



SPECIAL MUSIC SCHOOL
AT KAUFMAN CENTER
PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

UpBeat

Monthly Calendar & Newsletter

MAE
RONEY:
SMS MEMORIES
see page 5

January 2012

❖ mark your calendar ❖

January 3, Tuesday

Sorry, everybody, back to school

January 4, Wednesday

6:30 p.m. SMS Open House

January 6, Friday

8:30 a.m. Town Hall Meeting

January 10, Tuesday

8:45 a.m. PTA Board Meeting

January 12, Thursday

3:00 p.m. SLT Meeting

January 16, Monday

NO SCHOOL, Martin Luther, Jr. King Day

January 22, Sunday

2:30 p.m. Concerto Competition AGRH

January 23, Monday

8:45 a.m. PTA General Meeting

For Dates and Times of Community Service
Concerts and Performance Classes, see the
SMS 2011-2012 Google Calendar.

PRINCIPAL *Katherine Banucci-Smith*

Dear Families,

Dan Feigleson, the School's Network Leader, has worked with SMS for years, and is a big fan of our community, especially, the students. I was particularly moved when he offered the following submission for our UpBeat Newsletter. It reflects his deep understanding of who we are and the path we have chosen as a public school, and I am grateful to call Dan our friend.

From Dan Feigleson:

**"Work for something because it is good,
not just because it stands a chance to succeed."**

— Vaclav Havel

One of my personal heroes passed away recently. Vaclav Havel, the former President of Czechoslovakia, began as a playwright and activist, fighting for human rights, in the face of a totalitarian government. After being jailed and isolated for the crime of speaking out, he, eventually, emerged as a statesman and leader - and is usually credited as the one who brought democracy to the Czech Republic, in the period of the Velvet Revolution. (Check out his "Letters To Olga", reflections on freedom and responsibility, written to his wife from prison.) The irony was that Havel never sought out a position of power, but agreed to serve at the request of his fellow citizens. At first, he found politics a difficult transition from literature and theater, but, over time, developed an idiosyncratic leadership style, and is now recognized as one of the great humanitarians and intellectuals in the history of the country. Once his two terms as president were over, he returned to writing, publishing one last play in 2008. With the important mission of helping children become thinkers and questioners, Havel serves as an inspiration to us all.

Here is the link to the Vaclav Havel NY Times obituary.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/19/world/europe/vaclav-havel-dissident-playwright-who-led-czechoslovakia-dead-at-75.html?hp> <<https://owa2003.ny-cboe.net/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/19/world/europe/vaclav-havel-dissident-playwright-who-led-czechoslovakia-dead-at-75.html?hp>>

**LOOKS LIKE SMS HIGH SCHOOL IS COMING IN 2013!
See Katie's December 23rd E-Mail reprint on page 6,
and the DOE Letter to SMS Families on page 7.**

1ST ANNUAL

SPECIAL MUSIC SCHOOL
AT KAUFMAN CENTER
PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

online AUCTION

The first-ever SMS PTA Online Auction was a rousing success! Over **\$6,500** in bids were pledged. Thank you to Jhoanna, Natanya and Nora for all their hard work. Thank you to everyone who contributed, solicited, made bids and helped make this such a success.

A final accounting and official list of participants will follow shortly. Check the PTA blasts and website for full details.

MUSIC DIRECTOR *Jenny Undercofler*

Dear Parents,

It has been an intense four weeks, with Evaluations, Grade Concerts, and the Winter Choral Concert. And, then, to top it all off, we received the great news that we will be opening our first 9th grade in fall of 2013.

Overall, I think it was a positive and productive round of Evaluations. As you know, the purpose of the fall Evaluations (with the exception of the eighth graders) is to evaluate technical progress, as demonstrated in scales and etudes. The 8th graders played a full "Readmission" program that will make them eligible to apply to the after-school Young Artist Program. That application process will happen once the students receive their high school acceptances in February.

