

**Grand Forks Central Band
Through the Decades
By
Richie Osborn and Emily Cox**

For over the past 100 years, there is one club that has remained an essential part of Central High School: Band. Starting with a mixture of orchestral and band instruments, the music department at Central has been expanding and improving its band and orchestra programs, while managing to keep the history a major part of the organization.

The instrumental program first starting taking place at Central High School in 1916, under the influence of Professor Moses. At the beginning of the program, they did not have separate groups for band and orchestra, but rather had a conjoined symphony. In 1920, the group becomes an official program with Professor Moses as the acting teacher/director. During this year the orchestra claims their first state honors at the annual contest in the spring. The city of Grand Forks was very partial to this group and urged them to take tours of the state in which they did. Their North Dakota tour was very successful and encouraged more students to participate in the following years. By 1922, they had 35 musicians, including every instrument other than the



bassoon. However, in the second semester of the school year of 1922-1923, Professor Moses gave his directing position to Harold Rudd. Rudd starting forming a separate group just for band instruments. Although not as successful as the orchestra quite yet, the group made the most it could with its 20 members and performed in several parades along with playing at athletic events. This was the start of the infamous "Pep Band." In 1923, Mr. Haesle took over the department and increased the number of pupils from 55 to 250 in just two years. With the increase in students, there was also an increase in the

number of groups to participate in. Along with a Senior Band and a Senior Orchestra, they also formed a Junior Band and a Junior Orchestra. These groups did perform at concerts, but acting more as a trainer and feeder to the senior groups. That year there was a massive orchestra concert that incorporated both orchestras while showcasing some state soloists. Along with the four major groups, Haesle helped form two ensembles; The sax quartet, and the string quartet. The sax quartet was a favorite of the school, especially since the largest guy played the soprano saxophone, and the smallest guy played the bari saxophone. The band won their first state honors in 1925, along with acquiring their first of many sets of uniforms. The orchestra by 1929 had won every single state contest they had entered. Alongside the major group victories, there were also some small category winners from Grand Forks: Piano solo, Baritone solo, Marimba solo, Flute solo, and the string quartet.

By the 1930's many of the past graduates from the Band and Orchestra programs went off to perform professionally. A large number of graduates joined the Ted Weems' Orchestra, which was very popular in the 1930's. The band started to become more highly recognized after winning the National Band Trophy for claiming the state title three times in a row. The orchestra was trying

to win the National Orchestra Trophy as well, but were not quite there, as they had taken off the year 1928, and did not perform in the state contest. Other than the major groups, the band formed a trumpet quartet that was well received, and even dedicated a spot in the 1931 yearbook. In 1932 the orchestra was badly crippled with the loss of most of their principal players. Although fearing a downhill turn, they still placed at state. At this time, the clarinet quartet was formed and featured over the radio. It was such a success that the band kept the group going for several years. In 1936, the clarinet trio took first place at the State contest.

1940 was a major year for the Central Band. Not only did the band receive new maroon and gray uniforms, but they fundraised for the arrival of professional trombonist Jerry Cimera to



perform at their concert. He also offered a band clinic for the students to help with their skills. This urged students to form their own ensembles, and thus three new groups were formed; the saxophone quartet, the mixed quintet, and the revival of the clarinet quartet. Mr. Haesle thought that more needed to be done to expose the students to playing opportunities. Therefore, they formed a band exchange that was kept up for several decades. In 1942, they took their first exchange trip to Bemidji High School. That same school year, the band was entered into the University of North Dakota music contest. However, the

orchestra was also getting recognized for their achievements, and was in high demand for city banquets and actually had to form a smaller group that could play for these special events. They also won the UND music contest over the band. The band, being suppressed of this duty because of World War II, performed at the Homecoming Dance in 1946. That year they also did their exchange with the Breckinridge, MN, band. On the way to Breckinridge, they performed at the Moorhead State Teachers College. This was also the first year that the orchestra started playing the "Pomp and Circumstance" for graduation exercises. In 1947, the band reigned as the supreme group again, when they marched in three parades, and formed two smaller groups, labeled as German Bands. The bands consisted of a sophomore band and a junior band. There was also a band clinic held in Fargo that was attended by seven of the Central Band's members. However, that year the band tied



