

NRC Music News

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Music Committee, Niskayuna, New York*

Spring 2019

Young NRC Musicians



Young musicians at Niskayuna Reformed Church will tell you they like “the friends we can make”, “the music that we sing,” and “performing in front of everyone” at NRC. For many years children’s choirs have been singing God’s praises at the church.

Norma Lovell, who started singing as a child in the 1940’s, says “we have been blessed with a lot of good directors and musicians.” Later, as she herself was involved with directing the Youth Choir in the 80’s, she says “we just wanted kids to feel good about themselves.” Parent, Kathy Drapeau, likes how the directors explain what the songs are about, making choir like a “Sunday School with music.”

The season for both the Cherub Choir, starting at age 4, and Youth Choir, starting at 3rd grade, runs September to June. Cherubs, directed by Suzanne Mason accompanied by Nancy Tellier and the Youth Choir, directed by Joyce

Anderson accompanied by Rebecca Benjamin, rehearse after church starting at 10:45..

All children ages 4 and up are welcome and can join at any time. No prior musical training is required.



While the two groups typically sing at separate services, they will come together this Mother’s Day with some guest voices to sing the anthem, “Love is a Special Thing,” by Janie Oliver. Join us for the Mother’s Day service on Sunday, May 12, 2019 at 9:30 am to hear and see them sing. Then you will know why kids at NRC say “singing is fun!”

Meet the Members

Two unsung musicians behind the music program at NRC are our Organist, Rebecca Benjamin, and our Bell Choir Director, Jim Friderici.

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Rebecca Benjamin, Organist, and Jim Friderici, Bell Choir director

Rebecca started taking piano lessons at the age of 9, organ lessons at 13, and has served as our organist for the past 10 years. She loves the people of the NRC music program and enjoys how so many of them are involved in our instrumental opportunities. Beyond NRC, Rebecca serves as a Literacy Specialist for Schenectady schools while pursuing her doctoral degree in Educational Theory and Practice from SUNY Albany. Highly environmentally conscious, Rebecca carools, bikes or walks almost everywhere she goes. She was even recently inducted into the Catskill 3500 Club for hiking. Rebecca lives in Niskayuna with her husband, Mike, and her hedgehog, Arnie.

Jim grew up in the church and began playing with the bell choir when it first organized in 1976. As the director of the bell choir he enjoys the freedom to choose from a variety of pieces, traditional to modern, and the opportunity to sometimes merge the two into his own arrangements. Beyond NRC, Jim works for the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance and serves as a theater auditor for a division of Disney. Jim has many outside interests and talents that include music, fine arts, furniture restoration, gardening and cooking. He wants people to know that the NRC

Eendracht Bell Choir is a unique group, open to new people interested in playing. The bell choir will be ringing on May 12th at the 9:30 am service.

Music and Worship:

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Do you ever think twice about the fact that we sing during a worship service? Whether you sing in the choir or sing hymns with the congregation you are participating in a form of worship that predates the writing of the Bible. Catholic author, Mike Aquilina, makes an overview of the history of music in Christianity accessible in his 2016 book *P[. Á@Á@áÁ[]ç^c^á@Á[]l]áKÁ V@~*@P^{}•ÉV~@P^{}•ÉááÁP^{}•É*. He suggests that while the theology of the Christian Fathers was important to the survival of Christianity, it was music that made the message of Christianity accessible in much the same way that a jingle makes a product a household name.

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Youth Choir member, Jordan McCann, with her Dad, Bill McCann, after the Niskayuna High School production of *Šá^Á Y[{}^}* where she sang the role of Marmee.

Music Appreciation 101:

Requiem

The musical term *Requiem*, which means “rest” in Latin, first appeared in the 15th century where it was used for Catholic funeral music. The movements in a Requiem generally follow liturgical order, such as an Introit, Kyrie and Offertory. By the end of the 19th century, the Requiem began to walk a fine line between service music and concert music, with versions by Berlioz, and more notably Verdi and Brahms. Some

Requiems began to last upwards of two hours, and required orchestral forces that were rarely used in church music, let alone fit in Europe’s largest cathedrals. Their length was due in

part to the movement known as the Sequence and the popularization of the “Day of Wrath” text within it, which was vividly depicted by seemingly larger and larger brass sections from one composer to the next.

Today, many churches perform Requiems, or selections from them, because of their clear connection to the Lenten season, and the coming death and resurrection of Jesus. After all, much of the common mass liturgy, such as the “Agnus Dei” and “Lamb of God” and “Merciful Jesus”, are retained in Requiem masses. Many of the Requiems composed in the 20th century, such as the Faure, Durufle and Rutter, serve as a return to the early intention of the Requiem: to grieve for those who have passed on, and for those still



April 21st Worship Service

living, offer comfort in the promise of eternal life through Christ.

Performance Review

“Choral music is not one of life’s frills. It’s something that goes to the very heart of our humanity, our sense of community, and our souls.”

The NRC Senior Choir, along with talented guest musicians, presented four pieces on Easter Sunday. Andrew Burger,

Director of Music, chose challenging and beautiful pieces to accompany Pastor Jason Fulkerson’s sermon, both of which lifted up our hearts

and minds in celebration.

Featured were two movements from the 1985 *Requiem* by modern British composer, John Rutter; “Agnus Dei” (Lamb of God) and “The Lord is My Shepherd.” “Agnus Dei” combines liturgy from the traditional Latin Mass and the Book of Common prayer. The mood shifts from a message of hopelessness, to one of hope in eternal life through Christ.

Also included in the service was a contemporary piece with a stirring brass fanfare opening and a lively tempo, “Worthy is the Lamb,” by Allen Pote.

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