



Music Awards from The Instrumentalist



Honoring excellence in school
music programs for over 70 years

2026

WWW.INSTRUMENTALISTAWARDS.COM

Additional Information for Presentation Ceremonies on page 26

“You guys make it so easy.”

After assembling a 32-page catalog, you hope that every question has been answered. Despite our efforts to anticipate problems, sometimes directors need to talk to us. We live in a strange era for customer service. We have all been caught trying to reach companies or government agencies with an endless phone tree that pretends to help but is designed to wear you out and make you hang up. That is not how we work at Instrumentalist Awards.



When you have a problem, you can contact our friendly staff. Customers regularly seem surprised when we answer their calls. (“I didn’t know I was going to reach a person.”) We love hearing your students practicing in the background when you call. We also enjoy hearing about the successes or challenges faced by your program. Some of the most heartwarming calls happen when a director just can’t break a tie between two students and needs a second award rushed to the school.



Most customers prefer to go online to browse our store website (instrumentalistawards.com) to order their favorite awards and look at some of our new offerings. New additions to the catalog include a student plaque version of the Sousa student award (p. 4), updates to some of our certificates that needed a refresh (p. 11), and the National Band Leadership Award (p. 13), which received a warm response from directors last year. If you ever get an idea for a new award, please let us know.

We look forward to working with you this year!

Detailed information about award policies can be found on page 30. If you have any questions about them or which awards would be most suitable for your school, please give us a call or send an email. **888-446-6888** or awards@theinstrumentalist.com



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Telephone: 888-446-6888

Photos on the cover by Root and Wander Photography (top) and Kirby Fong (all others)



John Philip Sousa Band Award®

For over 70 years, this award has been nationally recognized as the highest honor high school band students can achieve. It was introduced with the approval of Sousa's daughters.

Sousa Student Awards

Each year honor your winning student's achievement with the presentation of a Sousa Student Award and don't forget to add your student's name to the official Sousa Registry. *(Purchase of one element of the official student award is a requirement of this honor.)*

Sousa Student Plaque



Sousa Student Plaque: This elegant new option for Sousa winners is made of solid walnut, matching the style of the **Sousa Wall Plaque**. Students can hang the 6"x8" award on their wall to enjoy for years to come.

(You can combine the new Student Award with other Sousa options, such as the deskpiece, pin and certificate. Go to our website for prices of these combinations or contact us by phone or email.)

Sousa Combination Set



Sousa Deskpiece
(Base: 3"x2.5", Height: 3")



Sousa Pin



Sousa Certificate (11"x8.5")
(frame sold separately, see p. 11)

The traditional **Sousa Combination Set** includes the **deskpiece** with a white marble base and gold medallion, the **certificate** with embossed gold seal, and **pin**.



The solid walnut **Sousa Wall Plaque** (12"x15") hangs in the band room to highlight the band's history and inspire students for decades to come. Each year add the winner's name.

When the original plaque is filled, a matching **Add-on Plaque** (12"x6" see p. 23) can be purchased to hang beneath.

National Sousa Registry

Add your students' names to the registry of Sousa Award winners. This national registry is a permanent record of students' achievements. www.sousawinners.com

Turn to p. 26 for biographical information on Sousa to share with students.

How to Present the Sousa Award

The **John Philip Sousa Band Award®** honors superior musicianship and dedication to the band program and is presented to the ensemble's top student in recognition of:

Outstanding achievement and interest in instrumental music, loyalty and cooperation, and an exemplary example of the high qualities of conduct and leadership.

The guidelines above reflect the spirit of the award, but as every program is different, each director determines which student best represents the Sousa Award for their school.

Official Sousa Policies:

1. To preserve the integrity of this top award, schools are limited to one set of Sousa student awards per year (or two in the event of a tie). The Gilmore Award (p.6), and The Director's Award for Band (p.7) may be used to honor additional students. In the event of a tie, each winner must receive identical components of the Sousa student award.
2. Students must receive at least one part of the official student award. You may not just add the student's name to the wall plaque.

All of these awards (including the names and images) are registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and are protected by registered marks. Duplication of these awards or the creation of similar awards is prohibited. See p. 30 for full policy details.

Sousa Student Plaque (21AW)	\$77
Sousa Student Combination Set (21CB Deskpiece, pin, and certificate)	\$75
Sousa Wall Plaque (21PL)	\$142
Sousa Add-on Plaque (21AO)	\$85
Certificate Frame (29PL see page 11)	\$37

Marble Deskpiece alone: \$71 (21DN), Pin: \$11 (21PN), Certificate: \$11 (21CT). Prices for other combinations of Sousa student awards may be found on our website or by contacting us.

