

WSMA High School State Honors Music Project 50th Anniversary

A Walk Through Time

1965

- Richard G. Gaarder presents the idea of the WSMA State Honors Music Project to the WSMA Board of Control. G. Lloyd Schultz, State Supervisor of Music, and Ralph Houghton, supervisor of music for Kenosha School District, head the committee.

"You could say that I'm one of the originators of the project, which I was very proud to be. It was a lot of work, but that was my life." - Stanley Nosal '68, '72-'73

1967-1973 Summer Camp at Green Lake

1967

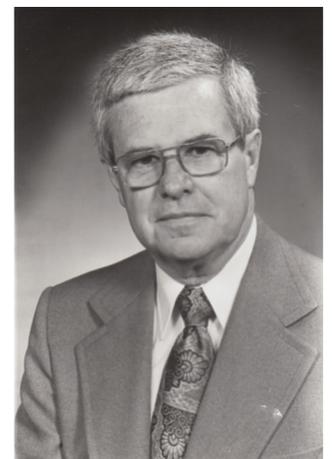
- Preparation for the inaugural year of WSMA High School State Honors Music Project begins with the first summer camp at Green Lake.

1968

- The first High School State Honors Orchestra Concert is presented at UW-Madison Memorial Union Theatre on January 13 under the direction of Dr. George C. Wilson, Vice President and Director of the National Music Camp, Interlochen, Michigan.
- Carl "Doc" Severinsen is trumpet soloist on two pieces.
- The concert is part of the 4th annual Wisconsin State Music Conference.



*Richard Gaarder



*Ralph Houghton



*1968 Pin



*1968 Orchestra

"Green Lake was magnificent. Parents came to pick us up and we gave a preview concert in a big barn. While playing "Night on Bald Mountain," a storm came up and the power went out and we finished the piece in the dark. It was so much fun!"
- Susan Chandler '68, coach '98-'99

"Dad, Dick and Jack wanted to make the summer experience a ton of fun and give the kids time to chill out and do their thing. Then coming back in October was just great! The way they set it up was flawless and it stood the test time."

- Steve Houghton '70-'72, conductor '07 & '14

1969

- High School State Honors Mixed Choir and Band ensembles are added.
- Concert moves to UW-Stock Pavilion on Saturday night of the Wisconsin State Music Conference for the next two years.

"Jack Pingel, percussion coach, was involved in everything in a very helpful way but also a prankster. He lived for laughter." - Roger Tweiten, coach '69-'72

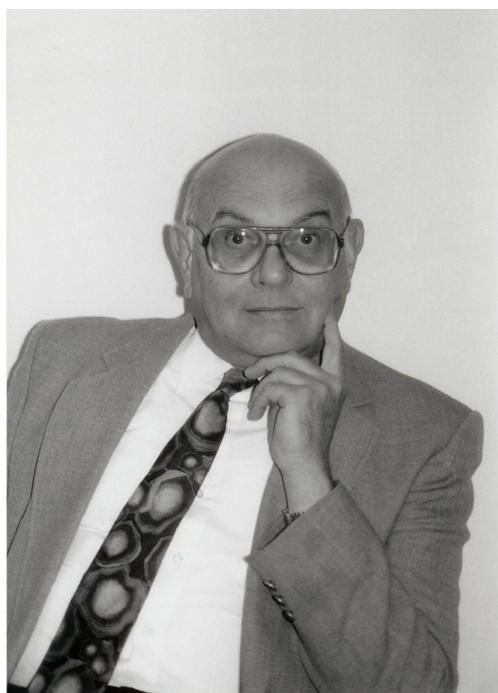
1971-1972 Concerts at James Madison Memorial High School

"I enjoyed the project so much that I used my experience to encourage my students to audition."
- George Utphall '70-'71

1973-1981 Concerts at UW-Stock Pavilion

1973

- Concert moves to Saturday, March 31 during the MENC North Central Division Convention in the Milwaukee Auditorium, which is now the Miller High Life Theater.
- Jack T. Pingel becomes coordinator of the High School State Honors Project.
- The annual Wisconsin State Music Conference moves from January to early November.
- This marks the first year the Honors concerts are in early November along with the Wisconsin State Music Convention. The concerts are held in the UW-Stock Pavilion, where they remain for nine years.
- This is the only time in Honors history when two concerts happen in one year, which is a turning point in the Honors Project timeline.



