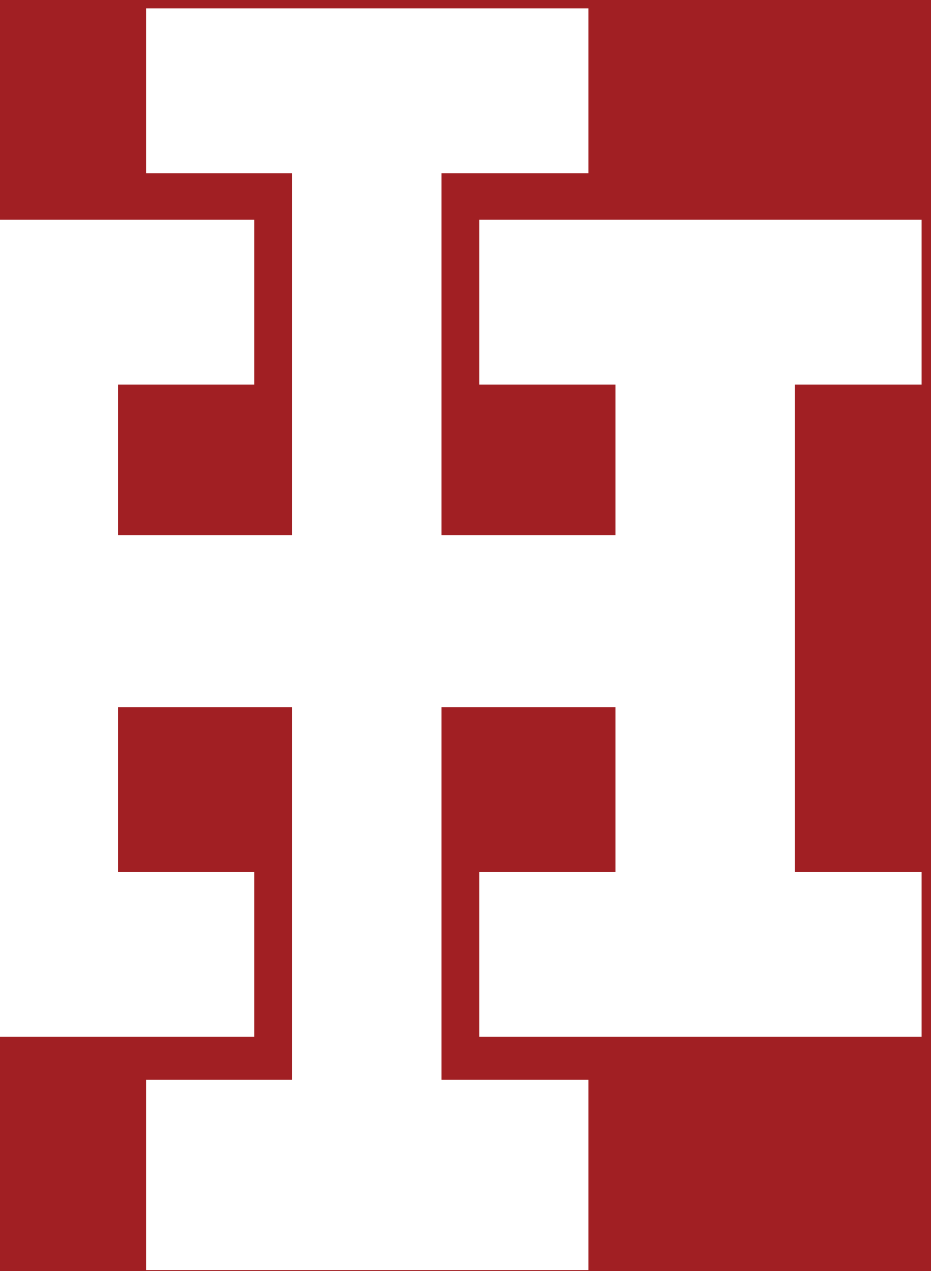


# CONSERVATORY | FOR THE ARTS

SPRING 2025



# A NEW CHAPTER IN ARTS EDUCATION



 **Jake Freshwater**  
11th Grade  
Ceramics & Sculpture

*Jake Freshwater,  
Class of 2026,  
IHHS Winter  
Art Show*



Arts & Activities Director Amy Clark with Evy Settle, Class of 2035 after a performance of "Frozen"

## THE CONSERVATORY FOR THE ARTS

AMY CLARK,  
DISTRICT ARTS &  
ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR

**The launch of the Indian Hill Arts Conservatory marks a bold and transformative chapter in our district's commitment to K-12 arts education. As the Arts and Activities Director, I could not be more thrilled to share how this initiative places the arts at the very heart of student learning—cultivating creativity, collaboration, and innovation across every grade level.**

The Conservatory is not a brand-new concept, but rather a natural evolution of the incredible work already happening across our district. For years, we've built a strong foundation in arts education—and now, we're intentionally expanding opportunities, adding new courses and staff, and looking ahead to enhanced facilities and programming that reflect the needs and passions of our students.

