

# VOLKWEIN'S MUSIC

# 125 YEARS

December 2013



The holiday season is upon us bringing with it an array of performances by our area community bands, orchestras, choruses and handbell choirs. Please see back cover for a listing of concert dates, times and locations.

Community bands have always been an important part of my "musical up-bringing." As some of you may know, my dad, Aldo, conducted a professional concert band and also a community band for many years. As a "kid," it was my opportunity to make music with adults. After high school I joined the musician's union and began playing in the professional band.

Community bands, as far as I'm concerned, are an extension of high school and collegiate bands. Though the members may now be engineers, home builders, sales persons, nurses, etc., they share a common love of performing. The opportunity to play in a community group allows each member to continue their musical journey

throughout life. And community bands almost always have music teachers on their rosters. The best teachers know, continuing to play their main instrument throughout their career allows them to continue on their own personal musical journey. A true musician is never done growing.

This, to me, is the goal of music education: Teaching for the bigger picture and not for the outcome of Friday night's halftime show, Saturday's band festival, the Memorial Day Parade, or the next band concert. If you follow the process, the halftimes-festivals-parades and concerts will improve right along with your teaching experience. Teach so students take music with them as they graduate and move on to other endeavors.

Recently, I have returned to playing in a community band: The Virginia Grand Military Band. This internationally recognized ensemble, based in the Washington, D.C. area, is conducted by one of the nation's leading band authorities, Loras John Schissel. Many of you have probably performed one of his arrangements with your high school band. And yes, I make the trip to D.C. five times a year at my own expense. I do so because, without a doubt, Loras is one of the most knowledgeable and demanding musicians I've ever met. Working as a senior musicologist at the Library of Congress keeps him totally immersed in the history, detail and style of all types of music. Schissel inspires every ensemble he conducts to perform to their maximum capability. Those of you who know me can attest to my need for playing with a good band.

The Virginia Grand Military Band is comprised of current and former members of the four U.S. service bands. There are some educators and other invited players to complete the roster. In a future issue of our newsletter, I will get more specific on what it's like playing for Loras. However, I wanted to tell this part of the story now to show how important I think community bands are to our musical lives. These bands help make our culture grow and keep players involved beyond their school years.

Community band schedules vary. Some are seasonal, others play all year long. For the musicians, it expands their repertoire and continues the learning process. Most ensembles have websites and some belong to the Association of Concert Bands (ACB). The ACB was started with the help of Walter Volkwein many years ago.

In the end, we need our students to become part of these groups. Whether it's band, orchestra or choir, it helps musical culture grow. Community players are the people who attend professional concerts. It could be the opera, ballet, symphony or shows. This keeps the cycle alive for generations to come.

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Have a great holiday season!

Jack DiIanni  
President, Volkwein's Music



# One Thing That Makes Us Unique!

*Our very own Santa's workshop:*



The sound from the workshop is unmistakable: hammering, grinding, sawing and sanding, punctuated by bursts of laughter and conversation. One voice sticks out as tasks are assigned, directions given and greetings are offered to visitors to this magical place. Could it be? Is it possible? Might this be the secret location of Santa's workshop? Well, no. Not unless Santa is a woman and the elves are a whole lot taller than we imagine. This busy workshop is the repair

department at Volkwein's Music. Here, Santa is played by Colleen Kresic, manager, and the elves are played by, well, by the elves: Brandon, Dean, Ed, Eric, Jeremy, Kyle, Leroy, Mike, Rick, Ted and Tom. Though it's not Santa's workshop, make no mistake, it is a magical place!



With over 250 years of experience between them, the folks that work in this shop are truly artisans. When

asked how they became interested in instrument repair, the stories are almost all the same. "I have always loved taking stuff apart," said 38-year veteran Rick Kresic. Others commented on the necessity of repairing their own personal instrument that provided their first experience with repair work. And then there is Jeremy Shirey who offered his story. "I came to Volkwein's looking for a position as a road rep. During the interview I was asked: 'Do you change your own brakes?' Not being quite certain how this applied to being a road rep, I answered, yes. I was told: 'We might have just the job for you,' and was taken to meet Colleen and tour the repair shop." That was in November of 2000. The tour must have gone well!

Often, many of the instruments that are brought in for repair are those used in Volkwein's school rental program. Though every instrument is given a detailed inspection before being sent to a beginning student, "stuff happens." Violins crack, bridges warp, slides and valves become stuck and woodwind pads fall out. And that's the good stuff. Major dents to brass instruments and broken keys to woodwinds from being dropped, warped bows from not being loosened and broken braces on horns from falling off a chair, are just some of the more serious problems that show up at the repair counter on a fairly regular basis.

However, what our repair technicians see way too often are instruments that come back with preventable problems that are mostly caused by lack of attention. Mike Hollis, who comes from a family of instrument repair artisans, stated it very concisely when he said: "The students don't own the instruments so they don't do as good of a job taking care of them as they should." Several of the technicians suggested if instrumental music teachers could take just a few minutes to teach proper cleaning methods and then follow up by providing a short time at the end of each class for the students to do the most basic of cleaning, both the instrument and the student would perform better. And it's not just performing better that is a consideration. Research has shown that both brass and woodwind instruments, that are not regularly cleaned, develop a buildup of mold that can cause serious respiratory illnesses. That alone should be a great motivator for keeping an instrument clean.



