

Musical Introduction Series Launches 2011-12 Season with World-Class Songwriter Natalie Merchant

Dear 92nd Street Y School Partners:

92nd Street Y is delighted to announce the much-anticipated launch of the 2011-12 Musical Introduction Series season, with one of the preeminent singer-songwriters of our time, Natalie Merchant. This dynamic and culturally rich program introduces young students in grades K-3 to the world of music, both in the concert hall and in the classroom, connecting the joy of musical learning with current academic curriculum and providing multiple avenues for students' artistic engagement and growth.

We began the season on October 19th with our popular Classroom Teacher Workshop at 92Y, featuring the first two programs that your schools will hear and see in concert this year at 92Y: Natalie Merchant, and Remember Me: Music, Art and Poetry Celebrating the Children of Terezín.

The 2011-12 concerts themselves began on November 30 and December 1 with the renowned singer-songwriter Natalie Merchant, performing original songs with text by both well-known and lesser-known 19th and 20th century poets, such as Edward Lear, Albert Bigelow Paine, Charles E. Carryl, William Brightly Rands and the child poet Nathalia Crane.

Prior to the concerts, which were held in 92Y's beautiful Kaufmann Concert Hall, each participating class received two visits from a 92Y professional musician teaching artist, who introduced students to Natalie Merchant and her music by exploring and analyzing her musical versions of classic children's poems. In their classrooms, students sang the chorus to Natalie's original songs and discovered how Natalie used her voice to capture the spirit of the poem and create the mood of the song.

Students also began their own "Poets' Club" in which they explored such questions as, *Who writes poetry? Why do people write poetry? Which poems and poets do we especially love?* They also wrote their own poems and original lyrics to Natalie's song, *Topsy-turvy-World*, and Natalie sang their original lyrics at the concert! Also in the concert hall, students had the chance to show off their knowledge of Natalie's music and the instruments in her band, to sing with her and share in her joy of original poetry and music and how the two work together.

We are extremely proud of the excellent work that your students accomplished in the first unit of study. All of their effort was apparent at the interactive concert, when they had the opportunity to share their work and love of music with Natalie Merchant and her band. Their enthusiasm and excitement at hearing and seeing this engaging, world-class performer was apparent in their smiles and joyful singing.

With warm regards,

Larisa Gelman, Director

Debra Kreisberg, Managing Director