



Midwest

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A United Purpose

During the week before the 2007 conference, I made a habit of checking the preregistration database several times a day. The number of preregistrants itself was less important than how quickly it was climbing. In less than three hours on Sunday night, December 9, for example, more than 50 people registered. I couldn't help but wonder about these people. What were their goals and expectations, where were they coming from and were they conference regulars or first-timers, teachers, college students, or others? Each new name that joined the list added to the momentum of our final preparations and expanded the impact that the 61st Annual Midwest Clinic would have. In all, attendees from 34 countries across six continents would ultimately converge in Chicago. What struck me as I scrolled through the list was how many names I recognized. Many of you I have never met, but I know who you are, and I'm honored that you have made the Midwest Clinic a part of your lives.

Last December, I asked a friend to take some photographs during the conference. Her assignment: in six hours on Wednesday, capture the atmosphere of the Midwest Clinic. Before she even picked up her staff badge, she had already been enveloped in the positive energy in the Hilton, aided by the crowds in the lobby and in particular by the teacher in the elevator who told her he had attended every conference since 1967. Her photos included decorations and displays, audience reactions, and many, many

conversations. In January, I attended a conference for members of the meetings and conventions industry. Also attending were hotel salespeople and managers, convention and visitors bureau reps, service providers, and event planners from every field and industry you can imagine. It was a collegial, spirited, and insightful gathering, but something was different from what I was used to experiencing. By the end of the conference, I realized what I missed was the way in which the teachers, students, and industry members who attend the Midwest Clinic are united in a single purpose: the advancement of instrumental music education.

It is this unity that makes the Midwest Clinic special from the moment you arrive at the conference. Our goal is to create an event at which that unity finds its fullest expression. I have written several times that I view our work at the Midwest Clinic as a year-long collaboration with attendees. Amazingly, the rewards of that collaboration always manage to exceed my expectations. The Midwest Clinic serves the same role for its planners as it does for its attendees: teaching, inspiring, fostering connections, and energizing. Each year, I depend on the conference to provide me with many of the challenges and lessons that will push and guide me in the next twelve months. Fortunately for me, it never fails to deliver.

— Kelly Jocius, Executive Director

“Midwest Madness”

We are honored that the Midwest Board has asked us to submit an article for this issue of the *Motifs*. Our sixth grade wind ensemble performed at the 2007 Midwest Clinic, and it has been suggested that we might share a few insights into the audition process. We would like to encourage anyone who is considering it to audition for this high honor. It is the thrill of a lifetime. We especially would like to entice young ensembles to audition. Our profession needs to showcase fine young bands. It can be most inspiring to instrumental classroom teachers across the globe.

The first step to auditioning would be to assess your particular situation. If you believe you have a high quality program, good administrative support, strong families, an instrumental class that meets daily, excelling students and a strong private lesson program in your school, then you stand a fighting chance at performing at the Midwest Clinic. This is arguably the highest honor a band or orchestra can receive internationally, and many ingredients need to be in place.

The second step in this audition process would be to attend the Midwest Clinic Performance Workshops, held each year at the conference. We had attended this workshop three times prior to our decision to undertake this venture. Attending the workshops led by Mark Kelly, Kelly Jocius, Darcy Nendza, and Rodney Dorsey proved to be most beneficial. Their advice and guidance proved most valuable. Every detail and due date of the application process needs

to be in compliance with the audition requirements. This attention to detail is indicative of what you represent as a director and the detail and knowledge you give to your ensemble’s musical performance.

Returning home from the 2005 Midwest Clinic, we immediately began choosing



our music for the 2006 band that would audition. In 2006, we attended the Midwest Performance Workshop for the second time, while the process was already well under way! Music had been selected and rehearsals had begun.

The unique situation at Maryville Intermediate School is that we virtually start over each year. MIS is a two-year school. It stands to reason that a great, grade 6 high school band that auditions will know their graduating seniors and the potential of a strong in-coming freshman class. In fact, most freshmen would probably not be in your typical high school top band. So, your band basically remains intact. On the Midwest application is the question “what percentage of the group we are listening to graduates from your program?” We had to answer, “100%!” Again, MIS is a two-year school of 5th and 6th graders.

While we would audition with the ‘06-‘07 6th grade class, it might be the ‘07-‘08 6th grade class that would attend and perform. The listening committee was well aware of our graduation rate from our application; we were hopeful they would nevertheless select this young band.

The conditions for audition dictate two pieces of contrasting styles along with a march from an approved composers’ list. I do not mind telling you that finding a good quality march from the approved list that sixth graders can play is not easy! We selected “Colonel Bogey” by Kenneth Alford. Our ballad was “Irish Tune” by Larry Daehn. Our feature piece was a fantastically fun composition by Dr. Gary P. Gilroy, “The Sphinx.” We

also arranged for Dr. Gilroy to fly to Maryville, Tennessee from Fresno, California to work with our group. While there, he assisted us greatly in preparing “The Sphinx” and also became acquainted with the band’s capabilities enough to compose a piece for us that we later performed at the 2007 Midwest Clinic entitled, “Three Stars of Tennessee.” Several directors visited our rehearsals to listen and make suggestions. We were able to secure many of our letters of recommendation through those directors’ visits. A number of directors, community leaders and parents were willing to help once they heard what we were attempting to do!

