

MEET THE DIRECTORS



Warren Starr earned a B.S. degree in Music Education from the University of Minnesota in 1980 and is currently working toward a certificate in Gifted/Creative/Talented Education at the University of St. Thomas. He started teaching at Hill-Murray School in 1981, and has been the Coordinator of the Parish Schools Band Program since 1984. Warren stoured China with the University of Minnesota Wind Ensemble in the summer of 1980. He has played tuba with the 451 t Army Band at Fort Snelling, the Tubadours at Valley Fair, the Minnesota Orchestra, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. He currently performs with the Minneapolis Pops Orchestra and his own quintet, Minnesota Brassworks.

Beth Johnson began teaching in the Hill-Murray Parish Schools Band Program in 1990. She received a Bachelor's degree in Music Education from the University of Minnesota and a Master's Degree in education from Hamline University. With flute as her major instrument, Beth performs with the Wooddale Orchestra, the Shoreview Northern Lights Variety Band and is a former member of the University of Minnesota Wind Ensemble. In 2004 she received the Distinguished Educator Award from the White Bear Lake School District. In addition she has presented a woodwind techniques session for the Minnesota Music Educators Association, and has served on the board of directors for the Minnesota Band Director's Association.

Elizabeth (Buffy) Larson has been a band director in the Parish Schools Band Program since 2001. She has a B.A. in both Music Education and Elementary Education from Augsburg College and is writing her thesis as part of a Master's Degree in Music Education at the University of St. Thomas. Buffy has worked on her Master's in trumpet performance at the University of Minnesota and freelances on trumpet as a soloist and with her brass quintet, Capital City Brass Quintet. She has recently joined the Minnesota Philharmonic Orchestra. Buffy is on the board of directors of the Bach Society of Minnesota and is a program intern for the Lyra Baroque Orchestra. She conducts the handbell choir at her church.

Heather LeVesseur began teaching with the Hill-Murray Parish Schools Band Program in 2001. She has a Bachelor's degree in Music Education from Augsburg College, and is working towards her Master's Degree in Music Education at the University of St. Thomas. Heather plays bassoon and contrabassoon in the North Suburban Concert Band, the Wooddale Orchestra, and freelances with several local orchestras. She also teaches private bassoon lessons.

LeAnn Lindgren joined the Parish Schools Band Program as a Band Director in 2006. LeAnn earned her Bachelor of Science in Music Education from the University of Minnesota. She has been a private instructor of woodwinds and jazz studies at Hamline University, band director at St. Paul Academy and Summit School, and private instructor of classical, jazz, and pop music at The West Bank School of Music. Along with her teaching, LeAnn has kept an ongoing career as a performing musician. Among her accomplishments, she was voted "Best Instrumentalist" by the Minnesota Music Academy in 1994 in the Brass/Reed category

Meet the Lesson Teachers

To contact a lesson teacher, please call or email Program Coordinator, [Warren Starr](mailto:Warren.Starr@parishschools.org) (651-748-2414).

John Ahern

John Ahern has been a private lesson teacher for the Parish Schools Band Program for 4 years and has taught privately in the Twin Cities for the last 12 years. In addition to teaching, Mr. Ahern has a busy playing schedule, currently playing in the Nova Contemporary Jazz Orchestra (a non-profit group that plays and records original music from Twin Cities composers), the Cedar Ave. Big Band (Directed by Steve Devich), as well as freelancing with local groups. Mr. Ahern's compositions and arrangements can be heard on 10+ CDs. Mr. Ahern is the co-founder of Blue Heron Music Studios, which has been involved in recording the Parish Schools Band Program's "Almost Spring" Concert since 2005.

Mary Criswell

Mary Criswell has taught woodwinds for the Hill-Murray Parish Schools Band Program since 2005. Mary earned a B.A. in Music from the University of Minnesota and a M.Ed. from Idaho State University, with specialization in Flute Pedagogy. She has been teaching private lessons since she was 16 years old, and has taught 8 years in public schools in Idaho and Minnesota. Her is currently Minnesota-certified to teach K-12 instrumental and vocal music. Mary is also a performing artist: she has played professionally for opera and musical theater orchestras, two symphonies, and for recording studios. She continues to teach privately, freelances, and plays with the BB&C Trio, a flute-cello-piano combo performing in various venues across the Twin Cities.

