



# The Teaneck Community Chorus

Teresa-Marie Gotanco - Artistic Director

*Proudly Presents*

# PURE IMAGINATION



**Sunday • May 18, 2025 • 3 PM**  
**Teaneck High School**



# PURE IMAGINATION

*To sit and dream. To sit and read.  
To sit and learn about the world!*

Through reading, we're able to travel to other worlds and experience alternate realities in hopes of enhancing our understanding of the one in which we live and how to thrive in it. In stories, we find nuggets of wisdom and various qualities that we can incorporate into our everyday lives. Come, ignite your own *imagination!* It's a whole new world!





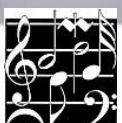
## Greetings from the President

On behalf of the Teaneck Community Chorus, welcome to our “Pure Imagination” concert. We are delighted to be joined by two of Teaneck’s own Teen Idols, Azaria Best and Kyle Farr, along with the Paterson Music Project Children’s Choir and String Ensemble, and the Silk City Jazz Collective.

At a time when we find ourselves confronted with the censorship of literature about diversity and who we are, we celebrate books, the freedom to read, to write, to dream, to learn. We salute writers and librarians and raise our voices in support of our rights and freedoms for all.

Thank you for coming. We hope you enjoy the program.

*Michel Kinter*  
President  
Teaneck Community Chorus



# PROGRAM ORDER

Visions  
To Sit and Dream  
Pure Imagination

Stevie Wonder  
Rosephanye Powell  
Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley  
from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

*Soloists: Kayla De Valle, Genesis Gibbons*

Out There  
Everybody Says Don't

Alan Menken  
(from *Hunchback of Notre Dame*)  
Stephen Sondheim  
(from *Anyone Can Whistle*)

Sogno di Volare

Christopher Tin (from *Civilization VI*)

With a Little Help From My Friends

The Beatles (as arranged by Sergio Mendes)

Remanso, Final Cancion

Julio Morales

For Good

Stephen Schwartz (from *Wicked*)

*Soloists: Gail Smith, Eileen White, Barbara Kinter, Noelle Lloyd*

Freedom Train  
Die With a Smile  
Don't Stop Believin'

Bruno Mars & Lady Gaga  
Stephen Ray Perry. Neal Joseph Schon,  
Jonathan Cain arr. Skylar Klein

My Once Upon a Time

*Soloist: Kyle Farr*

David Goldsmith & John Kavanaugh  
(from *Descendants 3*)

Paraiso  
Seeking Light

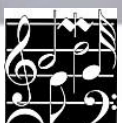
*Soloist: Azaria Best*

Ryan Cayabyab  
Brandon Williams

Pollyanna, I Believe in You

Keiichi Suzuki & Hirokazu Tanaka,  
Lyrics: Linda Hennrick (from *Earthbound*)

*Soloist: Kyle Farr*



# **Artistic Director – Teresa-Marie Gotanco**



Born and raised in New Jersey, Teresa-Marie Gotanco is a music educator, director, and performer based in north New Jersey. She is currently in her first year building the music program at Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child in Summit, New Jersey.

Prior to her involvement at Oak Knoll, Ms. Gotanco enjoyed an extensive career as an accomplished pianist, traveling around the New York/New Jersey region to play for various churches, choral performances, and musicals. Among the musicals she has played for are *Once on this Island*, and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (for which she also served as Choirmaster and Assistant Musical Director). With a passion for voice science, vocal health, and authentic expression in performance, she has led choirs, taught voice classes, and provided vocal coaching to clients from all walks of life.

Ms. Gotanco has also worked as a professional vocalist since 2018, when she made her professional singing debut as a soprano concertist and soloist with the Princeton Baroque Chorus. In 2019, she was featured as part of a septet at Carnegie Hall under the baton of Mr. John Rutter, and during that summer, she had the privilege of performing at the Apollo Theater in Syros, Greece, during the Festival of the Aegean. Ms. Gotanco holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Rutgers University.



# **Chorus Pianist – Bernie Visto**



Bernie Visto, is a pianist, music director to several plays, flutist, conductor, an all-around musician and an educator.

