



# *VanderCook*

COLLEGE OF MUSIC

ANNUAL  
REPORT

2013



# Our Mission

The mission of VanderCook College of Music is to enrich the lives of present and future generations through the preparation of teachers in instrumental, choral and general music disciplines. Our broad-based curriculum is designed to prepare teachers with strong character, skill in the process of teaching, and respect for the essential role of music in our culture.



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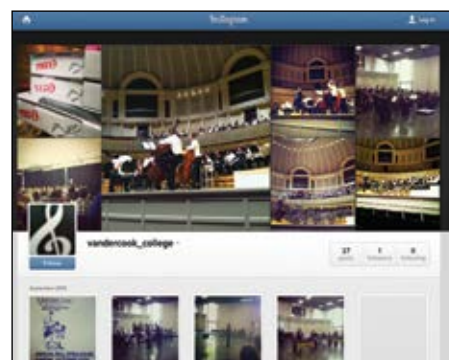
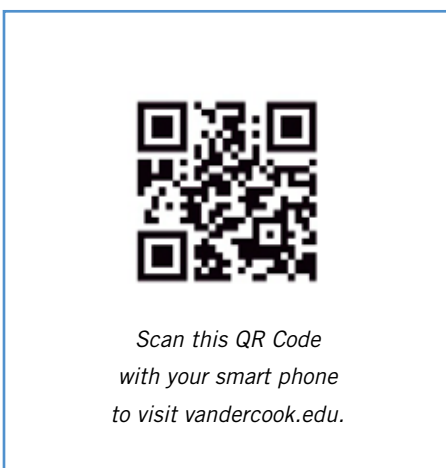
# Join the Conversation...



Anyone who has stepped foot on VanderCook's campus understands the depth of knowledge we expound and the pride we have in music education. The educators we prepare go on to do great things all over the country and the world.

We're working hard to extend our knowledge online and invite you to join us. Whether you use Facebook, Twitter or other social networks, include the hashtag **#TeachMusic** to display your knowledge of and advocacy for music education. Connect with your peers and colleagues online to help each other, to encourage each other and to remind yourselves every day that your work matters.

Find us on our website ([vandercook.edu](http://vandercook.edu)) and the social networking sites listed below.



Your work matters. Your voice matters. **#TeachMusic**



# A Letter from the President

Dr. Charles T. Menghini

*Dear Alumni and Friends,*

**Time.** Like you, I just wish I had more time. I wish I had more time so I could visit each and every one of you personally... and share with all of you the exciting news of our college. The successes we experience each and every day don't make it on the six o'clock news. You won't find them on the pages of the newspaper, but we have many success stories to share. And so, we present to you the fourth edition of our annual report.

This is my 20th year at VanderCook and my 10th year as president. During these 20 years, there have been literally thousands of teachers and students who have benefitted from the teachings of our faculty and the work of our staff. Each and every one of them has been a beneficiary of the time invested in helping to make their experience productive, practical and pertinent.

This annual report is but a snapshot of some of the people whom the college has served and with whom the college has worked. We present this as a gift to you, a gift of thanks for the time you have invested in our college. Whether it was the time you invested to attend a concert or event, the time you invested to take a class or earn your degree, the time you invested to make a contribution, or even the time you invested to think about us, and perhaps include us in one of your conversations. For all your investments, we thank you.

I believe that your time is the most valuable thing in your life. And where some people may "spend" time, I believe that in order to make our lives richer and fuller, we need to invest our time. You are receiving this annual report because that's what you have done with us: you have invested your time in VanderCook.

At our small college on the south side of Chicago, we invest our time developing the next great generation

of music teachers. We invest our time teaching people how to play all the band and orchestra instruments, how to sing, conduct, perform and teach. We do this with undergraduates eager to earn their bachelor's degree and emerge a certificated music teacher. We do this with seasoned professionals who seek a master's degree or who simply want a few more tools for their toolkit. And we do this with school students... young people who probably can't articulate why they do what they do, but simply do it because it's fun!

Through your investment in our college, you make it possible for us to continue our investment in music education, and by extension our investment in society. Wouldn't the world be a better place if there were more harmony, balance, blend and beauty? Isn't the world a better place with more music?

At VanderCook, we're going to continue our investment; in fact, we're going to expand our investment. We've been working hard to plan and raise funds for the renovation of a second building for the college. Hopefully you've already read about it, but if you haven't, you will learn more as you read through this report.

As you read the articles and look at the pictures in these pages, I hope you will see that the time you have invested in VanderCook through your actions, words and deeds have yielded a substantial return on your investment. I hope these pages will bring a smile to your face and a nod of your head, and that you feel your time was worth your investment.

Thanks for your continued support. Hopefully you will continue to invest in our college, our program and our students. I'm in Year 20 of my investment. Time sure flies when you're having fun!

Sincerely,

Dr. Charles T. Menghini





*Many a VanderCook graduate would call Kevin Lepper a living legend. As VanderCook's professor of percussion and director of applied studies, Lepper virtually personifies the dedication to and investment in VanderCook students that cements the college's reputation. Gregor Meyer profiles the unassuming Lepper and explores the auspicious origins and teaching philosophies of this beloved instructor.*

## Profile:

# Kevin Lepper

Ask around and it seems like everyone has a favorite Kevin Lepper story. There's the Silly Seminar performance of "Rock Me, Amadeus" in a full Mozart costume complete with white wig. There's the centerfold spread in the Advantage Network catalog. And of course, there are the legendary vintage shirts that would make any hepcat green with envy.

But beyond the jovial spirit and camaraderie that permeate almost every lesson and performance lies an intense dedication and stealth-like focus that conveys the commitment to his craft. Sophomore Luke Moyta recalls how Lepper went the extra mile before Moyta had even decided to attend VanderCook: "My very first lesson with Mr. Lepper was as a prospective student. My half-hour audition ended up being an hour and a half and was jam-packed with so much helpful information. That lesson was one of the main reasons I chose VanderCook."

Lepper's passion for bringing out the best in his students isn't lost on colleagues, either. As Undergraduate Dean Stacey Larson Dolan succinctly states, "Kevin has the patience of a saint. He is one of the most amazing teachers I have ever worked with."

It may come as a surprise to anyone who's worked or studied with Lepper that drumming was a musical talent that didn't necessarily come naturally to him. In fact, his story is one of tireless determination and a seemingly insatiable appetite to learn, improve and grow as an artist. Once bitten, he knew he had found his path. Upon first hearing those who would become his heroes – Buddy Rich, Ringo Starr, Tony Williams, Ed Thigpen, Steve Gadd – his conviction became unshakable.

Growing up in Hawk Point, MO, a town of about 350, Lepper's early years were decid-

edly a-musical. “I was a very typical rural kid. I did baseball in the summer, I would go out in the woods and roam and explore, rode my bike... Nothing to do with music.” Junior high school gave him the choice of joining one of only two groups: Future Farmers of America or the band. “Since I didn’t farm, I chose band,” he recalls. “There were about 150 people in the band, a quarter of your school population, which is unbelievable these days. It was a very dynamic group, and I chose percussion because I had braces.” He took to drums like a fish to water, and soon worked all the odd jobs he could find to save money for his first drum set – the very set currently used by the VanderCook jazz band.

Though he had found his passion in a drum kit, he admits with a smile that formal study was more of a chore than a hobby. “I took very few lessons; I wasn’t a good student. I didn’t practice what the guy wanted me to, I would just sort of noodle around with my own stuff, so the lessons didn’t go very well.” His high school years were of playing snare in the school band by day and playing along to rock ‘n’ roll hits by night. While he was certain that drumming would guide his future footsteps, it wasn’t until his first year at the University of Missouri that he met the man who would truly change the course of his professional life: Tim Lautzenheiser.

“I well remember taking a position on the music faculty at the University of Missouri in 1973,” Lautzenheiser recalls. “The first day on the job a new percussion student walked into the studio and announced he was planning to major in music/percussion. He did a short audition and I was candid in letting him know he had a far distance to go to catch up to his fellow music majors. Not only did Kevin embrace the challenge but he far exceeded everyone’s most positive (and extreme) expectations. There were countless early mornings when I arrived at the university to



find Kevin practicing diligently, and it was not unusual to see his sleeping bag resting beside a marimba; he would practice until he simply couldn’t stay awake, sleep for a few hours, and then begin the next segment.”

## “Kevin Lepper: It just doesn’t get any better!”

The bond that formed between teacher and student could not have been forged any stronger. Lepper credits his mentor with broadening his horizons on a multitude of levels. “[Lautzenheiser] is so passionate about music, and about doing things well and pursuing everything possible, that that’s when I really came up with a lot of my knowledge of who I listen to and who I play to,” he says. “He was one of those teachers where you wouldn’t have an assigned length to your lesson. With Tim, many times we’d have a lesson every day. He’d hear my practicing and say, ‘Hey Lepper, come in here,’ and we would have a half-hour or an hour lesson on the spot. If you were prepared you might have a two-hour lesson. If you were moving forward, he would just continue to work with you and work with you. And it would be that during the lesson he may throw on a jazz album or some Dick Schory. It was really him just showing me the way.”

Once ignited, Lepper’s passion for absorbing the techniques and styles of different drummers never abated. His tenacity left an indelible impression on at least one fellow classmate: “I remember watching him teach himself how to sightseeing by matching pitches with a marimba. There was no single person who worked harder or wanted to learn more than Kevin,” recalls Dr. Charles T. Menghini, whose lifelong friendship with Lepper began during their early years at Missouri. “His incredible work ethic, his sincere attitude and approach to everything he does, and his love for music are some of the things I admire most.”

When Lautzenheiser took a position at New Mexico State University, Lepper was one of about 20 percussionists who transferred with him to pursue graduate studies. “I was basically doing a dual major. I was saying, ‘I’m going to perform as well as I can, I’m really going to push that, but I’m going to take all of

the education courses along the way.” Lepper had been giving private lessons on the side and instructed at band camps already in high school and continued throughout college.

During his senior year, the offer of an assistantship forced him to choose one path or the other. “I was really sort of a late bloomer in the decision process,” he explains. “I was a graduate assistant and New Mexico State said, ‘If you’re going to do education, we’re going to fill the graduate assistant job with somebody else. If you do performance, then you can have the job.’ I knew at that point that I didn’t want to be a band director, so I chose to go performance.” He credits Lautzenheiser with pushing the craft but never the career. “He would push you for teaching and for performance at the same time. He never declared, ‘You’re going to be a music teacher.’ Instead he was, ‘You’re going to be a percussionist, and then whatever comes out of that comes out of that.’”

Master’s degree in hand, Lepper continued teaching percussion as well as theory at NMSU, eventually following his mentor once again, this time to Chicago. “Tim moved up to Chicago to take a job with McCormick’s, which is basically what we know as Bands of America now. I came up with him and started working in the sales department, selling flagpoles, music shoes, things like that. Selling at McCormick’s during the day, playing, teaching marching band – I kept everything going throughout.” It wasn’t long before he was able to freelance full-time as a performer and private instructor throughout the Chicago area. “I started realizing that teaching really was more of a forte than playing was. I seemed to be better at that, even though I really hadn’t put my finger on it.”

Lepper diligently worked his contact base and was able to secure both performance and teaching jobs entirely through word of mouth (“I don’t think I’ve ever had an inter-







view for a job.”). He landed at VanderCook thanks to Dr. Menghini, who at the time was VanderCook’s director of bands. When instructor Marc Jacoby prepared to leave his post in 1997, he recommended Lepper to succeed him as director of percussion studies. The life of full-time freelancing came to a close as full-time teaching took over.

Lepper’s impact on VanderCook students in the past 16 years has been nothing short of legendary. Those who have known him longest will tell you that his drive and commitment continue with the same fervor and determination as when he was a student himself. For others – new students, staff and even the musically untrained – his love of the craft and the attention he gives to each student are almost palpable. Junior Marlee Wilde best articulates what every student feels: “Mr. Lepper is a real treasure and VanderCook is blessed to have him. He not only teaches his students the fundamentals of percussion but also how to be a better person, teacher, musician and example to others.”

Lepper himself credits his success and popularity as a teacher with three tenets that have guided him to this day: commitment to excellence, the willingness to be a lifelong learner, and the importance of a musician as part of a group. “Everybody needs to be a part of the group to be successful,” he elaborates. “I believe that everyone is searching for a group to be a part of, whether it’s softball or band or chess club... What’s going to make a person satisfied with their life is if they’re an integral part of a group, and that’s what band does. We take all these people together and work towards a common goal. It becomes a safe haven.”

It is perhaps this avuncular attitude, this ego-less attention to the components as well as the final result, which allows all his students, percussion majors and secondary players alike, to feel right at home. Amy Lenting, VanderCook’s director of admissions who studied with Lepper as an undergraduate, still beams when recalling her days in the percussion studio: “Mr. Lepper is the master of breaking down musical concepts into their simplest form, explaining the parts, and then helping you see the big picture as you put everything back together. No one does it better.” Dr. Menghini sees the life experience permeate his teaching style: “It has been his journey, everything that he has worked for, how he has worked for it, all that he has accomplished that makes him such a great

teacher. He has been in his students’ shoes and knows what they need to do and how they need to do it.”

Never satisfied with simply continuing trends (“I’m not a ‘tread water’ kind of person; we’re either moving forward or we’re not,”) Lepper has implemented many elements to the VanderCook experience. Having a pep band and drumline play for runners at mile 23 of the Chicago Marathon is now a staple of fall semester’s undergraduate activities. The formation of a second percussion performance ensemble and the rhythm component of VanderCook’s Teacher Candidacy Skills Assessment also bear the stamp of his initiative.

“If I had my druthers, I’d have percussion students study piano,” Lepper confesses. “I actually took piano for about six months, and I tell my mom this every time I see her: ‘You should have put a seat belt on the piano bench, and locked me there for an hour and said, “I don’t care what you do, do something on the piano for an hour, and then you can get up.””

Outside of VanderCook, Lepper is as busy as he can be. He’s authored over 50 original works for percussion and over 400 special arrangements for marching band. His instructional books and videos have been published by Hal Leonard and FJH Publishing, and he remains in high demand as a clinician across the country. In addition to dozens of performances with school bands and ensembles (including a trip to perform in Moscow with Lake Park High School), his talents have been heard in a number of TV commercials (Oscar Mayer, Kellogg’s, Volvo and Audi, to name a few) as well as the reconstruction of Francesco Lavanigno’s original score to the restored version of Orson Welles’ film “Othello.”

Like many accomplished music teachers, though, Lepper is humble and unassuming about his numerous awards and accomplishments. His warm and welcoming demeanor never wavers, and his concern and devotion to his students have made seismic impacts on many a VanderCook graduate. In the words of former mentor Lautzenheiser, “Those who have the opportunity to be in the presence of Kevin are benefactors of a master teacher who, in his predictably humble style, is always quick to give credit to everyone else, and yet he is the source of excellence.”

*Kevin Lepper’s music products can be found at [www.advantagenetworkinc.com](http://www.advantagenetworkinc.com).*



A Q&A with

# Matthew Ingelson

*Matthew Ingelson is a senior trumpet player at VanderCook College of Music. Originally from Palm Springs, CA, Matt is the middle of three boys to Brian, a high school band director, and Bev, an inpatient rehab group director and Brian's flag instructor for the high school.*

## **When did you start playing?**

Like most good music-minded parents, my parents put me in piano lessons at the age of five. I remember enjoying playing piano a lot, but like most five-year-old music students, I didn't have much interest in sitting at the piano. My dad is a band director, and after school I spent all of my time listening to his rehearsals; this had a profound impact on me. I remember improvising his band music on a recorder until I started playing trumpet at age 10. I didn't really want to play trumpet at first (I had delusions of being a French horn player), but my dad, who is also a trumpet player, told me I had to start on trumpet before moving to horn. I never made the switch, and am all the happier for it!

