

VESTAVIA HILLS CITY SCHOOLS  
presents the

LOUIS PIZITZ  
Middle School  
**SYMPHONIC BAND**

**Leah Seng, Director**  
**Victoria Chambless, Assistant Director**

Alabama Music Educators Association  
Professional Development Conference  
Friday, January 24, 2025  
Birmingham, Alabama

# LETTERS OF CONGRATULATIONS



## *Governor Kay Ivey State of Alabama*

*Has Presented This  
Certificate of Recognition  
To*

### *Pizitz Middle School Symphonic Band*

*This certificate is presented in recognition of Pizitz Middle School Symphonic Band for been selected as an invited ensemble to perform at the Alabama Music Educators Association Conference. Congratulations on this remarkable accomplishment and best wishes for much success in the years to come.*

*Given Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the  
Office of the Governor at the State Capitol in the City  
of Montgomery on the 9th day of January 2025.*



*Kay Ivey*  
Kay Ivey, Governor



# LETTERS OF CONGRATULATIONS



Todd Freeman, Ed.D., Superintendent  
Aimee Rainey, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent  
Courtney Brown, CPA, Chief Schools Finance Officer

Scott Brown, Board of Education President  
Jay Stewart, Board of Education Vice President  
Jonathan Handley, Board Member  
Kyle Whittington, Board Member  
Amber Terachelis, Board Member

Congratulations to the Louis Pizitz Middle School Symphonic Band for being selected to perform at the 2025 Alabama Music Educators Association Professional Development Conference. The AMEA conference has a rich tradition of exceptional performances. I have been privileged to attend the conference in the past few years and know what an honor it is to be selected to participate.

The Pizitz Symphonic Band is under the direction of Leah Seng and Victoria Chambless. These two leaders are exemplary musicians and educators who continually challenge our band program to reach greater heights. They are genuinely invested in every child that participates in the band program. Under their leadership, the Symphonic Band continues a legacy of excellence in the Pizitz band program.

Over the last decade, Pizitz bands have participated in numerous festivals including the Southeastern Regional Concert Band Festival, AMEA annual conference, and Music for All National and Regional Concert Band Festivals. The Pizitz band program has also garnered accolades that include NAMM Foundation Best Community for Music Education, National Band Association Blue Ribbon National Middle School Award of Excellence, and the John Philip Sousa Sudler Silver Cup. Bands from Pizitz are routinely invited to be guest ensembles at universities in Alabama.

I am thrilled for the Pizitz Symphonic Band to perform at the AMEA conference and know that it will be an inspiring moment for so many who attend. I wish all the best for continued success to the students in the band, Mrs. Seng, and Mrs. Chambless!

Sincerely,  
  
Todd Freeman



VESTAVIA HILLS  
A LIFE ABOVE

ASHLEY C. CURRY  
Mayor  
JEFFREY DOWNES  
City Manager

January 8, 2025

Mrs. Leah Seng, EdS, NBCT  
Pizitz Middle School Band  
2826 Columbiana Rd  
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216

Re: 2025 Alabama Music Educators Association Conference

Dear Mrs. Seng,

I am delighted to hear that the Pizitz Symphonic Band has been selected as an invited ensemble for the 2025 Alabama Music Educators Association Conference to be held on January 24<sup>th</sup> at the BJCC Theatre.

We applaud your efforts in providing an excellent school music program at Pizitz Middle School. We support quality music instruction in all of our schools, and we share the view that music plays an important role in development of the whole child.

What an honor for the band to be selected to perform at this conference. Congratulations on this recognition!

Sincerely,  
  
Ashley C. Curry  
Mayor

ACC/ja





# LETTERS OF CONGRATULATIONS



2826 Columbiana Road • Vestavia Hills, Alabama 35216 • (205) 402-5350 • vestavia412@uspiztz

January 13, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my distinct pleasure to commend the Pizitz Symphonic Band on their opportunity to perform at the Alabama Music Educators Association Professional Development Conference in January. As you have certainly heard, both our band directors and student musicians have developed inspiring performances at the middle school level. Their work in music is exceptional, and I am proud to be their principal. It is a high honor to watch them seek their highest potential. When they are given the opportunity, students rise to the occasion and it is a lovely sight to see (and hear)!

