

# ARGINE SAFARI

1219 Briar Way, Fort Lee, NJ 07024 | (201) 953-5966 | [asafari@pascack.org](mailto:asafari@pascack.org) | Twitter: @arginesafari  
[www.arginesafari.com](http://www.arginesafari.com)

Passionate innovative teacher and music education advocate. Speaker, performer, presenter.

## EMPLOYMENT

### PASCACK VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Hillsdale, NJ | 2005 – Present

#### Music Teacher and Choral Director

- ♦ Teaching AP Music Theory, Projects in Music Theory I and II
- ♦ Teaching and conducting: Mixed Choir, Chamber choir, *Bro Squad*, *B Naturals*, and *Vivace Bells*
- ♦ Advising Tri-M Music Honor Society chapter 5873
- ♦ Advising PVHS Choir Board

#### Course Development/Teaching

- ❖ Developed, established and implemented:
  - [Global Collaborative Projects](#): Cultural Stereotypes, COVID-19 Struggles; 2019-present
  - *Global Curriculum*, in progress (collaboration with a Finnish school)
  - *AP Music Theory* (2008: district-wide initiation, curriculum writing, and development)
  - *Music and Society* (2010: district-wide initiation and curriculum writing, currently not running)
  - *Keyboard* (2012: district-wide initiation and curriculum writing)
  - *Audition Prep Workshop* (2016: Pascack Period class)

#### Leadership:

- ❖ Established faculty-student fundraising event *PV Rocks!* to benefit *Little Kids Rock* | 2013 – Present
- ❖ Founder and Director, *Vivace Bells*, Hand Bells Ensemble | 2010 – Present
- ❖ Established *Music Parents Association* | 2010 – Present
- ❖ PVRHSD Technology Steering Committee member, NSBA's Education Technology site visit | 2009
- ❖ Founder and Director, *PV Alumni Benefit Concert* | 2008 – Present
- ❖ Established Tri-M Music Honor Society chapters both schools in the district | 2008 - 2010
- ❖ Established annual *Talent Night* and *Coffeeshouse* fundraising events | 2007 (PV), 2009 (PH)
- ❖ Founder and Director, *Bro Squad*, All-Male A-Cappella Group | 2007 – Present
- ❖ Founder and Advisor, Choir Board: raised \$138,000 | 2006 – Present

#### Established, Developed and Collaborated on the following projects:

- ❖ World Languages Department, '*Songs of the World*' 2010 – 2015
- ❖ English Department, '*Senior Projects*': advisor 2006 – 2010
- ❖ Social Studies Department, '*Music and Society*' curriculum 2010
- ❖ Special Ed Department, '*The Effect of Listening to Music on Language Learning and Memory*' 2007
- ❖ World Languages Department, '*Carnevale Italiano*' 2006

#### Educational Travel / Student Awards and Recognitions:

- ❖ Montreal Heritage Festival and Competition: Montreal, Canada | April 2018  
Gold 1<sup>st</sup> place, Adjudicators Award, Outstanding Choral Group Award
- ❖ WorldStrides Festival of Gold: 1<sup>st</sup> place winners Los Angeles, CA | 2016
- ❖ Music Contact International: Ireland International Performance Tour Dublin, Ireland | 2015
- ❖ Italian Student Exchange / *Leonardo DaVinci Liceo* Treviso, Italy | 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014
- ❖ Performing Arts Consultants: 1<sup>st</sup> place and Grand Champion Award Norfolk, VA | 2014
- ❖ WorldStrides Festival: Philadelphia, PA | 2013  
Gold 1<sup>st</sup> place, Adjudicators Award, Outstanding Choral Group Award

- ❖ Heritage Festival: Silver Rating Washington, DC | 2012
- ❖ Heritage Festival: Gold 1<sup>st</sup> place New York, NY | 2011
- ❖ Heritage Festival: Silver Rating Boston, MA | 2010
- ❖ Student successes: 2008 – Present
  - Accepted to Bergen County, NJ Regional, All-State, All-Eastern, All-National Honors Choirs
  - Accepted to the most prestigious Music Performance & Music Education programs in the country, including: Berklee College of Music, Boston Conservatory, Eastman School of Music, Ithaca College, Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music, Mannes College of Music, NWU Bienen School of Music, NYU, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Westminster Choir College, and more

**Community and Volunteer annual events:** helped raise more than \$45,000 Ongoing

- ❖ Relay for Life: Performances Coordinator and team member
- ❖ Cancer Survivors Dinner and events

