

# NISO NOTES

Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra

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## To The Fabulous 50s We Go!

By Allison DeWaard

The upcoming Winter Concert will bring the audience back in time to the “Fabulous 50s”—the days of poodle skirts, carhops, and hula hoops. NISO will back up the “neato” band Rave On! as it pays homage to rock and roll legend Buddy Holly.

Rave On! has earned critical acclaim from reviewers, and audiences around the nation have been awed by lead singer Billy McGuigan's realism, sincerity and talent. According to NISO Conductor Christopher Stanichar, the vocalist's portrayal of Buddy Holly is “an amazing impersonation.”

The program will feature Buddy Holly tunes including *True Love Ways*, *Everyday*, *Maybe Baby*, and *Peggy Sue*, to name a few. Even audience members who don't recall the 1950s may find the music—or at least the style—to be pleasantly familiar. Holly was an influential singer and songwriter from the early days of rock and roll; sadly, his career was cut short by a tragic plane crash in 1959. Holly was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1986.

At the concert, the NISO ensemble will provide orchestral support for the Rave On! vocalist and band.

As Stanichar noted, “The orchestra is more than the formalized music that we usually play. It's nice for the audience to see that the orchestra can be used in a different way that is sometimes more accessible.” It is Stanichar's hope that NISO includes music for everyone, even first-time



attendees. The “Fabulous 50s” concert promises to succeed in meeting this goal. “It's the kind of concert where you don't want to sit there passively,” said Stanichar. The audience is “going to have a blast!”

The Winter Concert will be held in the B.J. Haan Auditorium at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa at 7:30 p.m. on January 21.

## Children's Concert Attracts First-Time Symphony Goers

By Shirley Matheis

For many area fifth and sixth graders, attending the NISO Children's Concert this fall was a “fabulous first” experience.

On the afternoon of November 15, the B.J. Haan Auditorium was filled with about 900 students from 21 area schools from as far away as Edgerton, Minnesota. Over the past two decades, fifth and sixth grade students and their teachers have been invited to attend an abbreviated, afternoon version of the NISO Fall Concert.

This year, the herculean task of seating so many excited young people in an orderly and timely fashion was facilitated by Mary Hulstein, who had assigned seats to schools, and by six Friends of NISO who served as ushers.

But how can a sophisticated symphony concert be made appealing to middle school students, many of whom have never been exposed to such music? Conductor Christopher Stanichar was up to the challenge, telling kid-friendly jokes and speaking at the middle schoolers' level. Having the children hold their breath as long as a horn player was doing helped to keep them involved.

Anna Mouw, a sixth-grade saxophone player, appreciated hearing the stories of the music: while listening to Kalinnnikov's *Symphony No. 1*, she could imagine the released prisoner walking back and forth. Micah Goslinga, a fifth-grader who has been playing viola for three years, loved the whole concert—including the funny jokes.

Teachers expressed gratitude for the opportunity to introduce their students to an excellent professional orchestra, and they reported students' expressions of amazement, excitement, and enjoyment. Jander Talen, music teacher at Sioux Center Christian School, appreciated having his lessons reinforced when his pupils saw the live performance of music he had introduced to them. His students watched carefully, and some even noticed that the harp was not where Mr. Talen had said it would be!

Richard Bogenrief's trumpet solo was a highlight for many, especially for those who play in school bands. The children applauded enthusiastically. No doubt some were dreaming of their own “fabulous first” performance on that stage some day.

## First Celebrity Conductor Fundraiser

By Shirley Matheis

NISO's first Celebrity Guest Conductor Fundraiser will be held on January 21, 2012 in conjunction with the Winter Pops Concert: Fabulous 50s. Prominent individuals from area communities have been invited to vie for the honor of conducting an impromptu orchestral selection that evening. They are vigorously garnering support from family and friends by soliciting donations for NISO. Each dollar donated will constitute one vote, with results tabulated during intermission. After intermission, candidates will be invited to give brief demonstrations of their conducting skills. There are four eager competitors, but only one winning candidate will conduct the orchestra after intermission.



### **Denise Harrison, Sioux Center**

Denise Harrison, the daughter of an elementary music teacher who played trumpet, grew up in Sioux Center. Music has always been a special part of life for Denise and her six siblings. She played oboe, and the others played trumpet, baritone, saxophone, trombone, French horn, and drums in marching and concert bands. Denise still

lives in Sioux Center with her husband Dave, their son, and their Jack Russell. In 2012 she will celebrate her thirtieth anniversary at American State Bank, where she currently serves as Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer. Denise relishes the possibility of being a celebrity conductor; she is competing for that honor in memory of her mother. Denise hopes that the marching band major-ette baton she twirled many years ago will have readied her for the challenge.



### **Lora Rankin, Hull**

Lora Rankin grew up on a farm west of Sioux Center but now lives in Hull with her husband, Eric, and their children: Elizabeth, Billy and Kohen. Lora's love for music began when she took piano lessons and had the chance to accompany her kindergarten classmates in a music program. Eventually adding violin, clarinet, organ and voice lessons to her piano studies, Lora graduated from North-

western College with a double major in Vocal Performance and K-12 Music Education. She enjoys singing with her family and performing in musical theater productions. Lora is the Music and Worship Leader at New Hope Evangelical Free Church in Orange City. She has high hopes of being the NISO Celebrity Conductor in January!



### **John Slegers, Orange City**

John Slegers is a native Californian who learned to love Iowa. He and Sheryl found Sioux Center—despite the absence of beaches, mountains, and deserts—to be a great place to live and raise their four children, now all adults. It was in Iowa that John learned to separate news from show business. As News Director at KDCR Radio, he can do creative, meaningful, and rewarding work in a rural setting. What he

learned to appreciate most is that he lives, works, recreates, and worships with his audience. NISO has been a great part of that experience. Although John plays no instruments, three of his children have been or are members of NISO. That obviously qualifies him to serve as the NISO Celebrity Conductor on January 21.



### **Bert L. Van Batavia, Boyden**

Bert L. Van Batavia farms and farrows hogs at his birthplace between Boyden and Hull. He and Sandra have three children and six grandchildren. Bert studied piano, trumpet, baritone horn, and tuba in his youth and graduated from Central College in Pella with a Music Education major. During the Vietnam War,

Bert played in Glen Miller's 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Band. Subsequently, he served as the instrumental music teacher in Manilla, Iowa, earned a degree from Morningside College, and spent many years as a substitute teacher at Hope Haven and Boyden-Hull Community Schools. Bert is a church organist as well. He directs various men's groups and enjoys arranging music, and he hopes to put his musical talents to work with yet another ensemble by winning the opportunity to be NISO's Celebrity Conductor.



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