

New Horizons Band Camp Provides Summer Fun for Community Musicians

In June 2011, I traveled to northwestern Michigan for a week of music on the campus of Interlochen Center for the Arts. This was my third camp at Interlochen, so I knew what to expect, but the aura of that institution, and all of the fabulous talent that has passed through its doors, lingered in the air.

Every two years, New Horizons Music sponsors a band camp for adults at Interlochen. This year, approximately 85 musicians participated, many of whom I recognized from previous New Horizons camps in various parts of the U.S. and Canada. It is always a fun: a reacquainting with old friends and the making of new friends, and we celebrate our common bond, the love of making music, just for the fun of it.

Daily activities, or classes, included Intermediate Band, Advanced Band, Advanced Wind Ensemble, Dixieland Band, Big Band Jazz, Flute Ensemble, Saxophone Ensemble, Advanced Percussion Ensemble, Chorus, Mixed Brass Ensemble, Introduction to Conducting, Percussion 101, Conch Choir (that's right—the seashells) and something which appears to be unique to The Villages in Florida: the Stroll Band, a vaudeville-style mix of parading in funny costumes, playing sing-a-long tunes (e.g. 'Baby Face') and the telling of bad jokes. Other camps have included ukulele, hula, German band, eurhythmic dance, drum circle, and mariachi band, as well as full orchestra. Such a variety, so little time!

Campers typically sign up for 4 to 5 classes which are repeated for 4 days, and then it is showtime. We have a party night with the smaller ensembles sharing their fun, followed by a more formal concert on the next morning for the large ensembles. Then it is hugs and kisses, and we all go home with new skills and rekindled enthusiasm, anxiously awaiting the next camp.

Music for the Intermediate Band is typically at Grade 1.5 to 2.5, to provide comfort and challenge to the newer musicians. The Advanced Band typically reads Grade 3 to 4 music. The ensembles present a mix of music, typically catering to the average skill level signed up for the classes. Faculty are picked from active New Horizons Bands, so they are well versed in the New Horizons philosophy of making music, and are sensitive to the needs of the adult beginning and intermediate level musicians.

New Horizons sponsors music camps in a variety of locations, including Chautauqua, New York; Helen, Georgia; Wine Country, California; the Pacific Northwest; Iowa City, Iowa; and many others. Some are annual, some not. More details on locations of band camps and local New Horizons groups can be found on the website: www.newhorizonsmusic.org.

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