



September 8, 2026

Greetings to all Westwinds Members,

I wanted to take a few moments to address you all as I close out my journey with Westwinds.

We've made some changes, and hired two new directors:

- Green Choir: Erica Phare-Bergh has decided to direct just one Westwinds choir (Young Adult Choir), and we've hired the wonderful **Liz DeMarino** to take on Green Choir. A very experienced, award-winning choir expert, Liz is a delight – we're so happy to have her on our team of directors.
- Gold Jazz Central: Jeff Graham has been asked to take on the new Gold Jazz Band. He will continue to direct Silver Jazz and has reluctantly let go of Blue Jazz.
- Blue Jazz: Gareth Bane, a most talented bari sax specialist and music educator, Gareth is a jazz guy through and through and excited to join Westwinds.

Survey Results:

As I always do, I very carefully reviewed the survey responses. All in all, our members are really happy with what we're doing – in their ensembles and as an organization. That's so very positive and amazing to hear!

But we can't make everyone happy all the time, understandably. There were a few things that came up that deserve some answers or explanations, at least. I know I always ask 'why' (I drove my parents crazy as a child!) so I have compiled some documents to provide information to our members as to why we make some of the decisions we do. The documents are divided into several categories to make what you're looking for a little easier to find. Or you may just choose to read through each of them for a fuller understanding of how or why many of our decisions are made. You deserve to know!

The categories are:

- Season/Calendar
- Venues: Rehearsal/Concert
- Concert Planning
- Ensembles/Directors
- Enrichment Opportunities

These documents will be posted on the website this fall. Check out the announcements for more information when they are posted.

I want to encourage you to reach out to the Artistic Director email directly with questions or concerns, ANY time. An email is the best chance to either help resolve any issues or, at the very least, provide some clarity. And if by chance, a response isn't made within a reasonable time, PLEASE reach out again as the inbox can get busy and occasionally things get missed. The Artistic Director email:

artisticdirector@westwindsmusic.org

Thank you:

- To ALL our members for your musical endeavours from this past season, including rehearsals and workshops, retreats, promotional events and many performances throughout 2025/26.

- To our long-standing members who come back year after year. Thank you for continuing to believe in and support Westwinds!
- To our newest members, we hope your experience is a positive one and that you will continue your musical journey with us.
- To all our MANY volunteers. You've heard it before but let me say it again – we can't continue to operate without YOU! From the casino, to hauling equipment, photographing, organizing and coordinating people, researching, group managing, serving on the board, posting social media posts and many other things – a HUGE thank you.
- For filling out the season survey! We had the most respondents ever – which is fantastic.

And finally, a rather long, but appreciative good-bye

What a spectacular journey it's been! A quick recap of my Westwinds journey, for those who are curious. I joined the Westwinds tour to China in 2013, as my inaugural Westwinds experience. I was very familiar with the organization but had never been involved before. After a wonderful experience, I promptly joined the Wind Orchestra that fall, and over the last 13 years spent time playing in the Wind Orchestra, Bronze Jazz, Silver Jazz, and finally Gold Jazz South. I have tremendously enjoyed each of my ensemble experiences and appreciated the insight it gave me into the member experience. I was hired in 2018 to direct the Blue Concert Band, which I loved dearly – especially watching people progress and make their way into other more advanced ensembles. In 2019, I was asked to be the Artistic Director, which was an honour but also slightly terrifying as I wasn't quite sure what this role would entail. I learned as I went, sometimes the hard way, but eventually felt like I was able to really contribute to the organization.

I'm proud to say that during my tenure:

- We survived Covid through a robust series of online offerings, the only community music organization doing such a thing, and in fact drawing people from all over the country to our courses.
- Following Covid, although numbers were down and our Green programs were non-existent as we started up in-person, we remained viable financially due to our dedicated members and directors.
- We have grown from registrations of approximately 320 in 2021 to 575 this past season.
 - We are starting this year with 21 ensembles, up from 12 in 2021.
 - Revived in 2022: Green Concert Band and Green Choir
 - Added since 2021:
 - 3 strings ensembles – Green, Blue and Bronze
 - 3 jazz bands – Blue, Copper and Gold Jazz Central
 - 1 choir – Young Adult Choir (YAC)
- Hiring the following directors, in no particular order:
 - Jazz: Kathie Van Lare, Jonathan Bell, Jeff Graham, Gareth Bane
 - Concert: April Waterbury, Jeff Waterbury, Jenine Maystrowich, Scott Campbell, Kathie Van Lare
 - Choir: Erica Phare-Bergh, Justin Macosky, Liz DeMarino
 - Strings: Christina Visy, Heidi Behrenbruch
 - And saying farewell to some amazing directors who have helped shape Westwinds: Anita Perlau, Ross McIntyre, and Kevin Willms.



I'm delighted to pass the baton to the wonderfully dedicated **Nathan Gingrich** (Bronze Jazz director, teacher at William Aberhart), who taking over the position of Artistic Director. He is a leader in the music education community in Calgary, highly regarded for his hard work, knowledge, experience, and his multitude of talents. I am so pleased that he has agreed to take on the role of AD, as we are stepping into a season full of possibilities.

It has been my absolute pleasure working with the amazing team of directors and collaborative artists – the best of the best in the Calgary area. We have had MANY very dedicated volunteers doing important work behind the scenes – too many to name. The Board members these past few years have been a dream team – outstanding pillars of our community who have been thoughtful in their decision-making, dedicated to the work and have a passion for the organization. And of course, Lisa Turner, our executive assistant, is truly the cornerstone on which Westwinds stands. There were many comments in our annual survey raving about the excellent work Lisa does – all of them completely deserved!

But the best part of the job, truly, was meeting so many of you, listening to the beautiful music you all pour your hearts and souls into, and being able to take such pride in whatever role I could play in supporting the organization and all of its members.

Have a wonderful 2026/27 season,



Jane McLauchlin

(Former) Artistic Director, Westwinds Music Society