



MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS CONCERT FEATURED 600 SINGERS GRADES 5 THROUGH UNIVERSITY

Choirs Combine

Photographed above, the Butler Choirs presented their first ever "Music In Our Schools Month" combined performance on March 27 in the Senior High gymnasium. March is designated by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) as Music in our Schools Month. Performances were given by the combined Middle School choirs, the 7th grade choral ensemble, the combined 8th and 9th grade choirs, and the combined Senior High ensembles. Invited guests were Dr. Stephen Barr and his Concert Choir from Slippery Rock University.

The event concluded with a finale that combined 600 singers from grade 5 through the university level. A goal of the evening was to promote singing across all learning levels, and for the Butler students to all hear the kind of music-making that they will be doing as they progress on to the next level.

Numerous parent volunteers made the event possible, and we are grateful for their help. Between the rehearsal and the event, students received a t-shirt commemorating the evening, and a pizza dinner by the Nutrition Group. Collaborating teachers were Mrs. Erevia, Mrs. Motta, Mrs. Tepper, Dr. Helsel, and Dr. Barr.

The mission of the Butler Area School District music department is to provide a sequential and relevant music education that enables its students to become musically engaged global citizens.

All-State and All-East success

Congratulations to choir students **Joseph Atkinson** (bass 1), **Abby Cavanaugh** (soprano 1), and band student **Cade Weaver** (euphonium), who represented our school at the PMEA All-State Conference. Joe and Abby sang in the All-State Mixed Choir, and Cade played euphonium in the All-State Concert Band, all running concurrently with the PMEA state conference held in Pittsburgh this April.

The PMEA conference was held in conjunction with the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) Eastern Division conference. Because she attended All-State choir last year, **Amanda Bishop** was eligible to apply for the NAfME All-East choir this year. She was successful in representing our school in the All-East treble choir under the esteemed direction of Dr. Sandra Snow from Michigan State University.

About the experience, Abby Cavanaugh said "It was one of the best experiences of my life. I got to sing with the best singers in PA, and Jerry Blackstone is a great man who I got to work with." Joe Atkinson agreed, adding "For me, getting to All-State was the culmination of 3 years of hard work in PMEA. I personally think it was the best payoff I could ever get for that!"

Photo of Mrs. Tepper directing the 8th and 9th grade choir at the FAB Showcase this April.

Butler Music Dept Newsletter

Spring 2019

MODERN BAND PROGRAM

Students at Center Avenue Community School are rocking out as their Modern Band Program continues to expand! Thanks to grants awarded (Golden Tornado Scholastic Foundation), an essay contest (NextTier Bank), and district jeans day donations we are playing guitars, ukuleles, and keyboards, and we also have three microphones with stands for our lead singers and rappers. Mrs. Persichini has been fundraising for our new instruments by providing lunches for Center Avenue Staff who lovingly support us with donations. Our latest additions to the band are two electronic drum kits! 2018-19 has been an amazing year in hands-on music making at Center Avenue. Thanks to all who helped us make it great.



Focus on a Graduate:

Mark Rodgers

The Butler Area School District Music Department is proud of all its students as they achieve learning and performing goals. We hold in high esteem the students who go on to find successes in a variety of careers. In this column, we would like to brag about successes of our graduates and fill the community in on their recent professional activities. Mark Rodgers is one of the graduates who went on to teach music. While an extremely talented educator, he has also become a sought after drill designer, arranger, and trumpet performer.

A current resident of Butler, Mark Rodgers is the director of bands in the Mars Area School District. At Mars, Mr. Rodgers directs the award-winning Mars Area High School Marching Band, and leads the wind ensemble, concert band, and jazz band programs, as well as teaching secondary instrumental lessons. Mr. Rodgers completed his Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education at Slippery Rock University, and then completed his Masters in Instructional Leadership from Robert Morris University. Rodgers is active in music performance and education in the Pittsburgh area, lending his talents as a trumpeter and in-demand marching band drill designer. Mr. Rodgers has designed more than 80 shows for 20 different band programs over the last fifteen years. Before teaching at Mars, Rodgers held positions in the Moniteau and West Greene School Districts.