*** Jack T. Pingel**



*** 1972 Orchestra - Green Lake**

"Our conductor, Morris Hayes, was so inspirational. He helped us grow as a musician and as a person. The memories I have of camp, our rehearsals and performances have lasted a lifetime!"
- Timothy Schaid '73

1974-1976 Summer Camp at Wayland Academy, Beaver Dam

1974

- Summer camp moves to Wayland Academy in Beaver Dam where it's hosted for three years.

"Wonderful years with Dick Gaarder and Jack Pingel. We laughed. We just laughed from morning to night. It was insane." - Ernest Broeniman, coach '74-'85

"The level of confidence I gained has benefited me throughout my life, both as a musician and a professional. It showed that working hard in such a short period of time with so many strangers could produce the most magnificent performance. My wife is also an alum of the Honors project. We can't be more proud to have our son have this awesome experience!"

- William Daley '75; parent of Matthew Daley '15-'16, '18

"The Honors experience most certainly added to my musical inspiration and exposed me to an excellent conductor, musicians and memorable literature. I met a fine clarinet player named Jill Kortum who was also in the honors band....little did I know that she would transfer to UW-Madison, we dated and have now been married for 35 years."

- Brian & Jill Hanes '76

1977-1979 Summer Camp at Lawrence University, Appleton

1977

- Summer camp moves to Lawrence University for three years due to the need of larger rehearsal space. Use of the Conservatory allows for room to operate and concerts are held in the Chapel.



*Lawrence Memorial Chapel

"In those years, the summer rehearsals were held at Lawrence. I'll never forget singing one of the Schutz double choir pieces with the two choirs facing each other on opposite sides of the balcony in the chapel - extraordinary!!"

- Andrew Lambrecht '77-'79; parent of Addie Jo Lambrecht '14-'18

1978

- The High School State Honors Jazz Ensemble is added and that concert is held in Mills Hall of the UW-Humanities Building for 13 years.

"To be part of a group whose combined passions were focused on preparing and sharing music in a professional manner was a definite catalyst to my pursuing music as my career. Sharing and learning from one another as young people as well as from an esteemed line up of music professionals at that time was exhilarating and deeply rewarding on many levels."

- Diane Maire Iorio '79-'80

"I remember jumping all around my house when I received my acceptance letter, but nothing will ever replace the smell of the cow barn where we performed!" - Mary Ellen Keller (Bergner) '80

1980-1996 Summer Camp at Carroll College, Waukesha



* Summer Camp Rehearsal

"My most memorable moment was the very first 5 minutes of my first rehearsal at Carroll College, under the direction of Dale Warland. The moment that all 100 voices opened their mouths to vocalize, my jaw dropped and I could not believe what I was hearing around me!"

- Kathy Allan (Beer) '81-'83

"Jack Pingel's dance routine with coconut bra and flower taped to his head!" - Craig Gall '84

"The honor to be appointed to the staff of this renowned project is the highlight of my teaching career. The commitment of the students to music and seeing and hearing the highest level of achievement has left me me speechless all of these years." - Ken Dado, coach '85-'96

1982 - 1992 Concert at Oscar Meyer Theater in Madison Civic Center

1987

- Honors Jazz Ensemble conductor Fred Sturm, professor at Lawrence University, proposes a program of WORLD PREMIER WORKS written by Wisconsin composers for Wisconsin students. This becomes a reality with John Harmon, Lovell Ives, John Radd and Fred Sturm providing the charts.

"Being on Honors staff made me much more aware of the whole picture and what other directors were doing. There were so many things that I didn't realize that I could and should be doing. I watched some of the most notable directors at work: Robert Fountain, Eph Elly, Andrew Thomas, Weston Noble and Charlene Archebek."
- Greg Dennis, coach '87-99'



*** Fred Sturm**

"I am so proud and excited that my son will have the chance to participate in the High School State Honors Band this year! My honors experience made a real, lasting impression on me, and I remember it as if it occurred yesterday. I never imagined that I would be so lucky as to have a child experience that same wonder and thrill one day!"