Mr. Visto was born in Iloilo City Philippines. He graduated from Rosa L. Parks High School in Paterson and received a full academic scholarship in Montclair State University majoring in Management Information Systems.

His passion for music and the desire to further his education enabled him to move back home to the Philippines and finished a degree in Bachelor of Music at the University of San Agustin in Iloilo City majoring in Piano performance and Music Education. While in College, Mr. Visto taught high school music at Colegio de San Jose and managed to have a Trio group to play for weddings and other music gigs. He also played piano at church every Sunday and managed a children's choir and an adult choir. Mr. Visto now is a certified K-12 music teacher at Norman S. Weir (K-8) and a high school piano teacher at his alma mater, Rosa L. Parks High School. In the community, Mr. Visto, is the music director of the Filipino Diocese choir of Paterson, Alay Awit, serving churches in the Paterson Diocese. Norman S. Weir is his home school and has received a Disney grant to perform a complete musical every year for the next 3 years. Mr. Visto is also a teaching artist for the Paterson Music Project (PMP) who performs regularly in Paterson.

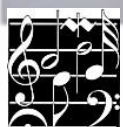


# Juliette Bowen

Juliette Bowen is a Sign Language Interpreter, who has won the hearts of the Teaneck Community Chorus audiences for over ten years. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Hofstra University, a Master's of Education in School Counseling, Herbert H. Lehman College, Bronx, NY and a Master's of Education in General and Special Education, Touro College, New York. She is fluent in Spanish, English, and American Sign Language.



She currently works with multi-handicapped, autistic, blind emotionally disturbed, deaf, and severely learning-disabled students in NYC. Her first experience with the deaf and hard of hearing was when she was approached to add these students to her caseload while counseling in Valhalla, NY. Juliette did not shrink back but willingly accepted the challenge and decided to provide equal access to these students by learning their language. She began working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in 1994 and later counseled and taught at the Lexington School for the Deaf, Queens, NY. She currently interprets for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Clinton Hills, Brooklyn, as well as Trinity Baptist Church in the Bronx.





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## Guest Artists



# Kyle Farr

A seventh grader at Thomas Jefferson Middle School, has performed at temple, church and school productions. Some notable roles that he has done have been the title role in Aladdin, Fiyero in Wicked and will play Lord Farquaad in Shrek Jr. this year. Thus far, Kyle's favorite role has been Aladdin. Some singers who he enjoys and have inspired him are Arianna Grande, Jennifer Hudson and Muni Long. After middle school, he hopes to be accepted to a high school of his choice. Kyle wishes to thank his parents for their support and encouragement, his twin brother, Kayden and his teachers, Ms. Neff and Mrs. Johnson, for allowing him to pursue his passion.





## **Azaria Best**

a Senior at Teaneck High School, began her musical training early when she sang in the school choir in the 6th grade. She went on to star in musicals during her Freshman year and learned the violin as a Junior. Azaria has also sung and danced in church and temple services and completed a mentorship for music students at

William Paterson University and at the Manhattan Vineyard Theater. In addition, she competed in the local and national competitions for the Contemporary Vocal category in the NAACP's ACT-SO competition and prayer breakfast/luncheon at the Mandalay Bay Hotel in Las Vegas. Azaria also performed at the Gospel Music in the Park, a Christian music festival held in summer. Appearing in *The Wiz*, her favorite performance, changed her life. When not performing, she enjoys the music of Billie Eilish, Blood Orange, Samara Joy and Tyler, The Creator. After high school, she plans to pursue a degree in Performing Arts. Azaria would like to thank her mom and dad for always encouraging her, her friends for giving her hope and her music teacher, Ms. Rondael and private voice coach, Mr. Chris, for their guidance and encouragement.



**Jason Quevedo - Bass**  
**Wes Ostrander - Drums**

## **Patterson Music Project (PMP)**

PMP provides tuition-free afterschool music programming for students in Paterson. Students study a primary instrument and participate in ensemble practice, instrumental sectionals, private lessons, and performances.

Paterson Music Project students are given the tools to succeed and flourish when they learn and perform an instrument. They gain greater self-confidence, discipline, creative thinking skills, a sense of achievement, and so much more that they will carry throughout life. Programs are available to students of all musical abilities.

