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A CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL SING-A-LONG



JOY TO THE WORLD, the Lord is come;

Let earth receive her King,
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heaven and nature sing.

DECK THE HALLS with boughs of holly,

Fa la la la la la la la.
'Tis the season to be jolly,
Fa la la la la la la la.
Don we now our gay apparel
Fa la la la la la la la.
Toll the ancient yuletide carol
Fa la la la la la la la.

GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN;

Let nothing you dismay.
Remember, Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day
To save us all from Satan's pow'r when we were gone astray.
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy.

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING,

"Glory to the newborn King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King."

A CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL SING-A-LONG



SILENT NIGHT, holy night,

All is calm, all is bright
 'round yon Virgin Mother and Child.
 Holy infant so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace
 Sleep in heavenly peace.

DASHING THROUGH THE SNOW in a one-horse open sleigh,

O'er the fields we go, laughing all the way: "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Bells on bobtail ring,
 Making spirits bright;
 What fun it is to ride and sing a sleighing song tonight.
 Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way;
 Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh, hey!
 Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way;
 Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh.
 Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way;
 Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh, hey!
 Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way;
 Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one-----horse----o---pen---sleigh!!!

GLORY TO GOD; Glory in the highest!

Oh, come let us adore Him.
 Oh, come let us adore Him.
 Oh, come let us adore Him,
 Christ the Lord.

Conductor's Corner:

Welcome! I am delighted to see you all here after what has been far too long!! You are about to hear a great variety of music that will start your holiday season off on a happy note.

We start our concert with the Christmas Eve Suite which are excerpts from Rimsky-Korsakov's rarely heard opera: Christmas Eve. The opera takes place in a small village in Ukraine and shows his masterful orchestration which showcases many members of our symphony. The Polonaise is the most well-known melody from the suite. This selection will comprise the first half of the concert this evening but never fear, the second half is power packed with fabulous music as well.

The second half opens with A Chanukah Overture (yes, the arranger chose this spelling). It highlights the many wonderful traditional Jewish folk tunes which includes: Maoz Tzur, originally written as a prayer to be recited or sung during the lighting of the Hanukkah candles. Rock of My Security was composed in the 1970's and is familiar within the Orthodox Jewish community.

Al HaNisim is a popular Chassidic melody from the early 1970's and is sung to the words of the opening verse of a prayer that recounts the events of Hanukkah. I Have a Little Dreidel, a children's song about the famous dreidel, or spinning top. The last of the folk tunes in this overture is S'vivon, another children's song about the dreidel. These melodies are beautifully orchestrated by New York composer and arranger, Robert Wendel.

Next, it is with great pleasure that the orchestra welcomes Debbie Pappas Sham, a popular and well-known actor and singer. I first met Debbie at MusicalFare, where we were performing in a production of Song and Dance by Andrew Lloyd Webber. It is a huge tour de force for the only singer in the cast and Debbie was brilliant. Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote the solo cello part for his brother Julian Lloyd Webber based on the music of Paganini. Debbie will put you in the holiday mood with two favorites, Oh Holy Night and We Need a Little Christmas from the beloved musical, Mame, which starred the marvelous Angela Lansbury in the original Broadway production.

Then the traditional Jingle Bells!!!! We invite the young people from the audience to come up to the front and play the bells with the orchestra. This is a good photo op!!

Frederick Delius' Sleigh Ride is also known as Winter Night. It is one of short pieces written for the seasons. Delius wrote this when he was in his 20's.

For all the ballerinas in the audience, we next present to you two selections from the ever-popular holiday ballet, Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker.

Debbie returns to the stage to sing a beautiful rendition of Irving Berlin's White Christmas.

We end our program with Debbie, all of you, and the orchestra in a holiday sing-along.

I and the Amherst Symphony wish you a safe, healthy, and wonderful holiday season. We look forward to seeing you at our February Family Concert when we will be joined by Buffalo Philharmonic Timpanist, Matthew Bassett, who will perform an exciting and very interesting timpani concerto with the orchestra.

Cheers!!!

