



MUSICmatters

Quarterly News from Music for Minors

Celebrating 35 Years!

Our Mission:

To nurture in children
a lifelong love
of music by
providing quality
music education
programs in schools
with our trained
volunteer and
professional
educators.



Executive Director Sonja Palmer, left; founder Grace Johnston, right

For 35 years, Music for Minors has been serving our communities with quality music education and, in doing so, has had a profound impact on the quality of life for both children and adults. This year, as we reflect on our legacy and history and gather stories about the impact of MFM on the lives we touch, everything points back to one defining moment and one person who defined it all: our founder, Grace Johnston. Simply put, this “diva” is a visionary who changed the face of music education in such a unique way.

If you ask Grace about why she founded MFM, she will say, “It was what was needed and the right thing to do.” She will humbly decline to accept accolades. Well Grace, the fact is that you—your foresight, love of the art of music, compassion, and activism—are worthy of our special recognition and extreme gratitude. I am sure I speak for everyone when I say *thank you* for giving us the gift of Music for Minors; for ensuring that we all value music as a fundamental part of our lives; for giving children, families, and communities a special bond; for fostering creativity (how important to the innovation and successes in Silicon Valley); for creating long-lasting impact; and for sharing your passion with us. Mission Success!

This spring, our 35th anniversary year will culminate in a wonderful celebration event to honor the rich heritage of MFM and the extraordinary individual at the heart of it all. I hope you will consider joining us for this momentous occasion. It is your support of MFM that enables the vision of Grace Johnston to be realized. Thank you for your generosity and the impact you each have on our collective future.

—Sonja Palmer

Mission Success!

MFM programs touch thousands of young lives each year. Our mission “to nurture in children a lifelong love of music” is fulfilled in the ongoing development of singers and instrumentalists, as well as dancers, music educators and enthusiasts, along with those of us whose lives are enriched by music in simple everyday ways. Meet a few of our former students whose stories show the impact of early music education:



Alexa Strutner, MFM student from 1998 to 2002, progressed into instrumental music and focused on percussion beginning in middle school. From sixth through eighth grades, she not only played in the school band, but she was also a member of the Peninsula Youth Orchestra. During that time, Alexa continued her enjoyment of vocal music, and had leading roles in several musical theater productions. She then moved on to the drumline with the St. Francis High School Marching Band for four years, and was lead percussionist in the Symphonic Band. Throughout high school, Alexa also participated in an after-school steel drum band. Currently, she is a freshman at New York University, exploring how music might feature in her college life.



Tyler Polen, MFM student from 2002–2004, has pursued his love of singing for many years with different choruses, including Cantabile Youth Singers, Almond School Chorus, and the Ragazzi Boys Chorus. He was actually “discovered” by his preschool music teacher who happened to be one of the MFM Founding Mothers, Nancy Wilde.

Tyler’s exceptional ability and vocal training have led to a number of extraordinary performance opportunities. In 2008, at the age of 12, he performed the title role of Rachel Portman’s *The Little Prince* for the San Francisco Opera. In addition, he soloed in the San Francisco Symphony’s performance of *The Shadows of Time* (by Henri Dutilleux) in 2006. Tyler has also performed the boy-soprano solos in several other major works.

Now a high school junior, he continues as a member of Ragazzi. During his seven years with the group, he has sung with the American Choral Directors Association’s Western Division Honor Choir in Salt Lake City, Utah (2006) and Anaheim, California (2008), toured to various international locations, and participated in a number of prestigious choral festivals.

Nicky Gelman, MFM student from 1994–1998, sang in the chorus and played clarinet in elementary school. He then moved on to saxophone, playing in the Wind Ensemble and Jazz Band at Los Altos High School. While there he also participated in choral music, including the elite Main Street Singers. Along the way Nicky studied guitar—electric and acoustic—and became the primary campfire song leader for the Palo Alto Family YMCA’s resident camp in the Sierras.

While attending Duke University, Nicky pursued a pre-medical education with a minor in music. He continued to develop his jazz saxophone skills through both private lessons and ensemble work, although singing began to take center stage. For four years Nicky sang with Duke’s leading all-male a cappella group, the Pitchforks. Two of their recent albums won the CARA Award for Best Male Collegiate Album. He became Music Director his senior year, and is currently at work producing their next album, scheduled for release in 2012.

During his time at Duke, Nicky also sang with the Vespers Choir, a select group of singers specializing in a cappella Renaissance music. He took voice lessons throughout college, and had recitals both junior and senior years, with songs in Spanish, German, Italian, French, Latin, and English. He recently added Russian to his repertoire through his experience at Chanticleer’s Choral Music Camp in Sonoma.