Marko Foss

Marko Foss graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead, MN with B.A. in Music Education. As a student he was a member of the Concordia College Band, the Concordia Orchestra, and participated in the annual Concordia Christmas Concerts. He has performed (on trumpet) with various ensembles in the area including the Bloomington Symphony, Fargo-Moorhead Symphony, the Mississippi Valley Orchestra, and Saint Croix Valley Symphony. Marko also plays cornet in Ameriikan Poijat, a Finnish Brass Septet that has been featured at the Lieksa International Brass Week and Kaustinen Folk Music Festivals in Finland. A former band director in rural Minnesota, he has now been teaching lessons with the Hill-Murray Parish Schools Band Program since 2001.

Bob Leo

Bob Leo attended MacPhail College of Music, earning a B.A. in Music Education with a major in saxophone. After college he emphasized flute, and has studied clarinet with Dr. Yu Tu from China. He has played in popular and jazz groups in the Twin Cities area. Bob has been in practice as a music therapist for HealthEast since 1989.

Scott Snyder

Scott Snyder has been teaching with the Parish Schools Band Program since 2001. In addition, he has been teaching for the Hill-Murray Academy for the Performing Arts since 2005. As a trumpet player, Scott has played professionally in the Twin Cities for over 30 years, and enjoys playing many styles of music.

Diane Thornton

Diane Thornton has been a lesson teacher with the Parish Schools Band Program for ten years. She has a Bachelor's degree in both Music Education and Elementary Education from Dickinson State University and has done graduate work in Music Education at the University of Minnesota. Diane has taught elementary classroom and instrumental music in Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota. She has been on the faculties of Dickinson State University and Bemidji State University. Currently Diane maintains a private woodwind and piano studio, and is active as a piano accompanist. She toured Estonia, Latvia and Russia in June 2005 with the Hennepin Ave. United Methodist Church Sanctuary Choir.

Richard Voorhaar

Richard Voorhaar received his Bachelor of Music degree in Theory and Composition from Arizona State University, finished course work for a Master's Degree from Rutgers University and has done work towards a Ph.D. at The University of Minnesota. His composition teachers included Ronald Lo Presti, Robert Moevs, Noel DaCosta and Dominic Argento. He has published over a dozen choral works, and his music has been performed both here and abroad. He has also arranged classical works for the advanced bands at the schools where he teaches. Mr. Voorhaar has performed professionally on trombone and baritone in groups on both the east and west coasts, and maintains private music studios in Eagan and St. Anthony Park.

Tom Zosel

Tom Zosel attended the University of Minnesota-Morris where he earned a B.A. in political science. He worked as a community organizer, lobbyist and advocate for several years, returning to the University of Minnesota in 1995 to study composition and music education. By this time, he was in demand as a professional saxophonist, thanks in great part to the success of the Lights Out Committee, one of the first groups he appeared with regularly after leaving his political consulting business. He has recorded and performed with Deb Brown, Joe Juliano, Syl Johnson, Erin Muir, the Maroons, Cornbread Harris, the Nova Jazz Orchestra, Danny's Reasons, Fatt Soul City, Soulvation, the Midnight Express, and le Cirque Rouge. In 2002, he formed his own New Orleans rhythm and blues band, the Beau Koo Jacks. In 1996, he began teaching at the Walker West Music Academy in St. Paul. Mr. Zosel still has private students at WWMA, and continues to work with the youth jazz bands and the summer Music Enrichment Program. His teaching experience includes tenures at Highland Park Junior High (1998-99), Twin Cities Academy (2000-02), Wilson Middle School (2000-01), and Salem Lutheran School-Stillwater (2003-06). He began working for the Hill-Murray Parish School band program as a lesson teacher in 2002. In the fall of 2005, he became the jazz ensemble director at Hill-Murray School.