Bryan Eckenrode



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Christmas Eve Suite (1903)

Nikolia Rimsky-Korsakov

1. Act I, Tableau I: Christmas Eve at Dykanka
2. Act III, Tableau VI: The Ethereal Space
 1. Ballet of the Stars
 - a. Mazurka
 - b. Procession of the Comets
 - c. Khorovod
 - d. Czardas and the Rain of Shooting Stars
 2. The Diabolical Carol
3. Act III, Tableau VII: Polonaise
4. Act III, Tableau VIII: The Return of Vakula
 1. Daybreak
 2. The Procession of Ovsen and Kolyada

Intermission

A Chanukah Overture

Dana Friedman &
Robert Wendel

Oh Holy Night

Adolphe Adams

We Need a Little Christmas
From “Mame”

Jerry Herman

Debbie Pappas Sham, Guest Vocalist

Jingle Bells

James Lord Pierpont

Sleigh Ride

Frederick Delius

Waltz of the Flowers

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Trepak

From “The Nutcracker”

White Christmas

Irving Berlin

Arr. Robert Russell Bennett

Debbie Pappas Sham, Guest Vocalist

A Christmas Festival

Leroy Anderson

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 Peg Beyer
 Reggie Guo
 Jennifer Sandner
 Jonathan Steffen
 Joseph Tronolone
 Anne Marie Will
 Ezra Zubrow

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 Brian DeJesus
 Melissa Bender
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 Noah Stierheim
 Vincent Tutino

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August Grillo, Principal
 Michelle Russ
 Eileen Brusino

Piccolo:

Eileen Brusino

Oboes:

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 Erin Rush

English Horn:

Laura Beuchi

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 Richard Nunemaker

Bassoon:

Susan Tichy, Principal
 Linda Mucyn
 Alex Weber

Contrabassoon:

Linda Mucyn

French Horns:

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 Principal
 Lee Brusino
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 Alex Mathes
 Isaac Newman

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 Ali Jeffords
 Al Schlisserman

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Bob King, Principal
 Peter Blackwell

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 Thomas Stroth
 Andrew Ziemba

Harp:

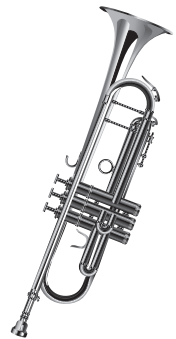
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BRYAN ECKENRODE, Conductor/Cellist

Conductor/cellist, Bryan Eckenrode, graduated cum laude from SUNY at Stony Brook and holds a Master of Music degree from SUNY at Buffalo.

Eckenrode is conductor and music director of the Warren Philharmonic

Orchestra in Pennsylvania and the Chautauqua Regional Youth Symphony, the Prelude Strings Orchestra, and the Young Artists' Orchestra of Jamestown. He is also conductor of the Amherst Symphony. He has been guest conductor with the Western New York Chamber Orchestra. He was guest conductor of the Genesee Symphony and the Cheektowaga Symphony. He was also conductor of the Zone 1 Area All State Orchestra. Eckenrode served as the program coordinator for Artpark's Music in the Woods series.

He is currently principal cello with the Western New York Chamber Orchestra and has performed with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, the Erie Philharmonic, and with Ars Nova.

He is principal cello with the Bach and Beyond Festival and records with the International Baroque Soloists. He was principal cellist with the British Columbia (Canada) Mozart Festival Orchestra and the Southern Tier Symphony. He is a member of the Lexington String Quartet, and the chamber groups Voci d'Amore and Camerata.

He can be heard on the CDs of many artists, including Ani DiFranco, 10,000 Maniacs, Sixpence None the Richer, Seven Day Faith, Them Jazzbeards, John and Mary, and Alison Pipitone: not only as a cellist, but as a bagpiper and flutist. He has recorded the sound tracks of film scores for several silent movies being distributed on commercial DVD by the Turner Broadcasting Network. He has performed twice at Lincoln Center in New York and recorded the sound track for the PBS special – The Siege of Fort Erie – A Glorious Battle. He was bagpipe soloist with the Buffalo Philharmonic for their successful Memorial Day Pops Concerts. He has been principal cellist with The Most Arts Festival held at Alfred University. He was recently inducted into the Sigma Alpha Iota for his distinguished contribution to the arts.

