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**Monday, September 23, 2024**
*For immediate release*

**Lawrence Conservatory of Music and Lawrence Community Music School to celebrate 150 years**

APPLETON - Lawrence University is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Lawrence Conservatory of Music and the Lawrence Community Music School (LCMS) throughout the 2024-25 academic year.

Banners celebrating the 150 years of history now decorate campus. Concerts giving a nod to the brilliance of the Conservatory will be presented in the coming weeks and months. And a proclamation delivered by Appleton Mayor Jake Woodford, a 2013 Lawrence graduate, applauds the Conservatory for building and sustaining “world-renowned programs in music and music education” at Lawrence.

“As we celebrate this milestone, we will honor our rich legacy and embrace our promising future through special events, commissioned music, and other showcases highlighting the talent of past, present, and future musicians and scholars,” President Laurie A. Carter said.

The Conservatory debuted in 1874, launched with a single faculty member. It has grown over the past century and a half into the esteemed music conservatory it is today. With more than 25 areas of study, 360 students currently pursuing one of three music degree options (plus a possible dual degree), and 48 full-time and 23 part-time faculty, the Conservatory prepares students for music careers of today and tomorrow.

The Lawrence Community Music School, meanwhile, continues to function as an important division within the Conservatory, providing music instruction and performance opportunities to Fox Valley residents of all ages. Once a preparatory school, it was known as the Arts Academy and then Lawrence Academy of Music before assuming its current name, Lawrence Community Music School, in 2020. It now serves about 900 students via private lessons, ensembles, early childhood classes, and more, presenting more than 40 public concerts a year.

“The 150th anniversary of the Conservatory and the Lawrence Community Music School is a momentous event,” said Conservatory Dean Brian Pertl, a 1986 graduate of Lawrence. “Throughout our 150 years, the Lawrence Conservatory has produced exceptional musicians, scholars, and educators whose influence has extended across the nation and across the globe.”

As it has from the beginning, the Conservatory remains an integral part of Lawrence University. Music education, performance, composition, dance, technology, entrepreneurship, and arts leadership are all woven into the programming of today’s Conservatory. State-of-the-art recording studios are readily available. Award-winning ensembles explore everything from classical to world music to jazz. Internships take students to Carnegie Hall, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the New York Jazz Academy, among others. Conservatory faculty teach, mentor, perform, and inspire in studios, classrooms, and on stage.

It is all part of Lawrence’s liberal arts landscape, a cohesive blend of a conservatory and a college of liberal arts and sciences that makes Lawrence distinctive.

It was in 1894, 20 years after it debuted, that the Conservatory really started to take shape, hinting at what it would become. From 1894 to 1924, it grew from one faculty member to 16.

In 1918, the 1,200-seat Memorial Chapel—funded in a joint effort between Lawrence and the Appleton community—opened, a game-changer for the Conservatory and the community. In 1959, the Music-Drama Center was built near the Chapel. Shattuck Hall was added in the early 1990s, connecting the Music-Drama Center and Memorial Chapel, providing the infrastructure of today’s Conservatory.

In the 50 years since the Conservatory celebrated its Centennial in November 1974, it has continued to evolve and thrive. The jazz and improvisational music program that was launched in the early 1970s has grown into a widely recognized program, bringing home more than 30 national DownBeat Awards. The opera theatre program, with legendary leadership dating back to the early 1960s, took a major step forward in 2014 when a generous grant allowed for Copeland Woodruff to be brought in as the Conservatory’s first director of opera studies.

In 2019, a Bachelor of Musical Arts (B.M.A.) degree was added to Lawrence’s degree options, providing new musical paths into and through Lawrence while complementing the existing degrees—Bachelor of Music (B.Mus.), Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), and Bachelor of Arts & Bachelor of Music Dual Degree (B.A./B.Mus.). The new degree expanded on the classical music component in the Conservatory, allowing students to focus on jazz and contemporary improvisation.

In addition to the LCMS, numerous community partnerships—most notably with the Mile of Music festival, the Music for All program, and the Appleton Area School District—have added layers to the Conservatory’s relationship with Appleton and the wider Fox Cities.

The 150th anniversary will be showcased on Lawrence and Appleton stages throughout this academic year. [Kaleidoscope 2024](https://www.lawrence.edu/music-arts/performances-productions/kaleidoscope) will kick off the events at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 12 at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center in downtown Appleton. Featuring students from almost every corner of the Conservatory, it will be a non-stop music blitz that celebrates the Conservatory’s past, present, and future.

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[*Lawrence University*](https://www.lawrence.edu/) *is a liberal arts college located along the banks of the Fox River in Appleton, Wisconsin. Founded in 1847, Lawrence has an enrollment of about 1,500 students drawn from nearly every state and more than 40 countries. Annually ranked among the best colleges in the nation, it features a college of arts and sciences and a conservatory of music.*