



## Mr. McMiller: Taking Giant Steps Forward

Mr. Mario McMiller is the director of the Jazz, Concert and Marching Bands at Science Park High School. The SPHS Band has become a major center for music and expression in the school, attracting students of all sorts. Each time the Band performs, be it Jazz or Marching Band, the students demonstrate the sort of passion and love for music that is truly moving.

This has made the Band subject to much appreciation and reverence both in school and out, earning the respect and love of the SPHS community. It has made a major impact upon the environment within the school, including a focus on jazz that teaches students about African-American History and Culture.



For a school largely focused on math and science, the musical community within the school is definitely impressive. However, Mr. McMiller doesn't think it's abnormal in the slightest, as he states that academic performance and musical skill go hand in hand, both requiring students to possess and further develop a certain set of qualities, including "patience, accountability, responsibility, and, most importantly, perseverance." The students in the SPHS Band exhibit all of these qualities and more on a daily basis, balancing music, academics, and other extracurricular commitments.

According to Mr. McMiller, being in the band is extremely beneficial for students in schools like Science Park, as it has been proven to improve the academic performance of students as they develop the skills previously mentioned. One student, he recalls, went from a 2.3 to a 4.5 GPA from freshman to junior year, learning how to play five instruments.

This remarkable improvement can also be attributed to the community that Band fosters. The Band, McMiller claims, is not an obligation; it's a family. The SPHS Band provides a positive outlet for those students who never had one elsewhere, and encourages students to work hard and be successful. Band helps students discover and develop what they want to do.

The Marching Band is a relatively new group which combines modern and classic music with physical activity and performance. The Band will offer the school "an energy it has never seen before," according to Mr. McMiller. The modern spin will ensure the support and success that such a dedicated group deserves.

Please support Mr. McMiller and the SPHS Band as they take giant steps forward.

# The Mr. McMiller Effect

By Jahlin Fernandes



“Mr. McMiller always says our purpose is to educate and entertain and I think that’s exactly what we do during our performances. Especially with Jazz Band, we play Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus tunes to show how these significant figures in not only black history but music history as a whole have influenced the more modern songs we’ve played.”

*-Ashley Dawson-Redwood, First Alto Saxophone/Section Leader*



“Being in the band gives me a sense of purpose and belonging; I’ve met the best friends I’ve ever had right in the Band Room. Every day I get to go to practice and do what I love surrounded by fellow musicians all working towards a common goal, and nothing beats the feeling of a lit performance after months of practicing.”

*-Ashley Dawson-Redwood, First Alto Saxophone/Section Leader*

# Mr. Townsend's 2016-2017 AP Lit Sonnet Competition

**Self-Apartheid**  
by Qua'janae James

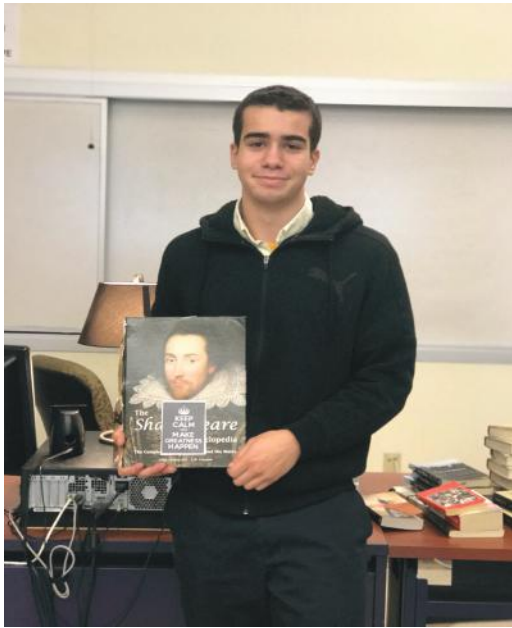
The history that is taught is filled with lies,  
To be born "black" is something I despise;  
My soul does shriek like children's piercing cries,  
The stories of the past are so disguised.  
While you can trace generations back,  
Your great grandparent's friend or foe,  
I think we need to face pressing facts,  
Being "black" is all I will truly know.  
Your land is but a few stops from my own,  
Just tell me from where did your blue ships sail;  
Self-hate is what we too are sadly prone,  
Like in the past my people will prevail.  
To create change, learn info that's not new,  
Because like me, the truth was hid from you.

**The Black Woman**  
by Imani Taylor

In generation after generation,  
Your beauty has been questioned and so doubted;  
The crushing pain became the base foundation  
From which a black, fierce flower thus sprouted.  
Buried so deep like the forgotten treasures,  
Concealed below the feet of the rude tyrant,  
Suppressing cries to catastrophic measures,  
The strong black woman always stands more virent.  
When your skin glistens under the bright sun,  
It's clear that you are perfectly unique;  
Dark, fluffy curls make hair days much more fun,  
Great qualities make you so far from bleak.  
Take pride and strut through life like a sweet queen,  
Black beauty is an honor to be seen.

## The AP Lit Students Voted and The Winner is Pedro Dias.

**Let Her Go**  
by Pedro Dias



The moon so beautiful stands in the sky,  
Providing solace in the midst of night,  
Displaying her grace to all those with eyes,  
With her amazing gaze, she shines so bright.  
She stands so close, yet I cannot touch her,  
Her beauty shines brighter than all the stars;  
Time looking at her goes by in a blur;  
When she leaves, I hope my heart has no scars.  
Will she be there when I need her the most  
To light up my sky in the wake of dark,  
To make my heart move like waves on a coast,  
To give me hope with her dazzling spark?  
I ponder if I should follow her glow,  
Or lose my emotions and let her go.



**Pistanthrophobia**  
by David Asafu-Adjaye

The calming winds are silent 'gainst a shriek,  
A sea of thought, all intellect devoid;  
The frame by which those lovely words you speak  
Would, into pieces die, quickly destroyed.  
The waves which 'gainst the sandy shore will beat  
Might forward bring the blare of beating drums  
And pools of hope be soaked up, then deplete,  
A coward's gloomy chant, calls death in hums;  
And yet, the air you breathe has given life,  
Though one should sadly find their windpipe choked,  
But fear the wisdom of the christened knife,  
Which, out of birth, holds danger when provoked.  
The threat which stands will stem for those betrayed,  
The objects of trust now make you afraid.

**Restoring Our Race**  
by Maryum Bhatti

It's the presence of black and brown bodies  
That threatens the liberty of the white man;  
The hate has become part of their hobbies,  
And slavery is where it all began.  
From the early mornings in the cotton field  
To ceaseless cruelty and oppression,  
Slavery was a wound that never healed,  
For it fostered a lot of aggression.  
Racism itself is existing still,  
Since unjust acts leave people horrified,  
Getting our rights is what we will fulfill,  
For this is the reason why many died.  
Let us continue to uplift each other,  
Because we have to move our race further.

# Joanne Goes to D.C.: The African-American Museum



The NMAAHC opened on September 24, 2016. This museum is dedicated to African-American History.

One of the most entertaining sections is the film/entertainment floor with a room called Contemplative Court. The Contemplative Court showcases a beautiful waterfall and benches by a serene fountain.

The overall architecture of the museum is honestly breathtaking. The design takes traditional African architecture and a modern zest to create a beautiful crown shaped building with glass windows, and the entire building is wrapped in a bronze-colored metal lattice.

The trip was really worthwhile, and I would definitely recommend a visit. To get tickets, go to <https://nmaahc.si.edu>

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Mr. Townsend

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