



# KHS Music Musings

FEBRUARY 2018

## UPCOMING CONCERT DATES:

- Naugatuck Community Band Benefit Concert, March 15th, 7:30PM KHS Auditorium
- Solo and Small Ensemble Recital, Tuesday, 4/10/2018 7:00PM KHS Auditorium
- Spring Concert, Tuesday, 5/15/2018 7:00PM, KHS Auditorium
- Memorial Day Parade, Sunday, 5/27/2018 12:00 Freight Street Waterbury

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## From the Podium

February has begun with a great deal of excitement and a whirlwind of chaos. We have seen the flu epidemic cause major problems with attendance and as a result the group seems to be trapped on a musical treadmill.

To add to that difficulty, we have just started working on our hardest song of the year, Aztec Fire. The song is presenting a very big challenge for the band, pushing their range, endurance, and musical confidence to the max. I told them I want to begin this piece now because it will take quite some time to get it together and I don't want to rush

it. Plus, I want to use this song as a way of pushing their musical endurance, something they will need for what is shaping up to be a longer Spring Concert than we have had in quite a few years.

The students have grown quite excited about some additional music that we will be tackling next. Every year I write one song for the band to perform at their concert as a world premier, this year, the band has already gotten two songs, and now I am putting the finishing touches on a third that I am very excited about. The song is based on the characters and locations found in the board game Candyland. This

will include Lord Licorice, Gloopy and the Molasses Swamp, Princess Lolly and King Candy. Each section will be it's own short song, but the whole 4 movement suite will clock in as our longest song of the program.

The Jazz band has gotten started this year, but hasn't made much progress yet due to snow days, sickness, the fundraiser, and one cancelation. I am looking to get things back on track in the coming weeks, as they have a goal of learning 2 songs with solos before the Small Ensemble Concert in April. Looking forward to a better end of February!

-Mr. Knecht

## Choral Notes

February has moved through so fast but the chorus seems to be keeping pace. With three songs learned since January, the choir is already in really good shape for May's spring concert. The group has decided to theme this concert program with songs from stage and screen.

The first song the choir has learned is a classic from the show "Rent." "Seasons of Love" is already a group favorite. The song will have several featured soloists – which students are also very excited about.

The next song the group is working on is an a cappella arrangement of a medley of songs by

the group "Fun." This song was featured on the show "The Sing Off" and includes the songs "Some Nights," "We Are Young," and "Carry On." Like "Seasons of Love," this song also has a few featured soloists.

Another song the choir is working on is the title song from "Phantom of the Opera." While there are no solos in this particular song, there are several students interested in trying the ending – including the very high ending note.

The group will add at least two more songs to round out the program. We are currently looking at a really interesting a cappella version of "Africa" by Toto. The song

has been featured in tv shows like Scrubs, Family Guy, South Park, Community, and New Girl. The fifth song is still undecided at this point, though the group has several pieces they are looking through.

The Men's and Women's choir have begun rehearsing weekly this month in preparation for their concert on April 10<sup>th</sup>. The groups are working with a 50's/60's theme. They will perform separately and hopefully combine for one or two songs. Besides the concert they will also plan another performance at The Cheshire House – an elderly rehabilitation home.

-Ms. Page

## Musician of the Month



Louie Armstrong (also known as Satchmo) was a pioneer of the swing Jazz era, and is most well known for his playing ability on the trumpet. Armstrong was a troubled kid throughout his youth, and even spent 3 years in a youth prison after firing a gun into the air. While in prison, he refined his playing ability on the trumpet, something he did on street corners to earn some money prior to being arrested.

After his short stint in prison he returned to playing

trumpet to earn money. He performed on Riverboats and various other venues to earn cash, but his career didn't take off till 1922. It was then when Armstrong was invited to move to Chicago to perform with his idol, Joe Oliver's Creole Jazz Band. It was here that Armstrong made a major name for himself. He became Oliver's primary soloist, and developed his played, controlling the instrument in upper ranges that most players struggled with.

He started recording some Jazz combo recordings while in Chicago that made him a household name. He would also revolutionize jazz with a technique called scat singing, where he would use non-sense words to improvise while singing.

Despite being a jazz musician, he is enshrined in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. His most famous song is "What a Wonderful World" which features him singing with his signature raspy sound.

## Call for Chaperones—May 30th

On Wednesday, May 30th, the Music Department will partake in our annual performance with High Note Music Festivals. We are in need of chaperones for this day, as we will be leaving school around 8:00 and returning to school between 5:00 and 5:30 that day.

In order to apply for the field trip I need at least 5 parents who are willing to chaper-

one the trip. The duties are minimal, as each chaperone gets assigned a small group of students and is responsible to check them in a couple times during the day and also pass out their meal passes.

It is a fun day, and something the kids look forward to. You can email me at [jknecht@waterbury.k12.ct.us](mailto:jknecht@waterbury.k12.ct.us) if you are interested in helping out or if you have questions.



