



2014-2024 Conductors:

Top row: Sam Ormson, Patrick Murphy, Larry Gookin, Patrick Vandehey. Row 2: Gerard Morris, Mark Lane, Mark Claassen, Christopher Sigman

BACKSTAGE

March 2025

RETROSPECTIVE - OUR SECOND DECADE 2014—2024

The Southwest Washington Wind Symphony was started in February 2005 by Richard Carr (pediatric anesthesiologist). The goals were to provide local musicians and music educators opportunities to perform quality music literature and support wind music education. This collaboration also provides musicians the opportunities to share and learn teaching and conducting techniques useful with their own students. **This edition commemorates highlights from our 2nd decade of making great music.** See the October 2014 issue of Backstage for 1st decade's highlights.

2014—2015

Cara Gabrielson, vocalist
Sam Ormson, conductor
Featured Guest at CWU Wind Ensemble Festival

2015—2016

Natalie Neshyba, flute
Patrick Murphy & Larry Gookin, conductors

2016—2017

Zachariah Galatis, flute
Patrick Murphy & Patrick Vandehey, conductors

2017—2018

Patrick Murphy & Sam Ormson, conductors

2018—2019 (Art Auction)

Margie Boulé, narrator
Patrick Murphy, Gerard Morris, Sam Ormson, conductors

2019—2020

Britta Hobbs, vocalist
Amelia Hunnicutt, cello
Vocal ensemble: Jan Boulé, Kimberly Claassen, Amanda Dickenson, Sheli Morrell
Karen Schulz-Harmon, cello
Patrick Murphy & Mark Lane, conductors

2022—2023

Sarah Maines, Mezzo-Soprano
Matthew Nelson, clarinet
Mark Lane & Patrick Murphy, conductors

2023-2024

Julia Hwakyu Lee, piano
Patrick Murphy & Mark Claassen, Conductors

2024-2025 (Art Raffle)

Patrick Murphy & Christopher Sigman, Conductors
Legacy of Music concert showcasing our prior conductors: Mark Lane, Lewis Norfleet, Sam Ormson, and Tim Siess
[Photos from dress rehearsal]



3.6.2025 UH



Dress Rehearsal
Union High School
Performing Arts Center
3.6.2025



Concert Day
Union High School
Performing Arts Center
3.9.2025

Have a Blast!

Conductors, founder reunite for Southwest Washington Wind Symphony 20th anniversary

BY: SCOTT HEWITT, THE COLUMBIAN March 4, 2025

How many conductors does it take to get a powerful wind blowing? A whopping five of them will be waving and handing off the baton Sunday as the Southwest Washington Wind Symphony celebrates 20 years of moving musical air with a reunion of past and present conductors. Returning to the podium to direct the 51-piece concert band in a free afternoon concert will be conductors Mark Lane (retired, former band director at several local high schools as well as Central Washington University), Lewis Norfleet (now a band director in Grants Pass, Ore.), Sam Ormson (current band director at Mountain View High School) and Tim Siess (current band director at Union High School), in addition to current principal Wind Symphony conductor Patrick Murphy (director of bands at the University of Portland).



"It is so cool to have all the core conductors coming back," Murphy said. "But the really cool thing is that Rich Carr is still around and still excited every week. Without Rich there would be no group." It was Carr's vision of a top-notch yet all-volunteer community band and his determination to network his way toward realizing that vision - that launched the Southwest Washington Wind Symphony. The project took a while to get off the ground, he said.

Carr, 77, who lives in Hazel Dell, was a working pediatric anesthesiologist at Doernbecher Children's Hospital when he took his kids to a musical extravaganza called "Blast," which, as the title suggests, leans into the sheer power and volume of brass instruments. "It was like an epiphany, seeing these musicians on stage, just having the time of their life," he recalled. "It took me back to when I used to play the cornet and I was having the time of my life. I wanted to do that again!"

As a kid, Carr played the cornet in church and with a Salvation Army band. But he set his horn aside again by the time he reached high school. He hadn't played in 35 years when unlikely inspiration hit him. Not only would he start playing again, he'd form a concert band that was a cut above the norm for a volunteer community group.



"I wanted to make really high-caliber music," he said. "That's what I enjoy. There's something about making music with other people that really touches your soul. It's not something I can do myself, because it's greater than the sum of its parts." Excellent concert bands already existed here and there in the Portland metro area, he discovered, but not in Vancouver. That made no sense to Carr, who knew that Southwest Washington was, and is, home to a strong community of talented musicians and music educators. "As I explored this idea and talked to band directors, I learned that a lot of the very best musicians from Vancouver were going to Portland to play," he said.

