



CENTER STAGE. Lucille Brooks ('26) stepped up to the mic twice, delivering solos in two songs, "The Middle" and a mash-up of "Anxiety" / "Somebody That I Used to Know." **PHOTOS: Jocelyn Rog**

TAKING NOTE. Academy Chorale prepare to take the spotlight as they watch director Tim Kraack, confident in their practice for many weeks leading up to this very moment.



MELODIES AND MASH-UPS. Charlie Zakaib ('27) and Brooks Geiger ('27) join in song during the smashing mash-up of "Anxiety" / "Somebody That I Used to Know" performed by the Academy Chorale.



a stellar performance

2025 Pops Concert

By Lani Ngonethong, The Rubicon

Only once a year do the jazz band, orchestra and choir perform together. The Huss Auditorium welcomed student musicians, friends and families on Dec. 5-6 for the annual Pops Concert. The Academy Symphony's best performance, and arguably the night's, was a medley of themes from the renowned film "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl," arranged by Ted Ricketts. It featured memorable pieces like "To the Pirate Cave" and "The Black Pearl." While most pieces tend to spotlight specific parts of the orchestra, sometimes overshadowed by the percussion, this arrangement perfectly showcased the entire ensemble. The strings shone, the woodwinds cut through clearly and the percussion drove the energy forward. Partly due to how



moving the soundtrack already is, and the symphony's performance,

the audience was the loudest it was that night.

Each year, the Pops Concert performs a rock classic. Last year, it was "Hotel California" and before that was a combination of hits from Queens. This year, the jazz band really showed up near the end of the concert with a jazz arrangement of the ever-iconic "Stairway to Heaven" sung by Led Zeppelin. The soloists carried the piece, all delivering outstanding solos including junior Roman Hozalski on the saxophone, ninth-grader Eugene Gardiner on the tenor saxophone and sophomore Ronan Keel playing the flugelhorn.

The jazz band's strongest moment came with their final piece "Spain" by Chick Corea, the jazz arrangement by Paul Jennings. The jazz band replaced the original trumpet solo with a trombone solo by senior Roman Farley. He stood up, rolled his shoulders and played with confidence. "Spain" is a fast and fun piece and the jazz band nailed it. The three ensembles closed the Pops Concert with "Can't Take My Eyes Off You" by Frankie Valli. With its loud colors and upbeat music, the audience surely could not take their eyes off of the Pops Concert.

CHOIR CONNECTION. Scout Wainwright ('29) and others sing "Hollywood Baby" as the Summit Singers combine with the other choirs.



TUNED-IN. The jazz band waits for the cue from director Jack Breen with their next song, "Moanin'" by Charles Mingus, after their intro with Academy Chorale "Industry Baby" by rapper Lil Nas X.

STUNNING SOLO. Roman Hozalski ('27) steals the spotlight for his saxophone solo.



FINALE FEVER. The three ensembles took the breath away from the audience as they performed "Can't Take My Eyes off You" by Frankie Valli as though this was the only moment that mattered, and were followed with rounds of applause. **PHOTO: Caden Deardurff**

KEY MOMENTS. Without Fiona Lambert ('28) on keyboard the concert would surely not have sounded the same. "I thought it was really cool to hear all the music classes come together and play songs," she said. "I'm looking forward to it next year."

PHOTO: Jocelyn Rog



Chloe and I both had a really fun time playing our mini-solo in 'Pirates.' It's my final Pops concert, and I think that this was a really great way to go out."

-Franny Wagner ('26)



BLOWIN' AWAY. Franny Wagner ('26) and Chloe Kovarik ('27) carry the woodwinds section from pianissimo to fortissimo during the "Pirates of the Caribbean" medley. **PHOTO: Caden Deardurff**



BOW ON TOP. Paloma Gomez Whitney ('26) and Maeve Duncan ('26) both play intensely, all of their hours of practice paying off for this successful performance. **PHOTO: Jocelyn Rog**



PULLING HEARTSTRINGS. Isaak Senaratna ('27) plays his heart out with the Honors Sinfonia cellos in "Skyfall" by Adele. **PHOTO: Jocelyn Rog**



DON'T FRET. Josh Melchert ('26) displays pure talent on his electric bass during the song "How To Train Your Dragon." **PHOTO: Jocelyn Rog**

"I have a collection of antique typewriters," Bennett Sauer ('26) said.

POPS CONCERT
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