We have been working, during the last two rounds of Evaluations, to articulate more clearly what we mean by "grade standard", on each instrument, in each grade. This is a difficult task, since like every classical music curriculum I've seen, our curriculum is, essentially, a graded repertoire list that "implies" skill development, rather than articulates it. For now, I am keeping a running list of some of the thoughts of the panelists, but, I hope that, in the near future we can expand this into a document with the depth/scope of our Theory Curriculum.

One highlight of the Grade Concerts were the cadenzas that several of our students wrote to play as part of their concertos. This is an age-old tradition – performers would, sometimes, improvise cadenzas, on the spot, to show off their command of the piece, as well as the instrument – but, it shows a wonderful blending of old and new. This blending of tradition & innovation will characterize the new High School.

Finally, I want to congratulate Sean and Emily on their amazing work preparing the students for the Winter Choral Concert. We are an astounding community, that can, not only, sing, but, also, enjoy a concert of works ranging from "Minnewanka" to "Who Built the Ark." And, I can't help identifying, as a parent, with the fact that my own kids are growing up, thinking that it's normal to share that kind of passion and talent for singing with every one of their classmates.

Best wishes to every one for an excellent New Year!

Jenny

FACE THE NEW YEAR with FACE THE MUSIC

"...polished, exuberant..." – *The New York Times*

Jenny Undercofler presents, Face the Music – an "all-classical" ensemble of more than 70 astonishingly talented teenagers from in and around New York City. The only teen ensemble in the country devoted solely to the study and performance of works by living classical composers, the ensemble has been praised by The New York Times for its "stunning performances" of music by contemporary composers such as Steve Reich, Nico Muhly and Terry Riley. Recipients of the 2011 ASCAP Aaron Copland Award, Face the Music has been featured on WQXR's "Young Artist Showcase" and National Public Radio's "All Things Considered".

The Queens Museum of Art

Sunday, January 08 | 2:00pm

Lincoln Center's Rubenstein Atrium

Thursday, January 26 | 8:30pm

Merkin Concert Hall

Tuesday, February 07 | 7:30pm

visit <http://kaufman-center.org/kc/press-release/face-the-music-launches-2011-12-concert-season> for full details.

PTA Dues: 62% & Rising

Our goal is 100% Family Participation. Please send in your dues today. If you have already done so, **Thank You!**

If you have any questions about your financial contributions to the SMS, please contact the SMS PTA Co-Treasurers at smspta.treasurer@gmail.com.

The PTA Board, and the entire SMS community, extends its gratitude and best wishes to the Van de North family. May there be nothing but joy and happiness in their new home in New Jersey. Evelyn, Nora, Pete and Timothy, you will truly be missed.

SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY

May 5th, 2012

**SMS Annual Barnes & Noble
Play-A-Thon & Book Fair**

10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

**Barnes & Noble
at Union Square, NYC.**

Details to follow!

The DOE 2011-2012

Academic Calendar available at
<http://schools.nyc.gov/Calendar/default.html>

amazon.com

**DON'T FORGET TO START YOUR
AMAZON.COM SHOPPING AT
SMSPARENTS.ORG. IT IS AN
EASY WAY TO SUPPORT SMS!**

If you start your Amazon shopping on the home page of SMSPARENTS.org, the SMS PTA earns a percentage on everything you purchase from Amazon. No details are disclosed. Tell your family, friends and colleagues. This is YEAR ROUND, so, if you're shopping Amazon anyway, **SHOP THROUGH the SMS WEBSITE!**



Clip your Box Tops 4 Education coupons and drop them off at one of the containers around the school. It's **FREE MONEY FOR THE SMS PTA**. For more info on Box Tops 4 Education go to www.boxtops4education.com.

COMPOSERCRAFT *Robinson (Robin) McClellan*

I couldn't believe my luck when Jenny Undercoffer invited me to create and teach a new seminar-style course for young composers at the Kaufman Center. The result, **ComposerCraft**, began in October and we are now moving ahead, full steam, with a number of exciting projects.

