

A Brief History of Music at HUHS

In 1937, Theodore Steinmetz and a fully recognized high school band program appeared on the Hartford scene simultaneously. Mr. Steinmetz, "Steinie," whose name recalls happy times for many in our community, accelerated the process of developing the hidden talents of promising young musicians.

In 1943, Michael Posgay became the high school's first full-time director, and in that year, conducted Hartford High School's first formal band concert. Mr. Posgay continued the work initiated by Mr. Steinmetz, but with the coming of 1944, Mr. Posgay and many other high school band directors were suddenly called upon to march to the music piped by Uncle Sam in World War II. Mrs. Posgay took leadership of the band in her husband's absence until 1945, when she handed the baton over to Michael Ross. In his two years at the high school, Mr. Ross did much of the spadework for his successor, William Roddick. During his ten years as band director (1947-1957), Mr. Roddick raised the standard of Hartford's high school band. The band advanced from Class C to Class A status, compiled near-perfect records in tournament after tournament, performed at the State Teachers' Convention, performed before countless local audiences, and hosted the District Band Contest. Mr. Roddick brought the band's numbers up to 70 musicians and, for the first time, all members were outfitted in red and black uniforms.

Leonard J. Schneider came to Hartford in 1957. In keeping with the tradition of excellence already established by his predecessors, Mr. Schneider was constantly seeking perfection from his band students. This was reflected in the band's outstanding performance record during his time at Hartford Union High School.

In 1973, enrollment in the band program grew, and David Kranjac was added to the music staff, taking charge of one band and the orchestra program. In 1982, David Vandermeuse took over leadership of the orchestra program. Mr. Kranjac and Mr. Schneider continued to lead the band program. Mr. Kranjac took full leadership of the band program and music dept. chair in 1988, aided by the talents of Mr. Vandermeuse.

In 1986, Cathy Parge took charge of the string program at the high school. In 1988, Joyce Malloy was added to the high school music staff on a part-time basis, directing the high school string program. In 1995, in addition to the orchestra, Mrs. Malloy became director of the Oriole Band.

Mr. Kranjac retired in spring of 2007, after 33 continuous years of leading the music program at HUHS. Because of budget cuts due to a shortfall in funding revenues, Mr. Kranjac's position was not filled.

The Hartford Union High School Band has carried its banner to Interlochen, Michigan; Winnipeg, Canada; Nashville, Tennessee; Orlando, Florida; and numerous cities throughout Wisconsin. In 1968, the band was selected to perform for the Wisconsin State Music Convention. In 1976, the band was invited to the Bicentennial Parade at Walt Disney World in Florida. In addition to concerts and tournaments, the band has performed at the state fair, sponsored a Massed Band Clinic, played numerous exchange concerts with other schools and attended the Football Band Days at Madison and Milwaukee

Universities. In 1987, the band had the distinct honor of performing for the president of the United States, Ronald Reagan. In April of 1992, the Jazz Ensemble was the only high school jazz group in the nation selected to perform at the National School Board Convention in Orlando, Florida, receiving an extended standing ovation from thousands of school board members. These are only a few of the accomplishments of the band as it thrived through the '80's, 90's and into the 21st century.

In 1997, with enrollment of over 200 students in band, the music department had the privilege of practicing and rehearsing in a new, expanded music facility. The marching band took another major trip in the spring of 1998 to Florida. The band has performed at many venues in the Orlando area seven times, the most recent being in the spring of 2007.

Joyce Malloy joined the HUHS staff in 1988 as a shared position with Hartford Joint No. 1. Under the direction of Joyce Malloy since 1988, the HUHS orchestra has expanded to a stable enrollment of about 45 – 50 string performers. Because of the growth and success of the music program, Mrs. Malloy was hired on a full time basis in 1995. In addition to leading the orchestra, Mrs. Malloy also worked with the Oriole Band. The orchestra recently completed a tour to our nation's capital to celebrate the 200th birthday of Abraham Lincoln, with performances at the Lincoln Memorial and the National Cathedral. You can see the orchestra perform at many school and community functions, downtown Hartford; at the Schauer Center; at the NHS and other student recognition ceremonies, and at the annual graduation ceremony.