



Newsletter

The Monthly Newsletter of *Hunterdon Academy of the Arts*

December 2016

Feeling Thankful

As I am writing our December Newsletter article, the weather is unusually mild, and I find it hard to believe that the Holidays--and Winter--are just around the corner! This time of the year I like to reflect on the events of the past 12 months, as I'm sure many of you do. 2016 has been a very successful and busy year, and we're so proud to have reached a number of very important milestones. Among these, HAA has celebrated its 35th Anniversary and won the "Top Music Program" award by the Hunterdon Happening List. Furthermore, we have grown our overall Music and Acting enrollments to over 660 students--for the first time in our history--and our Musikgarten program received the "Exemplary Program" Award for the 2015-16 school year. Personally, I have had a banner year as well, having been named one of the County's "Top 10 Movers and Shakers" by Hunterdon Happening. Most recently, I was also honored to receive the coveted "Entrepreneur of the Year" Award by the Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce.



It is important for HAA--its students, staff, faculty, and myself--to celebrate our achievements and bask in the limelight when the occasion arises. But truth to be told, I feel a bit awkward talking about myself and my own successes. Deep down I am a private person who loves reading and spending quiet time doing research on the newest and best approaches to education. My passion is to help students improve their learning skills, and support teachers in their efforts to motivate their students.

Making HAA a better and more exciting school is the accomplishment of an entire team. Years ago, when I worked alone in the office and tried to run the entire operation myself, HAA was not nearly as wonderful as it is now. To my truly amazing administrative staff, gifted and open-minded teachers, passionate students and unbelievably supportive parents, and--last but not least--my supportive and hard-working husband, Antonius: I am so thankful for having you in my life. Every single one of you! I truly COULD NOT have done all this without you.

This Holiday Season, let's rejoice and be grateful for what we have built together: this amazing performing arts school whose name--"HAA"--is spreading fast, and which is located not in Princeton or New York City but, lo and behold, right here in the heart of beautiful Hunterdon County!

Wishing You a Blessed Holiday Season, and a Prosperous 2017,

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Hunterdon
ACADEMY OF THE ARTS

Flemington & Lebanon

Student of the Month: Matthew Scotto

This month we're congratulating Matthew Scotto on winning December's Student of the Month Award!! Matthew is a 10 year old student who got started in our MusikGarten program over 6 years ago.

What instruments do you play and what made you choose them? What's cool about them? I am currently taking lessons for piano, cello and banjo. I was in the group keyboard class and when that ended I started taking private piano lessons. I started cello lessons in school last year and thought it was fun so I continued with private lessons. I don't know why but I've always wanted to learn how to play the banjo.



What kind of music do you like to listen to in your free time? I listen to all sorts of popular music like: Frankie Valli, Beatles, Queen, Eagles, Imagine Dragons, Coldplay.

What are your hobbies and what do you like doing in your free time? My hobbies are playing video games and playing with my puppy.

What do you like about being part of Hunterdon Academy of the Arts? What I like most about HAA are my current and former teachers. My music classes are fun! And HAA has fun parties.

What do you want to be (professionally) when you grow up? When I grow up I would like to be a famous YouTuber.

Thank You for Your Referrals!

A BIG THANK YOU to several individuals, for referring their friends to *Hunterdon Academy of the Arts*! It's wonderful to have such strong supporters who spread the word about HAA in the Hunterdon community! We'd like to give a special shout out to: **The Coey Family, The Walski Family, The Duran Family, and The Roberts Family** THANK YOU!!!



Still Looking for a Holiday Gift?



If you're still scrambling to buy **Holiday Gifts** for your family and friends, here's a very simple yet meaningful solution: **HAA Holiday Gift Certificates!** Our Gift Certificates can be redeemed towards any program we offer, and they can even be used to purchase sheet music from us. Best of all, they are super easy to purchase--all online! Just visit:

Birthdays in December

Richard Chen, Aniket Ghan, Patrick Hazard, Aleksander Lipinski, Dominic Sliva, Benjamin Bigdelle, Hallie Koches, Bethany Torsiello, Zachary Liebman, Reagan Reed, Neha Viradia, Katelyn Wance, Darren Tierney, Alexa Harwelik, Patricia Joswick, Emma Levine, Diana Moran, Annabelle Allentoff, Benjamin Brown, Cliff Hoyt, Angy Edwards, Patrick Giordano, Grayson Schlesier, Gillian McCaffrey, Erica Harmon, Meredith Harmon, Daniel Medeiros, Jimmy Wiegand, Carolo Pascale, Bobby Reuter, Thomas Benke, Aj Berry, Christopher Solimine, Finn Gorsline, Kaya Gorsline, Natalie Richardson, Emma Davidson, Matthew Woodward, Paige McDonough, Kate Murray, Annie Westgate, Kevin Zhang, Arthur Su



www.HunterdonAcademyOfTheArts.com/holiday-gift-certificates

Pet of the Month: Jin Jin Whidbee

Congrats to Jin Jin for winning the December Pet of the Month Award! Her family tells us, "She is 8 years old and Sydney loves her because she plays with him and is his best friend. She likes to chase after her feather toy and him when they play." AWWWWW

Pet of the Month (continued)

Don't despair if your pet isn't featured in this issue. We will keep all materials on file for future issues! Do you love your pet and can't wait to tell us all about him/her? Just visit www.HunterdonAcademyOfTheArts.com/MyPet and fill out the form on that page! If we choose your pet as the next *Pet of the Month*, we will feature him in the upcoming issue of the *HAA Newsletter* and send you a **\$25 Gift Card!**



www.HunterdonAcademyOfTheArts.com/MyPet

Fall Referral Contest: Win a FREE Breville 800ESXL Espresso Machine on December 19!

