and Tea Bread Sale for the 2026-2027 school year. For more information, please email us at niskayunafom@gmail.com and follow us on Facebook (@niskyfom) or Instagram(niskyfriendsofmusic).

I am so looking forward to our concerts this season—it is truly magical to hear our students perform and may your holidays be filled with peace, warmth, and music.

Warmest regards ~ Jillian Fountain

From The Director's Desk

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! The music department faculty is thrilled to welcome students back into our classrooms and ensembles!

NEW YORK STATE SCHOOL MUSIC ASSOCIATION

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

Nathaniel Allen, violin, String Orchestra
Sophia Connell, alto, Mixed Chorus
Natalie Dineen, soprano, Mixed Chorus
Maryn Gleason, alto, Mixed Chorus
Cyrus Joo-Schwaber, French horn, Symphony Orchestra
Alex LaFargue, tenor, Mixed Chorus
Samuel Radez, bass, Mixed Chorus
Brendan Yan, cello, Symphony Orchestra

19 students were selected as participants for this year's Area All-State Festival to be held at Proctors Theatre. Congratulations!

Mixed Chorus

Benjamin Bixler (bass)
Natalie Dineen (soprano)
Gabriella Fountain (soprano)
Anna Geveci (alto)
Maryn Gleason (alto)
Alex LaFargue (bass)

Symphonic Band

Simon Harvey (flute)
Carlin Tysz (trumpet)
Max Zheng (snare drum)

Symphony Orchestra

Nathaniel Allen (violin)
Ross Coook (bassoon)
Daniel Korevaar (trombone)
Evelyn Mok (violin)
Ellie Shin (cello)
Howyue (Kaydence) Yeong (cello)

Jazz Ensemble

Evan Frenyea (drum set)
Walter MacDonald (tenor sax)
Noah Yukilevich (piano)



From The Director's Desk

CONGRATULATIONS MRS. PIZZINO-CATALANO!

We're happy to recognize high school choral teacher Mrs. Pizzino-Catalano on being named the winner of the 2025 NYSSMA Established Educator Award! In his commendation letter, NYSSMA President Edmund Chiarello writes in part, "*in recognition of your exceptional support and outstanding accomplishments in the field of music education. The Established Educator Award was created to honor an experienced PreK–12 music educator who has made a lasting impact on students, colleagues, and the broader educational community through [your] dedication and excellence in teaching.*"

NEW MUSIC SUITE

The new music rooms at Iroquois middle school include an ensemble rehearsal room, two general music classrooms and two lesson rooms situated together, complete with hallway instrument storage! We're thrilled about the new spaces and having ensembles take place during the school day. (6th graders at Van Antwerp middle school also rehearse during the school day.) The capital project that focuses on improvements at VA also include a new music suite to be constructed there as well. We look forward to the completion of that project a couple of years from now.

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

We're proud to announce our upcoming production of *The Wizard of Oz* February 26 – 28, 2026. Auditions take place in November and ticket sales begin in January. Stay tuned for more information throughout the school year.

DISTRICT STRING FESTIVAL

We're excited to return to Proctors Theatre for our festival involving students in grades 6-12 with a concert on Wednesday, March 11 featuring several guest artists! Look for more details this winter.

~Eric Hughes



Making a Lasting Legacy

Niskayuna Friends of Music

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. Your donation will be recognized with a personalized brass plate on a chair arm in the high school auditorium. The inscriptions are enduring symbols of the breadth of our community.

Our Goal

Contributions will support improvements in the auditorium to enhance the acoustics on stage, sound technology, and lighting for the audience. They are a great way to recognize a special musician or teacher in your life, and they make great graduation gifts.

What Is the Cost?

Each plate is \$150 for individuals and families, or \$250 for businesses. This donation may be tax deductible as we are a 501(c)3 organization.