## **For many who decide to pursue music at the collegiate level, there's a point at which you realize that music is the most important part of your life. Did you have that? Why, when and where?**

I wanted to become a lawyer for most of high school. The turning point was at Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band Jazz Camp that I attended before my junior year of high school. Goodwin's fourth trumpet player, Dan Savant, had spoken to me about music business and law school, but ended the discussion with something along the lines of, "If you have the dream, you just have to go for it." Later, Wayne Bergeron reiterated this from a performance aspect, and even later Eric Marienthal repeated it all one more time. It all kind of clicked at that point. There's really nothing I love more than playing trumpet, and I had started making a bit of money playing – why try to make a square peg fit in a round hole? I truly believe, as I think most people do, that we have some natural role where we fit in society, and making music must be mine!

## **What things in life influenced you to consider and earn a degree in music, and music education to be specific?**

Music is very important to me, and earning a living with music is all I can see myself doing. There isn't much value in any other musical degree path, so music education is an obvious choice. Many of the most successful musicians have come from music education backgrounds: Michael Mulcahy of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and Mike Williams, lead trumpet of the Count Basie Orchestra, to name a few.

Chicago is also the best place in America for music. All this and more added up to my decision to go to VanderCook.

## **Why did you decide to attend here over another college?**

When it was time to look at colleges, Stefan Colson and I were talking, and his message to me was that I wouldn't really fit in anywhere that wasn't a music-exclusive school. I was kind of looking at a music college in Boston, but had met some people who went there and became increasingly uninterested in the school. My parents were also concerned about me getting a performance degree right off the bat, and their music ed program looked rather lackluster. I'd also had an opportunity in another country that had fallen through.



Matt, age 15, with his very musical family.

My dad had taken me to the Midwest Clinic a couple times before my senior year, and I was really jazzed about the conference. My senior year, I visited the conference and Dr. Menghini took us to see VanderCook. It was raining, very cold, and all of the Midwest Clinic's equipment had just been dropped off. Dr. Schuman met us there with her small children in tow, and listened to me play. I was pretty invested in jazz, and was also pretty arrogant, so I tried to play Arutunian's "Trumpet Concerto" by ear. This turned out to be a rather poor decision, as I had no idea that Dr. Schuman is the leading expert on Russian and Eastern European trumpet repertoire. When I inevitably played a wrong note, she stopped me, named the chord that I was trying to play over, and then had me continue.

When it came to choosing a school, the choice was pretty clear. VanderCook had already stuck its neck out for me without really having any reason to. Though I had known Dr. Menghini for a few years, he had never heard me play, and Dr. Schuman was a complete stranger. I think a lot of schools really try to push you away to create an air of exclusivity, but VanderCook really wants you, and the staff wants you to be successful.

### What about this program would you say is unique to other programs?

VanderCook offers the most comprehensive music degree of any program. We play in a wide array of ensembles and experience some phenomenal pedagogues. While the program is very deeply rooted in music education, VanderCook does a lot to encourage its students to do more in music. I've been able to take jazz lessons in addition to my classical trumpet lessons, and have even picked up jazz piano in my time here. VanderCook prepares you with more knowledge about every

instrument than any other school, which not only makes our teachers great teachers, but also prepares us to be knowledgeable arrangers and composers. VanderCook takes more time developing the strong fundamental skills that other schools don't bother with.

### Who have been your most influential teachers along the way? Why?

I have had many great teachers along the way who have really shaped my playing. My first teacher was really my dad, and all of my natural tendencies basically stem from him. I've taken lessons with many different trumpet professors and musicians; however, prior to VanderCook I studied primarily with Jimmy Ogden and Stefan Colson. Jimmy is one of the kindest souls I've ever met – he laid a lot of the foundations of my playing and I often refer to his teachings even now. He also gave me my first copy of Max Schlossberg's "Daily Drills for Trumpet" that I still play out of today. Stefan laid a lot of my foundational jazz trumpet techniques, and taught me how to play lead trumpet. Stefan's impact has been enormous on my playing and performing as he taught me to be diverse, how to record myself, and most importantly, keep my ego in check.

This list would be incomplete without mentioning the profound impact that Dr. Leah Schuman has had on me at VanderCook. Before coming here, I distinctly remember scoffing at trumpet players who played C trumpet. I was clearly very wrong, as now I perform often on C trumpet, and embrace a lot of the traditions of the trumpet that I overlooked before my college education. She's been the toughest person on my playing while also being one of the kindest teachers I've had.

Lastly, Anthony Kidonakis, VanderCook's jazz and saxophone professor, has really influenced the way I approach jazz, and also the way I view music holistically. He too is one of the hardest but simultaneously most caring teachers I've ever had.

### You have a family/friend connection to VanderCook. Could you detail that a little?

Growing up, I had heard these "stories" about my parents' band director in Calgary, Alberta. My dad was lead trumpet in the band and my mom was the featured baton twirler (which seems like an equally compatible and simultaneously incompatible couple, but that's separate from this story).

Around the time I was 13, we received a phone call from a band booster at Palm Springs High School saying that there was a man looking for my dad. It turned out that the man was Dr. Menghini, and he was visiting the band's annual Christmas Tree Lot. As it turns out, Dr. Menghini was the band director that my parents had told me all about. My parents rekindled their old friendship with Dr. and Mrs. Menghini, and the rest is history.

### Best teaching moment you've ever had... so far?

VanderCook recently sent four of us to Ecuador for an internship that put us in teaching positions for four different programs that ranged from high school, to beginners who were our age, to professional ensembles. There isn't one experience that I had there that was more valuable than any other moment; rather, the experience that we had teaching every group is my "best teaching moment." One of the greatest feelings I've ever experienced was communicating with a wide variety of people solely through music. There were a couple of occasions where players and I would exchange concepts and techniques, or information about instruments, and we'd forget that we don't speak the same language. Really, I feel as though this great teaching moment was a learning moment about the connection anyone in the world can feel to music.

### What are your plans for the future?

Music!



A 14-year-old Matt after a performance on the Great Wall of China.

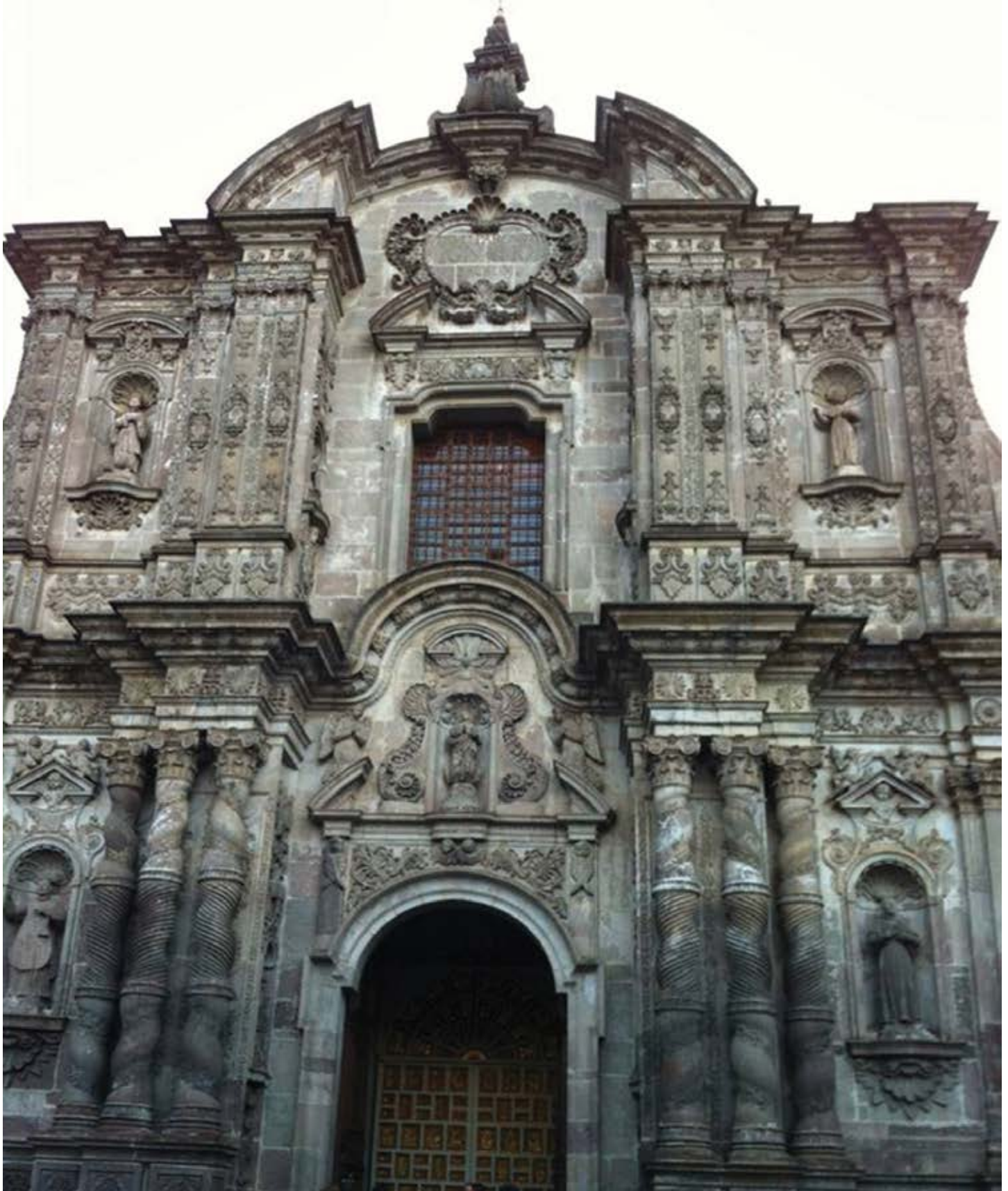


After a performance at Capetown City Hall in South Africa.



Matt with one of his trumpet idols, Wayne Bergeron





VanderCook Abroad:

# ECUADOR 2013



**“The takeaways are intangible, but very real. Because of this experience, our students have exposure to a secondary language, a broader education, and a different understanding of the world.”**

– Dr. Leah Schuman



*This summer, VanderCook launched a special program bringing selected VanderCook students to introduce a curriculum in the music school founded by alumnus Carlos Alban (BMEd '03 , MMEd '13). For some of the VanderCook students, it was their first time outside the country, and their first experience teaching music to non-native-English speakers. Sophia Madana collected their stories.*

As she stepped off the plane in Quito, Ecuador, Applied Trumpet Professor Dr. Leah Schuman knew she and the four VanderCook students accompanying her were about to embark upon a great journey with a large task at hand: improving music education in a foreign country, starting with a small studio run by former student Carlos Alban.

The group of five spent two weeks together, working with music students and helping to implement a VanderCook-like curriculum at the studio.

“I knew it would be a life-changing experience for our students,” says Dr. Schuman, discussing why she jumped on board immediately. “The opportunity to build that connection and bridge between VanderCook and students in a foreign country is priceless, and I had personally never been to Ecuador. The chance to visit there also appealed to me.”

Alban envisioned the idea of a program similar to VanderCook in Ecuador soon after he began courses at the college. “It was in my head to start a school in Ecuador since I was 15. I just didn’t know what path to take until I came to VanderCook,” he says.

With the help and guidance of VanderCook’s president, Dr. Charles Menghini, they put together a concrete, achievable plan to place a VanderCook curriculum in Ecuador, including bringing current students to work with Alban’s music school.

“Sometimes the best inventions are made by accident. That’s kind of what happened here,” says Alban. “There is a missing piece in music education in Ecuador. The country wants to start a college program for highly skilled musicians, however it is missing music education at the middle level. That part isn’t strong enough here. I’m turning my percussion studio into a music school for younger students as a response to the new efforts being made at the college level.”

The plan was now in motion and only one main task was left: choosing the students. Alban felt any student enrolled in VanderCook’s program would be well equipped to handle the responsibility, so he trusted the college’s choices completely.

“We knew we needed two males and two females for housing purposes,” explains Dr. Schuman. “We also knew we needed two students specializing in woodwind and two in brass. Students were required to write an essay to explain their interest in the program. We chose the students who fit the profile and who also displayed sincere, positive attitudes with a high level of flexibility who we knew would be able to go with the flow.”

This selection process brought students Ashley Burton, Paul Cepela, Matt Ingelson and Liz Limón to the forefront. Working with Alban, VanderCook was able to secure housing and flights so that students wouldn’t have any out of pocket expenses besides their day-to-day living costs.

No one involved knew what to expect going into the process. “We were very much thrown into the situation, but in the best way possible,” says Matt Ingelson. “No one was necessarily monitoring the small groups we were leading and it was solely up to the four of us to teach music. Our students were dedicated and very attentive.”



VanderCook's students were completely immersed in the culture of Ecuador, which influences much of the music taught there. "I appreciated that much of their music was more reliant on oral tradition," says Ingelson. "Our students were all well versed in traditional folk songs that belong to Ecuador's culture and society."

While the experience of implementing VanderCook's system into Alban's music studio was mainly positive, it did present some challenges. However, the students handled them gracefully.

"There was sometimes a huge language barrier. Some people only knew a little English and I had only taken three years of high school Spanish," says Ashley Burton. "Despite this, we were able to communicate using hand gestures, facial gestures, a few words every now and then, but most importantly music. Music is truly a universal language. To be able to come to a different country and not know what anyone is saying to you and still be able to perform and create music is such an awesome experience that every musician should have."

Learning secondary band instruments was a concept introduced to the Ecuadorian students just four months before VanderCook's students had arrived in Quito. "To see how far along they all were on these instruments in such short time really showed the talent they each possessed," says Burton. "The techniques used were at a high level, and this was reflected in the students' playing and attitudes." There was no doubt in her mind this was the result of Alban's teaching methods, which he picked up at VanderCook.

While working tirelessly in Ecuador with the music studio, the students, along with Dr. Schuman, spent two days seeing more of the country. These activities included visiting a thermal bath with naturally heated water, touring churches that are several hundred years old, and witnessing the inauguration of the new Ecuadorian president, Rafael Correa.

It was evident that after two weeks, the students made an impact at Alban's studio, and hopefully a firm step headed toward the improvement of music education in Ecuador. But Dr. Schuman noted that the experience certainly impacted VanderCook's students as well.

"I wouldn't change anything about the experience," says Burton. "I had an amazing time in Quito and feel so blessed to have gotten the opportunity to attend. I made wonderful memories and was able to experience things I wouldn't have anywhere else."



# Mark Reid

I started making music formally at age four with piano lessons. My mother, one of six sisters, comes from a musical family and my father had a successful career in music education and elementary school administration in Ontario. My sister fell victim to a teacher who encouraged her to just 'mouth the words' and didn't find music to be a central part of her identity growing up. Now, as a mother of a charming Grade 1 student, my sister insists that my niece be as expressive and musical as she likes. Her desire to be a contestant on "American Idol" and "The Voice" is as awe-inspiring as her unbridled songwriting skills. Her collection of songs about butterflies and princesses are on the local playground's Top 40.

My entire family has been immensely supportive of my choice to pursue a career in music. The support came easy considering that I made an unshakeable decision to be

a music educator at age 11, one month into my first year of clarinet playing. Decisive and determined behavior is a common theme amidst the childhood stories that my mother could retell for hours.

While piano was my first instrument, I was quickly put on the church women's group circuit throughout the county as a boy soprano, accompanied by my mother. I chose clarinet as my band instrument when I entered beginning band in grade 7. I added bass clarinet to my experience while playing in the Lindsay Kinsmen Band, and the saxophone in my first year of high school. My high school experience also included percussion ensemble, jazz band, clarinet choir, saxophone ensemble, chamber choir and vocal jazz ensemble. I've always maintained the clarinet as my main instrument, and completed my undergraduate degree at the University of Victoria (UVic) on clarinet with a major in music education.



My experience at UVic was remarkable. The flexibility of the program allowed me to customize my course of study and complete practical instruction in vocal jazz while under faculty supervision. The school is known for its promotion of new music and now stands as Canada's only all-Steinway school of music. The most unique experience was the opportunity to serve as tour manager for the Wind Symphony to perform at the Western International Band Clinic in Seattle, WA. Dr. Gerald King, one of very few Canadians





who hold membership in the American Bandmasters Association, modeled the teaching he'd describe in methods classes while on the podium as conductor of the Wind Symphony. I have the utmost respect for their care of students as future professionals and contributors to the profession. This point is best evidenced by the number of UVic alumni who serve as members of the Executive Committee of the British Columbia Music Educators' Association – 10 out of 12.