What do Volkwein's repair experts enjoy the most about their job? "Making an instrument play well," says veteran technician, Ted Woehr. And Ted should know, as he is in demand across the nation for his repair work on French horns. He adds, "I really enjoy working on older instruments, especially Civil War era horns. They were built surprisingly well." Leroy Abbott enjoys that his job always keeps him busy, especially at the beginning of a new school year, "September is our Christmas Season," he says.

And every now and then, these artisans get to perform a little magic. One such example occurred just a few weeks ago when a mother and her daughter showed up at the repair counter. The young woman had a birth defect that caused the fingers on her one hand to not fully develop. She had been playing saxophone in an area music program for several years;



however, she had reached the point where she was having difficulty improving. Jeremy Shirey, who specializes in the repair of saxophones, was assigned the task of coming up with a solution. As often happens with "unique" repairs, this became a collaborative project with several of the technicians sharing suggestions. Jeremy took measurements, tried different approaches, came up with a prototype for the girl to try and then created the final product. The look on the young girl's face as she played her newly configured instrument for the first time (see picture) was the look of a child on Christmas morning after having unwrapped that "very special" gift.

Many of the technicians described projects they had been involved with where an instrument was saved from ruin, a modification was made to accommodate an owner, or a brand new instrument was given its final "once-over" before being given to a beginning student. In each case, the instrument repair artisan not only handed the customer an instrument that would play well but, more importantly, an instrument that would allow the individual to experience the joy of making music. And that, my friends, is definitely a little bit of magic from Santa's workshop.

## Did You Know???



Volkwein's six full-time "Road Reps" drive a combined 70,000 miles per year providing service to approximately 500 schools in over 130 school districts.

(not pictured: Joe Dipytic)



Volkwein's Gift Shop has dozens of items for the musician on your holiday shopping list.



Over the past 4-years, Jack DiIanni has played on all the Ludwig Masters Sample Recordings for music educators.



Each year, Volkwein's Music supplies 45,000 music folders to schools and institutions that we service.



In the past 12-months, Volkwein's consignment program has helped our customers sell 800+ instruments and accessories through our Ebay Store.



# The Spotlight is on: Joe Dipyatic



"Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." The United States Postal creed could also be applied to one of Volkwein Music's "road reps," Joe Dipyatic, who would probably add "...nor deer nor winding mountainous roads nor busy band director's schedules..." to the list. Driving an average of 23,000 miles per school year, Joe has brought Volkwein's to the instrumental music teachers of Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Indiana, Somerset and Westmoreland Counties since 1992.

As with most of the musicians that work in our store, Joe's musical journey has had many twists and turns. A 1970 graduate of Bentworth High School, he was fortunate to have Clyde Caliguri as his band director/mentor. In addition to providing Joe with an excellent school band experience, Clyde introduced him to the Bentleyville Fireman's band where he started playing trumpet while still in 10th grade. As Clyde probably knew would happen, performing with adult musicians gave Joe an excellent reason to increase his practice time: fear of embarrassment. And practice he did, allowing him to be accepted into the Morehead State University's School of Music as a music education major. While at Morehead, Joe performed with various musical ensembles including the marching band. Memorable appearances with the band include marching down Constitution and Pennsylvania Avenues in Washington, D.C. for President

Richard Nixon's second Inaugural Parade in 1973 and performing halftime at Riverfront Stadium for a Cincinnati Bengals football game.

After substitute teaching for four years, Joe decided to follow in his father's footsteps and made a major career move into the coal mining profession. While working for the next seven years at Bethlehem Mine's Ellsworth Mine, first as a member of the "track crew" and then as a shuttle car driver, he never gave up his dream of performing and teaching music. In 1985, he traded the mine shaft for the instrumental music classrooms of the Catholic schools in Cambria County. One thing Joe remembers fondly from teaching in the Catholic schools: "Friday music days. On those days, everything else stopped and the students were able to go to instrumental music lessons as well as band and chorus rehearsals." Compare that with today's challenge of finding time for music in our schools amidst the focus on academics and the never ending standardized tests.

And then, there were the polka bands. Three in particular: "The Dominos" from Uniontown, and "Polka Dynamics" and "The Sounds," both from Pittsburgh. While with "The Sounds", Joe recorded eight albums and helped the band receive two Grammy nominations. The bands provided Joe an escape from the daily rigors of teaching and allowed him to continue to play his trumpet professionally. Even more importantly, they provided him the opportunity to meet a young woman, Janice, who would soon become his wife.

As an educational representative since 1992, Joe has been Volkwein's point person for the rural and mountainous counties east of Pittsburgh. When asked what his favorite part of being a "road rep" was, he immediately answered: "The people: the band directors and the kids, especially the beginning students. I became friends with the teachers. They would call me on Thursday asking me to bring something they needed for a Friday night halftime performance. My excellent relationship with the various directors even allowed me to borrow an instrument from one school and let another school use it until I could get back to Pittsburgh to pick up a replacement." Joe continued: "I loved that I was able to tailor my program to meet the needs of my directors." And meet their needs he did!