Please use the form on the next page or visit <https://niskyfom.org/name-a-chair-project/> to order an engraved plate. For more information, email niskyfriendsofmusicsecretary@gmail.com or call the District Music Office at (518) 382-2511, Ext. 21710

Name-a-Chair Order Form

Name _____
Address _____
Phone/e-mail _____

Please check one:

- ☐ Individual/Family: \$150 per chair
- ☐ Business: \$250 per chair

Please send this form with your check 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. Engraving can include graduation dates, such as "Mary Smith, 1999." There are examples in the auditorium.

DUE MAY 2026

Elementary School Notes

Hillside Elementary

The Hillside Elementary School hallways are filled with sounds of music! The students performed the school song, "Hillside Pride," at their first Hello, Hillside! assembly. Hillside students will continue to perform at their monthly assemblies!

Kindergarten students sing and dance to a variety of songs. We especially love singing and moving to, "Wake Up, You Sleepyhead!" There's plenty of laughter and smiles throughout our time together!

Kindergarten students are also exploring percussion instruments. We enjoy using shakers and drums! Several grades recently celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month through song and dance! We especially enjoyed performing to "Vamos a La Mar!"

Fifth graders have been exploring the music of Latin America and have enjoyed listening to a variety of styles including Reggaeton and Salsa. They also learned about Latin American instruments such as conga drums, timbales and maracas.

All fourth and fifth graders have the pleasure of performing as a chorus! We are working hard to prepare for our upcoming performances in the winter and spring!

A special thank you to the Niskayuna Friends of Music. Thank you for providing our students with the materials necessary for music instruction!

Craig Elementary

Welcome back to school! Craig students have kicked off the year with loads of activities and learning new musical skills every day!

Kindergarteners have already made so much growth, learning the basic skills of school participation while having fun singing songs to help them!

First graders are learning the difference between singing and chanting, while picking up a little Spanish and learning to read "Sol-Mi" on the music staff!

Second graders are having fun experimenting with dynamics "piano" and "forte" and learning how dynamics can help us enhance music, by creating some "spooky" October songs.

Third graders are singing rounds and really enjoying learning about wind instruments, the science of sound waves, and how they are created on each individual instrument.

Fourth and fifth graders started out the year very strong as excellent school leaders! They regularly help their younger friends find their way around school, while demonstrating what excellent learning looks like in chorus rehearsals. The 4th graders are really catching on to how to read their new Chorus Music, and will later arrange their own two-part renditions of our "Craig School Song". The 5th graders are wrapping up a really fun unit exploring Latin American music in honor of Latin American Heritage Month! ~Marilyn Brown

Middle School Notes

Music Ensembles During the Day!

Our Middle School Instrumental teachers are thrilled to have ensembles scheduled during the day this year. Seventh & Eighth Grade Bands and Orchestras are settling into our new rehearsal spaces in a beautifully renovated room at Iroquois. The space includes a large ensemble rehearsal room with new technology for playing music, videos and projecting information for students. Adjacent to the ensemble room are two nicely equipped small group lesson rooms as well as an impressive storage area for student instruments. The students love having band and orchestra as part of their regular daily schedule and they are falling into a productive routine for the beginning and ending of rehearsals. This wonderful advancement of our music program will greatly benefit our Nisky Music students!

- ***Dave Fisk, Brenda Hartman, Sue Kokernak & Stacey McClenon***



8th Grade Band Rehearses with Mr. Fisk in new Ensemble Room



8th Grade Percussionists Julian Bailey, Olivia Lessard and Benjamin Micklus work with new equipment



Mrs. Hartman works with 8th Grade Orchestra



Mrs. McClenon teaches 7th Grade cellists in a new lesson room

Middle School Notes

New General Music Spaces and Choral Risers!

The Middle School Choral & General Music teachers are so excited to share that our students are settling into our new rehearsal routines and spaces!

Both Seventh and Eighth Grade Chorus ensembles are now rehearsing during the school day on brand new risers. Having rehearsals during the day not only enables the students to effectively prepare for concerts, but allows time for them to also grow their musicianship skills in sight reading, engage in fun warmups and exercises, and participate in team building with their fellow ensemble members!