There are several teachers I consider mentors. These are people who've had a hand in my musical and professional upbringing and have become colleagues and friends. The most influential music teachers, however, are my parents. While my mother had no formal training in music education, I'd not have found singing without her encouragement. Watching my father's ensembles perform at local music festivals was so inspiring that it is safe to say that those experiences drove my desire to pursue this career. There were also school teachers who galvanized the determination. Russ & Deidre Baird, John Trepp, Richard Nace, Verna Ahner, Duane Bronson and Dr. Gerald King are the individuals whose professionalism and musicianship most heavily influence my teaching to this day. My personal achievement is largely the result of Dr. King's faith in my work, and his guidance to see responsibilities in music education beyond those of the classroom.

The landscape of music education in Canada is as diverse and comprehensive as our neighbour to the south (yes, there is a 'u' in that word). We share values of excellence in musicianship, respect for numerous means of music making, and appreciation for the way that our multicultural population diversifies children's musical experiences. Where we differ is on the topic of competition. Canadians tend to take a more tempered approach to competition. We celebrate student achieve-

ment with a lesser degree of pomp and circumstance. I would say, however, that this is a trait common to the difference between our nations' demonstration of patriotism. There are more fireworks aloft and ablaze in Chicago on the 4th of July than in all of Canada on our national holiday.

I found VanderCook by way of the Midwest Clinic and the cover of an "Essential Elements" book. After my first experience at Midwest, I realized that I'd had the opportunity to see performances or have conversations that connected every individual listed on the cover of the book. I took notice of VanderCook and held it in mind for some time. Two years ago, I heard the VanderCook Symphonic Band premiere a work by Kenneth Snoeck. When I discovered he was a member of the faculty, I got serious about applying. His online Band Arranging course was my first introduction to the quality of instruction offered at the school. The real reason I'm at the school, as many would say, is Cam Stasa. She wants to know who you are, and she helps you see the possibilities that the VanderCook experience can unlock.

My first day of school is the most inspiring of the year. The steady stream of students who come to the band room, just to say hello, reminds me so quickly how much they love the experience of being part of something bigger than themselves. With a music program of nearly 600 students, they share an identity that is reignited each September by simply setting foot in the music room.

The highlights of my teaching and music careers are often one and the same. We have been fortunate to connect with some impressive people who make and appreciate music. A few years ago, we had the distinct pleasure of performing for a visit to our school by Prince Edward, the Earl of Wessex, performing James Barnes' "Lonely Beach – Normandy 1944" to incredible applause and appreciation. The Band Room has also seen visits from Carly Rae Jepsen, Gene Simmons of the band Kiss, and Bill Cosby. Not too bad for an inner-city school.

The personal highlight thus far seems like it may never be beat. In 2013, I was recognized by MusiCounts, the music education charity associated with the Canadian Academy for Recording Arts and Sciences, with a JUNO Award and the title Music Teacher of the Year. I am deeply grateful to the students and colleagues with whom I work. Their support and

partnership enables my work and drives my continued advancement.

I know that my teaching has changed lives. This year, one Grade 12 student will graduate as a Section Leader but started in Grade 8 with an identified learning disability that should have severely limited his success. He loves his instrument and being a part of our community. A boy of few words in Grade 8, he's since developed a sense of great personal confidence and leadership ability. His teachers and counselor are so pleased with the profound shift they've seen in his level of communication.

Music education gives students an opportunity to explore interconnectedness in a manner that exists in no other subject area. Students enjoy instant response to their individual contribution each time they play their instrument or start singing. I have a passion for exploring new music for wind ensemble, and the students are proud of their series of premiere performances, which have included compositions by Ken Snoeck and Alex Shapiro. They are also responsible for the first high school production (and 11th by any company!) of Jerome Kern's 1915 musical comedy, "Very Good Eddie." These connections to the professional world, balanced with music of great icons, are the means to achieve the goals I have for my students.

I envision myself in 10 years at the helm of our music program, housed in the rehearsal room of my dreams. I hope that I am continuing to give kids a chance to express themselves in a collaborative and trusting community. My experience at VanderCook will undoubtedly nurture that vision and continue to excite my professional drive.





# A Letter from Ron Korbitz

## Alumni Board President

I am privileged to be able to communicate with all of you as the president of the Alumni Association. I am fortunate to be able to work with an Alumni Association board that is bright, talented and energetic. We represent diverse backgrounds from a variety of disciplines, college eras and degree programs. As I finish out my term as Alumni Association president, I would like to thank each of the board members I have served with for their time, talent and dedication to making VanderCook a stronger institution.

This fall, VanderCook will begin work on our new facility. This is an exciting time for our college. My graduate class was the first group of master's degree students to use the building at 3140 South Federal Street. After spending my undergraduate years and first year of graduate school at 3209 South Michigan Avenue, I noticed a tremendous energy that our "new" building brought us in the summers of 1995 and 1996. I once again feel that energy when I am on campus, and eagerly look forward to the future in our new performance, practice and teaching space.

This time of expansion is also a time for us, as supporters of VanderCook, to consider what we can do to expand our influence at the college. Maybe you can attend a concert and support our current students. They are a great group of young women and men who are always appreciative of a packed house. Maybe you can invite some VanderCook students out to observe at your school or take on a student teacher. We have all benefitted from strong mentors and leaders at some point in our careers and you can be that mentor for a current student. Maybe you can run for a position on the alumni board. We have open seats and our nominating team is looking for people who want to serve. All of these things will strengthen our alma mater and greatly benefit music education.

Big changes, like the renovation of a second building, also require us to examine our financial status. Phase One of this new project is going to cost approximately \$3 million. Phase Two will be an additional \$3 million. The board of trustees, administration and staff at VanderCook have all generously pledged support for our **Inspire. Build. Sustain.** Capital Campaign. I know several alumni who have also pledged. We are getting closer to our Phase One goal, and if you have not yet pledged your support, I ask you to consider making a financial gift to ensure VanderCook's success with this project and to secure VanderCook's legacy. A gift of *any size* will help the college!

As we move forward through the school year, I ask you to consider what your education at VanderCook has enabled you to accomplish, and consider how you can help VanderCook and our great profession grow stronger. We all become better when we give back and pay forward.

I hope to see you at the college this year, and I thank you in advance for your support. If you would like to contact me, I can be reached via email at [rkorbitz@vandercook.edu](mailto:rkorbitz@vandercook.edu). I welcome your thoughts and ideas. Have a great year and visit VanderCook soon.

Sincerely,

Ron Korbitz (BMEd 1990, MMEd 1996)



Making a Difference One Student at a Time:

# Carmen Rivera-Kurban

*As the first Hispanic woman to graduate from VanderCook, Carmen Rivera-Kurban has made an indelible impact at James Russell Lowell Elementary School in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood. Clarmarie Keenan talks with Rivera-Kurban about transcending expectations and elevating the musicianship of her students over the years.*

The excitement and noise grow as several families gather – parents, grandparents, sisters and brothers, godparents, aunts and uncles – in a northwest Chicago banquet hall on a late spring afternoon. The room is set with several round tables where the guests claim seats to enjoy an evening meal. At the back of the room, a silent auction awaits eager bidders. Front and center, a small area is cleared, ready for the evening's performances. Near the door to the kitchen, a rack of band uniforms is surrounded by children whose chatter reaches a giddy high pitch before it is quieted by a petite dark-haired woman, their teacher. She gently but firmly captures their attention, redirects their frenetic energy and cuts bedlam off at the pass.

She knows this is an important night – one they have waited, rehearsed and planned for since last August when school started. This is the night when it all comes together: the struggles with new music; the seemingly endless afterschool practice sessions; the challenges of mastering fingerings, embouchures and sticks; balancing young changing voices... Tonight is the year-end concert for the band and choir of James Russell Lowell Elementary School in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood. Lowell is a Pre-K-8 school serving a low-income population, an

urban ethnic mix, over 50% of whom are of Hispanic descent. And Lowell's band and choir program, now in its 25th year, is a brightly colored square in the quilted social fabric of the school and of the community. Parents use the phrase "life-saving" to describe the impact the program has had on their children and their families. The students themselves talk at a breakneck speed of their achievements and the enormous pride they feel and have earned. And at the center of all of the accolades and loyalty is a career music teacher, herself a lifelong Chicagoan of Hispanic descent, whose devotion and tenacity are the very heartbeat of Lowell's music program and certainly the catalyst for its continued success.

Carmen Rivera-Kurban (BMEd 1981) has been teaching at Lowell since 1983. Rivera-Kurban started as a "mentor" and began subbing after obtaining her substitute-teaching permit from the Chicago Board of Education. Her bilingual skills, coupled with her ability to manage even the toughest classrooms, caught the administration's eye when federal mandates in the late 80's included an enhanced focus on the arts, launching a new approach to learning. Rivera-Kurban was asked to fill the music void by teaching general music and choir –



with no budget. Undaunted, she dove in and, by 1995, had started Lowell's band program, also without a budget. Today, over 100 of Lowell's 1,500 students are actively involved in band, choir or both.

This persistence and drive might seem unusual for the average teacher, but Rivera-Kurban is anything and everything but average. A minority at the Chicago elementary school of her childhood, Rivera-Kurban was drawn to music in the 5th grade. After the violin and viola left her uninspired, she took to the clarinet and her journey began. The oldest daughter of Puerto Rican parents, Rivera-Kurban was not expected to pursue an education beyond high school. She credits her mother's unconditional love and support for fueling her determination and much of her success.

That success was also the result of Rivera-Kurban's work ethic and passion for music. She recalls beginning private lessons during her sophomore year in high school with "Doc" Ben Stoller. Saturday mornings, regardless of the weather or any temptations to sleep in or hang out with friends, she caught a bus and rode to Doc's home studio.

**"The greatest difference is when you're involved. If you're not, you're not going to have a big impact. You're just another teacher."**

– Carmen Rivera-Kurban

There, she was nurtured and encouraged to excel by a mentor she stills holds in high esteem and speaks of with unmistakable affection. Her hard work gave her opportunities that only deepened her love of music and focused her passion. She played in the Lakeview High School summer band and was accepted into the 165-member All-City Band that played on Saturdays at Jones College Prep. As the end of her high school career approached, Rivera-Kurban considered her options.

VanderCook had always been touted by Stoller as being the only school for Rivera-Kurban. “I respected his opinions. He told me there was no other place for me. So, I auditioned... thought I’d give it a try,” she reminisces. In the fall of 1978, Rivera-Kurban started at VanderCook, with her mother’s blessing and Doc’s encouragement. Her memories are of a VanderCook that developed her musicality and honed her innate nurturing skills into those of a teacher. Hard work aside, several great teachers, colleagues as hooked on music as she was, and sorority “hell nights” are some of the VanderCook memories she shares. “It’s a “modern VanderCook now,” she laughs, “and still the best place for a degree in music education.”

The first Hispanic woman to graduate from VanderCook, Rivera-Kurban took her degree to Texas where she taught band for one year. She worked a good program with the support of a good school system and enthusiastic boosters. The mixing of the VanderCook and Texas legacies was inspirational. Still, it was small-town Texas and Rivera-Kurban, a big-city girl at heart, decided it was not the right fit. At the end of her first year, she returned to Chicago, hoping to land a job in familiar, comfortable surroundings.

Joining the Lowell staff was her “no-turning-back moment,” as it was here she found the place where her passion mattered. Recalling the words of her trusted mentor Doc, she committed herself and her personal resources to the music program. “He was always right,” she muses. “You really do get out of your program what you put into it.” Rivera-Kurban went on to earn her master’s degree in counseling in 1992 at Chicago State University, a decision and experience she says has helped her help more students and families. “The greatest difference is

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## **“Carmen always comes through. She is so generous with her time and treasure. Her support affirms our work and makes a difference.”**

– Cindy Tovar, VanderCook Alumni Association Board

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when you’re involved. If you’re not, you’re not going to have a big impact. You’re just another teacher.”

Rivera-Kurban’s impact is real. She speaks of her students and their families with a sincerity and compassion that most reserve for their own families, because her students are her own. “I wouldn’t trade my Lowell experiences for anything,” she says. “I could have left many times. I was offered other positions at other schools. Because I am the founder of Lowell’s music program, I will always say no.” She is convinced teachers from highly funded districts and programs would benefit from a “swap day” where they could experience Rivera-Kurban’s classroom reality and appreciate her perspective.

The reality is one of success that is bred by her unwavering commitment. Xavier Custodio (BMEd 2007) is living proof of Rivera-Kurban’s dedication to her profession and to

her students. Now a Chicago Public School teacher himself with a master’s degree in administration from Concordia University Chicago, Custodio finds himself doing exactly what he watched Rivera-Kurban do when he was in her program at Lowell. “To be successful, you have to be committed,” he says. “You learn you’re there just to be there for them. I used to sit in Mrs. Kurban’s office after school while she was working, just hanging out with band kids, and my students do the exact same thing!”

During Custodio’s time at Lowell, the band made its inaugural trip to Florida to perform at Disneyworld, due in large part to Rivera-Kurban’s persistence and the support of the vocal, active parents who make up Lowell’s booster organization. “We raised a lot of money,” Rivera-Kurban recalls. “Taffy apple sales, chocolate sales, catalogue sales, sponsors. I provided the letters and the parents took them to local businesses.” She was








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**“It’s a modern VanderCook now, and still the best place for a degree in music education.”**

– Carmen Rivera-Kurban

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even able to encourage the board of education to underwrite some of the transportation costs. Both Custodio and Rivera-Kurban remember the local media covering their departure as the busses loaded and pulled away. And the band brought home the first trophy of many – the only one with a cup.

Custodio is quick to boast that plenty of Rivera-Kurban’s students continue music in high school and beyond. He recalls her advising students to take all of the tests possible and audition to see if they could get into one of the top city high schools. “The majority listen to me,” Rivera-Kurban smiles. Lowell alumni really never leave, according to Custodio. They support the program, attend concerts and stay close to “Mrs. Kurban.”

Alumni involvement comes naturally to the Lowell program because loyalty comes

naturally to their teacher and mentor. Rivera-Kurban is a staunch supporter of VanderCook. Her annual support of the A Night at the Pops benefit for the Great Teachers Scholarship Fund is an essential part of the success of this college tradition. “Carmen always comes through,” says Cindy Tovar (BMEd 2000), who serves on VanderCook’s Alumni Association Board. “She is so generous with her time and treasure. Her support affirms our work and makes a difference.” Rivera-Kurban also supports VanderCook students by opening her classrooms for observation hours and by taking student teachers. “Mrs. Kurban is a wonderful teacher. She is also a very genuine and generous person at heart. I’ve always had a positive experience with her, even when teaching gets rough,” says Ed Oberdieck (BMEd 2010), another VanderCook alumnus who Rivera-Kurban has

offered a hand up and counsel whenever needed. In fact, her early Lowell bands were training grounds for several VanderCook students who worked sectionals, helping with brass, percussion and woodwinds.

It should come as no surprise that Rivera-Kurban received VanderCook’s Distinguished Alumni Award in 2006. Presented annually by the Alumni Association, the award recognizes an alumnus who has made significant contributions to the field of music education and the legacy of VanderCook. Rivera-Kurban personifies the VanderCook legacy. Her advocacy of and for her students, for her alma mater and for her profession have a profoundly positive and lasting impact on the lives of those fortunate enough to come into the world she shares with all.



## A Q&A with Steve Nendza

“If They’re Laughing,  
They’re Listening.”

