



ST. FRANCIS PREPARATORY SCHOOL
6100 Francis Lewis Blvd. Fresh Meadows, NY 11365
(718) 423-8810 www.sfponline.org

*Accredited by Middle States Association of Colleges
and Secondary Schools*

Member of the Board of Regents of the State of New York

Member of New York State Association of Independent Schools

*Recipient of the U.S. Education Department's "Excellence
in Private Education" Award*

*Recognized by U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT
as an "Outstanding American High School"*

January 21, 2021

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

We hope this letter finds you well, especially during these different and challenging times.

Even though we have not been able to present concerts, we have been able deliver a quality program to our students.

We do have quite a few things going on, and we wanted to give you an update on how we've been able to ensure Music is not only alive and well, but thriving at St. Francis Preparatory School.

This summer, we spent an extraordinary amount of time researching the impact Covid-19 was having on Music Education.

Some of the resources we explored were:

- International Coalition Performing Arts Aerosol Study (The University of Colorado)
- Johns Hopkins University/Peabody Conservatory
- National Association for Music Education
- American String Teacher Association

Some of the webinars we attended were presented by:

- Nat King Cole Generation Hope Foundation
- American String Teachers Association
- American Choral Directors Association

Dr. Corbino and Mr. Johnston even presented a webinar in collaboration with the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools that addressed, in part, teaching in times of Covid.

We also met with numerous educators to collaborate and compare strategies. They included:

- Peter Loel Boonshaft, Hofstra University
- Susan A. Davis, Queens College
- David LaMorte, Tottenville High School, George N. Parks Award Winner
- Katherine Chu, Renaissance High School for Musical Theater & Technology
- Brother Joshua DiMauro, O.S.F., St. Anthony's High School

(over)

The result was a seamless transition to new strategies of teaching in a safe hybrid environment. For example, our string teachers are teaching tuning to our beginners. Our choral teachers are making sure our singers are versed in Music Theory, and hope to begin composition soon. And our band students, after careful consultation with our school nurse, are finally able to rehearse again in a socially distant setting in our auditorium.

An exciting event that have already happened include a virtual master class with faculty from Montclair State University, focused on college auditions. Upcoming events include our Chamber Orchestra working virtually with composer Eric B. Davis, and a seminar for local Music Educators on teaching Music during Covid which will be co-hosted by Queens College and St. Francis Prep.

We are pleased to report that all three orchestras, all three bands, and both percussion ensembles are playing. Our beginner string and percussion classes are also playing, and our beginning band classes are able to play remotely.

When you add it all up, the St. Francis Preparatory School Music Department, even in times of Covid, continues to be a shining example of what a Music program of the highest caliber should be. And that's why in 2011, we became the first school ever to be recognized by the Middle States Association by earning their Music Credential. This honor is "aimed at recognizing only those schools with the most sophisticated programs and the highest goals in music education." In fact, the author of the Music Credential hailed us by saying, "No one is doing it better!"

In April of 2018, we became the first school ever to be re-accredited for this great honor. The Middle States visitor declared, "Students and parents exclaim that the music program is the reason for choosing SFP. Relationships of students and faculty are strongly rooted in the development of the whole child. The faculty embraces teaching the students through the discipline of music. With that, they bring a comprehensive study of music through relationship building and develop a deeply genuine and wholesome experience to, and for, students."

In the spring of 2018, Prep sponsored its first Tri-M society. The Music Honor Society's inaugural class was in excess of over 100 students, and we will well surpass that number this year. In addition to providing well deserved recognition for our students, it provides them numerous service opportunities.

Prep's Music Department earned National Association of Music Merchants Foundation (NAMM) Support Music Merit Awards in 2019 and 2020. They have also earned Music for All Advocacy in Action Awards in multiple areas in the same span. In 2019, they were presented with a Proclamation from the Assembly of the State of New York and were recognized by the Long Island Music Hall of Fame and their High School Recognition Program.

And if that weren't enough, we are in the midst of renovating our facilities to ensure future Music students will have the facilities their talents and enthusiasm deserve! In September of 2016, we unveiled a small rehearsal room, a dedicated percussion room with all new equipment, a suite of seven Wenger SoundLok Sound Isolation practice rooms, and a classroom for our upperclassman electives, such as Music Theory and Music History. Coming very soon, an orchestra rehearsal room, orchestra storage room, choral rehearsal room, and a departmental office with storage.

We are including our department brochure, and encourage you to watch our department video (which was recognized by Music for All Advocacy in Action), which can be found at https://sfponline.org/dept_read.asp?res_id=154.

As we look forward to a return to normalcy, please do share our information with any potential students who might be interested in our program.

We wish you the very best during these times. Stay safe!

Robert Corbino, Ed.D., H'06
Chairperson
Band Director

Robert L. Johnston, H'14
Director of String Studies
Co-Internal Coordinator, MSA
Director of Publicity and Public Relations

David Y. Kobayashi, Esq. '93
Director of Choral Studies

Murat Karaça
Assistant Band Director

Joseph Higgins
Honors Orchestra Director

Marc A. Silvagni, Ed.D., '06
Director of Percussion Studies

Kirsten Corwin, '11
Concert Chorus Director

Joseph Barbieri, '16
Music Department Assistant