

August 1, 2010

Greetings to all current and potential Wartburg College Concert Bands program members:

That's right! Even if you are a new student all it takes to be a member of the **World Famous Wartburg College Concert Bands** program is a desire to join! You are continuing, or about to become, a member of what I hope will be one of many, and perhaps *the* most exciting and rewarding things during your time spent at Wartburg College!

This letter contains information regarding chair placement auditions this fall. While there is no audition to enter the concert band program, there is an audition process through which you will determine where you sit with relation to others on your instrument, and ultimately then, which concert band you will be in. First things first... (read carefully, then re-read!)

Your audition will consist of three parts:

- 1. Prepared Pieces**
- 2. Sight-reading**
- 3. Major Scales**

Enclosed please find photocopies of two band works, *To A New Dawn* (Philip Sparke) and *El Camino Real* (Alfred Reed). The instrument part should match what you play (for instance: you're a clarinetist – did I send you clarinet music?) IF NOT, contact me immediately, and I'll correct my mistake. On parts which normally have first, second, or third parts, I've sent only first parts. Don't worry about what part you were sent, how you play will determine where you sit, not the part you actually auditioned on. The seating in the WCCB program is based **ONLY** on your demonstrated playability level in this specific audition, not your class standing, your chosen major, your scholarship, your past history, etc. (remember that!) Everyone has equal opportunity to earn either the top or the bottom of the section. Everyone, in both ensembles (Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band) auditions every year for all spots! You are not auditioning for a specific band, only a comparative ranking of all the players on your specific instrument, this specific fall semester. The two concert bands will be formed from that ranking.

Please follow these instructions:

- 1. With the exception of percussion (see #7 below), both works are sent to you in their entirety. Check both front and backs of all pages!
- 2. Prepare the rhythms, pitches, dynamics, etc. to the best of your ability. When you come in to play for me in your audition, play it just like you'll play it with the full band (even though you may be nervous!) Take things at the tempo you think they might go – remember, part of your musical ability is your musical knowledge. If a passage is too hard for you, simplify it to something you **CAN** play. (You will not be penalized for this simplification. Leaving it out is **NOT** an acceptable substitute.) Play always with the most characteristic sound on your instrument of which you are capable – sound your best, all the time!

- 3. If your part has some part splitting, or more than one part on the page, YOU pick which one you prepare – it makes no difference to me.
- 4. You should play from your copy in your audition, so feel free to make what marks you need to better help you perform the music. (The photocopies will be recycled at the beginning of the year.)
- 5. The sight-reading will be as painless as possible. Probably two fairly short (24-36 measures), melodious exercises (NOT band music.) Pitch and rhythm are most important here!
- 6. I will ask that you be prepared to play the following major scales: C, F, B flat, E flat, A flat, G, D and A. (These are the scales on YOUR instrument, NOT Concert Pitch scales. For instance, the B flat scale will start on B flat on your instrument, not your “sounding” B flat.) You can play them one octave, or several; fast or slow; whatever – you will not be penalized for being cautious. All I want to find out is HOW YOU PLAY, and how your demonstrated talents are going to fit into the WCCB program.
- 7. Percussionists: you have been sent a variety of parts (all incomplete.) Come prepared to demonstrate whatever TOTAL percussion skills you happen to possess. (If you come from a school that does not stress total percussion [everyone able to play all instruments], please come prepared to learn what you don’t already know.) You will probably also be asked to do some sight-reading on snare, timpani and mallets. When you sign up for your audition time, please take a double slot, as it takes that much time to cover all the bases.

Each audition lasts about 9 minutes. When you arrive on campus, please come by my office (Fine Arts Center #111), where the schedule will be posted on the wall. Find a time that will work for you, and then come and do your audition at that time. Auditions will begin on Saturday afternoon, Sept. 4th, and run through Tuesday, the 7th. **New students, I’ll require that you do yours first, since the returning students don’t come back until after you do.** If you have questions or other needs concerning auditions once you get to campus, see me immediately; don’t wait ‘till your auditions to ask me. If you need an instrument, contact me NOW!