**INDIAN HILL IS INVESTING BOLDLY IN ARTS EDUCATION BY ENHANCING AND EXPANDING LEARNING SPACES ACROSS THE DISTRICT. RECENT UPDATES INCLUDE:**

### 2024

- **Renovated band and orchestra rooms** serving students in grades 6-12
- **Brand-new middle school choir room**
- **Two dedicated, state-of-the-art middle school art classrooms**
- **Unified Arts wing** at the elementary school—housing general music, band, orchestra, dance, and visual art
- **Renovated auditorium** at the primary school

### 2025

- **New digital media teacher** supporting middle and high school students
- **Reimaged spaces for digital media**
- **Second orchestra director** added for students in grades 5-12
- **Dance program launched**, with courses and instruction during the school day
- **New high school piano lab**, integrated into the AP Music Theory room, with more renovations to come this summer
- **New high school computer lab** dedicated to graphic design

Alongside these facilities improvements, we've expanded our curriculum to include exciting new offerings such as digital media production and advanced performance techniques. These courses build on the richness of traditional arts education while introducing students to emerging creative fields. As we look to the future, we're exploring the addition of programs in sound and recording engineering—expanding opportunities for students to engage with the technical side of the arts. Technology remains a key focus across disciplines, with students already working hands-on with tools like high-end digital cameras and editing platforms—developing work that is both innovative and reflective of contemporary practices.



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*Members of the Creative Team after the 2023 production of IHHS Theatre Winter Musical, "Frozen"*

The impact of the Conservatory reaches well beyond our school buildings. Through performances, exhibitions, and collaborations with local artists and organizations, our students are increasingly connecting with the broader community. These experiences help them understand the vital role of the artist in society and the power of the arts to inspire, challenge, and unite.

For me personally, this initiative is the fulfillment of a long-standing dream. I've always believed that the arts are essential to a well-rounded education. They're not just subjects to study—they're vehicles for self-expression, critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving. **With the Indian Hill Arts Conservatory, we are equipping our students not just for the next performance or project, but for lifelong success in whatever path they choose.**

The Indian Hill Arts Conservatory represents an ongoing investment in our students and their futures. With the tools, spaces, and opportunities we are putting in place—and those still to come—our young artists are poised to grow, create, and thrive in extraordinary ways.

I invite you to join us in celebrating this exciting journey. The work is far from over—and the best is yet to come.

ALUMNI  
SPOTLIGHT



Alumni Spotlight Cedric Michael Cox  
and his artwork

## Q&A WITH ARTIST, ALUM, AND ADVOCATE FOR JOYFUL CREATIVITY

CEDRIC MICHAEL COX

**From Kenwood kid to celebrated visual artist, Cedric Michael Cox has made his mark on Cincinnati—and far beyond—through vibrant, abstract art infused with joy, purpose, and deep-rooted meaning. An Indian Hill High School alum, Mr. Cox continues to show how a creative spirit, nurtured early, can blossom into a lifelong calling. We caught up with Mr. Cox to hear about his journey, his process, and the advice he has for current Braves finding their own artistic voice.**

**INDIAN HILL SCHOOL DISTRICT (IHSD):** WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE ART CLASS IN HIGH SCHOOL?

**CEDRIC COX (CC):** My senior year with Mr. Wolter stands out the most. He was a new teacher—fresh out of his master’s program—and brought a fun, laid-back energy to the classroom. He had a real excitement for everything, especially Art History. That energy was contagious. I took Advanced Art and also stayed after school to create. There was a camaraderie there, and he gave me room for my imagination to run.

**IHSD: WAS THERE A SPECIFIC “AHA!” MOMENT WHERE YOU KNEW ART WOULD BE YOUR CAREER? OR DID IT JUST EVOLVE NATURALLY?**

**CC:** It always felt natural. Even back in first grade with Miss McKibbin—I remember intensely coloring a themed project and just loving it. She shared my piece with the class. I was the new kid, and that moment gave me confidence. People would say, “You’re gonna knock this out of the park,” and I liked proving them right. That mindset followed me. Art became a way of grounding myself and creating something others could relate to.





Cedric Cox with his art

**IHSD: WHAT WAS YOUR ARTISTIC JOURNEY LIKE AFTER LEAVING INDIAN HILL?**

**CC:** I studied at University of Cincinnati's College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (UC DAAP) from 1994 to 1999, concentrating in painting. I spent my junior year abroad at the Glasgow School of Art in Scotland—that was transformative. After graduation, I moved to Over-the-Rhine, opened a small studio, and connected with artists who were doing pop-up shows and pushing boundaries. My first major exhibition was in 2001 at The Modern Design Gallery.

What really fueled me was community. I'd keep my studio doors open for kids to come in and color. That back-and-forth with the community—that connection—is part of what still drives me. I wanted to create work that sparked conversation. Art education and outreach became part of my mission early on.



**IHSD: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ARTISTIC STYLE AND PREFERRED MEDIUM?**

**CC:** Mostly painting, especially acrylic. Early in my career, I drew a lot—especially after Scotland. I realized this was a gift people were recognizing. There was a rhythm to drawing that led me back into color. My style is abstract, representational, surreal at times. I focus on cityscapes and urban environments, with attention to detail and composition that invites people in.

