

October 2, 2017

For immediate release, please

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## **Westchester Symphonic Winds Open Their Landmark 30th Season with “Bridges and Byways” Concert at Historic Tarrytown Music Hall**

The Westchester Symphonic Winds, the area’s preeminent adult wind and percussion ensemble, will present the opening concert of their 30th Season on Sunday, November 5 at 3:00 p.m. at Tarrytown Music Hall (13 Main Street, Tarrytown, NY). Conductor Curt Ebersole will lead the program, beginning his tenth year as Music Director. Our spotlighted work is *Brooklyn Bridge* by Michael Daugherty, featuring Westchester County native, Steve Cohen, clarinet soloist. Known worldwide for his solo performances, Steve is Professor of Clarinet at Northwestern University, and we are thrilled to welcome Steve home for this performance.

We will also feature guest conductor Richard F. Guillen, Director of Bands at Arlington High School, conducting *Famishius Fantasticus* by Michael Markowski. Our apprentice conductor is Ben Acrish, Director of Bands at Hendrick Hudson High School, who will conduct *Metroplex*, by Robert Sheldon.

The program also includes: *El Camino Real*, by Alfred Reed; *Our Reply* by Carl Holmquist; and *Colonel Bogey March* by Kenneth J. Alford. There is something for everyone!

Founded in 1988, The Westchester Symphonic Winds promotes music in Westchester County, instills pride in our nation and heritage, and nurtures the love of music by offering an exceptional concert experience for people of all ages. Recently featured in pieces by *The New York Times* and News Channel 12, The Westchester Symphonic Winds is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 and an Ensemble-in-Residence at the Tarrytown Music Hall.

Tickets for the November 5 concert are \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors and students. Children under 10 are free. More information at [westchestersymphonicwinds.org](http://westchestersymphonicwinds.org) or [tarrytownmusichall.org](http://tarrytownmusichall.org).



## **The Westchester Symphonic Winds**

Almost thirty years ago, two New Rochelle High School graduates, Rachel Eckhaus and Robert LaPorta, realized how much they missed the musical and social experience of playing in their high school concert band. They also discovered that there were virtually no local community bands, so they persuaded their former band director, James D. Wayne, to work with them to form a new organization in Westchester, which they named the Hudson Valley Wind Symphony.

From its humble beginning of 30 members, the group has grown to 65 wind and percussion players, has found a permanent home at the Tarrytown Music Hall, and has changed its name to the Westchester Symphonic Winds, to better reflect that its members are drawn from Westchester County and surrounding tri-state metropolitan area. The Westchester Symphonic Winds is an adult community-based wind and percussion ensemble, proud to celebrate its 30th season. We exist to promote music in our area, instill pride in our nation and heritage, provide opportunities for personal expression and growth within our membership, and nurture the love of music by offering an exceptional musical experience for people of all ages.

The ensemble has profited from the leadership of its conductors. James D. Wayne conducted the band from 1988-2004. Dr. Luis Fernando Jimenez was conductor from 2005-2008. Curt Ebersole was invited to conduct the 20th Anniversary Gala Concert in 2008, and was subsequently invited to stay on permanently as Conductor/Music Director. During Maestro Ebersole's tenure, the ensemble has been honored with several high-profile performances. These have included our Lincoln Center debut at Avery Fisher Hall in 2010, performances at the Association of Concert Bands National Convention in 2012 and the New York State Band Directors Winter Symposium in 2017, and four sold-out performances at the Caramoor Music Festival in Katonah, New York. In addition, guest conductors and clinicians have included the finest wind band conductors from across the nation, and superb soloists, both guests and those from within the ensemble, have headlined our programs.

Over the years, we have given concerts on behalf of many service and benefit organizations. Our educational outreach program has included a Side-by-Side Concert with the Mahopac Central School District. Our Exchange Program with the Northshore Concert Band of Evanston, Illinois, provided opportunities to perform at Pick-Staiger Concert Hall at Northwestern University and the Palace Theatre in Stamford, Connecticut. Our Apprentice Conductor program gives music educators from within the group an opportunity to conduct the ensemble, with coaching and feedback from Maestro Ebersole. The ensemble has been the subject of articles in *The New York Times* and *Teaching Music*, the magazine of the National Association for Music Education.