For the Band Room



Gilmore Wall Plaque (10.5" x 13")

The walnut **Wall Plaque** (above) hangs in the band room as a permanent record of students' achievements.

When the original plaque is filled, a matching **Add-on Plaque** with 12 additional name plates is available (see page 23).

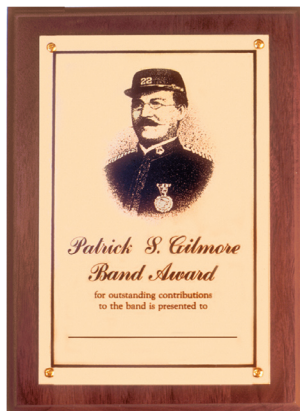


Add-on Plaque (10.5" x 6.5")

Patrick S. Gilmore Band Award®

The **Patrick S. Gilmore Band Award®** was introduced in 1994 in honor of the legendary bandmaster and impresario. Like the **Sousa Band Award**, present this award to students who exemplify outstanding achievement, contributions and dedication to the band program.

Many schools use the Gilmore Award as a runner-up to the Sousa Award to honor additional deserving students. It is also suitable for use as a middle school band award.



Present the winning students with the beautiful, walnut **Gilmore Student Award** (5"x7") each year. (Engrave the student's name on the provided line.)

Biographical information on Gilmore can be found on p. 26 to share with students.

Award Policy: If you present this award, you must give the official student award to the winner(s).

Gilmore Prices

Gilmore Student Award (31AW)	\$64
Gilmore Wall Plaque (31PL)	\$126
Gilmore Add-on Plaque (31AO)	\$85

(Quantities are not limited, and directors may determine how many to present.)

The Director's Award for Band®

Use as a Middle School Band Award
or as Runner-up to the Sousa Award

Begun in 1973, **The Director's Award for Band®** honors outstanding members of a middle or high school band. Each year present the winning students the walnut **Student Award**. The award may be given to multiple deserving students. The large plate offers room to engrave the name of the recipient, school, director's name, and presentation date.



Wall Plaque
(10.5" x 13")

Add the beautiful walnut **Wall Plaque** to your order to hang in the school and display the names of the winners as inspiration for future students and as a permanent record of the band's history.

The matching **Add-on Plaque** with 12 additional name plates may be purchased when the original is filled (*see page 23*).



Student Award
(5" x 7")

The Director's Award for Band Prices

Dir. Band Student Award \$67
(25AW)

Dir. Band Wall Plaque (25PL) \$126

Dir. Band Add-on Plaque \$85
(25AO)

Award Policy: If you present this award, you must give the official student award to the winner(s).



From humble beginnings in New Orleans, Louis Armstrong became one of the most famous musicians in the world.

Armstrong dazzled audiences with his skill as a trumpeter, singer, and bandleader for more than five decades and helped to make jazz an essential part of the musical world.

Turn to p. 27 for biographical information on Armstrong to share with students.

Louis Armstrong Jazz Award®

This award is the top honor for students in jazz band.

The **Louis Armstrong Jazz Award®** was introduced in 1974 to honor the outstanding jazz musician at each high school who exhibits superior dedication, musicianship, and creativity.

Armstrong Student Award

The official student award is the **Armstrong Combination Set** that consists of a deskpiece with a white marble base and medallion of Armstrong, a certificate with an embossed gold seal, and a pin.



Armstrong Certificate
(8.5" x 11")
(frame sold separately, p. 11)



Deskpiece
(Base: 3" x 2.5", Height: 3.5")



Pin
(actual size)

Do not put certificates through a printer.



Armstrong Wall Plaque

Place the beautiful walnut **Wall Plaque** in the band room as a permanent record of your outstanding students. (14" x 12")

A matching **Add-on Plaque** is available when the original is filled. It has 12 additional name plates and is designed to hang directly below the wall plaque. (14" x 5") See p. 23.

Armstrong Student Combination Set **\$75**

(23CB Deskpiece, pin, and certificate)

Armstrong Wall Plaque (23PL) **\$142**

Armstrong Add-on Plaque (23AO) **\$85**

Certificate Frame (29PL see page 11) **\$37**

Deskpiece alone \$71 (23DN), Pin \$11 (23PN),
Certificate \$11 (23CT)



Official Policies:

1. To preserve the integrity of this top award, schools are limited to one set of Armstrong student awards per year (or two in the event of a tie). The Herman Jazz Award (p.10) may be used to honor additional students. In the event of a tie, each winner must receive identical components of the Armstrong student award.