I want my work to feel joyful and universal—something anyone can engage with. I'm interested in the "why" behind what I'm creating. My art often sparks conversations not just about aesthetics, but about memories and identity. It's social commentary rooted in shared experience rather than division.





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*Cedric Cox with his art*

**IHSD: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO INDIAN HILL ART STUDENTS TODAY?**

**CC:** First—have fun. Make sure you’re creating from a place that feels natural to you. Don’t burn out trying to be everything to everyone. Stay grounded in self-respect and work ethic. That little extra bit of accountability? It makes good art.

Also—don’t get caught up in envy. Healthy competition is fine, but don’t let what you don’t have distract you from what you can create. Take care of your obligations, and don’t lose sight of what’s in front of you. The work you do now matters.

**IHSD: WHAT DO YOU HOPE STUDENTS WALK AWAY WITH FROM THEIR ARTS EDUCATION?**

**CC:** I want them to know their voice matters. Even if it seems like “everything’s already been done”—it hasn’t. The moment you finish a piece, you’re adding your voice to art history. That’s powerful.

You’ll inspire others. What you believe in will come through in your work. Stay true to who you are, not just who came before you. Social media can be a trap—keep a portfolio for yourself to remind you that you are enough.

Everyone has something special to offer. When I saw Picasso’s work as a kid, I thought, I can do this. That wasn’t ego—it was purpose. It was my turn. And now, it’s yours.

**IHSD: ANY FINAL THOUGHTS?**

**CC:** Art became more than just a class—it became a calling. I wasn’t the kid trying to be class president. I was the wild one, the free spirit. But when I left my 9–5 job to chase my dream, I worked another 6–8 hours every night to make it happen. And it did. That’s the dream. You just have to show up for it.





**THE BRAVES MARCHING BAND CONTINUES TO SHAPE NOT ONLY SKILLED MUSICIANS, BUT ALSO CONFIDENT, ADAPTABLE, AND COMPASSIONATE YOUNG ADULTS.**

**FEATURING TESTIMONIALS FROM ALUMNI REMI FRY, AUDREY PHILLIPS, HARRISON PADHY, AND NATHAN PADHY.**

# BRAVES MARCHING BAND A LEGACY



Behind every impressive performance lies a level of commitment that few outside the band world fully understand. These students begin preparing in the heat of summer and don't stop until mid-November. They bring the energy under the Friday night lights, then turn around and compete early Saturday mornings—often on just a few hours of rest. It's a schedule that demands grit, time management, and a true love for the art. The dedication of our Braves Marching Band students is unmatched, and it's part of what shapes them into disciplined, resilient individuals prepared for whatever comes next.

This legacy shines brightly through the stories of recent Braves Marching Band alumni who are now continuing their musical journeys in collegiate marching bands across the country.

Remi Fry, a current freshman at the University of Cincinnati, credits the BMB with transforming her musical and personal path.



***“Without my music guidance at Indian Hill, I would not have even considered a college marching band. It made me a more skilled and confident musician, alongside giving me critical social and leadership skills that greatly assisted in the transition from high school to college. I owe so much to Mr. Barker and Mr. Rotsching—without them and the Braves Marching Band, I wouldn't be in the place I am now.”***

That spirit of mentorship is a common thread. Audrey Phillips, now a freshman marching with the University of Wisconsin, reflects on the resilience and flexibility she developed through the BMB.



***“I originally auditioned on alto saxophone and ended up being placed on trombone. I had to adapt, but I ended up really enjoying both playing my instrument and the people around me. Mr. Rotsching's belief in me was the spark I needed to audition for the college marching band. It's been difficult at times, but I've never regretted it—the experiences have been incredible.”***





For brothers Harrison and Nathan Padhy, both now performing with Florida State University's renowned Marching Chiefs, the BMB was the starting point for discovering their passion for music and their leadership potential.

Harrison, a current sophomore, shared,



***“Music is one of my biggest passions—one I may never have fully realized without the exemplary music programs and staff at Indian Hill. Thanks to the opportunities I was given as early as middle school, I had the skill and passion needed for collegiate marching band.”***

