

GUEST COLUMNIST

A MUSIC CONDUCTORS PERSPECTIVE

Recently I had the pleasure of conducting the New Mexico Music Educators All State Symphonic Band in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This band consisted of the most talented high school musicians in New Mexico. The Symphonic Band consisted of 105 musicians from just about every high school in the state. What the people of Clovis should be especially proud of, is that 10 of these musicians came from Clovis High School. In addition, the New Mexico All State Concert Band consisting of 112 musicians had 13 members from Clovis. The Clovis High School Symphony Band consisting of 55 members was selected from all the school districts in the state as this years State Honor Band. They also performed in concert during the Music Festival. These three significant achievements in themselves are amazing, that one school district can produce so much musical talent. This feat speaks highly of the staff of music educators, their music training program, and the students themselves. Only through a true love of music can participation like this be realized. I was asked by a Band Booster parent if I would repeat the words that I spoke to the audience during the All-State Concert. At his request, I will attempt to do so, and this is what I said.

It is so important that young people feel the support of parents, school administration and community. There is no other activity that demands a higher expectation as that of music performance. Our goal always is to work for perfection, the absolute tops in execution. That takes hard work, concentration, cooperation, individual accountability and commitment to excellence. What the audience heard today, was the epitome of this focus. Students throughout the state, coming together for the purpose of achieving the highest level of music possible in one week of concentrated rehearsal. Usually when several schools get together, there is some kind of competition with a scoreboard on each wall or end of the field. Today there was not a scoreboard in sight, only cooperative and enthusiastic collaboration by talented students who all went home winners in musical satisfaction. *“The higher the expectation, the greater the satisfaction.”* When a musician makes music individually and collectively, something significant happens internally to that student that cannot be duplicated with the best speakers or earphones money can buy. That is because music demands that they play with passion and heart. No computer games, iPods, or other electronic devices; it is lips to mouthpieces, fingers to keys, hands to mallets and sharp minds continually processing the music. That is personal responsibility in action, live and vital to an atmosphere of success.

Clovis, New Mexico, you should really be proud of your High School Bands. I have no doubt that in the future years; your investment in their training and education will pay great dividends. It will prove to be the best investment you will ever make. Do everything possible to insure that your music students are provided the necessary resources to continue their program of excellence. What they are learning and doing right now, will benefit them for the rest of their lives. Please attend their performances, cheer them on, and support them in everything they do. When they travel to the various competitions and performances, they represent you, Clovis, New Mexico, and may I say they are doing a fantastic job from what I have seen so far.



Dr. Ray E. Cramer holds a BA in Education and an Honorary Doctorate from Western Illinois University and an MFA from the University of Iowa. Dr. Cramer was a member of the Indiana University School of Music faculty from the fall of 1969 through May 2005. In 1982, Dr. Cramer was appointed Director of Bands, and enjoyed a 36-year tenure at Indiana University, where he holds the title of Emeritus Director of Bands. Under his leadership the Indiana University Wind Ensemble earned an international reputation for outstanding musical performances. In December of 2008 he was named the “The Academy of Wind and Percussion Arts” honoree by the National Band Association. The AWAPA was established by the NBA for the purpose of recognizing those who have made truly significant and outstanding contributions to furthering the excellence of bands and band music. The 9-inch silver “AWAPA” figure is the “Oscar” of the band world. Dr. Cramer is actively involved in clinics and guest conducting engagements nationally and internationally. He and his wife Molly reside in Colorado Springs, Colorado because they love the mountains and to be closer to their children and grandchildren.