

March 2021

The Fine Arts Bulletin

Newsletter of the Fine Arts Boosters
of Bishop O'Connell High School



Choral Director Kyra Stahr 's Hard Work Pays Off



Kyra Stahr may have only been teaching at O'Connell since 2018, but her talent, passion and commitment have made an indelible impression on her students. A lifelong singer, she hails from a family with an exceptional musical pedigree. Both of her

parents are professional musicians, and her sister is currently pursuing her Doctorate of Musical Arts at the University of North Texas.

This past year of coronavirus lockdown has placed all educators under tremendous stress, but those teaching performing arts face special challenges. Mrs. Stahr hopes that her students know that the past year has been difficult for everyone and that it is okay to feel that! She has seen her students struggle and grow a great deal. She knows they are very resilient and her hope is that students take away from this experience the importance of their mental health and continue to find healthy ways to deal with the stress and anxiety everyone is facing.

Over this past year teachers have been forced to transition to digital instruction, and some have become de facto multimedia producers.

Mrs. Stahr has put together several virtual choirs, which she says represent "an almost indescribable amount of work." When asked what this entails, she replied:

"You have to make the practice tracks for students to listen to, rehearse the music, and then use an audio/video engineering program to put everything together. Every student submits a video of themselves performing with headphones on, so I can just hear their voice, and then I layer them all together. For every submission, the audio and video are separated and then you have to line up the exact seconds with the next student's submission. The computer creates a copy each time you add another voice, so the program uses a lot of RAM. I plan the repertoire for the fall semester before school starts and during winter break for second semester. The first semester was experimental because I was not sure how many videos I would be able to produce. It is challenging seeing the students in a limited capacity this year and each video took me hours to make. I have a better computer now and a new approach to making the videos for second semester so I am hoping it will be less time consuming. My software is Adobe Premiere Pro. Students share their videos with me via Google Drive and then I do all of the engineering myself."

"I will be extremely happy when we are able to have regular concerts again!"

VMEA Senior Honors Choir Inductees

In January seniors Sade Jackson, Katie Stansel and John Tuason were inducted into the Virginia Music Educators Association Senior Honors Choir.

We asked them to tell us about their audition experience.



**Sade
Jackson**

I will say that being a part of the senior choir was a lot of fun. There were over 100 of us and we learned two amazing songs- *Light, My Light* and *Geistliches Lied*.

The audition process was a lot of rehearsal with my wonderful vocal coach Ms. Packard. The person in charge of the event was a man named Joe Eveler, and we also had a guest speaker who happened to be the composer of one of the songs we sang. I got to learn different techniques and exercises for my voice.

The biggest takeaway I will get from this experience is that there are so many people who share a love of music just like I do and I think it's important to celebrate that.



**Katie
Stansel**

Auditioning for virtual choirs has been quite different. The pressure to perform for a person is nonexistent because you are singing on screen.

Unfortunately that made it difficult to feel connected to other singers and clinicians. Not being able to hear their voices or create that incredible choir sound was really hard and very isolating. I miss signing with people so much!

Two things I've learned: perfecting the art of recording yourself well is imperative for a quality performance.

And adaptability is crucial! Being patient with people, your situation, and yourself is a very important skill I'm working on and it was essential for this event as well.



**John
Tuason**

For the audition I had to do a lot of work to make sure I could do the best I could. The audition process was online this year. This worked out well for me and it was pretty seamless.

The guest clinician was Christopher Aspaas and he actually composed one of the pieces we sang (*Light, My Light*). He teaches at Texas Christian University.

I learned so many new techniques to help me with my singing, but the biggest takeaway, for me, was learning to look at the tiny details in pieces of music and appreciating them more than I had before.

Andriko Bilaniuk '22 Memorial Scholarship Concert

Please join the Bishop O'Connell High School community in celebrating the life and legacy of **Andriko Bilaniuk '22**, who went home to the Lord on July 12, 2020 after a courageous battle with embryonal rhabdomyosarcoma.

A concert in Andriko's honor will be held on Friday, March 26, 2021.



Credit: Matt Mendelsohn

Throughout his life, and especially during his challenging years in cancer treatment, Andriko found great strength and comfort pursuing his academic and musical interests. Andriko had an intrinsic love for learning, particularly philosophy, history and theology. He was also a gifted violinist who began his training at five years old. For those who knew this incredible young man, Andriko will always be remembered for his quiet, humble demeanor, thoughtful introspection, passion for the violin, and his insatiable desire to learn and share ideas with others.

This two-part concert will feature videos from current and former students, selections by individuals from some of the world's greatest orchestras, and performances showcasing the remarkable talent of internationally renowned soloists. At the conclusion of the virtual component, Mr. LaCrosse, the Performing Arts Department Chair and Director of Strings at Bishop O'Connell, will perform live all six of the Bach cello suites on the viola.

For more information about the concert and scholarship, please visit bishopoconnell.org/forAndriko Contact: TLacrosse@bishopoconnell.org

Through the Lens



Photography by senior Huy Hoang, influenced by Japanese photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto.

Special thanks to the DJO Blue Comet Jazz Band for their wonderful contribution to the gala!

Watch it again here:

<https://tinyurl.com/xt72lx63>



Coming Up

March 3: FAB general meeting 7pm

March 26: Benefit Concert for Andriko Bilaniuk '22 Memorial Scholarship

April 7: FAB general meeting 7pm

April 16: Deadline for Honors O'Connell Choir auditions

Knights of Hope Cabaret and two virtual choir videos to be released later in the spring.

Have You Heard?

Our spring 2022 FA trip will be to Orlando! More details to come.



Did You Know?

The COVID-19 lockdown has given us nothing if not time. Many people are taking advantage of this *lengthy* period to learn new skills and take up hobbies.

What have our arts teachers picked up during the 'Rona?

Ron Isaacson: **Gourmet cooking**

Kyra Stahr: **Parenting two new cats**

Gretchen Midgley: **Experimenting with new recipes**

Tim LaCrosse: **Smoking meats!**

Kelsey Walsh: **Puzzle solving**

Trent Jones: **Spending more time on acrylic painting**

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Attend our meetings:

First Wednesday of each month at 7pm.
for info email:

fineartsboosters@bishopoconnell.org

Buy a membership:

<https://www.bishopoconnell.org/the-arts/fine-arts-boosters/dues>

Congrats!



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Joey West

Luke Sullivan

Gavin Salinas

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