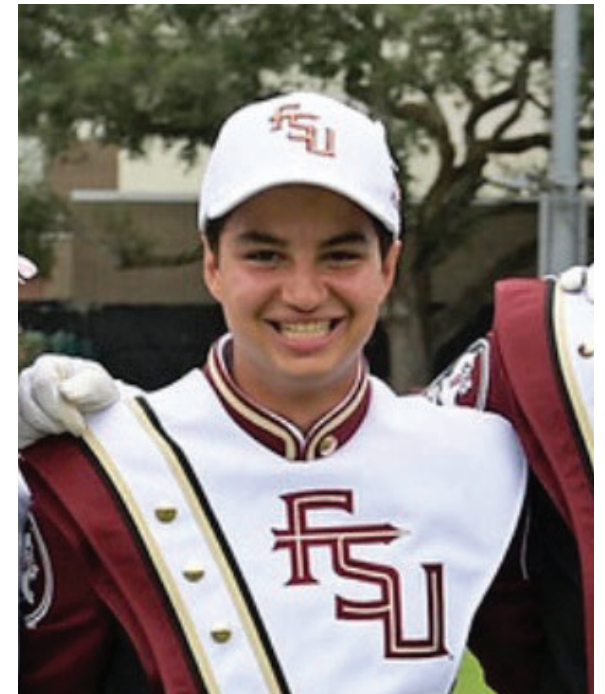
Nathan, a freshman, added,



***“The BMB taught me more than just music. It helped me develop leadership, balance, and commitment—skills that were invaluable when transitioning to college. They’ve allowed me to succeed academically while continuing my passion for music.”***

These reflections speak volumes about the impact of a program that is as much about people as it is about performance. Under the direction of Mr. Barker and Mr. Rotsching, students are encouraged to challenge themselves, support one another, and take pride in their growth—not only as musicians, but as leaders, teammates, and community members.

Whether performing under the Friday night lights or competing on a regional stage, the Braves Marching Band continues to deliver powerful musical moments. But perhaps the most powerful part of all is what students carry with them long after the final note is played.





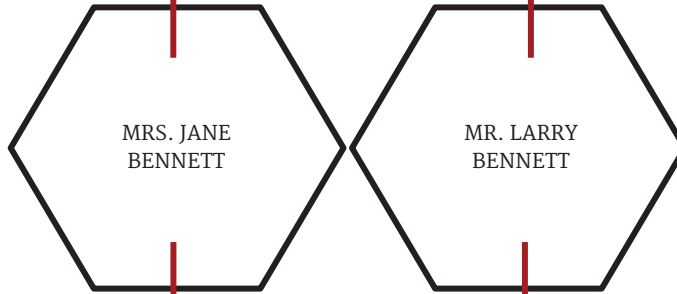
# ROOTED IN THE ARTS: THE BENNETT FAMILY

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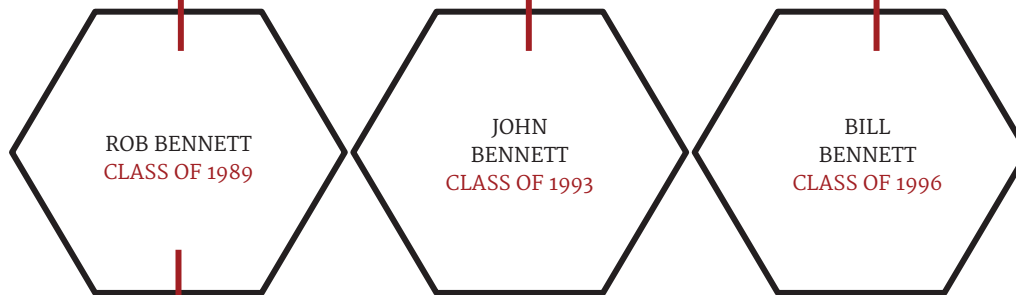
*Members of the Bennett Family*

# BENNETT IHSD ARTISTS FAMILY TREE

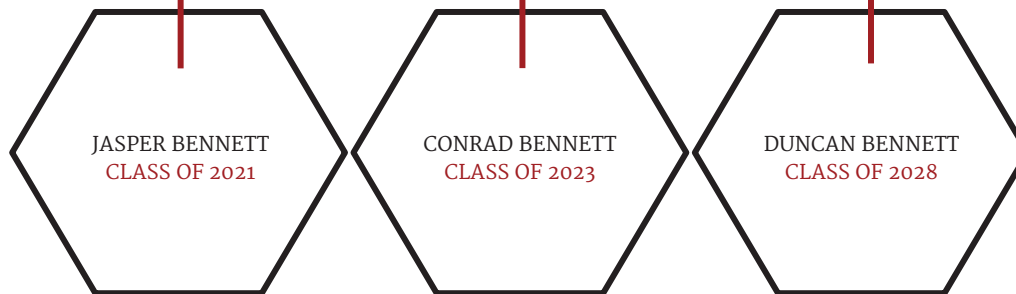
## PARENTS:



## THEIR CHILDREN:



## GRANDCHILDREN: ROB & HEATHER'S CHILDREN





Conrad Bennett and Jasper Bennett  
after Conrad's performance in  
*"Jesus Christ, Superstar"*

“

***We were introduced to the incredible breadth of programs IH offered— including music and the arts. That's when everything opened up for us.”***

**JANE BENNETT**

**WHEN A FAMILY'S STORY IS ROOTED IN MUSIC, THEATER, AND CREATIVITY, IT GROWS INTO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY—AND FOR THE BENNETTS, THEIR STORY HAS BEEN IN FULL BLOOM AT INDIAN HILL FOR MORE THAN FOUR DECADES. A TRUE “FAMILY TREE” OF THE ARTS, SPANNING THREE GENERATIONS, THE BENNETT LEGACY ILLUSTRATES HOW MUSIC AND PERFORMANCE NOT ONLY SHAPE INDIVIDUAL LIVES BUT ALSO CONNECT COMMUNITIES AND INSPIRE FUTURE ARTISTS.**

It all began in 1979 when Jane and Larry Bennett and their sons—Rob, John, and Bill—moved to Cincinnati and chose to settle in the Indian Hill School District. Their decision, driven by a commitment to quality education and a welcoming community, would go on to influence generations of their family in ways they never could have imagined.

