



ALL-AMERICAN ALUMNI BAND



To inspire and instill a love of music by celebrating our musical gifts.

Letter from the President

Hello AAAB Members and Friends,

From my perspective our Worthington Concert on the Green and parade couldn't have been any more successful! Wycliffe Gordon, our extraordinary soloist, is such a fine example for all of us- putting every ounce of emotion and soul into his music. His clinic with the high school students was also incredibly heartfelt and wise, sharing real life experience. What a magnificent time we had with Dr. Russel Mikkelson too. He was the PERFECT conductor for the AAAB by tasking us to improve but pushing with humor. I look forward to working with him many more times in the future. Major thanks to Carl Trevathan for putting this event together starting in 2020 and to Bryan Corbett for our rehearsal and pizza party space! There are way too many other people to thank because events like this take a huge team and I'm grateful for everyone's hard work and support. Check out this video clip of AAAB Memorial Day Reunion 2022 [AAAB 2022 Memorial Day Reunion - YouTube!](#)

I hope to see you all in St Louis for Labor Day and I look forward to revealing our plans for the future very soon!

Kim Scharnberg, President

Iowa 77-78, Trombone

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Music for Life – Promoting the concept that the benefits of music last a lifetime.

By: Donna Bennett

The AAAB has established three initiatives for our organization. These can be found on the website. In this newsletter we look at our first initiative: Music for life. Promoting the concept that the benefits of music last a lifetime. In support of this initiative we are out there promoting music by continuing to play in a vast variety of musical ensembles as well as reaching out to youth groups to share our story and experiences.

While in Worthington, Ohio; we were able to spend time with students from the Thomas Worthington High School Jazz Band, under the direction of Derek Scoles. Wycliffe Gordon taught a Master Class for the students, which was also attended by members of the AAAB Board. Imagine being one of these students attending this class with such a high caliber musician as Wycliffe and hearing the experiences from the Board Members about how music has impacted their own lives. The Jazz Band joined the AAAB in providing a concert on the beautiful town Green in Worthington on a lovely late Spring evening. They provided pre-concert music, performed several songs with Wycliffe and joined the AAAB for “Stars and Stripes Forever.”



Photo: John Parker

Dr. Russel Mikkelson, Director of Bands at The Ohio State University and AAAB Guest Conductor, shakes hands with Derek Scoles, Director of the Jazz Band at Worthington High School.

Photo: Edward Crockett



AAAB Members and players Rene Shapiro— Assistant Principal trumpet from the Baltimore Symphony and Paul Howard from the Kanawha Valley (WV) Community Band pose with the trumpet players from the Worthington High School Jazz Band. The kids were beaming with excitement.



Photo: Kim Scharnberg

As Keith Marks, Board Member, mentioned recently, all of our members could have had a career in music, either as an educator or professional. Just by being a member of the McDonald's Band we all exemplified this potential. Some chose that path, and we are vastly proud of our professional musicians and music educator alumni. Many of us continued to play our instruments in community or church bands or supported our children in being musicians. Music remained an integral part of our lives.

Some members did not continue to play for a vast variety of reasons, but most state that their experience as musicians and as members of the McDonald's Band provided a foundation for who they are today and set a tone for whatever career field they pursued. Some of these alumni are rediscovering their love of music and have picked up their instruments to play again.


As we reach out to the world to promote this initiative we also encourage and applaud our alumni who are rediscovering their gift for music. Promoting Music for Life with our own alumni is tremendously important. It brings new people to our ranks and broadens our reach through each member's musical experiences. Most importantly, we are adding more beautiful music to the world one note and one musician at a time. We are living our initiative every day within our own group. Read on to hear one alumni member's story.....

Waking up from a Long McSlumber By John Hobbs, Florida, 1978-1979

The highlight of my high school years as a small town (Panama City, FL) kid was being nominated and chosen to represent the state of Florida in the 1978-1979 McDonald's All-American High School band. As an alto sax and bassoon player, this was an incredible opportunity to see and experience sites and cities I never imagined possible and meet diverse high school musicians from around the United States. Unfortunately, I had to pack away my instruments and pursue a career without music when it was time for college.

After high school, I received my undergraduate and graduate degrees in Computer Science, married a beautiful Irish girl from Brooklyn, moved to Ohio, and had six wonderful children. We are a very busy family at the Hobbs Haus of Happiness, especially since one daughter has cerebral palsy and complicated medical needs (ventilator dependent, etc.). We are known as frequent flyers at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. Other than the radio, there wasn't much time for music.





Through it all, I never lost my desire for music. So, when the band started talking about getting back together, I closely followed the inaugural reunion event through Facebook. It looked like folks had a blast! I admit that I was a bit envious.

