

Winter 2015

# MUSICmatters

Quarterly News from Music for Minors



## Theme and Variations

I recently had the pleasure of hearing a strategic planning consultant remark, “after reading through the Music for Minors’ mission and website messaging, it was immediately clear that the heart of your work is focused on ALL children receiving music.” Our motivation is clear and guides our work on a daily basis. Make no mistake; MFM is moving toward making our vision a reality.

Today MFM is focused on innovation and technology with three priorities: delivery (the technology platform), content (curriculum activities, video and audio libraries, and music scores), and product licensing. In order to advance in these areas, we have recently outlined and launched a multi-year, multi-dimensional initiative detailing benefits at each stage of development, as well as opportunities to increase service and impact.

In the mix of our project is a new partnership with the Harvard Business School Community Partners, a pro bono service for nonprofits that show great promise. We are working with an exemplary team of alumni who will spend the next six months researching and developing a business plan for a licensed music curriculum model. This curriculum would aid in the delivery of music education by MFM educators, community volunteers, classroom teachers, and independent teaching artists, as well as through

partnerships we could establish with other comparable organizations.

We seek the best possible solutions to meeting the continual need to bring back and maintain elementary school music education programs. Adding a licensed music curriculum model would not only strengthen our ability to achieve the strategic goal of serving more students, but would also allow for extending our reach... beyond the classroom and beyond our current geography. A licensed product

could also create an additional revenue stream to feed back into subsidizing programs for local under-resourced schools.

MFM has charted the way through investment from

our own innovation fund, as well as funding from the Packard Foundation (strategic plan development), Intel (online song library), and Silicon Valley Community Foundation (exploratory phase), as well as partnerships with the Encore Fellows Program and now Harvard Business School Community Partners. Your support, and that of other generous donors like you, has been vital to the expansion of music programs. The theme is ALL children receiving music and the path there will be played out in a multitude of variations.

*Saja Palmer*



### 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.



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To learn more or make a donation:  
Contact us at 650.237.9130 or visit  
[www.mfm.org](http://www.mfm.org).

# Merci Beaucoup

Our successful Carnaval de Paris benefit was held on January 31st at the Los Altos Golf and Country Club. The beautiful venue and lavish décor set the stage for a special evening, and our 220 guests contributed their high spirits and inspiring generosity. Carnaval King and Queen, Webb and Chris McKinney, presided regally over this festive celebration of music education. With heartfelt messaging, top-flight entertainment, and exquisite French cuisine, many attendees felt it was Music for Minors best event yet.

A group of our students (3rd and 4th graders from Brittan Acres Elementary School, San Carlos) performed several numbers to get the event off to a dynamic start. The focus on children continued with nine-year old featured speaker, Lena Palmer. Lena introduced a video debuting a new song that she and her classmates wrote with singer/songwriter Steve Seskin, "Music, Music, Music." (You can see the song lyrics on back page, and/or view the video on our website: [www.mfm.org](http://www.mfm.org).) The audience also enjoyed a musical performance by soloist Casey Breves.

The Fund-A-Need Auction portion of the evening was fast-paced and our guests participated with enthusiasm. We are delighted to report that we surpassed our goals in the dollar amount raised.

The evening concluded with an After-Party, with music provided by the swinging dance band, Project Forte.

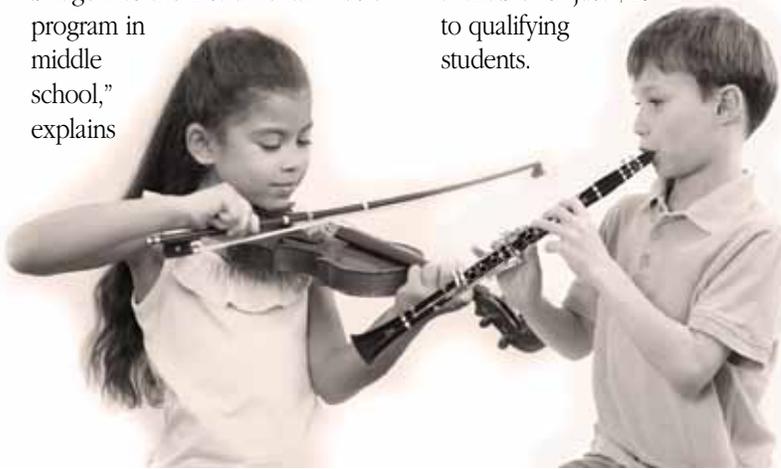
View photos from the event at [www.carnavaldeparis.mfm.shutterfly.com](http://www.carnavaldeparis.mfm.shutterfly.com)