“Our oldest son, Rob, was in second grade when we moved,” Jane shared. “John and Bill were of preschool age. Team sports were a big part of our lives, but soon we were introduced to the incredible breadth of programs IH offered—including music and the arts. That’s when everything opened up for us.”

Jane, a former high school teacher, quickly became an integral part of the Indian Hill

community, serving in PTA leadership and on the Indian Hill Booster Board. But it was her love of music that truly came alive when she attended her first high school musical, *Pippin*, in 1980. “What a performance it was! There was so much talent on that stage, and it was clear the students were deeply supported by the school and the community.”

Jane’s youngest son, Bill Bennett, IH Class of 1996, found his passion for performance early. “Singing in choir formed some of my earliest and fondest memories at school,” he shared. “I enjoyed the camaraderie with my peers, working toward a common goal led by a dedicated and passionate teacher, and having a lot of fun making music together.” He remembers forming a middle school rock band and performing at beloved music teacher Greg Hayward’s retirement celebration—an unforgettable experience made even more meaningful by Hayward’s personal battle with ALS.

Through high school, Bill was involved in Premieres, school musicals, and the talent show. “I loved being able to provide a rich, entertaining experience for others to enjoy,” he said. “Hank Henley and his team brought such energy and passion to their work, a value that I carry with me still today.” His senior year, he sang and danced in the lead role of *Crazy for You*—a performance his family still remembers vividly.

Bill’s love of music followed him into adulthood. He sang in the University of Virginia Glee Club, earned a master’s degree in vocal performance at DePaul University, and went on to perform with the Chicago



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Bill Bennett and Allison Henley  
(center couple) in "Crazy For You"

Lyric Opera and the Chicago Symphony Chorus. Today, though he lives outside the district, Bill remains an enthusiastic supporter of the arts at Indian Hill, attending concerts and productions with his wife and children whenever possible.

Her oldest son, Rob Bennett, IH Class of 1989, also has rich memories of the Indian Hill arts experience. "I kind of grew up in choir," he said, "and had the chance to be a part of the spring musical as a freshman. I really learned a lot about what it took to make a wonderful production come to life. Seeing different roles—on stage and off—and leadership among both students and teachers, and just the joy of being in front of a packed house in a great theater... I never forgot that." Rob also worked backstage as a member of the tech crew, an experience that gave him a unique behind-the-scenes perspective. One of his most cherished memories, though, came years later: "Back in 1996, Heather and I went out for a wonderful dinner before a show, and at that dinner, I proposed. That night, we had the opportunity to watch my brother Bill in the lead role in *Crazy for You*. We love that memory!"

Now Rob and Heather Bennett are proud Indian Hill parents themselves. Since moving back to the district in 2016, they've watched their sons—Jasper, Conrad, and Duncan—flourish in the very same programs that shaped their own lives.

Jasper and Conrad continued their musical journeys from previous schools, with Jasper performing in orchestra and choir and studying viola under Trista Emmons. Both

boys attended the Cedar Point music competition trips in middle school and participated in Premieres while in high school, building lasting memories. Jasper and Conrad now sing in a cappella groups at their respective universities, continuing the family's connection to performance.

Theater became especially meaningful for Conrad, who made his debut as Maurice in *Beauty and the Beast* and went on to take on several major roles, including three different kings in his senior year alone. His energetic portrayal of King Arthur in *Spamalot* and his memorable performance as King Herod in *Jesus Christ Superstar* were standouts.



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Members of the Bennett family after  
Conrad's performance in "Spamalot"

Duncan, the youngest, has already made his mark through roles in *Cinderella*, *The Wizard of Oz* during his time in middle school, and most recently in *Footloose*, the high school winter musical production this year, and is looking forward to being a member of Premieres next year. "We can't wait for more over the next three years," said Heather.

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***“On-stage opportunities build confidence and help our kids connect deeply with the world. We are so thankful for the tremendous instruction and support at Indian Hill.”***

Heather, a graphic designer by training and former Procter & Gamble Design Manager, has also brought her creative energy to the district. Through Spotlight, the annual PTO fundraising event to support the arts at the primary and elementary schools, she choreographed dances for groups of elementary boys, instilling rhythm, confidence, and a little bit of chutzpah. “I hope they enjoyed it at least half as much as I did,” she smiled.

She credits educators like Heather Koester, Kendra Thomas, Phil Clary, and Jeff Clark with helping each of her children find their niche in the arts. The family’s year abroad in Amsterdam underscored just how special Indian Hill’s arts programming is. “We were surprised by the lack of arts opportunities elsewhere. We’re so grateful to be back in a district that truly elevates the arts.”