When the second reunion event was scheduled for Columbus, an hour from my home, I decided that I needed to make an effort to attend. I told Carl Trevathan that I would do it, but only if he promised that he would tell me to stop playing if I didn't measure up. I assured him that it would not hurt my feelings. Carl told me to just play what I can and ride on the coattails of the more professional players.

I did run into a few unexpected obstacles. Since my sax spent so many years in the closet, I took it to a shop for a "tune-up." I was told it would be ready in 2 weeks, but it took them months. This depleted precious practice time, so I only had 2 months to learn the music. Even while practicing daily, often for hours, I thought there was no way I would be ready for the concert. Eventually, I started to enjoy my practice times and the music became easier.

Feeling comfortable with about 95% of the music, my plan was to drop out of those fast and complex passages that my old rusty fingers refused to play. I was still very nervous that I wouldn't "measure up" and seriously considered not going to the reunion. But then, I remembered reading Facebook posts from a clarinet player (Thalassa Naylor) who was in a similar situation for the inaugural concert and reached out to her. She was very reassuring and pushed the inclination to cancel right out of my mind.

Two weeks before the concert, I developed a severe toothache. The dentist said I had a fractured and infected tooth. He wanted to pull the tooth and do a bone graft. I thought, "This can't be happening." I had been practicing so hard and really wanted to play. My dentist was understanding and said he would help get me through the dental emergency and save the surgery for after the reunion.

When Memorial Day weekend finally arrived, I headed to Columbus and was happy to find out that I wasn't the only one coming out of a long McSlumber. It is a tradition with the Alumni Band that we play America The Beautiful as our first song together. Before we started to play, the tenor sax player (Russell Dumond) sitting next to me, said, "Get ready to be blown away!" We hit that first note and started to play. WOW! AMAZING! I can't even find the words to describe the flood of emotions that came over me. I knew then at that moment I had made the right decision.

As the practice days progressed, I happily discovered that we weren't in high school anymore. Everybody was super nice and very inclusive - no egos! Nobody was looking down their noses at other players. It was just a great group of people having a wonderful time making music together. The world outside of the band ceased to exist. It felt a bit like being in Disney

World.

The band director (Russel C. Mikkelson) was amazing! He understood that some of us were returning after a long slumber from the incredible world of making music. Before our concert, he made a wonderful speech that actually made my eyes water. I thought, "I'm finally back home."

The Sunday night concert in the park was a blast with a great turnout and enthusiastic audience. On Monday morning, we headed to the parade on a bus ride filled with song and merriment. The parade route was packed with cheering fans and I was pleasantly pleased with my own endurance as well as everyone else's on a hot and sunny Memorial Day. Our great drum majors kept us pumped up and on pace.

It was sad to see the magical weekend come to a close but I had an awesome time and was so happy I took the leap of faith to sign up and attend. I am already anxiously looking forward to our next reunion this Labor Day weekend. For any other folks that have been in a "McSlumber" from music, I highly recommend you join the ranks of the McDaring and give it a try!



Kim Scharnberg '77 Iowa (President) and John Hobbs '78.

Together Again for the First Time

By: Douglas Yeo (New Jersey, 1972) and
Mary Ann Swiatek (New Jersey, 1983)



Doug and Mary Ann at rehearsal,
All-American Alumni Band, Ohio 2022

Surprises come in all shapes and sizes. Some are unwelcome, but others make you smile, like when you took an exam and got a good grade you didn't expect. Sometimes, surprises take your breath away; just ask anyone about their reaction when they first stood on the rim of the Grand Canyon. But now and then, a surprise is so shocking, so unexpected, that it shakes you to the core of your being. That's exactly what happened to two people at the All-American Alumni Band reunion in Ohio in May 2022.

At the band's first rehearsal, after secretary/treasurer Carl Trevathan (trombone, Kentucky, 1976) made some opening announcements, each member of the band said a few words about their life and work since high school. Most of the band had offered their introduction when it was Douglas Yeo's turn. Doug (trombone, New Jersey, 1972) spoke about some aspects of his long career, mentioning his years as a high school band director, his tenures as bass trombonist of the Baltimore and Boston Symphony Orchestras, and his teaching positions at New England Conservatory of Music, Arizona State University, and Wheaton College, Illinois (where he teaches now).

But you can only imagine his surprise—no, actually, you *can't* imagine his surprise, because his surprise was greater than you can imagine—when, after Doug stopped speaking, Mary Ann Swiatek (clarinet, New Jersey, 1983) turned around, pointed at Doug, and exclaimed, "And he was my band director!" The look on Doug's face, from all reports, was priceless. He was speechless, and as the moment of recognition took hold, he could not, with his eyes wide, mouth dropped open, and eyebrows up, even manage to say, "WHAT?!" Here is some of their surprising story.