Over the next couple of months, the classes obviously rehearsed. We have three fifth grade classes and three sixth grade classes. The MIS wind ensemble is derived from the three sixth grade

classes. The classes meet daily for band; however, the wind ensemble only meets twice a week for an hour and a half. Occasionally, we used class time for the wind ensemble students. When we divide our class by that ability distinction, the regular band students actually relish in being "on their own." Suddenly, someone who rarely gets to be first chair is first chair with the wind ensemble students in a separate room. Those remaining sixth graders could not rely on the wind ensemble students, so they had to step

It does not have to be the same performance but must be the same music. Get close-ups of the students' embouchures, hand positions, horn positions and posture, etc. Secondly, you will need to record the conductor on each piece. So, we had each composition on the DVD twice, once showing the performers and once showing the conductor. It is understood that when you record a DVD from the back of the band in order to show the conductor, the balance of the band will not be optimal.

Well, that pretty much covers the logistics of the audition process. Be prepared for hard work and long hours. Keep those private lessons going. As directors, we would listen to great band recordings to keep our ear in good shape. We must make sure that we have great sounds in our ears and then coach and insist on that same sound from our sixth graders. As directors, we built each other up and encouraged each other and the students. We prayed a lot. We would pray not so much that we get what we want, but that we could witness to others, that... telling a student to play correctly is not somehow mean; it is just correct, that we could witness that even the youngest of students can perform well and get a great sound, and to witness that hard work pays off and keeps students on the good path! I hope this can help some directors understand the audition process. Preparation for the Midwest Clinic concert itself is another story. Good luck!

RoAnn Romines and George Hayden III are the band directors at Maryville Intermediate School in Maryville, Tennessee.



You will hear many people say, "no one is ever selected on their first audition." Do not believe it. Go for it! We were invited after our first audition, and it CAN happen!

up. The MIS wind ensemble rehearsed as a full wind ensemble twice a week for an hour and a half. In the past we would begin wind ensemble in January, knowing that we would wish to attend a spring concert festival. The Midwest audition year, however, required that we begin in November, since the audition material is due in mid-March.

In accordance with the application and the audition requirements, the concert programs from the previous three years were collected. We completed the application and included a cover letter. Included in our submission was a portrait of the wind ensemble and a picture of each director. The most important aspect of the audition process is YOUR RECORDING. We wanted only the best to record for us. Mark Recording from New York came to town to record the ensemble. Their professionalism is second to none. They were so helpful, knowledgeable and familiar with what bands do and what Midwest wants. At least three letters of recommendation are required. The board requires a DVD of the same music you recorded on the CD.

In our case we had the tripod right next to the bari-sax player! Ouch! Your letters of recommendation must go directly to the board of directors. Keep in contact with the Midwest office via phone or email to make ensure all materials arrive on time.

You will hear many people say, "no one is ever selected on their first audition." Do not believe it. Go for it! We were invited after our first audition, and it CAN happen! The listening committee will listen to your CD anonymously. Yes, you have your cover letter, application, past programs and letters of recommendation, but the only person to know what group is performing is the person putting the CD into the player. Please make sure that if you use a recording of a concert no one verbally introduces your band (thus identifying your group on the submitted CD). And, make sure that if you are performing in an auditorium that your school is not identified on the curtains, the wall or in any way. And please, do not submit a recording that took place in a gymnasium.

The Passing of the Baton— *Generation to Generation*

THE PASSING OF THE BATON

How many of us who attended the 2007 Midwest Clinic became a conductor, a performing artist, or a teacher of music because of a particular person in our lives—who was a role model for us—who inspired us and taught us in such a manner that we chose music as our vocation? I will take the liberty of providing a plausible answer to this question—nearly all of us.

Backstage in the Hilton ballrooms, I witness a camaraderie, a fellowship, an unspoken sense that “it’s all about the music”—among directors, performers, guest artists and guest conductors who are about to participate in a very exciting event. The additional message that resonates throughout these Midwest performance halls is this, “that music is a wonderful gift.”

Our students, at all levels, see and participate in our love of music and it eventually becomes theirs. To take it a step further, some of these students will choose music as a vocation and pass forward not only the skills we taught them but also those skills we inherited from our mentors. I surmise that many of these students who choose music as a vocation will respond in kind.

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

On Tuesday, in the Grand Ballroom, the Highland High School Symphonic Strings (Gilbert, Arizona) took to the stage. Their director, William Bitter, had invited Dr. Richard Strange, Director of Bands Emeritus from Arizona State University and Bitter’s mentor, to guest conduct the orchestra. Backstage, Mr. Bitter talked of his fondness and admiration for his inspiring teacher. He said, “Dr. Strange

was known as a demanding conductor who was pretty tough on the podium and in the classroom and that certainly bore itself out in my college experiences with him.