General music students are enjoying the new spaces and resources within them. Each general music classroom includes a beautiful new Promethean Board to display daily lessons and musical activities. Students have space to comfortably learn keyboard or guitar, as well as plenty of storage space for the instruments and classroom materials.

We are so fortunate to have these spaces and excited to grow the music program within them!

~ Catherine Jantson & Tom McCann-Loomis



8th Grade Chorus members with Ms. Jantson on the new risers!

High School Notes

Choral Corner

Welcome back to everyone and anyone who loves singing! We are enjoying a rigorous daily routine of working on repertoire for the fall concerts, listening to and discussing various genres of music, and developing our vocal technique.

Choral Uniforms

Students in A-Choired Taste, Choir, and Concert Chorale will be following the Niskayuna HS Concert Attire Policy, where students dress in professional concert black attire (sent home via Parent Square and included in the course syllabus).

Studio Singers and Bel Canto Voices members received their uniform order sheets (black glitter dresses/vests for Studio Singers and claret satin dresses/vests for Bel Canto Voices) in September and everyone should have a dress or vest for the first concert. Please note that the fabric for the Studio dresses and vests has been discontinued and we are still ordering from the same company but you will see variations in this outfit. There is no need for students who have the previously used outfit to buy a new one.

CONGRATULATIONS

~Congratulations to Sophia Connell, Natalie Dinneen, Maryn Gleason, Alex LaFargue, and Samuel Radez who have been selected for this year's All-State Mixed Chorus. Students will attend the NYSSMA Winter Conference in Rochester during the first weekend of December.

~Congratulations to Benjamin Bixler, Natalie Dinneen, Gabriella Fountain, Anna Geveci, Maryn Gleason, Alex LaFargue who have been accepted to the Area All-State Chorus. Students will perform at Proctors Theatre on November 22 under the direction of Dr. Alice Cavanaugh of Suffolk County Community College.

~Congratulations to the following students who have been accepted into the Empire State Youth Chorale and will perform at the four performances of Melodies of Christmas on the Proctors Theatre stage in December: Chloe Comley, Sophia Connell, Natalie Dinneen, Maryn Gleason, Sami Lazarus, Adrian Mohabeer, and Siya Tripathi.

Special Student Opportunities and Achievements

~AMDA (American Musical and Dramatic Academy) faculty member and professional Brigid Brady worked with students in Concert Chorale, Bel Canto Voices, and Studio Singers on September 25. Sophia Connell, Evelia Echandy, Gabriella Fountain, and Alex LaFargue presented musical theater songs for coaching in front of their peers, received feedback, and made on the spot changes to develop their audition material. Students were entered into a raffle for AMDA swag and enjoyed learning new warm-ups and techniques for better audition preparation. Thank you to the Niskayuna Friends of Music for providing small gifts for the AMDA guest artist.

~Maryn Gleason and Sienna Taddeo sang the National Anthem at Girls Field Hockey Senior Night on September 24.

High School Notes

~Congratulations to Gabriella Fountain who was awarded 2nd place in the HS division of the Eastern NY Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Musical Theater Competition at Skidmore College on October 4.

~Celeste Radez and Jacopo Giani performed in the Higgs Theatricals sponsored production of *Anastasia* on October 12. All proceeds from this fundraising effort were donated to the Rensselaer City School District Drama Club (grades 4-12) to support two musicals, ensuring that every interested student in Rensselaer City Schools will have the opportunity to participate. The production included over 50 performers from the Capital Region, Broadway performer Brynn Williams, and music direction by Broadway veteran Michael McAssey.

~ Sophia Connell, Natalie Dinneen, and Maryn Gleason performed a cappella versions of the “Star-Spangled Banner” and “The Erie Canal” at an Erie Canal Bicentennial Celebration at the Mohawk Harbor on October 14. The students helped welcome a replica of the Seneca Chief boat (which was opened to the public as a museum) at a special ceremony in front of a large and appreciative crowd. The three singers were mentioned in *The Daily Gazette* on October 14 for their contribution to the community and there is a wonderful video of these students that can be seen on the *Times Union* Instagram and Facebook pages.