In 1979, after several years of freelance playing in New York City, working secretarial jobs to pay the bills, and finishing his master's degree at New York University, Doug and his wife, Patricia, moved to Edison, New Jersey, where he accepted the Director of Bands position at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. STA had a small band program, about 55 players, and it was no surprise the school colors were red and white. The school was staffed by an order of Felician sisters—a Polish order of nuns—and lay teachers, many of whom, along with much of the student body, had Polish roots. (Doug's English and German Protestant heritage evidently were not impediments to his being offered the job!) Doug was in charge of the whole music department at St. Thomas Aquinas: He conducted the concert



band, charted shows and led the marching band, conducted the school musicals, taught beginner band, music theory, and Bach to Rock classes. And a partridge in a pear tree. Many of you who have been or are band directors know what it's like when you're the one person who has to do it all.

St. Thomas Aquinas High School, 1981. Doug is in the back row with the baton; Mary Ann is seated in the front row.

In 1980, Mary Ann Swiatek, a freshman clarinet player, came to St. Thomas Aquinas. Mary Ann had attended small Catholic schools from first grade on and had begun playing clarinet just three and a half years earlier—the first year her school had a band program. She decided to join the band because several friends were in the group, and she chose clarinet largely because her next-door neighbor had an old Bundy clarinet that was no longer being used. With a few individual lessons from her band director—Mary Ann did not have any previous background in music—followed by group lessons at school, she made it into her first region band two years later. At STA's fall placement auditions in 1980, Doug knew she was special, and he seated her first chair, first clarinet, ahead of several seniors. Mary Ann played in the concert and marching bands under Doug's direction. The school performed two musicals in the 1980–1981 school year, the first of which was *My Fair Lady*. Mary Ann played clarinet for the show and immediately loved playing in the pit. Doug suggested that she take up alto saxophone so she could play the woodwind book for the second show, *Guys and Dolls*, since it required doubling. She did. And she did a great job.

In May 1981, Doug won the bass trombone position with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and when STA's graduation ceremony was over, he said goodbye to the band, turned in his keys, and headed down Interstate 95 to Baltimore. This happened before the era of cellphones, the Internet, email, and social media, and his interactions with his former students at STA dwindled in the coming months. He lost track of Mary Ann and most others at the school who had been such a big part of his life for two years.

It was not until the first All-American Alumni Band rehearsal in Columbus—when Mary Ann turned around with a smile and exclaimed, “And he was my band director!”—that Doug learned that Mary Ann had *also* been a member of the McDonald’s All-American High School Band. In 1983, when she was a junior, the band the band director who had replaced Doug at St. Thomas Aquinas nominated Mary Ann for the All-American Band. She was selected to represent New Jersey—just like Doug, eleven years earlier.

Mary Ann had been aware of Doug’s career over the years, and she was excited when she saw his name on the list of attendees for the All-American Alumni band reunion—but she wasn’t sure he would remember her. After all, she had been one of his many students, they had spent only about nine months together, and that had been 41 years earlier! Mary Ann thought she recognized Doug as band members sat down for their first rehearsal but there wasn’t time for her to speak to him. Then came the moment of recognition, “And he was my band director!”

Once the happy shock of that moment was over, Doug and Mary Ann spent much of the All-American Alumni Band reunion reliving old times, talking about teachers, students, classes, and all manner of shared life from the year they spent together at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. Doug learned that Mary Ann had attended Oberlin College and had continued playing clarinet and alto saxophone through her years there, though her major was psychology and she had to spend quite a bit of time recovering from a serious injury to her teeth and lip. She continued to play clarinet and saxophone in community bands, churches, and community theatres in the places she lived while earning a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology and working as a college professor, then settling into her own practice in the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania. Shows remained her favorite type of performance, and she always remembered and appreciated how Doug introduced her to them. And now,

here they were, together in the All-American Alumni Band!



