

North Hunterdon Music Department Alumni Newsletter

May 11th, 2026

Hello All,

Time flies! It's the (end of the) first full week in May, which means that **Spring Concerts** are among us.



It was so great to hear back from many of you after the last Alumni Newsletter, sent out on March 3rd. That newsletter is available for viewing [here](#).

[Evergreen Alumni Request: [please consider giving us money](#).]

Since the last newsletter, it has been an active two months. You can read about specific ensemble updates - along with another sampling of *Nostalgia Alumni* - below.

As a department, we had another successful [Prism Concert](#) on March 26th. This year's finale piece was *O Fortuna* from Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. The evening featured every department ensemble, along with several solo and small group acts and a faculty performance!

Less than a month after the Prism Concert, we had an overnight field trip to Orlando, Florida, the latest in a storied run of excellent trips.. This trip was open to all students currently enrolled in our "Foundational" ensembles. These groups - Concert Choir, Freshman Choir, String Orchestra and Concert Band - form the **bedrock** of our performing groups. They meet "daily" which, in the current schedule, means 3 of every 4 days. The skills that students develop in these ensembles leads directly to the success of our other groups.

The students got an opportunity to [perform in Disney Springs](#) and also participate in a recording session with Disney musicians and audio engineers. Students were able to experience Magic Kingdom, Animal Kingdom, Hollywood Studios and EPCOT. Besides the obviously popular thrill rides/roller coasters, students enjoyed lots of musical performances, parades, light shows and other such amusements from the world's leader in entertainment.

As you read about the ensembles in which you used to participate, remember the **Nostalgia challenge™** continues: If you recognize the name of the randomly selected ensemble alumni (who filled out [this form](#)), reach out to them. Or, better yet, reach out to EVERYONE you shared that time with. It's a fun and pleasant distraction from whatever you've got going on. And, if you want to throw us a couple bucks* for everyone who responds to your outreach, well, that's just icing on the cake.

Enjoy the updates!

Regards,

Charlie Hopta

Alumni Invites: Please be on the lookout for Alumni involvement opportunities throughout the ensemble updates. You will likely receive personalized email invitations for these specific events as well.

CALLING ALL ALUMNI: The North Hunterdon Music Archives (as maintained for 20+ years by **David Lockart, Perry Andrews** and especially **Vince Angeline**), can use your help! We currently have (almost) every Winter & Spring Concert Program from 2004 to the Present. If you happen to have any old programs (or recordings) from prior to this era, please reach out! nhhsmusicdept@nhvweb.net

Chamber Choir

Random Nostalgia Alumni: **Mr. Julian Prieto, NHHS Class of 2020**

Current Director: Charlie Hopta (chopta@nhvweb.net)

The audition-based Chamber Choir performed well at the Prism Concert in March. The group is preparing for their performance at Spring Concert 2 on Thursday, May 14th. Chamber Choir graduates one senior this year, and hopes to welcome several new students into the ensemble after select choir auditions on May 26th and 27th.

Concert Band (includes the former Freshman Band class):

Random Nostalgia Alumni: **Mr. Michael Patuto, NHHS Class of 2021**

Current Directors: Charlie Hopta (chopta@nhvweb.net); Casey Carroll (ccarroll@nhvweb.net)

The Concert Band received a Silver rating at the CJMEA Concert Band Festival on Tuesday March 17th, held at Bridgewater-Raritan Middle School. Many members also joined the department trip to [Disney World](#). They will be featured at Spring Concert 2 on Thursday May 14th.

Concert Choir:

Random Nostalgia Alumni: **Mrs. Mary Meo (née Ennis), NHHS Class of 1977**

Current Directors: Hannah Fonseca (hfonseca@nhvweb.net) & Charlie Hopta (chopta@nhvweb.net)

The Concert Choir is preparing for Spring Concert 2 on Thursday May 14th. The 53-member group will be accompanied not only by piano, but also by various percussion and electric bass. Many of the members were able to enjoy the department [trip to Disney World](#) April 16th to the 20th.

Freshman Choir (formerly Women's Choir):

Random Nostalgia Alumni: **Mrs. Mary Murdock (née Studer), NHHS Class of 1978**

Current Director: Hannah Fonseca (hfonseca@nhvweb.net)

The Freshman Choir had a wonderful performance set at our first Spring Concert yesterday, Thursday, May 7th. Several students were able to join our [Disney Trip](#), and we look forward to having many of these students continue on with us throughout their high school career.

