



WAGNER MIDDLE SCHOOL
MS 167

□ Music Makes the World Go Round at Wagner

The music program at Wagner Middle School led by Instrumental Music Teachers, Ms. Cuevas, Ms. Dyer and Ms. Kirven is one of the most sought-after Middle School band programs in the city. This is largely due to how unique and dynamic it is. Our band program is very special because our band students have instruction every day. It is a three-year sequential program that uniquely prepares students to be successful in their High School auditions and for music-making throughout their life.

At Wagner we are stretching beyond our classroom walls to bring in world-class musicians to inspire our students. We recently had the honor of welcoming Tom Cabaniss, composer, Juilliard professor, and lead clinician for the Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall. Mr. Cabaniss worked with our 7th and 8th grade band classes on January 9th. He led the students through a large-group composition process to get them started on a project that will result in an original fanfare composed by the students. In addition to Mr. Cabaniss, we also welcomed Ms. Elizabeth Guglielmo, Director of Music for the Department of Education, and several teachers from the Citywide Music Professional Development Team to observe the process, which will be presented to music teachers who attend the January 28 Professional Development session. Video footage of our students working with Mr. Cabaniss will be shared at that session. Tom has graciously offered to come back to Wagner for some follow-up sessions with the 7th grade classes, who will continue the project with the goal of performing their original compositions during the Spring concerts in May.

The jazz band is stretching their abilities and repertoire by learning to play in the salsa style this Spring. Our Instrumental Music Teachers are working on bringing in a professional salsa flutist to work with the students, and we are hoping to include some surprise staff members to perform with us on the Spring Concerts.

Nell Flanders, an esteemed local violinist and conductor of the Manhattan School of Music pre-college orchestra, will be visiting Wagner this Spring to work with the students on bringing out the music in their performance and talk to them about the wonderful opportunities for young students at MSM.

We are working very hard to embrace our community within Wagner and New York City to create connections locally and globally. The Senior Band is working on "Sir Duke," by Stevie Wonder. As part of their exploration of this great music, they learned about the only female instrumentalist on "Songs in the Key of Life," the album "Sir Duke" is on, Ms. Bobbi Humphrey. Ms. Humphrey was also the first female instrumentalist to be signed to Blue Note Records, and she lives here in New York City! The students wrote letters to Ms. Humphrey to ask her about her experiences as a musician and working with Stevie Wonder. We are hoping she will consider coming to visit us here at Wagner!

The 7th grade bands are super excited to be working on "My Shot" from the Broadway show Hamilton. As part of their experience, the students will be writing letters to Lin-Manuel Miranda to ask questions about his experiences as a musician in New York City. Fingers crossed, maybe we can inspire him to come visit us, too!

