

USDAN SUMMER CAMP FOR THE ARTS ANNOUNCES NEW DEPARTMENT CO-CHAIRS FOR MUSIC PROGRAM

Long Island natives and Usdan alums Eric Huckins and Nicole Davidson will lead the premier music program for grades K - 12



Eric Huckins and Nicole Davidson
Photo Credit: Ryan Brandenburg & Matthew Hefferon

WHEATLEY HEIGHTS, NY (April 23, 2025) – Usdan Summer Camp for the Arts is pleased to share the appointment of Eric Huckins and Nicole Davidson as 2025 Music Department Co-Chairs. Huckins and Davidson are Long Island natives and Usdan alums with impressive careers as professional musicians and music educators. They will take the reins of Usdan’s Music Department beginning this summer.

One of Usdan’s biggest departments at Usdan, the Music Department is deeply tied to the identity of the 57-year-old institution. The department boasts an array of classes for instrumentalists and vocalists in grades K - 12, including large ensemble concert bands and orchestras, vocal ensembles, and piano, guitar, and composition classes of varying levels. As co-chairs of the department, Huckins and Davidson will oversee an impressive group of musicians and music educators, as well as shape the overall curriculum of the program.

“I am elated that Eric and Nicole have joined Usdan to lead the Music Department as co-chairs,” Executive Director Lauren Brandt Schloss shared. “At Usdan, the chairs not only decide the artistic and educational direction for their departments, but they also determine all administrative and production decisions. Eric and Nicole’s skills complement one another so beautifully, and I am confident that under their joint leadership Usdan’s Music Department will thrive.”



A graduate of both Curtis Institute of Music and The Juilliard School, Huckins has led a multifaceted career as a professional musician, music educator, and administrator. He currently serves as the Executive and Artistic Director of Long Island Chamber Music and as the Director of Band and Instrumental Music at The Green Vale School in Glen Head, NY. In addition, Huckins is an active performer on French Horn and the winner of Astral Artist's 2018 National Auditions, the first horn player named to their roster. Huckins has performed internationally as a soloist, chamber musician, and with orchestras in Europe, Asia, and across the United States, including The Philadelphia Orchestra, New York City Ballet, as Principal Horn of Symphony C (2018 – 2022), and in numerous pit orchestras on Broadway.

“It is an honor to be returning to Usdan as Co-Chair of the Music Department,” Huckins expressed. “Usdan was a profound place for my growth as a musician and person through my summers in middle and high school. My experience as a former Usdan student has shaped so much of what is now my career in music as a performer and educator. I am so looking forward to creating unforgettable, high-level artistic experiences for the young musicians at Usdan each summer!”

Equally excited about returning to Usdan in this role, Davidson shared, “Becoming Co-Chair of the Music Department at Usdan is beyond special to me. I cannot express how excited I am to be back in the most magical place. I look forward to working with the Music Department to facilitate learning, music-making, and above all, joy for both our students and staff this summer!”

Davidson is an active member of the music education community, having presented workshops through NYSCAME, NYSSMA, and NafME at the county, state, and national levels. For seven years, she served as a Festival Chairperson for the Suffolk County Music Educators' Association (SCMEA) All-County Festivals. She performs with the Long Island Flute Club and Huntington Community Band in addition to maintaining a private flute studio. A four-time quarterfinalist for the GRAMMY Music Educator Award, Davidson is an elementary band teacher in the Copiague School District on Long Island. She holds a Bachelor of Music Education with Honors from the University of Delaware (2017) and a Master of Music Education with Distinction from the Crane School of Music (2019). She also holds a teaching certificate in Childhood Education (grades 1 – 6) and is currently completing studies in Educational Leadership at Stony Brook University (expected June 2025).

“Eric and Nicole’s passion for Usdan’s mission shines bright, and I am thrilled to work alongside them to inspire the next generation of musicians and creative thinkers.” Director of Education Javan Howard shared.

With their unique talents combined, Huckins and Davidson will work to strengthen staffing and program offerings in the Music Department. They will learn the dynamics of the Music

Department from both a teacher mindset and administrative lens to build informed relationships with students and staff.

For information on Usdan Summer Camp for the Arts' Music Department and 2025 class offerings, including information on how to enroll, apply for tuition assistance, and participate in the 2025 Music Merit Scholarship search, visit usdan.org/music.

About Usdan Summer Camp for the Arts:

Usdan Summer Camp for the Arts (usdan.org) is an award-winning not-for-profit day camp for the arts and has been named a “Best Of” camp by *TimeOutNY/Kids*, and by *NY Metro Parents*. Diverse and playfully rigorous, Usdan brings exceptional teachers and professional artists – actors, directors, playwrights, painters, sculptors, musicians, composers, dancers, poets, and novelists – to teach and collaborate with Usdan students ages 5 to 18 from across Long Island and New York City. Usdan ignites each child’s artistic spirit in a fun, welcoming environment.

Usdan is an agency of the UJA-Federation of New York. Programs take place at the camp’s magnificent 140-acre woodland campus, located at 185 Colonial Springs Road in Wheatley Heights, NY 11798.

Visit usdan.org for more information.

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