

2017 All-State Conductors

Dr. James P. Ripley, 2017 All-State Band Conductor

Professor James Ripley conducts the Carthage Wind Orchestra, Carthage Band, and the chamber winds group AMATI. He also serves as principal guest conductor of the Sakuyo Wind Orchestra at Sakuyo University in Kurashiki, Japan, where he was the music director from 2001-2011. Dr. Ripley was recognized for distinguished service in the field of instrumental music by Luther College with the Carlo A. Sperati Award in 2012.

Dr. Ripley grew up in Lime Springs, Iowa, and attended schools in the Howard-Winneshiek School District. One of his first tuba lessons in fifth grade was from Philip Sehmman, recognized as one of the most extraordinary teachers in the Northeast District of the Iowa Bandmasters Association. Subsequent teachers, Beulah Montgomery, Leonard Upham, and Tom Haugen provided outstanding instruction and mentorship during those years, which also included performing with the Crestwood High School Band at the 1976 Iowa Bandmasters Association Convention.

Following graduation from Luther College, Dr. Ripley began teaching in the North Central District, for four years at Rockford Junior and Senior High School, from 1981-85. After attaining the Master of Music Degree at Northwestern University, Dr. Ripley taught for four years at Mayo High School in Rochester, Minnesota, and then returned to Cresco, to conduct the Crestwood High School Band in 1990. Dr. Ripley left Cresco in 1993 to become the Associate Director of Bands at Northern Arizona University. From 1997-1997, Dr. Ripley completed his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Wind Conducting at the Eastman School of Music, where he then continued as assistant professor of conducting and ensembles, serving as associate conductor of the Eastman Wind Ensemble and Wind Orchestra, and as conductor of the Symphonic Wind Ensemble at the River Campus of the University of Rochester.

Dr. Ripley joined the Carthage faculty in 2001. Carthage has since become a leader in commissioning new music for wind band, developing innovative approaches to instrumental music education, creating new editions of historically significant wind works of the twentieth century, and encouraging worldwide collaboration through music. James is an active arranger and editor of wind ensemble music, including a new edition of Henry Cowell's Celtic Set. He has appeared as guest clinician and conductor throughout the United States, Canada, and Japan. Dr. Ripley was appointed as Secretary and Parliamentarian of WASBE and currently serves as President-Elect of the World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles, and Chair of the Music Education Committee for the College Band Directors National Association.

Seh Ahn, 2017 All-State Orchestra Conductor

A recent fellow of the prestigious American Academy of Conducting at Aspen, Sey Ahn is an emerging young conductor already on the way to a brilliant career. The recipient of a Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance from Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music, she also earned two Master of Music degrees from the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California, one in piano and, subsequently, a second in orchestral conducting. A graduate of Larry Livingston's orchestral conducting program at the Thornton School of Music, Ms. Ahn has worked individually and/or in master class sessions with such renowned conductors as Gustav Meier, Victor Yampolsky, Larry Rachleff, Robert Spano, Nicolas McGegan (opera), Federico Cortese, Carl St. Clair, Jorge Mester, Helmuth Rilling, and Kurt Masur.

Widely in demand as a guest conductor of professional and youth orchestra around the country, she led the Colorado All-State Orchestra, Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas, New Mexico and many more. Ms. Ahn is a Lecturer, Chamber Orchestra Director & Instructor of Conducting at University of California, Santa Barbara. She also serves as the Assistant Conductor of the IdyllwildARTS Summer Music Festival, a thriving international music program for gifted high school music students set in Southern California. In addition, she is Assistant Conductor of the Music for All Honor Orchestra of America for outstanding high-school students, held annually in Indianapolis.

In February 2017 she led the Diamond Bar High School Symphony Orchestra in a successful performance of Tchaikovsky 6th Symphony at the ASTA Convention held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which was awarded the Grand Prize. Recent highlights include performances in Walt Disney Concert Hall (Los Angeles), Benedict Music Tent at Aspen (Aspen), Royce Hall (Los Angeles), Alice Tully Hall (New York), and Hilbert Theater (Indianapolis).

Dr. Stephen Alltop, 2017 All-State Chorus Conductor

A conductor, harpsichordist, and organist, Stephen Alltop is director of music for Alice Millar Chapel, conductor of the Baroque Music Ensemble, and an instructor in conducting, harpsichord, and oratorio. A specialist in oratorio performance, he has conducted over 100 oratorio and operatic masterworks. He also serves as music director for the Apollo Chorus of Chicago, the Green Lake Choral Institute, and the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra. In 2012, he was named Conductor of the Year by the Illinois Council of Orchestras for his work with the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra has received multiple awards for excellence in programming. He has also been named to Northwestern's Faculty Honor Roll.

An active musician in historic performance practices, Stephen Alltop has performed with many of today's outstanding early music musicians, including Julianne Baird, Elizabeth Blumenstock, David Douglass, Ellen Hargis, Ingrid Matthews, Kenneth Slowik and Ton Koopman. He has performed as a harpsichordist and organist with Boston's Handel and Haydn Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Bach Project, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Music of the Baroque, and the Omaha Symphony. Dr. Alltop has served as principal organist for Soli Deo Gloria's Chicago Bach Project. In 2011, he was principal organist performing Bach's St. Matthew Passion with the Ensemble Orchestral de Paris and conductor John Nelson at the Basilique St. Denis in France. As conductor of the Annual Celebration of Celtic Music at Chicago's Symphony Center, he has worked with distinguished television and stage performers such as Brian Dennehy, Bill Kurtis, John Mahoney, and Martin Sheen. Dr. Alltop served as coordinator for WFMT's Chicago Bach Organ Project, a live performance series of all of Johann Sebastian Bach's organ works.

In demand as a speaker about music, Dr. Alltop lectures frequently for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Northwestern University Alumnae Continuing Education Series, and other musical organizations. In 2014-15, he gave presentations on leadership for the Advanced Management program of the Kellogg School of Management. He is represented by Joanne Rile Artist Management.