While understandably proud of his career, Joe's greatest pride is his family. He and his wife, Janice, a first grade teacher at Portage Elementary School for 34-years and now retired, raised three children: Michael, Matt and Maria. One would imagine if you asked his family if Joe ever had to miss family dinners or his kids school and sports events because of his job, they would answer: "yes." However, that would quickly be followed by: "We are proud of him. We knew he was helping bring music to kids."

And Volkwein's Music is proud of Joe. He will be retiring this coming spring after "helping people discover music since (in his case) 1992." He is one of our "special resources." Thank you, Joe!



# Special Deals



**STEP UP**  
to **YAMAHA**

Purchase any qualifying "Step Up" Yamaha instrument and receive either a \$50 or \$100 rebate.

**October 1 - December 31, 2013**



**BUFFET GROUP**  
WIND INSTRUMENTS

**\$100**

**\$100 Dollar Instant Credit**

Ask a sales representative about terms and conditions

Get an instant \$100 store credit toward any additional purchase at Volkwein's Music, when buying select Buffet instruments



**Give AND Receive \$100**  
**This Year!**

**mail-in REBATE**

**Conn-Selmer PROFESSIONAL Instruments**

Handmade 81971 - Clarinet  
Warm Sound 44704 - Trombone  
New Bronze Bell 171842B - Trumpet  
Superior Playability 17410 - Alto Saxophone

\*Some Restrictions apply. Ask dealer for complete qualifying instruments. Double the rebate if purchased at an event co-sponsored with Conn-Selmer and attended by Conn-Selmer personnel.



**Give AND Receive \$50**  
**This Year!**

**mail-in REBATE**

**Conn-Selmer PERFORMANCE Instruments**

Great Value 83302P - Flute  
Excellent Intonation 17181 - Clarinet  
Professional Sound 17010 - Trumpet  
Dependable 8211 - Trombone  
Henri Selmer Paris Neck and Mouthpiece 4420 - Alto Saxophone

\*Some Restrictions apply. Ask Dealer for full details. Double the rebate if purchased at an event co-sponsored with Conn-Selmer and attended by Conn-Selmer personnel.



**VOLKWEIN'S MUSIC**

**50% OFF**

**MEINL 11"/12" HEADLINER CONGA SET**  
(IN STOCK COLORS ONLY)  
\*WHILE SUPPLIES LAST\*

**AND FREE MATCHING BONGO SET**

A \$683.00 VALUE  
FOR  
**\$294.50**  
IN STORE ONLY

**MEINL**

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## Community Holiday Concerts

(see listed websites for more details)

### ***Community Band South***

Dean Streater, Jim Bennett  
Directors

Dec. 7, 12:30 p.m. - USC Rec Center  
Dec. 15, 3:00 p.m. - Bethel Park Rec Center  
[cbs.pghfree.net](http://cbs.pghfree.net)

### ***East Winds Symphonic Band***

Susan Sands, Conductor  
December 8, 7:00 p.m. - Franklin Regional MS  
Dec. 14, 5:00 p.m. - PPG Wintergarden  
[ewsb.org](http://ewsb.org)

### ***The Harmony Singers***

Cynthia G. Pratt, Director  
Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m. - Brightwood Christian Church  
[harmonysingers.org](http://harmonysingers.org)

### ***North Suburban Symphonic Band***

Carl T. Iezzi, Conductor  
Dec. 15, 3:00 p.m. - Greater Pittsburgh Masonic Center  
[nssband.org](http://nssband.org)

### ***Pittsburgh Civic Orchestra***

Warren Davidson, Music Director  
Dec. 21, 7:30 p.m. - Upper St. Clair HS  
[pittsburghcivicorchestra.net](http://pittsburghcivicorchestra.net)

### ***South Hills Chorale***

Phil Aley, Conductor  
Dec. 13 & 14, 7:30 p.m. - Westminster Presbyterian Church, USC  
[southhillschorale.org](http://southhillschorale.org)

### ***West Hills Symphonic Band***

Clem Rolin, Conductor  
Dec. 8, 3:00 p.m. - West Allegheny HS  
[whsb.org](http://whsb.org)

**VOLKWEIN'S MUSIC** | 125 YEARS

*Wishing You & Yours  
A Very Happy Holiday Season*



#### HOLIDAY STORE HOURS:

FRIDAY	DECEMBER 6TH	8:30AM - 5:00PM
FRIDAY	DECEMBER 13TH	8:30AM - 5:00PM
FRIDAY	DECEMBER 20TH	8:30AM - 5:00PM

TUESDAY	DECEMBER 24TH	8:30AM - 12:30PM
WEDNESDAY	DECEMBER 25TH	CLOSED
FRIDAY	DECEMBER 27TH	10:30AM - 5:00PM

TUESDAY	DECEMBER 31ST	CLOSED
WEDNESDAY	JANUARY 1ST	CLOSED

SUNDAY AND MONDAY	CLOSED
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