~Concert Chorale sang the National Anthem and ALL HS choral students sang the Alma Mater at the HS Pep Rally on October 17.

~Gabriella Fountain sang the National Anthem at the homecoming football game on October 17.

Outside Performances

- Studio Singers attended the SUNY Schenectady Choral Workshop on Friday, October 24 where they participated in workshops with the college faculty and performed some of their October concert repertoire for Mr. Bruce Rogers (Director of Choral Activities at Mt. San Antonio College, CA).
- Bel Canto Voices and Studio Singers will be performing at the Niskayuna Town Hall for the Veteran’s Day Ceremony on Monday, November 10 at 9:15 am. Parents/guardians and community members are welcome to attend. As this is scheduled during the time that Choir has their regularly scheduled class, student volunteers will be reading poems at the event. The ceremony may be held outdoors, so please dress accordingly.
- FOM’S ANNUAL CAROLING FOR CASH FUNDRAISER continues this year! Please mark your calendar for **Monday, December 8** as members of *Studio Singers* and *Bel Canto Voices* will stroll through Old Niskayuna in Victorian costumes while singing carols and collecting funds for FOM. The fundraiser will culminate with a group performance at Union Café, 1725 Union St., at 7:00 pm.

****Parents/guardians who would be willing to chaperone by providing a vehicle for students to stay warm in will hear from Mrs. Catalano in late November (timeslots range from 4:45-7:45 p.m.). **Mrs. Catalano is also in need of parents/guardians/students who would be willing to help with publicity for this event.***

High School Notes

- **ALL H.S. CHORAL SINGERS** have been invited to share their voices on **Friday, December 12th at 5:00 p.m.** at the Niskayuna Town Hall for the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. Candy canes and hot chocolate will be served and this will be an extra credit/makeup opportunity!
- **A-Choired Taste** will be singing at the Niskayuna Community Center on **Tuesday, December 9th** at 11:00 am. Students will present a concert and join the members in a holiday sing-a-long. It has been a long tradition that this group also brings small gifts to the senior citizens in attendance.
- **Concert Chorale, Bel Canto Voices, and Studio Singers** (along with other instrumental groups) will perform at the annual winter assembly scheduled for **Thursday, December 18th at 2:00 pm** (snow date: Friday, December 19). 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. Please bring your license to present to our campus security team.

AN EVENING IN HISTORY is set for Wednesday, February 4, 2025 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 1896 and 1996.

As always, thank you for your engagement in our music program and please enjoy our first round of concerts as we share what we have been doing in the classroom on a daily basis.

~Christina Pizzino-Catalano

Choral Students Who Participated in Summer Arts Programs

~Ben Bixler - Pro Musica International Choral Festival at SUNY Albany
~Samir Bunch - sang at a wedding
~Sophia Connell - *Urinetown* at Proctors Theatre, Upstate Youth Choreographer's Showcase (choreographer and dancer)
~Evelia Echandy- NYC showcase through Carpe Diem, performed own compositions through Nashway Studios.
~Katie Esposito - *Coppelia* ballet with NYC Ballet at SPAC
~Zoey Fohtung - Festival of the Young Artists, *Coppelia* ballet with NYC Ballet
~Elin Forde - Broadway Camp JR. and Dance Intensives at Proctors Theatre, *Shrek JR* via Zoom, auditioned for *Newsies JR*, Singing and Dance Intensives at SLOC
~Gabriella Fountain - Berklee School of Music and BOCO Musical Theater Intensive, Ohio State Dance Team Dance Intensive
~Scarlett Gandolfo - danced and choreographed with the Upstate Youth Choreographers Showcase, counselor for Drama Kids International musical, directed a song for Drama Kid's Glee Camp
~Anna Geveci - performed at Niskayuna Farmers Market, Baker School of Dance Intensive
~Aidan Hull - *Hadestown* (SLOC), *Beetlejuice* (Kennady Talent), Proctors Collaborative Workshop (*A Chorus Line*)

