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MEDIA RELEASE

**PAKACHOAG MUSIC SCHOOL ANNOUNCES RELOCATION INTO WORCESTER**

**NEW PROGRAM DIRECTOR JOINS MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**OPEN HOUSE PLANNED FOR SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29<sup>TH</sup>, 2018**

**For release Tuesday, September 4<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, September 16<sup>th</sup>**

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Pakachoag Music School of Greater Worcester takes a big, bold step this Fall. The School has departed from its Auburn based home of 35 years to begin a new future in the heart of Worcester. The move follows several years of strategic planning around questions related to space, growth, access and partnerships – with an eye to maintaining the high quality music-making and education for which the school is known.

“At the center of those planning quadrants was our desire, on the part of the School’s board, to be able to look to the future with greater certainty around the space that would be available to us; not just a few months ahead, but several years in advance. That is something that requires the security of a multi-year lease something which had not been available to the School at our home in Auburn,” says Executive Director Sarah Smongeski. “Organizational muscle, as well as flexibility, requires that one plan strategically over multiple years. The move positions us to plan more effectively and pursue our mission in a more dynamic manner. We’ll be better positioned to adapt and change at a faster pace than has been possible due to a number of internal constraints in prior years.”

With wait lists in place for the past two years, the time was right for the School to make the move. After two years of probing a variety of options – a few within Auburn and several in Worcester, the School chose to land at All Saints Church. “We already had a quiet partnership with All Saints church that has been in place for over 10 years” says Smongeski. “That partnership was centered around a stellar choir program as well as the community outreach Afternoon Tunes program.” The AT program was founded by a Pakachoag alumna whose family are also members at All Saints. Several other families over the years have toggled Pakachoag programs and the All Saints choirs; and two recent board members also toggled both organizations. “When the church reached out to us, knowing we were looking for affordable space with a multi-year lease, it made sense to seriously consider the opportunity.”

Melodie Hanks, outgoing Board President at Pakachoag, notes: “As important as space is – and All Saints is a large and beautiful building which definitely impacted our decision-making – relationship is critically important. The strong commitment for high quality music-making that has resided at All Saints for over a century is proving a strong underpinning for the success of the now heightened partnership between our two organizations.”

“We are truly excited to be here,” says Kallin Johnson, incoming Board President for Pakachoag. Kallin is also no stranger to All Saints. He has both family and professional ties to the church’s music program (his nephew is the current Assistant Organist; and wife sang with the All Saints Girl’s Choir as a child and currently serves as President of the All Saints Choir Alumni Association). “Parking, a big issue for the families who come and go during day and evening hours for lessons, is sufficient with overflow options in place. We have dedicated space within the building for School offices and music lessons, which our faculty are really thrilled to make their own, and access to three large halls within the building for performances. A state of the art door entry system is proving helpful as we adjust to being in the city rather than the burbs. And the school recently installed air conditioning/heating units in newly constructed studios which provides each teacher control over their assigned studio space.”

To top off the move, the School has hired a new Program Director who will be leading lesson growth and managing the school’s robust student performance program which includes well over 25 student performances scheduled annually. Kristjon Imperio, a pianist, chamber musician, and educator sees significant potential for the school as a result of the move. “I’m thrilled to be on the team for one of Worcester’s greatest music traditions in Pakachoag Music School. Being an active performing artist, I have never ceased to forget and appreciate my own experiences in the process of learning music under the mentorship and guidance of great teachers.

“I look forward to wholeheartedly sharing the message and vision of the School more broadly, with the desire to realize the hopes and dreams of each aspiring musician, from ‘one to ninety-two.’ ”

The move has required a \$200,000 investment, made possible by generous school donors and grantors, which includes new air-conditioned studios, several new pianos, new offices and family waiting rooms. Studio space expands to include two additional rooms which translates, for once-a-week lessons, into a total of 12 new weekly studio spaces spread out over 6 days. The School is planning for a modest 10% annual growth rate for the next 2 to 3 years. Satellite activities already in place allow the School additional flexibility for how it manages growth in the coming decade.

Asked what she is most excited about with regard to the move, Smongeski notes: “I cannot pin it down to one thing, but I can wrap it around three things: Being IN Worcester. The city is making big commitments to culture and creativity. We’re excited to now be in a position to participate more directly in that community-based commitment. The second item is a bit more personal but has implications for us organizationally: This is an architecturally beautiful building – not only in the main sanctuary, but all of the smaller spaces show an appreciation for the subtleties of architectural design of the period. I appreciate that as an artist, on a personal level. But mostly, number 3, I am excited about new relationships and an expanding community. We have been so welcomed by the city of Worcester and the individuals who are heavily invested in the success of the city; from the support given us by the WBDC and City Hall as we were grappling with the challenges of finding a new home; to the leadership of All Saints which has demonstrated both respect for what we do, as well as collegiality. I am / we are committed to doing more for community – for the suburban families who find out they can come to Pakachoag and get what others think they have to go to Boston to get; AND for the urban families who want a better life for their children and see the arts as one step forward on that path to betterment. This move means we can do more.”

The Music School invite the public to attend a New Home Celebration Open House on:

Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
10:00 am to 4:00 pm  
10 Irving Street / All Saints Church  
Worcester, MA 01609

Activities include Music Together early childhood classes, a free Puppet Show, an afternoon Pakachoag Faculty ‘Walking’ Concert, alumni and student performances, a fiddle band showcase, lemonade in the courtyard, and Pakachoag partner showcases with Afternoon Tunes and the Boys & Girls Club of Worcester.

All Saints Church, who is opening the entire building for this event, will host an instrument petting zoo sponsored by the Afternoon Tunes Outreach Program at All Saints, will provide architectural tours of the buildings halls and hidden spaces, and will host an open choir rehearsal and organ performance in the sanctuary.

Activities take place on all three floors of the building. Please call ahead for details if you are physically disabled.

For a more detailed schedule of events please visit [www.pakmusic.org](http://www.pakmusic.org) > News & Events