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SYMPORIUM PREVIEW ISSUE





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Editor's Note:



As 2026 begins I reflect on how wonderful it was to connect, learn, and be inspired by the NYSBDA membership at the Winter Conference. From top notch performance sessions to inspiring and helpful clinics, I always leave the conference renewed with fresh ideas to put into use in the band room. I am confident that the upcoming NYSBDA Symposium will be packed with many highlights including a world premiere and key note with Randall Standridge, interview and conducting clinic with Living Legend Gary Hill, and phenomenal performances by the three honor bands. Perhaps equally as inspiring are the conversations to be had over lunch, between a session, or after a concert hour. Collaborating and learning from the many amazing teachers in our organization is a highlight and I always leave the Symposium weekend with a much needed March reset, ready to tackle whatever Music in Our Schools Month has to offer!

Hope to see you at the Symposium!

Jennifer Pham
Bandstand Editor
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From the Podium

By Jackie Kovacs, NYSBDA President



Happy 2026! I am writing this “From the Podium” the week of winter concerts, All-County auditions, student teacher final evaluations, fruit sale delivery and I’m beginning to see the calendar get closer to a well deserved break. By the time people read this article, we’ll be back working with our students in the new year, feeling refreshed and energetic about what awaits us in 2026.

The new year brings many exciting happenings for NYSBDA. The March Symposium is scheduled for March 6-8, 2026 in East Syracuse at the DoubleTree. The Honor Bands have been selected and are working on preparing music for this great experience. The Honor Bands will be conducted by renowned conductors. High School Honor Band, Dr. Jennifer Jolly, Middle School Honor Band, Dr. James Patrick Miller and Jazz Band, Andy Clausen. Read up about them in the honor band section of this Bandstand. [Register Here for the Symposium.](#)

In addition to the excitement of the honor bands, through the hard work of our commission chair Bradley Morrison, NYSBDA will be premiering the commissioned piece by Randall Standridge with the 2026 HS Honor Band. Standridge will also be the Keynote Speaker at the symposium! The Living Legend is Gary Hill, Professor of Music and Director of Bands Emeritus at Arizona State University. Gary Hill will also host the conducting workshop. Check out the symposium preview for information to apply to be a conductor. We’ll need a band for the conductors, so please bring your instruments and join in.

Also, mark your calendars for the Conn Selmer Institute Northeast, August 11-13, 2026 in Ithaca, NY. NYSBDA continues its collaboration with Conn Selmer and Ithaca College to offer the highest standard of professional development. [Registration is open!](#)

Why NYSBDA? NYSBDA was established to provide professional enrichment and networking, with a goal of “helping band directors be better educators.” This is the vision the founding members had when they conceived the idea of NYSBDA. This year we lost one of our founding members, Edward Lisk. His vision and passion for music helped shape music education. As I often say to my students, “those that came before us have set the standard. It is now our responsibility to build upon their foundation.” NYSBDA continues to foster a community of band directors, focused on learning by exchanging ideas and methods. NYSBDA strives to maintain the foundation established at its inception, while addressing the ever changing needs of our discipline. Through it all, NYSBDA has grown into a community of educators that have joined the journey.

Jackie Kovacs
NYSBDA President
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Symposium 2026 Preview

By Corey Riley, NYSBDA 1st Vice President



This year we gather for the 2026 NYSBDA Symposium to honor legacy and amplify artistry. We recognize the profound impact of past generations while tirelessly working to inspire the next in our classrooms and ensembles. The 2026 NYSBDA Symposium theme will celebrate this enduring commitment and the vital artistry we nurture. Join NYSBDA at the DoubleTree Carrier Circle, Syracuse, New York **March 7-9, 2026** for the Symposium and Honor Bands and Jazz Band Concerts, where sessions will focus on connecting our rich heritage with innovative practice in your classrooms.

Brian Carucci, clinician, will share his expertise to equip directors with the fundamental building blocks of running a successful jazz ensemble in his clinic, ***Jazz Band Basics***. This clinic will cover essential repertoire, stylistic concepts, and rehearsal strategies to get your jazz program off the ground or take it to the next level.

The clinic, ***The Warm-Up Web: Connecting Concepts & Creating Community***, with Jennifer Greene, will explore innovative ways to make your daily warm-ups a holistic experience. Participants will learn techniques to intentionally connect musical and technical concepts while simultaneously

fostering a strong sense of community and belonging within their ensemble.

A.I. for the Band Director: Automate the Admin, Amplify the Artistry, Greg Clark, will help directors harness the power of artificial intelligence to streamline their administrative tasks. This session will provide practical tips and resources for leveraging A.I. to save time on planning, grading, and communication, allowing directors more time to focus on the art of music-making and their students.

In ***Modern Band: Hands On***, Dr. Tom Zlabinger and Kevin Heathwood, clinicians, will guide participants through the process of incorporating contemporary musical styles and instruments into their programs. This interactive session will provide practical, ready-to-use techniques for starting or expanding a modern band, ensuring music remains accessible and relevant to all students.

In our repair clinic of the symposium, Samson Flancbaum presents ***Concert Night Emergencies: A Band Director's Tool Kit***. This session will demystify the most common and intimidating emergency repairs. Attendees will learn essential, practical fixes and the minimal tools needed to prevent a last-minute concert crisis, empowering directors to handle unexpected instrument issues with confidence.

Saturday will feature the clinic, ***Tips and Tricks for Teaching Beginning Flute / Flute Embouchure***, with clinician Michelle Crawford. This session will provide brass and woodwind directors alike with proven strategies for establishing a beautiful and consistent flute tone from the very first lesson. Participants will learn specific tips for addressing common embouchure and sound production challenges in beginning flute players.

Symposium Preview

Continued

Blueprints for Spontaneity: Teaching Jazz Improvisation in the Large Ensemble, with John Jeanneret, will offer directors practical frameworks for weaving improvisation into their existing large ensemble jazz rehearsals. Learn techniques to make jazz improvisation accessible and fun, transforming your students from readers into creators.

In *The Long and Winding Road*, Gary Hill, clinician, will share insights and reflections on the career of a music educator. This clinic is designed to inspire teachers at all stages of their journey, offering wisdom on navigating the challenges and celebrating the profound rewards of a life dedicated to music education.

We invite you to a special panel discussion honoring the legacy of **Ed Lisk**, a prominent figure in New York music education, beloved mentor, and charter member of NYSBDA. This moving session will explore the profound and lasting impact Mr. Lisk had on music education across our state, celebrate his dedication as an incredible mentor to countless band directors, and recognize his pivotal influence as one of the founding members of NYSBDA. Don't miss this opportunity to experience a special event reflecting on the life and career of a true legend in our community on **Saturday at 10:30 AM**.

The evenings will be filled with music starting Friday evening with the *Camillus Community Jazz Band*, under the direction of Steve Frank. This ensemble, composed of talented local musicians, will kick off the symposium with a concert of dynamic and engaging big-band repertoire.

The NYSBDA Middle School, High School and Jazz Honor Bands will work with their guest conductors throughout the symposium. The student musicians will participate in their rehearsal sessions, attend the evening concerts, learn about each other during meals and an evening ice cream social! The Middle School Honor Band, under the direction of **Dr. James Patrick Miller**, will perform on Saturday at 4:30p.m. The High School Honor Band, **Mr. Steven Wilson**, Director, will perform on Sunday at noon, followed by the High School Honor Band, under the direction of **Dr. Jennifer Jolley**, at 1:00 p.m. The Honor Bands will also attend leadership workshops with presenter **Ms. Erin Althen** on Saturday morning and afternoon.