One final word about auditions – please take them seriously. Auditions will be held every fall semester. It is entirely possible that you could move from one band to the other, depending on any changes in your demonstrated abilities over the years (always in comparison to others on your instrument.) The personal satisfaction you derive from the next year(s) of playing just could be determined by the preparation you put into this audition!!

The WCCB program is home to two concert bands: the Symphonic Band and the Wind Ensemble. The former has no limits on instrumentation, the latter does. The Wind Ensemble will strive to maintain the following instrumentation:

7 piccolo/flutes	1 bass clarinet	5 French horns	7 percussionists
3 oboes/E. Horn	1 contrabass clarinet	6 tenor trombones	1 harp
4 bassoons	3 alto saxes	1 bass trombone	
1 E flat clarinet	2 tenor saxes	2 euphoniums	
10 Soprano clarinets	1 bari sax	3 tubas	
1 alto clarinet	8 trumpets	1 string bass	

These numbers represent the maximum number of members in a section. Entrance is determined by a pre-existing standard of “playability” one must possess to attain membership. Players who do not demonstrate a sufficient level of playability will not be seated in the ensemble, even if that means that the section goes unfilled. By the same token, if more than this number demonstrates the sufficient level of playability, only this number will be seated in the ensemble. ALL students audition every year – upperclassmen hold no seats at this time. (Traditionally, about 25% of the Wind Ensemble has been first-year students each year.)

The Symphonic Band meets Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 3:50 to 4:40 pm in the Band Hall. (A sharing program is in place for members who wish to participate in other music ensembles also meeting during this time.) Wind Ensemble meets Monday through Friday from 4:50 - 6:00 pm. Enclosed with these audition materials is a schedule of events for both bands for the entire year. Please check your calendars NOW for possible conflicts. The weekend of September 11 – 12 is noted on this list as “Band Bonding Weekend” (a get-to-know-you event), lasting from Friday late afternoon through Saturday evening (about 8:00 pm) with a break from about 11:30 am to 6:00 pm. The schedule is fairly well set, and we need YOU, as a group, for this weekend. Bonding is held off-campus (bring a sleeping bag) and is THE most important social event for the bands all year! We’ll let you know specifics when rehearsals start.

On Tuesday, September 7th, the College celebrates what we call “Opening Convocation.” It’s like Commencement, but instead of saying “goodbye” to the graduating seniors, it says “welcome” to the entering freshmen. Here’s the plan: ALL returning students (only) meet from 7:30 – 8:30 pm on Monday, the 6th, to rehearse for this important event. (I KNOW it’s Labor Day, returning students, but I expect you here for this event. I will ask you to inform me ahead of time if you are unable to meet this obligation.) New students, you’re involved in the Convocation, so you cannot play yet. On Wednesday, the 8th, both bands begin rehearsals at their regularly scheduled times. The audition results will be posted by 7:00 am on that day (they just ended late the night before...)

Remember, if I sent you music for one instrument, and you need, or would like, music for another instrument (perhaps you play different saxes, or trumpet AND horn, or it’s your desire to play in both concert bands – no one plays the same instrument in both bands...) please make your wishes know to me ASAP through e-mail. I’ll get parts in the mail immediately.

I am so looking forward to seeing you again soon, or getting to know you for the first time soon. It’s going to be a fantastic year – one that will change you forever. Are you ready? I hope you’ll accept this invitation to join us – at least give us a try – a chance to prove who we are, and who we can be for you!

ALSO FYI: at the following web-site, (www.wartburg.edu/band) you can access information contained in the Wartburg College Concert Bands OWNER’S MANUAL. Such things as “dress codes” (required both for concerts and for band events), “rules and regulations”, and “band councils” are covered fairly extensively. Please check out the section on dress codes, as you’ll be asked to supply some items that may be more easily picked up prior to coming to campus! *You will receive a hard copy of this Owner’s Manual at the start of school as well.*

Please let me know your questions or comments.

Your servant,
“Dr. H.”

Dr. Craig A. Hancock
Director of Bands