

Midwest **Motifs**

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Lasting Impressions

My first trip to the Midwest Clinic was over 25 years ago. It was the June meeting for the conductors of the groups who were performing at the conference in 1973. I was surrounded by many of the people I had admired and heard of for many years—J. Frederick Müller, Ray Dvorak, H.E. Nutt, Howard Lyons, and others. I was in awe of the people who had, through their hard work, dedication and expertise, steadfastly maintained high standards of organization and presented the finest performing groups for many years. I also had great respect for these people as outstanding music educators. I sat in that daylong meeting listening to the requirements for the performance groups. There were a lot of rules. These rules not only contributed to the success of each performing group, they also made the conference what it was and still is today. That is, the best opportunity to hear newly published music; the best opportunity to hear student bands and orchestras performing at their peak; the best opportunity to learn from outstanding music educators through formal demonstrations, lectures and sitting around the convention center listening to others' experiences; and the best opportunity to visit a broad range of outstanding exhibitors. I remember that year at Midwest as if it were yesterday.

The years have passed. As the newest member of the Midwest Board of Directors I can now see what happens on the inside. With the 2001 Midwest Clinic I have completed my first year. The clinic was remarkable. For one full year the Board of Directors had planned for this conference. For one week I had climbed more stairs, ridden more elevators, heard outstanding bands, orchestras, and chamber ensembles, and gathered inspiring and useful information to

help in my teaching. I worked harder and learned more in one week than I had in a long time.

Over the past thirty-two years I have served on numerous local, state, regional and national boards. Each one has its own personality. Each one has a level of organization structure that either encourages or inhibits communication. Each one has a level of professionalism that either makes you proud to be part of the group or causes you to look for ways to survive unscathed. After one



year on the board I can tell you that the group of men and women who serve on this board are exactly what one hopes for. They are dedicated, hard working professionals who use their expertise to bring a balanced program that crosses the subtle boundaries of music educators.

Why do music educators, exhibitors, performers and clinicians come back year after year? I am sure there are as many reasons as there are people who attend. However, some of the reasons must be to learn new information or to reinforce good teaching habits, be around positive and professional music educators, forget some of the negative statements that we hear regularly about education and to remind ourselves of the joys of teaching and making



John Clinton

music. Each year there are more groups who, as one of the participating conductors put it, reached for his dream and performed at the past year's

Midwest. I hope

more people will make that reach. This past year one could hear middle school, high school, collegiate, military, and adult ensembles from around the United States. Many of these ensembles performed a significant amount of newly published music. It's the best opportunity of which I am aware to hear new music performed by outstanding organizations. Publishers and exhibitors from around the world come to Chicago to display their wares, present the newest educational materials, and inform you of a wide variety of opportunities.

As in any successful organization the balance between maintaining the traditions and quality of the past and embracing change to uphold quality is what keeps that group moving forward and strong. The strength of 55 years of excellence is behind the Midwest. The forward momentum of looking for new ideas and methods keeps the tradition fresh. I hope you send in a recording of your group for consideration as a performer. I hope you submit a clinic idea. I hope you come to the 2002 Midwest Clinic. You surely will not be disappointed.

— *John Clinton*

John Clinton is Director for the Oklahoma Center for Arts through the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Oklahoma.

The Performance of our Lives...

"Measure by Measure"

This most wonderful and rewarding experience of performing at the 55th annual Midwest Clinic started, of all places, aboard a cruise ship in the Bahamas two years ago. The Leesville Road High School Symphonic Band was performing on a festival cruise. The Band had just finished performing Jager's "Esprit de Corps," Bach's "Toccatina and Fugue in D Minor," and Welcher's "Zion." Gary Smith, from the University of Illinois, was our judge and took some time to speak to me afterwards. He was truly impressed with our Band and was wondering why he had never heard of us. He asked, "Have you ever played at Midwest?" My answer was "Are you crazy... there is only one of me at the high school, only some of the students take private lessons... we're a good band but we aren't in that league!" He replied quickly with "Yes you are and you should apply!" He went further to say that he could not remember a high school band from North Carolina playing there (the only other one was Greensboro High School in 1954) and he would be honored to write a letter of recommendation for us. I told him that my experience at Midwest was rather limited but he suggested I attend the next clinic and rediscover Midwest. Thanks to his encouragement, I did just that and the performance of our lives started to form.