His classes were some of the most demanding I had, and I became a better teacher and musician because of him. I have had the pleasure of becoming a colleague of Doc’s over the last twenty-seven years, and he is a regular visitor to the rehearsal rooms at Highland, sharing his wealth of knowledge and musical ‘chops’ with our bands and orchestras.”

Shortly thereafter Mr. Bitter introduced his associate director, Amy Bennett. Amy was a former student of Mr. Bitter, and her husband is the high school band director at Highland High School. It was at this point that I thought how marvelous it is to have all of these interconnections among mentor, teacher and student—the passing of the baton from generation to generation.

Mr. Bitter explained, “As anyone else in my situation will tell you, when a person comes through your program, and then becomes a teacher as part of that program, the benefits are endless. Amy already knew what I expected of my students, how I think, where the priorities are in the program, etc. ... Amy’s outstanding musical skills, teacher training, ability to think outside the box, and drive to see her students succeed is why the Highland orchestra program is as successful as it is today.” Bitter added, “I am most proud that in our school district we have two high school orchestra directors and two junior high



school orchestra directors who were high school students of mine years ago. I guess if you stay in any place long enough (twenty-seven years for me), you are bound to see something like this, but I like to think that I might have had something to do with it.”

On Wednesday, in the International Ballroom, The John Hersey High School Symphonic Band performed under the direction of Scott Casagrande. Scott explained that music is in his blood. “I am very proud to be a fourth generation musician and that my daughters are the fifth generation. My great grandfather was a bugler in the Italian Army.”

Scott’s father, John Casagrande, retired from George Mason University, was a guest conductor. Scott explained, “My father remains a mentor. Over the years, his influence has changed. His model is where I started as a young teacher. Over my 19-year career, I have made more decisions based on my own personality, unique situations and life choices. He helps a lot with tough decisions these days and his help with the Midwest Clinic concert preparation was vital. After my parents, James Keene (guest conductor, Director of Bands, University of Illinois) has been my most consistent, loyal and giving mentor. His inspiration and guidance have been monumental in my professional and personal life. I talk with him regularly about every aspect of our program. Gary Smith and Harry Begian

are 'heroes' from whom I ask for guidance on a regular basis, as well." Mr. Casagrande went on to explain his decision to choose music as a vocation: "When I was in high school, I couldn't imagine anything other than a life in music. I wanted to perform initially, but as I spent more time in teaching experiences in college, I realized that I was energized by teaching. It just felt right. ...My father used to say to me, 'It doesn't matter to me and your mother what you do, just do it well.' Obviously the environment helped with my decision to become a music teacher."

Prior to Wednesday's concert, a Hersey alumnus asked to look around the performance areas. He had played at Midwest in 1971 with the Hersey Band under the direction of Mr. Donald Caneva (the first band director at Hersey High School when it opened in the fall of 1968) and was looking forward to hearing the band that afternoon with Caneva as a guest conductor. Visiting Midwest had brought back many memories to this Hersey alumnus. The gentleman's name was Andrew Carlson, a current member of the U.S. Navy Band tuba section. He commented, "I have come full circle from my high school concert here at Midwest and now my performance with the Navy Band this evening."

Donald Caneva, currently the conductor of the Coastal Communities Concert Band in San Diego, is himself representative of "generation to generation." He is the third generation conductor for the Caneva family.

Early Thursday morning, I entered the International Ballroom and was surprised to meet a long time friend, Ken Bartosz, currently the conductor of the Glenview (Illinois) Concert Band. He was in attendance to see his grandson, Greg Schwaegler, conduct the Neuqua Valley High School Chamber Symphony. Greg's

parents, Steve and Susan Schwaegler, are both music teachers in Moline, Illinois. Here again we had three generations of music educators in one family.

Mr. Schwaegler is in his second year as a music teacher at Neuqua Valley High School and he commented on the effect his heritage has had on him as a new educator. "I am proud to honor my parents and grandfather with the work I do today. It is nice that we all have an understanding of one another when we talk about the business of teaching music and working with young people. I feel that, as I begin my career, I am standing on their shoulders. ...I think it is an important point that, not only were my parents and grandfather music educators, they were very good music educators. I spent four years watching my father work in rehearsal. That's four years of exemplary music teaching. After that many hours of observation, I had a good feel for what a high school band rehearsal was supposed to be about. ...Tough days in my first year of teaching often made me ask the question, 'If I wasn't doing this, what would I do?' Nothing, however, could possibly be as fulfilling for me as a career in music. It is my outlet for creativity, my chance to be a leader, and my chance to continue to expand my knowledge of music."

Saturday morning, the finale concert of Midwest featured the Michigan State University Wind Symphony under the direction of Kevin Sedatole. Richard Crain, Midwest Clinic Vice-President, served as master of ceremonies and John Whitwell, Director of Bands Emeritus from Michigan State and a member of the Midwest Board, was a guest conductor. "Kevin Sedatole was a first trumpet player in the Spring High School Band under my direction, when we performed at the 1980 Midwest Clinic," said Crain. "We were able to perform in the Grand Ballroom, and Kevin was a

part of an antiphonal brass group that played in the balcony for our finale number."

