Principal Brenden Cusack’s Remarks
Tri-M Honor Society Induction

Good evening everyone and thanks so much for inviting me for this momentous occasion. As I was preparing for tonight’s event, I was trying to pinpoint exactly why and how music has been so important to me. It occurred to me that for as long as I can remember, music has held a deep importance in my life. Some of my earliest memories are set to the background of my parents’ selections; the Beatles, Bee Gees and my dad’s love of Irish folk tunes, which were relegated to one day a week, usually Sundays, because my mother couldn’t stand to hear it all week long. Music always filled my house and I attribute my love of music to my parents. The first album I ever owned was given to me by my parents; Mr. Roboto by Styx. I listened to that rock opera so many times, the needle on the record player had to be replaced.

As I grew up, I dabbled with trumpet, guitar, drums, and bass. It was always enjoyable to me, but I didn’t take music very far until my senior year of high school, when I was invited by some friends to join their band and sing in our senior talent show. It seemed like fun so I agreed. What I did not know was that there would be about 600 people there to watch the show, including just about everyone I’d ever met, any girl I ever liked, and all my teachers, coaches and administrators. I had never before sung in front of an audience. I was absolutely terrified. I clearly remember standing backstage before going on and peeking through the curtains to see what was out there. I simply couldn’t believe what I was seeing, the auditorium was completely packed. There wasn’t a seat left in the house. I was certain that I would die on that stage that night.

Our performance was a strange (and not very good) medley of songs by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the Doors, the Beatles and AC/DC. For the first few seconds I only wondered why I ever agreed to take part in this spectacle. Why on Earth I would subject myself to something that was sure to kill off any semblance of a social life from that point forth. But slowly I started to realize that it seemed to be working. Our rehearsals might have actually paid off. People were dancing around in the aisles and going crazy. There were strobe lights blazing and we were unbelievably LOUD! The experience instantly became fun. In just one moment, what I thought would be my ruination became one of my favorite memories of high school. From that point on, I was hooked. I sang in a number of original bands over the next decade or so, and we actually saw a little success here and there. It was an adventure that took me from here to Manhattan, across the country and back. I have many amazing memories from my time as a performer. And I think the experience helped me as a teacher, a father and as a principal.
So to return to my initial question of why music is so important to me. I think for me, music truly holds the power of memory. Whenever I hear the song “Baker Street” by Gerry Rafferty, I am transported back to my mother’s 1972 Ford Maverick in the parking lot of Northside Elementary School on the day before my first day of Kindergarten. Mr. Roboto puts me right back on the floor of the living room with giant headphones on, learning Japanese phrases and wondering who Kilroy was. I hear “Gloria” by the Doors, and I am right back on that stage reveling in my last few moments of high school. The power music has in imprinting memories is awesome. Imagine life’s most important moments without music. Weddings, funerals, commencement ceremonies. What would they be without music?

Those of you being inducted into the Tri M Honor Society this evening have an extraordinary gift. You have the power to understand and make music. You have the power to make memories by creating music. I hope that you will always keep music in the foreground of your lives and that you continue to grow and evolve as performers. Perhaps your creations will someday become the soundtrack for someone else’s memories. Thanks for having me be a part of this evening’s festivities. It is truly an honor. Congratulations to all of our inductees.