We are very excited to welcome **Mr. Randall Standridge**, an acclaimed composer, educator, and marching arts designer, as our 2026 Conference Keynote Speaker. His compositions are performed internationally, with celebrated works like *Snake Charmer* and *Angelic Celebrations* featured in the prestigious "Teaching Music Through Performance in Band" series. Mr. Standridge is a leading voice in music education and is also composing a brand-new piece to be premiered by the 2026 NYSBDA High School Honor Band! Join us for his keynote address on Saturday at 2:00 p.m. and prepare to be inspired by one of the most exciting figures in contemporary band music.

Symposium Preview

Continued

NYSBDA is also extremely honored to host our **2026 Interview with a Legend, Gary Hill**. A conducting clinic with a directors reading band will be hosted on Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. with Gary Hill. Following the conducting clinic, Dr. Andrew Pease, NYSBDA President, will host an interview with our featured Legend, also with Gary Hill. All are invited to attend as our Legend shares about their life and career in music. Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity.

Registration for the 2026 NYSBDA Symposium can be found in the events tab of your NYSBDA Da Capo Account, www.nysbdamembers.org. Mark your calendars to join the NYSBDA community on March 7-9, 2026!

NYSBDA strives to provide exceptional professional development opportunities for band directors across the state of New York and enriching experiences for their students. Your participation in our Symposium and membership in our organization helps us to continue and grow those efforts. We deeply appreciate your membership and engagement.

Corey Riley,

NYSBDA President Elect, presidentelect@nysbda.org

2026 Symposium Schedule

The Power of Music

Double Tree Carrier Circle, Syracuse, New York

Friday, March 7, 2026

| | |
|------------------|--|
| 9:30 a.m. | Registration OPENS |
| 10:30-11:30 a.m. | Clinic Session- Jazz Band Basics, <i>Brian Carucci Clinician</i> |
| 12:00-5:00 p.m. | NYSSMA Manual on Display |
| 12:00-1:00 p.m. | Clinic Session- The Warm-Up Web: Connecting Concepts & Creating Community, <i>Jennifer Greene Clinician</i> |
| 1:15 -2:15 p.m. | Clinic Session- Modern Band: Hands On, <i>Dr. Tom Zlabinger and Kevin Heathwood, Clinicians</i> |
| 2:30-3:30 p.m. | Clinic Session- A.I. for the Band Director: Automate the Admin, Amplify the Artistry, <i>Greg Clark Clinician</i> |
| 3:45-4:45 p.m. | Clinic Session- Elementary Band Shenanigans That Work, <i>Melissa Cannan, Clinician</i> |
| 5:00-6:00 p.m. | Clinic Session- Concert Night Emergencies: A Band Director's Tool Kit, <i>Samson Flancbaum, Clinician</i> |
| 6:00p.m. | Dinner Break |
| 6:00-8:00 p.m. | Executive Board Dinner |
| 8:00 p.m. | Concert Hour- The Camillus Community Jazz Band, <i>Steve Frank Director</i> |

2026 Symposium Schedule

The Power of Music

Double Tree Carrier Circle, Syracuse, New York

Saturday, March 8, 2026

| | |
|------------------|---|
| 7:30 a.m. | Registration- Lobby |
| 8:00-5:00 p.m | NYSSMA Manual on Display |
| 8:00- 9:00 a.m. | Clinic Session- Tips and Tricks for Teaching Beginning Flute / Flute Emboucure, <i>Michelle Crawford Clinician</i> |
| 8:00- 9:00 a.m. | HS Students Leadership Session - <i>Erin Althen</i> |
| 9:15- 10:15 a.m | Clinic Session- Blueprints for Spontaneity: Teaching Jazz Improvisation in the Large Ensemble, <i>John Jeanneret Clinician</i> |
| 10:30-11:30 a.m. | Panel Session- ED Lisk Remembered, Various Clinicians |
| 11:30-12:30 p.m. | LUNCH BREAK |
| 12:30-1:30 p.m. | Clinic Session- |
| 1:35-1:50 p.m. | NYSBDA General Membership Meeting |
| 2:00-3:00 p.m. | Conference Keynote Speaker- TBD, <i>Randall Standridge</i> |
| 2:30-3:30 p.m. | MS Students Leadership Session - <i>Erin Althen</i> |
| 3:15-4:15 p.m. | Clinic Session- The Long and Winding Road, <i>Gary Hill Clinician</i> |
| 4:30-5:30 p.m. | Middle School Honor Band Concert - <i>Dr. James Patrick Miller</i> |
| 5:30-6:30 p.m. | C-NYSBDA - TBD, <i>C-NYSBDA Executive Board</i> |
| 8:00 p.m. | Concert Hour - TBD |

Sunday, March 9, 2026

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| 9:00-10:15 a.m. | Conducting Clinic with Directors Reading Band, <i>Gary Hill</i> |
| 10:30-11:45 a.m | Interview with a Legend, <i>Dr. Andrew Pease, Gary Hill</i> |
| 12:00 p.m. | High School Honor Jazz Band Concert - <i>Mr. Steven Wilson</i> |
| 1:00 p.m. | High School Honor Band Concert - <i>Dr. Jennifer Jolley</i> |

Who's Who?

Panelists and Clinicians at the 2026 Symposium

The Long and Winding Road: Honoring Legacy, Amplifying Artistry

March 6-8, 2026

Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Syracuse
6301 NY-298, East Syracuse, NY, 13057

NYSBDA is excited to announce our 2026 Keynote speaker, Mr. Randall Standridge, composer, educator, and marching arts designer! Mr. Standridge has also composed a piece to be premiered by the 2026 NYSBDA High School Honor Band. The 2026 Living Legend is Gary Hill, professor of music and Director of Bands Emeritus at Arizona State University, will host the conducting clinic and have the Interview with the Legend with Dr. Andrew Pease. Our evening concerts will feature Steve Frank and the Camillus Community Jazz Band on Friday. We are currently still looking for an ensemble to perform Saturday evening.

Living Legend 2026- Gary Hill



Gary W. Hill — Gary W. Hill is Professor of Music and Director of Bands Emeritus at Arizona State University, where he taught from 1999-2019. Prior to Hill's appointment at ASU, he was Director of Bands at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music (1986-99), at East Texas State University (now Texas A&M-Commerce, 1982-86) and Associate Director of Bands at the University of Colorado, Boulder (1980-82). He also served as Music Director for the Kansas City Youth Wind Ensemble and for newEar, a chamber ensemble devoted to contemporary music. Hill began his teaching career in Michigan, where he was Director of Bands for the Traverse City (1977-80) and West Bloomfield (1974-77) public schools.

Who's Who?

Continued

High school, university, and professional ensembles under Hill's direction have given performances for the National Band Association, the Music Educators National Conference (NAfME), the College Band Directors National Association, the American Bandmasters Association, the International Horn Symposium, the National Flute Association, at many state conventions, and throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. Performances conducted by him have consistently drawn praise from composers, performing musicians, and critics alike for their insightful, inspired, and cohesive realizations, and for their imaginative programming.

During Professor Hill's 39 years as a collegiate conducting teacher, he taught scores of undergraduate and graduate conducting students and served as the primary mentor for 53 wind band conducting majors, 8 who are serving as conductors of US Armed Forces' ensembles and other professional groups, and 42 who won university teaching positions.

