

**“Always Something New”**  
**Illinois Bands Enters a New Era**  
Compiled by Emily Wuchner, associate editor

It all began in the most unlikely of ways. A young engineering student who just happened to play the cornet joined the University of Illinois band. Within a few short years he was appointed director of bands. While onlookers evidently saw promise in what the young man could do, no one—not even the young A. A. Harding himself—likely imagined the magnitude of his impact on bands both at Illinois and throughout America.

The University of Illinois Bands has a long, celebrated history of excellence in music, due to the skill of its leaders, the dedication of its students, and the drive to explore uncharted musical territories. Each director has put his or her own distinct mark on Illinois Bands history, and pushed the ensemble to being, as John Philip Sousa put it, “the world’s greatest college band.” A. A. Harding brought the military band to the concert hall and Mark Hindsley created exquisite orchestral transcriptions to fill that same hall; Harry Begian’s passion for education led to the Conducting Internship Program and James Keene’s legacy lies in the many new works he commissioned for wind symphony. As each director brought something new to Illinois Bands, it is perhaps fitting, then, that the mantra posted on Harding’s desk read: “Always Something New.”

This fall, Steve Peterson joined the School of Music as director of bands and began adding his own contribution to the program’s illustrious history. In that light, we wanted to revisit the illustrious history of Illinois bands, but do so through the words of our alumni and students—those who made the music that made the history. What follows are short vignettes contributed by only a few of the thousands of Illinois Bands members including Christie Baechtold Schuetz who recalls the presence of Illinois Bands during wartime and Mark Clark who tells a funny story about his “extra large baton.” Former Director James Keene and Professor Linda Moorhouse share their experiences from the podium while Peterson provides insight into his goals for the Bands program. Under his leadership, Illinois Bands will begin a new era of excellence with a future that is sure to be *always something new*.

**Harvey Hermann**

I had the privilege of conducting, playing, and teaching under the baton of A. A. Harding, Mark Hindsley, Harry Begian, and James Keene. In the 1950s, I played clarinet for one year under the direction of Harding before serving for five years in the military. Shortly after my return, I resumed working on my Music Education degree at the University of Illinois and before I had earned my Bachelor’s degree, I was hired as the woodwind assistant to the director of bands—a post I held for 32 years. While I had many job duties, some of the most important included coaching individual musicians and sections and sometimes leading full-ensemble rehearsals. When Begian traveled, he usually left me to conduct rehearsals! Over the years I have heard many outstanding UI bands and am proud of my place in the legacy.

**Christie Baechtold Schuetz** (BA '46)

Under the direction of A. Austin Harding, I played bass clarinet in the Concert Band from 1944 to 1946, after transferring from Elmhurst College. Those were the war years, and many male players had gone off to the various armed services, leaving seats open to women players. The directors were also looking around other departments and allowing non-music majors to play in the bands. The trajectory of my life was shaped when I joined the Concert Band, for that was where I met my husband to be, Warren Schuetz. But that is another story.

During the '40s the Concert Band was featured in regular live broadcasts on radio station WILL. Associate Director Clarence Sawhill often conducted for those broadcasts, and it was his custom to rehearse the band right up to the second we went on the air. We often wondered if any of those last-second notes actually were broadcast.

Back then, rehearsals were in the venerable wooden band building adjacent to the Armory (where the Harding Band Building stands today), and concerts were in the teacup-domed Auditorium. Bandsmen from Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul motored to Urbana to swell the ranks of University band members.

A few servicemen had finished their tour of duty and had come back to complete their degrees. W. Jay "Wib" Hoel served in the European Theater and was awarded the Bronze Star. But in the Concert Band, Wib was the clown of the percussion section, and he pretty much got away with anything under the watchful eye of Director Harding. Once we were ambling through a rehearsal of Ferde Grofé's "On the Trail" from the *Grand Canyon Suite*. Wib fetched from his bag of instruments a Klaxon and sounded an ear-piercing "aaaOOOgah." Dr. Harding never missed a beat.

