

Omaha Homeschool Band & Orchestra

By Rick Brown, OHBO Director

The Omaha Homeschool Band & Orchestra (OHBO) is a ministry dedicated to teaching musical skills and awareness through instrumental ensemble performance within a Christian context. As home education was re-introduced into American culture in the early 1980s, many families, including our own, felt the need to incorporate instrumental instruction into their curriculum. We believe OHBO has helped meet that need. OHBO works primarily with homeschooled students, although students from private and public schools are welcome. We offer both Band and String Orchestra ensembles at multiple skill levels, from raw beginners to advanced high school-aged musicians.



OHBO has a long history. After a few years as a school band director, in the fall of 1989, I started the Nebraska Homeschool Band in Omaha and in Lincoln. At that time I had about a dozen students total... and four side jobs to help make ends meet. The band met in churches, private school buildings, and colleges in various towns across Nebraska like: Wahoo, Nebraska City, Nehawka, Peru, and of course, Omaha and Lincoln. I had several other jobs, but I was always able to continue with the band one way or another.



Unfortunately, I eventually had to give up the Lincoln group and others due to my time constraints. Yet, this allowed me to concentrate on the Omaha area, and in 2000 the band began meeting at Grace University. I had a short absence from the band in 2003 (due to being out-of-state) but returned shortly and continued working with the band. Come 2010, I had to leave the group in the hands of Jeff James, the band director at Grace University, so that I could focus on some other priorities for a while. I again was blessed to return in 2015 and once more assume the position as director of OHBO.

As Grace University neared closing, OHBO approached the Omaha Conservatory of Music and they graciously worked with us to provide space for our rehearsals and concerts. OHBO continues to meet at and collaborate with the Omaha Conservatory of Music at 7023 Cass Street in Omaha.

So over almost 30 years, several different directors, locations, and venues, the Omaha Homeschool Band & Orchestra is still going – and going stronger than ever. We now have over 100 students in seven different ensembles and five different teachers. We hold spring and fall concerts and perform at special events like the Omaha Homeschool Graduation and more. Over the past 5-6 years, our groups have been playing more and more advanced music, and we are reaching ‘critical mass’ – when a performing ensemble is large enough to have good players on all of the instruments. What an amazing accomplishment for all!

If you are interested in music, I invite you to visit our website at www.ohbo.org, come enjoy the next concert, and consider making OHBO part of your homeschool curricula.