New Jersey representatives (Jeffrey Venho, trumpet; Douglas Yeo, trombone), 1972–1973 McDonald’s All-American Band, with Betty White, conductor Paul Lavalle, and Tournament of Roses Queen Salli Noren



New Jersey representatives (Mary Ann Swiatek, clarinet; Rick Wygant, trumpet), 1983–1984 McDonald’s All-American Band, with Vanessa Williams

A surprise? For sure. But think about it. What would be the odds. . . ? A teacher and his student who had been connected to the same high school band at the same moment in time were members of the McDonald's All-American High School Band eleven years apart. Proudly representing The Garden State, New Jersey. They had not been in contact since 1981, but 41 years later, they met again for the first time at an All-American Alumni Band rehearsal in Ohio, other friends both had also shared experience of the American High odds? Incalculable? Priceless. All-American about.



surrounded by new and old who the unique experience of the McDonald's All-School Band. The ble. The experience. *That* is what the Alumni Band is

Doug and Mary Ann before the Worthington, Ohio, Memorial Day Parade 2022

Check out Doug's article about the entire Columbus Reunion.

[Making music with friends—The All-American Alumni Band – The Last Trombone](#)

And Doug's contribution to the July 2022 International Trombone Association about our Columbus Event.

[Trombonists Gather for 2022 All-American Alumni Band - International Trombone Association](#)



presents a

**Free Family-Friendly
Concert**

Sept. 4th

3 pm

Shaw Bandstand

Tower Grove Park

Dr. Stephen Gage, conductor **Kathy Lawton Brown, host**
featuring music by W.C. Handy, Scott Joplin, John Williams, and more!

St. Louis Reunion Weekend

September 1 –5, 2022

Guest Conductor

DR. STEPHEN L. GAGE served as Professor of Music and Director of Bands and Orchestra at Youngstown State University from 1993 to 2021. Stephen has recently accepted a position as interim Director of Bands at Indiana State University. Stephen holds degrees from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the Eastman School of Music, and the State University of New York at Fredonia where he also earned the Performers Certificate and was a concerto winner.



Professor Gage studied conducting with Harry John Brown, Donald Hunsberger, David Effron, Roy Ernst, James Keene, H. Robert Reynolds, and Paul Vermel. In September 2010, Dr. Gage was appointed Principal Conductor of the W.D. Packard Concert Band, a professional concert band, in Warren, Ohio and remains in this position. Stephen recently retired after 28 seasons as the Conductor of the Youngstown Symphony Youth Orchestra. Dr. Gage was inducted into the prestigious American Bandmasters Association in 1999, and he has served as an officer for the National Bandmasters Association. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra (IN), in the Paris Fine Arts Center (IL) and the Pinnacle Winds (MO).

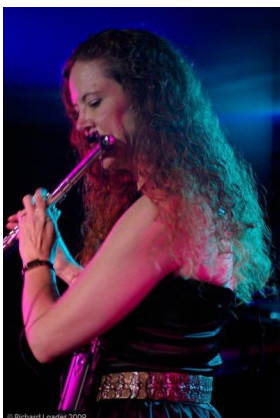
Professor Gage has written numerous published articles on conducting, rehearsal technique, and wind band literature. Stephen has served as guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator of high school honor bands and orchestras as well a number of university wind bands throughout the U.S., Canada, and Ireland. His list of guest conducting appearances includes the Youngstown Symphony Orchestra, the U.S. Air Force Band, the U.S. Army Band: "Pershing's Own", and the U.S. Army Field Band and Chorus, among others. Stephen and the YSU Wind Ensemble made their Carnegie Hall debut in 2005 and made a second appearance in November 2015.



Shaw Bandstand
Tower Grove Park
St. Louis, MO

Featured Soloists

Deborah Yates—Flute, Colorado, 1978



DEBORAH LEE YATES Accepted into her first symphony orchestra at the age of 13, Deborah was touring Europe at 16, playing piccolo with symphonic orchestras. Her classical talents earned her featured performances at the Brandenburg Hall in Vienna, Austria, for Austria's President, and a solo at Carnegie Hall. Deborah attended the University of Northern Colorado, on full scholarship, as one of the youngest students to be accepted into the Music Performance Program. Deborah has performed with symphony orchestras worldwide, musical theater, ballet orchestras, chamber ensembles, solo performance, and symphonic bands. She was a member of the Colorado Wind Ensemble, the Contra Costa Wind Ensemble, the Aurora Symphony Orchestra, the Pueblo Symphony Orchestra, and the Sangre de Cristo Ballet Orchestra. Her musical theatre work has included touring off-Broadway shows.

Now Deborah has trained her sights on the explosive expressionism in Jazz, Rock and World music with the unorthodox approach of using guitar pedals and effects to enhance her sound. She played flute throughout Britain and the Bay Area, performed weekly at Jagz at the Station in Ascot, England, and performed at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, before piloting the Vortex Tribe around the world. She tours and performs with amazing performers including Jon Mulvey and Stuart Hamm both of Joe Satriani and Prairie Prince from The Tubes. She also performed, toured and recorded for years with Mingo Lewis of Return to Forever and Santana. Deborah is at home in the corporate conference rooms as she is on stage. Combining her business strategy background and love of music, she has formed TwoHearts Entertainment with international locations. TwoHearts specializes in high quality instrumental music, education and music business/strategy. Deborah holds a BA in Music Performance, a BSc in Computer Science, a MMSc in Management of Information, and a PhD in Information Systems.