**Collaborations with Universities, colleges, community ensembles, and acclaimed performers:**

- ❖ Princeton Nassoons, *Princeton University, NJ* | 2018
- ❖ Rowan University, *Glassboro, NJ* | 2017
- ❖ Pro Arte Chorale, *Ridgewood, NJ* | 2016
- ❖ Seton Hall University, *South Orange, NJ* | 2016
- ❖ Adelphi Orchestra, *River Edge, NJ* | 2016 & 2018
- ❖ Notre Dame School, *Dublin, Ireland* | 2015
- ❖ Mississauga Canadian Youth Choir, *Mississauga, Canada* | 2015 & 2018
- ❖ Workshops: Yale University Whiffenpoofs, Robert Kapilow, Rutgers University Glee Club | ongoing
- ❖ The Bobby McFerrin Vocal Improvisation/Instant Opera! Carnegie Hall, NY | 2008

**UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS HELSINKI, SIBELIUS ACADEMY** *Helsinki, Finland | January-July 2019*  
**Fulbright Distinguished Teacher Fellow**

- ♦ Selected to conduct educational research and study nationally-recognized education systems and global education integration in Finland
- ♦ Presented seminars, lectures, masterclasses, workshops in Finland, France, Germany, and Russia
- ♦ Developed the *Fulbright Inquiry Project*, "Global Classrooms: Connecting Communities Through Arts Collaboration and Phenomenon-Based Design"
- ♦ Established new educational opportunities for collaboration, education and cultural exchange between teachers and students at the participating high schools in Finland and the USA
- ♦ Initiated and established a collaboration and a student exchange program between Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki, Finland, and Russian-Armenian University in Yerevan, Armenia

**NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION** *Trenton, NJ | January 2017 – August 2017*  
**Consultant, Government Employee Interchange Act/2017 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year**

- ♦ Completed a six-month fellowship, sponsored by ETS, that included advising on policy for the NJ and US Departments of Education, serving as an ambassador of education across the state, county, and world to advise on and exemplify best teaching practices
- ♦ Keynote speaker for more than 15 state and countrywide conferences and ceremonies
- ♦ Served as a resource to the Department for programs that directly impact the teaching profession, including Teaching Preparation programs across the state

- ♦ Established R.A.F.T. initiative: *Reaching All Future Teachers*. Leading a group of 21 County Teachers of the Year, organized workshops and presentations for all 25 Teacher Preparation programs in the state
- ♦ Provided guidance with the implementation of the Title I Arts Integration Pilot Program by the DOE
- ♦ Advocated on behalf of NJ Arts Education Partnership to raise the awareness of the Arts education issues
- ♦ Assisted the Department in providing oversight to present issues affecting education such as educational equity, inclusion, sustainability, and more

### **STAGE, SCENE & SONG PERFORMING ARTS (3sPA) Co-Founder and Creative Director**

2013 – Present

- ♦ Driving force behind all aspects of the non-profit organization
- ♦ Directed fully-staged musicals through Youth Theater collaborative for students in grades 6-12
- ♦ Developed unique internship programs for aspiring young producers, directors, writers, actors, musicians and dancers
- ♦ Received 10 nominations and 2 awards, including Best Ensemble, Best Musical, Outstanding Actor, and Best Music Direction, National Youth Theatre | 2015

### **CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH Music Director and Organist**

Woodcliff Lake, NJ | 2006 – Present

- ♦ Overseeing the Music Ministry at the Church and performing for Sunday services
- ♦ Conducting Chancel Choir and Hand Chimes Ensemble
- ♦ Hosting yearly Interfaith Thanksgiving Service which includes ministry leaders and performing groups from Pascack region churches and temples, with the mission to promote messages of peace and empathy, and the goal of raising money for refugees
- ♦ Organizing festive Christmas and Easter celebrations and fundraising concerts, collaborating with the area churches and professional musicians from the Tri-State area

### **BROOKLYN YOUTH CHORUS ACADEMY (GRAMMY AWARD-WINNING) Pianist/Conductor**

Brooklyn, NY | 1995 – 2007

Co-wrote the Academy's unique voice-based curriculum grounded on Kodály principles

- ♦ Conducted Preparatory Chorus and Junior Chorus
- ♦ Taught piano and voice lessons
- ♦ Highlights include performances with New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Elton John and Michael Jackson, Madison Square Garden, Carnegie Hall, and other major NYC venues

