

# The Paradise Center Presents

## Sam Feliksa

Plains High School

Spotlight on the Arts – January 2024



Interviewed by Karen Thorson

*“Spotlight on the Arts” by The Paradise Center honors and encourages students in the arts by highlighting their talent and acknowledging the support they receive through their schools and teachers.*

As a 17-year-old senior at Plains High School, Sam Feliksa is an impressive young man – polite, attentive, well spoken, talented, and passionate about music. He recognizes the beauty produced by all musical instruments and has played many. Starting on the piano in the sixth grade, he has played string

instruments including the ukulele and percussion instruments including the snare drum.

Feliksa’s interest in the snare drum began based on what he thought would be an easy instrument to learn. He was soon captivated by its rhythms and versatility, and he now considers it a favorite, although he is quick to say that he treasures all the instruments and their unique sounds. An interesting aspect of the breadth of his interests is that he mentions Mozart as one of his many sources of inspiration, among others that include artists in country, rock, heavy metal, and more. He is animated when he talks about his music, a sure sign of his passion and enthusiasm.

In addition to the instruments Feliksa has played in the past, he is interested in learning to play the violin, and he is in the high school choir, working with synthesized music, and posting his music on Spotify. Feliksa and his older brother both enjoy music and encourage one another to continue to play and experiment with new sounds.

As advice for anyone interested in learning to play an instrument, Feliksa says – No one is too old to begin. Do not be discouraged. “Put your toe in the water, the tide will pull you in, and you will not want to stop.”

In the immediate future, the district music festival in Missoula is on April 19th-20th. The Plains High School Band, Choir and Percussion Ensemble will play music they have prepared in front of a panel of adjudicators who will rate the performances. On April 20th there is an opportunity for students to perform a solo or ensemble piece, again to be rated by a judge. Students will have time with the adjudicator, who is an expert regarding the specific instrument, on how to improve their performance. If they score high enough, students can choose to go to state music festival in Helena. Feliksa will participate with the groups and, in addition, perform a snare drum solo playing "Funky Fat," written by Edward Freytag.

Finally, Feliksa's family has inherited a large collection of various musical instruments. He is looking forward to exploring this trove to expand his knowledge, discover some new interests, and enhance his ongoing musical journey.