*"Words make  
you think a  
thought. Music  
makes you feel a  
feeling. A song  
makes you feel a  
thought."*

*-E. Y. Harburg*

## New High Note Festival Information

This year we are once again planning on going to the High Note Festival, as mentioned above. However this year things will be slightly different, the Festival is coming to us! The kids will still get to go to Lake Compounce as a part of the Festival, which we will do on May 30th, however Kennedy High School will be hosting other schools on May 25th, May

31st, and June 1st! This is exciting as it will allow us to cut out the challenge of performing at Lake Compounce, which can be difficult when bringing instruments into the park, and also the kids lose a great deal of time at the park needing to bring those instruments back to the cars for safe keeping after the performance. We will also have access to all of our per-

cussion instruments, which is one of the hardest things about the trip.

This also will serve as a fundraiser for the Music Program as High Note Festival will be paying the music program for the use of our facility during those days. We are excited to have this new fundraiser and opportunity for performance with High Note Music Festival and hope this will be an annual opportunity for the school.

# Naugatuck Community Band Fundraiser

On March 15th, (Thursday Night), the Naugatuck Community band will be coming to Kennedy to perform on our stage at a benefit concert. They have done this performance every year for the past 3 years. The students will each get a free ticket to the show, as I want them to see the performance and hear what these experienced amateur musicians are able to do. Tickets will go on sale for the concert about 2 weeks before the show. The students will be selling

tickets to friends and family at a cost of \$5 per ticket, with the proceeds going towards each student's individual cost for the trip in May. In the past few years we have seen multiple students sell enough tickets to pay for their entire trip!

The Naugatuck Community Band is an ensemble of area musicians, most of whom only played in high school and maybe college. While there are some members who are career musicians, the ma-

majority of the group is comprised of amateur musicians. They will be performing a program of selections from their most recent concert program titled, Storybook, music inspired by literature. This will include Brian Balmages' Call of the Wild, Johan De Meij's Symphony #1 the Lord of the Rings, selections from Robert W. Smith's Divine Comedy, and Mr. Knecht's Where the Wild Tings Are, among other pieces.

## Stupid Music Humor



## The Mount Rushmore of... Jazz Orchestras

Jazz Orchestras were amazing ensembles that dominated the musical landscape in the 30's and 40's. Some of these groups did more than just jazz, but were most well known for their contributions to jazz.

- 1) Duke Ellington Orchestra - The Duke Ellington Orchestra got its start in the 1920's at the Cotton Club in Harlem, but through their history toured the world. They did everything from film scores to jazz, but still perform today and are widely regarded as one of the greatest jazz orchestras in the world
- 2) Count Basie Orchestra - This group started in the 1930's and continued to perform together after Count Basie's death in 1984. They started in Kansas City, but toured throughout the United States, performing the signature piano driven swing jazz music they pioneered in Kansas City
- 3) Glenn Miller Orchestra - While only active for 4 years, from 1938 to 1942, The Glenn Miller Orchestra performed and recorded some of the most famous music for Jazz Orchestra including: "In the Mood", "Chattanooga Choo Choo", "Pennsylvania 6-5000", "String of Pearls", and "Tuxedo Junction", among other hits.
- 4) Benny Goodman Orchestra - Goodman was a clarinetist who broke racial divides in swing music. His orchestra performed one of the most recognizable pieces ever written for jazz orchestra: Sing, Sing, Sing. He and his drummer, Gene Krupa, were referred to as the King of Swing.

## Instrumental Music Student of the Month

### January

#### William Keller, Senior

Clarinet

William is one of the most consistently dependable band members I've had at Kennedy High. William started with the band as a freshman and has "quietly" played everything and anything I've ever given him with little to no direction. He is musically one of the most gifted students in the band, showing tremendous musical understanding and musicality literacy within all of the music classes he takes.

In addition to being one of the best players in the band, William also holds the record for fewest words spoken over his four years, at Kennedy, having once asked to use the bathroom, otherwise I've never heard him speak.

#### Previous Winners

- Oct. - Rick Ramos
- Nov. - Gabriela Isak
- Dec. - Isaac Smyth
- Jan. - Rebekah "Pink" Merancy
- Feb. - William Keller



## Vocal Music Student of the Month

### January

#### Isaac Smyth,

Senior

Isaac joined the choir just last year. In that short amount of time he has become a leader in his section. Isaac practices constantly and pushes his own vocal range so that he can achieve success as a tenor. He learns his parts very fast and helps the others in his section. Isaac's dedication to choir and leadership in music in general make him a great addition to the choir.

#### Previous Winners

- Oct. - Shania Gould-Turner
- Nov. - Adriana Siharaj
- Dec. - Adnam Bilalovski
- Jan. - Sarai Genua
- Feb. - Isaac Smyth

