

The Vindicator

Todd Maki knows the score when it comes to orchestral passion



Submitted photo Todd Maki, founder of the Legacy Scoring Orchestra, is the new conductor and music director of the Youngstown Area Community Concert Band.

Todd Maki wants to bring orchestral passion to the concert band world.

The Youngstown native is the new conductor and music director of the Youngstown Area Community Concert Band, succeeding Joseph Pellegrini, who retired in 2025 after leading the group for 35 of its 42 years.

Maki has worked with various ensembles in the area, but his primary role is as a conductor, composer and founder of the Legacy Scoring Orchestra, which specializes in soundtracks for film, commercials and musicals.

Maki was aware of the YACCB because several musicians he'd worked with on various projects played in the band, and after Pellegrini announced he was retiring, some of those musicians told him he should apply.

"That was hilarious, because I've never conducted a band proper in my life," Maki said.

Despite his reservations, he decided to apply.

"They wanted me to take a meeting, to my shock," he said. "It was supposed to be 45 minutes. The interview ended up being an hour and a half, and they called me back very quickly and said, Todd, 'We unanimously want you to be our conductor.'"

Because he didn't come from a concert band background, Maki wasn't wedded to the norms and traditions of that genre. He believed the stereotype of community bands was mostly older musicians playing a familiar repertoire for predominantly older listeners.

"I said, 'We're going to change things up,' and immediately the band responded wildly favorably to that," Maki said. "There's a different energy about the band right now."

That energy starts behind the podium.

"It generally is understood that there is passion embedded in (classical) music," Maki said. "It's a reason why footage of (Conductor Leonard) Bernstein sweating and pouring water out of every orifice is compelling. It's passionate, it's exciting, and it's neat ... There's a new energy that I'm taking from the podium of an orchestra and intentionally planting it in concert band."

The theme for this year's program is "The Dream of Flight," and it includes classical works such as "Jupiter" from Gustav Holst's orchestral suite "The Planets" to film scores from "Star Wars" and "How to Train Your Dragon."

"I was sitting there thinking, wow, we're about to take flight on a new venture

with this band. ‘Oh, let’s play music about that.’ I did form a committee, and the four or five of us sat around and talked about ideas, ‘What do you guys like?’ It was important to me, because I needed to know what they have done in the past. I don’t want to choose repertoire that’s repeating.”

After Maki took over as music director, he recruited some musicians he’s worked with in the past. The band has swelled to about 80 members. Not everyone can make every concert, but concerts this season will average close to 70 players.

He also is looking to expand the band’s performance opportunities, talking to folks at such venues as Youngstown Playhouse, where Maki conducted the orchestra for its recent productions of “Oklahoma” and “Singin’ in the Rain.”

“We’re working on creating the very first YACCB ticketed performance at the Playhouse,” he said. “It would be a rock ‘n’ roll show, maybe guest vocalists, guest players, guest soloists, possibly for a fundraiser.”

Maki, 49, said he’s enjoyed the experience so far.

“It has never been my own personal ambition to conduct a community concert band, (but) it’s fun, I’m enjoying it, I’m learning from it,” he said. “I really genuinely love to bring groups together to push them to create greatness, and so when that happens in the most altruistic, purist sense, I’m very happy.”

2026 Youngstown Area Community Concert Band schedule

- June 28 — Summer Winds at the Winery at Wolf Creek, Barberton, at 12:15 p.m.
- July 2 — Shepherd of the Valley, Howland, at 7 p.m.
- July 19 — Mastropietro Winery Community Band Festival, Berlin Center, at 3:30 p.m.
- July 26 — Boardman Park at 4 p.m.
- July 28 — Austintown Township Park at 7 p.m.

August 7 - Mercer County Courthouse, Mercer, Pa., at 7 p.m.

- Nov. 1 — St. Patrick Church, Youngstown, at time to be determined
- Dec. 13 — Holiday Concert of Giving with Stambaugh Chorus at Stambaugh Auditorium, Youngstown, at 2:30 p.m.

For more information, go to yaccb.org.

NEWSLETTER

Today's breaking news and more in your inbox

Email Address

I'm interested in (please check all that apply) *(Required)*

☐ Daily Newsletter☐ Breaking News☐ Obituaries

Are you a paying subscriber to the newspaper? *(Required)*

☐ Yes☐ No

SUBSCRIBE