We are pleased to have three distinct groups participating:

- ❖ PMP Silk City Jazz Ensemble
- ❖ PMP Advanced Choir
- ❖ PMP String Ensemble



# PMP Musicians

## PMP String Ensemble, Shanna Lin (Director)

- ❖ Yarisel Almonte
- ❖ Evan Cespedes
- ❖ Destinee Feliciano
- ❖ Halle Lawrence
- ❖ Reanna Lawrence
- ❖ Tiffany Lawrence
- ❖ Geanelly Vallecillo
- ❖ Haley Vallecillo

## PMP Silk City Jazz Collective, Sam Tobias (Director)

- ❖ Alex Enriquez
- ❖ Caleb Gonzalez
- ❖ Jean Rosa
- ❖ Luis Rosa



# PMP Musicians

**PMP Advanced Choir, Jeremey Watson (Director)**

- ❖ Daleyza Ángeles-DeDios
- ❖ Khloe Chavez
- ❖ Madeline Cruz
- ❖ Aslan Dawson
- ❖ Alejandro Duran
- ❖ Khloe Gabriel Nunez
- ❖ Maithee Grullón Leon
- ❖ Krisneury Guzman
- ❖ Leila Hache
- ❖ Voctoria Hache
- ❖ Veronica Jackson
- ❖ Victoria Jackson
- ❖ Kanesha Joran
- ❖ Stephanie Lopez
- ❖ Naomi Olazabal
- ❖ Blanca Valentina Olazabal Raime
- ❖ Azalea Picou



# Teaneck Community Chorus Singers

**Artistic Director**  
**Teresa-Marie Cotanco**

**Pianist**  
**Bernie Visto**

## Sopranos

**Maria Adorno**

**Sue Akiska**

**Allison Christiansen**

**Kayla De Valle**

**Genesis Gibbons**

**Ilene Gilbert**

**Yasemin Cuibahar**

**Barbara Kinter**

**Noelle Lloyd**

**Chi Mei Lu**

**Amanda Paulsen**

**Jan Sprance**

**Cail Smith**

**Jan Sprance**

**Fern Wilensky**



# Teaneck Community Chorus Singers

## Altos

**Valerie Anderson**

**Anne Atlas**

**Anita Bluestone**

**Carole Boutry**

**Cathy Cavallone**

**Suzan Cho**

**Adriana Gibbons**

**Cinger Cordon**

**Judy Mars**

**Ellen Ray**

**Nadège Stretz**

**Eileen White**

## Tenors

**John Cotanco**

**Justin Lu**

**Wes Matsui**

**Patrick Montesano**

## Basses

**Skylar Klein**

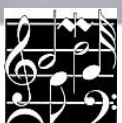
**Michel Kinter**

**Jim Norman**

**Jeff Pieper**

**Ernie Sprance**

**Jim White**



# Patrons

## Founder's Circle

(\$1000+)

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## Director's Circle

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Jack & Margaret Aaker

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Anita Bluestone & David Lyon

Steven Bell



## Benefactors

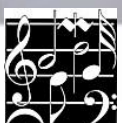
(\$250-\$499)

Juliette Bowen

Suzan Cho

Monica Schulze-Hodges

Michel Kinter



# Patrons

## Benefactors

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Chi Mei Lu

Justin Lu

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To Then From Now -

The Christopher A. Smith Foundation



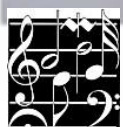
# Patrons

## Friends

(\$100-\$249)

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Jacqueline Kates  
Lisa Kass & Jeremy Hoffman  
Judy Mars  
Elena Matsui

The Montesano Family  
*(Paul Montesano & Damiana Astudillo,  
Anne Montesano & Garth Belcon,  
Matthew Montesano & Heidi Goodson)*  
Jeffrey and Andrea Pieper  
Lynn Roberts  
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# Patrons

## Supporters

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Gene & Gail Matsui  
Michael Matsui  
Jean Strickholm



*Thank you to our anonymous donors of all levels, we appreciate your support!*



# TCC Supporters

Bergen County Division of  
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The Puffin Foundation, Ltd.



