

## **SMPA Meeting: October 6, 2021**

Adrienne Tober, President of Staples Music Parents Association (SMPA) welcomes all parents and thanks music directors, parents and SMPA Executive Board Members. This is the second year that Adrienne has served as SMPA President and the second year that there has been an SMPA Executive Board which was very helpful and supportive last year. She states that we were very fortunate last year that the Staples Music Program was able to not only continue but thrive during the hybrid model, and that it is a testament to our dedicated music directors and committed music students and parents.

Adrienne introduces this year's SMPA executive board members: Adrienne Tober: President, Netta Levy: Treasurer, members: Allison Ziering Walmark, Andrea Moore, Anne Spencer Cheema, Christie Stanger, Danielle Dobin, Danielle Teplica, Heidi McGee, Marina Evenstein & Stacy Greiss\*

\*Stacy came on board after meeting

Adrienne introduces Staples Music Directors who give an overview of their programs for the year: Carrie Mascaro (orchestras), Jeri Hockensmith (orchestras), Luke Rosenberg (choral) and Phil Giampietro (bands) and new this year Caitlin Serpliss (asst bands)

## **OVERVIEW/UPDATE from MUSIC DIRECTORS**

**PHIL GIAMPIETRO** Director of Bands, Jazz & Wind Ensembles

3rd year at Staples, 12 prior years as band director/teacher

[pgiampietro@westportps.org](mailto:pgiampietro@westportps.org)

- Wednesday, October 27th 7:30 PM - FALL BAND CONCERT - Freshman Band, Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble Bedford Middle School Auditorium. Details have been emailed out and will continue to be emailed out.
- Two new ensembles, Wind Ensemble and Jazz Workshop, are off and running
- Our next event (besides Candlelight) is the Jazz and Java coffeehouse, Thursday, January 27th.

**LUKE ROSENBERG** Director Choral Activities

10th year at Staples High School

[lrosenberg@westportps.org](mailto:lrosenberg@westportps.org)

- First concert, October 19th, 7:00PM at Trinity Episcopal Church, Southport.
  - Treble Chorus, Anima Cantorum, Bella Voce, Choralaires, and Orphenians.

**CARRIE MASCARO** Director Orchestras, String Lessons, Chamber Music

29 years in Westport

[cmascaro@westportps.org](mailto:cmascaro@westportps.org)

- Fall Orchestra Concert: HalleBOOjah is at Bedford MS on Thursday, October 21 at
- January 7, 2022 - small ensemble concert with possibly another one in the Spring
- Spring Orchestra Concert - Freshman, Sophomore and Symphonic Orchestras
- Amati and Stradivarius Chambers have both begun rehearsals (Monday's 5:30-7:30) and will participate in the October concert, WYAC in February, a May Chamber Orchestra

concert, and Pops in June - We are looking to find places in town to perform for the community

**JERI HOCKENSMITH** Director Orchestras, String Lessons

3rd year at Staples, 13 years teaching

[jmuehleise@westportps.org](mailto:jmuehleise@westportps.org)

- Fall Orchestra Concert: HalleBOOjah is at Bedford MS on Thursday, October 21 at 7pm.
- January small ensemble concert
- Spring Orchestra Concert
- Amati and Stradivarius Chambers have both begun rehearsals (Monday's 5:30-7:30) and will participate in the October concert, WYAC in February, a May Chamber Orchestra concert, and Pops in June

**CAITLIN SERPLISS** Assistant Band Director, WYAC Coordinator

1st year at Staples, 6 years teaching

[cserpliss@westportps.org](mailto:cserpliss@westportps.org)

- Instrument Manager - any school instrument repairs/loaners go through Mrs. Serpliss

**CANDLELIGHT CONCERT**

(Jeri)

Brief overview/tradition - Candlelight is our gift to Westport and there are many musical traditions within the program that we continue each year, like the opening "Welcome Yule" and inviting alumni to sing "Hallelujah Chorus" at the end. As Phil and I arrived, a focus became to work to unify the music department and we are moving forward with this idea in Candlelight by choosing four major works that involve all three disciplines to perform. Rather than having a separate orchestra/band/choir piece of the program, we are excited to have all 11/12 students work on the same music with us during the school day, have a chance to work with each one of us as a conductor, and perform all together during Candlelight. This is very atypical for a high school program to be able to do, but with the caliber of our students and focus of our faculty, we are looking to break some ground and make Candlelight truly unique to Westport.