I attended many wonderful performances and clinics during the 2000 Midwest Clinic but the one that I would recommend that anyone attend if they are interested in applying to play at Midwest is the clinic presented by Mark Kelly on the application

process. After hearing some of the most outstanding band performances I had ever heard, I was unsure if I should apply. Mr. Kelly's clinic gave my thinking some very important direction and some very important advice. Even though everything is spelled out clearly in the application, Mr. Kelly gave greater insight to the whole process. As the clinic came near to the end, I was making up my mind that we should apply... then he said "Don't feel bad about your application being rejected... that great band you just heard applied four times before they made it!" My heart sank! For a moment, I felt "What am I thinking?" Even with Mr. Kelly's strong but true statement, Gary Smith's words echoed... "Apply!"

I came home and shared my experiences with the Band. They were excited about the idea even though they were unaware what Midwest was and what it would mean to them, our Band Program, our school, and in our case, our State! I showed them the Midwest Clinic History book, "The First Fifty Years," and other publications, such as this newsletter, for them to have some concept as to what this is all about. We recorded our music and put together our application. Space does not allow me to say as much about that as I would like to but I would be happy to discuss that with anyone who is interested and can be reached at dalbert@wcpss.net. I vividly remember the day I mailed the package, and the nervousness I felt as I mailed it. Soon a calm came about. I felt that our application represented the best work I can do and I was happy with it, no matter what!

You can imagine my proud expres-

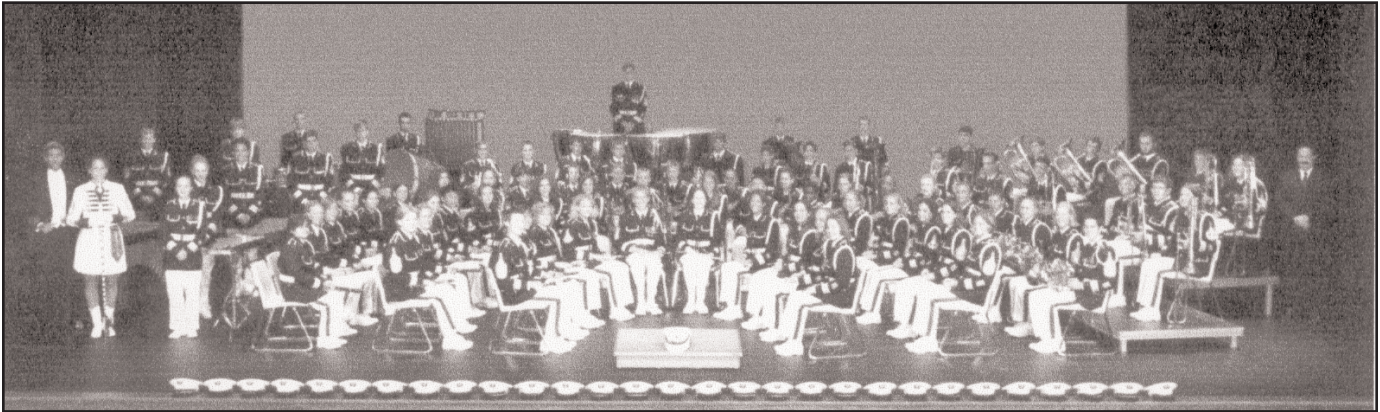


David S. Albert

sions as I read the letter of acceptance to the students. The room filled with applause and there was a new level of real accomplishment that we had never felt before... this unheard Band from Raleigh, NC, that only eight years ago started with thirty-two members, is going to be the first High School Band from North Carolina to perform at Midwest since 1954!

We chose a chairperson and formed committees to cover every aspect. From the very first meeting, this group went to work with a common goal in mind. This was the most important event that has ever happened to us and we would work together to give it our best!

When one arrives at this point, one is challenged in several areas: musically, financially, logistically, and emotionally. We were challenged in all these areas but grew as a committee and in purpose. As our beloved United States of America dealt with 11 Sept 01, so we had to as well. The trials and events of our entire journey were amazingly chronicled by staff writer Mary E. Miller and photojournalist Scott Sharpe for a six-chapter feature in *The News & Observer* entitled "Measure by Measure" and can be viewed in a multimedia presentation online at



Leesville Road High School Symphonic Band, Raleigh, North Carolina

www.newsobserver.com/band. I highly recommend this site to you if you want an in-depth look at the great things that can come about as a result of this prestigious event!

