

Notes from the Music Department:

There is so much about today's music that I would like to share, both about the new selections and the more familiar. Having said that though, it is probably wise to just concentrate on three.

"Nocturne, Blue and Silver: Chelsea," is the name of the first in a series of paintings by James MacNeill Whistler, an American artist who spent most of his adult life in England. His Nocturnes aimed to convey a sense of the beauty and tranquility of nature at early night, but with musical associations. Whistler explains, 'By using the word "nocturne" I wished to indicate an artistic interest alone, divesting the picture of any outside anecdotal which might have been otherwise attached to it.' Very recently, English composer Pam Wedgwood, wrote several pieces designed to respond to the mood, color, style, and story behind great works of art. About this particular one she wrote, "I chose this painting for its stillness and tranquility. When I started writing the music it just flowed onto the page." I hope you get the same feeling of peace that playing it gives me.

You may have noticed that Fanny Hensel's maiden name was Mendelssohn. A loving and supportive sister to her well known and brilliant brother, Felix, she was said to have had the same abilities as her younger sibling but because she was born in the early 1800's she was encouraged to live within the rules of the time. In spite of these constraints, Fanny wrote over 400 diverse pieces of music including today's **"Melodie"** that were often shared in her Berlin, Germany home during by invitation only Sunday afternoon house concerts. Several of her pieces were included in her brother's publications and were acknowledged by Felix as having been written by her.

For today's Postlude, Danika and I decided to dip into our choir repertoire and share again a song we felt was perfect for going forth into the New Year. **"Blessing"** was written by Wisconsin native, St. Olaf graduate, and veteran music educator, Katie Moran Bart. The words of this traditional Irish blessing seem perfect for the beginning of this new and, hopefully, better year.

Blessing (An old Irish verse)

May the road rise up to meet you;
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
And the rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again, my friend, until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Until we meet again, dear friends.....