*Since earning his bachelor’s degree at VanderCook in 1999, Steve Nendza has left sizeable footprints everywhere he’s taught. After 10 years of co-directing four concert bands and three jazz ensembles at Deer Path Middle School in Lake Forest, IL, Nendza took up the baton at Jack Hille Middle School in Oak Forest. Under his direction, Hille’s band program has more than tripled in size in little over three years. The program now has three concert bands, two jazz bands, a woodwind ensemble and a percussion ensemble.*

*“The enthusiasm and appreciation of fine arts in this building is astronomical,” Hille principal Courtney Orzel told the Oak Forest Patch in 2010. “It’s outstanding, because of his leadership.” Nendza explained to the same reporter: “I really try to approach it so it’s very positive. I get at their level, find a way a to connect the music to their lives. If they’re laughing, they’re listening.” During a recent visit to his double alma mater (he earned his master’s degree from VanderCook in 2003), Nendza shared some secrets of his success with Gregor Meyer.*

**Your mother, Carol Nendza, earned her master’s degree at VanderCook in 1990. What brought her to VanderCook?**

She was a DePaul grad originally and had been teaching band at Gurrie Middle School in LaGrange. During that time she felt she needed to get her master’s to help her improve as a teacher, and VanderCook was very practical – the nuts and bolts of how to help your bands get better and better and better. She was here when the building was over on Michigan Avenue.

**Did she encourage you to become a director, or did you naturally gravitate toward teaching?**

She encouraged me to stay in band because I almost quit when I was in the fifth grade. I hated it, and she told me to “Just stick it out for one more year....” And then something changed: I went into high school band and I grew to love it more and more. My parents encouraged me to play more. During my junior year, I went to the Bands



of America weekend leadership workshop and worked with Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser. After that experience with Tim, I was hooked on the idea of “leadership combined with music,” and VanderCook was the perfect pairing for that.

### **What instrument were you playing?**

In high school, tenor saxophone. I picked it because it was cool looking [laughs]. As you know, my mom was a band director, I played sax, my brother played drums – the worst combination that any director with children would want in their house. It was definitely loud all the time.

### **What was Lautzenheiser doing that made it such a pivotal moment for you?**

I remember him talking during the sessions about how you can't change people's attitudes, you can only influence them. When you have a band in front of you, you have to take steps to influence the students to want to work hard and to develop their sounds to help the ensemble, and that doesn't happen overnight. Tim is just open and caring. There was always that sense that he really cared about people.

### **Did you choose VanderCook because of your mom's experience?**

That did help with picking VanderCook. It was a small enough place that I knew I could get what I needed to be a good teacher. And they would help push me through. I was lucky to have worked for Dr. Menghini in the band office. That was the best thing in the world – it was like my second undergrad degree. Every day he'd have a new job to do or a project that he would want us to work on. I was fortunate to travel with him when he would clinic middle school or high school bands. We'd drive out to somewhere in the middle of the state and I'd watch him work a band for a couple hours. During the car rides, it was my chance to pick his brain and listen to his thoughts on band and how to be a great band director.

### **When did you come back to VanderCook?**

I had taught at Deer Path Middle School in Lake Forest for a few years and realized I had some weaknesses in my teaching, and that I needed more information to improve. The MECA classes really helped with that. I enjoyed the atmosphere of being in a classroom with people who were already teaching and sharing ideas to help everyone.

### **In what ways did you feel that the master's program elevated you from where you were at before then?**

I could create my own track. I was able to study other applied instruments that as an undergrad we touched on but we didn't really get into as much as I thought I needed to once I started teaching. I took bassoon lessons one summer with Dianne Ryan and that was just an amazing eye-opener on how to play bassoon well. Then I took guitar lessons. I had always wanted to play guitar, but I had never found the time in my life before that. One summer, I studied guitar with Dr. Julie Goldberg. It was great to be in class with students who were very fine guitar players, and people like myself who didn't know where to put our fingers. I just loved the hands-on approach the class had. That's the magic gift that VanderCook has. You're not going to sit and pontificate the entire time. It's, “Okay, here's a trumpet, let's play trumpet,” and figure out how to make it work.

### **Did you build a relationship with any secondary instruments that you weren't expecting to like as much as you did?**

For my undergrad, it was percussion with Kevin Lepper. I really enjoyed working with him and that he was always patient with his students, no matter what level they played at. I just fell in love with percussion. He had this approach that was, “We're going to teach you a lot, it's going to be interactive, and it's going to be a lot of fun.”

### **What do you feel that you're bringing your students that you wouldn't have been able to bring them if VanderCook hadn't been in the picture?**

I think VanderCook instills this passion for what you do. I look at Dr. Menghini and every day that I worked with him, there was this intense passion. One of the things that I tell my kids, and I tell them all the time, is, “Be happy with what you're doing, but don't be satisfied.” And that's something that I live with all the time. The other thing that I learned from him is the attitude of, “We're not going to give up on you. It may get bumpy along the way and you may hit some rough spots, and maybe you're kind of getting off your path, but we're not going to give up on you. We're going to keep trying to help you to make it go.” And I think that's the advantage of VanderCook versus a big university.

### **You're coming up on your fifth year at Hille. How do you like teaching there?**

It's an amazing community to teach in and very near the community I grew up in. The families really value a strong work ethic and they're super supportive of our music program. Currently over 80% of the kids in the school are in band or choir. The administration has set a schedule up where kids can do both band and choir during different periods of the day. Many of the students get almost 80 minutes of music a day. Our superintendent is extremely supportive of the arts and believes that music is an integral part of the development of the whole student. Five years ago when I started at Hille, we had 12 eighth graders in band, and this year we have 56.

### **And they're obviously very enthusiastic about it and they're not just taking it because it's required.**

Right, there's definitely a commitment to it. The kids like coming to class. I always love to hear from parents about how it has helped their child. For one of my flute players, who was a great young musician and super smart, school was hard for her socially. But she came to school because of the music. That's what got her out of bed in the morning, that's what made her want to come to school. I feel like I'm doing my job then, if kids are wanting to come to school for that.

I also try to make sure it's fun for the kids, so that they enjoy coming to band. I want to create an environment where the kids look forward to the class. I also realized that kids don't care how much I know. They don't care if I know every alternate fingering on every instrument, but they know that I care about them. And that's the thing that I didn't get early on in my career. I was always, “We have to get the notes, we have to get the rhythms, we have to get this, this, and this.” And all of a sudden I realized, “Oh my gosh, they don't care about that stuff!” They just want to know how to get better and they just want to know that I like them.

### **How do you make it fun for them?**

I spin it in a way from something I learned at the Midwest Clinic. I was watching Frank Wickes rehearse the VanderCook band at a late-night rehearsal, and you could tell the band was tired. Those blue vests had been working all day, and by now the band was just sounding kind of rough. As I'm watching,



I'm thinking, "Just tell them right now that it's not very good," because that was my mindset as a teacher at that point. But throughout the entire rehearsal, Wickes was like, "Okay, now trumpets do this, now clarinets do this..." and never the negative side of it. And that was my epiphany of teaching. I need to just tell them what I want them to do, not tell them what they're not doing right.

**It's 10 years down the road. What would you ideally love to hear a former student of yours say that they got out of your class?**

I think I'd love to hear them say, "You never gave up on me. You always pushed us. You cared about me, and I really, really like playing music." If I could hear that from one of my kids, I'd be happier than a clam.

**Have you ever relied on something you learned that you never thought you would have used?**

You know, it's one that I borrowed from Stacey Larson [Dolan]. I never had her as a classroom teacher at VanderCook, but I've worked with her in an honor band she conducted. She has also worked with the Hille band a few times and always offers great teaching tips to the kids that they really remember. One that she does is to have the kids tapping eighth notes on their leg and saying the counts out loud. I had never seen that method used in that way, it was another way for kids to internalize rhythm. Seeing her do that that one time in a clinic was an eye-opener.

**You attended when Victor Zajec was here. Did you have the opportunity to work with any other "legends" in the band world?**

I was very fortunate because of VanderCook and Midwest to work with Dr. Harry Began. He was the band director at the University of Illinois for many years. He and Dr. Menghini became good friends and because of that we worked with Dr. Began. It was an honor to talk with him about how he built the sound of his bands and the legacy he left on the band world. That's something you can't put a price tag on.

**Where would you like to see VanderCook be in 10 years?**

I would like to see it where if you have a student in high school who's thinking of teaching music, that their band director says without any hesitation that VanderCook's the place to be. It has the staff, the facilities, the resources and the contacts to help that student when they get out of college to land a job. That a principal, when they look at a résumé and see VanderCook, they would definitely give that young teacher serious consideration, just because of the name of VanderCook. That would be a great way for the school to hit its mark.







Profile:

# Adam Hill

*Adam Hill (BMEd 2005) has been the “face of VanderCook” for almost 10 years. In addition to teaching band at Romeoville High School for almost a decade, he rallies the crowds at Chicago Bears games with the team drumline. Amy Lenting talks to Hill about his impactful career as a music educator.*

You may not recognize the name, but if you’ve ever received a piece of mail from VanderCook College of Music or visited our booth at a music convention, you know the face of Adam Hill. A 2005 graduate of VanderCook’s bachelor of music education program, Hill’s photos have appeared on dozens of flyers, banners, brochures, posters, promotional items and, yes, even t-shirts. We knew when these photos were taken that Hill was destined to positively affect his future students, but we had no way of anticipating the profound impact he would have on their lives or that he would inspire so many of them to follow in his footsteps.

Given that Hill now performs regularly with both the Chicago Bears Drumline and the Chicago Bulls Stampede drumline, you may find it surprising to know that fifth grader Hill had absolutely no interest in joining band. “I wanted to play baseball – that was my thing,” says Hill. Once Hill hit his freshman year at Romeoville High School though, it was a different story. “I’m not sure if I thought the musicians at church were cool or what, but

one morning I just woke up and said, ‘Mom, I want to do band,’” And so the journey began.

After spending a season marching bass drum, Hill immediately started taking snare lessons with Gary Adams, Romeoville’s percussion and drumline instructor. “I remember practicing a lot. If I was at home watching TV, I was practicing. It didn’t feel like work – I did it for fun and to get better,” says Hill. By the time the next marching season rolled around, Hill was marching the snare line under the new instructor, Jim Dietrich. “Gary’s background in music was military based, and Jim had just finished a summer of teaching drum corps,” said Hill. “Our technique and the sound of our line developed a completely different vibe.” When Dietrich started handing out his own compositions for Romeoville’s drumline, Hill and his friends figured that if Dietrich could write music, they could too. “I remember passing around a yellow floppy disk with Finale 3.0, and a bunch of us all used that to write music for many, many years.”

Adams, known better to his students as “Porky,” played in the Joliet American Legion Band under Tom Drake (BMEd ’56, MMEd ’60). Despite having passed the baton to Dietrich after Hill’s freshman year, Adams returned to watch rehearsals and work with the students at Romeoville. When Adams told Drake about Hill’s remarkable progress, Drake invited Hill to perform with the Legion Band during his junior and senior years at Romeoville. Hill jumped at the chance.

When the time came to make a decision about college after graduating from high school in 1997, there was no question in Hill’s mind that music was his thing. He auditioned for a music school in Chicago and was accepted into their performance program. “I thought a music degree was a music degree,” says Hill. “They listed a bunch of music degrees for me, none of which were music education, and I picked performance.” After his first year of college, Hill spent the summer marching snare in drum corps. That fall, he started teaching a high school drumline, and by the following spring he had

***We've lost count of the number of Adam Hill's students who have been inspired to follow in his footsteps and attend VanderCook College of Music. We contacted a few of Adam's students who went on to attend VanderCook, and here's what they had to say about their teacher:***

#### **Kevin Hanrahan**

Adam Hill was one of my two biggest influences when I was 17/18 years old. If it were not for those influences, I would not have gone into music as a profession, let alone music education. I met Adam through marching his independent percussion ensembles: Americanos Indoor and Pioneer Indoor. These were the only times I was a direct student of Adam's, but I have always considered him to be a mentor/teacher. As a member in his ensembles, I always thought it was a direct result of Adam's persona, that being a member of something like these groups was so much fun. The best qualities of Adam's personality carried over to the members of the ensemble and that was what made it so much fun to be around and look forward to on a weekly basis. It became the highlight of my senior year of high school. To hell with graduating, I wanted to drum.

The way Adam taught and directed these groups was the type of teacher/mentor that I felt I had been looking for. I attended a different high school than where Adam taught. I had no such "role model" like the one he became. Adam "renewed," so to speak, my trust in having an educator as a role model like that. He was very personal and it was obvious that the student was always his first priority. It's safe to say that Adam was my main influence for attending VanderCook. He was my best resource for how little I knew about the world of music. With a little help from him in a letter of recommendation I am still grateful for, I attended VanderCook in spring 2008.

changed his major to music education. "I didn't gel with performance majors. I realized I wanted to teach," says Hill.

After another year of music education at the same school, Hill started thinking he needed a change. "I loved teaching, but I was going to school because it was what I was supposed to do. Music theory wasn't going well, and I was stuck in a rut." Around this time, Hill had started working with the drumline at Thornton-Fractional South High School in Lansing, IL, with VanderCook alumni Mike Madonia (MEd '90) and Bart Bates (BMed '94). "Mike called me into his office and basically told me that I was spinning my wheels and needed to check out VanderCook," recalls Hill. Madonia and Bates told Hill VanderCook had a great faculty, that he would know what he was doing, and that he needed to talk to Kevin Lepper, VanderCook's percussion instructor.

"So I did it," says Hill. "I talked to Kevin, set up my audition, played it, and didn't look back. I was starting over, but felt comfortable and knew it was what I needed to do."

Hill successfully completed his bachelor's degree in 2005, and was offered a position as assistant band director and percussion instructor at his alma mater, Romeoville High School. When asked what it's like as a teacher to return to a school he once attended as a student, Hill smiles and responds, "It's awesome. It gives me a deeper connection to my students. At the beginning of every school year I can talk to them from the standpoint of, 'Hey, I've been there and I've walked these halls.' Hopefully, I can be a role model. I want them to know they can come to me."

Music has also provided Hill with some incredible opportunities, both as a performer and a teacher. When asked to pick a single favorite musical memory, he can't cite less than two – one as a performer and one as a teacher.

"My favorite musical memory is going to London with the Chicago Bears as a member of the drumline. Until that point, the biggest crowd I'd ever performed for had been Soldier Field. The experience of being at Wembley Stadium, the accommodations, the way we were treated, the way the crowd responded to our playing... it was an incredible experience."



And his favorite teaching moment? "I founded Americanos Indoor in 2006, and we switched it to Pioneer Indoor in 2007. Back then, it was about having fun and doing it well. It's amazing how many students from that ensemble have started teaching other places and are now inspiring their students to teach. When you go to a WGI [Winter Guard International] show, you see Pioneer jackets everywhere. Being a part of that ensemble impacted them, and they're proud to have come from Pioneer, but when I realized that they're taking what they received and giving back... that was a cool moment."

The 2013-2014 school year is Hill's 15th year of teaching high school drumlines, his ninth year of teaching at Romeoville, and his eighth year running Pioneer Indoor. He estimates that he has also written over 30 books for drumlines. A seasoned music education veteran would say that Hill's career is just getting started, but Hill already recognizes the profound impact his teachers have had on him along the way.

"Gary Adams taught me rhythm and rudimental skills in a way that I still use with my kids today. He got me started the right way and gave me a solid foundation."

"Jim Dietrich showed me there's a 'next level' in music. He taught me discipline and a different culture of drumming as far as level and vocabulary. He's also a con-



stant support and still comes out to watch Romeoville and Pioneer Indoor rehearsals.

“Mickey Harzog taught me about muscles, pressure, mental capacity, breathing, and how to sync the body with the motion. I got better my first year of drum corps by default, but I didn’t really learn until Mickey started teaching me in my second year of corps.

“Kevin Lepper taught me musical patience and the philosophy of productivity.

“Dr. Menghini was tough as nails. I think I learned the most from him just by watching him work with students.

“Mrs. Rhodes... she had this way of letting you know that she loved you, but get your work done or else. I use that one with my students.”