At Pizitz, we seek to live out our creed of character, excellence, and family in all we do and say. What an honor to receive this commendation of excellence for young musicians. As their principal, I can also attest to their commitment to character- as they seek to personally grow as collaborators and learners. Our band directors, Leah Seng and Victoria Chambless, work tirelessly to cultivate an amazing, inclusive environment in the band room that embraces the notion of family through positive behavioral supports, ongoing praise, and high attention to detailed expectations.

I look forward to hearing the performance. Thank you for offering this opportunity to our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alicia Hunsberger'.

Alicia Hunsberger, Ed.D.  
Principal



January 9, 2025

Congratulations to the Pizitz Symphonic Band on being selected to perform at the Alabama Music Educators Association (AMEA) Conference. This distinguished recognition reflects the dedication and hard work of both the students and their directors, Leah Seng and Victoria Chambless.

The Vestavia Hills City Schools Arts Education Department is immensely proud of your achievements. We hope that you will savor this remarkable performance, as it will be a cherished memory. Thank you for representing VHCS Arts at the AMEA Conference.

Once again, congratulations on this well-deserved honor!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Faith Lenhart'.

Faith Lenhart  
Vestavia Hills City Schools  
Director of Arts Education





# PROGRAM

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Hi!</b>                     | William Owens   |
| <b>Bamboo Warrior</b>          | Christina Huss  |
| <b>One Final Mission</b>       | Adrian B. Sims  |
| <b>Rockbox</b>                 | Brian Slawson   |
| <b>Skogtrollet</b>             | Hans Peter Nielsen arr. Oystein Heimdal<br><i>Nib McKinney- Bassoon Soloist</i> |
| <b>MacFarlane's Lantern</b>    | Jennifer E. Rose  |
| <b>The Country Club Stomp!</b> | JaRod Hall  |



# PROGRAM NOTES

**Hi!**

William Owens

Alfred Music Publishing, Grade 2.5-3, Performance Time 2:15

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William Owens writes: Etymologically, the name Hiroto is of Japanese origin meaning big, great, soar, or glide. As music honoring a departed loved one is generally of an emotional nature, I was thrilled (and taken aback to be honest) at the request that the piece be upbeat and jovial. The title of the work draws inspiration from Hiroto's signature greeting and quite coincidentally, the first two letters of his name! The piece begins quietly but energetically with percussion and gradually blossoms into engaging melodic lines and a rich harmonic background. The music then comes to a tranquil yet cheerful end.

## **Bamboo Warrior**

Christina Huss

Excelcia Music Publishing, Grade 3, Performance Time 4:12

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In *Bamboo Warrior*, our hero is called from the peace and safety of his/her beautiful bamboo home to the battle of battles. The opening of the tone poem begins in the bamboo garden with solo flute and stays in the serene garden backdrop before the music moves to an ominous feeling. Urgency and an exciting chase leads the hero to a victorious destiny.

## **One Final Mission**

Adrian B. Sims

MakeMusic Publications, Grade 2, Performance Time 2:18

.....

Inspired by recent film and video game scores, this work takes us on one final adventure prior to ultimate victory. Heroic, optimistic, and adventurous! The music takes us from the safety of the mission base and propels the adventurer on an intense journey before securing victory. *One Final Mission* was commissioned by Pizitz Middle School in 2024 with grant funding from the Alabama State Council on the Arts.

## **Rockbox**

Brian Slawson

Tapspace, Med-Easy, Performance Time 2:45

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Intended as a tongue-in-cheek throwback to the disco era, Rockbox (based on J.S. Bach's popular Two-Part Invention No. 8 in F Major) should be thumping. Now, get your dance jam on!

# Skogtrollet

Hans Peter Nielsen arr. Oystein Heimdal

*Nib McKinney- bassoon soloist*

Norsk Noteservice, Grade 2.5, Performance Time 3:05

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*Skogtrollet*, meaning “Wood Troll”, was composed in 1950 for bassoon solo with orchestra. This arrangement can be played with bassoon- or tuba soloist. It is a funny and challenging piece for a soloist.