The students in ComposerCraft are seven talented fifth-to-eighth graders from SMS and LMS. All are gifted composers, who arrived with great experience already — they arrived having written klezmer tunes, electronic works, operas, symphonies, and a lot more.

We meet once a week for two hours. Class time is devoted to listening and score analysis (including composers such as Josquin, Beethoven, Lili Boulanger, and Bartok), dictation, exercises in harmony, counterpoint and compositional techniques, and studying form and style.

In-class work is supported by a course website I created as a kind of online textbook, using Haiku LMS and Note-flight, a custom online Music Notation Program. Topics include "balancing repetition with change," "consonance and dissonance," "what articulates form," "following up on the big idea of your piece," and "musical borrowing" — plus, techniques like imitation, hocket, isorhythm, and others (it will take us a while to get through it all!).

The online lessons include interactive audio/score examples and assignments that students complete using their choice of notation technology (including paper). I have approached the course content as if it were a college seminar, even borrowing material and lesson ideas from the composition and theory courses I teach at Hunter College and Rutgers. And, as I

expected, the ComposerCraft students have had no hesitation about diving right in!

All of this activity feeds into short compositions, that students will present in class — mostly, solos and duos, performed by their classmates.

Our academic year also features visits from distinguished guest speakers, including, well-known composers and prominent leaders in the New York City new-music scene, plus three major chances to compose for professional ensembles. First, students will write two larger scale works for readings with professional ensembles: in March with Yarn/Wire, a prominent local piano/percussion quartet specializing in contemporary music, and in May with a professional string quartet.

In addition, Metropolis Ensemble, the Grammy-nominated professional chamber orchestra dedicated to new music, has offered to co-organize and fund ongoing mentorship for the ComposerCraft students. Each student will meet individually with Metropolis players to create new works, as well as learn about how to write, idiomatically, for a given instrument and explore its expressive and technical possibilities — an invaluable skill for a composer! Their director, conductor Andrew Cyr, spoke to the class in the fall and became inspired to find a creative way for our students to collaborate with his virtuoso players. The process will culminate in a well-publicized concert at a prominent NYC venue (stayed tuned for details). So, all of this is still in its very beginnings, and we are excited for more great things to come!

Robin McClellan

MYRNA GOODWINE

Q&A BY: Matan R. Marder Friedgood

MRMF: Where were you born and where do you live now?

Officer Myrna: I was born in South Carolina. I am the fourth child of nine, three brothers and six sisters. We moved to NYC when I was a baby, and grew up in Harlem. I now live in the Soundview section of the Bronx. I went to James Monroe H.S.

MRMF: How long have you worked at the Special Music School?

Officer Myrna: I've been an NYPD School Safety Agent here for the past eight years. I work for the NYPD, School Safety Division, not the DOE, as some people think.

MRMF: Did you get special training to become a School Safety Agent?

Officer Myrna: Yes. I trained like a "regular" police officer. Same tough exercises, stairs, and safety training.

MRMF: Do you have the same power, authority, as the "regular" police?

Officer Myrna: If I had to, yes, I could make arrests.

MRMF: What is your favorite music?

Officer Myrna: I'm a big gospel fan. I used to sing in my church choir. I used to play the piano, clarinet and trumpet, at various times. Maybe I'll take up the piano, again, some day.

MRMF: Do you have favorite TV shows or movies, and movie stars?

Officer Myrna: I am a big Tyler Perry fan. He is "it" for me. I also like the oldie TV shows: Sanford & Son, Good Times, and The Jeffersons.

MRMF: What is your favorite excuse the kids give for not being able to use the stairs, needing to use the elevator?

Officer Myrna: I hear a lot of "but why? and It's not fair!" Some of the kids get creative with: I've broken my leg or it's my birthday, how about a break. There are so many stories.

MRMF: Do you like it here?

Officer Myrna: It is a good job. The kids are respectful and the parents always nice and friendly. Yes, the people are good here. I like it.