### **LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY**

- ♦ [2021 NafME Music Research and Teacher Education Conference](#): Presenter February 2021
- ♦ [2021 NJMEA Virtual State Conference](#): Presenter February 2021
- ♦ **2020-2021 Fulbright DA Welcome Workshop**: Fulbright Alumni Panelist Dec 5th, 2020
- ♦ **2020 Fulbright Global Teaching Dialogue**: Presenter July 2020
- ♦ **NafME Academy Presenter**: [Virtally Nothing: From Surviving to Thriving](#) April 2020
- ♦ **NNSTOY Leadership Conference**: selection/organization committee member July 7-10<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- ♦ **Music Educator Virtual PLC for teachers nationwide**: Initiated and facilitated March 16-June 20, 2020
- ♦ **NJ Department of Education: Title I Arts Integration Pilot Program team** January 2017 – January 2019
  - ❖ Training teachers in Arts Integration approach to education, acting as a Teaching Artist
  - ❖ Advocating for Title I Arts Integration Program, NJ DOE pilot program, within the state and nationally

- ♦ **Teacher of the Year Program**, Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) 2016–2017
  - ❖ Selected among 125,000 teachers in New Jersey as the 2017 State Teacher of the Year to represent NJ teachers nationally
  - ❖ Participated in unparalleled professional development with top educators from our nation on equity, advocacy, media training, family engagement, instructional leadership, policy, and more
  - ❖ Wrote and delivered numerous speeches, presentations for educators, administrators, and political figures in the state and across the nation, including NJ State Senate and House of Representatives, The NJ Board of Education, NJEA, NJ PTA, and more
  - ❖ Met and discussed current education issues with the United States Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, US senators, and the US Department of Education representatives
  - ❖ Delivered “Leading from the Classroom” podcast for Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) [www.teacherpodcasts.org](http://www.teacherpodcasts.org)
- ♦ **NNSTOY National Teacher Leadership Conference** July 8 – 11, 2018, Las Vegas, NV
  - ❖ Social Outing Conference Planning committee member
- ♦ **Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes Fellowship** June 17-22, 2018, Fort Scott, KS
- ♦ **Fairleigh Dickinson University** Madison, NJ |March 21, 2018
  - ❖ Presenter, workshop for early career educators: *Ode to Teaching*
- ♦ **ECET2NJPA Convening** The College of New Jersey |March 3 – 4, 2018
  - ❖ Presenter, *Connecting the Dots: Creativity and Innovation in the Classroom*
- ♦ **ECET2 Conference** Princeton, NJ |December 1 – 2, 2017  
*Courageous Conversations: Reflecting, Learning & Leading Toward Educational Equity*
  - ❖ Co-organizer: Planned and organized all breakout sessions, inviting guest speakers and facilitators
  - ❖ Artistic Director: a collaborative performance by 65 students from New Milford Middle School orchestra and Pascack Valley High School Choir, focusing on social justice through the arts
  - ❖ *Cultivate a Calling* speaker
- ♦ **Teach Plus Teacher of the Year Advisory Committee member** November 2017 – Present
  - ❖ Working with Teach Plus on our Title II advocacy project, ensuring full funding of Title II
  - ❖ Writing op-eds and reports, including Senator Cory Booker’s STRIVE Act to support the teaching profession
  - ❖ Participating in Capitol Hill briefing and Capitol Hill Day
- ♦ **NNSTOY & Aspen Institute Leadership Retreat** Washington D.C. |November 29 – December 1, 2017  
Twenty-five nationally chosen educators, principals and administrators collaborated on the educational challenge of distributed leadership
  - ❖ Developed research questions toolkit to help educators distribute leadership in their schools
  - ❖ Conducted Professional Development activities
- ♦ **ArtsEd and New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NSPSA) Summit** September 28, 2017
  - ❖ Presenter: *Transformative Power of the Arts*.  
Advocating for complete arts education in New Jersey: [artsednj.org/artsedsummit](http://artsednj.org/artsedsummit)
  - ❖ Facilitated round-table discussions amongst supervisors, administrators, policy makers, and educators
  - ❖ Recruited a group of future music teachers to participate in this Summit
- ♦ **NAfME Think Tank: Diversity in Leadership and Education Team member** 2017 – Present
- ♦ **NJEA Fr L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education: Grant Committee Member** 2017 – Present

- ♦ **NJEA Distinguished Service Award Committee Member** 2017 – 2021
- ♦ **Co-Founder and Artistic Director, Stage Scene and Song Performing Arts** 2013 – Present  
*Non-profit organization dedicated to transforming, enlightening and empowering youth, the society and the world through the performing arts.*
- ♦ **Distinguished Clinical Intern Awards Panelist**, NJ ACTE 2017 – Present
- ♦ **Lincoln Center Education Forum: Inclusion & Access: Social Justice, Classroom to the Stage** 2016
- ♦ **NAfME Music Research & Teacher Education Conference**, Discussion facilitator, Atlanta, GA | April 2016
- ♦ **Speaker, International Conference on Music and Innovation** Moscow, Russia | February 2016  
Interdisciplinary Studies of Musicology Department at P.I. Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory
- ♦ **Education Committee Chair & Treasurer of Palisades Virtuosi**, Professional Music Trio 2007 – 2016
- ♦ **Moderator and Presenter**, EdCamp for Music Educators Bergen County, NJ | January 2014

