

Midwest Motifs

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A “Thumbnail” Sketch of the 2002 Midwest Clinic

Now posted on the Midwest Clinic website are four dozen thumbnail photos for you to click on to see the larger picture. As with this brief note, it is a small picture of our 2002 clinic that I hope will encourage you to visit our website to recall memories of this landmark conference. For more photos, please turn to page 7 of this newsletter.

There were so many first-time events during this conference that to comment on all of them would be impossible. Our initial observation would have to include the fantastic attendance: a new all-time record set by several hundred. Our final attendance was over 14,000. WOW! Thank you one and all for your loyal and continued support of the Midwest Clinic. The board of directors is working hard to bring new and exciting concerts, clinics and exhibits each year. However, our focus is truly not on the size of this event, but rather, on the quality of the presentations.



As we strive to address the needs of this diverse assembly of teachers and educators, we will continue listening to your suggestions and guidance. You may have been involved in the long registration lines on Wednesday. Thank you for your patience. I am sure many of you will take advantage of on-line pre-registration this year to speed up the registration process. Pre-registration will be available from our website starting on August 1.

We will not quickly forget the wonderful performances by the Kosei Wind Orchestra and the unbelievable crowds for both of the Wednesday night concerts. We also experienced packed clinic

sites, a great interest in the new college level offerings and, of course, the outstanding concerts by our school concert bands, orchestras and jazz ensembles. All of these offerings plus the expansive exhibitor displays kept all of us hustling from one site to another throughout the week.

The 2003 conference will roll around very quickly. For those of us on the board with hair of a lighter color, the year goes by even faster! However, regardless of hair color, plans are already being formulated to provide attractive offerings for 2003. I encourage you to apply for a clinic or performance presentation by your ensemble. The strength of the Midwest Clinic is based on the clinicians and ensembles that apply. Have a productive year, and we look forward to seeing you in Chicago this December.

— Ray Cramer
President
The Midwest Clinic

Introducing the Midwest Clinic Web Archive http://www.midwestclinic.org/band_archive_2002.asp

Music lovers everywhere in the world can now view performances of nearly 60 pieces from more than 25 concerts held during the 2002 Midwest Clinic. These selections will be available from the Midwest Clinic website throughout the year as streaming videos. In addition to the concert footage, complete program information is provided for each piece, including the composer and arranger, publisher, year published, grade, time, and price. This archive is made possible by Soundtraks, the recording studio of New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois, ntjazz.com, and Mark Custom Recording Services, Inc.

The Midwest Clinic: “Gaawwlee!”

“Hey Stan. It’s Richard Crain on the phone.” Those few words from my wife Bobbi are how the Holliday Texas Wind Ensemble began the journey toward the 2002 Midwest Clinic in Chicago.

Holliday, Texas, is an interesting place. Fourteen miles southwest of Wichita Falls, Holliday was settled in the early part of the century by ranchers and oil workers. Today, Holliday boasts two blinking traffic lights, a long list of oil related businesses that moved away when oil hit hard times in the ‘70’s and ‘80’s, and a strong history of farming and ranching. Every Thursday is steak day at RT’s convenience store. Rick and Trey make the finest steak and folks from all over come to eat great food and talk about the latest Holliday High School sporting event. You can always tell it’s Thursday at RT’s when there is a long line of muddy pickup trucks and the patrons are wearing their spurs and chaps. Really!

Holliday High School is a small school — a very small school — 304 students in grades 9-12 to be exact. The marching band consists of approximately 90-100 marching members in grades 8-12. The Holliday band hall, a metal building that was built in the mid ‘70’s, is lovingly referred to as the band barn. The 300 students grades 5 through 12 that enter the band room every day, fill the dark brown wooden shelves and line the walls with instruments. The 48 x 48 room consists of an office, a storage/colorguard/library/practice room and one room used by the band parents that contains a refrigerator, heater, paint, and four bags of molded hot dog buns. Every day during 2nd period the three-time defending AA Texas State Marching Champion, two time Texas AA Honor Band,

Association of Texas Small School Bands Concert Band Champion, and 2002 Midwest Clinic performance band shows up and goes to work. There is magic in the air! From band parents who are relentless and work tirelessly, an administration and teachers that support the band at the highest levels, a community that says it wants quality music education in the school then proceeds to fund the program at a championship level, to students who exhibit incredible work ethic and pull together as a family, Holliday, Texas, is a band town! Most schools have signs about championship athletics. Holliday has a championship band sign at the entrance of the school.

The journey for Holliday to become a Midwest performing group actually began four years ago when Mr. Richard Crain, a Midwest Clinic Board member from Spring, Texas, was judging the band at the area level of the Texas Honor Band Competition. I was on tour with the Colts Drum and Bugle Corps, so my wife Bobbi was the representative for our band at the contest. Mr. Crain, after hearing our CD, told Bobbi that we should consider making a recording for Midwest; there was going to be a new “small school” category, and we might have a shot.