We went about the process of selecting the program and guest conductors. We worked with composers, arrangers, publishing companies and just about everybody else in the music business. This part was as exciting as it was frustrating at times but in the end we arrived at a program that fit within the Midwest purpose and a program we believed in! Rest assured these steps are very well explained and presented in the famous "Director Memos"!

We held several open rehearsals right before our departure. We wanted to practice performing the music from the opening note to the last note with an audience right at the end of our bells. This helped us be prepared for the most informed and discerning audience we would ever perform for.

There are no words that can explain the feeling we all felt as we arrived in the beautiful Hilton Chicago and experienced the Clinic. The students have written about their experiences and all of them commented about how "cool" the exhibits and College Night were and how the reality of it all was beginning to form... this was really big! Our dress rehearsal at the Hilton was, by any standard, bad. Luckily, we had

planned some needed rest and time for relaxing before the next day's concert.

As many have stated about their performance in the past, the concert went by too quickly. The students were comfortable about playing and enjoyed every note! I can honestly say that we made music! The Band played at a high level consistently throughout the concert and felt proud of what they had accomplished. I too was very proud to be a part of this highlight of our Band Program and in my career that two years ago was totally out of the question. I want to thank my wife Heidi and family for their support, Gary Smith for his encouragement and letter of recommendation, Mike Votta and Phil Homiller (who also wrote letters), our guest conductors, the administration of the Midwest Clinic, the Bands Club parents and school administration for their support for our new friends, Mary Miller and Scott Sharp, and of course, my students for their love and dedication to music!

Finally, I would like to thank the wonderful audience that we enjoyed so much! Thank you for coming and sharing the performance of our lives! As I often say at a concert "Besides... without you... this is just a rehearsal!" Would I ever consider doing this again? You bet I will! I hope you will consider it too!

— *David S. Albert*

Clinic Handout Update

So that teachers around the world can view them and print them for their personal use, we will be posting clinic handouts on our website later this spring. Detailed handouts are one of the best resources available to educators and are a key factor in a clinic's effectiveness. Beginning this year, we will place greater emphasis on handouts in our instructions to the clinicians. We will also increase the number of copies that we suggest they prepare, so that no one who attends a session goes away empty-handed.

Hilton Chicago Reservation Information

The Hilton Chicago will begin accepting housing reservations for the 56th annual Midwest Clinic on April 1, 2002. Please call the Hilton to reserve your room.

312-922-4400 or 1-800-HILTONS

The Midwest Experience

Being selected to perform at the 2001 Midwest Clinic was highly rewarding and fun! Out of all the things that the Edison Middle School Jazz Band One has achieved, nothing has been more exciting. Over the years, this jazz band has received numerous awards and high ratings from contests and festivals. Despite these accomplishments, the Midwest Clinic has been the *coup de grace* of performances. Nothing is quite like performing in front of a large group of music educators who can truly appreciate the students' and teachers' efforts. Since being selected to perform in the clinic, we've achieved a more intense focus, higher standards of performance, more discipline, and a greater sense of achievement, increased enthusiasm for jazz band.

Jazz Band One started rehearsals in August just before the start of the school year. Gigs were planned in advance of the Midwest performance so that the students would get accustomed to playing in front of large crowds. Rehearsals were longer than those in prior years. There were additional sessions for jazz improvisation development and additional practice time for the vocalist as well. As a result, before the first gig in October, students learned enough arrangements to perform for at least a 90-minute set. In fact, they had never had so many arrangements learned so early in the year. Since Jazz Band Two generally opens the gigs, we prepared for at least a 30-minute set earlier in the year as well. Hence, by this time of the year, all of the jazz band students were already showing a greater sense of accomplishment and more enthusiasm for jazz band and other performance ensembles.

The jazz bands had reached new levels of performance just after a few gigs. The solos had improved greatly! The ensemble started coming together and the musical feel was relaxed and swingin'. Many jazz band parents reported that their child was practicing so much that they had to be reminded to eat dinner. With the additional excitement of having professional guest artists to perform along with the group at Midwest,

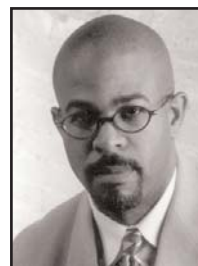


Edison Middle School Jazz Band One, Champaign, Illinois

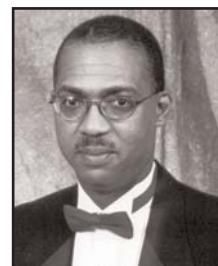
we were preparing with great anticipation for a special and memorable event.