Mardi Gras Mystique 2012



2011 King and Queen, Tom and Gunilla Follett

Back by popular demand, we will present a repeat of our highly successful Mardi Gras Mystique – A Fund-a-Need Benefit for Music for Minors, on Saturday, February 11th, 2012. Thank you to our Host Committee and the over 200 guests whose support in 2011 led to our raising nearly \$100,000 for music education in schools!

This year we will feature all the exciting elements that made last year such a hit, but with an enhanced experience sure to engage our revelers even more. The evening will include talented youth jazz musicians; our very own MFM children in song; an entertaining after-party band; Zydeco

players and Mardi Gras entertainers; authentic

Hurricanes, King Cakes, and Cajun cuisine; you and your friends decked out in festive Mardi Gras fashion, and an atmosphere that will transport you to the Big Easy! All the sights, sounds, and spirit of Mardi Gras rolled into one sumptuous evening to support quality music in our schools, enable expanded service to the community, and provide for continued success in achieving the MFM mission.

Who will be our 2012 King and Queen of Mardi Gras? Come to the event and find out! Look for your invitation coming in early January. And please consider joining our esteemed Mardi Gras Krewe (Host Committee). Contact Sonja Palmer at sonja@mfm.org or 650-237-9130 for details.

Music and Merriment— Flavors of Brazil

The evening of December 7th, MFM will host our annual donor and volunteer appreciation event, Music and Merriment, this year featuring Flavors of Brazil. We will offer intriguing food and drinks to entice your palate, along with elegant cultural dancing and a musical presentation of original compositions by composer Carlos Oliveira. The Brazilian Jazz Quintet Kata-Vento will perform. The musicians include Q Morrow on seven-string guitar, Rebecca Kleinmann

(MFM educator, pictured) on flute and piccolo, Sonia Calvett on flute, and Brian Rice on percussion. The music of Carlos Oliveira is inspired by the pifano music of his homeland, infusing different Brazilian rhythms with improvisation. Pifanos or pifes—Brazilian flutes—are a product of the cultural fusions typical in the northern region of the country. They are made of bamboo, just like the instruments used by several native groups, but they have holes positioned like European flutes.

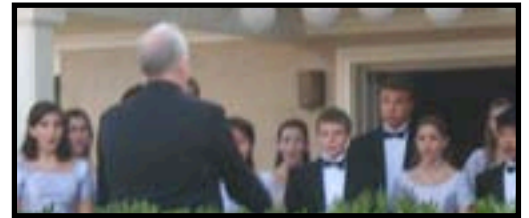
Invitations are circulating now and we hope you will join us for an exciting evening to honor your support of MFM and to enjoy a taste of Brazil. We look forward to seeing you!

*Music and Merriment – Flavors of Brazil
Wednesday, December 7th, 7:00–9:00 pm
Holbrook-Palmer Park Pavilion, Atherton*



Overture to Music for Minors

On Sunday, October 9th, 75 guests joined hosts Liz and Dave Rome, along with the Music for Minors Board of Directors, for an engaging social and musical afternoon. The event included an inspiring performance by Los Altos High School's accomplished Main Street Singers. In addition, a group of young students from Marshall Lane Elementary demonstrated what they are learning in their music education classes with MFM Volunteer Educator, Gosia Hoot.



Main Street Singers, directed by Mark Shaull

**To learn
more or
make a
donation:**

Contact us at 650-237-9130 or
visit www.mfm.org

Tell Your Part of the MFM Story

A key component of our 35th anniversary celebration is bringing life to the MFM story by sharing the narratives of people who have had first-hand experience with our organization. Whether you are a current or past donor, volunteer, parent of an MFM student, former student yourself, school personnel, or other community member, we would be delighted to hear from you!

Please visit www.mfm.org to chime in (and see what everyone else is saying).

Newsletter layout by Lissy Abraham



Save the Date!

MARDI GRAS MYSTIQUE

Saturday, February 11, 2012
Los Altos Golf and Country Club

Support music in our schools! Join us for the return of this festive Mardi Gras event filled with authentic libations, cuisine, and entertainment to celebrate music and its important role in education. All funds raised directly support the Music for Minors Fund-A-Need Initiative to bring music to more local children.

Look for invitations in early January

For more information: 650-237-9130 • www.mfm.org



883 N. Shoreline Blvd. C120
Mountain View, CA 94043