I was excited to have a reason to perform difficult music early in the concert season and, although we were not selected to perform at Midwest that season, the skills, work ethic and the team building the members learned were invaluable. Holliday students are goal-oriented individuals who, like most people, do their best work when there is a deadline. Two years and another State Marching Championship later, I felt it was time to give the Midwest Clinic another try.

“Hey Stan. It’s Richard Crain on the phone.” I was numb. I did not know that the most exciting and rewarding days of my professional life lay before me.

The whirlwind of activity started almost immediately after we received our Midwest Clinic Invitation. With the composers and music companies sending us stacks of music, we decided to rehearse ten days in the summer to choose a program. We had a great time reading music from all parts of the country and from the four corners of the globe. Music from Japan, Germany, Australia, England and the United States began to arrive in Holliday, Texas. While our sight reading and ensemble skills improved as we read each piece, the look on each performer’s face would reveal if the piece was a keeper.

When school began, and as we were counting down the days on the chalk board, television and newspaper reporters, friends and well-wishers called and visited the school regularly as people heard about the little band from Holliday that was going to Chicago. We heard from composers, band directors, and politicians who proclaimed the band “Ambassadors of Goodwill” for the State of Texas. We counted down the days and kept up with the weather in Chicago; with five days left, the chart on the board read “Holliday sunny, and 60 degrees; Chicago, snow with a low of 14.”

Surprisingly, when our departure date got closer, there was very little stress in our rehearsals. The kids wanted to perform and learn as much as I wanted to conduct and teach. We were partners, and the rehearsals in December were glorious!

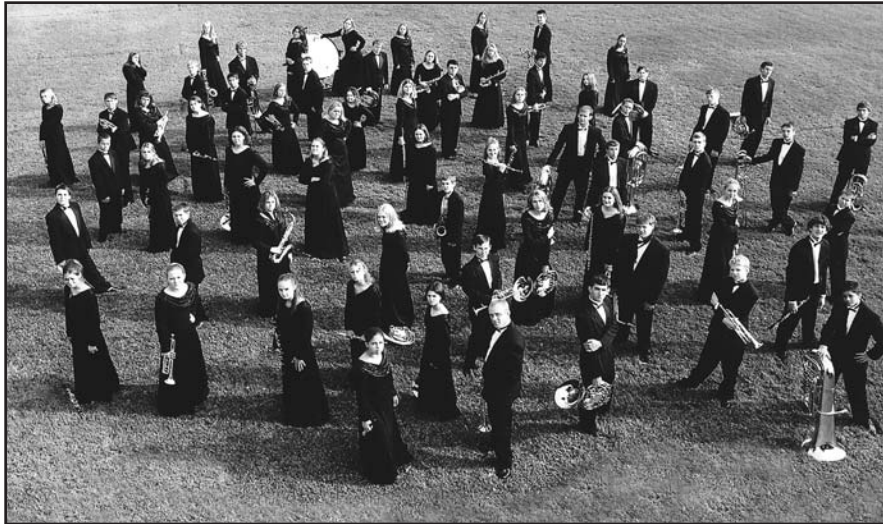
As we entered the Hilton Chicago, the full weight of the Midwest Clinic

stared each member of the band square in the face. The gold leaf on the ceilings, the exquisite Christmas decorations, and people, shoulder to shoulder in the hallways, reminded us that we were performing before an

international audience. I snickered as I heard someone say, "Dorothy, this ain't Kansas." We went directly into the rehearsal room where our composers and Texas band friends came by to wish us well. By the end of rehearsal, you could cut the tension in the room with a knife!

Because we don't get out much in Holliday, when we go on a band trip, it is full of things to do. After our first rehearsal, I scheduled a lunch cruise on Lake Michigan. It was a beautiful day on the boat, the food was great, and there was a DJ playing music. Senior Sean Baker, who was on his first band trip, decided to dance a solo that looked like John Travolta meets Charlie the Tuna. We laughed hard and the tension melted away.

We visited the Midwest Clinic Exhibit Halls where the kids from Holliday saw glass flutes, multi colored clarinets and trumpets, and every new instrument made. They brought home information from university and military bands, fund raising companies, and they tried to name that instrument that is part trumpet, horn, trombone, and tuba. I had a parent with me as I took a quick tour through the exhibits and showed him the silent practice rooms, music publishers, the new instruments and every-



Holliday High School Wind Ensemble

thing that goes with them. He must have been impressed; he said only one word during the tour — "Gaawwleee!"

We were just getting warmed up. Chicago-style deep-dish pizza then the Blue Man Group followed that night; the Field Museum and Sue, the most complete T-Rex skeleton in the world was next on the list. On Saturday we squeezed in five hours of shopping on the Magnificent Mile, saw the Chicago Symphony, and attended a Bulls basketball game.