There are sad memories too. At one of our concerts the Band played the Andante from Sibelius's Symphony No. 1 (some of the saddest measures ever written), while a sergeant from Chanute intoned the names of our colleagues who would not be coming back.

I am ninety years old now, but those memories are still precious to me. My advice to young people today: keep music always in your life. It is sustaining, fulfilling, and will be your faithful companion whatever the circumstances.

### **Joe Rank** (BS '69, MS '73)

When I enrolled at Illinois in 1965, I auditioned because many of my Urbana High bandmates did. A non-music major, I was hardly an accomplished musician and the Second Regimental Band and Marching Illini provided a welcome social outlet and the opportunity to be part of something bigger than myself. I graduated in 1969 and went on to serve a 20-year Navy career. When I was assigned to Illinois as assistant professor of naval science, Associate Director of Bands Everett Kisinger invited me to play in the Summer Band. On one of my first dates with my wife of 41 years, I played on the steps of the Auditorium while she listened on the Quad.

I picked up my saxophone again when my kids were in elementary school. All four enjoyed bands through high school; two continued at Illinois. They logged nearly 20 Illinois Summer

Youth Music camps and appearances at Superstate. Our son, Bill Rank (BME '01, MME '07) is a successful Chicago-area music educator. Last year, he completed the full ISYM cycle, first attending as a 6<sup>th</sup>-grade camper and returning as the director of the junior concert band.

When we moved back to C-U in 1994, we purchased Prof. Mark Hindsley's house where many of his classic transcriptions were penned. I have since enjoyed playing in the Mark Foutch Band, the Parkland College Band, and the UI Summer Band.

Never underestimate the positive impact of Illinois bands on the lives of non-majors.

### **Margene Pappas** (BME '69, MS '73)

From 1965-1969 I participated in the University of Illinois Concert Band under the direction of Mark Hindsley. I loved my clarinet and band and entered the University as a Music Education major. At the time, I knew that I was part of something extraordinary but didn't realize the amazing value of my education until I graduated and became a teacher/conductor myself. As I have grown throughout the years those experiences of establishing a standard of excellence have had a major impact on my career as a music educator and conductor including teaching elementary, jr. high/middle school, high school, and college bands. I love listening to the recordings and still remember and love the repertoire we played. My appreciation for the chance to participate in the Illinois bands increases throughout the years and I am so thankful that I had this incomparable opportunity. I'm also thankful that upon occasion I have been asked to return to campus and work with the ISYM bands and have the chance to rehearse in the band room and perform at the Krannert Center Great Hall. It always brings back wonderful memories. All the best to Dr. Stephen Peterson, Dr. Linda Moorhouse, Dr. Elizabeth Peterson, and Prof. Barry Houser in carrying on the finest tradition of college bands in America.

### **Mark Clark** (BS '81)

When I was asked to provide a recollection of some experience in the U of I Bands, it was difficult to narrow it down to one story. If you allow me a little bit of rambling, I'll share a minor observation that is perhaps representative of those little inconsequential things that we all notice in life, but that we hold as precious memories. Let's just call this the story of the long baton.

I grew up in Fairfield, Illinois, and had the great good fortune to have both a marvelous grade/middle school band director, and an equally marvelous high school director. While in grade school, I expressed an interest in learning how to conduct, so in 1970, my band director, Myrl Newcom (MME '51) gave me a baton and started teaching me how to direct a band. That baton was representative of the style of the times, and was probably 20 inches long. A real toad stabber. That baton went on with me to high school, and I used it as a student conductor. All during this time, I was fully aware of the Illinois Bands, and my dream was to one day become director of bands at Illinois. Another story for another day.

When I came to campus in 1977, I had the great good fortune to finally meet the legends: Harry Begian, director of bands, and Mark Hindsley, retired DoB. During Hindsley's tenure at Illinois, he demanded that his assistants Everett Kisinger and Guy Duker use the King David baton ... the Looong ones. Bill Kisinger, Everett's son, and now retired Director of the Purdue Band, told me years later that his dad hated long batons, and would "accidentally" snap his off, down to a size he liked. Hindsley though, demanded that his directors use the "official baton" and would immediately replace the downsized baton with a new one.