- Amy Copeland (Foltz) '87-'88, parent of Ben Copeland '17-'18

1991

- WSMA celebrates 25th Anniversary with a reception before the Honors concerts, which include a commissioned piece for orchestra by David Ott, a graduate of UW-Platteville.
- High School State Honors Vocal Jazz Ensemble is introduced as a way to stimulate more vocal jazz in Wisconsin schools.
- Vocal Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Ensemble concerts are held at Holiday Inn West Trade Center for seven years.

1993

- Jack Pingel completes 25 years of leadership to the project having served in the following roles: percussion coach, honors chair and project coordinator.
- Special edition t-shirts are provided for Honors students for the first time, beginning a long standing tradition that continues today.

1994 - Linda Peterson becomes coordinator of the High School State Honors Project.



*Linda Peterson



* Honors Band Pin

"I was fortunate to be able to study great music with great peers and conductors. I remember performing Warren Benson's "The Passing Bell" with Jerry Junkin. I got to tell him this year at Midwest how much that experience helped me develop as a musician. I am now 18 years into a teaching career."

- Ben Jaeger '93-'94

1995

- The State Honors Project model is expanded to include middle school students with the first-ever Middle Level State Honors Band.
- Wisconsin Public Radio broadcasts the Honors concerts throughout Thanksgiving Day, starting an annual tradition that continues today.

1996

- After a successful first year of the Middle Level State Honors Band, the project is expanded to include choir.
- The Wisconsin Arts Board invites the 1995 Vocal Jazz Ensemble to perform in Japan as part of a cultural exchange sponsored by Wisconsin-Chiba organization.



* 1996 Japan Tour

"I'll never forget the first rehearsal of the honors orchestra... my jaw dropped in awe of the amazing sound. I couldn't believe that I was actually playing with such an incredible ensemble! For a moment I thought someone must have mixed up my audition result with someone else's... I'm fairly confident that between my year with the orchestra and band, I've never been surrounded by that much talent in the same room at a given time."

- Patrick Donahue '95-'96

1997-2000 Summer Camp at UW-Eau Claire

1997

- Orchestra is added to the Middle Level State Honors Project completing the current ensemble structure.
- Summer camp moves to UW-Eau Claire in order to restructure the camp schedule from three to two consecutive camps.

"The 1997 project is a family-based special memory for my wife and I. At that time the choir, band, and orchestra shared the same concert at the Oscar Mayer Theater. My son, Jeff Sandberg, was a percussionist in the honors band, my nephew, Lang Jacobson, sang in the honors choir, and I was the string bass coach for the honors orchestra. Since I was an honors student myself in 1969, it was extremely rewarding to see members of our family represented in each performing group that evening."

- Les Sandberg '69, coach '92-'93, '97-'98

1998

- High School Honors Treble Choir is added due to the high number of auditions for both sopranos and altos having reached over 300 students per section in 1997.
- The concert structure is realigned with the Treble/Mixed Choirs and the Vocal/Instrumental Jazz Ensembles performing at the Madison Marriott West, and the Band and Orchestra continuing at the Madison Civic Center.



*** 1996 Trombone Section**

1999

- Vocal Jazz and Jazz Ensemble concerts move to Dane County Expo Center, signifying a number of venue moves over the next few years.
- Treble and Mixed Choir concert moves to Madison Masonic Center Auditorium.
- More than 2,440 students auditioned which marks the largest number in program history.

"The year I was in the honors program, Rick Bjella was the conductor of the mixed choir. He pushed me to put my heart and soul into my singing. The pieces he chose stuck with me and I even used one of them as my entrance into the music education at UW Milwaukee. Even though I ended up teaching instrumental music, Rick inspired me by showing me what great teaching looks like." - Rebekah Mueller (Nyenhuis) '96 & '99

"I remember all the fun our choir had at the UWEC campus in the summer while we prepared our music. Being with others who took music just as seriously as I did and pushed me to be better is something I'll remember forever." - Christina Conn (Burgess) '99

2000

- Vocal Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Ensemble concert moves to the First United Methodist Church in Madison.