Gary W. Hill is one of the most sought after guest conductors and clinicians in the instrumental music education field. As a conductor, appearances in more than a dozen countries and throughout the United States have included performances with myriad high school honor bands, numerous college and university wind bands and orchestras, many professional ensembles, at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic, and at World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles' conferences. As a clinician, Hill has presented hundreds of workshops on conducting and rehearsal technique for music teachers of all levels and has worked with thousands of bands and orchestras and their teachers. Professor Hill is currently a Conn-Selmer Educational Clinician.

Hill remains passionately involved with research concerning the exploration of biochemical reactions spawned by the musical process, the art and craft of conducting, and the past, present, and future of instrumental music in schools. He is the author or co-author of numerous articles published in music trade journals (CBDNA Journal, WASBE Journal, Bands of America, National Association of Schools of Music, AMEA Journal, etc.) and in scientific journals, proceedings, and books, including: the Acoustical Society of America; The Oxford Handbook of Making Music and Leisure; and in the Journal Hormones and Behavior.

Professor Hill is a member of many professional organizations, including the American Bandmasters Association and the College Band Directors National Association, for which he hosted the "Fiftieth Anniversary National Conference" (1991), co-hosted the 2019 biennial national conference, as well as the joint conferences of the North Central and Southwestern Divisions in conjunction with The Society for American Music (1998), served as president of the Southwestern Division (1989-91), and as national president (2003-05).

Who's Who?

Continued

KEYNOTE SPEAKER AND CLINICIAN-

Mr. Randall Standridge

Randall Standridge (b.1976) received his Bachelor's of Music Education from Arkansas State University. During this time, he studied composition with Dr. Tom O'Connor, before returning to Arkansas State University to earn his Master's in Music Composition, studying with Dr. Tom O'Connor and Dr. Tim Crist. In 2001, he began his tenure as Director of Bands at Harrisburg High School in Harrisburg, Arkansas. He left this post in 2013 to pursue a career as a full-time composer and marching arts designer.



Mr. Standridge is currently published by Grand Mesa Music, Alfred Music, FJH Music, Wingert-Jones Music, BandWorks Publications, Twin Towers Music, and Northeastern Music Publications. Mr. Standridge's music is performed internationally. He has had numerous works selected to the J.W. Pepper's editor's choice. His compositions Snake Charmer, Gently Blows the Summer Wind, and Angelic Celebrations have been included in the "Teaching Music Through Performance in Band" series. He has had numerous works performed at the prestigious Midwest Clinic in Chicago, Illinois. His work Art(isms) was premiered by the Arkansas State University Wind Ensemble at the 2010 CBDNA conference in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and his work Stonewall: 1969 was premiered at the National LGBA conference in 2019. Mr. Standridge is a contributing composer for Alfred Music's Sound Innovations: Ensemble Development series.

In addition to his career as a composer, Mr. Standridge is the owner and editor for Randall Standridge Music, LLC and Grand Mesa Marching. He is in demand as a drill designer, music arranger, and colorguard designer for the marching arts, as well as a freelance artist/photographer and writer. He lives in Jonesboro, Arkansas with his family.

Who's Who?

Continued

Erin Althen is a music educator, mentor, leader, and advocate whose life's work centers on empowering students to discover their most fulfilled, authentic, and light-filled selves through the transformative power of music. Now in her 23rd year with the Westhill Central School District in Syracuse, New York, she serves as Director of Bands and Chair of the Fine Arts Department at Westhill High School, where she conducts the Wind Ensemble, Musical Pit Orchestra, and Pep Band; advises the Tri-M Music Honor Society and Westhill Musical Leadership Academy; teaches lessons; and coaches chamber music ensembles.

Beyond her work in the classroom, Ms. Althen is the founder and co-conductor of the Syracuse Youth Wind Symphony, co-founder of the Central New York Music Teacher Mentoring Program, and co-author of The Sight Reading Book, a 21-volume series aligned with state-specific standards. As a clinician and guest conductor, she leads honor ensembles and presents professional development workshops for music educators at the county, state, and national levels. An accomplished flutist and piccoloist, she maintains a private studio and has performed on world-renowned stages with exceptional music educator wind ensembles and orchestras.

Ms. Althen's contributions to the field have been recognized with numerous accolades, including the Outstanding Band Director Award from the New York State Band Directors Association, the Music Teachers of Excellence Award from the Country Music Association Foundation, the National Federation of High Schools Outstanding Music Educator Award, and selection as a Semifinalist for the 2025 and 2026 GRAMMY Music Educator Award. Ms. Althen earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from Syracuse University and resides in Central New York with her husband, Corey; daughters, Isabella and Fiona; horse, Louie; and rescue cats: Callie, Clover, Josie, Caspian, and Frankie.



Melissa Cannan has been teaching elementary band for 32 years. She currently teaches fourth and fifth grade band in the Liverpool Central School District, at Soule Road and Liverpool Elementary schools. She is a graduate of Ithaca College and holds degrees in education and performance. She plays euphonium in the Eastman Community Music School Music Educators' Wind Ensemble and enjoys playing trombone as well. She was recently appointed as the NYSSMA All-State Band Chair. She was honored to be named the Liverpool Central School District Teacher of the Year for 2024-25. She lives in Clifton Springs with her husband Scott and her sons Matthew and Brian.

Who's Who?

Michael Struzik is a 1988 graduate of the Crane School of Music, SUNY Potsdam. As of June, 2021, he is a retired music teacher from the Brighton School District near Rochester. His responsibilities at Brighton included directing the Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, and Jazz Band, as well as teaching brass and percussion lessons to students in grades nine through twelve. He taught music theory and advanced placement music theory. In addition, he directed the pit orchestra for the annual spring musical. Mr. Struzik also served as a music facilitator for the district.

Mr. Struzik has conducted All-County and honor band festivals in several counties in New York State as well as the state of Virginia. He is a past recipient of the University of Rochester's Excellence in Secondary Education Award. He is also the 2011 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from the New York State Band Directors Association. In 2019, he received the Helen Hosmer Excellence in Teaching Award from the Crane School of Music. In 2020, he received the Excellence in Music Education Award from the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. Mr. Struzik is an All- State certified adjudicator, and is also an adjudicator for major organization festivals. Since 2017, he has served NYSSMA as the Adjudication Festival Committee band chair.



During the summer, he teaches at Crane Youth Music in Potsdam, New York. Mr. Struzik is a free-lance musician in the Rochester area, and performs regularly with the Orchestra of Northern New York, Northern Symphonic Winds, and the Penfield Symphony Orchestra. He is a member of NYSSMA, NAFME, the International Trombone Association and has served on the executive board of the New York State Band Directors Association in a variety of positions, currently as their Executive Director. He is also a Past-President of the Monroe County School Music Association. He is currently enjoying his current position as the student teaching facilitator for the Rochester and Buffalo areas for the Crane School of Music.

Mr. Struzik lives in Webster, New York with his wife Katie and enjoys spending time with his two grown sons Christopher 29, and Matthew 25, and their new grandson Charlie!

Brian Carucci is a music teacher at Shenendehowa High School where he teaches Wind Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, instrumental lessons, and serves as the pit orchestra director for the high school musical. He coordinates the annual Shenendehowa Jazz Festival and Invitational, bringing world-class artists to work with Shenendehowa students and students from across the Capital Region.

An All-State woodwind and jazz adjudicator for the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA), Carucci is set to begin his term as Chairperson for the All-State Jazz Ensemble. He is the Director of the prestigious Skidmore Jazz Institute and maintains an active private woodwind studio in Rexford, New York.