Eckenrode is an adjunct professor at Canisius College, Buffalo State College, Jamestown Community College, and director of the string department at Villa Maria College. Eckenrode is on the music faculty at the renowned Nichols School in Buffalo. He is married to the internationally acclaimed soprano, Cristen Gregory.

Guest Artist: Debbie Pappas Sham, Singer Musical Theatre



A Buffalo News review, August 2021, described Debbie Pappas in the one woman show of MusicalFare's LOVE LINDA: THE LIFE OF MRS. COLE PORTER, directed by her husband, Norman Sham (her favorite partner on and off stage) as "a charismatic performer with a lush singing voice and irresistible stage presence."

Debbie has been a local actress on Buffalo's stages for 38 years, performing in many productions at MusicalFare Theatre (Rosemary in TENDERLY; THE ROSEMARY CLOONEY MUSICAL) and her favorite roles have been featured on area stages of Artpark (Mrs. Banks in MARY POPPINS), Kavinoky Theatre (Donna in MOMMA MIA), the Irish Classical Theatre (Greta in THE DEAD) and Second generation Theatre (Margaret in LIGHT IN THE PIAZZA). Debbie's most thrilling real-life role is to be grandmother to Jules.

A three time recipient of the WNY Artvoice "Arties" Theatre Awards which are considered Western New York's Tony Awards, they began in 1991 and are held each year to celebrate local theatre.

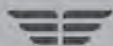
We look forward to Debbie performing a selection of holiday songs for us on the Amherst Symphony stage, including "Oh Holy Night" and "White Christmas" and joining with the audience in our tradition carol sing-a-long.

Debbie Pappas Sham is not new to the ASO stage. Did you attend her performance as our Guest Artist at the Sunday, April 7, 2019 concert, MUSICAL THEATRE & MORE WITH RANDALL KRAMER & FRIENDS, Randall Kramer, Conductor?



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Pre-Concert Event: Smallwood String Students



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The ASO is pleased to announce our 2022-2023 Outreach School, Smallwood Drive Elementary (grades K-5) within the Amherst School District. The mission of this collaboration is to increase our community's participation in, and appreciation for the arts by encouraging students and their families to present and attend community orchestra performances. Smallwood Drive Principal, Mr. Richard Crozier, is very excited about the collaboration with the Amherst Symphony Orchestra and thrilled to showcase his students.

Our pre-concert today is presented by Smallwood String Students. Thank you to Orchestra Director Ms. Mary Kate Ells for preparing her students for this special program.

The concert program cover was designed by Smallwood Elementary Tazkia Gias. The design really captures the mood of today's "Sing!, Sing!, Sing!" theme, as well as the overall mood of the Holiday Season. Thank you to Smallwood's art teacher Ms. Anna LoTempio for working with her students on this special project.

In January, Symphony members will present a "Meet the Orchestra" assembly at Smallwood Elementary. This assembly is in preparation for our February 4th Family Concert.

Enjoy "Sing!, Sing!, Sing!"

Sandra Paddock,
Outreach School Program Coordinator

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PROGRAM NOTES

by Claudia Staines

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
1844-1908

Christmas Eve

Based on a short story of the same name, Rimsky-Korsakov wrote the music and libretto for "Christmas Eve" between 1894 and 1895. It debuted in Russian in December 1895, and in England in 1898.

The story had been used at least three other times for operas, including "Vakula the Smith" by Tchaikovsky in 1974. While some critics have said that the composer wanted to re-create the atmosphere of a folk-tale, one man, Gerald Abraham, suggested that there was much "...humanity and humor... as well as atmospheric strength..." in this opera.