For the Midwest performance, we chartered a bus and planned an overnight trip. This trip included planned rehearsals and other clinic activities. On the day of the performance, tension started to build. The students were anxious to display their hard work and efforts. They were, however, confident from having played the many gigs booked prior to the big performance. Nevertheless, the seriousness of the performance began to take hold of the group. During the sound check, Antonio García assured the students that it would prove to be a wonderful experience and reinforced his favorable impression of the group's audition tape and sound check. He gave the kids permission to relax and have fun! It was amazing to see the room fill with music educators from all over.

Once the band started playing, immediately the audience applauded with great appreciation and encouragement and the band relaxed and the fun began! They were excited, and we were too! It proved to be a great performance. Ron Bridgewater and Ron McCurdy, the guest artists, played fantastically along with the band. Our featured vocalist, Ali Hobbs, brought the house to lengthy applause. It was an all around super experience for the jazz band director, Sam Hankins, and guest performers and guest directors, John Currey (Central



Kevin Turner



Sam Hankins

High School, Champaign, IL) and Kevin Turner (Edison Middle School, Champaign, IL). Afterward, many of the audience members greeted and encouraged the students. In addition, Sammy Nestico came backstage to meet the kids. Of course, we were all honored to have been complimented by him. The students know his work from having played some of his charts.

The improvement of musicianship in jazz band has had a positive effect on not only the individuals in jazz band, but those in concert band and orchestra as well. Students are learning their respective parts in all ensembles with more attention to detail. The intensity that they put into preparing for Midwest is being applied to the other ensembles. More students are taking private lessons and have even purchased better quality instruments in preparation for next year's jazz band auditions. We are looking forward to an even better year for both jazz bands as a result of having performed in the prestigious Midwest Clinic.

— *Kevin Turner and Sam Hankins*

A Journey Worth Making



Stone High School Symphonic Band, Wiggins, Mississippi

The following article was adapted from remarks delivered by Mohamad Schuman during his December 22, 2001 Midwest Clinic concert.

I am truly honored to be standing before each of you today. Words simply cannot express the amount of joy that was felt with the news of our acceptance to perform at the 2001 Midwest Clinic. The Midwest Clinic Board of Directors asked me to speak during our concert about the success that I have experienced with my own band program and additionally to encourage groups from other small schools to apply for consideration.

Today, I am not here to give you any magic pill or potion for instant success because to my knowledge they simply do not exist. What I would like to do is present you with some information that I think has contributed to the success of the Stone Band Program. I strongly feel that the accomplishments of our students and staff are a direct result of hard work, determination, and perseverance.

As you all know, band is not a microwaveable product, yet we are living in what one would consider to be a microwaveable world. People want the end result with the fastest means possible. However, band instruction and learning is somewhat like a slow roasting

procedure. While there are new developments to enhance the educational process, band today in many ways is the same as it was twenty-five or more years ago. I do my best to explain this to the students entering the program at the beginning level.

Rather than setting limits for what can be achieved within our program, we instead set goals and then work collectively to achieve them. Even when we fall short it is not failure, but rather delay. As educators, we set the tone for the learning that will take place and the willingness to learn within each student. Students meet our expectations, especially when they know that you genuinely care about them.

In addition to quality instruction and a child's willingness to learn, there are three key ingredients that I believe are necessary to develop and maintain a successful program. These are parental, community, and school support. The Stone Band Program is fortunate to have these crucial elements in place.

- Our parent organization is a vital part of our program, for these people give countless hours both individually and collectively to support the Stone Band Program.
- Our community not only demonstrates an unfaltering support of the Stone Band Program, but it also strongly supports all other educational areas within our school system.

The Stone County School Board & Administrative Officials provide us with the tools through which our program can

achieve success. Three major ways they accomplish this goal is by providing:

- (1) the number of instructional staff needed for the number of students within the program
- (2) budget monies to operate, maintain, and build a quality program... and most importantly,
- (3) a steadfast commitment to the scheduling process.

ALL BAND CLASSES IN THE STONE BAND PROGRAM MEET EACH DAY.

We are fortunate that in this time of what I will call "scheduling experimentation" our school officials demonstrate a firm understanding of the importance of daily reinforcement of performance skills.

Although the Stone Band Program is representative of a small school in a rather small area (student enrollment at Stone High School is 750), the students that make up our program are no different than any other kids. To view their achievement potential in any other way would be to render my students a great disservice.

