

STATE OFFICIALS JOIN HARD-HAT TOUR OF MMAS

MANSFIELD, Mass. (Aug. 6, 2021) – MMAS Academy students welcomed a delegation of state and local officials Friday with the song “Seasons of Love” from the musical “Rent” before officials donned hard hats and toured the theater’s ongoing renovations.

Michael J. Bobbitt, executive director of the Mass Cultural Council, joined the tour, during which officials were shown the layout for the planned 110-seat theater, offices and studio space for the MMAS Academy. The Mass Cultural Council provided \$98,000 to help the Mass Music & Arts Society with summer renovations as the theater prepares to open in the fall.

The state also provided \$50,000 for activities, productions and improvements, thanks to state Sen. Paul R. Feeney and state representatives F. Jay Barrows, Ted Philips and Adam Scanlon, who attended the tour Friday.

“It was a great afternoon, and I am so proud of the academy students for their performance,” said Ken Butler, MMAS’s executive director. “Of course, we’re grateful for the support from our local reps and Senator Feeney for pulling this visit together and bringing Director Bobbitt to experience MMAS.”

MMAS, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, has been a cultural home for artists, audiences and aspiring performers of all ages since 1993. In 2017, MMAS purchased its current building and land across from the Xfinity Center, and moved in 2020 from its previous location in Mansfield Center.

MMAS Academy students performed the song from “Rent,” then recited haikus they had written about how much MMAS has meant to them. MMAS Executive Director Ken Butler, Education and Artistic Director Dori Bryan Ployer and Development Director Abigail Brookes Young, welcomed the state officials with remarks before a hard-hat tour of the new arts center from contractor Matthew Grosshandler, vice president of operations for Bald Hill Builders (Walpole, Mass.).

The \$600,000 in renovations to the building and property are expected to be completed in the fall and ready to open for a play in January, written by “On Golden Pond” author Ernest Thompson. Outdoor events have been held all summer under a large tent that overlooks the Norton Reservoir.

Also in attendance on Friday were MMAS independent donors, sponsors and members of the MMAS board of directors.

Programs of MMAS are supported with grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the MCC Facilities Fund and the Local Cultural Councils of Mansfield, Attleboro, Foxborough, North Attleborough and Norton.