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## Westchester Symphonic Winds Celebrates 30 Years!

Where can you find extraordinary musicians from all walks of life, spanning five decades in age, who play music with passion, joy, excitement, and a commitment to high performance standards? You can find them at Tarrytown Music Hall on May 12 as they celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of making and sharing music as a community ensemble in Westchester.

The 65-member band is made up of individuals dedicated to performing and sharing the concert band tradition with Westchester audiences, and includes music educators, doctors, lawyers, engineers, bankers, and professionals from diverse backgrounds. In residence at Tarrytown Music Hall, the Westchester Symphonic Winds has also performed for sold-out audiences in the Venetian Theater at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts in Katonah. In a *New York Times* article from October 2015, current conductor/music director, Curt Ebersole commented about the dedication of these players: "It says a lot about the community response and support for their fellow citizens who live to play rather than play to live."

During Maestro Ebersole's tenure, the ensemble has been honored with several high-profile performances. These have included the band's Lincoln Center debut at Avery Fisher Hall in 2010, performances at the New York State Band Directors Association Symposium in 2017, the Association of Concert Bands Convention in 2012, and a collaboration with the Northshore Concert Band to present concerts at Northwestern University in 2015 and the Palace Theater in Stamford in 2016. In addition to its yearly concert series as ensemble in residence at the Music Hall in Tarrytown, WSW has worked with public school bands, advancing their love of the concert band experience, and demonstrating that music-making can extend into adulthood, regardless of one's profession.

The May 12 Gala Concert will include selections from the group's favorite repertoire, guest conductors, composers, arrangers, and soloists. Dr. Thomas McCauley, of Montclair State University, will conduct Leonard Bernstein's, *Overture to "Candide."* Dr. Shelley Axelson, also from Montclair State, will conduct, *Der Traum des Oenghus*, by Rolf Rudin. And renowned composer, Jack Stamp, will conduct his own composition, *Prayer for a Troubled Nation*. Saxophone virtuoso, Lois Hicks-Wozniak, formerly of the West Point Military Band, will perform for the fifth time with the band as the featured soloist, playing *Tarantella*, from David Canfield's, *Concerto after Glière*.

Maestro Ebersole will conduct the Broadway overture to the musical, *Gypsy*, arranged by WSW clarinetist Barton Green; Percy Grainger's classic, *Lincolnshire Posy*; Kalinnikov's, *Finale from Symphony #1*, featuring twenty-two antiphonal brass players; and *Sennet*, a fanfare by Patrick Burns, written specifically for this gala celebration.

The ensemble has come a long way in the last 30 years and one of its main goals is to ensure the future health of the organization and the institution of the community band. WSW would like to continue to support composers of band literature through commissions, to foster cooperative efforts with local schools and with bands like WSW, to sponsor master classes, and of course, to continue to purchase percussion equipment, music, and all that is financially required of such a performing arts organization. Tax-deductible contributions of any size will help WSW launch its next 30 years of music making here in Westchester. Visit the following link to help realize this goal:

<https://www.gofundme.com/wsw30>

Principal trumpet Stan Serafin and principal oboe Gina Serafin recounted one of many memorable moments participating in WSW from a few years back. "We were completing a dress rehearsal of a symphonic wind arrangement of the finale from Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. It was an absolutely soul-stirring rendition that had us all on the edge of our seats, giving one hundred percent of our effort. After the final cut-off, Curt was beaming, smiling, and practically in tears as he said, 'I am so lucky to be conducting this band.' At that palpable moment, it was clear that the feeling was entirely mutual."

On that note, The Westchester Symphonic Winds cordially invites you to celebrate 30 years of music by attending the May 12 Gala Concert at 8:00 p.m. at the Tarrytown Music Hall. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for students and seniors, and free for children under 10. Tickets may be purchased through the Music Hall box office, 877-840-0457, or online at [www.tarrytownmusichall.org](http://www.tarrytownmusichall.org). Those in attendance can participate in a very special raffle where the winner will receive a five-minute conducting lesson from Maestro Ebersole and then lead the band in Sousa's, *Stars and Stripes* at the concert! It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and no experience is required!

Westchester Symphonic Winds is a 501(c)3 charitable organization and exists through the generosity of its friends. Contributions may also be sent to Westchester Symphonic Winds, Box 485, 333 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains, New York 10605.

## **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 bass hornist, and speaking/clinic engagements with the Midwest Clinic, TEDxOneonta, and several state music education conventions and conducting symposia.

**Jack Stamp** currently serves as an adjunct professor at the University of Wisconsin- River Falls, Dr. Stamp teaches conducting and composition. He recently retired from full-time employment as Professor of Music and Director of Band Studies at Indiana University of Pennsylvania where he conducted the Wind Ensemble and taught courses in graduate conducting. Dr. Stamp received his Bachelor of Science in Music Education degree from IUP, a Master's in Percussion Performance from East Carolina University, and a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Conducting from Michigan State University where he studied with Eugene Corporon.

**Thomas McCauley** is currently the Director of University Bands in the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University in New Jersey where he conducts the Montclair State University Wind Symphony and Symphonic Band, and teaches both graduate and undergraduate conducting. He has held similar positions in the states of Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois in addition to teaching high school instrumental music in Nevada for nine years. Composers including Karel Husa, David Gillingham, Joseph Turrin, Bruce Yurko, Robert Aldridge, Morten Lauridsen and O'Neal Douglas have praised his work. In December of 2010, Dr. McCauley appeared as a clinician in Chicago at the 64<sup>th</sup> annual Midwest Clinic. Each November, he hosts and teaches a symposium at Montclair State University called the *Weekend Wind Conducting Symposium* with special guest clinicians and participants from around the world.

**Shelley Axelson** is currently Assistant Professor of Music Education at Montclair State University in New Jersey where her responsibilities include teaching conducting, conducting the Symphonic Band and Campus Band and teaching courses in instrumental music education. Before coming to New Jersey, she held a similar position at the University of Indianapolis. Dr. Axelson was also the Director of Bands at Central College in Pella, Iowa, Pasco Middle School in Dade City, Florida (co-author of the Secondary Music Curriculum) and Richardson Junior High School in Richardson, Texas.

**Lois Hicks-Wozniak** is an active concert saxophonist in the New York Metropolitan and the Hudson Valley region. Among her many awards is the Special Presentation Winners Recital Series, sponsored by Artists International Presentations. As her prize, she performed her New York Recital Debut at Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall. Currently an adjunct professor of music at Marist College and the State University of New York at New Paltz, she spent several summers as artist teaching faculty at the New England Music Camp and was a former visiting saxophone instructor at Susquehanna University. She has studied at the Interlochen Arts Academy, the University of North Texas and the Florida State University, and her teachers include Dr. Frederick L. Hemke, Patrick Meighan and Debra Richtmeyer. She maintains a private piano and saxophone studio, and she teaches Spinning and other exercise classes at her local gym.