

# VOLKWEIN'S MUSIC

September 2013

125  
YEARS

As all of us at Volkwein's Music prepare to celebrate our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we are proud to present this first issue of our quarterly newsletter. Our intent is to inform, educate and entertain you with articles on new products and services, upcoming sales, technical discussions written by our professional musicians and repairpersons, stories from our 125-year history and spotlight articles introducing you to individual Volkwein employees. Whether you receive our newsletter via mail, email or simply pick up a copy at our store, we hope you will share it with friends and students to enjoy.

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125 years! Not many companies stay in business for that length of time. Those that do usually have three things in common:

- The desire to help others achieve their goals by providing a great product or service.
- Great employees to produce the product or deliver the service
- The ability to change with the times

At Volkwein's Music, helping schools maintain their music programs has always been one of our main goals. Thousands upon thousands of Western Pennsylvania students have started their musical journey on one of our rental instruments. When repairs are needed, our full service repair shop provides fast and reliable service to individuals and schools. Lesson books and sheet music are available for viewing on our sales floor and families who rent instruments from us have the opportunity to return at the end of the rental period and upgrade to a better instrument. Area band, orchestra and choral directors have long depended upon Volkwein's Music for their music and instrument needs.

Through the years, the task of providing products and services has been taken up by our outstanding employees. We employ some of the brightest and most talented people you will find working in the music retail industry. Not many stores can boast their employees play many of the major venues Pittsburgh and the surrounding area have to offer. Yes, it does make for great employees who can carry on Volkwein's tradition of "helping people discover music since 1888."

In 1990, reacting to the rapid growth of Pittsburgh's suburbs, we moved to our current store in Robinson. Situated near some of the area's busiest highways, this location provides easier access as well as a modern, more compact, retail space. Like all retailers, we have had to adapt to consumers increased use of internet and catalog purchasing options. With Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Ebay accounts, we provide our customers the opportunity to choose how they wish to accomplish their musical shopping needs. However, through it all, one thing that has never changed is the personal service our customers can receive by calling or visiting our store. And that personal service is what I believe makes Volkwein's Music special.

On behalf of everyone at Volkwein's Music, I thank you for your patronage and invite you to join us on Saturday, September 28th, for our 125th Anniversary Celebration. There will be live music, door prizes and giveaways, free food and special pricing on select merchandise. But most importantly, you will have the opportunity to reconnect with many of our employees, the same folks who probably helped you at some point on your own musical journey. I look forward to seeing you there!

Jack DiIanni  
President, Volkwein's Music

# "Helping People Discover Music Since 1888"



included on a list of Pittsburgh's historic businesses and institutions?" Well, Bechtel Music House, then located on Smithfield St., was the birthplace of a business that is synonymous with Pittsburgh's music scene: Volkwein's Music.

In 1888, Rudolph and Jacob Volkwein started working at Bechtel's. By 1895, Rudolph Volkwein was managing the store and in 1905, he and his brother purchased the business. Eventually, the store was moved to Liberty Ave. where it remained for 44 years.

Although Volkwein's Music grew continually during the first half of the 1900's, there were periods of financial difficulty during the Depression and the two World Wars. Rudolph's sons, Carl R. and Walter, eventually joined their father in the business. During the 1930's, Volkwein's stopped selling pianos in order to concentrate on other musical instruments. After World War II, the company's mail order business started to grow, as did the marching band and concert band programs in schools.

Carl Volkwein's son, Carl W. Volkwein, joined the family business in 1960, and by 1979, he and Nunzio C. DiIanni had taken over management of the store. In 1965, Volkwein's Music moved to a building on Sandusky St. on the north side of Pittsburgh. This move gave the store a sales boost due to increased retail and warehousing space. The 1980's saw the DiIanni family (Nunzio's brothers, Aldo and Tony, Aldo's sons, Aldo Jr. and Jack, as well as Jack's wife Beverly), join the fold. Although Volkwein's remained at the north side location for 25 years, this location also had its limitations so, in 1990, the business moved to its current location in the RIDC Park West near Pittsburgh International Airport.

