



The High School View

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Minnesingers perform across Ireland

BY JOSIE WELCH

Over April break, the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) choral group, the Minnesingers, made their biennial trip abroad, this year traveling to Ireland to perform in various historic venues and tour the country together. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this was the group's first trip abroad since 2019. From formal concerts to breaking out into song and dance on the streets of Galway, the performance never stopped in Ireland.

The group included 31 singers and seven chaperones, and the group's performances were directed by performing arts department chair and music teacher Abigail Chandler. For some students, including junior Ava McGee,



The Minnesingers put on a concert in St. Mary's Cathedral in Kilkenny.

COURTESY MINNESINGERS

this trip was their first time visiting a foreign country. "It was definitely nothing I've experienced before, because I've never really traveled outside the U.S.," Ava said. "I loved exploring. We got to go to a castle and explore the streets of Galway."

Students also spent their time rehearsing for formal performances, which included a concert at St. Mary's Cathedral in Kilkenny. Ava said that the audience at Kilkenny made the performance even more exhilarating.

"The audience there was

really appreciative, and it was such a positive space to perform. We were given a full standing ovation," she said.

Senior Emmett Favreau was shocked by the audience turnout. "It was the only venue that had more than 15 people. That was

something I didn't expect at all," he said.

Ava added, "Many of the people who attended the concerts were older, or more religious, and very interested in choir music," she said.

The venues the Minnesingers performed in were unlike any they've sung in before. Senior Ashley Brasefield said, "We sang in a cathedral in Galway, and I loved it. It has the best sound — you can hear the echo after every song. It was beautiful."

"These buildings were built for the human voice and for singing," said Ms. Chandler. "One of the best parts of the whole experience for me was doing that first warm-up in that first cathedral and seeing the kids' faces and saying, 'Wow, that sounds amazing.'"

Preparation for the trip began in late December 2021, and consisted of memorizing various songs, choreography, and formations. Freshman Josie Powers recounted the rigorous preparation in-

involved for the trip. "It was a lot of doing my homework [for Minnesingers] over and over again. During February break, I reviewed every song every single day," she said.

Ms. Chandler felt proud of her group for their strong performances, but more important, for the connections the students made with other choir members they performed with over the course of the trip.

"The experience of watching the kids come together, put aside all their differences, and create something larger than any one of them individually is the reason I do this job," she said. "It really is a unique thing to sing in choirs together. There's a connection that happens there that you can't find anywhere else."

The Minnesingers will perform their spring concert this weekend in the Performing Arts Center. Performances will be held at 7 pm Friday, May 6, and Saturday, May 7, at 4 pm. **HSV**

For student environmentalists, every day is Earth Day

BY NIKEYA TANKARD

Every year on April 22, people around the world celebrate Earth Day. Although clubs at MVRHS recognize the day in a variety of ways, many students and teachers feel that environmentalism requires consistent action in addition to single-day celebrations.

"I feel like it's silly to do it all in one day," said junior Annabelle Brothers, president of the Protect Your Environment (PYE) club.

Science teacher Mike Joyce agreed: "I think it's great to have a day where everyone thinks about [environmental issues], but it's also great to just be conscious of it as you go along."

In efforts to spread awareness and information year-round, PYE holds monthly

"Climate Cafe" meetings in company with the Martha's Vineyard Commission to educate community members and facilitate conversations on topics like climate change, sustainable power, and waste management.

"We'll meet at Rosewater in Edgartown, and it's an open-invitation community discussion led by PYE members," said senior and club member Graham Stearns. "We have focus questions that guide the discussion, share ideas to progress movements within the community, and see how other people can get involved."

The Island Clean Up Project (ICUP), another MVRHS club, leads weekly cleanups. "We pick a different spot or public space every week, and pick up as much trash as we can,"



Island Clean Up Project president Ruairi Mullin disposes of trash collected by student volunteers.

JOSIE WELCH

senior and co-president Ruairi Mullin said.

Two weeks ago, the Interact Club and its members collaborated with ICUP to clean up East Chop, Owen Park, and the Boys and Girls Club. "We were able to get about 195 pounds of trash off

the Island. It was amazing," senior and Interact Club president Ella Clarke said.

In addition to raising awareness of environmental issues and providing peers and Islanders with opportunities to act locally, these environmental clubs and

their advisors are focused on how to improve MVRHS' environmental impact.

"It's important to be conscious of how we [as a school] are affecting the environment in our everyday activities. It can be easy to not think about it, but being conscious of how much water or electricity or plastic — even coming down to the utensils we use — everything we do has some impact on the environment," Graham said.

Annabelle addressed the small changes the school has made thus far. "We see a lot of smaller steps being taken. [Cafeteria staff] made the decision to remove the plastic water cups by the side of the water refill stations, offering reusable water bottles instead. I think that's a great way to reduce our consumption and our waste," she said.

Annabelle added that an opportunity for large-scale change could potentially exist in the upcoming school renovation project. "[PYE] would like the new school to be carbon-neutral, and totally run on renewable energy. That's the big-picture sort of idea," she said.

No student would deny that thinking about how to create large-scale change can feel overwhelming at times. Sophomore PYE member Lyla Solway said, "You're one person out of almost 8 billion people. Making progress really has to change on a systemic level."

Science teacher (and former PYE advisor) Louis Hall agrees: "The more students that learn about the environment and are engaged in the decisions they're making, the more we're able to change the system." **HSV**

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