

The American Band College of Southern Oregon University

Now in its twentieth year of operation, the American Band College began as a summer workshop for school band directors. In 1992 a masters degree program was implemented in which 6 candidates enrolled. Today, there are nearly 250 band directors from more than 40 states and three foreign countries enrolled in this Southern Oregon University masters program. This summer nearly 50 will complete the degree requirements bringing the total number of graduates in the first 15 classes to 458.

The teaching faculty for ABC includes 24 of the world's finest teachers, conductors, and composers. Each summer a new faculty is presented so that attendees are exposed to the expertise of more than 60 teachers during their 3 summers in Ashland. Local faculty include Scott McKee (Managing Director), Paul Kassulke (Director of Operations, 1994 ABC grad) and Max McKee (ABC Executive Director). ABC Graduates on the staff include Cathi Leibinger (Florida 1999), Ted Burton (Oregon 2000), Elizabeth Lonergan (Oregon 2002), Jay Jones (California 1998), Matthew Arau (Colorado 2003), Marianne Robison (Oregon 1997) and Tracy Wright (Georgia 2004). Nel McKee (Financial Manager). Additional operations staff include Kay Kassulke (Special Services) and Angel McDonald (ABC Center for Research).

When candidates first enter the program (95 new ones this year), the American Band College faculty administers an extensive entrance exam measuring 40 areas of teaching (instrument fingerings, embouchure development, percussion instruments and techniques, conducting, band literature and many others). From those results each of the candidates develops a course of study that concentrates only on his or her 7 to 20 areas of weakness. This includes annual written exams, video assessments and the completion of 6 special thesis projects.

During their on-campus time each summer, candidates attend more than 70 sessions (covering many facets of band directing) while playing 3 hours a day in the ABC Directors' Bands. In these ensembles, candidates sightread more than 75 new compositions and also prepare 35 compositions for the two major public performances under 8 guest conductors and 2 world-renowned soloists. This year over 100 second and third year masters candidates serve as preparation conductors for the guest composers and directors. This is part of the American Band College evaluation process at Southern Oregon University.

Guest conductors for this year's Ginger Rogers Craterian Theater concert include Bruce Dinkins (Texas), Ralph Hultgren (Australian composer), Mike Bankhead (U.S. Air Force retired), Al Wright (National Band Association founder), Gladys Wright (Women Band Directors International founder) and Allen Vizzutti (trumpet soloist).

The ABC Directors' Band also participates in the Ashland Fourth of July parade and then presents a two-and-a-half hour Fireworks Concert at Ashland High Football Stadium beginning at 8:00 p.m. (pre-concert music and special activities begin at 7:00 p.m.) Guest conductors for this year's July 4th concert include Robert W. Smith (American composer), Robert Ponto (University of Oregon Director of Bands), Cynthia Hutton (SOU Director of Bands) and Tim Lautzenheiser (ABC grad faculty and Master of Ceremonies). Guest soloist is renowned tuba virtuoso, Patrick Sheridan, from Arizona State University.

The American Band College at the Crate

The Wright Night



Gladys and Al Wright

Bruce Dinkins • Ralph Hultgren
Mike Bankhead • Allen Vizzutti

Thursday, June 26, 2008
Ginger Rogers Craterian Theater
Medford, Oregon