

# **Our Musical Self & New Rules!**

As I write this article I am finalizing the 2012 Missouri All-Collegiate Band. Special thanks to Dr. Brad Snow, University of Missouri-Columbia and Tom Poshak, Phi Beta Mu and Conductor of the St. Louis Wind Symphony for their help in reading the nominations and helping with the member selection. This has been an exciting, rewarding and challenging experience. I received nominations from twenty five institutions. That gave us a total of 158 names from which we sorted to make as balanced an ensemble as possible. The challenge was making sure we had equitable representation while honoring each director's endorsement. Chair placement auditions will take place on Wednesday, evening January 25, 2012.

The director/clinician for the 2012 All Collegiate Band is Dr. Paula Holcomb. Dr. Holcomb is the Director of Bands at the State University of New York at Fredonia. She assumed her present position in 1999 after serving in a similar position for 20 years at Central College in Pella, Iowa. Under her direction at Central College, the Symphonic Wind Ensemble and the Symphonic Band toured internationally to Canada, Europe, and Mexico and performed at Alice Tully Hall of New York City's Lincoln Center. At SUNY Fredonia, the extensive band program consists of four concert bands. Dr. Holcomb conducts the Wind Ensemble and musicals, and teaches graduate and undergraduate conducting. Additionally, she initiated the conducting program as part of the Master of Music in Performance.

Dr. Holcomb has conducted bands and orchestras in 39 states, South America, Australia, Mexico, Europe, and Canada. She has presented Conducting Symposiums in Canada, South America, Australia and the United States. Dr. Holcomb is former assistant horn of the Des Moines Symphony and past president of the Iowa Music Educators Association. Recently, she was presented with the A. Frank Miller award from Kappa Kappa Psi, served on the Council and Artistic Planning Conference Committee for the World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles, serving on the board of the Conductors Guild and is currently Northeastern Division President-elect of the College Band Directors National Association.

Dr. Holcomb has selected truly outstanding repertoire for the performance featuring compositions by Grainger, Shostakovich, Copland and Marquez. The All-Collegiate Band will perform as part of the Third General Session on Friday evening. I hope you will find the time to drop in for what will certainly be one of the many highlights of the conference.

Clinics from my area this year will include presentations by Dr. Milt Allen and Joe Alsbrook.

On Thursday we are pleased and thrilled to welcome back to Missouri Dr. Milt Allen. Dr. Allen taught at Parkway South High School and in the Orchard Farm School District. Dr. Allen currently serves as Visiting Associate Director of Bands at The Ohio State University where his duties include conducting the OSU Symphonic Band and teaching courses in undergraduate instrumental conducting. He is Director of Bands and Instrumental Division Director at Eastern Illinois University, where he conducts the Wind Symphony, Collegiate Band, University Band, teaches undergraduate conducting, guides the graduate wind conducting program and oversees all aspects of Eastern's band program.

A 17-year veteran of the public school rehearsal room, Dr. Allen's refreshing and practical approach to both music education and conducting has taken him throughout the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom as a clinician and guest conductor. Dr. Allen has presented at numerous conferences including the Midwest Clinic, MENC regional and national conventions and BASBWE International Wind Festivals, Dr. Allen's humor, passion and experience combine to illuminate the possibilities of both music education and the live art of performance. Dr. Allen is a Music Education clinician for the Jupiter Instrument Co.

Dr. Allen's clinic session is entitled "***Making Music Amidst the Madness: Rediscovering our Musical Self.***" Music educators are quitting at an alarming rate. Arts education is in crisis. Low pay, poor conditions, helicopter parents, no support and the only measure of successful music education sits on the trophy shelf. Is this what you thought it would be like? Come reflect, recharge and/or rediscover that original passion for music. Enjoy an inspiring session that examines our personal musical journey and what impact that has on our students.

Joseph Alsobrook has been an active music educator since 1988. He currently serves as Chairman of the Music Department at Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri. Prior to his current position, Mr. Alsobrook taught instrumental music at Union High School and Union Intermediate High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma. His fifteen years of classroom experience includes elementary music, middle school band, and high school band and orchestra.

Mr. Alsobrook has been a guest speaker on music education in multiple states, is certified in Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood Music by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and is a six-time recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Music Director's Award presented by the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association. In 2005 he was recognized as a Distinguished Mentor by Lindenwood University and is the 2009-2010 Lindenwood University Scholar of the Year.

Mr. Alsobrook is the author of *Pathways: A Guide for Energizing and Enriching Band, Orchestra, and Choral Programs* (2002) and *Destinations: a Compass for K-12 Music Educators* (2011). Both texts are published by GIA Publications, Inc.

Mr. Alsobrook's session is entitled "***Music Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, New Rules.***" As a profession, how will we define superior music education in the 21st century? Are we doing enough? Do new things make for new ways of seeing? Is it possible to connect daily instruction to the Big Picture? Through story, data, and innovative models, this presentation explores incomparable strategies for advancing music education and encouraging the study and making of music by all.

Joe Alosbook's session is very timely given the recent USA Today article, "*How to enliven – and save – High School music programs.*" The article calls attention to a current issues addressed by Scott Shuler, NAFME President. In a recent article published in the Music Educators Journal Mr. Shuler discusses a dated approach to teaching music in our schools which is centered around large ensembles in our curriculum. It is through participation in these large ensemble that most students experience music education. The participation in these large ensembles is dropping as we all know. There are economical reasons as well as curriculum issues

that continue to pull the student in various directions. Do we need to consider a new approach or an approach that gives us new directions. I want to explore this topic in my next article. I hope to gain more insight from both clinics by Dr. Allen and Mr. Alsobrook.

I have been reading Joe's book "*Pathways: A Guide for Energizing and Enriching Band, Orchestra, and Choral Programs.*" Pathways is a collection of great ideas and practical methods for obtaining our desired goals in Music Education. This book goes beyond the theoretical and shares experiences and gives direction for purposeful teaching and program building. A great read and a book that I wish I had read much earlier in my career.

I ask my student teachers to submit reflections based on their teaching experiences and observations each week during their student teaching assignments. It is my turn to share a reflection with you based on my experiences the past two months. I have had the pleasure to serve as an adjudicator for several Marching Band festivals throughout our state over the last several months. Each time I finish a festival although mentally exhausted from judging for almost 10 hours on average, I am renewed and impressed by the marvelous musicianship that I have heard, the complete and total dedication and commitment from both students and teachers that I have witnessed and the incredible crowds of parents and supporters that have attended each event. I have heard large bands with impeccable precision and small bands that have impressed me musically and visually. I have witnessed color guards and auxiliary units whose visual representation of the music I hear is absolutely stunning. The visual musicality of these groups is so very impressive. I have heard individual soloist that display absolutely marvelous levels of musicianship. More times than I can count bands impressed me both musically and visually to point of an overflow of emotion. Yes, ask some of the schools if you could review their tapes. More times than I care to admit I was forced to stop talking and compose myself because I was so moved emotionally and truly impressed. Those that know me know that this happens regularly and without warning when I hear performances and watch young people achieve. This season brought this reaction more than I remember in past years. My only explanation is that I witnessed a greater emphasis on musicianship and quality musical performances on the field that is a reflection of the standards that we hold ourselves to in the concert hall. As well I continue to be impressed with the total commitment from students to perfect such intricate drill and music. Band Directors thank you for raising the bar for this generation of students and encouraging a high level musicianship regardless of the venue and purpose. Thank you for the wonderful work that you do daily in the name of Music Education!

I am looking forward to seeing everyone again in January! Best wishes for the holiday season.