To learn more about Volkwein's Music and our role in "helping people discover music since 1888," please visit [www.volkweinsmusic.com](http://www.volkweinsmusic.com).

## Did You Know???



The old Volkwein's Building, located on Sandusky St. in Pittsburgh's north side, is now the Andy Warhol Museum.



Volkwein's YouTube channel has had over 160,000 views. You can join our video fans by going to [www.youtube.com/volkweinsmusic](http://www.youtube.com/volkweinsmusic)



This was the 66<sup>th</sup> year for Volkwein's Sacred Choral Reading Session with featured guest clinician, John Purifoy.

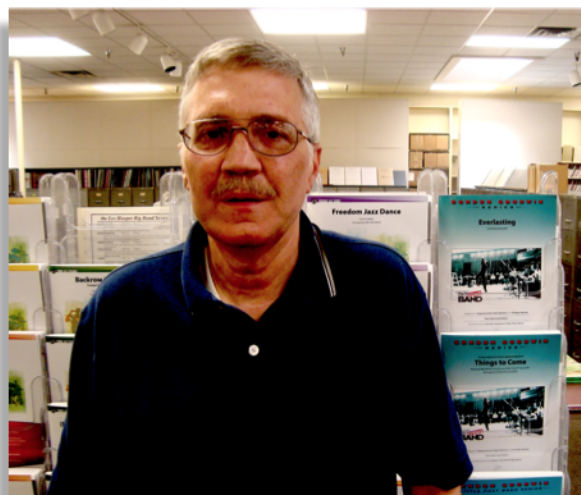


Jack DiIanni, Volkwein's president, has an unusual entry in his performance resume: He performed *Stars & Stripes Forever* with the Virginia Grand Military Band with guest conductor John Philip Sousa!

Okay, it was John Philip Sousa, IV. But still, how cool is that?



# The Spotlight is on: Ray Kasperek



As any successful business owner will tell you, the greatest resource they have are their employees. To say that Volkwein's Music has an abundance of such resources is an understatement. From educators to performers, newly minted music majors to folks that have seen it all, Volkwein's employees are what make our "full-service" music store so special. In this and subsequent newsletters, we will "spotlight" one of our "special resources." In this issue, we are proud to feature Mr. Ray Kasperek.

Ray's musical journey began within the instrumental music program at McKeesport High School. There, he performed with the concert, marching and jazz bands, as well as the school orchestra. As with any great musician, Ray was influenced by several teachers and mentors beginning with his mother who was a church pianist. His private instructors included Joseph Zych (4th grade through high school) and Louis Paul, former principal clarinetist with the PSO, (while attending Carnegie Mellon University)

Upon graduating from CMU with a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education, Ray was hired as a junior and senior high school band director by the Swissvale School District, now a part of the Woodland Hills District. While teaching, he completed his Master's Degree in Music Education. After two years in the classroom, Ray found himself missing performing and made a decision that changed the direction of his life: he auditioned for the United States Air Force Band. Selected to play clarinet and the entire saxophone family, he began a musical and life journey that would take him to 49 of the 50 states (he just missed getting Hawaii in as well), Canada, Europe and the Far East while performing under the baton of the legendary Colonel Arnald D. Gabriel. During his time with the USAF Band, Ray performed for Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan and Bush '41 as well as many heads of state and Queen Elizabeth II in venues such as The White House, Boston Symphony Hall, Carnegie Hall and the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

In 1993, Ray retired from the band and joined the staff of Volkwein's Music. Initially working in the instrumental music department, he was later assigned to the band department where he remains today. Using his expertise as a professional woodwind artist and music educator, as well as his experience touring with the USAF Band and private clarinet instruction, Ray is able to guide band directors and private students through the vast repertoire of concert band, marching band and solo literature. August 14th, 2013, marked his 20th anniversary with Volkwein's. When asked what he considers to be the biggest change in the 20 years he has been in the music retail business, Ray states: "The internet. It has completely changed the business. Directors, while they still call on the phone, no longer come into the store as often, thereby missing the interaction with other directors as well as our knowledgeable staff."