Groups participating: all choirs, 11/12 Bands & Orchestras

In-person & recorded -no livestream: 3 performances - one on Friday, December 17th and two on Saturday, December 18th.

**WESTPORT YOUTH ARTS COLLABORATIVE (WYAC)** formerly the Youth Concert

(Caitlin)

Dates: Wed/Fri morning February 2nd and 4th, 2022

No evening concert for WYAC; high school students perform 45-minute long concert for the purpose of recruitment; we encourage the upper elementary students in the audience to participate in our music program through high school

**POPS CONCERT**

Dates: Saturday, June 4th, 2022

Over the last 6 years we have performed an outdoor Pops concert at the Levitt Pavilion. Families have picnic dinners on the lawn, food trucks sell dinner for the interested crowd in the Westport Library parking lot and small chamber ensembles perform before the concert starts.

creating a festive atmosphere. Parents have been very helpful loading and unloading trucks of our equipment, soliciting ads for the program and donations to enrich our music program.

## **SENIOR BANQUET**

(Carrie)

We want to have a special senior event in the spring to celebrate all of our senior musicians. The event will include dinner, awards, a DJ. Before COVID we were planning to have the banquet at the Patterson club because one of the senior parents was a member. We would need help with decorations, food planning, DJ etc. It should be an evening to celebrate all of the musical successes and the time we have spent together as well as wishing them well in their future endeavors.

## **FUTURE PLANS**

(Phil)

Musical Artist

- We are always looking for opportunities to have guest artists and clinicians work with our students, but our funding from the school district can often be rigid and inflexible. Support from the SMPA helps us to work around these kinds of constraints in order to bring in experts outside of our building.

Commission Pieces

- A good amount of the time, the music we perform has been commissioned by one or more school districts, colleges/universities, etc. We would like to begin doing this in order to source repertoire for Candlelight that features symphony orchestra and choir combined. There is now a wide selection of this music available currently, so it would be wonderful for our district to help create music of this nature to be shared with the rest of the world. As an additional bonus, it would be forever stated on the sheet music for this piece that Staples High School helped to commission it.

Travel

- We continue to seek opportunities for students to travel and perform around the US and abroad. Covid has derailed this somewhat but we still have our hopes set on a significant trip in 2022-2023.

Adrienne thanked the music directors for their updates and program overview and said that if parents have any questions related to the music program to please reach out to the respective music director.

## **SMPA: PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

(Adrienne & Netta)

### **VOLUNTEERING/DONATIONS**

Adrienne explained that the SMPA's role is to support and enhance a wide range of programs, services and events that enrich the Staples Music Program and experience of the music students. This is done by promoting parent involvement and participation through providing volunteers and funding for items not included in the school budget, which subsidizes enhanced programming and performances.

Adrienne said that throughout the year, parents are needed to help with various events or programs, such as the larger Candlelight and Pops Concerts and also with smaller performances that will be happening again this year. She will be emailing parents a volunteer sign-up for parents to serve as volunteers on an as needed basis throughout the year.

Parents with students enrolled in the Staples Music Program are automatically a member of the SMPA. In order to help support the efforts of the SMPA, there is a suggested donation of \$25 per family. The donation button on the SMPA page of the Staples Music website is not live yet, as a new donation platform is being set up this year, but it will be live soon.

## **FINANCES**

Netta, SMPA treasurer, explained that the SMPA started the year with a very healthy reserve since last year's expenses were much less due to the pandemic restrictions and limitations for the music program. This year the SMPA purchased \$10,000 worth of recording equipment and a \$9,000 stage extension which will allow all performers to fit on the stage together. There are smaller expenses that pop up throughout that the SMPA helps out with.

Netta said that for the Candlelight Concert in the past, poinsettias have been purchased as decorations for the concert and then sold to parents as a way to offset the cost. Due to different issues associated with this endeavor, the poinsettias will now be purchased by the SMPA and donated to various local organizations afterwards. The SMPA is looking for places to buy poinsettias at cost or even donated and asked that if any parent has a connection to possible plant nurseries to please let them know.

Adrienne added that the SMPA offers a scholarship(s) at the end of each year to students who are pursuing music after high school.

## **CONCLUSION**

Adrienne concluded by thanking everyone for attending and asking parents to please look for an email from the SMPA to be going out to all parents through the music directors. This email will have information about the SMPA including a volunteer sign up and a link to donate. Thank you to the parents for their continued support of their students and the Staples Music program!