# MacFarlane’s Lantern

Jennifer E. Rose

Randall Standridge Music, Grade 3, Performance Time 2:18

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The story of “MacFarlane’s Lantern” dates back centuries to the Clan MacFarlane of the Scottish Highlands. Descended from the medieval Earls of Lennox, the MacFarlanes occupied a portion of the western shore of Loch Lomond. For much of their history, the MacFarlane clansmen were a rambunctious and rebellious group. Their rallying cry, “Loch Sloy”, was used as a signal for night raids to take cattle from their richer neighbors. It is because of their very successful night raids that the full moon that shines over the Scottish Highlands became known as “MacFarlane’s Lantern”.

# The Country Club Stomp!

JaRod Hall

The FJH Music Company, Grade 3, Performance Time 3:07

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This piece is written in the style of a “second line” groove, which originates from New Orleans brass band parades. The parade block would traditionally consist of the brass band in the front (forming the first line), followed by the crowds of people marching and dancing along with the band (forming the second line). The drummers, the leaders of the second line, provide a joyful and energetic pulse to keep the participants moving along. This cultural staple of New Orleans is an evolution of West African circle dances. Second lines have become a staple to both Black American and African American celebrations and processions, even including funerals. *The Country Club Stomp!* gets its name from Country Club Drive, the street on which Sam Houston Middle School is located in Irving, Texas.





# 2024-2025 LOUIS PIZITZ SYMPHONIC BAND

## **Flute**

Annaliese Aller  
Shambeau Das  
Taylor Kennedy  
Sophia Kong  
Sophia Wang  
Charlotte Watkins  
Charlotte Yother

## **Oboe**

Ana Lucia Carlo  
Caroline Perry

## **Bassoon**

Tucker Hicks

## **Clarinet**

Anjali Anantharam  
Ava Almond  
Gisele Balch  
Madeline Dillon  
Addison Gowing  
Nathan Green  
Alex Liu  
Riley Lyndon  
Destanei Sheffield  
Jessie Shi  
Oliver Soong  
Charlotte Stamper  
Grant Thomas  
Henry Vance  
Logan White

## **Bass Clarinet**

Elizabeth Brewer  
Sasha Shakhmatov

## **Alto Saxophone**

Jaylen Galloway  
James Henry Gibson  
Alyssa Hieftje  
Ari Johnson  
Zander Poe  
Elena Smith-Moody

## **Tenor Saxophone**

Henry Bridges

## **Bari Saxophone**

Mason Stephens

## **French Horn**

Fletcher Bush  
Dawson Doleys  
Katie Hovater  
Xanthe McKelvey

## **Trumpet**

Joss Carr  
Alex Dueffer  
Jordan Hovater  
Santiago Montejo Nazar  
Shiloh Sciacca  
Albert Sun  
Andrew Wallace  
Natalie Windsor

## **Trombone**

Baylor Boeckmann  
Troy Carlisle  
Jacob Esparza  
Bennett Jackman  
Cooper Mitchell  
Alex Oakley

## **Euphonium**

Luke Brown  
Jack Verhine

## **Tuba**

Michael Battle  
Ethan Belue  
Olen Gann  
Miriam Hudson

## **String Bass**

Avie Thompson

## **Percussion**

Jenny Bae  
Pender Fritz  
BW Haddock  
Thomas Kime  
Ryder Mussato  
Juniper Richardson  
Cannon Thomas  
Derek Tian

# DIRECTORS



**Leah Seng** is in her 14th year at Pizitz Middle School, and her 22nd year of teaching. A pianist and clarinetist, Mrs. Seng is a native of Chelsea, Alabama. During her tenure at Pizitz, the band performed at The Midwest international Band and Orchestra Clinic, Music For All National Middle School Band Festival, Southern Division CBDNA/NBA Conference, Music for All Southeastern Regional Concert Band Festival and the Alabama Music Educators Association Professional Development Conference as well as been an invited ensemble at the University of Alabama, Auburn University, Troy University and UAB honor band festivals. The band program has received the NBA Blue Ribbon Award of Excellence and the John Philip Sousa Foundation Sudler Cup.

Prior to serving at Pizitz, Mrs. Seng established the band program at Columbiana Middle School. Her bands have been consistently recognized with superior ratings at Alabama's Music Performance Assessment. In 2018, Mrs. Seng was named Pizitz Middle School Teacher of the Year. The previous year, she was selected as Rotary Teacher of the Year for Pizitz. She is active as a guest clinician and conductor for middle school bands throughout the region. Mrs. Seng is a board member and clarinetist for the Alabama Winds community band. She currently serves as the Chair for the District IV of the Alabama Bandmasters Association. Mrs. Seng has presented clinic sessions at the Alabama Music Educators Association Conference and Alabama All-State Band Festival.

