



## Biographies

### ***Dr. Dan Aldag – Sr. Jazz Band***

Dr. Aldag is in his 25th year of teaching at HSU, where he leads the Jazz Orchestra, the AM Jazz Band, and the Jazz Combos. He also teaches trombone and courses in jazz and popular music, and in 2013, received HSU's Excellence In Teaching Award.

A founding board member of the Redwood Jazz Alliance, Dr. Aldag has helped bring more than 70 renowned jazz artists to Humboldt County to perform and to present workshops for HSU students and members of the community. For the past nine years, he has co-hosted Bright Moments with the Redwood Jazz Alliance, the Friday evening jazz show on KHSU.

He regularly performs on trombone with the North Coast Brass Ensemble, and has written a number of arrangements for the group. A strong advocate for jazz education, he frequently works with middle school and high school jazz bands. His recent achievements include the publication of two of his jazz band arrangements and serving as a clinician at the 2019 Jazz Educators Network national conference.

Dr. Aldag earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in trombone performance from the University of North Texas, holds Masters degrees from the University of Illinois in trombone performance and composition, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Performance from California State University, Fresno.

### ***Gwen Gastineau-Ayoob – Jr. Orchestra***

Ms. Ayoob earned music degrees from the University of the Pacific and Humboldt State University, where she also received a California Teaching Credential. A native of Del Norte County, she began her teaching career in the Del Norte public schools, where she taught in the elementary classroom, reading recovery, and music. From 2000 until her retirement in 2012, she taught K-12 music including classroom, band, choir, and orchestra at all levels, in Eureka City Schools. This year, she came out of retirement to teach music in the McKinleyville Union School District. Ms. Ayoob was conductor of the Curry-Del Norte Youth Orchestra and has been on the faculty of the Humboldt Music Academy and served in leadership roles in the North Coast CMEA and the California Orchestra Directors Association. She performs in Humboldt Harmoniemusik and is principal clarinet in both the Scotia Band and the Eureka Symphony.

### ***Dana Christen — Senior Choir Accompanist***

Ms. Christen was born in Scotia, began piano studies at age five, and is a graduate of Fortuna High. She graduated from HSU with a Bachelor's degree in Music and a teaching credential. While working on her Master's degree in Music Education at University of Oregon, she studied piano with Dr. Greg Mason and Dr. Deborah Clasquin. She has taught music at Scotia and Loleta Elementary Schools, and has been an accompanist for the Ferndale Community Choir, Six Rivers Choral Artists and choral groups at Fortuna High School. Ms. Christen was named NCCMEA Music Educator of the Year in 2006. In her free time Ms. Christen enjoys playing chamber music. She anticipates even more free time as she is retiring at the end of this school year. Congratulations!

**Alexander Kahn – Sr. Orchestra**     [www.alexanderkahn.com](http://www.alexanderkahn.com)

Dr. Kahn is Associate Professor of Music and Director of Orchestral Activities at Sonoma State University. At Sonoma State he directs the Sonoma State Symphony Orchestra and teaches courses in conducting, music history, orchestration, and general education. Alexander comes to Sonoma State from Gettysburg College, where he was Associate Professor of Music and Director of Orchestral Activities at the Sunderman Conservatory of Music. Previous university-level orchestras with whom Dr. Kahn has worked include the UC Berkeley Chamber Orchestra (Founder and Music Director) and the UC Berkeley Symphony (Assistant Conductor).

In addition to his educational activities, Dr. Kahn has worked with professional orchestras across the United States and throughout Europe. He is the Founder and Music Director of the Vintners Chamber Orchestra, a professional chamber orchestra based in Sonoma County. Previously, he was Music Director of the Metta Ensemble (Gettysburg, PA). He has also served as Cover Conductor for the Baltimore Symphony and as a Staff Conductor for the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC. Between 2007 and 2008, Alexander served as Assistant Conductor of the Bamberg Symphony in Bamberg, Germany. While in Bamberg he was also Music Director of the Bamberg Collegium Musicum.

Dr. Kahn earned a PhD in Music History from UC Berkeley and remains active as a scholar. He is a frequent lecturer on topics including music and mindfulness meditation, the history of film music, and the history of amateur music-making in America. He also directs the pre-concert lecture series at Sonoma State's Green Music Center.

When not conducting, Dr. Kahn enjoys cooking, hiking, reading, and travelling, and spending time with his wonderful wife and daughter.

**Siera Kaup – Jr. Choir**

Ms. Kaup is currently the elementary music specialist at Howard Elementary in Eugene, Oregon. She is a graduate of the University of Oregon with her bachelor's degree in Music Education. Ms. Kaup is a current member of The Motet Singers and previously performed for three years with University of Oregon's Chamber Choir, with whom she competed in choral competitions abroad as well as performed with the Oregon Bach Festival. Siera has also served as Music Director at the University of Oregon's University Theatre. She is also a proud alumnus of Eureka High, where she performed in Limited Edition and Jazz Ensemble.