Mr. Crain went on to explain, "The Pioneer High School Band, Ann Arbor, Michigan, John Whitwell director, also performed at this same Midwest in 1980. ...Later, John Whitwell moved to Texas, to be the director at Stephen F. Austin University. Kevin Sedatole was there for a period as assistant director. John Whitwell then moved to Michigan State University where he served for many years as the Director of Bands. Last year, Dr. Sedatole was selected as the new Director of Bands at MSU replacing John Whitwell who had just retired. So it was a great honor to have been able to serve as the master of ceremonies for the MSU Symphonic Winds concert."

FINAL THOUGHTS

Isn't it remarkable that we are all members of a vocation that we love enough to encourage and inspire our students and even family members to pursue—to pass the baton to future generations? There was a common thread among all the directors that I interviewed—the obligation to share the music with others, to honor those mentors that they revere so strongly and to "pass it forward." John Paynter, one of my role models, once said, "I can't understand why anyone wouldn't want to be a musician." We educators, through our work with students, via our words, thoughts and deeds, demonstrate that we share his viewpoint.

Dennis Montgomery is a private brass instructor, Vice Chair of the Northshore Concert Band, and Stage Manager at the Midwest Clinic.



From Freetown to Chi-Town: The Pursuit of Music and Midwest

Captain Anthony Kabba is the Director of the Army Band in Freetown, Sierra Leone. This article is adapted from a conversation that took place between Captain Kabba and Kelly Jocius during the Midwest Clinic on Thursday, December 20, 2007.

Kelly Jocius: Please tell me about Sierra Leone.

Anthony Kabba: Sierra Leone is a very small country along the coast of West Africa. It's a tropical country. We are exposed to heat throughout the year. We used to have what we call harmattan during December, when we experienced cold—but not as cold as here in Chicago! These days, we do not experience much cold because of the deforestation. Poor people go up to the hills to cut down trees to sell for firewood for cooking. So we are experiencing an even hotter climate, and we are encouraged in Sierra Leone to plant trees. We dress the same way as Americans, but only when going to work and church. We don't wear this heavy stuff, like I am wearing today.

What is the official language?

When you go to school, you are taught English as the official language. But outside of the classroom you speak a different language. In your workplace, you speak this language, called Krio, even to your boss, except when it's an official meeting. Then you speak English. The English language is used for formal occasions.

How is Sierra Leone different from other countries in Africa?

Sierra Leone is very friendly. We open our doors to strangers. That is what is most typical of us. That is also one of our problems. Because the war was first in Liberia. We hosted them when they came, and some of them were bad people, and that's how the war came into Sierra Leone.

I understand that the war was not about religion or tribal conflicts.

No. People did not want to work, but

they wanted to get rich. There are diamonds in Sierra Leone. The war was because of diamonds.

But since 2002, there's been no war?

No war. I entered the military just after the war. When you interact with a military person, they will tell you they don't want war because the military is losing friends, family, and money. You don't profit when you go to war. During the war, a lot of people ran away. My wife and my son are in Philadelphia. She filed for permission to leave in 2000. At that time, we were not yet married. We got married in December 2004 in Freetown. I should be staying with them, but I only have a Visitor's Visa and I don't want to do anything that will affect my personality or send me to prison.



How and when did you start studying music?

I was born in a Christian home. My grandfather was the organist of our church. I remember the choir singing when I was in primary school, which is the first six years of school. In secondary school, when I was thirteen, I became exposed to band music. My school was called Methodist Boys High School. They had a school band. During the assembly—the devotional hour before schoolwork began—we said our daily prayers and heard all the announcements about the day. These announcements

were accompanied by the school band, and after that we marched into our classroom while the band played. During my lunch periods, I would watch these boys practicing for the next day. It was then that I became interested in learning the cornet. When I was accepted into the band, I was given a cymbal. After some time, I said to the director, "I don't like this instrument." So I was issued a cornet. From your school days until when you are old, you play with that band. During those days, there were about forty-five people in the band.

So this becomes your band for life?

Yes. The band was like a family I grew up in.

What happened once you joined the band?

I played cornet until I left the school for tertiary education. I entered Milton Margai Teachers College (now called the Milton Margai College of Education and Technology), a four year college, in 1990. At this time, I started playing the trombone because of an embouchure problem.

After I graduated with my Higher Teachers Certificate, I taught music at secondary school from 1994-1998. After those four years, I decided to go back to college to get my degree. When I entered the college, the program had changed. It was no longer Music; they now called it Performing Arts. At the Bachelor level I studied music theory, classical formal analysis, aural training, sight singing and sight reading, and music from other countries. For example, we studied the Renaissance, the Baroque period, the Classical period, and the Modern period. We studied Balakirev and the Mighty Five. I liked the Russian composers' music!