We auditioned for the Midwest Clinic three times before being accepted. Even when the band wasn't selected, we all grew simply by going through the audition process. Walking through this "Midwest Experience" has been a journey worth making. Therefore, I would like to challenge those of you who are teachers in small schools to give it a shot.

Dare to accept the challenge of your dreams... for anything is possible!

— **Mohamad Schuman**



Mohamad Schuman

Applying to Present at the Midwest Clinic

As the March 15 receipt deadline for Midwest Clinic Applications approaches, questions annually arise as to what the Board of Directors is seeking in clinic content and in the application itself.

Grassroots Education

The Midwest Board is committed to bringing attendees information useful the day they return to their classes and rehearsals. If you review past successful presentations, you'll find an increasing focus on "Music 101" topics: approaches that will aid the band, orchestra, or jazz directors in their first years—or will assist veteran educators by providing new avenues towards solving recurring challenges in music education. Printed handouts containing practical information—not just an artist bio—are an essential, valuable resource for attendees. Successful presentations of a more "esoteric" nature are not common at Midwest.

Sponsorship?

It is not necessary for a clinician to have a sponsor, but all clinicians are responsible for their fees and expenses. Midwest believes there are potential presenters worldwide who are not yet known as "big names," especially the small-school and/or inner-city educators who have learned how to achieve great quality in their music programs despite significant odds. It can be helpful for such applicants to demonstrate that they have already presented workshops at the local or regional level, but the Board is open to new applications that will introduce us all to the next generation of "big names."

Target what you are going to accomplish and offer a reasonably detailed proposal to Midwest, not just a title and biographical statement. If other, equally deserving topic-approaches are explained more convincingly than yours, you may not be chosen.

Education vs. Hard Sell

The Midwest Clinic wishes to heighten the educational experience of the conference and lessen any potential overtones of commercialism: clinics at Midwest are to teach educational concepts, not promote products or services. The Board has found that most hour-long workshops that attempt to survey the applications of an entire text are not nearly as effective for our attendees as clinics that focus on a limited number of topics and solutions. So if you are an author/developer, for example, your application may need to reveal a different approach from even your successful presentations delivered at various trade shows, in-service sessions, and state music education conferences.

For example, you may have a book or product that represents the overall compilation of your approach: it may even be for sale in the exhibit area of the Midwest Clinic. But instead of offering a one-hour, "infomercial"-style tour of your product, you can easily explore any number of educational angles on string bowing, brass playing, jazz theory, or chamber music repertoire—without having to sell outright your own text, play-along CD, or technological creation. Your application and clinic might be most successful if you ask yourself the following questions:

- What concepts are most critical to my workshop?
- What specific examples from my book or resource are most valuable for my handout?
- Are there appropriate views other than my own—alternate references or approaches—that may serve not only to inform my audience but also increase my being perceived as an artist/educator rather than a company spokesperson?

The following examples may assist your perspective as to the Midwest Clinic's guidelines for clinicians:



Antonio J. García

Acceptable:

- Using examples excerpted from your publication or resource.
- Including an order blank in your handout.
- Inviting attendees to visit your exhibit booth during Midwest.
- Setting flyers for your product or service on a table at the rear of your clinic room.

Unacceptable:

- Titling your session so as to communicate total reliance on the product.
- Guiding the attendees page-by-page through your publication so as to promote an introduction to the whole product rather than focusing on its educational substance.
- Making repeated references to the availability of the item for purchase.
- Distributing samples of your product at your clinic.

The Midwest Clinic believes that clinicians can present the concepts inherent in their publications/resources without communicating a "hard-sell" attitude.

Decision

The decision of the Board of Directors as to which clinic applications are accepted for a given year depends not only on the quality of the proposal and its relevance to our attendees but also on the overall menu of priority topics and how best to serve attendees in a given year. Thus achieving a balance of topics

may mean declining a number of excellent clinic applications.

Your Contribution

If you have questions about these guidelines or any aspect of the clinic application process, please contact the Midwest Clinic office or a member of the Board of Directors. Midwest Clinic

attendees are dedicated educators who are searching for information, approaches, and resources they can apply to their own music programs. By concentrating on practical guidance and instruction, you will help them meet their goals in attending the Midwest Clinic.

— *Antonio J. García*

Antonio J. García is the Director of Jazz Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University.