Set in the 18th century in the Ukrainian village of Dikanka, the opera tells the story of a widow named Solokha who agrees to help the Devil steal the moon. The Devil creates a vicious snowstorm to help Solokha ride up in the sky to affect her robbery but also to prevent her son Vakula from seeing his beloved, Okasana. The Devil, you see, is peeved with Vakula over an icon the young man painted mocking the Devil. Solokha makes it back to her home to discover that The Devil is getting cozy in front of her fireplace, when the mayor, the priest and Oksana's father Chub arrive one after the other to seduce her. Each of the four dive into waiting sacks to hide from each other but before they can jump out to woo the lady, her son hauls the sacks off to his smithy.

In Act 3, Vakula asks a friend to help him deal with both Oksana and the trouble the Devil has given him. Patsyuk, his friend, advises Vakula that in order to obtain the help of the devil, he must go to the devil. Vakula puts down his sack, and the devil jumps out and tries to get his soul in exchange for Oksana. Vakula, however, grabs him by his neck, and climbs on his back. He forces the devil to fly him to St. Petersburg. The Devil puts down Vakula in the Court of the Tsaritsa, who is amused by the young man and she agrees to give him her boots, which had been requested by Oksana as a prelude to her agreeing to reunite with Vakula.

By now, it is Christmas Day, and the villagers of Dikanka believe Vakula is dead. However, his triumphant return, with the boots, leads to the engagement of Oksana and Vakula, and another Merry Christmas.



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A Chanukah Overture**Dana Friedman 1964 -
Robert Wendel 1951 -**

Although many people conflate Christmas and Chanukah, in great part because both are celebrated at the same time of the year, there are significant differences in the two celebrations.

Imagine your town being taken over by people telling you that you can't practice your faith anymore, that are trying to take away your identity. That's what was happening to the Jewish people when a huge army of Syrian-Greeks invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the Holy Temple. But rather than accept this situation, a tiny army of Jews, lead by Judah the Maccabee, fought back and reclaimed not just the Holy Temple, but the entire city. Of course, the Jews wanted to restore the Temple and needed light by which to work. The purified oil used for the lamps was in very short supply, just enough in fact for one night. Yet, miraculously, the menorah burned for eight nights, long enough to purify enough oil to keep the lights burning.

The concert overture we will enjoy this afternoon is based on several well-known Chanukah songs. According to the notes and research done by Dana Friedman for this overture, the melody for "Maoz T'zur" is a folk song from about 100 years old and has been put to the prayer sung or recited as Chanukah candles are lit. "Rock of My Security" is about half that age, dating back to the 1970s, attributed to Rabbi Seymour Rockoff. The melody for "Al HaNisim" is also from that time period, although it is sung to words much older, those of a prayer that recounts the miracle of Chanukah. The other two components of the overture are songs for children, although the entire family cannot help but be drawn into "I Have Little Dreidel", an American tune from the 1950s.

As the world can learn from the Chanukah candles, the way to fight darkness is not by maintaining the same amount of light we had in the past, but by always increasing the light.

O Holy Night**Adolphe Charles Adam, composer 1803 - 1856
Placide Cappeau, French poem 1808 - 1877
John Sullivan Dwight, English lyrics 1813 - 1893**

In the small town of Roquemaure in France, the church organ at the local church had just recently been renovated. To celebrate the glorious 'new' sounds, and to mark the fast-approaching Advent and Christmas season, the parish priest wanted a new Christmas poem. He asked Placide Cappeau, a wine merchant and native of Roquemaure, and also a poet, to take on the task. Cappeau, who had never before shown any interest in things ecclesiastical, agreed! His poem, "Minuit chrétiens" - "Midnight Christians" - reflects on the awe and humility of the birth of Jesus.

Shortly after, Adolphe Adam, who was a noted composer and music critic, put the words to music he composed specifically for the poem. The carol, still known as "Minuit chrétiens", was debuted by opera singer Emily Laury, at the church in Roquemaure in 1847. In 1869, Unitarian minister and music teacher, John Dwight wrote the English lyrics with which we are most familiar today. However, in French-language churches, the original "Minuit chrétiens" is sung to start the Midnight Mass of Christmas Eve.