Like many avocational groups, WSW members represent many backgrounds and vocations, but the common thread is the love of the concert band experience. Since a broad cross-section of the public has never heard a serious concert band, one of the aims of the group is to expose music lovers to this wonderful, vast repertoire. The organization is an Ensemble-in-Residence at the historic Tarrytown Music Hall in Tarrytown, New York, and rehearses there on Monday evenings from September through June.

Visit us at [www.westchestersymphonicwinds.org](http://www.westchestersymphonicwinds.org) for more information and personnel opportunities. We also maintain a presence on Facebook and Twitter (@WSWinds). Westchester Symphonic Winds, Inc. is a Section 501(c)(3) Not-for-Profit organization. Contributions, financial assistance, principal chair underwriting, and volunteers are essential to our success, and always welcomed.

### **Artist Bios:**

**Curt Ebersole** has served as the Conductor/Music Director (John P. Paynter Memorial Chair) of the Westchester Symphonic Winds since 2008, fostering its exponential growth over the past ten years. He retired from Northern Valley Regional High School (Old Tappan, New Jersey) in 2013 after serving as Director of Instrumental Music for 31 years, and now teaches at The Masters School, in Dobbs Ferry, New York. He earned a Bachelor of Music Education degree and a Master of Music in Conducting degree from Northwestern University, where he studied conducting with John P. Paynter and clarinet with Larry Combs, and earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Clarinet Performance from SUNY-Purchase, where he studied with Ben Armato. He has served as a guest conductor and clinician for numerous county, regional, and all-state student ensembles, and adult community ensembles across the nation, including performances at Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, and Symphony Space, and in Las Vegas, South Korea and Australia. His achievements include multiple teaching awards, ensemble performances as a clarinetist and basset hornist, and speaking/clinic engagements with the Midwest Clinic, TEDxOneonta, and several state music education conventions and conducting symposia.

**Ben Acrish** has been the director of bands at Hendrick Hudson High School, a NAMM nationally recognized school district, since 2011. At Henhud he conducts the wind ensemble, concert band, pep band, and annual spring musical. He is responsible for establishing successful multi-year courses of study in both guitar and music theory. Additionally he has served as the NYSSMA AAS coordinator in Westchester County for the last 4 years. As a trumpet player Mr. Acrish has performed in Westchester and NY area since moving here in 2005. He is a graduate of the Purchase College of Music studying with jazz masters Ray Vega, Jim Rotundi and Jon Faddis. Mr. Acrish has been a proud member of some of Westchester's finest community ensembles, including the WSW since 2010 and the Benson Scott Big Band since 2007. Mr. Acrish currently lives in Croton, NY with his wife and two daughters.

### **Steve Cohen**

Active as both a soloist and chamber performer throughout the U.S. and around the world, Steve Cohen is the former principal clarinet and frequent soloist with the New Orleans Symphony, later known as the Louisiana Philharmonic. Cohen joined the New Orleans Symphony in 1975 and remained as principal clarinet with its successor, the Louisiana Philharmonic, through May 2004. He was featured as concerto soloist with that orchestra many times and has also been featured as concerto soloist at the Brevard Music Center, where he has played and continues to play principal clarinet each summer since 1979. In the summer of 2016 he was featured as soloist in John Adams' Gnarly Buttons at the Brevard Music Center. In the summer of 2010, he was featured as soloist on the Copland Clarinet Concerto with Keith