Fast forward. I graduated in 1981, and returned for Homecoming to participate in the Alumni Band. As a new grad, Gary Smith, the assistant DoB, and director of the Marching Illini asked me to help round up the "fossils" -- get them warmed up and tuned -- and to be sure they knew where to be, and when to be there. Over the next few years, Gary gradually increased my level of help, so eventually, my old baton came out of mothballs, and I used it for rehearsals with the Alumni Band. For several years, Mark Hindsley would also attend our reunion, and usually ended up using my baton. One year, I failed to have it with me, so when I handed him a shorter baton, he looked at me questioningly, and in a serious tone asked, "Where is the rest of it?"

The day finally came in the late '90s when after a Homecoming weekend, I left my baton in the rehearsal room at Harding, and a few days later realized it was missing. A phone call later, no baton.

Fast forward again. In 2006, my wife and I attended a night game at Memorial Stadium and ran into Gary Smith, now retired for several years. Gary invited us over to his home after the game (which I think was his way of getting a ride home.) As we relaxed with a drink, I was looking at his glass-covered coffee table which was filled with all sorts of memorabilia. And in that case... there it was. My baton. I pointed and whispered to my wife, "That's MY baton!" So, I played dumb and asked Gary about the baton, and he was rather excited to tell me that it had turned up at the Band Building, and he thought there was a chance it might have been A.A Harding's. "Those guys always used those long batons." I didn't have the heart to tell him.

The last fast forward, I promise. Last summer, at a reception following a Summer Band Twilight concert on the quad, I was visiting with Barry Houser, and somehow, the story of that baton came up. When I told him that I supposed that Gary still had it, Barry laughed and told me no, that Gary had given it to him, and that it was hanging on the wall in his office! So, this past season, Barry handed the baton back to me, and one last time, I used it to direct the Alumni Band.

This is a silly story, I know, but I think in some small way, it represents the love story so many of us have with the Illinois Bands. It goes beyond the traditions, beyond the excellence. For a time in our young lives, that pause between leaving our parents home, and starting one of our own, we had the chance to experience greatness in a way that has touched our hearts forever.

**Bill Jastrow** (BME '74)

Having performed under Robert Hindsley as my high school director, Mark Hindsley as a festival conductor, and twice for Harry Begian at ISYM prior to his appointment as director of bands, the decision to major in music education at Illinois was inescapable. After 40 years as a high school music teacher I still cannot imagine a more musically and personally rewarding professional training opportunity than I experienced as a member of the Illinois Bands.

In addition to the Marching Illini, I was a percussionist in the Large Symphonic Band under Dr. Begian's baton throughout undergraduate school. I was in awe of the band program's history, the level of musicianship — even the rehearsal facilities. Rehearsals were the highlight of every week. The energy and expectations exhibited from the podium generated a musical intensity that was exceptionally challenging and incredibly fulfilling. As it always took time for that intensity to wind down, I have fond memories of post-rehearsal walks across campus with friends, including my future wife Julie, replaying rehearsal moments and humming favorite passages. Now, just sitting in the rehearsal room can trigger a “time machine” flashback to specific compositions, conducting gestures, and faces from those very memorable years.

The friendships built on Illinois band memories live on as my path crosses with music educators, as well as professionals in diverse career fields who, as non-majors, played in a band. As alumni there is nothing that Julie and I treasure more than having been part of the Illinois Band tradition.

**Julie Dierstein Jastrow** (BS '73, MS '79, PhD '94)

Attending the Illinois Band's inaugural concert in Krannert's Great Hall as a high school senior sealed the deal for me. Sitting with friends in the last row of the balcony of a packed hall, we were blown away by the clarity of sonorities and symphonic nature of the repertoire. Although I was unsure about whether to major in science or music, I knew I wanted to play in that hall with that band.