Jazz Ensemble:

Random Nostalgia Alumni: **Mr. Joe Rothstein, NHHS Class of 2015**

Current Director: Casey Carroll (ccarroll@nhvweb.net)

The Jazz Ensemble received a [Silver Rating](#) at the SteelStacks High School Jazz Band Showcase in Bethlehem, PA on Sunday, March 8th. The Rhythm Section received special praise from the adjudicators. The Jazz Ensemble rounded out Spring Concert 1 just last night Thursday, May 7th, closing with a splendid rendition of *Caravan* as featured in the movie *Whiplash*. The Annual Jazz In The Park performance at Finn Road Park will be on **Saturday June 6th**.

ALUMNI INVITE: Alumni interested in joining us for our annual **Jazz In The Park** performance on Saturday June 6th should fill out [this google form](#). Any questions please reach out to Mr. Carroll.

Madrigals Choir:

(Please note: this is a select Treble choir. The Chamber Choir is what used to be called the Madrigals)

Random Nostalgia Alumni: **Noel Kromenhoek, NHHS Class of 2011**

Current Director: Heidi Peterson (hpeterson@nhvweb.net)

The audition-based Madrigals had a great performance at the Prism Concert. Their rendition of the hot new choir song, *Time* by Jennifer Lucy Cook was thoroughly enjoyable. The 'Mads' will be featured in Spring Concert 2 on Thursday May 14th.

Marching Band:

Random Nostalgia Alumni: **Ms. Deb Yocum, NHHS Class of 1986**

Current Director: Charlie Hopta (chopta@nhvweb.net) and Casey Carroll (ccarroll@nhvweb.net)

Check out the Golden Lions [NHMA Pasta Fundraiser](#) - ongoing through May 15th

The Golden Lions were last seen and heard in action at the Clinton St. Patrick's Parade on Sunday, March 15th. Registration for the 2026 Fall Marching Season ("Escape The Nightmare") [is now live!](#) As a reminder, our announcer **Mr. Ralph Fader** will share his legendary introductions for one more season, marking his 20th year!

The Golden Lions will also perform in the Flemington Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 25th, 2026 and the Hunterdon County 250th Anniversary Parade on Sunday, June 14th. We would love Alumni to join us for this endeavor.

ALUMNI INVITE: We will have interested Alumni join us for the Hunterdon County 250th Anniversary Parade on Sunday, June 14th, 2026. The parade is in Flemington and begins at 2pm. Interested Alumni should reach fill out [this google form](#)

ALUMNI INVITE - Part 2: The First Field Show Performance of the 2026 'Golden Lions' Marching Band will be on **Friday, August 21st**. To kick off the evening's festivities (including a pizza party and the aforementioned first Field Show performance), we would love to invite Alumni back to perform some pep tunes in the Stands. Much more information to come! Please reach out to Charlie Hopta (chopta@nhvweb.net) with your *tentative* interest!

Tri-M (Modern Music Masters):

Random Nostalgia Alumni: **Ms. Prerna Shankar, NHHS Class of 2022**

Current Advisor: Heidi Peterson (hpeterson@nhvweb.net)

Tri-M (Modern Music Masters) is a Music Honor Society open to all students that meet the necessary academic and courseload criteria. Applications are currently available for students, and this semester's Induction Ceremony and Recital will be on Thursday, May 28th. The students had a successful *Representing* recital (highlighting both Black History and Women's History months, respectively), on Tuesday, March 31st.

Members of Tri-M will be performing *The Star Spangled Banner* (as arranged by former Music Department Supervisor **David Lockart**) at the Somerset Patriots game on Tuesday, June 9th.

Show Choir:

Random Nostalgia Alumni: **Mr. Wes Christenson, NHHS Class of 1999**

Current Director: Hannah Fonseca (hfonseca@nhvweb.net)

The Show Choir continues the long tradition of pop music excellence in performance. They had an excellent performance at our first Spring Concert, May 7th. Two days after the Department-wide Prism Concert, they earned a [Gold rating](#) at the Roxbury Invitational Choral Contest!

Spring Play/Cabaret:

Random Nostalgia Alumni: **Ms. Tara Stollenmaier, NHHS Class of 1992**

Current Director: Heidi Peterson (hpeterson@nhvweb.net)

The Spring Cabaret performances occurred on Friday May 1st and Saturday May 2nd (matinee and evening performance on Saturday). They were well attended and well performed, featuring solos, duets, group songs and great scenes / plays. The cast included 43 students, with an additional 5 students assisting backstage and in the tech booth.