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PRESENTATIONS, WORKSHOPS

- ♦ **Global Teaching Dialogue** by Fulbright Teacher Exchanges. Presenter July 28-30, 2020
- ♦ **Lincoln Center: Activate**, Professional Development Initiative. Participant July 21-24<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- ♦ **Stockton University Future Educators Virtual Conference**: Presenter May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- ♦ **NAfME Workshop: Virtually Nothing: From Surviving to Thriving**. Presenter April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- ♦ **TED-Ed Idea Accelerator BETA Tester**: amplifying educators' voices. Presenter. 2018 -2019
- ♦ **Presentations to Music Education Students** September 2017 – Present  
*From Surviving to Thriving: Please Don't Stop the Music*
  - ❖ **Westminster Choir College at Rider University**, Princeton, NJ
  - ❖ **Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of Music**, New Brunswick, NJ
  - ❖ **Rowan University's Music Education Department**, Glassboro, NJ
  - ❖ **The College of New Jersey**, Ewing, NJ
  - ❖ **Fairleigh Dickinson University**, Madison, NJ
- ♦ **Provided expertise & connected** with the NJSEA & NJFEA early career educators Feb 2017 – Present
- ♦ **NJFEA Conference Keynote Speaker: Why Teach?** June 2018, Kean University, NJ
- ♦ **Speaker, Seton Hall University, Kappa Delta Pi and Educational Studies:** Oct 2017  
*ELL students and their needs: what is culturally responsive teaching?*
- ♦ **NJFEA Conference Keynote Speaker**, William Paterson University Oct 2017
- ♦ **Keynote Speaker at the NJ Arts Education Partnership Summit** Sep 2017  
*alongside Sir Ken Robinson: Why Arts Education?*
- ♦ **Keynote Speaker, Montclair State University Network for Educational Renewal:** Sep 2017  
*The importance of collaboration and mentoring new teachers*
- ♦ **Keynote Speaker at the Linden Schools District: Leading Your Legacy.** Sep 2017  
Spoke to the entire district of more than 1,000 faculty and staff
- ♦ **Space Academy for Educators** July 19-25, 2017, Huntsville, AL
  - ❖ Participated in an intensive week-long program to develop teamwork and leadership skills and discover innovative instructional practices; participated in STEM projects and space mission simulations
- ♦ **Education Commission of the States National Policy Forum** June 28-30, 2017, Coronado, CA
  - ❖ Participated in discussions about education equity, Arts Integration Projects across the nation, and other important education issues
- ♦ **NJFEA Conference Keynote Speaker** May 2017, Monmouth University, NJ

- ♦ **The Smithsonian Institution, CCSSO, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Scholastic** *April 17-30, 2017, Washington, D.C.*
  - ❖ Participated in professional development and staff development
- ♦ **Presenter, ECET2 Spring Convening:** *March 2017, Princeton, NJ*  
*Creativity in the Classroom: Keep your students engaged, motivated & excited about learning!*
- ♦ **NJSEA Preservice Conference Leadership Matters: Keynote Speaker** *Feb 2017, Princeton, NJ*
- ♦ **Presented numerous workshops** to K-12 teachers in New Jersey *Oct 2016 – Present*  
*Topics: Teacher effectiveness, diversity in the classroom, arts integration, social-emotional awareness, classroom management, mentor-mentee effectiveness, and more*
- ♦ **Provided numerous training sessions** to future music educators through NJMEA and NAFME programs
- ♦ **Clinician**, working with choirs ranging from middle school to university levels: *2015 -current*
  - ❖ **Eric Hamber Secondary School Chamber Choir**, Vancouver, Canada
  - ❖ **St. James-Assiniboia Senior Divisional Choir**, Winnipeg, Canada
  - ❖ **Candesca**, Kelowna, British Columbia
  - ❖ **Mississauga Festival Youth Choir**, Mississauga, Canada
- ♦ **ASCD Conference on Educational Leadership**, Atlanta, GA *Oct 2012*

## AWARDS, GRANTS & RECOGNITIONS

### *2018-2019 Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching*

*2018 Arts Educator of the Year*, awarded by New Jersey Education Association

*2018 NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence*

*2018 Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes Fellow*

*2018 Outstanding Music Director*, recognized by WorldStrides OnStage

*2018 Kevin Grover Distinguished Teacher Leader Scholarship*, awarded by Mount Holyoke College