Soon, I found myself in the midst of Mark Hindsley's year-long retirement celebration with the opportunity to perform many of his transcriptions. That spring was capped by the news that Harry Begian would be the next director of bands. Having played for Dr. Begian with the All-State Band, I felt my decision to attend Illinois was truly blessed. And it was — for I had the privilege to learn and grow both musically and personally under Dr. Begian's mentorship for five years as principal bassoon in the Large Symphonic Band.

As a non-major including two years of grad school, it was not always easy to juggle classes, labs, field work, rehearsals, studio lessons, reed making, and practicing. But my science professors were supportive, and thankfully we somehow made it all work, including stints in MI and orchestra. Although I eventually chose a career in science my best memories, college friendships, and my emotional “loyalty” to Illinois are profoundly centered on my musical experiences (as shared with my husband, Bill) — especially those associated with the Illinois Bands.

**Scott Casagrande** (BS '88, MS '93)

Choosing Illinois as a Music Education major was a strange and unique process for me, but it was a decision that eventually provided great experiences and benefits that changed my life forever. I will always be grateful.

I am originally from a Washington, DC suburb and weighed many options in choosing a school. I chose Illinois thinking that I would be able to learn from Dr. Harry Begian, who was the director of bands at that time. Unfortunately, my family could not afford to send me to Illinois out of high school and I ended up spending a year at home working two jobs and playing anywhere I could. That year at home ended up being Dr. Begian's last at Illinois as he retired at the end of the year. As they say, one door closing opens another and I was able to participate in the hiring of our next director of bands, James Keene, who continues to be my most important professional mentor to this day.

I learned from the best: Harry Begian (who was constantly on campus and worked with many of my high school bands through the years), James Keene and Gary Smith. These three men taught me not only to be a great musician, teacher, and organizer, they taught me about passion, loyalty, and drive. I can look back on all of the opportunities, knowledge and experience gained at Illinois as important, but these men and their contributions to my professional life as role models were immeasurable and priceless. As Dr. Begian always said: "it's the guy [or gal] on the box" that makes the difference.

**Erin Johnson** (BM '10)

Growing up in Illinois, you find that there is about a 50/50 chance that you will end up following the cattle-call downstate to Champaign-Urbana. Some of us grow up dreaming of it; others grow up knowing that the probability of joining the ranks of some of the country's most celebrated academic departments is inevitable. In my case, I was a late bloomer: it wasn't until my junior year in high school that I truly felt that feeling of identification and ownership toward studying at Illinois—and I'll never forget sitting excitedly in my first days as a freshman in the MI piccolo section and, a few weeks later, a flutist in the Wind Symphony, knowing that I had made the right decision. Surrounded by new friends, many of which I still hold dear to this day, it was this wave of anticipation and then, just as quickly, a sense of peace and tranquility that began to fill up my heart before September had even hit: I'm home, I thought. I'm home.

On each return to Illinois, I am reminded of walks from the Music Building to Harding, each day waiting for a new challenge. From Mr. Keene and Lucinda Lawrence to Dr. Pete Griffin and the countless list of TAs that made my years in that building the most memorable of my life. I thank each of them for providing me with the spirit, the discipline and the sense dedication to teamwork it took to rise up into my own career in music as a bandleader and performer. My gratitude is limitless and my love eternal!

### **Nicki Roman** (MM '15)

I was a member of the University of Illinois Wind Symphony from 2013-2015. During this time, I held the principal saxophone position and had the opportunity to perform and collaborate with students and faculty from all over the School of Music. Although playing in this ensemble was a requirement toward my degree, I knew the significant legacy of the band program at UI and I carry many special memories from being a part of this unified ensemble. Dr. Linda Moorhouse is a strong advocate for creating a critical thinking environment in and outside of the classroom and her understanding and interpretation of the wind ensemble literature stands out among the many directors I have worked with since the beginning of my studies. I had the fortunate opportunity to perform with the wind symphony this past spring at the 2015 College Band Director's National Association Conference in Nashville, TN. Not only did Dr. Moorhouse and the band program spend countless hours preparing for this performance, but the graduate saxophone quartet was also invited to perform Michael Colgrass's *Urban Requiem* for saxophone quartet and wind band. This experience awarded myself and the graduate saxophone quartet the opportunity to not only perform this concerto at an extremely high level, but was also a networking opportunity among the band community that none of us had experienced before. Whether it was playing in the conducting symposiums on campus, traveling with the Wind Symphony or sitting in rehearsals, the University of Illinois band program was a vital part of my graduate school education.