Carucci's previous roles include Assistant Conductor for the NYSSSA School of Orchestral Studies and adjunct clarinet instructor at Schenectady County Community College. As a performer, he has appeared with Albany Pro Musica, Northern Symphonic Winds, Capital Region Wind Ensemble, Schenectady Light Opera Company, and the Glens Falls Symphony.

Who's Who?

Continued

Gregory Clark teaches at Guilderland High School, where he directs the Symphonic Band and teaches Music Technology. He holds an Advanced Graduate Certificate in Music Learning Theory from the University at Buffalo, a Master of Music in Music Education from the Crane School of Music (SUNY Potsdam), and a Bachelor of Science in Music Education from The College of Saint Rose.

Mr. Clark's teaching career spans the elementary, secondary, and undergraduate levels. He has helped expand the vibrant music program at GHS by establishing the Stage Band and JEN Chapter. Prior to Guilderland, he taught in the Whitesboro CSD, the Utica Academy of Science Charter School, and the Town of Webb UFSD. He has presented professional development clinics including, "Trombone as your Secondary Instrument", "Unlocking Creativity in Beginning Band", "Composition for Instrumentalists", and "A.I. in the Music Classroom", as well as topics related to music notation software and Music Learning Theory.



In addition to his teaching, Mr. Clark is an active adjudicator, guest conductor, composer, arranger, and performer. He serves on the NY-GIML Board and has previously held leadership roles in other music education organizations. His favorite music is whatever his daughters, Penelope and Zayda, are singing on any given day. He is a proud graduate of Vernon-Verona-Sherrill schools, and is thrilled to stay involved with NYSBDA after being an Honor Band member as a middle school and high school student.



Michelle Crawford is a dedicated music educator and flutist with over 33 years of teaching experience. A 1993 graduate of the Fredonia School of Music, she holds a degree in Music Education and studied flute under Dr. Susan Royal. She is currently in her 33rd year teaching 4th and 5th grade instrumental music at Homer Central Schools, where she leads a thriving program of nearly 170 young musicians.

Michelle is an active NYSSMA woodwind adjudicator. She loves sharing her passion for beginning instrumental music. In 2020, she was honored as the CNY Arts Educator of the Year. She is proud to have had eight of her students this past summer selected for the 2025 inaugural Elementary NYSBDA All-State Honor Band. In addition to her school program, Michelle maintains a private woodwind studio at her home in Tully, and has guest conducted several elementary All-County ensembles.

Beyond her teaching, Michelle is deeply involved in the arts and education community. She is a certified FTC FIRST Robotics Judge as well as a certified FIRST LEGO League Judge. She regularly ushers with her husband, Greg, at the Skaneateles Festival and the Landmark Theatre. The couple resides in Tully and are the proud parents of five adult children and grandparents to two little ones.

In her free time, Michelle enjoys spending time with her husband and friends at their home on Crooked Lake, around the campfire, boating, fishing and camping. She loves skiing and sledding in the winter time. Travel is also a passion - visiting National Parks and exploring Europe. Life is about adventure and she's looking forward to many more years of creating fun adventures with her husband.

Who's Who?

Continued

Samson Flancbaum is an Instrument Repair Technician and faculty member at The Crane School of Music, where he cares for and maintains an inventory of more than 1,200 student and professional instruments. He also leads the orchestral strings repair techniques course and curriculum, sharing his craft with the next generation of musicians and educators.

With over a decade of hands-on experience, Samson brings both technical mastery and amusician's sensitivity to the care, maintenance, and restoration of band and orchestral instruments. He has a special passion for vintage woodwind overhauls—breathing new life into flutes, clarinets, and saxophones through precise mechanical work, acoustical adjustment, and detailed restoration.



A Crane graduate himself, Samson earned dual Bachelor of Music degrees in Euphonium Performance and Music Theory in 2013, followed by a Master of Music in the same areas from the University of North Texas in 2015. After his studies, he shifted his focus to the art of repair, apprenticing with master technicians in Aledo, Texas. There, he honed his skills in high-end woodwind and brass work and developed a deep appreciation for the craftsmanship behind every instrument.

Samson remained at the shop as a full-time technician and later served as Repair Foreman from 2019 to 2022. In addition to handling major restorations, he oversaw daily operations, worked closely with clients, and guided apprentices—earning a reputation for meticulous attention to detail and a thoughtful, player-centered approach to every repair.

Certified as both a Muramatsu and Straubinger technician, and seasoned in emergency repairs from his days supporting marching bands across Texas, Samson is highly proficient in all areas of band instrument repair. His work is trusted by performers, educators, and students who rely on his ability to restore instruments to not only function flawlessly, but to feel and sound their very best.

Now back at Crane, Samson blends expertise with a genuine commitment to service and education. He takes pride in supporting students and music educators in New York and across the country—keeping their instruments in exceptional playing condition and sharing the knowledge that helps them care for their craft.



Jennifer Reynolds Greene has been an instrumental music educator, specializing in bands, for more than thirty years. Currently, she is the Wind Symphony Director at Binghamton University (SUNY). For the majority of her career she held a position at Fayetteville-Manlius High School, a suburb of Syracuse, New York, where she taught Concert Band, Studio Music, Music Theory 2, AP Music Theory, brass and percussion lessons, and chamber ensembles. As a director, Dr. Greene's bands have performed nationally in San Antonio, Atlanta, Orlando, Washington D.C., and Chicago, earning consistently high ratings and awards. She has served as a guest conductor for several honor band festivals and has

Who's Who?

Continued

toured four times with the American Music Abroad program. As a music educator, Dr. Greene is an active member of the New York State School Music Association for which she is an adjudicator for majors and All-State brass, a member of the Manual Selection Committee, and the Zone 3 Representative.

As a musician, Dr. Greene remains active as a freelance hornist and a member of Central Winds: A Music Educators' Wind Ensemble. She has performed with this group since 1993, and served as its General Manager from 1999-2017. As part of the educational outreach of this group, Dr. Greene has presented clinics at Ithaca College, Syracuse University, and the Eastman School of Music. The group has enjoyed working with such conductors and artists as Donald Hunsberger, Mark Scatterday, Steve Peterson, and The Boston Brass, and performing locally and at The Midwest Clinic in Chicago, Illinois, the Texas Bandmasters Association Conference in San Antonio, Texas, and the New York State Band Directors Symposium in Syracuse, New York.

Dr. Greene serves as an adjunct for several institutions, including Onondaga Community College (SUNY) where she designed and implemented the Intro to Music Education course, and Syracuse University where she teaches brass methods. At Kent State Dr. Greene advises students in their Capstone projects, in the Research course, and facilitates courses such as Advanced Studies in Teaching Instrumental Music and Technology for Music Teaching and Learning. Her research interests include teacher education as it relates to mentoring and professional development, teaching and learning in a digital environment, and belonging in music ensembles. She has been published in the Journal of Research in Music Education, the Journal of Music Teacher Education, Arts Education Policy Review and the School Music News (NYSSMA). She has presented research at numerous conferences such as the NAFME Biennial Music Research and Teacher Education Conference, the Society for Music Teacher Education (SMTE) Symposium, the Mayday Group Colloquia, NAFME Eastern Division, NYSSMA Winter Conference, the International Society for Music Education (ISME) Conference, and the Narrative Inquiry in Music Education Conference.

Dr. Greene holds her Bachelor of Music Education, Summa Cum Laude, from James Madison University (1990). Her Master of Music degree is from Ithaca College (1991) and her Doctorate of Musical Arts is from Boston University (2015).



