

NEWSLETTER

Highlands Community Orchestra Concert

At the April concert of the Highlands Community Orchestra, we explored the contribution that immigrants made to the music life of the area in which we reside. The orchestra performed music of the Scots-Irish and German heritage that the immigrants brought with them. We even had a bag piper join us on several tunes!

In keeping with this year's celebration of the 250th birthday of the USA and the orchestra's continuing celebrating of the contributions that immigrants have made to the success of this country, we explore the hugely successful Broadway Musical. What started as an outgrowth of the music hall and variety shows, the Broadway Musical grew into a multibillion-dollar business that brought fame and fortune to NYC and became one of the USA's biggest exports to the world beyond. Many of the early Broadway shows were written by immigrants or their children – many of them Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe.

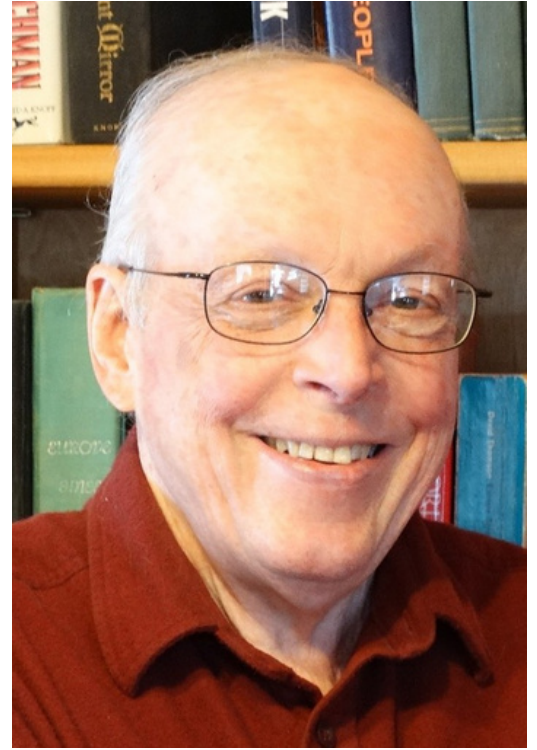
Jewish immigrants and their culture shaped the foundation, sound, and thematic evolution of the American Broadway musical. Denied entry to many traditional WASP-dominated professions, brilliant first and second-generation Jewish writers, composers, and producers found an open door in the burgeoning theatrical worlds of New York's Lower East Side and Second Avenue Yiddish theater, eventually building what became the quintessential American art form. Early 20th-century Yiddish melodramas and musical revues trained a generation of performers and creators who migrated uptown to Broadway.

Creators frequently used upbeat plots and allegories to work through the anxieties of immigration, acceptance, and dual identity. Composers blended traditional Eastern European Jewish modes and cantorial styling (Yiddishkeit) with Afro-American jazz, ragtime, and classical European structures to invent a dynamic new American sound. Iconic writers used the stage to define and celebrate America as a welcoming land for outsiders. By the 1960s, shows like *Fiddler on the Roof* brought specific Eastern European Jewish shtetl life and the theme of shifting tradition directly to the mainstream global stage.

Continued on Page 2

September 13

Garth Newel Music Center,
3 pm
The Highland Center, 7 pm



Lew Freeman, baritone

Stay up to date on
Arts Council
events at

highlandcountyartscouncil.org

Email

highlandcoarts@gmail.com

Like us on Facebook
and Instagram
to stay connected!



Highlands Community Orchestra Concert continued

The Highland Community Orchestra will be performing music from four 'classic' musicals written around the 1940's and 1950's: The Sound of Music (1959), My Fair Lady (1956), South Pacific (1948), with one exception being Fiddler on the Roof, which was written in the 1960's. Each story centers on change – finding a place for yourself and your family. Each story centers on the difficulties of engaging with people and places that seem strange to you. Perhaps you, yourself, have gone through a transformation – what are the consequences of having made that change?