# Program Notes

By Cathy Cavallone

*Visions* - Born Stevland Hardaway Morris in 1950 of American-Ghanaian descent, but professionally known as Stevie Wonder, the singer-songwriter and record producer put out his sixteenth hit album entitled *Innervisions* in the summer of 1973, which features *Visions*. Despite having lost his eyesight shortly after his birth, Wonder would go on to write and perform hits for Motown, R&B, Funk and Pop for over five decades. The soulful lyrics are a nod to Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech and offer hope for a better world.

*To Sit and Dream* - Written by Rosephanye Powell (b.1962), an American choral composer, singer, professor, and researcher, this enchanting piece incorporates the words from "For You", a Langston Hughes poem. This song addresses the issue of "our problem world" and beckons us to turn to books for answers and comfort. The jazz harmonies transport listeners to an ethereal world where dreams can become reality.

*Pure Imagination* - Sung by Gene Wilder in the 1971 children's film, *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (based on the novel by Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*), and most recently by Timothee Chalamet in 2023, this piece has a dreamy quality that evokes a technicolor fantasyland. Written by the British songwriting team of Anthony Newley and Leslie Bricusse (*Doctor Dolittle and Scrooge*), who received an Academy Award for the film's score, the song's euphoric melody inspires anyone from ages 2 to 102 to go anywhere their imaginations will take them.

*Out There* - From the 1996 Disney animated film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (novel by Victor Hugo 1831), composer Alan Menken and lyricist Stephen Schwartz capture the intense isolation of the disfigured main character, Quasimodo. He is banished to the bell tower of Notre Dame Cathedral because he is so hideous and there, laments his apparent fate, never making contact with the outside world. Quasimodo's heartfelt plea "just to live one day out there" brings a tear to our eyes in this sonorous ballad.



## Program Notes (Continued)

*Everybody Says Don't* - This punchy tune from Stephen Sondheim's 1964 Broadway musical *Anyone Can Whistle* (book by Arthur Laurentis) was first sung by Harry Guardino and co-starred Angela Lansbury in her stage musical debut. In 1993, Barbra Streisand recorded her rendition of the piece. *Everybody Says Don't* emphatically invites us to "make just a ripple...come on, be brave" and disregard what people think when we make choices. It is the quintessential Broadway song that, by the end, has audiences cheering for themselves.

*Sogno di Volare* - (*Dream of Flight*)- Featured in the video game, *Civilization VI*, composer Christopher Tin (b. 1976) created this Italian, symphonic masterpiece based on the writings of Leonardo daVinci (1452-1519), a polymath of the High Renaissance period. It is a work of poetry in flight as it celebrates the perfection and wonder of humanity. It resonates with victory through fanfare as if emanating from the heavens, taking the listener to new heights of glory.

*With a Little Help from My Friends* - First written and recorded by The Beatles (1967), *With a Little Help from My Friends* is a warm, uplifting tune with a soulful, easygoing rhythm that captures the spirit of camaraderie. Its lyrics celebrate friendship and support, making it an enduring anthem of unity. Reimagined by Brazilian composer, Sergio Mendes (1941-2024), this rendition combines hints of samba and jazz with smooth harmonies to create a gentle, upbeat tempo that has listeners swaying to the syncopation.

*Remanso, - Canción Final (Haven the Final Song)*- This poignant and reflective piece by Mexican composer and educator, Julio Morales (b. 1987) and inspired by Spanish poet, Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-1936), blends rich melodies with heartfelt lyrics. The song creates a tranquil atmosphere, as if basking in the caress of El Sirocco. Morales' emotive delivery is a beautiful culmination of introspective storytelling with a soothing, almost meditative quality that resonates long after the song ends.



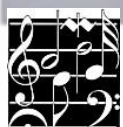
## Program Notes (Continued)

*For Good* - *Wicked* (novel by Gregory Maguire), the 2003 hit Broadway musical, features *For Good* (composer Stephen Schwartz), a duet first sung by the powerful mezzo-soprano Idina Menzel (Elphaba) and the resonant Kristin Chenoweth (Glinda). Elphaba and Glinda harmonize thoughts on their relationship and conclude that they are better because they knew each other. This lyrical tune is an ode to friendship that listeners will find themselves humming to long after the performance.