One student called our performance surreal; it happened so fast she hardly remembered performing. I told the kids that we would warm up, take a picture, and go backstage. The International Ballroom was empty. While we were waiting backstage for our concert to begin, many of our composers came by and wished us well; Ray Cramer, Midwest Clinic President, also came by and spoke to the band. We then took some time alone and reflected on our heritage, our loved ones at home, our school and the support given to us by the community—our life in Holliday, Texas. After a short prayer, we took the stage.

The International Ballroom was full—standing room only. Richard Crain was our emcee and a guest conductor

for the evening. Mr. Crain is a great friend and an eloquent man who spoke about our students and our school; I began to worry about the kids getting nervous as they looked out on a packed house. I then heard my name and

walked that walk that I practiced in my bedroom, bowed that bow that I rehearsed before the mirror in the bathroom, then turned and tripped on the first step on the podium. The performers giggled away their stage fright before they began the finest performance of their young lives.

When I have been asked about our trip to Chicago, my response is always about the Midwest experience. The Holliday Wind Ensemble worked together as a team and performed before a warm and generous international audience that has a passion for music and young musicians. Our students witnessed multiple professional musical organizations, talked with numerous universities, saw the potential for employment opportunities in the field of music, and visited with composers and professional musicians from all parts of the globe. Most importantly, we had fun! The Midwest Clinic is first rate, the pinnacle for musical organizations. Would the Holliday Wind ensemble like to return to Midwest? Did we grow as musicians? Did we mature as individuals?

Is Thursday steak day at RT's?

— Stan Mauldin
Band Director
Holliday High School

Student Perspectives on Performances

The following comments were taken from papers written by members of the New Trier High School Jazz Ensemble I, following their performance at the 2002 Midwest Clinic.

“Playing at the Midwest Clinic for people who appreciate the music you are making gave our performance a completely different feeling. Our group didn’t feel nervous when the audience had that attitude, mainly because we were no longer trying to impress anyone. The impression had already been made and the musical experience was more pure because of it. That is to say, the performance is more about the music than the musicians.”

“My experience performing at the Midwest Clinic has had enough impact on me that I now see my future differently. I now will play my instrument after college, just to never stop having such intensely musical experiences.”

— *Connor Danstrom*

“The whole performance and the days prior and after were kind of a blur, so I still need to let it hit rock bottom before I can truly appreciate what a special experience it was.”

— *Matt McGowan*

“The day after the concert, many of the members of Jazz Ensemble commented on the great amount of fun they had performing at the Midwest. I think we should all strive to treat every concert like a Midwest concert. If we were to always perform with the same musical intensity that we displayed at that concert, it would create a higher overall level of performance...and it would be more fun—which is the reason everyone starts playing an instrument in the first place...to have fun!”

— *Aaron Weinstein*

“Knowing that the majority of the audience were directors from around the world allowed me to really enjoy the performance more than any other in which I have participated. I knew that I would have to seriously play to impress them and compliments would not be handed out socially. I took this into account and felt very good after the performance when directors I didn’t know went out of their way to tell me I did a good job. I never felt more special in my life.”

— *Michael Thorsen*

“In so many words, the Midwest convention showed me what it was like to be a professional musician.”

— *Peter Comperole*

“The Midwest was really different for me because we were playing for such a huge audience, many of whom were musicians, so that factor also made the experience truly exhilarating.”

— *Cody Riggan*

“The Midwest was probably one of the most memorable experiences in my life. The time we spent preparing for the Midwest was an experience itself. Riding on the bus back from the Midwest Clinic, I felt I accomplished something I didn’t even expect to accomplish. Of course it was a hard and long road to get to where we ended up, but it was well worth it.”

— *Bryan Krugman*



New Trier High School Jazz Ensemble I

Performing at the Midwest Clinic

These remarks were taken from journals written by members of the Edgewood Junior High School 8th Grade Concert Band. The group's director, James DeCaro, writes: "The assignment was made due to Indiana Public Law 221, which requires all areas of the curriculum to incorporate reading and writing. The students in my 8th grade concert band were all given a journal and told to chronicle their experiences, feelings, and observations from the time of the making of the CD for application to the clinic, to the rehearsals, pre-concerts, and the trip itself."

"It's the day after the Midwest trip. I'm so sleepy and need to get rest. I look back and think it was the best school trip ever! I hope all our future band outings are this great. Even through all the hard work, and extreme stress, it was the best accomplishment I've ever done. I have finally seen how great we really are."

— Kayla Scroggins

"We just found out that we were invited to the Midwest Clinic. This is a huge honor.

"We just came back from summer break and when we got back, we saw the Midwest magazine and we were on the front cover! This thing is a real big deal. I'll be real busy until December.

