

St. Francis Music Journal

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A New Change Begins

What's new for the 2008-2009 school year

Mr. Oestreich
SFHS Music Director

As I'm sure you've heard by now, there are two new music teachers in the St. Francis school district. We continue to have Mrs. Doty teaching at Willow Glen, but we add Mrs. Lewis at Deer Creek and me at the high school. For those of you not new to the district you'll recognize this as a change from the past few years. We no longer have the position split by band and choir, but by school so Mrs. Lewis teaches all music at Deer Creek and I teach all music at the high school. Mr. DiStefano and I are very excited about this format. We both feel that I will be able to be more focused and involved being at the high school full-time. I personally am looking forward to teaching all of the various courses offered here. Without getting into my background (you can read about that in another section) I'll just say that I have experience in each of the types of classes we have here and I'm looking forward to working with each one.

With a new director there are bound to be several

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Important Announcement...

Mr. DiStefano and the school administration approved a new order for percussion equipment. The school will be buying some much needed percussion equipment including some replacement marching percussion. I hope that you join me in extending a HUGE thank you to them for being so supportive of our music program!

A Look Inside SFHS Music

This year's demographics examined

I thought it would be a good idea to share with you this year's make-up of the SFHS music program. In the 2008-2009 school year SFHS is offering the following courses: Concert Band, Concert Choir, Chamber Choir, and Music Theory. I am teaching all of these courses as well as individual lessons with the band and choir students.

This year's concert band comes in at a little under 30 students. Interestingly, 10 of those students are percussionists. We began the year by jumping right into pep band music as we geared up for our first football game performance. We took out many of last year's best pieces and added some new ones.

Also at the beginning of the year some percussionists came to me about doing a drumline (which I heard was very popular last year). I naturally gave two thumbs up and started working with them to get ready for a Homecoming performance. I'm very proud of these guys for spending many hours working on this and for always being enthusiastic. It's been a great time! The guys and I are now looking forward to making our

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changes. The students and their families will all have to get used to how I run rehearsals, how I do grading, and even what my personality is like. Likewise, I get to know about you, what things you've been doing in the past, what you've enjoyed and what you'd like to see changed. This can be a difficult process for everyone involved, but it can also be a lot of fun. What I want you to know is that I'm very open to hearing your feedback. I've been able to look through some things in the music rooms and learn about some activities you've participated in and pieces that the ensembles have performed. I've also been fortunate to talk with several students about a wide range of topics. It's been great to sit back and learn about the history of St. Francis from the students' point of view. I look forward to talking more with the students' families and hearing their stories. Please feel free to contact me any time about anything! I've already had some excellent questions from parents and students and I encourage you to continue asking!

Councils Up and Running

As in previous years the students have voted to continue having band and choir councils where student leaders can meet and discuss things with me outside of class and then talk through things as a group. I felt that there was one needed change to the format of the councils and that was to eliminate the position of "Treasurer." Since everything financial would have to go through me anyway I thought that it would be best to just eliminate the position of Treasurer and replace it with something that could be of more use to the group. I created the "Fundraising Coordinator" who, as it sounds, will be responsible for brainstorming about fundraising opportunities as well as taking polls, collecting and disbursing forms and assisting the music directors as needed. This change was welcomed by the students and we had many volunteers to fill the roles. I'm excited to announce this year's band and choir council members. I will feature each of them throughout the upcoming issues of this newsletter.

	Band Council	Choir Council
President:	Katie Boknevitz	Theresa Beaudry
Vice President:	Rebecca Kennedy	Marisa Perez
Secretary:	Lisa Czarniak	Katrina Roxas
Fund Coord:	Jillian Lyles	Alexis Siekert

Music Department Website

One of the great things about having a new website for the school district is that it enabled me to create a new website for the music department at SFHS. I'm very excited about the website and I hope that you all will remember to check it regularly. The best thing about it is that it enables me to put the most up-to-date information at your fingertips. The Music Calendar will always have the most accurate information, so if you're curious about a concert date, what time to be at school for a pep band performance or even when the next quiz in music theory will be, you can hop onto the website and see that information within seconds. Since we have already had changes to the schedule that was in the syllabi, I'm requesting that each of you get online and see the revised information. I had to change the date for the Winter concert and I incorrectly listed the Fall choir concert as a Wednesday instead of a Tuesday. Whenever there is a change I will send a note to you, but I want you to know that you can always find the right information online. Also, an electronic copy of this newsletter (in color) will be available for you to view at any time. If you would like to always view them online and not receive the black and white paper copy you can just let me know and I'll make a note of that.