*2017 Fifth District Hometown Hero Award*, presented by Congressman Josh Gottheimer

*2016-2017 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year*, CCSSO National Teacher of the Year Program

*2017 Evangelina Menendez Trailblazer Award*, honored by U.S. Senator Menendez

*2017 New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers Honorary Life Membership Award*

*2017 Trailblazing Efforts in the Field of Labor and Business Award*, by Bergen County Executive

*2017 Full tuition scholarship*: Riley College of Education and Leadership, Walden University

*2017 Top 17 people to watch in 2017*, named #5 by the Record and NorthJersey.com

*2015-2016 Bergen County Teacher of the Year*, New Jersey Governor's Educator of the Year

*2015-2016 Pascack Valley High School Teacher of the Year*

*2015 Grammy Music Educator Award Nominee*

*2015 - 2018 Winifred M. & George P. Pitkin Foundation Inc. Grants: 3sPA*, [www.3spa.org](http://www.3spa.org) (\$55,000)

*2015 National Youth Theatre: Nominee*, Outstanding Musical Direction of 'Catch Me If You Can'

*2013 Music Director of the Year*, by WorldStrides Heritage Performance

*2012 Conductor of the Year*, Music Educators of Bergen County Incorporated, MEBCI

*2010 Distinguished Secondary School Teaching Award* from Princeton University

*2010 - 2017 PVHS Parent-Faculty Organization Grants* for Outstanding Student Projects (\$14,500)

*2010 Extraordinary Contributions to the World Languages Department*, PVHS

*2009 Music Educators National Conference: Outstanding Contributions & Selfless Leadership*

*2005 Knights of Columbus #5427 Leadership Award: For Years of Inspiring Leadership*

*2000 Our Lady of Guadalupe Youth Theatre: Outstanding Director*

1997 **Brooklyn Youth Chorus**: Appreciation of Selfless Dedication and Talent

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

**ACDA**, American Choral Directors Association. Participated in Eastern Division Conferences

**ASCD**, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

**MEBCI**, Music Educators of Bergen County

**NAfME**, National Association for Music Education. *All-National Ensembles sponsor*

**NJ All-State Opera Festival**, Committee Member. *All-State Opera Conductor* | 2013 & 2014

**NJCPT**, New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers: Honorary Life Membership

**NJ Council of State Teachers of the Year Committee**

**NEA**, National Educators Association

**NJEA**, New Jersey Education Association

**NJMEA**, New Jersey Music Educators Association.

**NJSMA**, New Jersey School Music Association

**NNSTOY**, National Network of State Teachers of the Year

**The Metropolitan Opera Guild**, Member. Established HD Live in Schools memberships for the district

## PUBLICATIONS AND BOOK REVIEW WORK

**Fish, Bilha**. *Invincible Women: Conversations with 21 Inspiring & Successful American Immigrants*  
(featured in the book). May 2020

**Safari, A**. *Innovative Methods of Teaching Music Theory and Ear Training in the American Secondary schools. Moscow Conservatory Journal of Research in Music Education. Moscow, Russia. June 2019*

**Book Proposal Review Team Member**, ASCD Oct 2017 – Present

**Book Reviewer** for *Solution Tree Publications* Summer 2017 – Present

## EDUCATION

**WALDEN UNIVERSITY**, Riley College of Education and Leadership 2017 – Present  
PhD candidate: *Learning, Instruction, and Innovation. GPA: 4.0*

**WESTMINSTER CHOIR COLLEGE OF RIDER UNIVERSITY** Princeton, NJ | 2009  
Westminster Conducting Institute and AP Course in Music Theory Teaching

**BROOKLYN COLLEGE, CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK** Brooklyn, NY | 1995 – 1999  
BS, Business Management and Finance, Dean's List, Golden Key National Honor Society

**MOSCOW P.I. TCHAIKOVSKY CONSERVATORY** Moscow, Russia | 1988 – 1993  
MA, Music Theory and Composition, Diploma with Distinction  
BA, Piano Performance and Theory

**YEREVAN R. MELIKIAN COLLEGE OF MUSIC** Yerevan, Armenia | 1984 – 1988  
Associate Degree in Theory of Music, Honorable Diploma

## CERTIFICATIONS

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY** New Brunswick, NJ | 2012  
Supervisor Certification

**NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY** Jersey City, NJ | 2005 – 2006  
Alternate Route Teacher Preparation Program: K-12 Music Teacher Certification

**LANGUAGES**: Fluent in Armenian and Russian; Taught repertoire in more than 20 languages