High School Notes

~Claire Hull - Royal Nationals, The Reign, *Beetlejuice* with Kennady Talent, *Hadestown* auditions and readthrough, classes at Dance Me,
~Maeve Hull - Capital District Arts Initiative Dance Intensive
~Molly Hull - Capital District Arts Initiative Dance Intensive
~Emma Juras - Bristol Hills Music Camp
~Lyra Kirby - Taught two dance classes/choreographed at World Class Dance
~Ava Krebs - Summer classes at Kings Dancers
~Alex LaFargue - Pro Musica International Choral Festival at SUNY Albany
~Sami Lazarus - Bristol Hills Music Camp
~Lil Lean- Sleepaway Camp house band
~Walter MacDonald - Bristol Hills Music Camp
~Adrian Mohabeer - Pro Musica International Choral Festival at SUNY Albany
~Kai Moore - Bristol Hills Music Camp and Florida Music Institute
~Tarynn Schleicher - performed at Broadway Camp JR At Proctors Theatre
~Kiana Sheffield - Capital District Arts Initiative Dance Intensive, NYC Dance Alliance Week Intensive at Pace
~Ava Silvia- *Beetlejuice* at Russell Sage College, musical theater auditions, performed in *Trail to Oregon*.
~Chloe Trimarchi - Boston Ballet Summer Dance Intensive
~DeAngelo Wimberly - Pro Musica International Choral Festival at SUNY Albany
~Emma Wildermuth - 5-week Miami Ballet Summer Intensive



Evelia Echandy working with AMDA guest artist Brigid Brady on September 25 (photo credit: Lindsay Quackenbush, District Communications Team)



Sophia Connell, Natalie Dinneen, and Maryn Gleason singing at the Erie Canal Bicentennial Celebration at the Mohawk Harbor on October 14

High School Notes

HS Concert Band

The High School Concert Band is the largest band we have seen in recent years and the students have been working diligently since the beginning of September! On November 6th the band will be performing an exciting and diverse program of new pieces - March of The Shadows by Haley Woodrow, Tribal Journeys by Justin Harden - and an old favorite, The Witch and the Saint arranged by Carl Reinecke. We are looking forward to collaborating with the Symphonic Band in February as a mini-High School Band Festival with the theme "Forged in Courage" - look for an exciting combined thematic program with the two High School Bands on February 5! In addition to our final concert on May, 28th, the Concert Band will also perform at the annual Memorial Day Assembly on May 12th - we look forward to this chance to honor our veterans every year.

We would like to thank the Friends of Music for sponsoring our part in a BRAND NEW PIECE written for Concert Band by Aakash Mittal. The band performed "Salt March" by Mittal at last year's District Band Festival - we also welcomed the composer into school last February (thanks to funds from FOM, the HS PTO, NHS Social Studies Department, the Murlalimanohar family, and Bristol Hills Music Camp) to work with all of our 10th grade students in addition to Band and Choir students in the High School. We are thrilled now to be a part of the consortium funding his new piece, "Awaz" which will be delivered in June of next year. We look forward to working on and performing this piece in the 2026-2027 school year. Thanks, FOM!