I encourage you to check out the Department page first because it explains the layout of the website. I also want to make you aware of one feature in the calendar. By default the calendar lists all dates for each course. If, however, you'd like to see the dates for just your course (e.g. just the band dates, just the music theory dates, etc.) you can use the down arrow and select the course. Don't forget that copies of the syllabi are available on each course's web page.

There are two ways to access the music department website. The first is to go from the main page through Academic Departments -> Fine Arts -> Music. The second is to go to the staff directory and select my website. Both will take you to my staff page where all the music web pages are. In case you'd like to go to my page directly I'll provide the URL below:

<http://www.sfhsmariners.org/faculty/poestre/index.cfm>

SPOTLIGHT ON...

MR. OESTREICH

This section is going to feature some biographies of SFHS music students. I figured that I would start, however, by giving you some information about my background. As you know, this is my first year teaching in the St. Francis school district. I was thrilled to be included in the interview process, because I felt that I could uniquely contribute to the new format that the administration was looking to re-instate. I earned my undergraduate degree from Carroll College in Waukesha where I studied music education. The unique part of my education was that I earned certifications in general, choral, and instrumental education. I always loved to sing and to play so I decided to study both areas. Carroll provided me with the opportunity to conduct various instrumental ensembles (such as chamber strings, Wind Symphony, etc.) as well as the opportunity to be a student director of a chamber choir. I led weekly rehearsals and conducted a variety of pieces with that group for two years. I also took on the additional roles of working for the music department, being a music librarian, planning tours for the Wind Symphony and tutoring almost all of the music courses. While I took courses for my German minor, I also tutored for those courses and worked in the language lab.

I continue as an active musician in the community. I currently play principle- and contra-bassoon in the Waukesha Area Symphonic Band and have been a substitute with the Carroll Wind Symphony, Wisconsin Wind Orchestra and Racine Symphony Orchestra. I also recently performed with the Greendale Community Theatre.

My other favorite pastimes including spending time with friends and family, playing games or cards and playing a variety of sports. I especially enjoy playing volleyball, racquetball (4-wall, of course) and badminton. I love spending time outdoors (mostly on or in the water) and try to fit in at least one camping trip every year. I have also developed an "unbeatability" in Mario Kart 64.

I'm very excited for this school year. I hope to energize the music program, continue to do much needed upgrades, fund-raise some money for good use, develop the students' musical ability to the best level possible, and have a great time working with all of you!

performance solid and adding some cool improvements for performances later this year.



Concert choir also came in at a little under 30 singers this year. We started out the year with auditions (so that I could determine voice parts, vocal color, etc.) and then we started learning repertoire for our first concert. I'm also spending some time doing activities to build music reading skills.

Chamber choir came out to 10 women this year with exactly 5 sopranos and 5 altos (who planned that for me?). We also did choral auditions and started learning music for the first concert. This group of energized singers is setting the bar high and going for some excellent singing this year. We've been building good singing skills (especially intonation) and are already starting to get past the right notes and into the details of the music.

Both Concert Choir and Chamber Choir have a concert with Deer Creek in October.

Music theory this semester turned out to be my awesome class of sophomores. All seven of them hail from the sophomore class and interestingly only one of them also doubles as a student in one of the performing ensembles. We jumped in right away with a unit on the basic materials of music. I believe that the small class size has really helped to get these students off to a great start. I'm looking forward to helping these students as they develop a solid understanding of the beginning concepts of music theory.