



'Tis the Season for Musicals

Support and participate in your school productions!

And now... a non-paid advertisement in support of **MS/HS music drama programs...** also perfect for celebrating “**March – Music in Our Schools’ Month!**” Please pass this on!

The coming springtime brings birds, flowers, bees, and... *the magic of live theater!* Lasting from early March to late May, the season of school musicals is now upon us! Here's a friendly reminder from a retired public-school musical director/producer to attend one or more of your local shows! I guarantee it: You won't be sorry! (For singers and instrumentalists already in a youth, church, or community ensemble, this is message is probably “singing to the choir!”)

The school musical allows all of the Fine and Performing Arts the chance to collaborate, create, communicate, and “come together” in the presentation of a new transformed art form... everything from acting, dancing, choral, chamber, and solo singing, and instrumental accompaniment... to costumes, make-up, sets, props, lighting, sound, and special-effects. The music and stage crafts “make the magic” to stir your imagination for an evening or matinee of wonderful entertainment and enlightenment!

Many of our local high school musicals secure the rights for the same licensed productions that you see in downtown professional productions (like Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera and PNC Broadway series in my area) – one might say “professional grade” intended to be performed by seasoned professionals and not “watered down.” But, regardless of the incredibly challenging vocal ranges, dance steps and athleticism, virtuoso musical passages, and instant scene changes, the students always “rise to the occasion,” and perform amazingly artistic, realistic, funny, serious, romantic, thought-provoking, and inspiring numbers, providing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to share with your entire family!

The scripts and scores for each show provide only the barest information on how to put everything together. The directors, choreographers, and set designers have to determine the selection and placement of the cast on the stage (defining their blocking and all entrances/exits) as well as the kind of backdrops, props, and platforms to build, position, and move (in and out) from scene to scene. Because of this, I can offer you the assurance that no two presentations of a single production will ever be the same. In addition, no two shows performed at different sites will even be remotely similar. The variety and unique talents of the leads, chorus, dancers, pit orchestra, and production crews, as well as the vision and leadership of the artistic staff, will assure that the audience will experience many surprises and excitement every time they come to the theater!

Support your talented musicians, singers, dancers, and production-crew members. Buy a ticket. Invite other members of your extended family, coworkers, and neighbors to escape their wintry doldrums and enjoy an outing. Do you love theater? Consider volunteering to help the musical, assisting in the peripheral such as sewing costumes, distributing posters, selling tickets, building sets, painting the scenery, buying a program advertisement or well-wisher announcement, or chaperoning the parties. Contact the school's musical director or Performing Arts chairperson to find out additional ways to help “make a difference” in your school's Performing Arts.

The school district at which I am proud to have served for 33 years as music teacher and 7 years as Performing Arts Curriculum Leader is putting on **SHREK – The Musical**. Their “grand opening” for two weeks of shows is March 6, 2020 (7:30 p.m.) in the Upper St. Clair High School Theater, 1825 McLaughlin Run Road, Pittsburgh.

What else is happening in our southwestern PA area? See a few of the upcoming HS musicals on the next page.

See you at the shows!



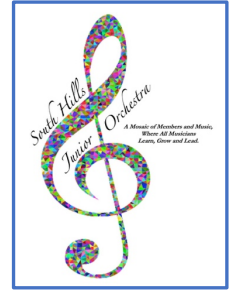
Paul K. Fox, Artistic Director

www.shje.org



The mission of *South Hills Junior Orchestra*, which rehearses and performs at the Upper St. Clair High School in Pittsburgh, PA, is to support and nurture local school band and orchestra programs, to develop knowledge, understanding, performance skills, and an appreciation of music, to increase an individual member's self-esteem and self-motivation, and to continue to advance a life-long study of music. Members of the Orchestra learn, grow, and achieve positions of leadership to serve their fellow players.

This and all Fox's Fireside blogposts are free and available to share with other music students, parents, directors, and supporters of the arts.



For more information about SHJO, please visit <http://www.shjo.org/>.

SAMPLING OF HIGH SCHOOL SPRING MUSICALS (SOUTHWESTERN PA/MARCH 5 TO MAY 9, 2020)

Ringgold HS	<i>Thoroughly Modern Millie</i>	March 5-7, 2020
Upper St. Clair HS	<i>Shrek – The Musical!</i>	March 6-8, 12-14
Thomas Jefferson HS	<i>Disney's Newsies!</i>	March 12-15
Bethel Park High School	<i>Guys and Dolls</i>	March 18-21
Bentworth HS	<i>Shrek – The Musical</i>	March 19-21
Peters Township HS	<i>Big Fish</i>	March 19-22
Chartiers Houston	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	March 20-22
West Allegheny HS	<i>9 to 5: The Musical</i>	March 20-22, 27-28
West Mifflin HS	<i>The Addams Family</i>	March 26-29
South Park HS	<i>Chicago: High School Edition</i>	March 26-29
Baldwin HS	<i>The Addams Family</i>	April 1-4
Burgettstown MSHS	<i>The Music Man, Jr.</i>	April 2-4
Brentwood HS	<i>Annie</i>	April 2-4
Elizabeth Forward HS	<i>Drowsy Chaperone</i>	April 2-5
Mt. Lebanon HS	<i>Once Upon a Mattress</i>	May 7-9