*"Awaz is a Hindi-Urdu word that translates to mean "noise, sound, and voice" depending on the context. **Awaz for Wind Ensemble** will explore these three meanings as three movements of music. This piece will incorporate elements of structured musical improvisation. Rather than employing Jazz chord changes, the score will give students specific scales and simple musical "games" that will add color and spontaneity to the piece. The score will come with instructions and a guide for both students and teachers to explore the improvisation elements as an ensemble. I will be drawing from twenty one years of teaching beginning improvisers to create improvisation structures that are accessible to musicians who don't have Jazz training. Awaz for Wind Ensemble will also feature a soprano vocalist providing the opportunity to showcase a vocal student or bring in a special guest." - Mittal*



SUNY SCHENECTADY BRASS DAY

Several Niskayuna Students attended the 5th annual Brass Day at SUNY Schenectady on October 11th. The Day was filled with masterclasses, lectures, and performances. with SUNY Schenectady School of Music Faculty members Dr. Allyson Keyser, and Phil Pandori as well as the Trojan Horns - a local New Orleans Style Brass Band. The Trojan Horns worked with and performed with 40 student brass players from around the Capital Region - the concert was fun and exciting and it was a great day of music making for all involved!

High School Notes



HS Jazz Band and Jazz Ensemble

The High School Jazz groups are off to a GREAT start! Both groups sound fantastic and we are excited to kick off two of the Fall concerts (10/30 and 11/6). The pieces we are working on include both jazz standards and popular music - with a possible Halloween surprise on the 30th. In addition to our two regular concerts this year in October/November, we look forward to the annual Niskayuna Jazz Fest in April where we will be welcoming in tenor saxophonist and jazz pedagogue, Mr. Austin Day. The jazz bands also look forward to performing at our annual Evening in History collaboration with the Social Studies department on February 4th, as well as a possible trip to the NY State Capitol to perform during Music in Our Schools Month. The Jazz Ensemble started a new tradition last year in June with a Jazz Picnic during lunch mods as our final performance - we look forward to keeping this tradition alive on June 4th of this school year. On the same evening, the Jazz Band will be performing at the Niskayuna Town Hall Gazebo alongside the Middle School Jazz Band. Lots to look forward to this year in the jazz department!

Congratulations to the 3 Niskayuna Jazz Ensemble students selected for this year's Area All State Jazz Ensemble:
Evan Frenyea, Walter MacDonald, Noah Yukilevich



Austin Day - District Jazz Festival Guest Artist



Austin Day, teaches Band, Music Technology, and directs the Jazz ensembles at Sleepy Hollow Middle/High School in Sleepy Hollow, NY. He holds a Bachelor of Music in Music Education with a minor in Jazz Studies from the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam and a Master of Music in Jazz Studies from the University of Northern Colorado.

Mr. Day has been teaching in public school since 2014. He has been invited as a guest artist/clinician at music festivals throughout New York State. He has conducted Student Honor Ensembles in Westchester, Putnam, and Dutchess counties as well as the Capitol region, Syracuse, and the Adirondacks. Mr. Day was awarded the 2024 Music Education Innovation Award by the New York State School Music Association. In addition to his work as an educator, Mr. Day works as a professional Saxophonist in the New York Tri-State region. He has contributed to dozens of recordings for prominent Jazz, Rock, Pop, and R&B artists, was a member of multiple Downbeat Award-winning jazz ensembles, and has performed throughout the United States, Mexico, Canada, and Europe.

Mr. Day has been invited to speak as a guest lecturer in Jazz History and as a guest clinician in colleges and universities throughout the country. He has also presented presentations on Cultivating Creativity in the Electronic Music Classroom at state and national music education conferences. In addition, Mr. Day has also presented several lectures on the Music Industry for the pre-college program at NYU Steinhardt. Mr. Day serves on the executive board of the New York State Band Directors Association as the chairperson for the High School Honor Jazz Ensemble, and he serves as a member of both the NYSSMA and NAFME Songwriting and Composition Committees. Mr. Day maintains an active performance schedule outside of the classroom. When not teaching or performing, he enjoys spending quality time with and being inspired by his two amazing children.