Rob’s brother, John Bennett and his wife Amanda are also raising the next generation of Braves. While his sons aren’t all as active in the arts as their cousins, they remain deeply connected to the Indian Hill arts experience, and enjoyed the experiences they participated in within the arts world during their primary and elementary school days. Warren graduated with the Class of

2023, William is a current junior and a member of the varsity basketball team, and Sam is in fourth grade. All three boys have grown up participating in the arts during their K-5 years, as well as playing in the band during middle school for William and Warren, attending concerts and theatrical productions at IH, developing a strong appreciation for the arts as enthusiastic and supportive audience members. John continues to perform locally in the “Forever Diamond Band” with his IHHS classmate, John Hartz, a testament to how the arts are still part of his life.



*Rob, Duncan, Jane, Heather, and Larry-3 generations of Bennett's*

Bill Bennett, now living outside the district, also remains a passionate supporter of the arts. He and his wife Amanda regularly attend Indian Hill concerts and performances with their children, showing continued support for the program that helped shape Bill’s career and passion. Their presence in the audience reflects the enduring love the entire Bennett family holds for the arts—and their commitment to celebrating the talent of others.

As Conrad put it best, “Indian Hill brings out the best in its students and leaves an impact. The program breeds talent by supporting, challenging, and lifting students up.”

Jasper echoed that sentiment.

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***“The IH Arts program laid the foundation for my collegiate musical endeavors and has contributed to my ongoing musical aspirations.”***

Duncan adds, “I credit my enjoyment of the arts not only to my family but to my teachers. Throughout middle school, I learned bits of music theory from Mr. Clary and honed my changing voice with Mrs. Koester. Now, in high school, Mr. Sylvester has been a great help to gain confidence in my voice, as last year I was unable to partake in singing and choir as I was living abroad and did not have these opportunities. Thanks to their encouragement, I’ve been able to follow in my family’s footsteps.”

Whether on stage or in the audience, painting or performing, choreographing or composing—the Bennetts have shown up with joy, creativity, and an unwavering belief in the power of the arts. Their legacy is more than a family tradition. It’s a vibrant part of Indian Hill’s story.

As Jane says with pride, “The Bennett family continues to show up in force to watch Jasper, Conrad, and Duncan take the stage.”

DATE	TIME	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
Aug. 5	7:00 pm	Braves Marching Band Preview Night	Stadium
Oct. 16, 17, 18	7:00 pm	HS Fall Show Performances	The Sue
Oct. 21	7:00 pm	MS & HS Choral Concert	The Sue
Oct. 28	7:00 pm	MS & HS Fall Band Concert	The Sue
Oct. 30	7:00 pm	MS & HS Orchestra Spooktacular	The Sue
Nov. 8	TBD	Marching Band MidStates	Simon Kenton HS.
Nov. 14, 15	7:00 pm	MS Fall Show Performances	The Sue
Dec. 5-12	6:00 pm	HS Winter Art Show (Dec. 5th Opening Night)	
Dec. 10	7:00 pm	MS Chamber Music Fest	IHMS
Dec. 11	6:00 pm	ES Choir Concert	IHES
Jan. 24	6:30pm	Cabaret!	
Jan. 27	7:00 pm	6-8 Choral Concert	
Feb. 9-11	6:00 pm	2nd grade Musical Performances	IHPS
Feb. 19, 20, 21	7:00 pm	HS Winter Musical Performances	The Sue
Feb. 20	2:00 pm	HS Winter Musical Performance	The Sue
Feb. 27	4:30-7:00 pm	MS Art Show	Blue Ash Recreation Center
Mar. 1	2:00 pm	Spotlight Talent Show	The Sue
Mar. 4-5, 11-12	6:00 pm	Ukulele Concert	IHES
Mar. 7	Morning	Instrumental Music Donut Day	IHMS Cafe
Mar. 20-21	7:00 pm	MS Spring Musical	The Sue
Mar. 23-25	6:00 pm	1st grade Musical performances	IHPS
Mar. 26-April 3		HS Band & Orchestra European Trip	
Apr. 10	6:00-8:00 pm	MS Solo and Ensemble Festival	
Apr. 17-18	7:00 pm	HS Spring Show	The Sue
Apr. 22-26		9-12 Choir Trip	
TBD	5:30-7:00 pm	MS Art Show at Greenacres	
Apr. 30	7:00 pm	HS Choir Concert	The Sue
May 1-8	6:00 pm	HS Spring Art Show (May 1 Opening Night)	
May 5	7:00 pm	HS Band and Orchestra Concert	The Sue
May 4-6	6:00 pm	Kindergarten Musical performances	IHPS
May 7	6:00 pm	ES Choir Concert	IHES
May 12	7:00 pm	5th Grade Band and Orchestra	The Sue
May 14	6:00 pm	IHMS Music Showcase	The Sue
May 15	5:00-7:00 pm	SHINE Night	IHES

**PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS** | **2025-2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**



**LAUNCH: PIANO LAB COURSES, SIX KEYBOARD STATIONS,  
AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEEPEN MUSICIANSHIP.**