One aspect about our music education is that we aren't exposed to our own music when it comes to notation or oral training, because our rhythm is too complicated. When we want to learn aural training, we use Western music like *<hums God Save the Queen>*. But our



own music sounds like *<hums and drums complicated rhythm>*. So it is difficult to notate such music. At times you'll be teaching some of your kids in school how to notate "God Save the Queen," and they will say, "What about our music?" For the teachers who can do this, it will take one hour just to write out a melody in the African idiom. If you cannot write out the music that they love, they will say this is "white man music," music from the West. Then you are killing the interest of the kids. It's not easy, music education in Sierra Leone. It's not easy. At times when we are going toward examination periods, they will stop all music activity.

We call our system the 6 3 3 4 system of education. Primary schooling for six years, Junior Secondary (JSS) for three years, Senior Secondary (SSS) for three years, and Tertiary for four years. In primary school, we have just singing and dancing in the curriculum, not music instruction. In JSS (ages 13-15) you start introducing music to the students, telling them about the notes, the family of instruments, and about musicians from other places. In SSS, it is very serious work; there is no music, because they say music is for fun. Then, in tertiary, you should be able to perform. Even at the tertiary level, you start teaching these grownups the names of notes. Everything that should have been learned in JSS 1, you start teaching all over again, because they might not remember.

How common is music education in JSS?

It is an elective, and only schools with music teachers offer it. I would say this is ten percent of the schools in Sierra Leone. Some of these schools are doing

something unfortunate. These headmasters and principals think anybody can teach music. They will find anybody and say, "Show them how to sing and dance." This hurts when it comes to funding our department. They think music is just entertainment and dancing. And some parents will say, "I don't want my child to become a musician. They will just spend all their money in the clubs, drinking and smoking. Musicians are not serious people." After my bachelor degree, I was thinking of moving to something else, away from music for my masters degree. I was not getting support from my department to work with my students properly.

So what would you like to change about the music education system?

There are so many things, but the main thing is funding. You may have the audience, but you are not able to do anything without the funding. If you have classical concerts that you invite people to attend, and they begin to see how the musicians are performing, they will start to reconsider. Our society is difficult because when they see brass and woodwinds, they think, "These are church instruments." When they see music notation, even if it's reggae or dance music, they assume it's church music. And they don't appreciate church music very much. If you go to Africa, and you want people to come and listen to your music, you should think of playing dance music. And jazz of course, because we have some background with jazz in Africa. If you read about us and the slave trade you see we are part of this music in the southern American states. If you say you are going to play symphonies, they are

not going to appreciate it, except for people who went to college and listened to this music.

How did you get your job with the army?

The director of music was getting old, and he retired about five years ago. The person next in line was not qualified, and after the war, when the Special Court came to Freetown, his name appeared on the list to be tried. So he fled. After I did my masters in Education Administration, where I learned how to manage a school and human resources, I got this job with the military. It was better because the military band is a state band. They play for state functions. But this too is not well funded. We need to go to the school bands to borrow instruments. After our performance we take them back to them.

So how do you rehearse?

Well that's a good question! After you play, you pass your instrument to the next person.

Do some members own their own instruments?

None.

How many members are there in the band?

The total personnel is ninety-five. We have two bands. We have the regimental band that only performs for state functions, not for any civilian functions. And the other is the dance band. The dance band will play for the public.

What kind of music does the regimental band play?

Marches. Yesterday, during the United States Navy Band concert, I saw some of the soloists stand up. In Africa, we play music that is moving. That's why we like all Western marches. If you say we're going to teach the military band to play a symphony, something with long notes, they will not appreciate it. At times when we go to places and play this music, what they will tell me is, "Captain, I'm feeling sleepy."

I'm dying to know, how did you learn about the Midwest Clinic?

There's an organization called the IMATT, International Military Advisory and Training Team. Most of the people in this

organization are Canadians. They came to Sierra Leone after the war to help the military, and they wanted to assist me in going to conferences. They were focusing on something in London, but there was nothing like this. So I went on the internet, and I saw the previous years' programs from your conference, and this was very interesting. I took this to the principal at a music academy in Freetown. She said it's an educative program. But I said, "Why do they use the word clinic?" Because for me, when I hear this word, I think of going to the hospital. She said, "Why do people go to the clinic?" I said, "Because they are sick. They need treatment." She said, "It is the same. When you are sick with your music, you go there."

The first time you tried to come to the Midwest Clinic was in 2005. What happened?

You see, many people try to leave Sierra Leone because they want to change their homes. And the embassy has gotten tired of this. So when I applied, they said "No." They were not convinced that I would come back after the conference. But when I tried again in 2006, they believed me that I would come back. My government will not sponsor me, so my wife paid my way.

So your first time attending the Midwest Clinic was in 2006. How much of the conference were you able to attend?

The conference started on December 19. I left the day before. The flight was late from Freetown to London, where I was to transfer. Before we landed at London, the pilot said "There is snow and ice. We cannot land." So we went to another place, I do not know how they call it, and we landed. Then we were put on a bus to take us to the airport, but by the time I got there, I missed the flight. So I had to wait for the next day. That flight went straight to New York. From there I went to Philadelphia, where I spent a night. And then I came here. I arrived on Friday and went to a clinic and concert on Saturday.



