

# The Sagemont School's Music Program is Something to Sing About

BY STACEY BOMSER



Sagemont Synergy

The Sagemont School prides itself on the success of its students, who excel academically, athletically and artistically. In the performing arts, its multi-disciplinary music program, which includes both band and choral instruction, has allowed students to achieve greatness and perform publicly.

Sagemont's music program begins at the Lower School Campus where children are introduced to music theory, vocal score reading and music appreciation. According to music teacher Sandy Baron, students start as beginners, both vocally and instrumentally. The students advance, during their music class, both individually and as a group.

"The chorus is open to third, fourth and fifth grade students," notes Ms. Baron. "These students are taught to follow vocal scores and use proper vocal techniques, while using the repertoire that is sung in unison, rounds and, when possible, two-parts."

As students matriculate to the Upper School Campus, for middle school and high school, the musical instruction choices expand exponentially. The Sagemont School offers band, chorus, keyboard, guitar, and rock band programs, as well as music theory courses through the Advanced Placement level.



Members of the Sagemont Upper School band practice.

"Theory is an important part of the foundation of music and as we often teach through performance, various concepts are introduced currently in all concert band performance ensembles," explains Band Director Jessica Gronberg.

Music theory is also taught to choral students. Teacher Matthew Goldberg notes, "Along with standard music theory, we cover harmony, ear training, arranging, stage performance and more."

Sagemont's music program is open to all students. "Each and every year we have several students at different ages that come to our program that are new and begin their musical journey," shares Ms. Gronberg. "What's so wonderful as a sixth through twelfth grade program, most stay to continue playing so that we continue building upon this foundation. The amount of growth seen from year to year is truly remarkable."

That is evident by the numerous accolades and accomplishments students are receiving. According to Ms. Gronberg, "Sagemont students Peter Koltis and Jonathan Lopez are part of the All-State Honor Band. Sarah Roque, Brian Pastewski and Jonathan Lopez are in the All-County Honor Band. And Angeliqwe Gronberg was selected for the Youth Pride Honor Band."

In addition, Sagemont had several students participate in the Florida Bandmasters Association District and State Solo and Ensemble, which took place last month. The school also has students performing in the South Florida Honor Band Festival hosted by the University of Miami Honor Band, Tri-State and Festival of Winds Honor Band.

"My philosophy has always been that given an atmosphere where pride, respect, and diligence are fostered, excellence will be something students will demand of themselves," shares Ms. Gronberg. "I credit the students for the various achievements and accomplishments throughout this year as well as prior years."

While classical music is obviously important in music instruction, Sagemont students are fortunate to be able to study more modern music as well in the guitar, keyboard and rock band classes. "Chorus is often offered at many schools, but the



The Sagemont Lower School chorus performs at Cleveland Clinic Florida.

opportunity to study guitar and/or keyboard five days a week is extremely advantageous. Most music students study privately with a teacher at their home or in a studio once a week for 30 minutes. Taking music five days a week surely accelerates the learning process," claims Mr. Goldberg, who also directs the Sagemont Synergy rock band. "From Mozart to Maroon 5...from Bach to Bon Jovi...they're rockin' it all here at The Sagemont School."

Sagemont Synergy is a culmination of the chorus, guitar, keyboard and rock band programs at The Sagemont School. "Our performances feature students in all these programs working together on different songs. They perform vocal solos, duets, small ensembles, large ensembles, and sometimes perform all together like we do at Weston Town Center and Walt Disney World."

Performing in public is a big part of being a musician and Sagemont music students are presented plenty of opportunities to perform on campus, in the community and around the state. At school, band and choral students perform seasonal concerts, as well as at The Sagemont School Art Festival, open houses, and graduation. Locally, students are invited to perform annually at Weston's Celebrate the Arts Day. They have also performed at Cleveland Clinic Florida. Other notable performances include a Universal Studios' STARS Stage performance, Give Kids the World (a special village for terminally ill children and their families), and national anthem performance at a Miami Marlins game.

These performances are not the only unique opportunity available to students at The Sagemont School. Its Visual & Performing Arts Center, housed on the Upper School Campus, has provided a place for music students to study and thrive.

"With the support of our outstanding administration, we have received sound equipment and instruments to take Synergy to the next level," said Mr. Goldberg. "When you walk into our room and see the mixing board, PA speakers, wireless microphones, electric and acoustic guitars, our beautiful new Yamaha electric pianos, drums and more...you can surely tell Sagemont is someplace special."