**Larry Pitts — Junior Choir Accompanist**

Mr. Pitts has been an accompanist for the past 20 years, at HSU, the First Congregational Church in Eureka, local elementary schools, Humboldt Light Opera Company and the Humboldt Music Academy. In addition to teaching piano privately, Larry is on the faculty of the Music Department at HSU.

### ***Dr. Rachel Samet – Sr. Choir***

Originally from New York, Dr. Rachel Samet is enjoying her fourth year teaching at Humboldt State University. In addition to conducting the University Singers, Humboldt Chorale, Madrigal Singers, and Mad River Transit Singers, Dr. Samet teaches conducting, voice, and music education classes. Prior to her position at HSU, she served as the Director of Choral Activities at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and Bucknell University in Pennsylvania. She has taught choral music in high schools and middle schools and served as music director for numerous theater productions. She has worked with dozens of choirs from across North America for local and national festivals as an invited clinician and adjudicator. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting from the University of Colorado at Boulder, a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from Boston University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Piano Performance from Oberlin College. She loves making music in the beautiful environment of Humboldt county.

### ***Gregg Sisk – Jr. Band***

Mr. Sisk taught music at Arcata and McKinleyville high schools from 1981 - 2008. He has taught band, choir, jazz band and world percussion. His jazz band received numerous awards around the state as well as a trip to the National Band Competition in San Antonio, Texas, taking the championship for 1992. His bands have also received numerous awards at the Reno Jazz festival and our own local festivals. Many of his students have gone on to become music educators and touring musicians.

Mr. Sisk began playing music as a child. In high school he met his wife playing in their school band together. He went on to receive a degree in Music Education from the University of Redlands. He and his wife have three daughters, all of whom play a musical instrument.

Mr. Sisk has been a huge part in the All County Music Festival throughout his career. His school hosted the festival 4 separate times. He has conducted the Senior Band, and been a chair for all the senior groups over the years. He was the president of the National Band Directors Association for 8 years.

Mr. Sisk is now retired. He enjoys substitute teaching for the music program at Freshwater school and is enjoying time with his family.

### ***Kearney Vander Sal – Sr. Band***

Ms. Vander Sal is from Santa Barbara, Ca where she began learning flute and trombone in elementary school. She began playing bass trombone her senior year of high school for the Advanced Jazz Band, and now considers the bass trombone her main instrument. After receiving her Bachelor's in Flute Performance and Music Education at Humboldt State University, Ms. Vander Sal taught music in Santa Barbara for eight years. She taught elementary music for four years at as many as nine different schools each week, and then became the high school band director for four years at her alma mater, Santa Barbara High School. Ms. Vander Sal has recently moved back into the area and is excited to conduct tonight!



## **Music Teacher Award Winners**

### ***Mary DeAndreis* – North Coast CMEA Music Teacher of the Year 2019**

Ms. DeAndreis is a fourth generation native daughter of Humboldt County. She was schooled locally, graduating from Humboldt State University with a degree in violin performance and a multiple subjects teaching credential. She is an active musician in the area, playing violin and viola in the local orchestras. She teaches elementary music in the Eureka City School District where she travels to four elementary schools carting her wares. Her days are filled with singing, dancing and the harmonious and joyful sounds of beginning strings. She feels strongly that quality public music education is a vital and important component of a child's emotional and educational development. She is proud to be a music teacher and honored to be recognized by her teaching peers and friends for this award.

### ***Judith Scharnberg* – CMEA State Hall of Fame Inductee, 2019**

Ms. Scharnberg has been a music teacher for over forty years; abroad in Canada, Israel, Thailand, and in Massachusetts, New York, Maryland, and New Mexico. For the last twenty-nine years, she has taught in Fortuna and calls Humboldt County her home.

Ms. Scharnberg is a graduate of State University of NY, Potsdam for her BA in Music Education, Harvard University with a Masters of Arts in Teaching Humanities and an Orff Certification from University of Denver.

Ms. Scharnberg has the most fun when making music with young people. While at the Rohnerville Schools, she directed a fifth grade musical each year based on the American history curriculum, in which every student participated. After school ensembles frequently performed in the community and her performing groups consistently received ratings of Excellent and Superior. She has mentored over a half dozen student teachers and several teachers in their first years as part of the TSA program.

In addition, Ms. Scharnberg has served as festival organizer, held many North Coast Section offices, as well as offices for the Rohnerville School teachers association.

“I believe that passionate teaching coupled with reflection on how to be a better teacher each day and with each group of students, makes being a music teacher on the North Coast the most worthwhile job I could ever have.”