Lockhart and the Brevard Music Center Orchestra. He has toured in the U.S. as principal clarinet with the Texas Opera Theater and throughout Europe as principal clarinet with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra. He returned to Korea to be a guest artist and master class clinician at the Seoul Philharmonic Clarinet Festival in 1998. He maintains an active yearly solo, chamber music, and master class schedule and has performed solo recitals and master classes throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe, Korea, China, Taiwan, Bangkok and Japan. He performed at the ICA conventions in several cities, including in Porto, Portugal in August of 2009 and was guest artist and teacher at the International Music Course in Guimaraes, Portugal, returning in September of 2011. Moving to Chicago in 2005 to become clarinet professor and coordinator of the winds, brass and percussion at Northwestern University he plays as principal clarinet with the Music of the Baroque orchestra, has played on numerous occasions with the Chicago Symphony including on Eb clarinet. He has also played with the Chicago Lyric Opera orchestra, and as a chamber musician throughout the Chicago area and beyond. His many collaborations include the Lincoln Quartet, the Miro Quartet, the Dempster St. Pro Musica and the Chicago Chamber Musicians.. He performed in February 2015 as guest soloist with the Hendersonville Symphony Orchestra in North Carolina and also was recently in Tokyo and Osaka, Japan with a tour of master classes and recitals in the fall of 2014. He has guest taught at the Oberlin Conservatory, University of Southern California, and Indiana University. Previously on the faculty of the Cincinnati College-Conservatory and Louisiana State University, he is an artist/clinician for Buffet clarinets and a Legere reed artist. For 2015-16 he was also Visiting Professor of Clarinet at the University of Texas at Austin in addition to his Northwestern duties and has performed most recently with the Miro Quartet on their series there. He hosted the 2001 International Clarinet Association Convention in New Orleans and has written many articles for the magazine for this organization. New York City born to a Juilliard trained clarinetist, his teachers have included, Loren Kitt, Larry McDonald, Karl Leister and Robert Marcellus.

**Richard F. Guillen**, a native of Kearny, New Jersey, received his Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from Kean University of New Jersey and his Master's Degree in Music Education from Western Connecticut State University. Since 1997, Mr. Guillen has been director of bands at Arlington High School in the Arlington Central School District, located in Dutchess County, NY. He previously served as director of bands at Central Regional High School in Bayville, NJ from 1989 to 1997. Mr. Guillen's current responsibilities in the Arlington Central School District include serving as the district's Music Coordinator as well as director of the Arlington High School Wind Ensemble, the most advanced of the school's five concert bands. Mr. Guillen is also the director of Jazz programs at Arlington High School, serving as the director of the award winning Arlington Jazz Machine, the most advanced of the school's three Jazz Ensembles, and assisting with the school's two other jazz ensembles. Mr. Guillen's marching, concert and jazz ensembles have consistently received many awards and accolades. His bands have received several "Gold with Distinction" awards at NYSSMA state music festivals. The Arlington High School Wind Ensemble has performed at the NY State School Music Conference, several wind band festivals in the northeast, and made its Carnegie Hall debut in 2014. The Arlington High School Jazz Machine has attended the prestigious Berklee Jazz Festival in Boston 20 times. Since 2007, the Jazz Machine has taken 1st place 4 times at Berklee and has placed in the top 3 every year in Large Ensemble Class 1. The Jazz Machine also participates annually in the Essentially Ellington program. From 1997 to 2005, Mr. Guillen was the director of the Arlington Admiral Marching Band. During that time, the Admiral Band consistently ranked as one of the

top 5 bands in New York State and in the Northeast. In 2004, the Admiral Marching Band won the NY State Field Band Conference National Class Championship. In 2003 and 2004, the Admirals won the Musical Arts Conference Class 5 Championship and were also crowned MAC Grand Champions. The Admiral Marching Band has been a Bands of American Eastern Regional finalist every time they've attended the event. The Admirals attended the 2004 Bands of America Grand National Championships and qualified as a semi-finalist and placed among the top 25 bands in the nation.

Aside from his duties at Arlington High School, Mr. Guillen is also a very active freelance arranger, composer and program consultant for many competitive marching bands and drum corps. He has been invited to work with various musical organizations as a clinician, adjudicator, and guest conductor around the country. His marching band and drum corps arrangements have been a part of many state and regional championship programs. As a brass performer, Mr. Guillen was a member of the Cadets Drum and Bugle Corps and the Sunrisers Drum and Bugle Corps. As a jazz saxophonist and director, Mr. Guillen has worked with Bob Mintzer, Phil Wilson, Greg Hopkins, Andy Fusco, and Bob Yurochko. Mr. Guillen is also active as a freelance adjudicator for marching bands, concert bands, jazz ensembles, and drum corps throughout the U.S. He has served as the Brass Caption Judging Supervisor for Drum Corps Associates (DCA) since 2009 and is also an adjudicator with MAC, US Bands, ISSMA, KMEA and several other independent programs. He currently resides in the town of LaGrange in the beautiful Hudson Valley Region of Dutchess County, NY with his wife and their four daughters and feels truly blessed.

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