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We Need a Little Christmas

Jerry Herman 1931 - 2019

The theatre world lost a legend last month, when Dame Angela Lansbury died. Although most people will remember her best for “Murder She Wrote” on television, Dame Angela was a huge Broadway star over decades. As the lead in “Mame”, she delighted audiences for months, in New York and in the first road company.

Mame Dennis is an eccentric Bohemian living life on her terms in New York in the 1920s, when she is most unexpectedly left in charge of her late brother’s 10-year old son, Patrick. But rather than do the expected thing as his guardian, she introduces him to her fascinating coterie of friends and their foibles, instilling in young Patrick her favorite credo, “Life is a banquet, and most poor suckers are starving to death.”

In the musical, “We Need a Little Christmas” is performed after the Great Stock Market Crash has wiped out Mame’s fortune. She is determined to try to make a go of things, and decides that she and Patrick, and her two household servants, need to cheer themselves up with, well, a little Christmas!

Jingle Bells

James Lord Pierpont 1822 - 1893

It remains an unsettled question where and when James Lord Pierpont originally composed this quintessential holiday song. The city of Medford Massachusetts claims it was written at the Simpson Tavern in 1850, while the City of Savannah Georgia says he wrote it for the church where he was an organist, sometime later in the 1850s. Given that it was often sung at parties, a drinking song with tinkling ice in glasses used to simulate bells, perhaps the tavern story is the right one.

As to when, well ‘Jingle Bells’ was copyrighted in 1859, but has long since passed into public domain. And into our hearts, as a signal that the winter holiday season has arrived, ready to be celebrated and enjoy.

Sleigh Ride (“Winter Night”)

Frederick (né Fritz) Theodore Albert Delius 1862 - 1934

This is not the version of “Sleigh Ride” you might be expecting, but we’re quite sure you will enjoy this charming piece nevertheless.

‘Sleigh Ride’ is the second number of Three Small Tone Poems for orchestra written between 1888-90, but not performed until November 1946. The other two pieces are ‘Summer Evening’ and ‘Spring Morning’ with a fair bit of evidence to indicate that there was, in fact, a composition to celebrate autumn, although it has been lost to posterity.

It is possible that Delius’ Sleigh Ride was originally a piano work, *Norwegische Schlittenfahrt* (Norwegian Sleigh Ride), but if that’s true, Mr Delius seems to have had this one lost as well! Philip Threlfall states that the piece was first performed in Leipzig on Christmas Eve 1887. Edvard Grieg, Johan Halvorsen and Christian Sinding were amongst the guests at a party at which, according to a letter written by Grieg to Frants Beyer “After the meal we were, without exception, all plastered, but the program had to be adhered to and it offered music, music and still more music! What a Christmas Eve! ... Mr Delius played a piano piece which he calls ‘*Norwegische Schlittenfahrt*’ with great talent.” So wrap your rugs around your legs closely and enjoy this sliding-ride along a country lane on a cold and frosty winter’s night.

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Waltz of the Flowers Trepak from "The Nutcracker"

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky 1840 - 1893

The story of The Nutcracker is loosely based on the E.T.A. Hoffmann fantasy story The Nutcracker and the Mouse King, about a girl who befriends a nutcracker that comes to life on Christmas Eve and wages a battle against the evil Mouse King. Tchaikovsky began work in February 1891, continuing his efforts while on an American tour later that year for the opening of Carnegie Hall. Heading home, the composer heard a new instrument in Paris — the celesta. He believed the bell-like tone would be perfect for the Sugar Plum Fairy music, and asked his publisher to acquire a celesta for the first performance of The Nutcracker.

Selections from The Nutcracker were first performed as an orchestral suite in March 1892, part of a double-bill as it were with the one-act opera "Iolanta". In a letter Tchaikovsky wrote shortly after the performance, he said the "...opera gave pleasure but the ballet not really; and as a matter of fact, in spite of all the sumptuousness, it did turn out to be rather boring."