# EXPLORING CREATIVITY AND CONFIDENCE IN THE NEW IH PIANO LAB



Mr. Phil Clary with student Sofia Heinichen in Piano Lab

“

***I enjoy Piano Lab as it is such a fun and easy way to learn an instrument! I love that I get to play at my own pace in a relaxed environment, especially since I have this class in the middle of the day- it's a great way to destress. I am also grateful to have Mr. Clary open to helping when needed.***

The program is led by Phil Clary, a familiar and highly respected figure in the Indian Hill music community. For years, Mr. Clary has inspired students through his work as the AP Music Theory instructor, accompanist for grades 3–12 choir performances, and assistant director of Premieres. His deep musical knowledge, paired with a warm and encouraging teaching style, has made him the perfect fit to launch this exciting new offering.

The piano lab is outfitted with state-of-the-art digital pianos that allow students to work independently or in small groups, using headphones for focused practice or unplugging for group instruction and ensemble-style learning. This flexibility supports a range of learners—from those sitting down at the keyboard for the very first time to those who are looking to refine their technique and take their skills to the next level.

In Piano Lab, students are not only learning to play the instrument—they are continuing to build on the musical foundations they've developed in other courses. Concepts such as note naming, rhythm reading, and music theory are woven into each lesson, reinforcing what students may have learned in choir, band, orchestra, or AP Music Theory. The course offers a hands-on application of those skills, making music literacy more engaging, meaningful, and memorable.

“Piano Lab gives students a very personal connection to music,” Mr. Clary explains. “Whether they are reading notes for the first time or composing their own progressions, they're engaging both sides of the brain—and the results are often surprising and exciting,

even for them. Adding Piano Lab this year has allowed all students enrolled in the class, those with and those without prior formal training in piano, to grow in their keyboard skills. Some of the students in this course are choir, band, and orchestra students who are expanding their musical skills and knowledge base. Other students are taking a music class at IHHS for the first time!”

Students are learning more than just how to play notes—they're building transferable skills that include discipline, focus, ear training, and expressive musicality. Many students are already seeing how their piano practice connects with other areas of the arts, from music theory to vocal performance and composition.

“I love seeing students light up when something clicks,” says Mr. Clary. “They realize that what seemed complex or intimidating at first is absolutely within their reach. That realization builds confidence that extends well beyond the keyboard.”

The introduction of Class Piano reflects Indian Hill's continued commitment to growing arts programming that is both inclusive and aspirational. By offering students another gateway into music, we're giving them new tools to express themselves and discover joy through sound.

As the Conservatory continues to expand, the piano lab stands as a symbol of what's possible when we invest in both the breadth and depth of arts education. Whether it's the first note or the hundredth, each keystroke is another step in helping students find their rhythm—and their voice.

IHMS Theatre Production  
of "Lion King Jr."



**SHAPING THE FUTURE: A THRIVING ARTS PROGRAM  
REQUIRES NOT ONLY CREATIVE TALENT AND DEDICATED  
EDUCATORS, BUT ALSO VISIONARY LEADERSHIP,  
COMMUNITY SUPPORT, AND THOUGHTFUL PLANNING.**

**THE FUTURE OF THE ARTS:  
THE ARTS CONSERVATORY  
ADVISORY COUNCIL  
BEGINS IN 2025**



*IHPS students at Extra Special Night Spring 2024*

## **THANK YOU TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ARTS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THEIR EFFORT AND SUPPORT OF THE IH ARTS CONSERVATORY:**

MRS. VICTORIA AAGAARD  
MR. JOHN HARDER  
MRS. KATHERINE JARNIGO  
MR. STEPHEN LEE  
MR. NOLAN MARX  
DR. ROBERT RHOAD  
MRS. ROBIN SCHWANERKAMP

Launched earlier this school year, the Arts Conservatory Council is a collaborative advisory group comprised of past and current parents, alumni, representatives from partner organizations, district board members, administrators, and engaged community members. Together, this diverse and passionate group brings a wide range of experience, insight, and enthusiasm for supporting the arts at Indian Hill.

The Council has met twice to date, including one dedicated working session, with a third meeting scheduled for later this spring. These initial gatherings have focused on establishing shared goals, defining the Council’s mission and vision, and laying the groundwork for future action. One major outcome currently in development is a formal Charter that will guide the Council’s efforts and help articulate long-term priorities for the Conservatory.

In these early stages, the group has also begun brainstorming ideas for future programming, expansion, and student opportunities. From exploring new curricular offerings to imagining enhancements to our physical spaces, the Council’s discussions reflect a commitment to dreaming big while staying rooted in what matters most: providing transformative arts experiences for all students, K-12.

Importantly, the group is also beginning to think strategically about future fundraising and resource development opportunities to support these initiatives. As the Indian Hill Arts Conservatory continues to grow in scope

and visibility, the support of a strong and organized advisory body will be essential to sustaining its impact.

The formation of the Arts Conservatory Council represents an important step in the long-term vision of the Conservatory—one that honors the past, embraces the present, and actively plans for a vibrant future. We are deeply grateful for the time, energy, and passion each Council member brings to the table. Their work is helping ensure that the arts remain not only strong, but central to the Indian Hill student experience for generations to come.