VOLUNTEERING AT SMS: A GOOD IDEA *Michelle Marquez (3)*

Are you interested in volunteering at the Special Music School? Is there a new idea you would like to pursue to help support the SMS community? Do you have a couple of hours to spare to help your fellow parent volunteers on an existing sub-committee? We would like to hear from you.

Volunteering at the Special Music School has so many benefits - here are just a few good reasons to share your talents and volunteer at SMS:

1. By participating, as an SMS parent volunteer, you help to set a good example for your children about what it means to "give back" to the community and show them how important it is for them, also to be as actively engaged in the classroom, in their schoolwork and in all other SMS community initiatives. Together, you and your children will establish a greater sense of pride in SMS and all that it has to offer.
2. Having a strong parent community informed, engaged and involved with the SMS PTA and with the greater community helps to ensure that parents will continue to play key roles in the valuable learning already being provided to our children. Your opinion matters and will help shape the future of your child's education.
3. Volunteering can also give you a chance to showcase your own talents while also helping support SMS. Are you an avid writer? Is research your thing? Maybe you would like to help the newly-established Grants and Fundraising Committee to identify foundation or corporate grants to support the SMS community. Or, maybe you want to help write an article for the SMS Monthly Newsletter, UpBeat. Maybe there is a parent workshop or subcommittee that you would like to establish to help educate other SMS

families. Or, maybe you are willing to lead a Yoga class for kids and families to support a balanced and healthy lifestyle for the SMS family. There are many ways to get involved.

4. Volunteering at SMS also helps us to ensure that our children will continue to enjoy many of the special extra-curricular programs that they look forward to each year, such as the Play-A-Thon, the Art Show and the Halloween Party. The SMS PTA needs everyone's help to make these programs a real success for our children, to further build on them, and, also, bring new ideas to the table. Are there any special programs that you would like the PTA to consider? Would you be interested in spearheading a project this Spring? Please let us know.

E-mail fundraisingsms@gmail.com to share your ideas and to volunteer.

Kaufman Center Update for January 2012: Gina Napolitano

Happy New Year from Kaufman Center! We are looking forward to an exciting Winter and Spring with some important fundraising events and great concerts at Merkin Concert Hall coming up. I hope you'll be able to join us!

Musical Evenings:

Every year, Kaufman Center holds a series of Musical Evenings to benefit the Special Music School. Hosted by Kaufman Center supporters in beautiful homes around the city, these events feature a cocktail reception followed by an intimate performance by world-renowned artists. Invitations will be mailed to all parents this month. The 2012 dates and artists include:

February 28: Sasha Cooke, mezzo-soprano, accompanied on piano by New York Festival of Song Artistic Director, Steven Blier

April 5: Ignat Solzhenitsyn, pianist

May 23: Harlem String Quartet

Kaufman Center Gala

Kaufman Center's biggest fundraiser of the year is our annual gala, which

honors individuals who are committed to the performing arts and arts education. The 2012 gala, honoring Ginny Mancini, arts leader and supporter, and David Israelite, President and CEO of the National Music Publishers' Association, will be held on April 26 at 583 Park Avenue. This elegant evening includes a cocktail reception, seated dinner, and a concert by Lucy Moses School and Special Music School students and professional artists. Information about purchasing advance tickets and tables will be distributed in student backpacks this month.

Merkin Concert Hall

The fantastic Broadway Playhouse series, curated by Sean Hartley, introduces children and families to some all-time musical theater greats. The 2012 series begins on Sunday, January 8 exploring music by George and Ira Gershwin. Other 2012 dates include Stephen Sondheim on February 5 and "Yip" Harburg on March 18. For more details, visit <http://kaufman-center.org/mch/series/broadway-playhouse>.

The 2012 New York Guitar Festival pairs performers with silent films by one of the greatest comic actor-directors in the history of cinema: Buster Keaton. This series of four concerts will be presented January 10-19. For more information, visit <http://kaufman-center.org/mch/series/new-york-guitar-festival>. And, the second annual Ecstatic Music Festival kicks off in February, at Merkin Concert Hall. This groundbreaking series will feature more than 150 performers and composers from different musical backgrounds, who are re-defining music today. For more information, visit <http://kaufman-center.org/mch/series/ecstatic-music-festival>.