Hill also remarks he would be remiss in not crediting his students for teaching him a lot too. “Through failure and success, I’ve learned to reflect on what I’m teaching and how I’m teaching it. Earlier in my teaching, I’d get angry and be quick to start correcting. I’m not saying that never happens anymore, but the students aren’t malicious in their mistakes – either they don’t understand or I didn’t explain it well,” says Hill. “Or,” he chuckles, “they’re being lazy.”



*Adam Hill married his wife Brenna, a high school math teacher, in 2008. They currently reside in the Chicago suburbs with their nine-month-old son, Milo.*

### Alexander Hinds

Adam has been a major influence in my musical career thus far. Since my first introduction with him at Pioneer Indoor in 2010, he pushed me to strive for the best both on and off the field. Throughout rehearsals, I learned effective teaching methods that could be applied to any section, not just within the confines of marching percussion. Adam’s care and concern for his students go above any teacher I had come across before coming to VanderCook. In the years since I first joined Pioneer Indoor, Adam has become a father figure to me. He genuinely cares about his students and encourages them to come to him if they ever need help with anything, be it school or personal issues. I had the privilege of teaching alongside Adam at Romeoville High School for the 2011 marching season, and my knowledge and passion for music expanded. Adam demands the most of his students while making rehearsals fun and enjoyable. In my time at RHS, it was evident that Adam’s students are eager to come to class and learn from such a knowledgeable teacher.

Adam is an awesome person and I’m glad to call him a friend and a colleague.

### Elise Kuchenbecker

I knew that I loved to sing and perform music when I started high school, but it took a teacher like Mr. Hill for me to finally listen to music. He would start out every morning by playing a piece for us, giving us a new idea to listen to for the second time around, and blowing us away when the piece suddenly seemed completely new and we found ourselves able to pick out even more than he had originally offered. Mr. Hill brought an incredible amount of passion and knowledge to share with his students every single day. That passion inspired myself and many other students to become the best musicians we were capable of being. I found myself being inspired by Mr. Hill to share that same drive and love for music with my own students one day and began the college tours. As soon as my mom let loose that I was interested in becoming a teacher to Mr. Hill, he walked me right into the admissions office of VanderCook and told me that many colleges have great music programs, but there is no program better for music educa-

tion than VanderCook College of Music. After all the college visits, I completely agreed. I am so thankful for the education Mr. Hill gave me as his student, but I am even more thankful for the inspiration he has been in my life as a musician and music educator.

Also, it is agreed among his students that there is nothing better than performing and receiving an Adam Hill high-five followed by being told that your performance was, “Stupid sick.”

### Michelle Mock

When I was first looking in to college I had a completely different plan than I have now. I was thinking that I was going to go to a big university and major in performance and actually make a stable income using only that degree. I knew that I wanted to do something with music, and I only knew that because of Mr. Hill. Music was always something I did for fun. It wasn’t until I got to high school and became part of his percussion studio that I started realizing how passionate I really was about it. Mr. Hill would push me to my musical limit with every song and then he would push me farther with the next one. He inspired me to keep getting better and to never settle for just okay material. He helped me see that I was better than that, and I had the ability to do whatever I wanted. The greatest part about his influence on me is that it’s not limited to just music. Over the years, I have had countless talks with him about my school work, or a boy problem in high school, or a test I was needlessly panicking over, or even just life in general. He would always make time to just talk with me, and I was one of those kids in high school that just needed someone to listen. When I talked with him about my college plans, he was the only person to tell me the facts of life and got my head out of the clouds. He asked me how I felt when I performed, and he asked me how I felt when I was helping another student learn part of a song. He got me interested in a music education degree, and then he straightened out the rumors I had heard and got me interested in VanderCook. Mr. Hill was the best teacher I have ever had, because he taught me more than notes on a page. He taught me about life. I just hope that one day my students will look up to me like his students look up to him.

## A Midwest Clinic Reflection:

# Brian Covey & Brian Logan

*Two generations of VanderCook alumni reflect on bringing bands to Midwest.*

It is well known that being selected to perform at the Midwest Clinic is a tremendous honor. Two of our alumni will be leading their bands during performances in the highly coveted convention. Brian Covey (MMEd 2006), music department chair at Lockport High School, and Brian Logan (BMEd 1983), teaching at Wheeling High School, reflect on the opportunity and the Midwest Clinic's close ties to VanderCook.

"We were filled with cautious optimism in being chosen to perform this year," says Logan. "Not only is this a great honor, but it is a significant responsibility and the goal is to put on a great performance." This is Logan's third opportunity performing at the clinic as a director.

Logan planned several performances for his group in preparation for the Midwest Clinic, including one at Elmhurst College and one at VanderCook. They rehearsed for over 50 hours this summer to get a head start. "My students are aware of this responsibility and by the time we get to Midwest, they won't be nervous about performing and representing the best of the best," he says.

Covey is thrilled at being invited to perform at Midwest Clinic for the second time. "The expectations are overwhelming," he says. "However, VanderCook prepares a director for this kind of work. By participating in the summer graduate program, I was immediately able to take back what I learned there straight into the classroom." Covey attributes his most recent promotion to music department chair to VanderCook's breadth of knowledge and his passion for continuing to learn. Attending and performing at the Midwest Clinic allow him to revel in both.

As an undergraduate student, Logan was exposed to the Midwest Clinic from behind the scenes and hopes his students can also catch a glimpse of that aspect of the convention.

"I had the good fortune of being able to work for the Midwest Clinic as a VanderCook student," says Logan. "I was exposed to several performances and got to rub elbows with the great minds of music education. We will be at the clinic for a couple of days so that my students get to hang out with amazing musicians, hear great concert bands perform, attend the clinics, and have the chance to be fully immersed in the world of music education."



Brian Logan with Jazz Band, 2013 Midwest Clinic.



Brian Covey, 2013 Midwest Clinic.



Brian Covey, 2013 Midwest Clinic.





## Profile:

# Scott Sater

*It is not uncommon that students who attend VanderCook's summer graduate program develop a bond with their peers over their three summers in Chicago. In such a short six weeks, they put on three performances as well as participate in graduate commencement every year. In between classes, they raise funds together to donate a gift to the school. Former graduate student Scott Sater (MMEd 2001) shares his thoughts about VanderCook's program and how it directly reflects his values as an educator and as a person.*

VanderCook College of Music is a very special place for me. It is where I grew up as a music educator. Meeting Dr. Charles Menghini and his comrades at this impacting institution in Chicago reminded me of why I went into teaching, why I never left it, and why I wanted to get better at creating art with young people.

The teachers at VanderCook re-ignited and inspired my passion for teaching, because they live and practice the very things that I believe in as a teacher: sharing everything we know, inviting people to grow, telling stories, making powerful music together, and creating an environment where students and teachers work together as partners pursuing the highest levels of musical excellence.

When I first telephoned the college to check it out, I was greeted by a vibrant voice, an enthusiastic communicator and a charged countenance. When I hung up, I realized that if Dr. Menghini could be that excited about teaching, could want my presence there as a prospective student, then VanderCook was the place for me to transition to the next level, and during those summers, I was not disappointed.

I learned to play better, teach better, understand more deeply, and care even more about our craft: teaching the art of music. I met students who cared as much as I did, who cared as much as VanderCook faculty did; talented students from Eastman, from Julliard, from Minnesota to Jamaica to Illinois. And those friendships and connections have continued to this day, 11 years later.



My career was impacted by VanderCook and so was my life. I remember when my kids came to my commencement that summer of 2001. Dr. Menghini greeted them like they were his grandkids. I've never met anyone quite like him. He exemplifies what VanderCook prides itself in: high standards, meeting people where they are, and going on an unforgettable ride together toward producing some of the finest music teachers in America.





## Helping Schools Soar:

# Americaneagle.com

*Much has been written in recent years about non-profit organizations looking to the corporate world for business models. Americaneagle.com has been bridging those two worlds for almost 35 years. Company President Mike Svanascini talks to Gregor Meyer about his passion for bringing schools to the next level of online presence.*

The connection between the New York Yankees and public schools may not seem so obvious, but to Americaneagle.com's president Mike Svanascini, the segue from professional sports to education was a no-brainer.

"Sports always has to be on the leading edge of everything," he recalls. "We were putting videos for the Yankees on the YES Network on the Yankees' baseball site about 10 years ago, before anyone had multimedia. We built these little systems to put videos on websites, and then we'd offer it to a school; 'Hey, now you can put videos on your school site.' Same thing with podcasts. The day video podcasting came out, we had Blackhawks video podcasts on the iTunes store immediately. In doing that sort of thing, we've been able to offer an already-built product. It was a lot cheaper for the schools; the sports entities ended up paying for the initial development because they had to have it right when it came out."

This crossover strategy has been key to Americaneagle.com's success. Since 1995, they have developed over 5,000 websites for a roster of clients that would make any company jealous: the White House, Chicago Bears, Chicago Blackhawks, NASCAR, the U.S. Army, the United Center, Chicago Transit Authority, the Chicago Park District, Portillo's, Grand Victoria Casino, the American Red Cross, Garrett Popcorn, Abbott Laboratories, Beretta International and dozens of townships and school districts throughout the country.

The 34-year-old family-owned and -operated company began publishing software for the Apple II market in the late '70s. As the industry evolved, the company became one of the first web design companies in the country. "Basically we were originally





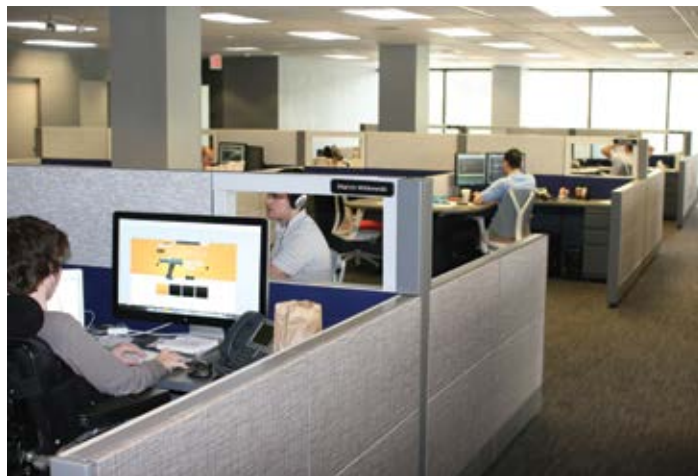
an IT company that did office networking,” Svanascini recounts. “We already had school districts as customers in the ‘90s, and when we started doing websites, the first big one we did was Naperville 203, about 17 schools. We really underpriced that project, and we worked hard to basically build a platform for schools from that point forward.”

Their award-winning website designs for schools developed several then-unique features that are now virtually considered standard on most school sites: online grade tracking, parent portals, individual teacher websites and alumni forums. Svanascini estimates that 10% of their customers are grade schools, colleges or universities. As most schools are broadening their online offerings, Svanascini adopts a practical philosophy about Americaneagle.com’s role in the booming area – one that decidedly puts schools first.

“There are really great programs out there that are really economical, so we don’t recommend customers spend a lot of money with us if we find something out there that they can do with a better rate that’ll be better for the school in the long run. So it could be in the future that we do more of it, but we always look at the marketplace, and if we can’t compete price-wise or if it would be better for the customer to be somewhere else, we’ll work with that other company to bring the best scenario.”

When VanderCook set about to reboot the college’s website, trustee George Quinlan, Jr. highly recommended Americaneagle.com, which had designed the Quinlan & Fabish Music Company website. The results made the difference of before-and-after as great as night-and-day. “I could not be happier with the entire process,” enthused VanderCook President Dr. Charles Menghini. “We’ve received rave reviews from everyone regarding the aesthetics, content and ease of navigation.”

“Our personal philosophy is that if a designer’s stuck in one industry, it starts to become routine, so we kind of like to mix it up,” says Svanascini. “Basically we look at the school and what their branding is, and I try to find an artist that’s going to mix the best of that, with that type of entity.”



Having started building school websites early on, Svanascini and his team of designers and front-end developers have seen a myriad of changes in how schools at all levels are changing the focus of their online presence. “What I see as a trend is a lot of schools are using their sites as a tool to actively seek out students much more than they did in the past. They’re using broadcast email tools a lot more, and text messaging is very popular, because someone who’s 17, 18 years old, that’s their number one source now. So we’re implementing text messaging on tons of websites right now to send alerts. If someone’s near the school and they’ve allowed you to text, you can say, ‘Hey, you’re right by the school right now, come in for a visit.’ Or ‘Get 10% off a t-shirt at the shop,’ that sort of thing. It’s a trick from e-commerce that’s definitely going to impact the school industry.”

Testimonials from satisfied clients speak volumes on the company’s website, as do the number of industry awards won by Americaneagle.com over the years. Multiple Interactive Media Awards, Horizon Interactive Awards, Communicator Awards, Internet Advertising Awards, W3 Awards and Forbes Best of the Web listings are just a few of the distinctions Americaneagle.com websites have received for design, creativity, innovation, visual appeal, optimization and overall user experience. (It’s worth noting that two awards since 2009 have been for school sites: Homewood-Flossmoor High School, and Township High School District 214 in Arlington Heights.)

“We’re kind of unique because we do so many industries,” Svanascini reflects from the company’s new headquarters in Des Plaines. “But there are a lot of companies that just do school sites and nothing else. So we’re probably doing more schools than any developer except those ones that just focus on schools.” As new applications are developed and become permanent fixtures in the online presence of both the education and corporate worlds, Americaneagle.com stands poised to continue strengthening the impact of its clients’ websites and relationships with their audiences.

*Sample web pages and a full portfolio can be viewed at [www.americaneagle.com](http://www.americaneagle.com).*





**MUSIC EDUCATION. It's what we do...it's all we do.**







McHenry MS Choir, Director: Carol Munn 1st Row (Floor L-R): Faith Emmons and Dillon Moede  
2nd Row (L-R): Chloe Cassidy, Justine Asperga, Carolyn Miller, Thomas Borghardt, Nicole Nischke, Mason Schroeder, and Kylie MacDonald



# A Letter from Dr. Lewis Schmidt

Chairman of the Board of Trustees

## Greetings to all!

It is a great pleasure to share this 2013 Annual Report with you. The Board of Trustees is extremely proud of the leadership of President Menghini and his faculty and staff. Through their expertise and dedication, VanderCook is thriving and growing – even in these uncertain economic times – as we fulfill the mission of VanderCook established by its founders, H.A. VanderCook and H.E. Nutt. Our students and graduates continue to become teachers with exceptional preparation, proven by a consistent job placement rate over 90%.

Perhaps the most important item on our agenda the past few years has been finding an effective, practical and sustainable way to accommodate our growing enrollment and to provide the state-of-the art facilities our students need and deserve. In 2008, the trustees voted to initiate a capital campaign, **Inspire. Build. Sustain.**, to provide the resources needed to lease and repurpose a second building on IIT's campus, just steps from VanderCook's current location.

Since that decision was made, the trustees, Dr. Menghini, faculty, staff and several individuals have raised 80% of the capital needed to begin Phase One of the project, scheduled to begin spring of 2014. The two-phase project will provide additional classrooms, practice and library space, a rehearsal/reception hall, offices and VanderCook's first dedicated performance space. The support of our alumni and friends has sustained VanderCook over the years. On behalf of the entire VanderCook family, we are grateful and humbled by your loyalty.

Now the time has come when we must ask each of you to consider how you can come to the aid of your school! Remember all the great times, the ironclad friendships – the memories of a lifetime? Here is an invitation to pay back your alma mater and help new and future VanderCook students create their own memories and start their own careers. You have graduated and are doing great things in your schools, classrooms, studios and communities. We are proud of you and how wonderfully you represent VanderCook. AND NOW WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Please help make this project a reality. Show YOUR passion for VanderCook and ensure the future of the college and of music education. Inspire – Build – Sustain!