This may well be one of the nicest holiday presents you've ever received--a beautiful Breville 800ESXL Espresso Machine! This highly rated gadget has lots of attractive features, including:

- 15 Bar Italian Pump
- Purge Function: Automatically adjusts water temperature after steam for optimal espresso extraction temperature
- The Triple Prime Pump releases 3 bursts of hot water to moisten the ground coffee resulting in greater build-up to extract the fullest flavor
- Thermoblock Heating System
- 75 Fl.oz (2.2L) removable front-fill water tank
- Espresso machine with ThermoBlock heating system and 15-bar Triple Prime pump
- Durable stainless-steel housing; selector dial for espresso, steam, or hot water
- 4-1/2-inch cup clearance; swivel steam wand with frother; 75-ounce removable water tank
- Filters, tamping tool, cleaning tool, and stainless-steel frothing pitcher included
- Measures 12 by 10 by 12-1/2 inches; 1-year warranty



A Value of \$323!

Referrals Are a Win-Win, Each and Every Time

To enter the Fall Raffle for this amazing prize, just refer your friends to HAA! It's easy! As a sign of our appreciation, we are rewarding **both you and your friend with a \$25 check** when s/he enrolls in our programs! Refer as many friends as you like!

www.HunterdonAcademyOfTheArts.com/Referrals

Faculty Showcase: Rob George, Guitar/Banjo/Mandolin/Ukulele/Rock +

This month, we are spotlighting Rob George, one of our most successful Guitar Teachers. We're fortunate for having Rob on board, and can't wait to share with you the interview we had with him.

You teach several cool instruments (and a new program) at HAA, in addition to guitar. What instruments are those and how did you get into playing them? In addition to guitar, I also teach ukulele, banjo, and mandolin. I actually got into these instruments because of an uncommon instrument one of my previous teachers had me learn: the lute. The lute is essentially a predecessor to the guitar, and it's really tricky to get a nice sound on. My teacher had a philosophy that if you can get a good sound on the lute, your sound on the guitar would be that much better because of it. This sparked a fascination with tone, and I began learning a bunch of less played, fretted instruments in hopes to apply that to my guitar playing.

You also play in a band. Can you tell us more about it and the kind of music you play? The band I play in is called *Mr. Hey Mister*. If I had to label our sound I'd say we're kind of like a chill electronic jazz group. It started as a duo with my friend Ryan and I; I would play guitar and program sounds on my computer, and he played the drums. Recently though we've developed a much more R&B sound as we've been joined by a bassist and a singer. We've been working on a full length album hopefully ready to release relatively soon!

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Award-winning Hunterdon Academy of the Arts has campus locations in Flemington (NJ) and Lebanon (NJ). Founded in 1981, we are the largest performing arts school in Hunterdon, serving students of all ages and levels of ability. The school is particularly well known for its high-quality Music lessons and classes, but has more recently added Acting instruction to its services.



Faculty Showcase (continued)

You majored in Classical and Jazz Guitar Performance. How does classical music fit in with the rest of your music interests? Classical music fits in to the rest of my musical interests in almost too many ways. I would say the biggest influence studying it has had is how I now listen to music. In Classical music, expressing yourself through your playing is so essential to conveying the way the piece makes you feel, and in my opinion the most beautiful music is created due to the subtleties that can often be overlooked. For example, I try listening for how loud or soft is the music being played, which notes are being accented and which aren't, when there's tonal changes... when you start to critically listen you can find there's a lot of sounds going on that you may not have been aware of before and it's really really cool!

How do you inspire your students to explore various musical styles and dedicate their time to practicing? To inspire my students to explore various music styles. I try to understand what kind of music they like first. Then we work together to learn the songs they're interested in. Once we understand what sounds they're interested in, we pursue those sounds. Once I have an idea of what my student likes and doesn't like I try to suggest bands that they might not have heard of before; the more music you listen to the more you can understand what sounds you like and what you don't.

As far as practicing goes, the biggest thing I encourage is to use your time efficiently by setting a few small goals instead of one big one. Trying to learn an entire piece in one day from start to finish can often be frustrating, discouraging, and frankly, unrealistic. But saying something to yourself like, "Okay, I can get the first thirty seconds of this song down, and then maybe I can work on my scale" creates an achievable, realistic, and rewarding goal.

What do you enjoy about being part of the Hunterdon Academy of the Arts community? My favorite part about being a part of the Hunterdon Academy of the Arts community is easily the positive and encouraging atmosphere. From the students and parents to the teachers and staff, everyone is always helping each other become better musicians, but more importantly, better people :)