### **Ashley Hedlund**

Music has been a tremendous part of my life for as long as I can remember. Having a career in music, I'm now able to pursue my dreams and share my passion for music with others in countless ways. Band has given me an outlet for creativity, expression, and a way to connect with fantastic peers and instructors. The past two years while at Illinois, I have been a part of the Marching Illini, Basketball Bands, multiple Concert bands, a jazz band, and an orchestra. Participating in these ensembles has been able to help me in many ways, from networking to help improve my professional career, to trying out new styles of music, which helps enhance my musicianship. Right now, I look forward to the upcoming Marching Illini season, and the endless hours I will be spending with my amazing Marching Illini family. All of my favorite memories come from the practices, performances, and trips with the Marching Illini. With this outstanding ensemble, I have been able to perform for Vice President Biden, travel to Ireland for the Dublin St. Patrick's Parade, Dallas, Texas for the 2014 bowl game, make multiple trips for football games, and travel to New York for the upcoming Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade! These are just a few of the big memories I'll be making with the lifelong friends I have from the University of Illinois Bands program, and I could not be more thankful to be where I am today.

### **Diana Economou**

I entered the Band program as a freshman in the Fall 2013. This was the first year the program was understaffed, and I can say with confidence that the faculty has continuously worked hard trying to not let it interfere with the student's learning. The faculty made themselves available for

me every time I asked for their help. They've taught me just as much about life as they have about music, and I've definitely appreciated my time working with them.

Overall, I've had an incredible experience in the UI Band program. Most notably, getting to play next to the University's best instrumentalists in Wind Symphony for three semesters has helped improved my technique and musicianship tenfold. My favorite moment in Wind Symphony was during a dress rehearsal in Krannert's Foellinger Great Hall. We were playing Maslanka's *Give Us This Day*, and sitting right in the middle of the gorgeous sounds of my peers playing one of the most beautiful pieces written for band was emotionally overwhelming.

I'm excited to work with Dr. Steve Peterson this coming year in Wind Symphony. I've only heard good things, and it'll be interesting to see how differently than Dr. Moorhouse he approaches Wind Symphony. Rehearsing with the different director of band candidates during the interview process was easily one of the highlights of my sophomore year. As a music education student, seeing all the different styles of conducting and teaching was fascinating, and sparked a lot of thought provoking conversations among my peers and me. I'm ecstatic that Dr. Peterson was chosen, and can't wait to jump into those rehearsals! I'm looking forward to this school year of big changes!

### **Erik Elmgren** (BM '15)

I had the pleasure of playing in the University of Illinois Bands program for the entire four years of my undergraduate degree from 2011 to 2015. I started out in the Hindsley Symphonic Band and worked my way up to Wind Symphony by my sophomore year. Although I have played in band for my entire musical life there was something different about playing in the University of Illinois Bands, especially the Wind Symphony. The sense of tradition and pride that the directors instilled in every member of the ensemble during rehearsals and especially concerts elevated the level of performance each and every time. This sense of pride made me value the experience of playing in an ensemble more than I already do. One particular memory I have from my experience is playing at the College Band Directors National Association's Annual 2015 Conference in Nashville. The level of preparation required for this concert was immense and the music programmed demanded many members of the ensemble to function as soloists, including myself. This was one of the best experiences I've had of what I would call "large-scale" chamber music. In many ways the band functioned more as a small chamber group than as a large ensemble and the experience was immensely rewarding. Experiences like this helped me become the musician I am today by emphasizing the value of both individual responsibility and musicianship as well as sharing musical experiences with my fellow musicians and the audience.