Tom Blanchard— Percussion, Virginia, 1983



Percussionist Thomas Blanchard was born in Fairfax, Virginia, and studied with members of the U.S. Army Band in Washington, D.C. He chose a career in music after being selected for the Young Apprentice Program of the National Symphony Orchestra in high school. Tom received music degrees from the University of Michigan and Temple University and has performed in 23 countries as well as multiple U.S. venues such as Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Walt Disney World, and the Pan-American Games.

Tom has recorded on numerous labels such as Deutsche Grammophon and EMI, and he has been heard on NPR, CBS, The Today Show, and the Disney Channel. Tom soloed with the Bogota (Colombia) Philharmonic, and appeared on QVC live television twice with pianist Giovanni.

Currently, Tom performs with the Delaware, Harrisburg (PA), Reading (PA), Kennett (PA), Annapolis (MD), Lancaster (PA), Pennsylvania Philharmonic, and Chautauqua (NY) Symphony Orchestras, as well as Opera Delaware, Opera Philadelphia, Philadelphia Ballet, and The Philly Pops. He has played with performing artists including Wynton Marsalis, Chris Botti, Joshua Bell, Renee Fleming, Paul Simon, Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, Bernadette Peters, among others. Tom regularly performs, records, and tours with the Philadelphia Orchestra, including a concert for Pope Francis in Philadelphia in September 2015.

Douglas Moore—Monroe —Clarinet, Michigan, 1980



Douglas Moore-Monroe is associate professor of clarinet at East Carolina University, where he performs with the Coastal Winds woodwind quintet. Since 2011, Monroe has been on the faculty of Interlochen Arts Camp and since 2015, he has been the camp's Woodwind Coordinator. Previously, he taught at North Dakota State University where he was a founding member of Trio Élan, the Red River Winds, and was principal clarinet with the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony Orchestra. Moore-Monroe was principal clarinet of the Arizona Opera Orchestra in the late 1980s, and since, has performed with the Mariinsky Theater Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle (Raleigh-Durham), the Aspen Festival Orchestra, the Interlochen Faculty Orchestra, Richmond Currents and performs frequently with the North Carolina Symphony Orchestra.

Douglas has performed as concerto soloist with orchestras and wind ensembles at venues such as the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Chautauqua Institute, Jordan Hall in Boston, Interlochen Center for the Arts, Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas, Music Hall in Cincinnati and the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall in Baltimore.

Before entering academia, Moore-Monroe performed with United States military bands. He began as clarinetist with the United States Army Field Band, Washington, D.C., where he performed as concerto soloist and was a founding member of the United States Army Field Band Clarinet Quartet. Following this assignment, Monroe was accepted into the United States Air Force's conductor program. While in the Air Force, he was commander/conductor of both the USAF Band of the Golden West at Travis AFB, CA, and the USAF Heritage of America Band at Langley AFB, VA. One of the highest honors of his military career was leading the musical performance for the interment ceremony of President Ronald Reagan in 2004.

In fall 2018, he taught in residence at the Beijing Central Conservatory of Music, China. Overall, Moore-Monroe has performed in 44 states, Canada, nine European countries and Mexico.

David Lang—Euphonium, Iowa, 1983



David is from Dubuque, IA where he was a member of the Colts Drum and Bugle Corps. David was the recipient of the Yamaha Instrument Award as a member of the McDonald's All-American Alumni Band. David went on to study Music Education at the University of Iowa. Upon graduation, he became a music educator serving Iowa schools for over 30 years. He was the vocal teacher and band director at East Buchanan Community schools as well as the Band Director at Central City Community School and the Independence Community School Districts.

Along with his wife, David was on the staff of the Iowa's Ambassadors of Music European Tour in 1988. He continued to participate with this tour biennially for 20 years. While in Switzerland, he discovered the Alphorn.

He currently plays with Iowa Brass and DTKK German Band. He is a frequent guest soloist on Euphonium and Alphorn. Since retiring from teaching, David has become immersed in arranging, playing and recording music for Euphonium and Alphorn individually and in ensemble.

It's going to be a great time in the "Lou!" We are looking forward to seeing you there!!!!

Can't make it to St. Louis? Stayed tuned (no pun intended), more events are in the works.

Now go practice!