Please stop by and visit us on the 5th floor if you have any questions about these events or would like invitations to send to your friends, family, and colleagues. Thank you for your continued support and partnership with us.

Gina Napolitano

Development Associate
gnapolitano@kaufman-center.org

SMS MEMORIES *Mae Roney*

Although I graduated from SMS in June, I don't feel that I have truly left. This is sort of confusing, I guess, but, I learned so much and developed so much at SMS, that I doubt that I will ever feel fully separated from it. It also helps that I go to LaGuardia, a performing arts high school that is two blocks away from SMS, so, I'm always in the area, and am always around similar groups of people, who are interested in the arts. Many of my friends from SMS, also, go to LaGuardia, and that made the adjustment to a bigger school easier, because, as we all meet new friends, we stay close and, then, make friends through each other. Some of my friends went to other high schools around the city, but, I see them, frequently, through YAP, and, also, because I think that the strong, close bonds that are formed at SMS cannot be broken easily. The teachers, also, formed special relationships with the students, close ones that allowed for the students to learn in a way that best suits them, whether it's one-on-one tutoring or by visual or aural learning devices. I felt that I learned a lot about my personality through my experiences at SMS, and, was then able to flourish as a person, because I was comfortable around both the teachers and the students. The things I learned from my time at SMS, both about the world around me and about myself, shape the person I will become. Because of this, SMS is not just a school that I attended, but, a part of me that I will always carry, and there will, hopefully always be a part of me there.

GOTTA LOVE SMS *Annette Santiago-España (K)*

Over this past Thanksgiving holiday, our family sat around the dinner table, as we normally do this time of year, and began sharing the things in our lives we are thankful for. Everyone had their turn, including the kids. So when it came to our daughter's turn, Ana Isabella (Kindergarten), to share what she was thankful for, she, loudly, exclaimed the Special Music School! Ok, that didn't happen. What she really said was some combo of her cousin and Strawberry Shortcake. But, in any case, on the drive back from South Jersey my husband and I decided to come up with a "Top 10" list of reasons why we love the Special Music School. We had to scrap our first Top 10 list, since sitting in traffic for two hours, waiting to go through Lincoln Tunnel, made our first list very dark and upsetting.

Here is our Top 10 Reasons Why We Love the Special Music School

10 – The perfect location if you're an APPLE fan

09 – The opportunity to take a yoga class in the building through Lucy Moses, just moments before your child's music lesson. Serenity now!

08 – Where else can you get a beautifully-knitted hat designed just for your child? Thanks Diane!!!

07 – 10 hours of violin practice per week! Who doesn't love THAT?

06 – Sean Hartley's ability to get a bunch of kids (and adults) to sing show tunes at 8:30a.m. Town Hall Meetings.

05 – The hot lunch program! Oh wait, that's PS 231.

04 – Established in 1996, SMS is already ranked 2nd overall in ELA and Math Assessment scores among public elementary schools ...watch your back Anderson.

03 – Our daughter's fantastic violin instructor, Lynelle Smith.

02 – Public school tuition, private school feel!

01 – The wonderfully diverse, creative, and warm community of SMS

february 2012

❖ looking ahead ❖

February 2, Thursday

Groundhog Day

February 3, Friday

8:30 a.m. Town Hall Meeting

February 6, Monday

8:45 a.m. PTA Board Meeting

♥ February 14, Tuesday ♥

Valentine's Day (don't forget Silvia & Yvonne)

February 16, Thursday

3:00 p.m. SLT Meeting

February 20 through 24

NO SCHOOL Winter Recess

February 28, Tuesday

8:45 a.m. PTA General Meeting

For Dates and Times of Community Service Concerts and Performance Classes, see the SMS 2011-2012 Google Calendar.