### **Ben Clemons**

I play the trumpet and I am about to go into my senior year studying music education at the University of Illinois. In my three years as a student at the University, many of my favorite educational experiences have stemmed from my involvement in the Illinois Bands. I have

played in the Illinois Wind Symphony for each of the six semesters I have been enrolled at the university, and it has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my college career. In my time as a Wind Symphony trumpet player I have enjoyed many memorable performances, such as our performance at the convention for the College Band Directors National Association in Nashville last March. The success and high-caliber music making I have enjoyed in the Illinois Bands would not have been possible without my teachers and fellow musicians. These musicians continue to challenge and inspire me on a daily basis. The Illinois Bands faculty has taught me so much during my tenure and I cannot thank them enough for their continued support and dedication to student growth. I am incredibly excited to go back to the Illinois Bands for my last semester of my undergraduate degree this fall, and I look forward to working with these great people once more.

### **James Keene**

#### **A BLAST FROM THE PAST!**

I was delighted and honored to be asked to share a few thoughts in *Sonorities* and especially to welcome Dr. Stephen G. Peterson to the Illinois Bands family. In Steve Peterson, Illinois has appointed a truly outstanding musician, educator and human being to the director of bands position. One of my cherished memories is of guest conducting Steve's outstanding Tempe High School Band at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic thirty two years ago; neither of us could have imagined what the future would bring. Steve is, of course, accompanied by his talented wife Beth, who brings her own set of impressive credentials to the Illinois Bands program. Together with Linda Moorhouse and Barry Houser, we have a band staff that is second to none!

In retirement, I have had the opportunity to guest conduct, adjudicate, and present clinics across the country and internationally and one of the great pleasures has been reuniting with the many Illinois Bands alums who are enjoying outstanding careers as performers and educators in leading institutions and musical organizations . These were some of the students who created the "Illinois Bands Legacy" through memorable performances at venues such as the national conventions of The American Bandmasters Association, the College Band Directors National Association, Music Educators National Conference, several performance at Orchestra Hall/Symphony Center in Chicago, Carnegie Hall in New York, as well as tours and recordings. Additionally, I continue to run into band alumni who are now successful in business and professional careers. Although their majors and degree programs were outside the School of Music, they cherish their band experiences in concert bands, pep bands and most notably in the Marching Illini, and attribute these to instilling dedication, discipline, enhancement of the joy of music, and the quest for excellence.

The legacy of band pioneer A.A. Harding, , which was refined, developed and taken to the pinnacle of the band profession by Mark Hindsley and Harry Begian is known and respected across the country and throughout the world . I was blessed to inherit this legacy as well as the support of the world-class artist/faculty in the woodwind, brass and percussion studios of the School of Music. It is this legacy and commitment to musical excellence that that ensures that

the band program will continue to thrive despite the budgetary crisis and other issues in academia. With the appointment of Steve Peterson, the U of I Bands are in good hands, indeed.

Welcome home Steve and Beth!

### **Linda Moorhouse**

I first met Harry Began a number of years ago and was drawn immediately into the musical and dynamic charisma that made him so very special to so many people. He once sat for two hours (with stern face and arms crossed!) and listened to a rehearsal of my LSU concert ensemble before we embarked on a southern states tour. I will never forget his kind comments, nor will I stop cherishing the wooden score/baton holder he made for me; it arrived at my office three weeks after he left. It now hangs on a wall in my office in the Harding Band Building. How apropos!

It's hard to believe I am in my sixth year at the University of Illinois. It seems like yesterday I received a call from Gary Smith urging me to consider moving to Urbana-Champaign. "You will absolutely love it," Gary said. He was not wrong. I do love it here. While the past five years have certainly been interesting (and at times challenging), I wouldn't trade any of it. My colleagues are among the best in the world and our students are simply amazing. I'm especially proud of what the Bands division has accomplished in my short time here.