

# District 64 Band and Orchestra Parents Association

## Notes & Beats



The District 64 Band and Orchestra Parents Association provides support and enrichment opportunities to the students and staff of the District 64 Instrumental Music Program.

### Guest Artists Foster Dreams

Inspiring lessons from a jazz master, a prize-winning conductor, and an electric violinist are gracing the music-enrichment programs that BOPA members are helping bring to District 64.

In March, concert 1 orchestras from Lincoln and Emerson joined in an extended rehearsal led by Allan Dennis, founder and director of Midwest Young Artists, a leading Chicago-area youth music program. MYA's top ensemble has been named Illinois' Youth Orchestra of the Year three times. Dr. Dennis is also music director of the Kankakee Valley Symphony Orchestra.

Tenor saxophonist Mark Colby led April's annual Jazz Fest, a workshop/performance for the Lincoln and Emerson jazz bands. Colby, a DePaul University faculty member and first-call studio musician, has played with Gerry Mulligan and Frank Sinatra and appears on three Maynard Ferguson albums.

Next fall kicks off with rocker Mark Wood's visit with selected students from districts 64 and 207 on September 10

### Behind the Baton

Who sneaks in time on Guitar Hero, who's performed on seven CDs, and who turned to music when Santa didn't deliver? After last fall's look at the orchestras, we wrap up with the leaders of District 64's amazing bands.

**Eric Bachmann's** musical life started on an "off" note—a trumpet he'd wanted at age five never appeared under the Christmas tree. Luckily, a Beatles drum set from his parents fit the bill instead. That young start led eventually to percussion and music-education degrees from Northwestern University and a 20-year teaching career, including 13 years at School District 64. "I cannot imagine a world without music," says the Emerson band and jazz band leader, "and having the opportunity to share it with young people is an unimaginable joy!" Mr. Bachmann has played in area groups like the Northshore Concert Band, but free time now focuses on his four young children and fostering their love of music. Two have started piano, and one of them "wants to be in a rock band as soon as possible." Mr. B's favorites include Billy Joel—a longtime idol—John Mayer, Aaron Copland, Count Basie, and Mozart. But not only them, he adds: "I always try to know what [students] are listening to at the moment." He hopes that music will always fill students' lives and that they'll strive for excellence everywhere, just as in band. "Whatever they do later in life, do it with pride and passion and they will never work a day in their life."

Flutist **Angela Deligiannis**, too, has ties to the Northshore Concert Band, as an ensemble member during all of the nine years that she's taught. The group performs regularly at Northwestern and at regional outreach concerts. Now in her fourth year with Emerson's bands and percussion group, Mrs. Deligiannis teaches music "because I want others to experience the same joy I have felt," she says. "There is an inexplicable way that music makes me feel when I perform or hear a certain piece or a song.... It can bring you right back to a wonderful, or not-so-wonderful, time or place in your life." She credits family and teachers for nurturing her passion, which led to studies at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Northwestern. "Playing well—take years of hard work," she emphasizes. "It doesn't happen overnight." But perseverance yields opportunities, too: Performances took her to England and Ireland in college and, more recently, to France. Mrs. Deligiannis is one flutist with wide-ranging taste—from Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald to Wynton Marsallis, from Mozart and Beethoven to Aaron Copland and Claude Debussy. Rock favs include Jethro Tull, not surprisingly, but also Beatles, Bruce Springsteen, U2, Foo Fighters and Weezer. "I also like learning to play guitar (and Guitar Hero!) in my free time," she adds, "although the free time seems to be decreasing."

The happy reason for that change, baby Dean, was born to Mr. and Mrs. Deligiannis on December 7. During Mrs. Deligiannis' maternity leave, her Emerson bands have been led by **Jamie Hestad**, also a flutist and also from the

or 11. Wood, violinist with the Trans-Siberian Orchestra, Julliard grad, and creator of the Viper

electric violin, will lead an all-day workshop and evening performance at Maine South auditorium.

He has performed with Celine Dion and Lenny Kravitz. Details at [electrifyyourstrings.com](http://electrifyyourstrings.com).

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## Spring 2009

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Lincoln Band Director

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## A Great Year—Thanks to You

Even in recessions, violin strings break and patch cords wear out. But that's something BOPA's 271 member families understand. Their support for D64's music programs—and support from our generous PTOs—was unfazed this year's economic trend. To that loyalty we holler *thanks!* Money from annual BOPA memberships buys music, equipment, and learning opportunities not possible through district funding alone. As of late April, contributions totaled \$12,408. Fantastic!

## IMEA Correction

Our fall issue omitted violinist Paul Pilecki (Lincoln) from a list of students who made the Illinois Music Educators Association's Junior Division Honor Orchestra. Great job, Paul!

