



## Upper School Parents' Association Meeting Minutes February 5, 2019

Upper School Parents' Association Executive Committee Members Present:

- Leah Goldberg
- Libby Albright

### Featured speakers:

**Kelli Edwards - Performing Arts Department Chair**

**Adrian Anantawan - Music Department Chair**

- President's Welcome - Leah Goldberg  
Meeting was called to order at 7:03 P.M.

### I. Kelli Edwards - Performing Arts Department Chair

Kelli is new this year to the position of Department Chair. She has been at Milton for 17 years running the dance program and teaching in the performing arts department. Kelli discussed how the performing arts department, similar to athletics, is unique at Milton in that it offers both a curricular and co-curricular program.

- **Curricular offerings** involve drama, dance, oral interpretation, and theatre design. There are also various dance electives as well as an improvisation class.
- **Co-curricular opportunities** include nine shows each year, two of which are dance concerts.
  - 1) The winter dance concert is a fully produced program put on by a diverse group of approximately 70-75 students with all levels of dance experience. Many dances are choreographed by students which provides opportunities for creative expression and leadership.
  - 2) The spring dance concert is more informal, held in Wigg, and provides additional opportunities to choreograph, dance, and experiment in these areas.
  - 3) The nine shows each year consist of three per season. Fall of 2018 shows included: *The Addams Family* (a musical), *The Freshman Follies* (a Freshman-only performance), and *Antigone* (a play). Winter 2019 shows are *The Children's Hour* (play), student directed one-act plays, and the winter dance concert. Spring 2019 performances will include a play *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night*, a sketch comedy show called *Wicked Sketchy*, and the spring dance concert. There is only one musical each year which takes place either in the Fall or the Spring.

## Arts Night

On Friday, April 26th visual arts, performing arts and music will combine for an evening of creativity and many events. The orchestra concert will take place followed by additional short performances in Kellner in dance, drama, spoken word, music, and singing. The evening ends with *Improv Night* (improvisational theatre). The creative writing class collaborates with the drama class by writing one minute plays which are then performed. Visual arts will be represented through an installation and displayed art pieces throughout Kellner.

Arts Night, like most of the arts events on campus, is open to the entire Milton community. In general, students and families should check the Milton website, calendar, and newsletters (Centre Connection) for specifics on all arts events. Ticketing is done through Eventbrite so tickets can be accessed on-line at no charge. Efforts will continue to ensure that the Eventbrite link is on the website, and to effectively get information out about all events on campus.

## Q & A

**Kelli answered a question about how much students with a strong interest in the arts can realistically do while satisfying other course requirements.** For students who want to “dive deep” they can take advantage of core coursework and electives (including, perhaps, an independent study). In addition, they have access to a large variety of co-curricular opportunities. Milton requires a full year of art to graduate, and the hope is that if this is done in the Class III year the opportunity still exists for additional electives in the final 2 years.

## II. Adrian Anantawan - Music Department Chair

The music department is working to increase accessibility within the instrumental music program and broaden offerings at the Class IV level. Currently for first year students there is Glee Club, General Music, the orchestra and jazz programs (experience required), and Fundamentals of Guitar. There is a focus on the Class IV year as a great time to experiment and see what settles with the students so that future classes can be created.

A broader goal is to expand programming and scope within K-12, considering the sequence from lower to middle to upper school.

### **Recent developments include:**

- Reintroduction of the middle school jazz program.
- Enhancement of both middle school and Class IV General Music by expanding the interface with technology.
- Introduction of a guitar class for Class IV.

### **Future goals include:**

- Incorporation of world music and perhaps R&B modules.
- Combine concerts in order to better collaborate and build community.
- Work across divisions and increase K-12 music celebrations.
- Host an instrument fair so students can try out new instruments, and consider other ways to engage with music at Milton.

Regarding traditional offerings the music department aims to deepen the experiences for students:

- A new aspect being introduced to the multi-year, full credit music package is a **citizen artist** component. Students will have the support of Milton for a 2-3 year community engagement project,

and the ability to interface with a music advisor (similar to the Senior Project model). The focus is on the identity of music as an idea of service.

- The existing South Africa trip for the jazz program continues to build community through engagement with students and local communities, giving concerts, and providing instrument donations.
- An analogous international relationship is currently being developed for the orchestra students. These trips emphasize music as one's "passport" to be able to communicate with different cultures.

The music department is generally trying to broaden **community engagement**:

- Invite speakers doing community work in music to come to Milton, i.e. Shelter Music Boston, in order to galvanize more students to create service opportunities for themselves.
- Enable students to pursue community initiatives away from campus by providing school support and time. An example of this is the Vibe program created by Class I student, Kat Stephan.

## Q & A

**Adrian responded to an inquiry about chamber orchestra.** It is a bit more work for a 1/2 course as it meets three times per week instead of two. While it is historically an auditioned group, students are often assessed for readiness during their Class IV orchestra year OR can submit a video if they are new in Class III. Acceptance into the chamber orchestra is not based solely on talent, but a willingness to practice and contribute to the group. Discussions and preparations for entering this program in the Fall begin in late April of the prior school year.

**A parent asked about performance opportunities for the middle school jazz group, and if they might do a concert with upper school jazz.** Adrian directed her to Bob Sinicrope, who had opportunities to showcase middle school students at the beginning of the year, for information on future plans. Jazz concerts tend to start earlier in the year and Bob continues to build the middle school culture. A broader department goal is to find performance opportunities between divisions, such as giving a performance at the Lower School each year.

**A question was asked about opportunities for student music at school theatre productions.** Earlier this year a string quintet played at *The Freshman Follies*, and a composing student put together a piece of music for the dance concert. There are many avenues for students to cross-collaborate, and for music to fit into any discipline.

**Better outreach to the community about drama and musical performances** is needed, and efforts continue within both departments to improve communication about events in the arts. Leah Goldberg offered the help of the Parents' Association in posting information or spreading the word when needed.

## III. Information, Reports and Announcements - USPA Volunteers

1. Next Donut Day - February 14th
2. Faculty and Staff Appreciation Day - February 13th
  - Nicole Lippa, Chair.
  - Donations are very strong for raffle items.
  - Set-up and decorations - February 12th.

3. Panel Event - February 26th in Straus
  - 7-8 p.m. social hour.
  - 8-9 p.m. panel discussion with David Ball, Indu Singh, and Todd Bland. Moderated by Rod Skinner.
  
4. Next USPA Meeting: Monday, March 4th at 8:15 a.m.
  - featuring Caroline Sabin, English Department Chair and Rob McGuirk, History Department Chair.

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.**