Some of those players shrugged off the idea of launching a serious but voluntary new ensemble in Clark County, Carr said. (Current conductor Murphy said, "I don't know if I would have answered a call from some doctor looking to start some new community band.") But others loved the idea, and about 20 showed up at what's called a "reading session," sight reading and evaluating suggested pieces they might commit to performing. "Many of those folks already knew each other and were glad to have a reason to gather and socialize," he said.

"When we sat down and made music together, magic happened," Carr said. "That's what sparked this thing. It wouldn't have happened without other people." About 70 percent of those people are professional music educators, he said, and they are very busy people. They have just a handful of rehearsals in the run-up to each concert, and the musicians are expected to be capable sight-readers and concert performers. It's an invitation-only group.

Given all that, Carr said it's gratifying and frankly surprising to realize that the group has survived and thrived for decades. Such longevity didn't seem likely when the group started, even though Carr took the project seriously enough to set it up as a bona fide nonprofit corporation. He remembers going to a nonprofit-agency information session where he was told that his little effort couldn't possibly survive, even for five years.

Musical excellence is one reason why the Southwest Washington Wind Symphony has lasted 20 years, Carr said. The other, frankly, is that its three concerts per year are always free. "The business side of keeping this organization alive has been challenging," Carr said. "We keep it free because, if you charge anything at all, you'll exclude people. We want to include everybody. We want students to come." That strategy continues to work, he said. The community is generous with donations, and there's no shortage of musicians of every age eager to get involved. "Some of today's players came to our concerts as kids, as students, and they said, 'I want to play in that group,'" Carr said.

New American music

What exactly is a "wind symphony"? That's just a hifalutin term for what's also known as a concert band or simply a brass band, Murphy said. It's an ensemble with an even "thicker texture" of lung-powered woodwinds and brasses than a full orchestra, he said. On Sunday the group will include one piano, two double basses and an assortment of percussion." It's not an orchestra and it's not a marching band, but it's another kind of music that's really American," Carr said.

Concert bands draw both from orchestral classical repertoire and from the popular standards that still get played on community bandstands. Plus, Murphy said, there's a growing body of interesting new music for concert bands. "The concert band world is young," Murphy said. "The sounds we make are constantly evolving and we are always trying new things."

Sunday's diverse program includes John Philip Sousa's 1893 "The Liberty Bell," which is best known (fortunately for Sousa? or unfortunately for Sousa?) as the theme song to "Monty Python's Flying Circus"; Gustav Holst's 1909 "First Suite in E-flat for Military Band," an early example of "serious" music composed for concert band; and David R. Gillingham's 2001 "With Heart and Voice," which has a distinctly modern flair.

Murphy's own selection is a 2024 composition called "Skyward Spirits: A Micro Symphony" by JaRod Hall, a young African American band director, tubist and trombonist based in Texas. "It is so dynamic and energetic," he said. "You've got a line of percussion in back and you've got all these flashy brassy instruments in front and there are some big solos. It's a toe-tapping good time."

"We must be doing something right, because the audience keeps showing up. I hope this can continue for a long time." -- Rich Carr. Founder of the Southwest Washington Wind Symphony

City of Vancouver, Washington

Proclamation

- WHEREAS, music education is a vital part of a well-rounded academic curriculum, providing students with essential skills such as creativity, critical thinking, teamwork, and perseverance; and
- WHEREAS, Music in Our Schools Month, observed annually in March, serves as a national celebration to raise awareness about the importance of music education in schools and its lasting impact on students' personal and academic success; and
- WHEREAS, the 2025 theme for Music in Our Schools Month, "United Through Music," highlights how music serves as a powerful unifying force that connects individuals across diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences; and
- WHEREAS, the Southwest Washington Wind Symphony, now in its 20th Anniversary Season, is dedicated to fostering a love for symphonic band music, supporting music education, and providing free, high-quality performances for the Vancouver community; and
- WHEREAS, many of the Southwest Washington Wind Symphony musicians are current or retired music educators, exemplifying a lifelong commitment to mentoring and inspiring young musicians in our schools; and
- WHEREAS, Vancouver Public Schools and Evergreen Public Schools have received the Best Communities for Music Education Award multiple times, demonstrating the region's dedication to maintaining strong music programs that benefit thousands of students each year; and
- WHEREAS, the Southwest Washington Wind Symphony's upcoming concert on March 9, 2025, serves as a special opportunity to highlight the significance of music education and unifying power of music within our community.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Anne McEnerny-Ogle, Mayor of Vancouver, Washington, do hereby proclaim the Month of March as:

“ Music in Our Schools Month ”

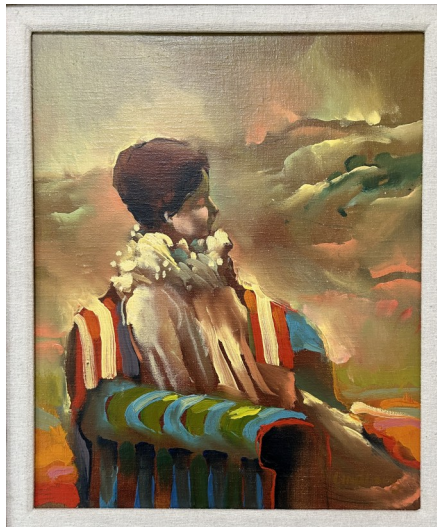
in the City of Vancouver and encourage all community members to recognize and celebrate the contributions of music educators, students, and organizations that enrich our community through music.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and cause the seal of the City of Vancouver to be affixed this 3rd day of March 2025.

Anne McEnerny-Ogle

ANNE McENERNY-OGLE, MAYOR



"Gold" by Keith Lindberg

BACKSTAGE

May 2025

One learns from books and example only that certain things can be done. Actual learning requires that you do those things.

– Frank Herbert, author of the "Dune" series

2025—SWWS 20th Anniversary Season Celebration

MORE MARIMBA MUSIC IN MARCH

In **March 2024**, SWWS audience members waiting in the lobby before the concert were serenaded by a group of talented high school students performing on the marimba. We were fortunate to have a return appearance one year later on **March 9, 2025** by one of those students, Gideon Beam, from Evergreen High School who exquisitely performed solo. The multi-octave marimba must be difficult to play proficiently— only 2 hands, 4 mallets, and many similarly colored wood bars!!! Those of you who attended our May 18 concert got to see more percussion work by this gifted musician. Thank you, Gideon, for making such a special experience for our audience members! Kudos to his mom, Kara Beam, who plays clarinet with SWWS.

CUB SCOUT PACK 610

A local Pack of Cub Scouts and their parents attended our **March 9** concert. After the concert, the group met musicians on stage and learned some basics about conducting technique while standing at the conductors' podium. We hope this motivates some of them to learn a musical instrument and/or become future music patrons so that this vital tradition continues into the future! Well done, Scouts, and we hope you attend future performances!

ART RAFFLE - MAY 18, 2025

At the **May 18** concert, we raffled the last remaining painting (above) given to SWWS in 2018 to support its mission by the Give Art Foundation (Gene Wigglesworth and Grace Teigen). It was part of a group of paintings by contemporary American artists including Keith Lindberg, Sheep Jones, Carole Watanabe, and Marianne Kolb. You may recall that the music programming for our Oct. 21, 2018 concert was designed by Patrick Murphy based on themes inspired by the painting September Hut by Sheep Jones. The raffle winner in May was one of our volunteers who said he knew exactly where in his home this colorful one-of-a-kind oil painting would live.

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT MAY 18, 2025

As we celebrate the close of our 20th anniversary season, I want to extend heartfelt gratitude to you, our audience, donors, and community, for your unwavering support. Your presence sustains our mission of sharing exceptional wind band music free to the public. I also thank our past presidents: Richard Carr, Peter Boulé, and Carinn Ormson, whose leadership helped shape who we are today. As we look

As we look ahead to our 2025-2026 season, we're planning some exciting collaborations, new repertoire, and expanded opportunities for engagement with young musicians. Stay tuned! We can't wait to share it with you.

Warmly,
Jessicah Wager
SWWS President

With much gratitude for the past 20 years:

- SWWS Musicians and Ushers
- SWWS Board of Directors
- Conductors, Guest Conductors, Soloists, & Ensembles, & Student Musicians
- Thomas Friedman & the Union High School auditorium crew
- Matt Griffin & Evergreen Public Schools Videography crew
- Our dedicated and supportive audience and contributors
- Our founding corporate sponsor:
- Beacock Music

Looking forward to seeing you during the next 20 years...

спасибо 谢谢
GRACIAS
THANK YOU
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