## Hear Them Live! Upcoming Concerts

5/5/09 Emerson beginning, cadet and concert bands, 7 pm  
5/5/09 Lincoln orchestras, all ensembles, 7 pm  
5/6/09 Lincoln cadet and symphonic bands and percussion ensemble, 7 pm  
5/7/09 Lincoln Music Assembly, 8 am  
5/7/09 Lincoln beginning, concert and jazz bands, 7 pm  
5/7/09 Emerson concert orchestra 1, symphonic & jazz bands, symphony orch., 7 pm  
5/8/09 Emerson Music Assembly, 8 am  
5/8/09 Emerson jazz band at Jazz Dinner/Dance, Maine South, 6 pm  
5/12/09 Emerson beginning, concert 2 & chamber orch.; string & perc. ensembles, 7 pm  
5/14/09 Lincoln band & orchestra tour to elementary schools  
5/15/09 Emerson band & orchestra tour to elementary schools  
5/15/09 Rehearsal & pizza party for 8th-grade orchestra students, Maine South, 3:30 pm  
5/16/09 Emerson concert orchestra at Music in the Parks, Great America  
5/19/09 8th-grade orchestra students perform with Maine South ensembles, 6:30 pm  
5/21/09 Instrumental music New Student Night, Emerson, 4 pm  
5/27/09 Instrumental music New Student Night, Lincoln, 4 pm  
6/4/09 Lincoln/Emerson orchestra bowling party, Brunswick Zone, 4 pm  
6/10/09 Emerson Promotion Night, symphonic band performs at Emerson, 6:30 pm  
6/10/09 Lincoln Promotion Night, symphonic band performs at Maine South, 6:30 pm

## Close 'nough for Jazz?

"A concert is like a bullfight—the moment of truth."

—Arthur Rubinstein

"Play the music, not the instrument."

—anonymous

"By concentrating on precision, one arrives at technique, but by concentrating on technique one does not arrive at precision."

—Bruno Walter

"God tells me how the music should sound, but you stand in the way!"

—conductor Arturo Toscanini, to a trumpet player

## Behind the Baton (continued)

U of I at Urbana-Champaign. "It's been a privilege to work with the students, teachers, and community of District 64," Ms. Hestad says of this, her first year leading bands. "I love witnessing the moment when something 'clicks' and [students] suddenly take off as musicians." Bach and other baroque music may be her favorites on flute, but she performs also in the Chicago Gamelan Ensemble, a Javanese ensemble.

**Brian Jacobi** never planned to use his U of I degree in music education: "Performance was my goal, teaching was definitely a fallback position." He studied trombone with two members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and performed for 11 years with the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra. Meanwhile his private teaching opened a door when one school's band director suddenly left. The band parents asked Mr. Jacobi to take over. "I declined," he says, "but told them I would help out until they found somebody." After just one month, he was sold on the job. "I had no idea how rewarding it could be to help young students discover the joy of musical performance." A teacher now in District 64 for 19 years, the Lincoln band director is also the curriculum specialist for instrumental music. And still a performer: His work in several Chicago jazz bands led him in 1990 to the Rob Parton JazzTech Big Band, of which he is a founding member. Mr. Jacobi's recorded seven CDs with JazzTech, including several recordings as a featured soloist. Hear JazzTech at FitzGerald's on Roosevelt Road on the third Wednesday of every month, or anytime at [www.cdbaby.com](http://www.cdbaby.com). Details are at [www.rparton.com](http://www.rparton.com).

Don't try to pin down Lincoln band director **Mary Skomasa** to one favorite band or composer. "I like just about every style of music," she says. "What I listen to depends on my mood and what I'm doing at the time." A member of District 64's music department since 1990, Mrs. Skomasa has taught since 1978, with a few years off to start her family. The director of Lincoln's percussion ensemble hones her own percussionist skills with the Northwest Symphony, Evanston Symphony, Joliet Alumni Band and freelance work throughout Chicagoland. She also teaches piano privately and is a staff member/director of the Illinois Ambassadors of Music, which arranges performances in Europe for high school and college musicians. "I love teaching, working with students and music," says Mrs. Skomasa, a graduate of both Northern Illinois University and VanderCook College of Music. "I can't think of a better way to spend my life!" Success, she feels, is "when one of my students says, 'That was cool. Let's do it again!'"

## Hang with the Band this Summer

Or opt for the orchestra. Or jam with the jazz dudes. Whatever you play, whatever your level, District 64's Worlds of Wonder summer program

has an ensemble for you. Three-week sessions start June 16 and July 6 and meet at Emerson Middle School. Keep those skills sharp this summer and stay in touch with friends! See [www.d64.org](http://www.d64.org) for details and registration forms.