



Program

Passacaliga ...Handel
arr. Frost

Water Lily Matt Riley

Lion City..... Soon Hee
Newbold

Evil Eye and the hideous
Heart.... Alan Lee Silva

Sheep May Safely Graze
.... Bach arr. Riley

Preludio..... Paul Whear



HIGHLAND
RAMS

Highland High School, founded in 1956, is located in Salt Lake City and part of Salt Lake City School District. Highland serves students in grades 9-12 and students across the city, with boundaries that include parts of the historic neighborhoods including Glendale, Millcreek, Sugarhouse and Foothill. Hillside Middle School is the primary feeder for Highland, with Clayton and Glendale sending a small portion.

Highland's Symphony Orchestra is an auditioned ensemble that meets on B days and is one of two orchestras serving 90 students. The ensemble consists almost primarily of upperclassmen, but is open to freshman who pass an audition. The size of the ensemble varies from year to year, depending on instrumentation and quality of auditions. Since 2015 the Symphony Orchestra has qualified for the State UMEA Orchestra Festival and earned Superior ratings. In 2020 the ensemble performed at the Utah Music Educators Association Mid-Winter Conference, with 2024 marking the ensemble's second performance at the Mid-Winter Conference.

This year's Symphony includes a wide variety of students. Two-thirds are upperclassmen, and approximately one third of the students receive private instruction. Included are a mix of AP students, IB students, Student Athletes, and students are encouraged to have many other interests. However, they are all committed to continuing Highland Symphony's tradition of excellence.



Meet The Orchestra
2024 SYMPHONY

Meet the DIRECTORS



*Curtis
Black*

Curtis Black is the director of instrumental music at Highland High School, where he has taught since 2015. He currently teaches Orchestra, Band, Jazz Band, Percussion, AP/IB Music Theory and Guitar. Under his direction the program has doubled in size and is a consistent qualifier for the UMEA State Festivals.

Curtis Black earned his Associates degree from Snow College. Upon graduation he went on to earn a Bachelors in Music Education from Southern Utah University, where he graduated Magna Cum Laude. Since graduating, Curtis has earned an ESL endorsement and a Masters of Science in Curriculum and Instruction from Western Governors University. Curtis currently serves on the Utah Music Educators Association Orchestra committee and as the High School State Orchestra Festival Manager.

Aside from his career, Curtis spends his time playing in various community groups and spending quality time with his husband Zachary Giddings. Without Zach's encouragement Curtis would never have believed this could be possible.



*Michelle
Misco*

Michelle Misco is the Orchestra director at Hillside Middle School, as well as Dilworth, Beacon Heights, and Highland Park Elementary Schools. She has been a Music teacher for 28 years, with 24 of those being in Salt Lake City schools. She is married with two children, and regularly enjoys skiing, hiking, and camping.

Michelle grew up in East Syracuse, NY, and graduated from Syracuse University in 1994 with her bachelor's in music education. She has also studied history and computer science, but music has always been her calling.

In 1995, she moved to Utah to teach band and orchestra at Albion Middle School in the Jordan School District and was awarded a PTA Teacher of the Year award. She left teaching for a brief career in real estate and returned to teaching orchestra in the Salt Lake City Schools.

Michelle is also active in developing and teaching professional development activities. She collaborates with Curtis Black at Highland High to help create a thriving vertical program. She is an advocate of music availability to all students and writes grants regularly to supply as many instruments as possible to children in her schools.



About

THE PROGRAM

Thank you for attending our performance and sharing this experience with my students. I have joked that this program is a collection of “grade 3's that are actually grade 4's.” But honestly, each piece was carefully selected to push and challenge this current orchestra.

The program as a whole showcases different styles, composers and grade levels. They work together to challenge this orchestra fundamentally and musically. In my opinion, each piece has musical and educational Merit.

However, at a more personal level, I would call the theme of our program “music that worked.” This is essentially a program of songs that I discovered early in my career. These are pieces that my students have loved playing and I have loved teaching. Though these pieces are new to this group of students, they are pieces that pushed me at the earliest points of my career. Essentially, these are some of the pieces taught me to be an orchestra director.

We hope you enjoy!



Program NOTES



1 Passacaglia Handel arr. by Robert Frost

Composer and string specialist Robert Frost enjoyed a 30 year career, working in Cache County Utah. He was a teacher, string specialist and composer. He composed over 250 pieces throughout his life. The Passacaglia , a popular form from the Baroque Era, Found favor because of its potential for developing variations. In this arrangement from Handel's Passacaglia in g-minor Frost uses a variety of techniques and patterns to accompany Handel's original melodic patterns.



2 Water Lily Matt Riley

This piece is based of a simple melody in a pentatonic scale. In Matt Rileys Words, "I think that beauty can be found in simplicity. Claude Monet seemed to agree when he depicted water lilies in a series of paintings. Simple things such as walking through a forest, coming to a hidden pond and taking in the scent of flowers mixed with the scents of the forest can bring a profound sense of joy. Maybe you pause in this beautiful place and contemplate what you have, your joys, losses, and people that you love. Perhaps you linger a little bit longer thinking about how transient everything is. This very scene will soon change with the seasons and the water lilies will be gone. The beautify of the moment is mixed with sadness. Maybe you decide to stick around a few more minutes to take it all in and experience more of what this wonderful place has to offer."



3 Lion City Soon Hee Newbold

Composer Soon Hee Newbold's Lion City draws upon the country of Singapore, and is written to reflect its history, languages and booming economy. This composition uses different sound effects to portray gamalen instruments as well as "East meets West Chinese and contemporary melodies."





4 Evil Eye and The Hideous HeartAlan Lee Silva

Based on the classic Edgar Allan Poe short story "The Tell-Tale Heart," this work is reminiscent of a classic Hollywood horror movie theme. The piece has two main themes a slow, ominous theme followed by the frantic minor theme. These themes and various sound effects engage the ensemble in this classic story.



5 Sheep May Safely Graze Matt Riley

Matt Riley Composed this piece as a part of his "Epic Christmas series". Like much of Rileys music, this is "Hollywood inspired." He hopes that audiences will find the arrangement and fresh and interesting.



6 Preludio Paul Whear

American Composer Paul Whear composed Preludio in 1966 for The Vivaldi Orchestra of Manchester U.K. This piece features precise bowing patterns and ostinatos, set with interesting chord progressions and melodic material.



Thank you

STUDENTS

Performances like this aren't possible without dedicated students. Thank you for your work and dedication to excellence. I believe that excellence breeds excellence, thank you for being part of that tradition.

I also want to thank my seniors. During covid Salt Lake City School District was 100% on zoom and the High Schools had alternating A/B quarters. These students started high school orchestra on zoom and only receiving instruction 2nd and 4th quarter. During this time we saw a 30% drop in performing arts enrollment and all of our programs were damaged.

I will admit that it was a highly uncertain time and I struggled watching policies destroy our programs. But, over zoom, from my kitchen table, I met this amazing group of freshman. Their dedication and enthusiasm inspired me. Seniors, thank you for your grit, determination and leadership. The last four years have been a journey, I am beyond proud.



Thank you

COMMUNITY

Thank you to all the people who support the High School's program. Administrators and parents play a key role in the success of these students. Thank you to Jeremy Chatterton for being an administrator who truly cares about the success of all students.

I also owe Michelle Misco a huge thank you. Without her, none of this would be possible. Not only has she inspired countless students, but she has also inspired me. I appreciate her advocacy and teaching, but above all I appreciate her friendship.