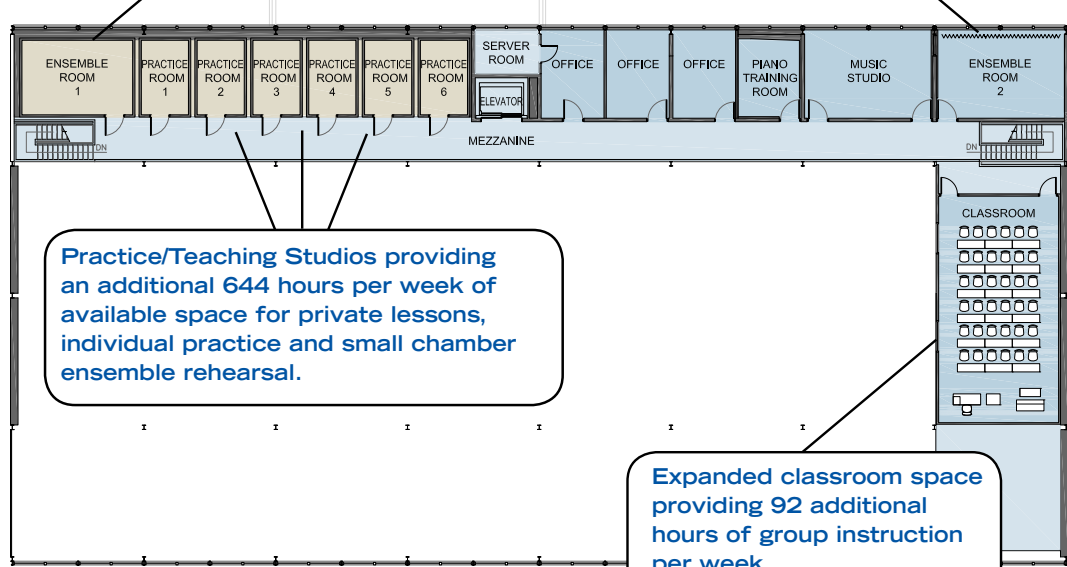
Respectfully and Passionately,  
Lewis Schmidt (MMEd 1963, HD 1992)  
Chairman,  
Board of Trustees

## PHASE ONE

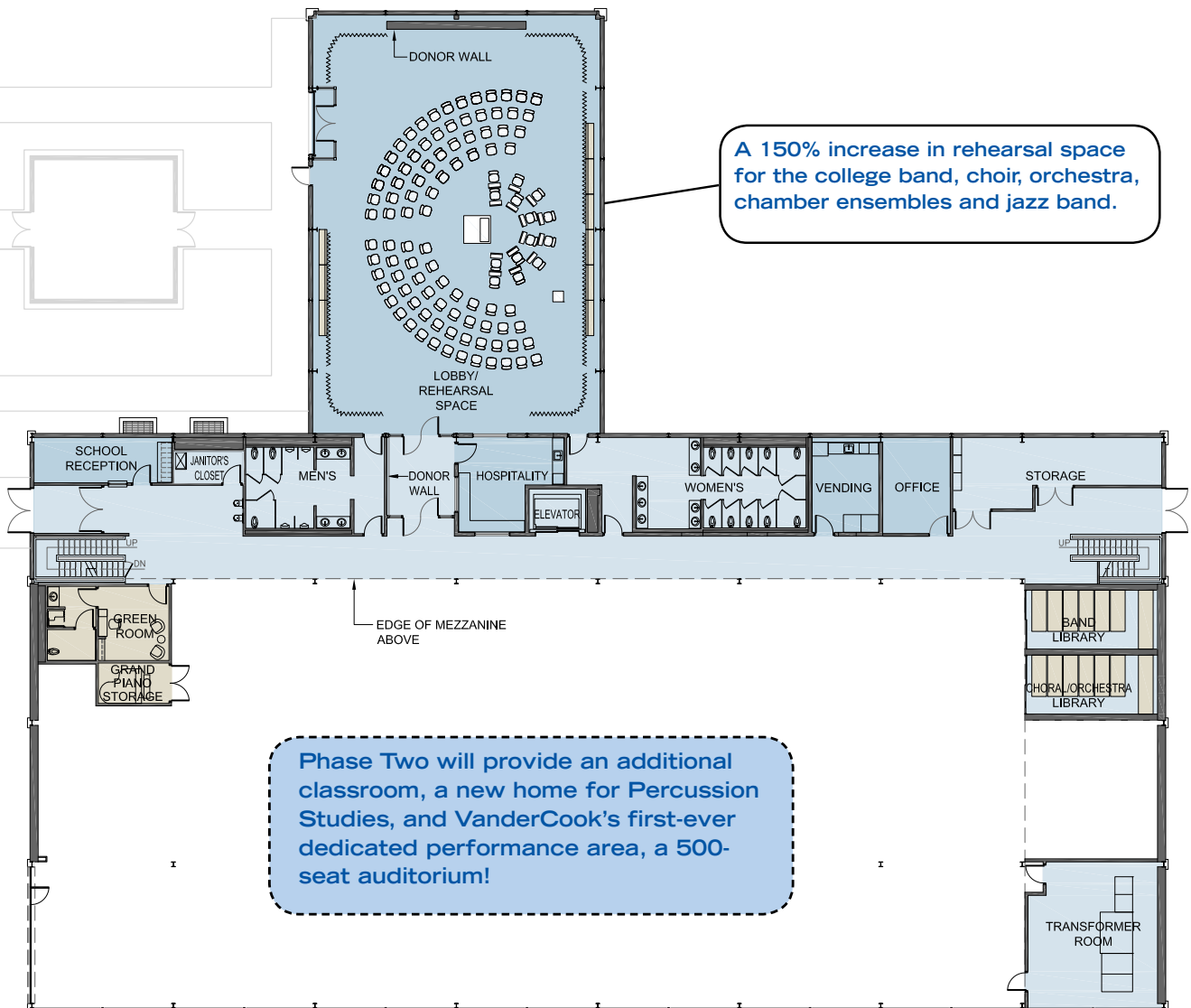
Ensemble Rooms offering 184 hours per week of space for chamber ensembles and instrumental techniques classes.

Practice/Teaching Studios providing an additional 644 hours per week of available space for private lessons, individual practice and small chamber ensemble rehearsal.

Expanded classroom space providing 92 additional hours of group instruction per week.



A 150% increase in rehearsal space for the college band, choir, orchestra, chamber ensembles and jazz band.



Phase Two will provide an additional classroom, a new home for Percussion Studies, and VanderCook's first-ever dedicated performance area, a 500-seat auditorium!





## Remembering the “Keyboard Atom Splitter”: Eddie Oyer

*VanderCook College of Music trustee John Armato recounts a recent visit with his first music teacher, and how it led to the newly established Eddie and Patty Oyer Scholarship.*

Two Christmases ago, on a trip to my hometown of Kansas City, MO, to visit family, and on nothing more than a whim – or perhaps it was the nostalgia that besets a man in his late 40s – I visited my first drum teacher, Eddie Oyer. It proved remarkable, and it produced an indelible story, a cherished instrument, and a scholarship for VanderCook College of Music.

When I was growing up we lived in a typical suburban middle-class community, but my dad worked across the river as a counselor at a junior high school in a mostly Italian, more

socio-economically challenged district of Kansas City. When I began begging for drum lessons as a little kid, it was natural for him to ask for advice from those around him. The answer, in that part of town, was obvious: Eddie Oyer. So, in 1972, one week after my eighth birthday (no music teacher would accept a student under the age of eight, no matter how much begging was involved) my parents began weekly trips to 5240 St. John for my drum lessons. For seven years, I learned the basics of my instrument from Eddie. Amazingly, he was concurrently teaching kids piano (my sisters included), guitar, organ, clarinet, dance and acrobatics, accordion or even ventriloquism. Eddie was – *is* – a remnant of the all-around entertainer era.

But this story isn’t so much about those lessons as it is about Eddie himself, now in

his 80s, and a life lived simply, humbly and with great optimism, faith and focus. It’s about a man who was (and is) as devoted to his mother and his wife as any man I’ve ever known. It’s about a man who never had children of his own, but was surrounded by the children of his community because of the music he taught them.

The instrument and the scholarship? Well, I’m getting ahead of myself...

Patty Oyer, Eddie’s wife, greets me at the door wearing a “Live, Laugh, Love” Christmas sweater. She gives me a big smile and a hug and tells me she would have recognized me anywhere. Eddie comes into the living room wearing a navy bathrobe over slacks and a shirt. It’s my turn to say how little has changed. He is still tall, with wavy



hair combed straight back – as always. He carries himself the way dancers do: straight, sure, in control. He carries one of those canes with a little platform at the end that sports four stubby feet. It's the only visible concession to age. In an earlier decade, the robe and cane might just as easily have been a tux and walking stick.

We sit in the tiny front room on metal folding chairs amidst an abundance of Christmas decorations, ornaments and figurines. It's what I imagine a parlor was like back when people had parlors.

We chat, slowly at first, figuring out how to overlay the warmth of an old relationship with actual conversation. Eddie's a man of few words, but he slips easily into entertainer mode, cracking jokes, flashing an impossibly charming smile, gesturing vividly, imitating accents and the like.

"Do you stay in touch with many of your students these days, Eddie?" I ask.

"Well, let's see, there's John Armato!" he says with a big laugh.

Some people have belly laughs. Eddie has shoulder laughs. Svelt and limber, he has a way of jostling his shoulders up and down as he laughs, the way an early animated cartoon character might. For a moment, he's Steamboat Willy and it's a bit comical and endearing at the same time.

When I mention that I took a couple of lessons with the legendary jazz drummer Joe Morello a few years ago when I lived in New York, Eddie flashes a huge grin and says, "Really?" with genuine excitement. He begins vocalizing Morello-style rhythms with the easy, swinging sounds drummers use when they try to describe rhythms to each other.

"His left hand would be going *zsijha dot dot dot-da dot* and then he'd be over there with his right hand playing *splang lang a-lang lang* like it was fighting against the other hand, but it was beautiful," says Eddie.

As our smiles relax, I tell Eddie that there are things that never interested the eight-year-old me that eventually the 48-year-old me became curious about, and I wonder if he'd mind if I ask him some questions about how he came to do what he's done all these years. He almost immediately brings up his mother.

"She wasn't a musician but she was instrumental in a lot of people's lives, certainly mine," he says. "She didn't know how to teach music but everything she told me was right," he says. Among her advice: pay attention to other musicians and "steal" whatever they did best.

This was her house. Probably just shy of a century old, it is only a few years older than Eddie, who was raised in it. I mention how amazing it is that he is still living in the very house he grew up in and he tells me, "I think that's what my mother wanted."

She may not have been a musician, but music was important to Eddie's mother and she made sure he and his sister studied it. When musicians traveled through Kansas City, she frequently arranged for them to give Eddie a lesson. She paid close attention during those lessons and had a good ear and later while listening to him practice she would shout from the other room, "That doesn't sound right!"

Eddie's older sister was a dancer. She performed professionally all over the country and eventually began teaching dance from a studio on the third floor of this house. She used to travel to New York City periodically to study with teachers there and as Eddie got older he would go along. Invoking the kind of language that feels leftover from vaudeville, Eddie tells me they would spend a "season" there. He was just a boy but he paid attention to what his sister was doing, which is how he learned to dance and do acrobatics as well.

Eddie became an excellent pianist. At one point his sister got tired of trying to find good rehearsal pianists for her students, so Eddie started playing for them.

"I knew what stop-time was," Eddie tells me. "You had to be able to play stop-time for the tap dancers and those other piano players who were classically trained couldn't do that."





Eddie, too, was classically trained, but he had the advantage of learning from teachers from other corners of the music world as well. Frequently his teachers from more lowbrow styles would be impressed at his longhair skills, and his highbrow instructors would be astonished by his command of more popular styles. One of those more serious early teachers was a woman from Sweden, a classical pianist who seemed to find guilty pleasure in the less formal genres. At the end of their lessons she used to ask him to “play that boooogie woooogie,” he says, broadly imitating her Swedish accent. (There go those shoulders again.)

“I had lots of teachers on every instrument,” says Eddie. He also had a knack for teaching himself. Eventually he could play a small band’s worth of instruments. His music education served him well. Even saved his life, to hear him tell it.

By the time he was in his 20s, Eddie was being booked into Kansas City hotel showrooms and nightclubs for months at a time. He was billed as the “Keyboard Atom Splitter,” and was known for his speed and busy left hand. He played lots of stride piano, ragtime and, of course, “boooogie woooogie.”

His home base as a headliner was the Omar Room, a popular nightclub at the old Continental Hotel in downtown Kansas City. But then came Korea, and Eddie was drafted and trained as a combat engineer. He never shipped out though. While he was in training, an officer who was a frequent patron of the Omar Room noticed Eddie wasn’t there anymore and asked about him. When he was told Eddie had been drafted he immediately arranged to have him reassigned to Fort Leavenworth, KS, as a musician. The officer was stationed there and wanted to continue to enjoy Eddie’s music.

“They used everything I had,” says Eddie. He played solo piano. He formed a trio. He led a big band. Eddie says he played practically nonstop from 1952 to 1954.

The conversation lulls and I ask Eddie about the little practice drums I remember from my initial group lesson days. Each of us students would get a little wooden drum, maybe eight inches in diameter and about 10 inches tall that was open at the bottom and had a loose head tacked to the top. We’d set them on some sort of little stand and, sticks in hand, follow along with Eddie as he taught us grips and strokes and rhythms.

Oh yes. He remembers. Eddie tells me how he made those drums by sawing down the hollow colonnades that had once stood in the very room we’re sitting in. They had been decorative architectural elements in the original house design. He cut them into short lengths, tacked on pieces of used bass drum heads that he had found somewhere and turned them into practice drums.

“Did your mother know you were going to cut down her columns?” I ask incredulously. “Oh yes,” he replies. “She didn’t mind. She always supported me.”

I can’t decide which amazes me more, the ingenuity and resourcefulness he brought to his project, or a mother’s love so deep that she didn’t mind him taking a saw to her living room.

Still shaking my head, my gaze falls on the ancient piano beside us.

“That sure looks like the same piano you had in the studio, Eddie,” I say. “Could it be you had just the one piano all those years?”

It could and it is.





The piano reminds me of Shel Silverstein's book "The Giving Tree," which, though a children's book, tells a rather sobering story of a little boy and a young tree who age together and how the tree gives its apples, limbs, timber, etc., to the boy as he grows, until eventually it is only a stump for the old man to rest upon. Eddie's piano is a bit of a stump. It has given just about all it has to give. The ivory is worn off perhaps half of the white keys. Many of the black keys have been rubbed into sloping curves, the result of Eddie's fingers and those of his students, sliding a half step up or down from the ebony over the course of decades, with an invisible but certain smoothing effect, the way a steady stream polishes stones.

Eddie plays his piano hard, very percussively. "You should see what it looks like inside," he says, and then tells me about one of the hammers, which has completely split in two; Keyboard Atom Splitter indeed.

The piano makes me think of one other instrument from the studio – the first drums I ever played. I can still picture them. Silver sparkle Ludwigs with a ride cymbal mounted to the bass drum. I figure they must be long gone, but out of curiosity I ask whatever happened to them.

"Third floor" Patty says, pointing above us.

I'm dumbstruck. In the more than 40 years since my first lesson, I've played from New York City to Napa Valley and never in that time did I think I'd ever see those first drums again. Yet, evidently here they are, two flights up.

"We couldn't give them away when we closed the studio," Patty says with exasperation. "We tried to sell them, then we tried to give them away, but no one wanted them."

I look from Patty to Eddie and back again.

"I will buy them from you," I say, giving each word special weight so they know how serious I am.

"Well, you can have them," Patty says with an air that suggests she'll be glad to finally be done with the whole thing.

We climb the stairs and there they are. The drums I remember. The first drums. Silver sparkle. Ludwigs. With the famous "keystone" logo valued by collectors of vintage drums. Unbelievably, the heads appear to be the very same heads I played on. They have the original logos on them as well patches of duct tape. They show the wear of decades and the dents of dozens of indelicate drummers-in-the-making. Eddie never changed them. This is appalling to the drummer in me, but it is utterly reasonable for a man who charged just a dollar a lesson and cut down parts of his mother's living room to make practice instruments.