High School Notes

Jazz Combo Club

Last year at the High School, we piloted the brand-new Jazz Combo Club! We are thrilled to say that the club has been made official after a successful pilot year! The club gives jazz students the opportunity to further explore jazz improvisation in the small group setting with a mission to bring jazz to the school community and beyond. The group performed at many public performances last year including a farmers' market, the Broken Inn, birthday parties, and even a NYSUT member reception in front of Governor Kathy Hochul! We plan even more performances this year both at school as well as in community coffee shops, nursing homes and senior living facilities, and more! The club is open to students of all abilities, in or out of the music program, who wish to develop their improvisation skills and explore jazz music further.



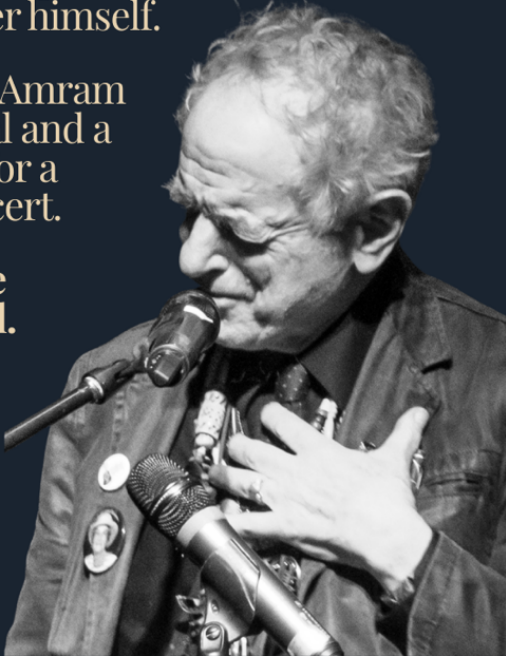
Jazz Combo Club and Governor Kathy Hochul, NYSUT Reception 2025



Jazz Combo Club at NHS Activities Fair 2025

Attention ALL Niskayuna Jazz Families!

Jazz French Horn and composer legend, David Amram, will be performing a concert at SUNY Schenectady on November 21st at 7PM. NHS Jazz students have been offered free tickets for the concert! Please reach out to Mr. Pandori (ppandori@niskyschools.org) to coordinate these tickets if you are interested. Additionally, Mr. Amram will be providing a FREE masterclass open to the public at SUNY Schenectady on November 20th from 12:30-1:20PM.



An Evening with the Maestro

Join Musicians of Ma'alwyck in honoring the 95th birthday of legendary American composer David Amram, a genre-defying icon whose seven-decade career has earned him "rockstar" status in the classical music world.

We celebrate this milestone with a beatnik-inspired concert featuring a special performance by the composer himself.

In addition to the performance, Amram will lead both an open rehearsal and a public masterclass. Join us for a reception following the concert.

Don't miss this unforgettable salute to an American original.

*Visit musiciansofmaalwyck.org
or call (518) 512-9479
to reserve tickets.*

 **SCHENECTADY COUNTY**
NEW YORK

SUMMER MUSIC NEWS

Bristol Hills Music Camp:

Theodore Aimi
Maxim Blotnikov
Addison Elsbree
Evan Frenyea
Simon Harvey
Celeste Joo-Schwaber
Emma Juras
Sami Lazarus
Elijah Lavander
Caitlin Li
Walter MacDonald
Kai Moore
Pierce Olsen
Annabelle Rahner
Jeanne-Rose Rooney
Ellie Shaw
Carlin Tysz

Capital Region Summer Trombone Institute

Caitlin Li
Clara Guidarelli

Skidmore Jazz Institute

Evan Frenyea

Caitlin Li at the Capital Region Summer Trombone Institute in July



Nisky Music Alumni Doing Great Things!

Quinton Cain (class of 2018) recently completed a Jazz European tour featuring performances in Germany, Austria, Great Britain and the Netherlands. For more information about upcoming performances, visit www.quintoncain.com.



Quinton performing at the Cafe Alto in Amsterdam Netherlands

Empire State Youth Orchestra

Congratulations to the following Niskayuna students who were selected to join Empire State Youth Orchestra!