John Jeanneret is a professional musician, music educator, and conductor who teaches instrumental music in the Fayetteville-Manlius School District. He directs multiple concert and jazz ensembles at the middle and high school levels. Jeanneret holds degrees in music education and saxophone performance from the Crane School of Music and in jazz performance and composition from the University of North Texas. He is currently a DMA candidate in music education at Boston University.

Jeanneret is a passionate educator and reflective practitioner whose work centers on creativity, student voice, and inclusive musicianship. His teaching emphasizes improvisation, aural learning, and experiential approaches that position students not just as performers but also as creators of music. He is deeply committed to fostering learning environments in which students and teachers alike feel empowered to make their own musical choices, take risks, and express their identities through sound.

Who's Who?

Continued



NYC Modern Band Crew

Dr. Tom Zlabinger

Kevin Heathwood

Dr. Tom Zlabinger is an Associate Professor of Music at York College / CUNY in New York City, where he has taught popular music performance and directed the York College Band since 2003. He holds a B.A. in music from Grinnell College, an M.A. in jazz performance from Queens College / CUNY, and a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from the CUNY Graduate Center.

His dissertation, *FREE FROM JAZZ: The Jazz and Improvised Music Scene in Vienna after Ossiach (1971–2011)*, documents the evolution of Vienna's jazz scene through interviews with prominent Austrian musicians, experiences performing with Austrian musicians in Vienna and New York City, and extensive discographic research. Dr. Zlabinger has published on improvisation, live performance online, musicians and music making in and around various media franchises (including *The Big Lebowski*, *Peanuts*, Neil Gaiman's *Sandman*, *The Simpsons*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and *Star Wars*), and the intersections of blues, jazz, and psychedelic music.

A performer on both electric and upright bass, he also sings and plays guitar. Dr. Zlabinger has served on the boards of the Association of Popular Music Education and the Music Educators Association of New York City. In 2022, he founded Telematic Studios to help musicians make music together by offering online voice lessons, hosting jams live online, and publishing accurate and easy-to-read charts.

Kevin Heathwood is the band director at Frank Sinatra School of the Arts High School in Astoria Queens, the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Bushwick Big Band, and is currently serving as the NYSSMA Zone Representative for New York City. He completed his undergraduate degree at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, his masters at Teachers College Columbia University, and is currently pursuing a doctorate in educational leadership from Long Island University. The first rock band he was in was jamming in his neighbor's garage during the summers and has since been either leading rock bands or playing in one ever since high school. His main influences in the rock idiom are Bruce Springsteen, the Beatles, Queen, and Pink Floyd.

Who's Who?

Continued



The Camillus Community Jazz Band, featuring vocalist Lauren Sageer Directed by Steve Frank

The Camillus Community Jazz Band, established under the auspices of the Town of Camillus, NY, Parks and Recreation Department, was formed March 2025, through the initiative of several alumni of the West Genesee High School Jazz Band. Led by Steve Frank, the group performs an extensive and varied repertoire including arrangements from the bands of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Buddy Rich, Gordon Goodwin, Bob Mintzer, Rick Hirsch, and many others.

Steve Frank has enjoyed a long career in music, with over forty-five years of experience as a band and jazz band director at the elementary, middle, high school, college, university, and community level, including ten years as teacher in the music education department of the Setnor School of Music, Syracuse University. He also served as Education Program Director for the internationally acclaimed Syracuse Jazz Fest (Frank Malfitano, Executive Director) from 2003 through 2013.

He has studied as a trombone performance major at the doctoral level at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, N.Y., and holds a M.M. in Music Performance from Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio, and a B.M. in Music Education from the Crane School of Music, Potsdam, New York.

As a free-lance professional trombonist, Steve has performed and recorded with groups as diverse as the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, the Detroit Concert Band (Leonard B. Smith, director), The Colorblind James Experience, Phil Marshall's La La Land, and a multitude of touring shows, jazz groups, and swing bands. He is a composer and arranger, with published compositions for elementary concert band (Alfred Music Publishing, C. L. Barnhouse Company) and for trombone and trombone ensemble (Ensemble Publications) among his many works. His instrumental music supplement series, The Good Book, has been used for years by music teachers across New York State. Steve's composition "Variations on Barnacle Bill, the Sailor" has been performed and recorded by trombonists and tubists around the world, including Charlie Vernon, bass trombonist of the Chicago Symphony.



Middle School Honor Band

Conductor and Bio

Dr. James Patrick Miller, conductor

Originally from Winona, MN, **James Patrick Miller** is a Grammy nominated conductor and educator traveling the nation and globe working with professional, military, community, university, and school ensembles. His work has brought him to guest conducting engagements and workshops with more than 100,000 high school students since 2002. Along with his international career as a conductor, Dr. Miller serves as co-founder and artist with HJPMusic – The Clinician Cooperative, engaging nationally and internationally with conductors, scholars, teachers, students and ensembles promoting the organization's mission of "Artistry, Passion, Compassion, Empathy" within music performance and education (learn more at hjpmusic.net).



Professor Miller's previous appointments include The Douglas Nimmo Endowed Professor of the Gustavus Wind Orchestra and Gustavus Adolphus College from 2014-2024, Director of Bands at The University of Massachusetts from 2009-2014, and Assistant Director of Bands and Choirs at Cornell University from 2002-2006. Miller won the American Choral Directors Association National Conducting Competition in New York City in 2002 and led the UMass Wind Ensemble to a Grammy nomination in 2015 for its recording of Stephen Paulus' Concerto for Trumpets and Band. Miller's ensembles have appeared at conferences of the College Band Directors National Association and Minnesota Music Educators Association 6 times, and he has led ensemble tours across the nation from New England to Las Vegas and to Norway, Sweden, Spain, and France. Performances under maestro Miller's direction have earned praise from Pulitzer Prize winning composers Karel Husa, Gunther Schuller, and Steven Stucky, Emmy Award winning composers Bruce Broughton and Julie Giroux, Grammy Award winning composer Stephen Paulus, and renowned composers Katherine Bergman, Sydney Guillaume, David Maslanka, Oscar Navarro, James Stephenson, and many more. In 2018 Miller was pinned as an honorary officer in the United States Coast Guard during his appearance as the Captain Louis J. Buckley Guest Conductor with the United States Coast Guard Band and he has appeared as a guest conductor crossing the nation from California to Maine and Nevada to New Jersey.

Earning the DMA in conducting from the University of Minnesota, the Master of Music in conducting from Ithaca College, and the Bachelor of Music in Education from St. Olaf College, Miller has also held memberships in CBDNA, WASBE, NAfME, MICCA, ACDA, and MBDA. He was inducted into Pi Kappa Lambda in 2001 and holds honorary memberships in Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Tau Beta Sigma, and Kappa Kappa Psi. Dr. Miller also works in the higher education division of Oxford University Press where he serves arts, humanities, social science, and STEM programs throughout Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin promoting OUP's mission of advancing learning, scholarship, and research. Miller lives in St. Peter, MN with his wife, professional conductor and soprano Dr. Heidi Johanna Miller, their two daughters, two cats, two fish, and is a very below average golfer.

High School Honor Band

Conductor and Bio

Jennifer Jolley (b. 1981) is a composer, conductor, and professor. Her work is founded on the belief that the pleasures and excesses of music have the unique potential to engage political and provocative subjects. Addressing a range of topics such as climate change, #MeToo, feminist history, and the abuses of the Putin regime, Jennifer strives to write pieces that are equally enjoyable and meaningful.