Congratulations to the SMS Chess Team on their Second Place Finish in the December 18th NY Chess Kids Chess tournament, held at PS 116. A very cold day yielded the warmest results. The SMS Chess Team Rocks!



THE TEAM (pictured left to right):

Jonah Kernis, 3rd grade

Lucas Amory, 4th grade

Kyrie McIntosh, 6th grade

Abe Gold, 5th grade

Gregory Llewellyn, 5th grade

Daniel Ma, 5th grade

Delphine Kernis, 3rd grade

For more information and to join the Chess Club, see Chess Club Flyer at SMSparents.org/parents/directory-forms/.

December 23, 2011

Dear Parents of the Special Music School,

We are very excited to officially announce the expansion of the Special Music School. Beginning in 2013 we will begin to phase in a high school. We couldn't be more excited about this opportunity to create a comprehensive music program for our children, grades K-12.

Here are the basic facts:

- * We have been slated to open with a 9th grade in the fall of 2013.
- * We have been assigned space in the Martin Luther King Educational Campus, the giant building at the corner of 65th and Amsterdam. There have been six small high schools in that building since 2005.
- * We will be taking space over from a small high school that is being phased out (Manhattan Theater Lab High School)
- * There will be a public hearing (January 24th) and a Panel for Educational Policy vote (February 9th) that will happen before our expansion is declared official. We've also been told that there will be a separate meeting for our community, with a date yet to be determined.

If you are like most people I have talked to informally, you have a million questions about what the new high school will be like, how we will handle the transition, how we will handle admissions, and so on.

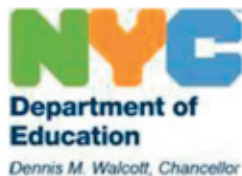
Some of these questions have answers attached to them, but because this approval came suddenly (last Friday afternoon) and out of the blue (they were telling us 2016 as an opening date, as of a few weeks ago) we have not yet scheduled a time to meet with all of you. In the smallest nutshell imaginable:

- * Music high school
- * Focused on providing an overtly "21st century" focus (composer residencies, music technology class requirement, large scale collaborative projects)
- * 50 students in a grade
- * Students attending Juilliard/MSM/Mannes Pre-Colleges will be eligible to audition

I anticipate that there will be many questions that you will ask that require research and rethinking, but I hope we can all undertake this as a collaborative and exciting venture. More information will follow in the New Year. Enjoy your holiday!

Yours,

Katie and Jenny



52 Chambers St.
New York, NY 10007

December 22, 2011

Dear Special Music School Families:

This month, the Department of Education (“DOE”) announced its decision to propose the phase-out and replacement of Manhattan Theatre Lab High School. As part of the replacement proposal, DOE is proposing to expand Special Music School from a K-8 to a K-12 school.

I am writing to inform you that separate Educational Impact Statements (“EISs”) formally describing the proposals, are now available on the DOE’s Web site at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/manhattan/proposal?id=79>. You can also find copies of the EISs in the main office of Special Music School.

During a meeting on **February 9, 2012**, the Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”) will vote on several proposals, including these two. If the proposals are approved, Manhattan Theatre Lab High School will begin phasing out at the end of this school year, and Special Music School will expand in building M490 and begin enrolling ninth-grade students for the 2013-2014 school year.

In the event that the phase-out of Manhattan Theatre Lab is not approved, the DOE would re-examine the availability of space in the building, and may, as appropriate, revise its proposal to co-locate Special Music in M490. Such a revised proposal would be described in a revised EIS.

Before the PEP vote, all community members are invited to attend a joint public hearing. At this hearing, you will have the opportunity to share feedback about this proposal. The hearing is scheduled for:

January 24, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.
Building M490
122 Amsterdam Avenue,
New York, NY 10023

At any time, comments about the proposals can be directed to the Division of Portfolio Planning by phone at 212-374-3466 or online at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/changes/manhattan/proposal?id=79>.

The official Notice of Proposals is attached.

Sincerely,

Tamika Matheson
Manhattan High School Superintendent

Enclosure: Notice of Proposals