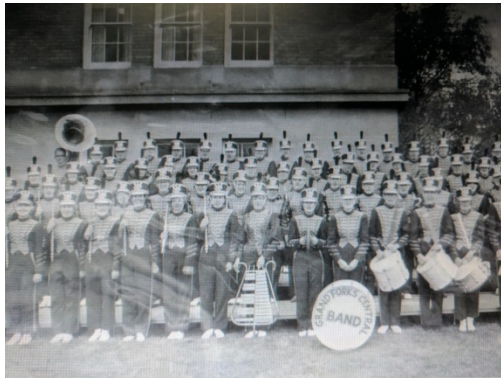
for first with the Bismarck High School band at State. The band also did another exchange with Bemidji High School. At this time, Mr. Haesle started to incorporate jazz influences into the music his groups were playing. This may have been the start to forming a jazz band in the future. The band started to reign again in the competition world, as they won top honors at the UND music contest. They also marched in two of the local parades. This year they exchanged with Winnipeg High School. In 1949, however, the band ended up tying for first place again with Bismarck at the UND music contest.

This tie did not defer the band in any which way. They came back strong as ever, and were actually one of the most highly recognized bands in the midwest. This new title urged the band to

purchase new satin uniforms in 1952. They again exchanged with the Winnipeg High School. In 1953, the band was named the official band for the state basketball tournament. With their comeback, they also won the state tournament for band. In 1958 the orchestra was recognized for producing many well known instrumentalists. In 1959, Mr. Haesle passes the baton to Murice Callahand, who only runs the department for a couple years.

Mr. William Pond took over the department in 1961, and started his career off with a massive concert in Fargo. In 1963 the band got new uniforms. The success from the students pushed Pond to enter some of his students into the city symphony. They were very well received musicians. In 1968, the orchestra gets a separate conductor from the band with the addition of Dwight Sherwood.

In 1970, the marching band becomes so well renowned that they were invited to play form a Winnipeg Blue Bombers game. That year they also did another exchange with the Winnipeg High School. Mr. Haesle's influence of jazz within the band helped incorporate jazz band as an activity. Although not quite an official organization, the jazz band meets at 7 a.m. once a week. In 1971, the



orchestra hires a new director with Kenneth Larson. Along with the opening of a new school (Red River), the number of members in the orchestra started to decline. In order to save the organization, they offered a youth orchestra for both schools to join rather than two separate groups. Even with this compromise, the orchestra only contained 18 members. That same year, the band met President Nixon at the airport and played for his landing. Later, the band fundraised to perform at the Niles Township Community High School in Skokie, IL. In 1972 the band got new uniforms again. They were also invited to play for the school's version of "Oktoberfest".

The orchestra got yet another director named Jack Miller. However, he didn't stick around long, because Mr. Kim Walters became the new director in 1975.

In the 1980's, the band got a new set of uniforms that had flashy hats and the standard maroon color. That year Scott Neumann replaces Kim Walters for the director of the orchestra. However, he didn't last long either, because Mr. Gram took over in 1984. The band got their new director in 1986 with the arrival of Dale Koppelman. That same year the band was invited to travel to Vancouver and play for the World Exposition. To top it off, band member Hayley Svedjan was chosen to be a part of the McDonald's All-American Band. In 1987 the jazz band finally becomes recognized as an organization at Central. Along with this, the orchestra no longer carries band instruments and becomes just a string orchestra. To finish off the 80's, the band took a trip down to New Orleans, LA.

In 1991, the orchestra gets a new director, Mr. Steve Carriere. That same year the band was chosen to travel with the concert choir and perform at Carnegie Hall in NYC. In 1992, the jazz band makes its first appearance outside Grand Forks by playing at the NDSU jazz concert. Instead of the band getting new uniforms, the orchestra actually adopts concert uniforms. In 1999, the jazz band gets so popular that they have to form three different groups; the Maroon Jazz, the Gray Jazz, and the Knight Jazz.

In the year 2000, Mrs. Christie Aleshire takes over the band department and becomes the first female Instrumental Music director in Central High School history. Band also forms three groups this year; the Varsity Band, the Concert Band, and the Symphonic Band. In 2010, the band department welcomes Mr. Tom Wogsland as a co-director alongside Aleshire. In 2015, the band acquires new uniforms, which are the current marching band attire. This year there are only two bands, the Concert Band, and the Symphonic Band. Mrs. Aleshire retires in 2016, and the department welcomes former Central grad Mrs. Sarah Harlow as the acting director of the band. This year brings new changes to the department, with the formation of freshman, or Paladin, orchestra, and a touring Combo Jazz Band consisting of five lone members.

Band is one of the longest lasting, and most consistent, groups in Central history. Behind the brand new music building, and the fancy marching jackets, there is a lot of history buried deep in the bowels of the department. Talk has lead people to believe that the department is considering showcasing their deep history in the not so distant future.

#####