*Paraiso* - The Filipino pop group, Smokey Mountain, first performed this melodic composition by Ryan Cayabyab in 1991. The album, from which the title song comes, is considered to be the biggest-selling album in the Philippines to date. The ethereal sounds, as if coming from a paradise, reflect the song's title, but the message is ironic to the title. The lyrics depict the poverty, squalor and smog that exist in parts of the county, but the haunting harmony actually transports us to the beauty that dwells in our minds.

*Seeking Light* - Based on the poem by choral lyricist, Charles Anthony Silvestri (b. 1965) and composed by Dr. Brandon Williams (Associate Professor of Choral Music and Choral Music Education at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey), *Seeking Light* is an uplifting piece inspired in part by Silvestri's *Uncle Vince*, and by the work of British artist Pamela Colman Smith. The ballad takes listeners on a journey through life's ups and downs, ultimately finding light.

*Pollyanna - I Believe in You* - is a heartfelt and optimistic ballad from the 1960 Disney film *Pollyanna*. The song was composed by the legendary songwriting duo Richard M. Sherman and Robert B. Sherman, known for their uplifting and memorable melodies. In the film, the song is performed by actor and singer Jimmy Boyd, who portrays the character Jimmy Bean. With its simple yet



## Concert Production

Production Manager

Graphic Design

Web Masters

▶ Publicity Chairman

Program Design

Program Notes

THS Production Leader

TCC Music Committee Chairman

TCC Membership Chairman

TCC Fundraising Chairman

Reception Coordination

Jeffrey Merrigan

Ernie Sprance

Laura Downs-Buma

Monica Hodges

Jennifer Smith

Jack Aaker

Gail Smith

Cathy Cavallone

Jamie Boyle

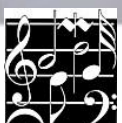
Wes Matsui

Sue Akiska

Jeri Kadison

Ellen Ray

Sue Akiska



## Acknowledgements

**Bergen County Department of Parks, Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs** from funds granted by the **New Jersey State Council on the Arts**.

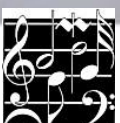
**We thank the Puffin Foundation Ltd.** for their continuing support and partnership with the **Teaneck Community Chorus**. The foundation's partnership has been critical to our mission of diversity and inclusion in all of our programs.

Thank you to **Jamie Boyle**, for leading the production crew at **Teaneck High School**. Thanks to the supportive students running lights and audio.

Thank you, **Jeff Merrigan** for serving as our outstanding **Production Manager!**



Thank you to the members of the **Teaneck Board of Education** and **Superintendent, Dr. Andre Spencer**, for continuing our long-standing partnership to increase engagement within **Teaneck**.





# PURE IMAGINATION

The Teaneck Community Chorus

thanks you for sharing this day with us!

▶ *Updates and information about TCC  
will be posted on:*

▶ [www.teaneckcommunitychorus.org](http://www.teaneckcommunitychorus.org)

▶ <https://www.facebook.com/Teaneck-Community-Chorus-105307001058>

▶ <https://www.instagram.com/teaneckcommunitychorus1/#>



The Teaneck Community Chorus



PURE IMAGINATION:  
A Once Upon a Time Story  
by Wesley Matsui

Once upon a time, a curious child named Elio lived in a quiet town with a golden library at its heart. Elio adored stories that lived on pages and danced in songs. But lately, something has gone missing. The library is growing dim. Fewer people visit. Books whisper instead of singing.

One day, while gazing out the library window, Elio had *Visions*: a dream of a world united by wonder, where words could fly and music healed hearts. But visions mean nothing if they remain only dreams. So, Elio sits beneath the tallest shelf and begins *To Sit and Dream*, imagining a better world—a story waiting to come alive.

Then, deep inside the stacks, a voice hums a familiar tune: "Come with me and you'll be in a world of *Pure Imagination*..."

As the library walls give way to sky and possibility, Elio sings *Out There*—a yearning to experience the world beyond, to belong, and break free from the quiet confines of life on the margins. At that moment, the library isn't just a building—it is a portal to everything beyond reach.