*Members of IHHS Premieres at Cabaret 2024*

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a grey suit, a red shirt, and a patterned tie, stands in the center of a large, empty theater auditorium. He is wearing large black headphones around his neck. The auditorium is filled with rows of red seats, and the stage is visible in the foreground. The background shows the brick walls and balconies of the theater.

# ARTS CONSERVATORY | STAFF SPOTLIGHT

**ERIC CIMINI:  
THE CREATIVE FORCE  
BEHIND IH TECHNICAL THEATER**

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At Indian Hill, the magic of the stage extends far beyond the performers in the spotlight. Behind every seamless transition, stunning light display, and perfectly timed sound cue stands Eric Cimini, our technical director and auditorium manager. With an impressive career spanning live entertainment, concert production, and technical theater, Eric brings a world of experience to our students and school productions.



Eric Cimini's work station during David Letterman's "My Next Guest"

“

***In live entertainment, I got to build events and productions on a grand scale. In theater, I get to help build people — and that's the most rewarding production of all.***”

## HIS ROLE AT INDIAN HILL

As the technical designer for all events in the auditorium, Eric ensures that every production, from theatrical performances to concerts and assemblies, runs smoothly and professionally. His expertise extends district-wide, serving as a technical consultant for various programs.

In addition to his design and management responsibilities, Eric serves as a mentor for students in technical theater, guiding them in lighting, sound, and scenic design. His leadership helps young artists develop real-world skills in stage production, giving them a foundation for future careers in the entertainment industry.

## A BACKGROUND IN THE ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Eric's expertise is built on an extensive professional background. He holds a BFA in Technical Theater from the College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) at the University of Cincinnati, specializing in lighting design with a minor in sound design. Beyond his degree, he has numerous industry certifications, including:

- **Entertainment Technician Certification Program (ETCP)** certifications in theatrical rigging and entertainment electrical work.
- **Pyrotechnic License** for large displays, close proximity effects, and flame effects.
- **Certifications from top sound, lighting, and rigging manufacturers.**

His career includes impressive roles such as:

- **Technical Director for Interlochen Center for the Arts** summer concert series (2005-2006).
- **Touring Lighting Designer for KC & The Sunshine Band** (2006-2007).
- **Technical Theater Specialist at Eisenhower Hall, West Point Military Academy** (2007-2008).
- **Resident Master Electrician and Adjunct Professor at CCM** (2008-2012).
- **Senior Production & Installations Manager at Loud and Clear** (2012-2021).

## ILLUMINATING STAGES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Beyond Indian Hill, Eric has shaped the production of countless high-profile events, concerts, and theatrical performances. Some of his notable experiences include:

- Lighting Designer for David Letterman's My Next Guest Needs No Introduction featuring Dave Chappelle.
- Production work for U.S. Presidents, including George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump.

“

***Every cue called, every set built, every student empowered — that's the real show I come for every day.***”



Eric Cimini at work in the Sue Harder Memorial Performing Arts Center

“

***Behind every great performance is a crew of passionate students— and nothing is more rewarding than guiding them as they discover the magic backstage.”***

- Audio Production Manager for the E-Zoo EDM Festival (2018, New York).
- Managed production for the Super Bowl LIV private party in Miami.
- Ran sound for Prasco’s Rock the Park concerts featuring Toby Mac, Riley Clemens, Cory Asbury, and Jordan Feliz.
- Managed audio and lighting for Dave Chappelle’s Summer Camp in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Eric’s expertise in concert production extends to major festivals and events such as the MLB All-Star Games (2015, 2023, 2024) and the MLB World Series Trophy Presentation Stage (2024). His ability to adapt and execute complex productions has earned him a reputation for excellence in the field.

### **EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR IH STUDENTS**

Eric’s vision for technical theater education at Indian Hill extends beyond the classroom. Since joining IH, he has:

- **Developed a Tech Theater class** that covers technical, historical, and fundamental aspects of theater production.
- **Provided hands-on learning opportunities** for students, including real-world experience with local production companies.
- **Encouraged students to take ownership of set design, lighting, special effects, and production execution** for school performances.

Looking ahead, Eric hopes to continue expanding opportunities for students by connecting them with industry professionals and offering real-world experience in live event production. His goal is to cultivate a passion for technical theater, helping students build skills that can lead to careers in the entertainment industry.

### **A VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

Eric Cimini’s presence at Indian Hill is more than just technical expertise—it’s an opportunity for students to engage in professional-level productions and explore careers in the performing arts. His passion for innovation, combined with his extensive background in live entertainment, ensures that Indian Hill’s theater program remains a beacon of creativity and excellence.

Whether it’s mentoring students, designing spectacular productions, or expanding technical theater education, Eric’s impact is felt in every performance that graces the stage. We can’t wait to see what he creates next!

“

***Teaching technical theater isn’t just about lights and rigging, it’s about lighting up young minds with confidence, creativity, and collaboration.”***



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## **LEARN MORE**

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