Mrs. Seng holds the degrees of Bachelor of Science in Music Education from the University of Alabama, Master of Music Education from the University of Georgia, and Educational Specialist in Music Education from the University of Alabama. Her professional affiliations include the National Band Association, National Association for Music Education, Alabama Music Educators Association, and the Alabama Bandmasters Association. In 2022, Mrs. Seng earned National Board Certification in Early and Middle Childhood Music. Leah is married to Jordan, and has two children, Julia and Jordan Jr.



**Victoria Chambless** is in her 4th year as the Assistant Band Director at Pizitz Middle School. She began her teaching career as the 6th-12th grade Band Director at Hamilton High School in Hamilton, Alabama. She came to Pizitz from Rudd Middle School in Pinson, Alabama, where she served as the Director of Bands. Bands under the direction of Mrs. Chambless consistently receive superior ratings at the Alabama Music Performance Assessment each year. She was named "Teacher of the Year" at Rudd Middle School for the 2020-2021 school year.

Mrs. Chambless holds the degrees of Bachelor of Science in Music Education from the University of Alabama and Master of Music Education from Central Washington University through the American Band College. Mrs. Chambless is an active clinician and has conducted various middle school honor bands throughout the state of Alabama. Victoria is married to Matthew Chambless, the Director of Bands at Simmons Middle School in Hoover, Alabama. Both her husband and her perform in the Alabama Winds community band in Birmingham, Alabama.

# NIB MCKINNEY

Nib McKinney is a distinguished performer and dedicated bassoon educator known for her dynamic and engaging presence in the music community. Originally from Fort Payne, AL, McKinney now lives in Birmingham where she maintains a flourishing private studio of bassoon students. With teaching appointments at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Samford University, the University of Montevallo, the University of North Alabama, the University of West Georgia, and the Alabama School of Fine Arts, she encourages and develops the next generation of bassoonists.



As the founder and director of the Birmingham Bassoon Band, McKinney actively promotes community engagement through music, bringing together bassoonists of all ages from across Alabama. Her performance schedule extends throughout the Southeast, where she performs with ensembles such as the Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra, Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, Chattanooga Symphony, The Atlanta Pops, Jackson Symphony (TN), and Rome Symphony Orchestra.

Currently, McKinney is recording her debut studio album, “Bassoon Americana”, which highlights the works of underrepresented American composers. She has shared the stage with notable artists, including Tony Toni Tone, Chloë Agnew, Bo Bice, India.Arie, The Blind Boys of Alabama, LeAnn Rimes, and The Temptations, Praised for her “big and beautiful” sound and confidence and characterized as an “easy collaborator”, her performances are noted for their confidence and nuance.

McKinney holds a B.S. in Music Education from the University of Alabama and an M.M. in Performance from the University of Georgia, where she is also completing her D.M.A. in Performance. With a deep commitment to exploring new music formats and teaching methodologies, Nib McKinney continues to enrich the musical landscape wherever she performs.



# LOUIS PIZITZ MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND

The band program serves 240 students annually. Sixth grade students are placed in the Beginning Band program where they receive group and individualized instruction. In the seventh and eighth grades, students are placed into one of two ability-based performing bands. The Pizitz Band is under the direction of Leah Seng and Victoria Chambless.

The Pizitz Band program has a rich history of outstanding achievement. The band program has received many awards as well as earning consistent superior ratings at the yearly Alabama Bandmasters Music Performance Assessment. The band program has received the NBA Blue Ribbon Award of Excellence and the John Philip Sousa Sudler Silver Cup. The Pizitz Middle School Symphonic Band has performed at many prestigious events, including the Midwest Clinic, Music For All National Concert Band Festival, Alabama Music Educators Conference, NBA/CBDNA Southern Division Conference and performances as invited ensembles at the major universities in Alabama.