Jennifer's works have been commissioned and performed by ensembles worldwide, including the Dallas Winds, Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra, Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Central Ohio Symphony, Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, and Quince Ensemble. Her music has been featured in venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Rivera Court at the Detroit Institute of Arts, and Žofín Palace. A future piece commissioned by the US Navy Band will premiere at the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles (WASBE) Conference in Gwangju, South Korea, in Namhansanseong Art Hall.



Jennifer received degrees from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music. She is now an Associate Professor of Music Theory and Composition in the Department of Music, Multimedia, Theatre, and Dance at Lehman College in the Bronx and was a Fulbright Scholar to Egypt in 2023. She has been a composition faculty member at Interlochen Arts Camp since 2015.

Jazz Ensemble Honor Band

Andy Clausen is a New York-based trombonist, composer, arranger, and educator. A sought-after touring and studio musician across genres, Andy has worked with a wide range of artists including Joanna Newsom, Fleet Foxes, Jon Batiste, Common, Bon Iver, Aaron Dessner, Feist, Sylvan Esso, Vieux Farka Touré, Celisse, John Zorn, Wynton Marsalis, Samora Pinderhughes, Dave Douglas, Haley Heynderickx, Aoife O'Donovan, Caroline Shaw, Theo Bleckmann, Chris Thile, Gabriel Kahane, Nico Muhly, and Conrad Tao.

Andy is a founding member of The Westerlies, an acclaimed new music brass chamber ensemble. From Carnegie Hall to Coachella, The Westerlies navigate a wide array of projects with the precision of a string quartet, the audacity of a rock band, and the charm of a family sing-along, creating music that is “folk-like and composerly, lovely and intellectually rigorous” – NPR.



Andy has also gained stature as a bandleader for creative music with the albums The Wishbone Suite, Shutter Vols. 1 & 2, Few Ill Words: Solo Trombone at The TANK, Vol. 1, and Heart of Tones: Solo Trombone at The TANK, Vol. 2. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, the New York Philharmonic, the Hollywood Bowl, Red Rocks, Coachella, Radio City Music Hall, the Kennedy Center, The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, NPR Tiny Desk, Newport Folk Festival, Newport Jazz Festival, Newport Classical Festival, FreshGrass, Pitchfork Music Festival, SFJAZZ, and Jazz at Lincoln Center.

In addition to his performance work, Andy is an active composer for film, television, and radio, contributing original music to NBC, MSNBC, Showtime, The Michelle Obama Podcast, PBS, NPR, The New York Times, Blue Chalk Media, the Whitney Museum, and Freedom House.

Andy is a graduate of The Juilliard School, and in 2021 joined the faculty at The New School as an artist-in-residence and professor of trombone and composition. From 2015–2023, Andy served as Artistic Director for Jazz at New York Youth Symphony, collaborating with guest artists including Maria Schneider, Rufus Reid, Matt Wilson, Ingrid Jensen, Ted Nash, Jim McNeely, Sean Jones, and more. Additionally, Andy works with thousands of students each year through The Westerlies’ educational initiatives, and has given masterclasses at Juilliard, Yale, Colburn, Northwestern, Manhattan School of Music, Boston Conservatory, and Michigan State University.

Andy is an endorsing artist of Conn-Selmer/King Trombones, Eventide Effects, and Moog Synthesizers. He lives in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, with his wife Rachel. Aside from music, he enjoys cooking, biking, walking, travel, and photography. More info at: www.andyclausen.com and on social media @aclausent

“A melody from Andy Clausen is pure moonlight. It’s lovely and magical, full of warmth, and it can brighten up the room. But moonlight also is a source of mystery, with ominous overtones and an electric tension” - Bandcamp Daily

“sleek, dynamic large-group jazz, a whirl of dark-hued harmony and billowing rhythm...The intelligent sheen of Mr. Clausen’s writing was as striking as the composure of his peers...It was impressive, and not just by the yardstick of their age.” - The New York Times

Honor Band Programs

Middle School Honor Band

*James Patrick, Conductor
Omar Williams, Chairperson*

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------|------------------------|
| Escape! | | Adrian B. Sims |
| My Neighbor Totoro | | Joe Hisaishi (Yo Goto) |
| The Bonsai Tree | | Julie Giroux |
| Excerpts from The Firebird | | Igor Stravinsky |

Jazz Ensemble Honor Band

*Andy Clausen, Conductor
Austin Day, Chairperson*

Program to be selected from the following:

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Blues in Hoss Flat..... | Frank Foster |
| Stockholm Sweetin' | Quincy Jones |
| Free Whaley | Andy Clausen |
| All Heart..... | Duke Ellington/Billy Strayhorn |
| Thad | Jim McNeely |
| Roll Em' | Mary Lou Williams |

High School Honor Band

*Jennifer Jolley, Conductor
Bradley Hartman, Chairperson*

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Ash..... | Jennifer Jolley |
| Deciduous | Viet Cuong |
| Lichtweg/Lightway | Jennifer Jolley |
| Second Wind..... | Randall D. Standridge |

Honor Band Schedules

2026 NYSBDA Middle School Honor Band Rehearsal and Activity Schedule

Any changes will be announced during rehearsals

Friday, March 6

| | |
|------------------|---|
| 10:00 – 10:30 am | Percussion (only) Registration |
| 10:30 – 11:30 am | Percussion Sectional |
| 10:30 – 11:30 am | Woodwind and Brass Registration |
| 11:00 – 12:00 pm | Lunch |
| 12:15 – 5:00 pm | Rehearsal (breaks at the discretion of the conductor) |

Room assignments will be passed out around 3:30

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 5:00 – 6:00 pm | Dinner and Free Time |
| 6:00 – 7:30 pm | Rehearsal |
| 7:30 – 8:00 pm | Transport to DoubleTree |
| 8:00 – 9:00 pm | Attend Concert with guest performers |
| 9:00 – 9:30 pm | ICE CREAM SOCIAL |
| 9:30 – 9:45 pm | Transport return to Embassy Suites |
| 9:45 pm | Lights Out and Room Check |

Saturday, March 7

| | |
|------------------|--|
| 7:00 – 8:00 am | Breakfast |
| 8:00 – 11:00 am | Rehearsal (breaks at the discretion of the conductor) |
| 11:00 - 11:25 am | Lunch |
| 11:25 - 12:00 pm | Change into Concert Clothes, ROOM CHECKOUT |
| 12:15 – 1:45 pm | Rehearsal |
| 1:45 – 2:30 pm | Transport to DoubleTree. Percussionists concert set-up |
| 2:30 – 3:00 pm | Leadership session with Erin Althen |
| 3:00 – 4:00 pm | Dress Rehearsal |
| 4:00 – 4:30 pm | Tuning and Final Instructions |

4:30 PM NYSBDA Middle School Honor Band Concert @ DoubleTree

Honor Band Schedules

NYSBDA Honors Jazz Ensemble 2026 Rehearsal and Activity Schedule

Friday - March 6

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 10:30-11:30 | Rehearse. Dewitt Basin |
| 11:30-12:30 | Registration/Lunch. Adirondack Room |
| 12:30-3:30 | Rehearse. Dewitt Basin |
| 3:30-4:00 | Break for Room Check-in |
| 4:00-5:15 | Rehearsal. Dewitt Basin |
| 5:15-6:15 | Dinner. Adirondack Room |
| 6:15-7:30 | Rehearsal. Dewitt Basin |
| 7:45 | Assemble for Featured Performance |
| 8:00-9:30 | Evening Featured Performance. Grand Ballroom |
| 9:30-10:30 | Free Time (including Ice Cream Social). Adirondack Room |
| 11:00 | Room Checks then Lights Out. |