This was the third and last of the ballets Tchaikovsky wrote, and he did not live to see. Which is too bad because The Nutcracker has become the most frequently performed of all ballets and has served as an introduction to classical music for many young people.

White Christmas

Irving Berlin 1888 - 1989

Born in Imperial Russia, Israel Isidore Baline arrived in the United States in 1893, and while his family was rather poor, he always said he didn't grasp how poor because that was the only life his family had ever known. Berlin's first song published was called "Marie from Sunny Italy" for which he received 33 cents for the publishing rights. His first hit came in 1911 with "Alexander's Ragtime Band". Over the course of a 60-year career, Berlin wrote more than 1,500 songs, as well as the scores for 19 Broadway shows and 18 Hollywood films. It was in one of those films, "Holiday Inn", when Bing Crosby first introduced audiences to "White Christmas".

The simple lyrics, connecting childhood and home to the sweetness of Christmas, had particular resonance for Americans in the winter of 1942 as millions of G.I.s were facing their first Christmas separated from their families. But for Berlin and his wife, who were both Jewish and thus did not celebrate Christmas, there was another kind of sadness to the December 25th date. In 1928, their three-week-old son died on Christmas, and they made it a point to visit his grave every year on the date. Christmas has so many meanings, but this song seems to show it's mostly about family and belonging.

A Christmas Festival

LeRoy Anderson 1908 - 1975

Audiences will recognize the name LeRoy Anderson because of his seasonal favorite "Sleigh Ride", but the composer has a rich repertoire of music which has often been described as "accessible". Certainly, Anderson was a favored composer of Arthur Fiedler, legendary conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra, who was very keen to have a large selection of what is often called 'light classical music' or, and perhaps more accurately, 'classical pops'.

In an interview with PBS early in the 1960s, Anderson said that he had been asked by Fiedler to do a concert overture for recording by the Boston Pops.

A Christmas Festival was completed June 1950 and was first recorded just a few days later. In his interview with Dick Bertel, Anderson explained that "...selected the ones that were most popular and best known, and then...tried to give instrumental treatment to them... I took the themes and built you might say a concert overture around the Christmas songs. Not just carols..." In fact, the Festival ends with "Jingle Bells" which is a secular song celebrating the joy and gaiety of the Christmas spirit.

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Teachers will have list of requirements and application forms.

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Information regarding the 2023 Music Scholarship sponsored by FASO (Friends of the Amherst Symphony Orchestra) and the Williamsville Rotary will once again be extended to all Town of Amherst High Schools, public and private. The scholarship is awarded to a senior who is planning to go on to be a music major. The award is given to a senior graduating from schools in the Town of Amherst or a senior who is related to a member of the Amherst Symphony. Information has been sent to the schools and symphony members about the requirements and location of auditions. This will be our 38th year of scholarships.

Sharron Jo Rich
Scholarship Chairperson

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

People might tell you they are “Happy as a clam”. I actually never thought of a clam as being particularly happy, so though the saying is mildly humorous, it always puzzled me. Turns out the entire expression is, “As happy as a clam at high tide”, so those little crustaceans can happily float back out to sea. For many of us, it is challenging to be happy clams this time of year because no high tide comes to buoy and raise us above life’s personal circumstances.



I have found music to be the best pill to fight the blues and it is wonderful to see all of you here to take your palliative dose of music. But when you leave, keep the music going. I am fortunate to have a family heirloom. It is a 1956 Wurlitzer jukebox which has been in the family since it was new. I have it stocked with all my favorite tunes – A17, “Twist and Shout”, C9 – “Twilight Time” and so on. Sometimes it is a great effort to simply press the buttons, but I am always glad I did.



You may not have a jukebox, but in this age of technology, there are many ways to access your music choices. Make a list, check it twice. You’re gonna find out that you feel quite nice.

Also consider getting a dog from rescue. I don’t know why dogs love us so much, but they can be a huge sustaining comfort. Now, if I could get my greyhound to howl, “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” by Bobbie McFerrin, I would be one happy clam at high tide.

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