And the adventure begins. A secret staircase appears behind the poetry books. Elio follows it down, where the words of rebellious dreamers echo: "*Everybody says don't... but I say do!*"

Then, a gust of wind catches a page from one of the books and carries it upward. Elio chases it to the top of the library's dome, where the ceiling disappears and the sky opens wide. There, with his heart racing, Elio lifts his voice in *Sogno di Volare*—a dream of flying, limitless horizons, and stepping into the unknown with courage and wonder. He imagines flying without a controller in hand. And what better way to fly than to soar on the strings of the Paterson Music Project String Ensemble, Shanna Lin (Director)

We fly on an extraordinary adventure. It is a quest to rescue wonder from vanishing, to remind the world why everyone's story matters.

The story continues with *The Power of Connection*. Elio could not travel alone. Stories, like songs, need companions.

First comes Bea, the classmate who always reads upside down. Then Theo, who speaks in riddles but understands feelings better than anyone. Together, they form a team. Like the song says, they got by *With a Little Help From My Friends*. Can you dance the bossa nova?



As nightfall approaches, the team wanders to the library courtyard, drawn by the voices of an ensemble singing. That song, *Remanso, Canción final*, a Garden of )

Quiet Waters, the children pause to contemplate in the peaceful pool of reflection as darkness encloses.

Inspired by their contemplation, the trio sings together. “Because I knew you,” Elio says to his friends, “I have been changed *For Good*.”

Just then, a joyful sound echoes through the stacks—a new group of adventurers arrives children led by someone with a magical wand in one hand and a book in the other.

They bring their magic:

With *Freedom Train*, they sing of hope in motion, the power of freedom, and the belief that justice and joy are destinations worth traveling toward, together.

With *Don't Stop Believin'*, they reignite the spirit of perseverance. The journey is extended and uncertain, but belief is the flame that lights the way.

And with *Die with a Smile*, they sing with longing and strength about reclaiming one's story and inspiring all of us to find the hero within.

Their songs are not interruptions to the journey. They are the journey. And with these children's voices added to the mix, the library world grows brighter and braver.

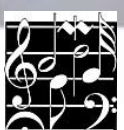
But far above, in a tower of red tape and closed doors, the villain known only as The Eraser lurks. He fears imagination. Fearsome books that make people think. Favored music that stirs the heart.

He banned stories. “*Too dangerous*,” he declares. He locks up books, erases verses, and silences songs. He wants a restricted world of order, not a world of wonder.

But, no one can silence music forever. And stories always find a way.

After hearing the Eraser's decree, a new youngster, our young hero Kyle, wanders into a forgotten corner of the library. He finds an old phonograph and a dusty record labeled *My Once Upon a Time*.

As it plays, our hero feels a bittersweet reflection on everything that had been lost to fear, silence, and forgetting. Love, wonder, and stories that once filled the air now feel distant, like dreams slipping away.



The song becomes a turning point: a memory of what matters the most and reclaiming the moment to move forward.

\*"Once upon a time, the world was sweeter than we knew..." The kids in the library say, "I want some of that."

No one could undo the past, but who would sing the future? Our young heroes would.

At last, the team group reaches the world's edge, where legends say *Paraiso*—paradise—waits. A real place of poverty and destitution is elevated to a world shaped by joy, connection, doing good, dreaming, and singing.

The last to join is Azaria, who leads the library youth in climbing the Mountain of Meaning, singing *Seeking Light* with wisdom beyond her age. Elio says Azaria is *Seeking Light* through darkness and the night. Did she hear that story from the resilience of her elders?

But then the Eraser appears. "End the story," he growls.

Young Kyle returns with full voice exclaiming, "Who says end the story!!" The library trio shout, "He's one of us! Sing for us, young hero!" And suddenly there are more children gathering, their wind uplifting and inspiring.

Out pour the words of *Pollyanna*, the eternal optimist: "*I believe the world is full of sunshine and possibility.*"

The Eraser falters. Not even he could erase the belief. The light grows. The library doors burst open. Families, children, and elders race in, singing, reading, dancing, and believing together.

Music tells the story of who we are. It teaches us to bond, believe, fight for truth, and dream.

And in this living music library, we remember that imagination is not a luxury. It is a responsibility. So, read, sing, dream, and take action. The story continues with you. "*Don't you worry about a thing!*"

*The End?*