"Tonight was our Winter Concert. I think we did very well. Dr. Cramer, Dr. May, and Mr. Murphy were here. They have been a huge support for our band and Mr. DeCaro.

"I love Chicago! This place is so cool it just blows your mind. They have just about everything. We just got done with the concert. We performed the best we ever did. The concert was great even though the practice made me want to die because I was so nervous."

— Adam Williams

"Tonight was our last rehearsal before Chicago. It was hard to believe that it was finally time. As we were running through the songs I was really listening to how good we really were. I think some of the parents were surprised at how far along we came. It was kind of sad, but tomorrow is the big day.

"I wasn't too nervous because our last two rehearsals went really well. After we performed the concert, it was really sad. After all the work that we put into it, it was over. I really thought we did good though."

— Julie Ferguson

"The concert was at 4:15 in the International Ballroom. Of course, we were all nervous (except Brooks, he never gets nervous) and I was sure that if I missed even one note, I'd be embarrassed for life. "Air For Band" brought the audience to applause. The finale had them on their feet and we had even a few people personally tell us what they thought. I don't think I've ever done anything musically in my life that has made me nearly as proud as I was when the whole band stood up and the clapping commenced. Now I see what all those people meant when they told us we belonged there, we did. And suddenly, band means everything in the world to me."

— Ashley Theodore

"When I heard that we were going to get to go to Chicago, I was very excited. We will be playing with bands from all over the world. I can't wait to go. I'll get to miss some school.

"This Wednesday, we leave for Chicago. I can't wait to see all the cool things; Sears Tower, ESPN Zone, Navy Pier, Lake Michigan, the hotels, Giordano's and Blast. I can't wait much longer."

— Brooks Davis

"Five days away, only five days away. The band became closer because we will see each other more often because we're in band and jazz band. Some of us have even become friends with people we wouldn't even talk to if it wasn't for band."

— Marty Ledbetter

"Last spring when I was in 7th grade, our concert band tried out for the Midwest Clinic in Chicago for the winter when we would be 8th graders. Later on, Mr. DeCaro told us we made it. He kept telling us what an honor it was to perform there. It would be way better than any other contest, competition, or clinic. The Midwest Clinic is the best there is.

"We did it! We did excellent! Everyone comes up and congratulates us when we walk down the halls of the Hilton. It's so fancy."

— Haley Brown

"Two days before we leave to go to Chicago. I can't wait. Mr. DeCaro is going easier on us it seems. I think it's because there is not much more he can do. It is up to us. I hope I don't screw up in Chicago.

"Last night I didn't sleep much. I got to the school at about 6:15 a.m. I'm surprised at how calm Mr. DeCaro is. Usually before a concert or contest he is really stressed out.

"Well, we are riding high from last night's performance. We stayed up until about 2:00 a.m."

— Cam Cunningham

The Midwest Clinic gratefully acknowledges these students and their directors for allowing us to share their impressions in this newsletter.



Edgewood Junior High School Band

A Year in the Life of a Midwest Clinic Performer

Taking my middle school eighth grade concert band to the Midwest Clinic was not something that I thought I would ever do. But last winter Lissa May, a good friend and professor at Indiana University prevailed upon me. We started late so there was a last-minute rush to solicit the recommendations, fill out the application, and make the CD. I decided to include one track of my 7th grade concert band on the CD since they would be the group to attend if we were selected.

The waiting is the worst part. I ran into Midwest Clinic President Ray Cramer at one point after I knew that the selection process was complete, and he said nothing to me about whether or not we had been chosen. But the day after I saw him, we received the express mail package and learned that we would be presenting a concert at the 56th annual Midwest Clinic. The next day I told the students, and they were ecstatic.

Choosing the program was a difficult, but very rewarding process. The

many rules on music selection made it tough, but I was exposed to so much great music and by early September, the program fell into place. The guidance of John Whitwell, Ray Cramer, Otis Murphy (our guest soloist), Lissa May, and countless others proved to be invaluable. The experience of attending, conducting, and playing at the MidEurope Conference with Bloomington High School North in Austria during the summer was also a great help.

The students hit the ground running when they returned in the fall. The goal was to have every student play every note in every song. As the time drew closer, everyone grew more excited and worked even harder to learn the music.

When the day to depart arrived, everyone was so eager. The look on the student's faces when they first saw the Hilton Chicago was one of amazement. However, what was even better was the look on their faces of satisfaction after the last note res-

onated throughout the ballroom. From the application, to the music selection, to the countless hours of preparation, to our concert and clinic performances, the entire process was one that we will always cherish and one that we will never forget.

— *Jim DeCaro*
Band Director

Edgewood Junior High School



Scenes From The 2002 Midwest Clinic



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Applications are due March 14.

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