Did you have specific goals for the conference, and have you met any of those goals so far?

Teaching lower brass, especially with bass clef because I started playing the cornet and that is in treble clef. I'm a pianist and I can read the bass clef perfectly well. When I came to the military I was thinking that this was the same way: if I play C on the cornet as open valve and on the euphonium and baritone, they are the same fingering but when they use the bass clef, the fingerings change, and that is what surprised me. But in the school band, the fingerings do not change because in the school band we use the treble clef. So if C is open in treble, we play C for trombone and C for euphonium and baritone. It would be the same C open for cornet, the same finger position. But now in the military band, they use bass clef so the fingering and the position of the trombone all change. Because at times they would play something along or if I would want to take the instrument to teach them how to play it, I have to imagine the score written a tone higher because the scores are written at concert pitch for the lower brass, except the horns. Trombone, baritone, and tuba are written in the same key you would see for the flutes in C, the same key. So, I think of it for the cornet, and I transpose a step

higher. And therefore if I want to play something for them on the euphonium I shall transpose as I play along a step higher. So now, from the seminar yesterday, I was able to pick up something new.

Also, we just received a directive from the Ministry of Defense that the band should play for the President of Liberia. We should move the band to the airport. Most of the times when we do this, our program would just collapse. Yesterday, there was a seminar on planning and avoiding these obstacles (Organizing Your Band/Orchestra Program to Fit Your School and Your Life! By Bill Laughlin). This will help me.

I can't tell you how delighted I am to hear that the reach of the Midwest Clinic will now extend to the President of Liberia! Did anything about the conference surprise you?

Yes! In 2006, the students from Japan played like angels! It was extraordinary for me to see such children. They were wonderful. I admired them because of their tender age.

When you go back home, will you share this trip with other teachers?

We don't have a platform for us to meet. If someone were to do this and invite people from the provinces, the schools would not fund this. But I will share my experiences with my military band and with my alma mater, where I am still part of the band.

What do you think you will do next?

I would very much like to have a job teaching high school band in America.

Thank you very much. I know that music teachers in the United States will be excited to hear your story. I hope I see you at the Midwest Clinic again next year and every year!

Thank you.

This article has been shortened for this newsletter. For the complete article, please visit www.midwestclinic.org/motifs/2_08/kabba.asp.

My Freshman Year as a Midwest Board Member

In December of 2006, I received a surprise phone call from Richard Crain letting me know I was nominated to serve on the Midwest Clinic Board of Directors. Of course, I was honored beyond belief but asked for a little time to process this incredible growth opportunity. The first set of questions was for Richard Crain: "How often will we meet and when? What will my responsibilities be? I've spent the bulk of my career teaching elementary and middle school band, why me?" The next set of questions was for me: "Can I add one more commitment to my plate? Can my wonderfully supportive husband manage the schedules of my three teenage daughters while I am away four times a year? Will my school district release me for a week before winter break? Can I find a qualified sub for my students?" My quick answers were yes, yes (but it might cost me), yes and no (they're all at Midwest).

In 1985, John Paynter asked me to serve on one Midwest committee in an "ex officio" capacity, reviewing concert programs submitted. One of this committee's charges is making certain the groups play quality literature and follow the Midwest rules of timing, publication dates and grade level percentages. I thoroughly enjoyed this yearly meeting and getting acquainted with many of the current Midwest Board Members. My colleagues on the board teased me that it only took me 22 years to become a full member! They immediately welcomed me into this family atmosphere and treated me as a valued member.

Having this committee experience, being an attendee for 30 years as a public school teacher, performing at Midwest multiple times with the Northshore Concert Band and being a clinician myself, I felt ready for the challenge. By the end of this first year, I now stand amazed by how much I DID NOT know about what it takes to put on the Midwest Clinic!

A truncated list of my learning curve follows:

- 1) The fact that every board member and the talented administrative staff believe strongly in the Midwest philosophy that promotes the pragmatic and educational nature of this clinic. Every decision is made with this philosophy in mind. The board also spent a large amount of time looking forward into a long range plan ensuring the future growth and success of the conference.
- 2) I felt good about the anonymous nature of the group selection process. CD's are numbered, the committee listens and takes notes, discussion ensues, groups are selected AND THEN we learn the names of the schools and their directors.
- 3) How EVERY board member, regardless of their teaching background, is committed to the importance of performing quality literature at grades 1-3 as well as advanced pieces. The largest percentage of band and orchestra directors that attend Midwest teach at the elementary and middle school levels.
- 4) Observing the shell of the Hilton before the official move in was pretty shocking. Seeing the ballrooms without stages and chairs is one thing, seeing the cavern of a basement in the Hilton and watching the Freeman decorating crew transform the space into an exhibit area was another story. Walking through an empty Hilton lobby on Sunday was an eerie experience; I missed all of my buddies!
- 5) I was amazed by the constant juggling done by our staff. One of the bigger challenges seems to be trying to put together a schedule with all the space constraints only to have to start over when last minute decisions are made by neighboring hotels to remodel clinic/performance rooms in December! The level of detail attended to by these three throughout the year was mind boggling.
- 6) How gratifying it was to spend a year as a liaison advising a group that

would perform at Midwest! Knowing everything that goes into that experience and then getting to be an observer backstage watching the faces of those students and their directors is something that is still with me. Their energy and joy were palpable.