The orchestra will be joined by Highland baritone, Lew Freeman, who will perform songs from the Great American Songbook. Many of these songs come from Broadway Musicals or films that are no longer produced, but the songs live on as favorites in the repertoire. Lewis Freeman, baritone and actor, has performed widely in the Mid-Atlantic area and abroad. He has been a featured soloist with the Washington National Opera, National Symphony, Detmolder Jugendorchester in Germany, Cathedral Choral Society, Columbus (OH) Symphony and Greenville (SC) Symphony. He appeared in the first operas performed at both the Wolf Trap Performing Arts Center and at the Kennedy Center. In his early work, he performed in concerts conducted by composers Igor Stravinsky and Aaron Copland. His stage work has included several productions with Constellation Theatre of Washington, DC. He has also performed in film projects, most recently for Seventh Story Productions of Nashville, TN in an educational film for its client, The Museum of the Bible.

The orchestra has grown to thirty-two members from all surrounding counties in Virginia and West Virginia – Highland, Bath, Pocahontas and Pendleton Counties. The musicians meet once a week for eight weeks before a concert on Wednesday evenings at the Highland Center in Monterey, VA. There are three concerts scheduled for each year – April, September and December. The orchestra is an all volunteer group, with some of them traveling an hour (or more) to get to rehearsals and concerts. There are no auditions for the musicians – just a desire to keep playing their instruments! Many of the musicians played their instruments throughout their high school years and many of them played through college, as well. An interesting fact about the orchestra: there are four moms and their children playing in the orchestra, a multi-generational group!

The Highlands Community Orchestra is supported by donations from members of the Highland County Arts Council and the public. Visit www.highlandcountyartscouncil.org/support-the-arts to donate to the Arts Council and support the orchestra.

If you are interested in joining the Highlands Community Orchestra, contact Gretta Sandberg, President of the Highland County Arts Council and Director of the Highlands Community Orchestra at grettasandberg@gmail.com



Help Keep the Arts Thriving in Highland County!

Friends,

One of the things that makes the Highland County area such a special place to live and visit is the opportunity to experience music, art, theater, and creativity right here.

Over the past few months, the Arts Council has sponsored events such as Artists' Weekend and Wet Paint show, storytelling, a youth drama camp, and Kinnfolk in the CP Jones House garden. In the coming months, we have an exciting lineup of events— Elk River Ramblers during the Hands and Harvest festival, and the ever-popular community orchestra. Many of these programs are offered free of charge or at a very modest cost because we believe the arts should be accessible to everyone in our community.

These events don't happen by accident. They happen because people like you believe the arts matter. If you've enjoyed a concert, visited an art exhibit, attended a workshop, brought your children or grandchildren to Youth Drama Camp, or simply appreciate having a vibrant arts community in Highland County, we invite you to become a member of the Highland County Arts Council.

Every membership helps us

- Present high-quality performances and exhibits.
- Offer educational opportunities for children and adults.
- Support local and visiting artists.
- Keep arts programming affordable and accessible for everyone.

To make your gift and become a member, please visit:

<https://www.highlandcountyartscouncil.org/support-the-arts>

You can also see everything that's coming up on our event calendar:

[Highland County Arts Council Events Calendar](#)

Thank you for helping us bring music, art, and creativity to our community. We couldn't do it without you. And if you're already a member, thank you for your support!

Thank you for donations in July & August to...

Carol Swecker

John Sweet

Suse Field

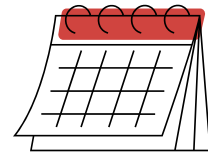
Joan Dreicer

Debra Sheffer

Members like you help ensure we can continue to bring quality artists, musicians, workshops and events to Highland County!



Upcoming Events



Highlands Community Orchestra Concert

Sunday, September 13, 2026

Garth Newel Music Center, 3 pm

The Highland Center, 7 pm

Free admission, donations accepted



Elk River Ramblers at *Hands & Harvest Festival*

Saturday, October 10, 2026

The Highland Center, 3 pm

Membership Meeting

Saturday, November 14, 2026

TBD



Highlands Community Orchestra Concert

Sunday, December 6, 2026

The Highland Center, 3 pm

TBD, 7 pm

Free admission,
donations accepted



Be sure to sign up for our newsletter and follow our social media pages, so you don't miss the latest news, events and performances!

To donate, simply scan the QR code, or follow the donation link.

We appreciate your generosity!

[Donation Link](#)



THANK YOU

Without the support of the following organizations, the Highland County Arts Council would not be able to provide the programming that is its hallmark.

The Virginia Commission for the Arts
The Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge
The Little Swiss Fund The Charles Pinckney Jones Foundation