The Moorhead Sixth Grade Orchestra performed in the Grand Ballroom on Tuesday afternoon, December 18 at 1:30. As part of their assignment for school, each orchestra member kept a journal of the trip to Chicago. What follows is the journal entry where students were prompted to write a letter to a friend describing the orchestra's experience at the Midwest Clinic.

Dear Jodi:

I am writing to you to tell you how our concert day in Chicago went. I got up early Tuesday morning and our orchestra went to the Whitney Young High School and gave a very good rehearsal concert. After that we went back to our hotel and had about an hour to just relax before we would have to leave for the Grand Ballroom at the Hilton Hotel.

When we got to the Hilton, I had butterflies in my stomach from being nervous, but I was still very excited. The Grand Ballroom was just beautiful, and when I walked in I felt like a million bucks. When we started our rehearsal in the Grand Ballroom it was just as Mr. Cole had said: you could hear a beautiful ring on every cutoff. After the rehearsal we waited outside the ballroom and I was ready to share my emotions with the crowd of people that was coming in.

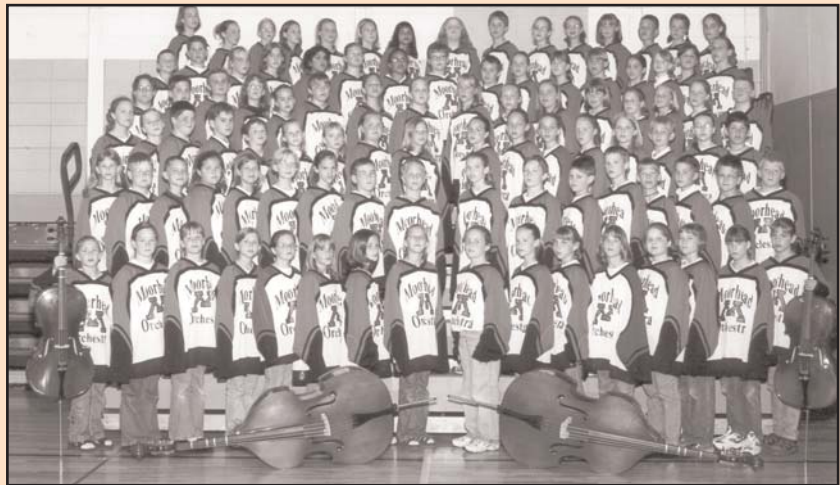
When we started playing, I was so

proud! My emotions during our first piece "March Heroic" were awesome. I felt so happy to have the first song under our belt, and in my opinion, if I had been coming to this concert and heard that song for the first time, I would have felt really happy. I think the piece that went the best was the "Torch Burns Bright." When I started playing that song I got tears in my eyes. It was the last song of the concert. I got this rush through my body. I was kind of like, "Oh no, this is the last song!" You just felt that you didn't want the concert to ever end, yet it went by so, so, fast! When we played the last note of our last song I got a huge rush of happiness and pride. We were done and it felt great! We had been working so hard for almost nine months.

It was worth it—I know one thing

for sure though. We were living a dream that I'm sure every other orchestra member in the past has dreamed of— playing at Midwest. It was awesome. I wanted to pinch myself to make sure that I was really there. Usually when we practice together, we have good songs and there are always songs that need work. It was a really neat feeling to know that everything was going our way! We didn't mess up in the concert and no one even broke a string—it was magical, a dream come true. I don't think I will ever be able to explain the feelings I had when we played at Midwest.

Sincerely,
Lauren Doda
Moorhead Sixth Grade Orchestra
Mrs. Anderson's Class



Moorhead Sixth Grade Orchestra, Moorhead, Minnesota

828 Davis Street, Suite 100
Evanston, Illinois 60201-4423

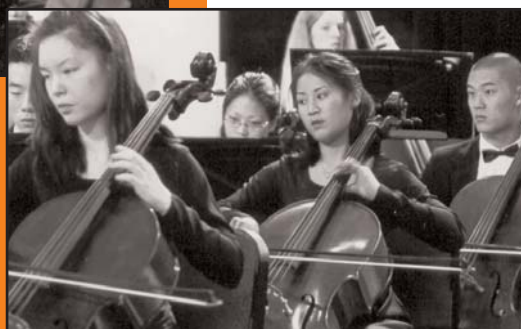


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56th Annual Midwest Clinic—December 17-21, Hilton Chicago

Apply to perform in 2002!

Print an application from
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Midwest Clinic office to request that an
application be mailed or faxed to you.
Applications are due on March 15.



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<http://www.midwestclinic.org>