- 7) Attending more concerts and clinics than ever before, I was struck by the quality of the performances and expertise of the clinicians that this conference draws.
- 8) The dedication of a large staff of area teachers as well as the "blue vest" VanderCook, Northwestern, and University of Illinois students was also impressive. They spend their week moving equipment, setting stages in short turn around time, managing the performance and clinic sites and in general, making everyone else look good.
- 9) I enjoyed an opportunity to meet with exhibitors and learn more about the music industry. The theme that recurred was, "This clinic produces the best traffic of any other conference we attend; both from a quality and quantity standpoint of attendees."
- 10) I spent a chunk of time in the Teacher Resource Center and the Business Center, places I had just breezed by in the past. Like most of us, my time was always limited at Midwest. I left thinking, is there anything this clinic doesn't do for attendees?

As I drove home late Saturday afternoon after our final board meeting, I reflected on how lucky I am to have chosen this fulfilling career. It is one that attracts quality students and colleagues of outstanding character.

Nancy Golden is a Band Director in School District 181 in Clarendon Hills and Hinsdale, Illinois.



Music, Midwest, and So Much More

Like many of you, I anxiously await December to travel to the Midwest Clinic to be re-energized, recharged, and enlightened. The experience of attending its fabulous clinics, concerts, and exhibits serves as a culmination of what has been a long and productive semester for me each year. I know when the last release of our Holiday Concert reverberates through our Performing Arts Center it is only a short time until once again I will see familiar faces at our staff meeting and I will be in the throes of the whirlwind that becomes the Midwest experience for me.

It seemed that this year would be much like so many others. Band camp had begun and I was deeply involved in making sure the more than 300 students in our band program were outfitted with Drillmasters, ponchos, lyres, and all the other necessities that are needed for marching band. On August 7, I received the email from Kelly Jocius inviting me to serve once again on the Midwest conference staff. I looked over our first semester schedule and contemplated all that would transpire from that moment until our staff meeting: six home football games, possible playoffs, annual fundraisers, chamber music recital, Holiday Concert... so many things on the calendar. Midwest would mean a great deal has been accomplished and the holiday season with its much needed time away from school has arrived.

I quickly responded back to Kelly that I would be delighted to serve on the staff not knowing that the road to Midwest would be much different this year than in the past. For this year, while taking care of what are usually routine doctor's visits and annual testing, I learned I would face a new challenge. Following a mammogram and biopsy in late October, I would receive a call that

would stop me in my tracks. On November 1, I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Over the weekend, I contacted select members of the Northshore Band clarinet section as well as our conductor, Dr. Mallory Thompson. I serve as the section leader/principal clarinet of the Northshore Band. We had a concert coming up the very next weekend. I was unsure if I would be in the emotional/mental state to play our upcoming concert. We would be playing Grantham's "Southern Harmony" as one of our selections. I was to play the second movement's opening solo. I have done this solo on several other occasions but was unsure under the current situation if I could pull this off. I am from the South - North Carolina to be exact. This shaped note tune was a favorite of mine and reminded me of the type of singing so prevalent in the small churches of the South. I had to make sure that this part of the concert was covered in case I was not up to the task. I emailed my stand partner, Alan Dubois, to make sure he was ready to cover the solo just in case. All those I contacted were ready to cover whatever I needed but did not feel they would need to do this for me. I knew this concert would be incredibly challenging for me to play. It was so close to the diagnosis and my mind was a jumble.

On Wednesday, November 7th my husband and I had an appointment with Dr. Goldish, a surgeon specializing in breast surgery. Dr. Goldish explained what she was looking at and what would need to transpire in the next few weeks. I asked her three important questions that only a band director would ask. Will I be able to conduct my Holiday Concert? Will I be able to play clarinet for an upcoming church service? And will I be able to attend the Midwest

Clinic? I knew I had the right doctor when she said "Why wouldn't you do any of those things?"

Following this doctor's visit, I traveled to Northwestern to play the dress rehearsal for the Northshore Band concert. I quickly went in to take my place on Pick-Staiger's stage to see if I could get my head into playing. My stand partner, Alan, came in to see how I was doing. I asked to go over the "Southern Harmony" solo section. It went well. It would be difficult but—I decided—not only could I do this solo, I needed to do this solo. That was a difficult rehearsal but it prepared me for the concert on Sunday. That concert was wonderful and the solo on "Southern Harmony" went well. I was able to play well and attended the reception following the concert where I spent some time talking with Larry Combs, our guest soloist.