Saturday - March 7

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 7:00-8:00 | Breakfast. Adirondack Room |
| 8:00-9:00 | Leadership Session. Cross Roads Ballroom |
| 9:00-11:30 | Rehearsal. Dewitt Basin |
| 11:30-12:30 | Lunch. Adirondack Room |
| 12:30-4:30 | Rehearsal. Dewitt Basin |
| 4:30-6:00 | Dinner. Adirondack Room |
| 6:00-7:30 | Rehearsal. Dewitt Basin |
| 8:00-9:30 | Evening Featured Performance. Grand Ballroom |
| 9:30-10:30 | Supervised Free Time |
| 11:00 | Room Checks then Lights Out |

Sunday - March 8

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 7:00-8:00 | Breakfast. Adirondack Room |
| 8:00-9:00 | Rehearsal. Dewitt Basin |
| 9:00-10:30 | Relocate to Grand Ballroom, Change for Concert |
| 10:30-11:30 | Soundcheck/Dress Rehearsal. Grand Ballroom |
| 11:30 | Tuning and Quiet Time. Dewitt Basin |
| 12:00 | 2026 NYSBDA Honor Jazz Ensemble In Concert |



Honor Band Schedules

NYSBDA HS Honor Concert Band Schedule – 2026 **(Schedule is subject to change)**

Friday, March 6:

| | | |
|---------------------|---|--|
| 10:30 am – 11:30 am | - | Percussion Sectional |
| 11:30 am – 12:45 pm | - | Registration/Lunch |
| 12:45 pm – 3:30 pm | - | Rehearsal and Seating Auditions (Sectionals) |
| 1:30 pm- 2:30 pm | - | Woodwind Auditions |
| 2:30 pm- 3:30 pm | - | Brass Auditions |
| 3:30 pm – 4:45 pm | - | Rehearsal |
| 4:45 pm – 5:15 pm | - | Break/Room Check In |
| 5:15 pm – 6:15 pm | - | Dinner |
| 6:15 pm – 7:30 pm | - | Rehearsal |
| 8:00 pm – 9:00 pm | - | Attend Evening Concert |
| 9:00 pm – 10:30 pm | - | Ice Cream Social |
| 10:30 pm | - | Room Checks and Lights Out |

Saturday, March 7:

| | | |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 7:00 am – 8:00 am | - | Breakfast |
| 8:00 am – 9:00 am | - | Leadership Session |
| 9:00 am – 11:30 am | - | Rehearsal |
| 11:30 am – 12:30 am | - | Lunch |
| 12:30 pm – 4:30 pm | - | Rehearsal |
| 4:30 pm – 6:00 pm | - | Dinner |
| 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm | - | Rehearsal |
| 8:00 pm – 9:00 pm | - | Attend Evening Concert |
| 9:30 pm – 10:30 pm | - | Supervised Free Time (in meal area) |
| 10:30 pm | - | Room Checks and Lights Out |

Sunday, March 8:

| | | |
|---------------------|---|--|
| 7:00 am – 8:00 am | - | Breakfast |
| 8:15 am – 9:30 am | - | Dress Rehearsal |
| 10:00 am – 11:30 am | - | Dress for Concert and Check Out |
| 11:30 am – 12:00 pm | - | Warm-up for concert |
| 12:00 pm | - | Concert– Honor Jazz Band/Honor Concert Band |
| 2:00 pm | - | Congratulations and have a safe trip home! |

LIVING Legend



Gary Hill

Gary W. Hill — Professor of Music and Director of Bands, Emeritus, at Arizona State University, where he taught from 1999-2019 — is one of the most sought-after guest conductors and clinicians in the wind band field. As a conductor, appearances in more than a dozen countries and throughout the United States have included performances with many professional ensembles, numerous college and university wind bands and orchestras, myriad high school and collegiate honor ensembles (including dozens of All-State bands), at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic, and at World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles' conferences. As a clinician, Hill has presented hundreds of workshops on conducting and rehearsal technique for music teachers of all levels and has worked with thousands of bands and orchestras and their teachers. Professor Hill is currently a Conn-Selmer Educational Clinician.

Prior to Hill's appointment at ASU, he was Director of Bands at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music (1986-99), at East Texas A&M University, (1982-86), and Associate Director of Bands at the University of Colorado, Boulder (1980-82). He also served as Founding Music Director for the Kansas City Youth Wind Ensemble and the conductor of newEar, a professional chamber ensemble devoted to contemporary music. Hill began his teaching career in Michigan, where he was Director of Bands for the Traverse City (1977-80) and West Bloomfield (1974-77) public schools.

High school, university, and professional ensembles under Hill's direction have given performances for the National Band Association, the Music Educators National Conference (NAfME), the College Band Directors National Association, the American Bandmasters Association, the International Horn Symposium, the National Flute Association, at many state conventions, and throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. Performances conducted by him have consistently drawn praise from composers, performing musicians, and critics alike for their insightful, inspired, and cohesive realizations, and for their imaginative programming.

During Professor Hill's 39 years as a collegiate conducting teacher, he taught scores of undergraduate and graduate conducting students and served as the primary mentor for 55 MM & DMA wind band conducting majors, 8 who became conductors of US Armed Forces' ensembles and other professional groups, and 44 who won university teaching positions.

LIVING Legend

Gary Hill

Hill remains active as a guest conductor, teacher, and clinician, and continues to be involved with research concerning the exploration of biochemical reactions spawned by musical processes, the neurobiology of the art and craft of conducting, and the past, present, and future of instrumental music in schools. Additionally, he is a passionate lover of dog training and the sport of dog agility, and frequently weaves lessons learned from this pastime into his teaching.

Professor Hill is the author or co-author of numerous articles published in music journals (CBDNA Journal, WASBE Journal, Bands of America, National Association of Schools of Music, AMEA Journal, etc.) and in other journals, proceedings, and books, including: the Acoustical Society of America; The Oxford Handbook of Making Music and Leisure; and in the Journal Hormones and Behavior. Hill has discussed his research as a speaker at numerous regional, national, and international meetings.

Professor Hill is a member of many professional organizations, including the American Bandmasters Association and the College Band Directors National Association, for which he hosted the “Fiftieth Anniversary National Conference” (1991), co-hosted the 2019 biennial national conference, as well as the joint conferences of the North Central and Southwestern Divisions in conjunction with The Society for American Music (1998), served as president of the Southwestern Division (1989-91), and as national president (2003-05).

Clinic

Saturday, 3:15-4:15 PM

Masterclass

Sunday, 9:00 AM

Interview

Sunday, 10:30 AM

Symposium 2026 Conducting Application

Our conducting clinic will be led this year by our Legend, **Gary Hill**. If you are interested in being considered to conduct during this session, please fill out the [form](#) by JANUARY 28, 2026. All efforts are made to choose conductors that represent a wide range of experiences and locations throughout the state. Anyone interested is encouraged to apply.

Each participant will be asked to conduct ONE of the following selections during the clinic:

Three Ayres from Gloucester - Hugh Stuart (any movements)

Salvation Is Created - Pavel Tschesnokoff arr. Houseknecht

First Suite in E-flat - Gustav Holst (any movement)

Second Suite in F - Gustav Holst (any movement)

Lincolnshire Posy - Percy Grainger (movement 1, 2, or 6)

OR any other high quality piece of your choosing, subject to NYSBDA approval/availability

Applicants should have deep knowledge of whichever piece they choose.

