

## **History of Best of the West Select Band at Mesa State College - Grand Junction, Colorado**

Best of the West Select Band began as a one day event in 2000 as Colorado Senior Band Day (CSBD) with 40 high school seniors joining the Mesa State College Wind Symphony for a spectacular concert. The second year, 60 students attended allowing the event to form its own high school band with Dr. Calvin Hofer conducting. In 2002, with the generous financial support of Stephen Boelter and Karen Combs, the first guest conductor, Eugene Corporon, was invited to conduct and CSBD became a two day event. James Houlik, tenor saxophone, was featured in a Colorado premiere of Joseph Wilcox Jenkin's new concerto composed for Mr. Houlik.

In 2004, to encourage participation of sophomores and juniors, the name was changed to Best of the West Select Band (BOTWSB). Eighty students participated, and the event featured the Memphis Brass as guest soloists with the MSC Wind Symphony in a performance of Eric Ewazen's *Shadowcatcher*.

A milestone was achieved in 2005 with the participation of over 140 students, necessitating the formation of two equal bands. With the continued financial support of Stephen Boelter and Karen Combs, BOTWSB brought in guest conductor Dr. Paula Holcomb, commissioned a new work especially for this event from Dr. Karl Boelter, premiered by the Mesa State College Wind Symphony. Our featured guest soloist was Bob Spring (clarinet) from Arizona State University.

This vision continues, seeking excellent conductors and soloists and commissioning outstanding composers, making this a premiere event in Colorado and the western United States for high school students and their directors.

### **The Vision**

In 2007, we will stay with an auditioned top ensemble and a second ensemble for less experienced students. However, to represent the continued excellence of the ensembles, the top ensemble will be called the BOTW Wind Symphony, and the second ensemble titled the BOTW Symphonic Band. All participating students will audition for ensemble and chair placement.

The commissioned piece will be performed by the Mesa State College Wind Symphony. The two high school bands will perform works of the guest composer if possible. During Friday of this event, the Music Department hosts the BOTW participants at a dinner featuring performances by the MSC Faculty, Jazz Ensemble and chamber groups. This is also an opportunity for the guest composer to have his/her chamber works performed by our outstanding faculty.

The guest composer, along with the guest conductor will work his/her pieces with the Mesa State Wind Symphony, the two high school bands, and college faculty chamber ensembles/soloists. The guest composer conductors and artist(s) also present sessions to the teachers. If the composer is also a conductor, the composer may be able to conduct their own works as well. It is quite possible that the guest composer and conductor may be the same person.

The guest conductor will work with the top high school group as well as guest conduct the MSC Wind Symphony on one piece, schedule permitting. The second select band will be conducted by a guest conductor as well, generally an outstanding conductor/teacher from Colorado.

The guest artist will perform a recital on our Guest Artist Recital Series the night prior to the start of the festival, present master classes to college and high school students, perform a piece on the Friday afternoon recital and present a session with the high school teachers.

### Mesa State College, Grand Junction, Colorado

Mesa State College is one of the fastest growing public colleges in Colorado with an enrollment of approximately 6,200 students. The Music Department is located in the new Moss Performing Arts Center, which houses a 288-seat Recital Hall, 620-seat theater, two large rehearsal halls, 13 faculty studios, a new piano/technology lab with 16 stations, as well as classrooms and practice rooms. Mesa State offers a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music with concentrations in Music Education, Performance Emphasis and Liberal Arts.

Grand Junction is located in western Colorado and is nestled below three mountain ranges, the Colorado National Monument, the Grand Mesa and the Bookcliffs. Grand Junction and the greater Grand Valley have a population of approximately 115,000 residents, and is the largest city between Denver and Salt Lake City.

### Best of the West Select Band

<u>Year</u>	<u>Guest Conductor</u>	<u>Guest Artist</u>	<u>Guest Composer</u>
2000	Calvin Hofer, Mesa State		
2001	Calvin Hofer, Mesa State		
2002	Eugene Corporon, Univ. of North Texas	James Houlik, tenor sax Duquesne University	
2003	John Tuinstra, Univ. of Wis-Whitewater	John Tuinstra, tuba	
2004	Alan Lafave, Northern State University	The Memphis Brass The University of Memphis	
2005	Paula Holcomb, SUNY-Fredonia	Robert Spring, Clarinet Arizona State University	Karl Boelter SUNY-Fredonia
2006	Gary Hill, Arizona State University	Patrick Sheridan, tuba	Jason Nitsch Houston, TX
2007	Karl Alan Williams University of Memphis	The Memphis Brass University of Memphis	Eric Ewazen Julliard School of Music
2008	Joan deAlbuquerque Cal-State Long Beach	?	Carolyn Bremer Cal-State Long Beach
2009	?	?	?
2010	?	?	?
2011	?	?	?
2012	?	?	?
2013	?	?	?
2014	?	?	?
2015	?	?	?

### Best of the West Select Band Commissioning Project

2005	<i>Mountains &amp; Mesas</i> by Karl Boelter
2006	<i>Elegy for a Ghost Town</i> by Jason Nitsch
2007	<i>Grand Mesa</i> by Eric Ewazen
2008	??????? by Carolyn Bremer