Surgery was scheduled for November 16. Then the results of my breast MRI showed yet another suspicious area in another place on my chest. Dr. Goldish called to let me know that I needed to come in for an ultrasound and biopsy of this area. So instead of surgery, I was back to see the surgeon for more tests. Now I was very concerned that the surgery date was coming much too close to our Holiday Concert and the other events that I so wanted to be able to do.

The next Monday the results were in. The biopsy taken was negative for cancer but several radiologists felt that the image on the MRI was not accessed by the biopsy. I would need another MRI with an additional biopsy. The next MRI would last approximately 2 hours. I found it took every bit of concentration I could muster to remain calm. Several years ago I took Alexander technique lessons to prepare for a solo I had to

perform. These lessons proved important in the focus I needed to go through this test. An MRI guided biopsy could not be performed as the area which needed the biopsy was unreachable by this method. This would mean even more delay. I returned home now sure that my concert, the church performance, and Midwest were in jeopardy for me. My spirits were low. My husband and I talked. A biopsy of this new area was

I conducted our Holiday Concert and I can tell you the ovation I received from our parents and students that day as I took the stage was awesome. An ovation for just showing up—that's pretty sweet! I guess some of the parents thought I was just coming out on stage to let everyone see I was fine. When I went to the podium to conduct many were floored. This felt great! The kids played well. It was a very special concert.

the news of being cancer free and completing the three requests I made of my surgeon. Being at Midwest was thrilling. The music never sounded so sweet. It was exciting to be able to be there and experience all that it had to offer. I was recharged and revitalized. I was able to see friends and former students who are now directors and performers themselves. One of them, Jamie Lipton, always drops by the Boulevard Room to see me. I asked her if she knew about the cancer. Jamie indicated that she knew all about it from other former students but knew that I would be at Midwest. "Midwest has always been important to you," she said, "so I knew you'd be here."

Cancer had not stopped me from being me. I briefly explained and he gave me a big hug and thanked me for allowing him to be a part of that special moment.

needed. I could have it done before surgery or I could have it done as a part of the known surgery knowing that if it contained cancer additional surgery would be needed. We decided to have the biopsy done at the time of the lumpectomy. If additional surgery was needed that would be done at a different time. So the date was set, December 3.

I arrived at the hospital early in the morning. It took several hours to complete the presurgical testing. Soon the cancer would be removed and I would know exactly what was ahead. Surgery went well. I woke up in a noisy recovery room and was asked what type of music I would like. "Mozart," I said. I was given a CD player and headphones. I smiled at the familiar strains of the Mozart clarinet concerto. There could have been nothing better for me to listen to than this. When did I first learn this melody? I remember I was a sophomore in high school preparing for the All-State band audition. I've probably played it every year since then.

My husband met me in a second recovery room. He told me the best news yet. The cancer was completely removed with wide margins and my lymph nodes were clean.

The very next week I played a special service for the Holidays at the Village Church in Barrington. This was more like the normal pre-cancer me. It felt good to play my instrument and make music. My second request had been fulfilled.

On Sunday, December 16, just thirteen days after surgery, I checked into my room at the Hilton to begin my work as a staff member at the Midwest Clinic. I had told Kelly Jocius about my trials to make it to Midwest. He had replied that they looked forward to seeing me and would do everything to make the week possible for me. I didn't expect anything special during the week just the opportunity to be there. The staff, as a whole, was not aware of my road to Midwest. When I checked into my room, the bellman didn't know what all the tears were about. It seemed that making it through that door meant that my final request had come true. Cancer had not stopped me from being me. I briefly explained and he gave me a big hug and thanked me for allowing him to be a part of that special moment.

The staff meeting that evening was much like many in the past. We went over the week's schedule and shared small gifts for the holidays. I had received my most important gifts for the holiday season:

This year's Midwest was the year of the mentor. I had intended to write a tribute to my mentor Barb Buehlman. Barb hired me to work with her in Round Lake, Illinois when I graduated from Northwestern. Over the years, Barb and I became good friends. I admired her for her skill as a teacher, arranger, organizer, and musician. She taught me more about strength of character than anyone I've ever known. I've been told over and over since I began my treatments for cancer how strong I am. Barb Buehlman, my mentor, showed me on a daily basis what strength of character is all about. When Kelly told me Barb would be proud of how I handled this, it made me smile.

This article has been shortened for this newsletter. For the complete article, please visit www.midwestclinic.org/motifs/2_08/durham.asp

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The Survey Says

More than 1,000 attendees of the 2007 Midwest Clinic submitted surveys, sharing their impressions of the conference and ideas for the future. Here are some survey suggestions that we will be exploring in 2008:

- Make clinic handouts available via the website prior to the conference.
- Create Performer Capsules similar to Clinic and Exhibitor Capsules.
- Increase the number of clinics held twice during the week.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to submit the survey! If you have not yet done so, it is not too late for your ideas to make a difference this year. Please visit www.midwestclinic.org survey and tell us what you think.

Apply to Perform or Present a Clinic.

**Applications are due
March 19.**

Performance Application

www.midwestclinic.org/pdfs/performance_application.pdf

Performance Application FAQs

www.midwestclinic.org/performance_faqs

Performance Application Recording Tips

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