String Orchestra:

Random Nostalgia Alumni: **Ms. Margaret Ricketts, NHHS Class of 2008**

Current Director: Heidi Peterson (hpeterson@nhvweb.net)

The String Orchestra earned a Bronze Rating at the CJMEA Orchestra Festival, within a half point of earning Silver Rating. The future is bright: the group only graduates three (outstanding) seniors this school year. The ensemble performed wonderfully at both the Prism Concert and Spring Concert 1 on Thursday, May 7th.

Thespian Honor Society:

Random Nostalgia Alumni: **Mrs. Nicole Evans (née Ragno), NHHS Class of 1993**

Current Advisors: Mrs. Mary Hopta (mhopta@nhvweb.net) & Ms. Regina Cavo (rcavo@nhvweb.net)

Thespian Honor Society co-sponsored a field trip to see *The Outsiders* on Broadway, along with the Tri-M Music Honor Society, on Wednesday March 4th. Thespians will have their induction ceremony right before the **Miscast** performance on June 5th, 2026. It is free to attend Miscast and baked goods will be sold to support the program.

Wind Ensemble

Random Nostalgia Alumni: **Mrs. Anna Holl (née Smith), Class of 2008**

Current Directors: Casey Carroll (ccarroll@nhvweb.net) and Charlie Hopta (chopta@nhvweb.net)

The Wind Ensemble currently involves 20 dedicated musicians, last heard performing at the Prism Concert in March. The Wind Ensemble will perform at Spring Concert 2 on Thursday, May 14th.

ALUMNI INVITE: Interested Alumni who can attend our final two rehearsals (on Monday, May 11th and Tuesday, May 12th), and the spring concert on Thursday, May 14th, should reach out to Charlie Hopta (chopta@nhvweb.net).

Winter Musical (North Hunterdon Theatre Organization):

Random Nostalgia Alumni: Mrs. Megan Lazovick (née Burtnick), NHHS Class of 2000

Current Director: Mary Hopta (mhopta@nhvweb.net)

Congratulations to the Cast and Crew of *Shrek The Musical* on big wins during their competition trips in March! Students and staff attended Music Mountain Theatre's Inaugural Drama and Performing Arts Conference AND Bucks County Playhouse's Student Theater Festival. On both trips, students had the opportunity to perform selections from *Shrek the Musical* and attend workshops on Acting, Singing, Dance, and Technical Theater. North Hunterdon brought home numerous awards, including: Best Production, Best Spotlight Performance: Morning Person (Jianna Marina & Rat Tappers), Best Male Lead (Max Sklar), Best Dynamic Duo (Max Sklar & Jianna Marina), and several other awards recognizing our fantastic ensemble and other cast members (Kat Wolf, Savannah Wrigley, Jordan Wolf).

We also participate in several award programs throughout the year. We're waiting to hear about the Rising Star and BergenPAC awards for 2026; however, we got the excellent news that we were nominated in 8 categories for *Mamma Mia* and 1 for *67 Cinderellas* through the FOXY Awards. This runs by the calendar year unlike our other award programs we participate in, so the nominations were just released for last Spring's show.

Mamma Mia is nominated for the following: Outstanding Achievement by a Student Lighting Technician - Shayna Kantor, Kayla Blasovic, and Faith Hawkins; Outstanding Achievement in Scenic Design - Mary Hopta and Caleb Dagnall; Outstanding Achievement by a Stage Manager - Amelia Reitman and Tanmayee Vyakaranam; Outstanding Achievement by a Student Stage Crew - Grace Hawkins, Caleb Dushinka, and Katie O'Sullivan; Outstanding Achievement by a Dance Captain - Ava Spinetti; Outstanding Performance by a Featured Ensemble Actor - Established - Bo Pardo as Pepper; Outstanding Performance by a Supporting Actress - Comprehensive - Ava Spinetti as Tanya; Outstanding Achievement in Direction of a Musical - Mary Hopta

67 Cinderellas is nominated in the following: Outstanding Performance by a Supporting Actress - Established - Jianna Marina as Minerva

Thank you for reading! Feel free to reach out to any member of the music and/or theater departments with any questions or concerns.

General Email: nhhsmusicdept@nhvweb.net

Best Wishes,

North Hunterdon Regional High School Music Department

&

The North Hunterdon Music Association