## Double Play! Introduction to Violin and Clarinet for 5th Graders

Music for Minors is proud to partner with the Redwood City Education Foundation to give fifth graders hands-on experience with two orchestral instruments. Starting this month, we are offering an after-school program at six elementary school sites. "The goal of Double Play is to provide a bridge into the instrumental music program in middle school," explains

Jean Tyan, MFM's Program Director, "We know that the academic and other benefits increase the longer that students participate in music, so we hope to help them develop the interest and confidence needed to continue." With support from the Kirven-Morse Family Fund, instruments will be provided at no cost, and this eight-week program is available for just \$10 to qualifying students.



## People of Note to Retire

After 30 years of producing first-rate children's music concerts and educational workshops, People of Note (PON) will be retiring.

Founded by Grace Johnston in 1985 as the fundraising arm of Music for Minors, PON has brought popular artists into local venues, introducing thousands of families to such artists as Tom Chapin and Charlotte Diamond. In the last decade, PON established itself as its own nonprofit, bringing a wider range of musicians to perform in under-resourced elementary schools. We salute PON for the generous support, as well as its enduring dedication to promoting a love of music among our children.



# Educator Spotlight: Tobi Nielsen

**B**reathing Olympics, silent cheers, and recorder karate are just a few of the innovative ideas that educator Tobi Nielsen brings with her into the classroom. A lifelong music lover who sings and plays piano, recorder, ukulele, and guitar, she comes equipped with her best game and expects the best from every student in return. There's nothing Tobi enjoys more than seeing her students grasp new concepts and master new skills. And beyond this, she is most rewarded when the children embrace challenges (like insisting upon performing "This Land is Your Land" with the descant). Not surprisingly, she asks no less of herself.



was back in 2010, when she responded to a flyer posted at the Campbell Library. She summoned up her courage to face those kindergartners and took the plunge. This is her fifth year of teaching with Music for Minors, with three as a volunteer and she's mid-way in her second as a paid educator. Tobi now has over 500 students in 2nd – 5th grades. She loves her work and pursues her ongoing professional development with passion. Currently Tobi is taking the additional step of studying to become a credentialed teacher.

"Teaching inspires me," she says, "I know this is how I'm going to make a difference in the

"When I first started as a volunteer with Music for Minors," Tobi explains with a smile, "I was terrified!" That

world. MFM lit that fire in me and I'm grateful for that."

## Music in Our Schools Month

**Y**ou are invited to attend a Music Sharing Event in an elementary school classroom. See the real impact of your donation, and get a first-hand view of what music education is all about. Music for Minors Sharing Events are a time when parents and other community members can experience how children explore music through hands-on learning, and see the joy and learning it brings. The more you know about music education, the more there is to be excited about. We hope that a deeper understanding will help foster a wide base of support for keeping music in our schools and accessible to all children.





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## Music, Music, Music...

Here are the lyrics created by Music for Minors 2nd-4th grade students in our Songwriting Workshop with Steve Seskin...

**Chorus:**  
Music, music, music's phenomenal, incredible  
You can let your imagination run wild with a melody  
I like singing a lot and dancing too  
Playing an instrument is really cool  
It brings people together  
Makes me feel better  
Music is magical  
Music, music, music, music's phenomenal, incredible!

**Verse 1:**  
It's not like math where one answer is right  
It's hard to master but when you do it's outta sight  
Every song sets a different tone  
With a song in your heart, you're never alone.

**Verse 2:**  
Music is tempo, rhythm and beat  
It can be loud or soft and sweet  
Fortissimo or pianissimo  
However you play it all I know...

It can be beautiful  
A little unusual  
Wonderful, mystical  
It's irresistible!

