

SMPA Meeting
October 14, 2020

Adrienne, President of [SMPA](#), welcomes all parents, members and the amazing staff of our Staples High School Music Program.

Adrienne thanks and introduces the executive board: Adrienne Tober: President, Sue Rubin: Treasurer, Andrea Moore, Allison Ziering Walmark. Anne Spencer Cheema, Christie Stanger, Danielle Dobin, Danielle Teplica, Heidi McGee, Suzanne Hermus

Adrienne introduces our incredible and creative music program staff about what will be happening this year and what their hopes are during the year .

CARRIE MASCARO, Director of Orchestras, String Lessons, Chamber Music - She has been here for a long time but feels like a first year teacher all over again with all the new and great changes that we are making, and challenges we have during this new hybrid model. She is very happy to have the students back in the classroom and to actually communicate with them in person or virtually, even one on one in the zoom format. Trying to keep everyone connected. She is really looking forward to this year with the kids.

Carrie notes that last year, it was a heartache not being able to praise and call out her seniors as they graduated from the program. She felt such a loss as it was truly one of her favorite groups of kids. She hopes that this year we can plan to celebrate our seniors in an important way regardless of the status in in-school or remote learning due to the covid crisis. Please contact cmascaro@westportps.org if you have any questions.

JERI MUEHLEISE, Director of Freshman Orchestra, String Lessons, Piano, Music Technology - this is her second year at Staples, 11th year teaching, and she's happy to be back. She is also happy to be back at school and to have such an awesome team and to be co-teaching with Carrie. She feels they have surpassed even their wishful thinking and the program is going better than they had even hoped. They are really able to work well, having two teachers on it between doing Zoom and on Zoom. The kids seem excited to take on these new challenges now and during the year to come.

Please contact jmuehleise@westportps.org if you have any questions.

LUKE ROSENBERG, Director of Choral Activities - This is his 9th year in Westport. It has been so great to see all the kids again and to be making music with them. One of the bright spots about this year - they have been able to integrate some different software which has allowed them to approach rehearsing from a different angle but has also allowed them to spend more time working towards musical literacy and getting the students to become fantastic readers. Feel free to email him at rosenberg@westportps.org if you have any questions.

PHIL GIAMPIETRO, Director of Bands, Jazz Ensemble, AP Music Theory - Despite the uncertainty with how this hybrid model was going to play out, he feels things are as back to as normal as possible, even with all the safety measures, social distancing, fabric barriers, etc. Ultimately the students are getting to play and getting as much done as possible, just in a different context. He feels they are all optimistic about what IS actually possible this year even with all the challenges. They already had their first jazz ensemble rehearsal, as did the other groups, and went as well as it ever has. It is exciting to get back to as normal as we can now. They all meet with their ensembles once a week. He can be reached at pgiampietro@westportps.org if you have any questions.

CANDLELIGHT CONCERT

Mr. Giampietro gave an overview of the plans for this year's **Candlelight Concert**. The place where parent help may be needed, at least in the near future, is in regards to the Candlelight Concert. It is usually a big undertaking and is a multi night concert. This year will be special and different. This year will be the 80th anniversary of the Candlelight Concert, and will be presented virtually as a pre-recorded and live-streamed event. The video production will be done professionally and Dan Woog will be adding special touches in a historian type way, perhaps with interviews. As usual, it is not only a gift to our school community but a gift to the Westport community. Also, for the first time, the program will incorporate all the Staples music groups so that all music students will have a part in the concert this year.

There will be at least one rehearsal for every group in November between the 16-20th. The video recording will take place on the weekend prior to Thanksgiving, on Saturday 11/2 and Sunday 11/22. Each music group will have individual recording times, in keeping with covid safety measures. The recording will take place in the gym. The students will have a "call time" and will be asked to show up in concert attire to video record their group segment. Although there may be conflicts, please try to have your child available for their taping/filming time on that weekend. The Candlelight Concert will be presented in a pre-recorded streaming form to families and the community on December 19th. We will do our best to document the tradition and the hard work the kids put into their music.

Dates to remember for the Candlelight Ceremony this year.

November 16-20th: exact dates/times TBD for each group

November 21st & 22nd: Performance Recorded - Video/Taping each group for Virtual Candlelight Concert.

PLEASE make sure your child is available (the weekend before Thanksgiving.)

December 19th: Pre-recorded Live Streaming of the 80th Anniversary of the SHS Candlelight Ceremony.

Adrienne will be asking for volunteers to sign as the need arises. This year the SMPA plans to continue to support the music program by providing volunteers and funding for items not included in the school budget and to help subsidize enhanced programming and performances. Last year, the SMPA was able to fundraise to purchase a travel audio microphone system, a special purchase for the program. The SMPA has also been able to contribute to scholarships for students who are pursuing music after high school and have also supplemented musical artists who have visited Staples and worked with the music students. Due to the pandemic, we are not yet sure of all the needs for volunteers and funding, but the music program will be needing assistance as we move through the year, hopefully as smoothly as possible given the circumstances. Adrienne will be sending out a volunteer signup. It will be a general signup for parents that we can pull from as needed throughout the year. Please look for that email. Please sign up to volunteer, and please join SMPA.

Jerri and Carrie talk about future plans for the second half of the school year.

The **Youth Concert**, held in February, is a very special event where the older student groups perform for our students from 3rd-6th grade. The theme has been a "cultural journey" the past few years, with input and coordination from the Westport Public Library, and our art programs. The library even has a special display, if students want to take out materials on that particular topic. The schools and the community have really embraced the event. **CANDI INNACO**, Instrumental Lessons, Chamber Music, has been the masterful creator and been responsible for pulling off this amazing event for the last few years! She is working on how the concert could happen this year and is well underway, thinking of a theme, technology etc. In terms of helping her, parents will receive information about what is being planned and what may be needed for this event.

POPs concert, held at the end of the year at Westport's Levitt Pavilion is planned to happen, and more info will be available as we get a bit closer to the event. Please stay tuned for more information.

Thank you to the parents for their continued support of their students and the Staples music program!