We reminisce over the dusty drums, about how from day one he taught me how to make music with others; we played together with me at the set and him at the piano. This was profoundly different than the typical drum lesson. Eddie says he never taught like other drums teachers taught because of the experiences his mom gave him. It wasn't just about drums, but about show business and music.

I tell him how grateful I am of that, and how little I appreciated it at the time.

"You never understand while you're learning," he says, "and it's probably best that way."

Eventually the visit ends as it began, with a handshake for Eddie and a hug for Patty,





and a few weeks later a good friend visits them on my behalf to pick up and ship the drums to me in Sacramento. While she's there, she delivers Eddie a letter from me that says, in part:

*As you've probably noticed, I'm sentimental by nature. So seeing those silver sparkle Ludwigs — the very first drums I ever played, when drums and drumming were still just a dream — was an unexpected treat. But the opportunity to acquire those very same drums from you as the 40th anniversary of my first lesson approaches, well, it is an absolute privilege.*

*My friend Lisa will give you a sum I hope you will find acceptable, but which I know is too small for the great gift those drums represent. That's why, as a more lasting sign of appreciation, I'm also funding a scholarship to be created in your name at VanderCook College of Music in Chicago.*

*The president of VanderCook is my former high school band director and dear friend, Dr. Charles T. Menghini. I've been a member of the college's board of trustees for several years. VanderCook is 100 years old and one of a kind: It is the only college in the nation that focuses exclusively on teaching future music educators. Its single degree, single focus makes it powerful. Our students learn 19 different instruments. They learn to sing, play, conduct and teach. And when they graduate, they're ready and in demand to teach any level in any setting including band, orchestra and choir. That incredible versatility reminds me of the similarly incredible versatility you brought to your studio.*

*I'm also reminded of your commitment to keeping lessons affordable. My dad still recalls how you once told him you simply don't raise your prices. I consider your rates of \$1, \$3 and never more than \$5 to be an act of compassion for your community. Your scholarship fund at VanderCook will continue that commitment and that compassion by helping to make it possible for students whose promise is greater than their bank account to pursue their passion for teaching music.*

In May of 2012, I celebrated the 40th anniversary of my first drum lesson with the sparkle of those beautiful drums mirroring the sparkle of champagne I raised to toast Eddie and Patty and the unexpected gift of that Christmas visit. Six months later, VanderCook named Jonathan Page, a percussionist and third-year student, the first recipient of the Eddie and Patty Oyer Scholarship.

In the end, though, I think I was the greatest beneficiary of all of this. Not because of the drums — they are moving mementoes, of course, and I was delighted to discover that the snare in particular is a world-class instrument, and I use it now on every one of my jazz gigs — but because I think I experienced the real nature of philanthropy. It turns out, it's actually a rather selfish act. Saying "thank you" in a way that preserves another person's legacy is good for the soul. It's a necessary act of self-expression and a powerful emotional release. It took me 40 years and an impulsive visit to discover, but it was worth the wait.

*John Armato's drum-inspired artwork and writings about music can be found at [www.johnarmatodrums.com](http://www.johnarmatodrums.com).*



# Honorary Doctorates

*Since 1986, VanderCook College of Music has recognized the life's work of music educators, composers and music industry professionals by conferring the honorary doctorate degree. This year, the college awarded this distinction to three very special individuals, profiled here by Gregor Meyer.*



The awarding of *Doctor of Music Education, honoris causa* has been VanderCook's highest acknowledgment of men and women who have made significant and long-lasting contributions to the field of music education. By extension, their achievements have contributed immeasurably to generations of students as well as society at large.

VanderCook's first honorary doctorate was awarded to the college's co-founder, Hubert E. Nutt. Over the years, the individuals honored have included Vaclav Nelhybel, Forrest L. Buchtel, Sr., Richard Brittain, Merle Isaac, Victor Zajec, William D. Revelli, Tim Lautzenheiser, Duffie Adelson, Remo Belli and Everett "Vic" Firth. This year, VanderCook recognized three individuals whose lifetime of service to the field of music education has left an indelible impact on how music is taught and appreciated by students, teachers and professionals alike.

# VanderCook College of Music Honorary Doctorates

**July 2012**

**Joseph M. Lamond**, educator,  
president and CEO of the  
National Association of Music  
Merchants (NAMM)

**May 2012**

**Gregory L. Bimm**, educator, arranger

**July 2011**

**Michael L. Harris**, co-founder,  
Harris-Teller, Inc.

**July 2011**

**Edward J. Harris**, founder, GIA  
Publications

**May 2011**

**Robert B. Vezzetti** (BMEd 1954,  
MMEd 1968), educator

**July 2010**

**Everett "Vic" Firth**, founder of Vic  
Firth Company

**May 2010**

**Ray E. Cramer**, composer,  
educator, director of bands  
emeritus at Indiana University

**July 2009**

**Qian Ni**, founder of Eastman  
Strings, president of Eastman  
Music Company

**May 2009**

**Himie Voxman**, composer,  
educator

**July 2008**

**Morton L. Manus**, composer,  
president of Alfred Music  
Publishing Company

**May 2008**

**Kenneth M. Snoeck**, composer,  
educator

**May 2007**

**Duffie A. Adelson**, educator, presi-  
dent of Merit School of Music

**May 2006**

**Ted Lega**, educator

**July 2005**

**Keith A. Mardak**, music publisher,  
chairman of Hal Leonard  
Corporation

**July 2004**

**Leo C. Harris**, educator

**July 2001**

**Betty J. Bertaux**, educator

**May 2000**

**Duane E. Johnson**, educator

**July 1999**

**George A. Quinlan, Sr.**, educator,  
co-founder of Quinlan & Fabish  
Music Company

**July 1999**

**Leo J. Henning**, educator

**July 1996**

**Barbara D. Buehlman**, educator,  
former executive director of The  
Midwest Clinic

**May 1995**

**Ethel K. Merker**, educator

**July 1995**

**Timothy N. Lautzenheiser**, educator

## Paula A. Crider

Ask Paula Crider about her accomplishments over the years and she'll tell you that teaching and working with those who are passionate about music is her greatest reward. That modesty mitigates a lifetime of milestones and benchmarks throughout an impressive career as teacher, clinician, author, adjudicator and mentor.

Crider taught in public schools for 16 years before joining the faculty of the University of Texas at Austin, from where she received her master of music education degree. She taught conducting, brass techniques and marching band methods there for 17 years, and was twice awarded by the university for distinguished teaching. Bands under her direction won numerous awards and distinctions. The Crockett High School Band in Austin won 12 consecutive University Interscholastic League awards for excellence in concert, marching and sight-reading during the 12 years under her baton. The 1981 Crockett Band, in fact, continues to hold the highest score at the Texas State Contest, and was named "Best Band Ever" by Texas Monthly magazine. Over the years, she has also received the National Band Association's "Citation of Excellence," the John Philip Sousa Foundation's Sudler Order of Merit and the Midwest Clinic Medal of Honor.

Further punctuating a career of firsts, Crider has shattered the glass ceiling in a number of areas. During her years at Crockett, she became the first woman in the state to direct a Class 5A band. She was the third woman ever to be elected to the American Bandmasters Association, and later became the first woman to serve as the National Band Association's president. In addition, Tau Beta Sigma, the National Honorary Band Service Sorority, named the Paula Crider Outstanding College Band Director Award after her.

She plays these precedents down as well. "Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do whatever you want to do," she says. "Too often teachers are treated as second class citizens. We're judged by bank accounts rather than the strength of our character." Her impassioned acceptance speech at VanderCook's undergraduate commencement in May included the following words of encouragement: "Nothing is more important than teaching our children, and you have the power to change the face of things through music."



## John L. Whitwell

"Great teachers are passionate. They love what they do."

John Whitwell could easily have been talking about himself with that statement. As an educator, clinician, conductor, adjudicator and author for almost 50 years, Whitwell's career has been driven by his intense passion for music, and for bringing out the best in his students and the bands under his baton.

"My life in music started in 1951, when at the age of eight my family attended the first parade I had ever seen. My life was changed forever." Whitwell started playing trombone in fifth grade and never looked back, eventually earning a bachelor's degree in music education from Abilene Christian University, and a master of music degree from the University of Michigan. After 16 years as teacher, director of bands and music department chairperson in Michigan public schools, he taught and directed bands at alma mater Abilene Christian and at Michigan State University. During his time as director of bands at Michigan State, he served as chairperson of the conducting area, and received MSU's Distinguished Faculty Award in 2003, and the Paul Varg Alumni Award for Faculty from the College of Arts and Letters in 2004.

As a lecturer, guest conductor, clinician and adjudicator, Whitwell has participated in hundreds of music conferences, state and national music association meetings, workshops, festivals and music competitions throughout the U.S., England, France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland and Mexico. Whitwell joined the board of the Midwest Clinic in 1997 ("I first attended the Midwest Clinic in 1975, and am proud to say I have not missed one since..."). In addition, he served as past president of the Big Ten Band Directors Association, and past president of the North Central Division of the College Band Directors National Association.





Although he retired from teaching in 2006, Whitwell remains extremely active in the commissioning of new music, having worked with composers including Michael Colgrass, James Curnow, Michael Daugherty, Eric Ewazen, Sam Hazo, Jennifer Higdon, David Maslanka, Charles Ruggiero, Frank Ticheli, Joan Tower and Eric Whitacre, among dozens of others.

Accepting his honorary doctorate this past May, Whitwell told the graduating class, "Educators who are successful have a great desire for continued growth." With his post-retirement schedule as guest conductor and clinician showing no signs of abating, Whitwell stands as a testament to that notion.

## James T. Rohner

Chances are not many people would leave a law career to run a magazine, but if James Rohner hadn't done just that over 30 years ago, the world of music education might be very, very different.

Rohner was born and raised in Evanston, IL, and played trumpet throughout his junior high and high school years. After earning his B.A. and LL.B. from Yale University, he practiced law in Philadelphia and Chicago for seven years before returning to his earlier passion, music. Rohner's father started "The Instrumentalist" in 1946 while still teaching in Chicago- and Evanston-area schools. Despite the magazine's unique focus, circulation numbers limited the scope of its publication and its longevity. Enter the younger Rohner, who took a leave of absence for a year to reorganize and streamline the operations at both "The Instrumentalist" and its sister publication, "Clavier" magazine.

This "leave of absence," along with Rohner's keen interest in and support of bands and band music, has continued for over 30 years. Contributors over the years include many of the most important conductors, composers and educators in the history of music: Leroy Anderson, Samuel Applebaum, Harold Bachman, Harry Begian, William Bennett, Lucien Cailliet, Thomas Fabish, Arthur Fiedler, Morton Gould, Percy Grainger, Howard Hanson, Frederick Fennell, Haskell Harr, Elizabeth Green, Merle Isaac, Pierre Monteaux, Vaclav Nelhybel, H.E. Nutt, James Pellerite, Donald Peck, Sigurd Rascher, Alfred Reed, Bennett Reimer, William Revelli, Renald Schilke and Leopold Stokowski.

As Rohner himself wryly observes, "There are legions of stories of people who have said that they couldn't afford graduate school but that the magazine was their post-graduate education." VanderCook's Undergraduate Dean Stacey L. Dolan undoubtedly speaks for many with her own account of the magazine's impact on her career: "Since I was a high school student musician, through my early years of teaching and into the present, 'The Instrumentalist' has provided relevant information and articles in all areas of music and music education to guide and inform me every step of the way. Rohner meticulously puts together issue after issue filled with useful information for the music educator. Simply put, 'The Instrumentalist' is the 'go to' read for anyone in the business."



May 1994

**Wilber D. Elliott**, educator

July 1994

**Michael J. Davis** (BMEd 1967), former director of the Walt Disney World Resort Band and Orchestra

July 1993

**William R. Coyle**, educator, co-founder of the National Association of School Music Dealers

May 1992

**Melvin L. Shelton**, educator

July 1992

**Lewis A. Schmidt** (BMEd 1963), educator, current chairman of the board of trustees of VanderCook College of Music

July 1992

**Guy F. Foreman** (BMEd 1944), educator, arranger

July 1992

**Richard Davis** (BMEd 1952), jazz bassist, composer

July 1991

**Neil Dunlap**, educator, arranger

July 1991

**Harris Bergh** (BMEd 1935), educator

July 1990

**Victor Zajec** (BMEd 1950, MMEd 1964), educator

July 1990

**William D. Revelli** (BMEd 1931, MMEd 1936), educator, director of bands at the University of Michigan

July 1990

**Clifford Lillya** (BMEd 1931), educator, professor at the University of Michigan

July 1990

**Merle J. Isaac** (BMEd 1932), composer, educator

July 1990

**Forrest L. Buchtel, Sr.** (BMEd 1932, MMEd 1934), composer, educator

July 1988

**Albert Richard Casavant** (MMEd 1952), educator

July 1988

**Richard E. Brittain** (BMEd 1941, MMEd 1955), conductor, educator, former president of VanderCook College of Music

July 1987

**Richard S. Peck**, jazz saxophonist, composer

July 1986

**Ruth E. Artman**, educator, composer

July 1986

**Vaclav Nelhybel**, composer

July 1986

**Haskell W. Harr** (BMEd 1952), composer, educator



On the Course for VanderCook:

# The TrusTEE Golf Outing

*VanderCook's annual TrusTEE Golf Outing is the signature summer event for the college, so much so that it's hard for many to believe the tradition has only been around for eight years. A brief history of the event, and some insight into how important it is to VanderCook's students, follows.*

Eight years ago in early 2006, trustees Robert Reich, George Quinlan, Jr., and Lew Schmidt, along with Dr. Charles Menghini and then-assistant to the president, Clarmarie Keenan, were mulling over another way to support the Great Teachers Scholarship Fund. As VanderCook's largest source of institutional aid, the Great Teachers Scholarship Fund is critical to VanderCook students. Awards from the fund help fill gaps, make ends meet, and reduce

the stress that managing a student budget can create. "Financial aid makes such a difference for students paying their own way – as well as for parents who support their child's education. Out-of-pocket costs for our strongest students are minimized thanks to the Great Teachers Scholarship Fund," says Sirena Covington, director of financial aid. "Maintaining the fund with the support of fundraising is so important."

To add to the support generated by A Night at the Pops each spring, the idea of an annual golf outing was added to the list for consideration. The ideal mix of friend-raising and fund-raising, an afternoon on the course seemed worth a try. An outing hosted by the board of trustees could be even more promising, introducing VanderCook to the board's networks, as well as to vendors, alumni and parents. Working with Trustee Erica Chianelli's contact at the Links of Carillon in Plainfield, IL, a date was secured and the first TrusTEE Open Golf Outing was in the works. There were hole sponsors to secure, prizes to collect, betting holes to devise, goody bags to fill and hole-in-one insurance to negotiate. There were mailings to design, schedule and send. There were "likely" golfers and sponsors to invite. A logo and graphics would be critical to give the event its own personality and its own "face." And while Thursday, June 15, 2006, was in the future, it was definitely in the near future.

Undaunted, every aspect of the plan was set in motion to host the inaugural golf outing to benefit the Great Teachers Scholarship Fund. "I don't think we ever really questioned our decision. Everyone was on board – even non-golfers – and we set out to make it a success," says Keenan. "We had a lot of support, some unexpected help, and ultimately, a good event." The day of that first outing, VanderCook hosted 52 golfers with the help of 20 hole sponsors and student workers manning the par-3 betting holes. Additional

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**"Financial aid makes such a difference for students paying their own way – as well as for parents who support their child's education. Out-of-pocket costs for our strongest students are minimized thanks to the Great Teachers Scholarship Fund. Maintaining the fund with the support of fundraising is so important."**

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– Sirena Covington, director of financial aid



supporters even came out to enjoy dinner and join in on the awards “ceremony” and raffle. The weather cooperated, everyone survived 18 holes, and a two-tier raffle sent everyone home a winner. The biggest winner of the day was certainly the Great Teachers Scholarship Fund. The inaugural TrusTEE Open netted just over \$11,000 to add to the fund’s principal and created a following. The second Open date was secured for 2007 and the summer golf outing continued, becoming a valuable asset to an important scholarship fund as well as a new college tradition.