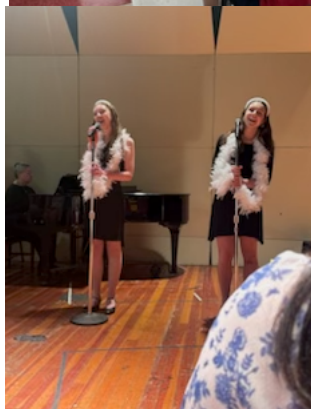
As a regional organization, ESYO attracts students from over 75 public and private schools throughout Eastern New York and Western New England. Returning and potential members must pass a competitive audition for their positions. ESYO students range from 4th grade to 12th grade. The 13 performing ensembles must rehearse weekly with professional musicians as conductors and coaches. A season's schedule includes over 30 concerts, requiring over 600 hours of rehearsal time.

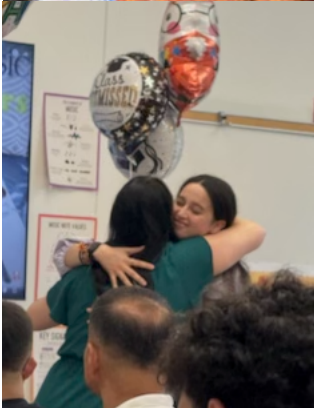
Caleb Cho
Isaac Liu
Ethan Casserly
Rohith Kulkarni
Jiya Mangalmurti
Mihika Sengupta
Ross Cook
Rory Evanoff
Ruchir Bollapragada
Tejas Jacob
Audrey Shin
Nicholas Lessard
Elise Shaw
Elie Shin
Brendan Yan

Max Zheng
Daniel Korevaar
Sean Calhoun
Joelene Zheng
Shambhavi Gupta
Luca Borboa
Shlok Prabhushettar
Evan Frenyea
Walter MacDonald
Bhavyanshu Kandlakunta
Rhea Utturkar
Jeane Lee
Isaac Lee
H. Kaydence Yeong
Celeste Joo-Schwaber
Cyrus Joo-Schwaber



This is why we do what we do. From Band Fest, Jazz Fest, to Niska Day, and on...Here is a look at last year's musical excitement!





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You can also scan the following QR Code as a direct link to joining Friends of Music.



Niskayuna Friends of Music 2025 Pie and Tea Bread Sale



Back by popular demand for your winter holiday celebrations!

Featuring Delicious Pies and Tea Breads from Mourningkill Farms Bakery

This **PRE-ORDER ONLY** sale supports music education through enrichment grants, scholarships and district festivals.

Choose from 10 varieties of freshly made, frozen pies, and 6 varieties of freshly made tea breads (which can be frozen).

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All Standard Pies are \$19.50 (10-inch) Made Without Gluten Pie is \$20.00 (8-inch) Tea Bread Loaves are \$10.00 Online Ordering Only: https://niskyfom.org/ (Click on Pie Sale!) Pre-Order Your Pies and Tea Breads Online November 1-29, 2025 Pick Up Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 Pick Up Time: 3:30 - 6:30 PM Pick Up Location: Niskayuna High School <i>**Pies/Breads Not Picked Up Will Be Donated**</i> For questions, email niskyfompies@gmail.com or call Nancy Gort at (518) 221-9071	10 scrumptious pie varieties to choose from: 1. Apple 2. Apple Crumb 3. Pecan 4. Very Berry (Raspberries, Blueberries and Blackberries) 5. Strawberry Rhubarb 6. Peach Raspberry 7. Chocolate Chip 8. Coconut Supreme 9. Cherry Crumb 10. Made Without Gluten Deep Fudge (the MWG flour is a mix of grains, starches, and nuts made by The Secret GF. The pies are made in a facility that also produces gluten-containing products so the pies are NOT a registered "gluten free" product.)	6 delicious tea bread options: 1. Apple Cinnamon 2. Banana Chocolate Chip 3. Gingerbread 4. Lemon Blueberry 5. Carrot Raisin 6. Cherry Pecan Scan to Order: 
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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!