So, next time you visit us at Volkwein's Music, please make a point to find Ray Kasperek. Thank him for his 20 years of service to our nation as a member of the United States Air Force Band. Pick his brain for that one concert tune or solo that will make your next performance special and congratulate him on his 20 years of service to Volkwein's Music and to band and orchestra directors, as well as performers, from across the country. Ray truly has been "helping people discover music since (in his case) 1993."

# To Celebrate our 125th Anniversary

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Take an **EXTRA** 10% off our everyday low prices on all **in-stock**:

## - Printed Music

All printed music in the store: sheet music, ensemble arrangements, method books, song books, instructional books and more!



## - Accessories

Including drum heads, sticks, reeds, mutes, and a lot more!



## - All Products

Including Cymbals!!!  
(A Meinl Representative will be in the store all day)



## - All Products

The best reason to play drums.

(A Pearl Representative will be in the store all day)



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## BLOW OUT SPECIAL

### Pearl Forum Drumset

Including hardware and cymbals!  
(Limited quantity - first come, first served)  
\*\*excludes rental conversions

# \$399



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## PLUS: Door Prizes & Giveaways!

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# One Thing That Makes Us Unique!

## *Our Percussion Repair Shop:*

Established in 1981 by Jack DiIanni, our *Percussion Repair Shop* has evolved into a nationally recognized “full-service” source for drum, keyboard percussion and timpani repairs as well as for re-wrapping and custom drums. Though Jack is now president of Volkwein’s Music, he can often be found back in the percussion department, along with Evan Brown and Rob Myers, working on the shop’s latest project. Together, these three artisans provide a wide variety of services. A few recent examples are:

### **Refurbishing Mt. Lebanon High School’s 1953 sixty-inch Slingerland “Rose Bowl” Bass Drum**



Built for Mt. Lebanon’s appearance in the 1954 Rose Bowl Parade, then used in the bands second Rose Parade appearance as well as Cotton and Orange Bowl Parades, the drum had fallen into disrepair. With a renewed interest in the history of their band program, the Mt. Lebanon School District asked Volkwein’s Music if they would be able to restore this historical bass drum to its original condition. After repairing the shell and replacing the worn gold wrapping and all hardware, the percussion shop had one more thing to do. Working with Remo, and using 16mm film of MTL Band’s appearance in the 1954 Rose Parade, they re-created the original graphics that were used on the drum’s heads. As the picture shows, the drum looks just like it did the day it was delivered. Now, for every home game, the “Rose Bowl Bass Drum” leads the marching band onto the field for their pre-game show.

### **Re-wrapping new or used drums**

As more and more schools became interested in a “custom” color for their drums, or simply want to extend the life of the drums they already own, Volkwein’s has experienced an increased interest in drum shell re-wrapping. This picture shows a project completed for the West Virginia University Percussion Studio.



### **Tom’s Pad**

In the mid-1990’s, Tom LaFlame, legendary Pittsburgh drummer, educator and owner of the Crafton-based *Drums* retail store, designed a tunable practice pad to replace the popular Ludwig Drum Pad that had been discontinued. Tom created his pads cutting by hand the wood mainframe and metal rims. When Tom’s health began to decline, Volkwein’s Music took over production. They standardized the manufacturing process, switched to Russian birch for the main structure, outsourced the production of the metal rims to ensure standardized roundness and offered the pad in four standard colors as well as custom colors upon special request. To honor Tom, Jack’s first drum teacher, he named the practice pad “Tom’s Pad.”

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[www.volkweinsmusic.com](http://www.volkweinsmusic.com)

# VOLKWEIN'S MUSIC | 125 YEARS

Anniversary Celebration!

**Saturday | September 28, 2013**

- ✓ Live Music
- ✓ Door Prizes & Giveaways
- ✓ Free Food
- ✓ Special Pricing on Select Merchandise