The addition of event sponsorship opportunities to the outing in 2011 has made the event even more profitable. Rick Ueno, a loyal friend of VanderCook, has secured support from the Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers he manages for the last three outings. Americaneagle.com, under the leadership of Mike Svanascini, also signed on for sponsorship this year to help the college host the eighth annual outing. With the help of members of the Board of Trustees Development Committee led by event co-chairs Erica Chianelli and Chris Sweetland, and the addition of Jeff Sadowski, director of philanthropy, to the staff, 2013 proved to be a record-breaking year for this summer tradition. “The TrusTEE Open is a fun- filled relaxed event that continues to grow year after year. Golf is something that allows us to draw such a diverse crowd of VanderCook supporters, from alumni to suppliers to neighbors to even ‘Carl Spackler’ himself!” says Chianelli. “Plus, it’s the only

**“We’re introducing new people to VanderCook, connecting with alumni, enjoying the company of our loyal vendors and friends – all while helping our students. That’s a winning combination of fun and success.”**

– Clarmarie Keenan, director of institutional advancement

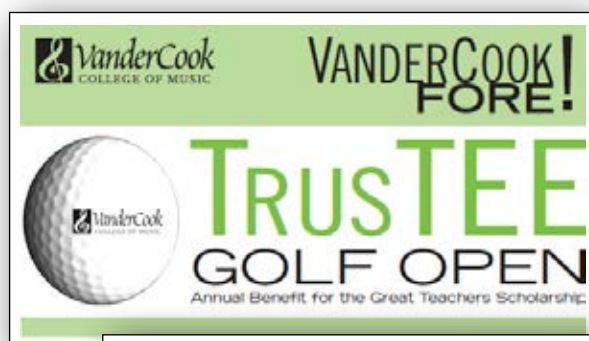
event I’ve ever been to where a group of ‘honest’ golfers wins a prize!”

Picture-perfect weather made the day at the Links of Carillon a wonderful afternoon for 93 golfers and 39 holes sponsors this year. Changing the raffle to a pick-a-prize format allowed golfers to choose among 50 prize lots with raffle tickets purchased or won on the par 3’s. In her current role as director of institutional advancement, Keenan has seen the TrusTEE Open grow significantly and could not be happier about the results this year. “A great team effort allowed us to add \$26,500 to the Great Teachers Scholarship Fund. In eight years, the golf outing alone has increased our ability to support our students with over \$125,000,” she says. “We’re introducing new people to VanderCook, connecting with alumni,

enjoying the company of our loyal vendors and friends – all while helping our students. That’s a winning combination of fun and success.”

The date for the ninth annual TrusTEE Open has been secured: Thursday, June 12, 2014. We hope you make plans to join us as we continue our summer fund-raiser for the Great Teachers Scholarship Fund. For more information, to secure an event sponsorship, to reserve your foursome or sign up to golf with new friends, contact Clarmarie Keenan at ckeenan@vandercook.edu or 312.788.1131.

## The TrusTEE Golf Logo Through the Years



# Philanthropy and VanderCook

**The “faces” of our annual Share Your Passion Campaign, all now active teachers, tell us how *your* generosity impacted their VanderCook experience and their future.**

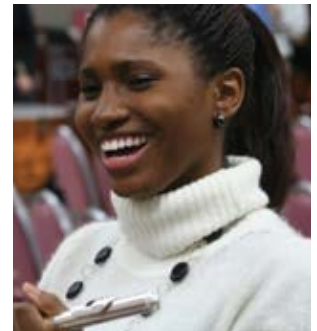


Passion is an intense emotion, a compelling feeling, extreme enthusiasm, or an uncontrollable desire for something. I have a passion for teaching music. There is no way that I ever could have realized my dream of teaching if it had not been for the Share Your Passion Campaign. Through the generosity of individuals who believe in the power of music education, I am now able to share MY passion with thousands of students!

***Steven Sanders, percussion***  
***BMed 2009***  
***Band Director***  
***University of Illinois at Chicago College Prep High School***

The Share Your Passion Campaign gives aspiring music teachers from all walks of life the opportunity to a wonderful college experience. VanderCook has given me the tools and the confidence needed to walk into any school and raise student interest in music, creating future musicians and music teachers. Without VanderCook and the Share Your Passion Campaign, I would not have the drive and commitment to our schools' music programs I have today.

***Melissa Alexander, flute***  
***BMed 2010***  
***Music Teacher***  
***Lewis Elementary, Chicago Public Schools***



In my time as an undergraduate student, VanderCook scholarships made it possible for me to follow my dream of becoming a music educator. Through the support of donors, I learned the values of hope and gratitude. The support of donors is the reason I earned my bachelor's degree from VanderCook and am now in my sixth year as a music teacher and band director. Supporting VanderCook's campaigns annually gives even more students the opportunity to share their love and passion for music.

***Karen Schuster, flute***  
***BMed 2008***  
***Instrumental Music Teacher & Band Director***  
***KIPP Intrepid Preparatory School, Houston, Texas***

**When you invest in VanderCook through a gift to the annual campaign, one of several scholarship funds or the capital campaign, your generosity changes lives.**





The Share Your Passion Campaign and its donors are vital for sustainability and growth. VanderCook is a small school, and through donor support, students are able to receive much-needed aid to benefit their education. Furthermore, donor contributions provide a basis for growth towards continual development of resources and student needs. Thank you to the donors who give truth to the spirit of the campaign, and allow students to share their passion.

***Meghan Tokunaga-Scanlon Torres, voice  
BMEd 2011  
Music Teacher  
DeWitt Clinton Elementary, Chicago Public Schools***

Your annual support not only ensures opportunities for current students, but also leaves a lasting wealth of knowledge we carry into our professional careers. Right now I am building a music program at an international school in Jakarta, Indonesia, and I would not have been able to do so without the know-how I obtained in my coursework and the strong networks I made in my time at VanderCook. VanderCook has truly given me all that I need to make my passion into a reality. Thank you!

***Mark Lai, clarinet  
BMEd 2011  
Beacon Academy, Jakarta, Indonesia***



I am currently working on my master's degree at Missouri State University, where I received a full-tuition graduate assistantship. Graduating with my bachelor's degree from VanderCook is, without a doubt, the reason I was granted this amazing opportunity. Your support and contributions made it possible for me to attend and graduate from VanderCook, which directly affected my eligibility to receive this reward. You provide young, aspiring music educators with the opportunity to realize their dreams, and for that, we are truly grateful.

***Tayyib Olashade Dauda, saxophone  
BMEd 2013  
Missouri State University***

The assistance I received from scholarships during my undergraduate career at VanderCook seemed to have been heaven sent. There were times I thought I might not be able to return to school for another semester because, as an independent student, I could not get approved for more loans. By supporting VanderCook, contributors are not only sponsoring its individual students, programs, community and facilities, but also helping to build a stable foundation upon which a love for, understanding of, and sense of ownership of music can be built. Each contributor not only assists VanderCook students but also reaches out to each student with whom VanderCook graduates share their passion.

***London Johnson, trumpet  
BMEd 2010  
Alcott College Prep, Chicago Public Schools***



**Every gift makes a difference. Every gift inspires a dream.  
Every gift brings a little more music into the world.**



**"I have always loved music and wanted to keep it in my life. I always knew that my teachers had a huge impact on me. I realized it was my dream to become a music teacher. Finding such a wonderful, perfect college like VanderCook made me realize that I could make my dream a reality. Without your support, I would not be able to pursue my passion. My deepest thanks!"**

**– Regan Kline**








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**“Music has had a huge impact on my life, giving me a means of expression I wouldn’t otherwise have. I chose VanderCook because I truly believe VanderCook is the best place for music teachers to be educated. It’s the best place for me to be so I can share my passion with others. I am extremely grateful for your support of VanderCook and students like me.”**

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– Jessamyn Larsen

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# Our Donors

*Recognizing gifts received from August 1, 2012 through July 31, 2013.*

## SHARE YOUR PASSION CAMPAIGN

### \$5,000 and Above

Peter Berghoff  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Harris  
Harris-Teller, Inc.  
Dr. Roseanne Rosenthal

### \$1,000 to \$4,999

John Armato  
Drs. Remo (HD'07) &  
Ami Belli  
Stephen & Margaret Benson  
Ann M. Betz (B'76, M'84)  
Kaye L. Clements &  
Jeanne Triner  
Connie (M'00) & John  
Donnelly  
Stephen Kuchta (M'96)  
& Marilyn Gilmore  
John & Kathleen Huston  
Brock Kaericher  
Ron (B'90, M'96) &  
Angela Presutti Korbitz  
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**"Ever since my first piano lesson from my uncle at 12 years old, I knew that music was the greatest thing in my life. Coming from a Latino middle class family, college was a long stretch in my mind. The staff at VanderCook believed in my dream to become a music teacher. That's why I chose to come to VanderCook, and your support makes this all possible – for others as well as for me. For this, I am deeply grateful. Thank you! And I promise to become the best teacher I can be."**

– Christopher Guerrero



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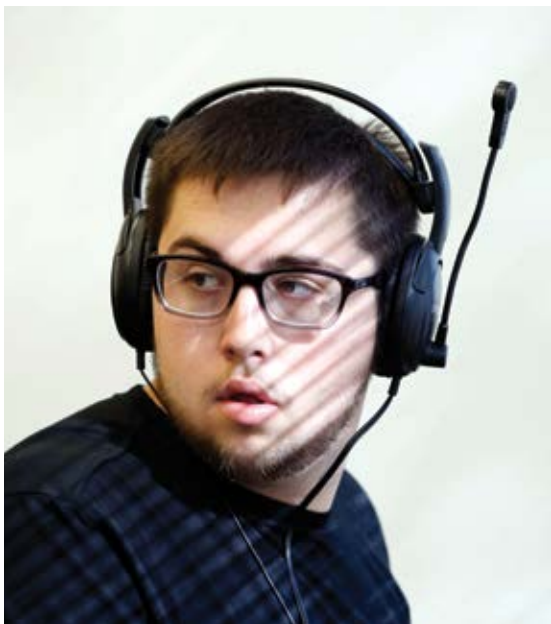
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**“Thank you so much for supporting my dream to become a music educator. I am a fourth-year student at VanderCook and have truly come to find my education rewarding and dear to my heart. Without your contribution, this would not be possible. Your help will enable me to inspire others with music as it has touched my life. May your care bring you much happiness and prosperity.”**

**– Jeremy Rowland**

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# Statement of Financial Position

## Fiscal Year Ending July 31, 2012 and 2011

Assets	2012	2011
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,156,626	\$ 419,339
Tuition receivable	158,274	144,633
Grant receivable	234,020	752,475
Pledges receivable	114,366	184,516
Prepaid expenses and other assets	129,781	69,650
Cash held on behalf of the Alumni Association	30,289	31,609
Investments	2,139,383	2,101,280
Property and equipment, net	493,502	511,122
Deposits	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 4,466,241</b>	<b>\$ 4,224,624</b>

Liabilities and Net Assets	2012	2011
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable	\$ 28,639	\$ 57,794
Accrued expenses	330,373	109,449
Unearned revenue	35,941	68,137
Deferred rent obligation	425,862	375,924
Obligations under capital lease	37,543	49,552
Funds held on behalf of Alumni Association	<u>30,289</u>	<u>31,609</u>
Total liabilities	\$ 888,647	\$ 692,465
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted:		
Undesignated	\$ 920,562	\$ 1,036,453
Designated	<u>308,603</u>	<u>208,188</u>
Total unrestricted net assets	\$ 1,229,165	\$ 1,244,641
Temporarily restricted	\$ 1,937,637	\$ 1,876,726
Permanently restricted	<u>\$ 410,792</u>	<u>\$ 410,792</u>
Total restricted net assets	<u>\$ 2,348,429</u>	<u>\$ 2,287,518</u>
Total net assets	<u>\$ 3,577,594</u>	<u>\$ 3,532,159</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 4,466,241</b>	<b>\$ 4,224,624</b>



*"Memories of our lives, or our works and our deeds will continue in others."*

– Rosa Parks

# In Memoriam

We were notified of the passing of the following alumnae during the 2012 – 2013 academic year.



**"George Quinlan, Sr. (May 11, 2013)** was a personal hero to so many of us. He was a true friend to everyone he met. Always with that 'Kris Kringle' smile, he lit up every room he entered. His love of family and of the profession he did so much for is an inspiration to every one of us who aspire to be a musician, teacher, leader, businessman or human being. There is no doubt that his legacy will live in the hearts and minds of everyone who was fortunate enough to have had the pleasure of his company."

– Dr. Charles T. Menghini

**Joseph E. Abbott, Jr. BMEd '73**

Momence, IL July 3, 2013

**Ralph J. Arnold MMed '61**

Oak Lawn, IL July 10, 2012

**Donald L. Ambler BMEd '53**

Denver, CO May 15, 2013

**S. Mitchell Bender BMEd '60**

Herndon, VA July 1, 2013

**Leland P. Bennett MMed '64**

Harahan, LA September 1, 2012

**Robert Blash MMed '70**

Paso Robles, CA October 15, 2012

**William U. Burt MMed '69**

Norwalk, OH June 20, 2010

**Joseph P. Chambers MMed '56**

Gastonia, NC September 25, 2009

**Leonard A. Chambers MMed '70**

Tomball, TX July 12, 2010

**William Jose Chambers MMed '81**

Western Springs, IL June 30, 2011

**Winchester Davis BMEd '61**

Greenville, MS January 3, 2008

**Dr. Perry B. Dennis MMed '40**

Columbus, MS June 15, 2013

**Carl Dephouse MMed '70**

North Charles, SC February 7, 2013

**James T. Dixon BMEd '56**

Munster, IN December 5, 2012

**L. Wayne Garrison MMed '90**

Carlyle, IL Unknown

**Vernon Harleston MMed '63**

Hazlehurst, GA March 29, 1994

**Thomas W. Hoffman BMEd '60**

Franklin, IL January 16, 2013

**Nelson W. Jackson MMed '55**

Memphis, TN June 26, 2012

**Dale Klinzing MMed '62**

Riverside, CA April 14, 2007

**Thelmer McClanahan BMEd '64**

Pikeville, KY May 12, 2013

**Lucien W. Miller, Jr. MMed '92**

Las Vegas, NV October 12, 2006

**Robert Allen Pettengill BMEd '66, MMed '84**

Surprise, AZ January 26, 2013

**Brother Edwin Reggio MMed '61**

Austin, TX April 24, 2013

**Thomas J. Stanton MMed '63**

Satellite Beach, FL July 9, 2001

**Melvin Van Buren BMEd '57, MMed '63**

Geneva, IL August 10, 2013

**Ronald Zachara BMEd '70**

Itasca, IL August 20, 2006



**Salvatore A. Grasso (May 7, 2013)**

"Although I never had the privilege of hearing Salvatore Grasso's bands, I know they must have been nothing short of terrific. It is obvious that Mr. Grasso was a teacher who inspired hundreds upon hundreds of students and families. He was a man who led by example and carried with him high musical standards and expectations that he instilled in his students. I can say this confidently because of our college's relationship with the company he founded, Grasso Graphics, and the continuous demonstration of their attention to detail, commitment to excellence, and sincere caring and appreciation for others. These traits are synonymous with the man, Salvatore Grasso, and the company he founded."

– Dr. Charles T. Menghini

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 James Gilworth, 1981–1989  
 Richard Brittain, 1975–1980  
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 Diane Kelly, Controller  
 Amy L. Lenting (BMed '04), Director of Admissions and Retention  
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 Peter Berghoff, Graduate Dean's Assistant  
 Robert DeLand, Head Librarian, Archivist  
 David Eccles, Director of String Music Education  
 Wayne Fong, IT Manager  
 Kristen Gogol, Financial Aid Assistant  
 Rachel Healy, Business Office Assistant  
 Dr. Yu-Sui Hung, Applied Piano, Aural Skills and Theory  
 Anthony G. Kidonakis (MMed '09), Applied Saxophone, Jazz Band, Jazz Harmony  
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