My musical journey likely took a different route in comparison to many of my music education colleagues. As some of my music teachers can attest (and some still teach at Butler), if you had to identify future music educators based upon their talent levels at the elementary

and middle school levels, my name would not be mentioned. In fact, I often brag to my current students that I was last chair in my junior band! Only one thing in my life really changed my musical journey: practice.

In 8th grade, my junior high band director challenged our band class to complete practice journals totaling 100 minutes per week for three months. Being a slightly arrogant junior high trumpeter, I told my director I would double the practice time and complete two of these practice journals. Little did I know that particular assignment would spark my love of the trumpet, and the practice room.

This was just the beginning of my musical journey. I joke that I did not have many friends in high school because when asked if I wanted to hang out my answer was always "I can't, I need to go practice." One of my high school band directors once told me I was the only student they every had that practiced every day, 365 days a year.

From there, I found that practice makes better, and I immersed myself in every musical environment in high school. At that time, I was able to take four semesters of piano, two guitar classes, concert band, jazz band, chorus, and music theory and composition.

I feel blessed to have attended Butler during a thriving time in the music department, as I felt daily encouragement from the entire music faculty. I do note that many of my memories and experiences were not necessarily tied to daily rehearsals, but to the extensive travel opportunities through marching band and choir. In college these travel opportunities continued as I performed in thirty states and six countries, in various musical ensembles.

My journey from last chair to first chair has forever set it my mind that every student has a musical gift, but it often takes a special music teacher to shape the encouragement.

I have spent the last twelve years as a high school band director, and I make it my daily goal to teach and inspire my students to love music. I still stay in contact with many of my music teachers, and I thank them for their continued encouragement!

FAB Show

The recent FAB Showcase featured a multitude of performing ensembles, celebrating the arts all evening on April 13, 2019. Performing groups included the Rock Orchestra, Percussion ensemble, jazz ensemble, BMS FAB choir, IHS choirs, and the McQuiston Choir. The BMS FAB choir performed their "Broadway Best" show, which they will repeat for Kid's Day America on May 11 at 1:30 pm on the Butler Farm Show grounds.

Faculty Spotlight

Mrs. Katherine Black (photo on right) was awarded the PADESTA 2019 Outstanding New String Teacher award. According to PADESTA (Pennsylvania and Delaware American String Teachers Association), this award is designed to recognize string/orchestra teachers with one to five years of full time teaching experience who have exhibited the highest levels of leadership, dedication, and achievement in public or private schools in Pennsylvania and/or Delaware. Candidates are expected to have demonstrated excellence in at least one of the following areas: teaching, program building, coaching, advocacy, etc.

Dr. Jeffrey Tedford from Grove City College nominated her for this prestigious award. He had the opportunity to work with the Senior High orchestra during the Side by Side concert in February.



In other faculty news, Dr. Bryan Helsel has completed his Ph.D. studies at Kent State. Additionally, Helsel will be the guest conductor next fall for the Armstrong County Honors Choir. He was chosen as the guest accompanist for the NAFME All-East choir this spring, and next fall, he will join the adjunct faculty at Kent State University, teaching choral pedagogy to instrumental majors.

Upcoming Events

- May 7: SHS band concert. 7pm @ IHS
- May 9: 6th grade instrumental concert 6:30pm Intermediate Auditorium
- May 11: BMS FAB choir at Butler Farm Show grounds 1:30 pm
- May 14: 7th and 8th grade bands 7pm
- May 15: 9th grade band 7pm
- May 17: BMS choirs 6:30 pm at SHS
- May 17: Rock orchestra spring tour
- May 20: 5th grade instrumental concert 6:30 pm at Middle School
- May 21: 7th and 8th grade choirs 6pm
- May 21: 9th grade choir 7:30 pm
- May 21-24: 4th grade instrumental recruitment
- May 22: Intermediate Orchestra 7pm
- May 23: SHS Orchestra 7pm @ IHS
- May 28: SHS Choirs 6pm @ IHS
- August 23: Choir camp 9am-12pm at IHS, culminating in a short performance at noon combining choir and orchestra