Applicants will be asked to provide a link to a video of you conducting at the end of this application. There is no required piece for the application. Whatever repertoire your ensemble is currently working on is sufficient for the application.

Hotel Booking Information

Reserve a room at the DoubleTree using the [Hilton Website](#)

BAND CALL IN

Hello there!

We're glad you can join us for BAND CALL IN.

We have a room block reserved at DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Syracuse for March 6, 2026 through March 8, 2026. Booking your room is simple, just select "Book a Room" to receive your group's preferred rate.

We're looking forward to seeing you in March! We hope you enjoy your stay and your group's event!

Book Your Room

Event dates: March 6, 2026 - March 8, 2026

Book by: February 2, 2026



DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
Syracuse



6301 State Route 298,
East Syracuse, NY 13057
USA



+1 315-452-0200

[Book a Room](#)

Rooms & Rates

2Dbl Mobility/hearing Access Bathtub No Smok - \$144.00

Region 1 Workshop



The 13th Annual NYSBDA Region 1 Workshop was held on October 16, 2025, at Hamburg HS. Forty-two teachers and 7 additional presenters attended this full-day workshop. We took a moment at the beginning of the session to recognize the loss of our first keynote in 2013 & 2014, Edward Lisk, as well as the passing of past Hamburg Schools instrumental teachers Robert Reichard and Janice Jones.

Dr. James Tapia (Syracuse University) was our headliner, starting with the Region 1 Directors' Band and a review of "Concert Band Gems". Tapia covered quality music for elementary, middle school and high school (including Perthshire Majesty by Hazo), and concluded this session conducting an emotional rendition of Grainger's Irish Tune from County Derry. Dr. Tapia's keynote address addressed leadership skills. "A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way". This was a fantastic opportunity to peek inside a college director's day, to see how he balances his relationship and time management with colleagues, students, & family, while teaching music at a major university.

Jim Tapia's final session was with Larry Dubill's Hamburg HS Wind Ensemble. Here, Tapia was really in his element, working to polish an already good ensemble to a higher level. This session, entitled "Beyond the Notes: Unlocking Expressive and Lyrical Musicality with your Elementary, Middle, and High School Ensembles." This clinic concluded with Galante's Cry of the Last Unicorn.



Region 1 Workshop continued...

In the next session, Aaron Staebell brought us a nice jazz reflection: "Improvisation at Any Age: Beyond the Notes & Rhythms." Aaron provided insight into his teaching and performance experiences in jazz, and how to create an environment for students to succeed as improvisers. Before lunch, Mike Titlebaum and the Ithaca Jazz Ensemble gave an exciting performance of some special selections from the Steve Brown Jazz library, which Brown recently donated to IC. The concert was a treat for all!



Afternoon sessions began with Rudy Tichy (recently awarded NYSSMA's Outstanding Contributor Award) and two repair techs from Twin Village Music, addressing numerous quick fixes and repairs for woodwind instruments. Our final session was a roundtable featuring "Engaging Students, Building Community: What's Working in Band?" Meaghan Venitelli (West Seneca) was the facilitator, with Tami Feldman (Orchard Park), Karen Fish (Starpoint), Mike Robertson (Grand Island), Jacob Seymour (Lancaster), and Matthew Tichy (Williamsville) serving as panelists. It was so nice to hear the approaches and perspectives from each of these dedicated music educators. This annual workshop is run by a steering committee of NYSBDA members and serves to inspire all in attendance.

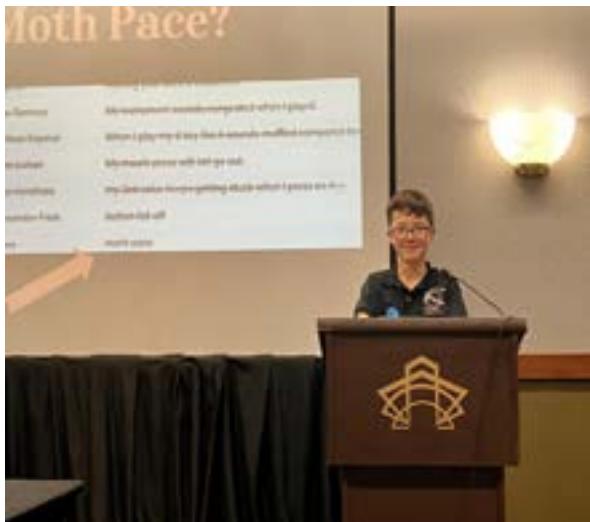


NYSBDA AT WINTER CONFERENCE

NYSBDA members at the Winter Conference gave sessions providing inspiration, helpful tips, repair info, and collaboration.

Student Led Instrument Repairs

Bradley Morrison
Anne M. Dorner Middle School Students



Building an Ensemble Culture of Joy

Erin Althen, Greg Borsz
Syracuse Youth Wind Ensemble



Renew Your Membership Today

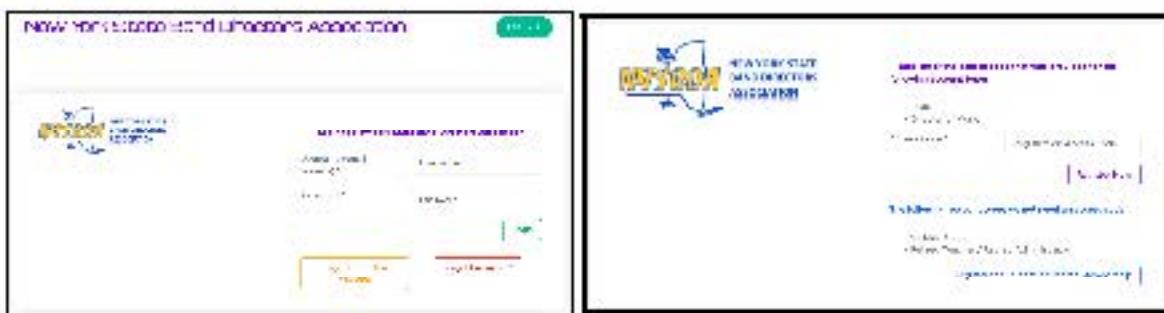
NYSBDA Da Capo Instructions

Membership Registrations and Honor Band Applications

The New York State Band Directors Association is migrating our membership registrations and honor band applications to Da Capo. We hope this will streamline our membership services and increase security of personal data. We also hope it will simplify the honor band application process.

Directions:

1. Visit <https://nysbdamembers.org>
2. Select Register New Account. We are resetting the database so everyone must do this the first year.
3. Enter the access code **nysbda** and select "Register Now"



4. Provide us with your updated information and create your account (This data will be used for the honor band applications which will help streamline that process).
5. Pay your dues through Afini Pay, or download the membership application and pay by mail with a check or PO.

FAQs

- Although the membership database is resetting, our email list remains intact. If you provide a different email address through this process, it will be added to our email list. All emails from our past list will remain, unless there is a request to have them removed.
- If you are having issues with the access code, make sure you are using all lowercase characters.
- You will no longer need to enter your director information for each honor band application.
- You must be an active member and have paid your annual dues in order to register students for our honor bands.
- Eventually the members only content of the website will migrate to Da Capo's document center, including the clinic video archive.



COLLEGIATE NYSBDA



NYSBDA

New York State

Band Directors

Association



**Start your C-NYSBDA
Chapter today!**

Questions?

vcusumano1@pride.hofstra.edu