The Pizitz Band program includes a wonderful staff of sectional and lesson teachers. Students in all band classes have opportunities to take private lessons, to perform throughout the school and community in small ensembles and to perform at Solo and Ensemble Festival. Percussion students may also enroll in our Percussion Ensemble class. Students in the band program are very active in other activities, including Athletics, Robotics, Math Team, Student Council, Ambassadors and Drama. It is the goal of the band program to foster a lifelong love of music and to help students realize their potential in band and in life.



### **Flute**

Annaliese Aller  
Shambeau Das  
Taylor Kennedy  
Sophia Kong  
Sophia Wang  
Charlotte Watkins  
Charlotte Yother



### **Clarinet**

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Ava Almond  
Gisele Balch  
Madeline Dillon  
Addison Gowing  
Nathan Green  
Alex Liu  
Riley Lyndon  
Destanei Sheffield  
Jessie Shi  
Oliver Soong  
Charlotte Stamper  
Grant Thomas  
Henry Vance  
Logan White



### **Oboe**

Ana Lucia Carlo  
Caroline Perry

### **Bassoon**

Tucker Hicks

### **Bass Clarinet**

Elizabeth Brewer  
Sasha Shakhmatov

### **String Bass**

Avie Thompson



## **Alto Saxophone**

Jaylen Galloway  
James Henry Gibson  
Alyssa Hiefertje  
Ari Johnson  
Zander Poe  
Elena Smith-Moody

## **Tenor Saxophone**

Henry Bridges

## **Bari Saxophone**

Mason Stephens

## **French Horn**

Fletcher Bush  
Dawson Doleys  
Katie Hovater  
Xanthe McKelvey



## **Trumpet**

Joss Carr  
Alex Dueffer  
Jordan Hovater  
Santiago Montejo Nazar  
Shiloh Sciacca  
Albert Sun  
Andrew Wallace  
Natalie Windsor







**Trombone**  
Baylor Boeckmann  
Troy Carlisle  
Jacob Esparza  
Bennett Jackman  
Cooper Mitchell  
Alex Oakley



**Euphonium**  
Luke Brown  
Jack Verhine

**Tuba**  
Michael Battle  
Ethan Belue  
Olen Gann  
Miriam Hudson



**Percussion**  
Jenny Bae  
Pender Fritz  
BW Haddock  
Thomas Kime  
Ryder Mussato  
Juniper Richardson  
Cannon Thomas  
Derek Tian

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to:

**The 2023-2024 Pizitz Symphonic Band members:** We are here today because of your hard work!

**Our current Pizitz Symphonic Band students:** We are so lucky to be your directors! Watching you work together and grow since you were “born into beginning band” has been an awesome journey.

**The Pizitz Middle School Band Parents:** Thank you for all you have done to help our students be successful, and thank you for allowing us the privilege of teaching them.

**Dr. Todd Freeman, Superintendent of Vestavia Hills City Schools:** Thank you for your support of the Pizitz Band Program and commitment to fine arts education in our school system.

**Dr. Alicia Hunsberger, Principal of Pizitz Middle School, and Russell Leonard, Donna Morgan, and Ashley Perry, Assistant Principals of Pizitz Middle School,** for your support of the Pizitz Band Program and truly understanding what we do in the band room!

**Faith Lenhart, VHCS Director of Arts Education,** for your support in funding and grant writing and finding a way to make our ideas happen.

**Deanna Bell, Trudye Confessore, Kate Donaldson, Jerell Horton, and Heather Palmer,** Vestavia Hills Elementary Music Teachers and High School Band Directors, for your friendship and support.

**The faculty and staff at Pizitz Middle School:** Thank you for supporting our band students through academics. Teachers and coaches- you go above and beyond to make sure students can participate fully in as many activities as they want.

**Past Pizitz Directors:** Kim Bain and Susie Winter, you are the reason we are here. We are honored to continue the incredible legacy you built! Thank you for your inspiration and support.

**Grant Dalton and Samford University Bands** for sharing the beautiful Brock Hall and use of percussion equipment for our Preview Concert.

**Pizitz Middle School Private Lesson and Sectional Staff:** Karla Roberts, Dr. Siobhán Ciulla, Nib McKinney, Anna Stoney, Stephanie Chapman, Cindy Chambless, Joseph Smith, Steve Jessup, David Curren, Brad Palmer, and Chris Byars. You play such a big role in the success of these students and this band program.