2001 to Current - Summer Camp at UW-Green Bay

"The only reason I auditioned for Honors was because of the encouragement of my high school director. This was a huge event to shape my life, musically and socially. I had NEVER played in an orchestra until this point, so imagine being from a small town music program and being able to play "Symphonie Fantastique" and "Russian Easter Overture" with a huge group of high school musicians from across the state. It shook my world!"
- Stacey Zwirlein (Krueger) '00-'01

2000

- Honors summer camp moves to UW-Green Bay where it is still hosted today.
- With a supporting grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board, WSMA commissions Wisconsin composer John Harmon to compose a piece for the Orchestra. The result is a beautiful piece of music called "Flight of the Monarch", one movement of *A Suite of Migrations* dedicated to Aldo Leopold.

2003

- Vocal/instrumental jazz concert moves to Middleton High School which marks the final year of the Vocal Jazz Ensemble.

"The honors choir experience reinforced my need to have music as a big part of my life. It helped inspire my desire to go into music education and help share that love with others."
- Schuyler Pietz (Gardner) '03



***2006 Choir Camp Rehearsal**

2004

- Overture Center for the Arts opens in Madison and hosts the Band and Orchestra concert.
- The Jazz Ensemble concert makes its final move to Monona Terrace to capture the audience of Wisconsin State Music Conference attendees.

"Being selected for the honors experience gave me confidence in my abilities as well as the push I needed to go to college for music education. As a music teacher, I am proud to share my knowledge of the experience and value of the project with my students so that they are inspired to audition." - Jamie Mills (DeGolier) '04

2005

- Treble Choir and Mixed Choir concerts move to Madison's new Overture Center for the Arts, joining band and orchestra on the grand stage of Overture Hall.

"Being chosen to sing in this fantastic group solidified my decision to pursue a career in Music Education after graduation. I was exposed to beautiful music and amazing women, and have been able to share my fond memories with current students going through the audition and performance processes." - Libby Secard (Bragee) '05

2007

- Wisconsin Foundation of School Music launches a campaign for the Honors Endowment and a \$6 million endowment plan is created that will ultimately fund every chair and conductor of the WSMA.
- Tim Wurgler becomes coordinator of the High School State Honors Project, continuing his involvement of 22 years, serving in multiple roles, such as coach, coordinator and operations director.

"Our conductor, Gary Green, and the late Chris Werner (who was on the honors band staff at the time) invited composer David Maslanka to one of our rehearsals to help us interpret his piece, "Give Us This Day." - Anne Proescholdt '07



***2009 Mixed Choir Rehearsal**



***2006 Administrative Staff: Richard Fellenz, Marcia Paul, Tim Wurgler, Linda Petersen, and Micki Carlson**



2012

- As part of a new project called the "Young Performers Initiative," Wisconsin Public Television partners with WSMA to air a one-hour compilation of the 2012 High School State Honors Band, Orchestra and Choir concerts.

2016

- Continuing her previous involvement as both a coach and ensemble coordinator, Victoria Donahue becomes the High School State Honors Project coordinator.

"My tenor section coaches, as well as the rest of the honors staff that I have met, have inspired me to pursue music education as a career, and my friends from Honors have continued to help fuel my passion for music."
- Alex Steinhaus '16-'17

2018

- Orchestra performs a piece written by Garth Nuestadter, Emmy Award-Winning composer for film, television and concert music and State Honors Music Project Alumni (1999-2002, 2004).
- WSMA celebrates 50 years of the High School State Honors Music Project: Honoring the Past, Supporting the Present, Imagining the Future!

"As we look to the next 50 years, we imagine a future where those who have benefitted from the Honors Project support us with increased accessibility and access for our state's most musical youth through further development of the Honors Endowment."
- Laurie Fellenz, WSMA Executive Director



WSMA STATE HONORS

MUSIC PROJECT