2. Students must receive at least one part of the official student award. You may not just add the student's name to the wall plaque.

All of these awards (including the names and images) are registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and are protected by registered marks. Duplication of these awards or the creation of similar awards is prohibited. See p. 30 for full policy details.

Herman Student Award



(5" x 7")

Present the winners with the beautiful, solid walnut **Herman Student Award** each year, engraving their names and presentation date on the provided line.

Herman Prices

Herman Student Award (30AW) \$64

Herman Wall Plaque (30PL) \$126

Herman Add-on Plaque (30AO) \$85

(Note: If you present this award at your school, you must give the official student award to the winner/winners).

Woody Herman Jazz Award®

Woody Herman led a series of bands from 1936 to 1987 and was noted for hiring up-and-coming young musicians, many of whom became leading jazz performers. **The Woody Herman Jazz Award** was created in 1989, shortly after his death, as a way to honor outstanding jazz students.

Middle schools use this award to honor their top jazz players, while many high schools offer it as a runner-up for the Armstrong Award.

(Quantities are not limited.)



Herman Wall Plaque (10.5" x 13")

Order the walnut **Wall Plaque** to hang in the band room as a permanent record of your students' achievements. There is a matching **Add-on Plaque** when the original is filled.



Add-on Plaque (10.5" x 6.5")

Turn to p. 28 for biographical information on Herman to share with students.

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NEW DESIGNS for 2026!

Certificates

Because so many students contribute to the success of a musical ensemble, there may be additional students you want to honor. These colorful 11" x 8.5" certificates are printed on heavy, high-quality paper stock. (All shown in certificate frame, which is sold separately – see below.)

Certificate Prices

1-14 \$4 each

15+ \$3 each

(Must be all the same certificate for quantity discount.)

Orders of certificates and/or pins alone are sent via USPS – unless rush shipping is requested. Shipping rates will vary based on quantity. Call or email if you need a quote.

We do not recommend putting certificates through a printer as the gold seal can rip off.

Certificate Frame (29PL)

The wood certificate frame will protect the award and allow students to display their accomplishment. **All of our certificates** (including Sousa, Armstrong, Orchestra, Choral, and Chopin) **fit in the beautiful wood frame** that has a clear acrylic cover to protect the certificates for years to come.

Unlike the awards, which may be purchased only by schools, students and parents may order the frame. \$37

NEW Musicianship Certificate (29MU)



For outstanding effort, creativity, musical excellence, and contributions to the success of the music program

NEW Merit Certificate (29ME)



For outstanding contributions, leadership, and service to the music program

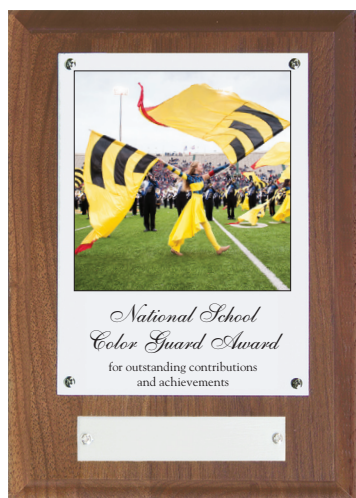
First Chair Certificate (29FC)



For the principal players, to recognize their leadership and musical contributions



Marching Student Award



Color Guard Student Award

National School Marching Award® & National School Color Guard Award®

The **National School Marching Award®** and the **National School Color Guard Award®** recognize the outstanding achievements, contributions, and dedication of student leaders in marching band and color guard.

Each year honor your top students who make the season a success. Present the winners with the **Student Awards** (5" x 7"). These high-quality awards are made from solid walnut wood with a vibrant color picture.

Order the matching **Wall Plaques** to display a permanent record of their achievements. The solid walnut wall plaques come with 15 name plates to engrave the winners' names. When the original plaques are filled, matching **Add-on Plaques** are available. (See page 23.) Prices on following page.



Marching Wall Plaque
(10.5" x 13")



Color Guard Wall Plaque
(10.5" x 13")

National Band Leadership Award

NEW

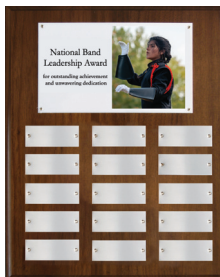
The **National Band Leadership Award** offers directors a way to recognize those students who take a generous and selfless approach to serving their bands, including such student leaders as:

- Section Leaders
- Drum Majors
- Band Managers
- Student Mentors
- Assistants to Directors
- That kid who practically lives in the band room

Or any other student leader who assists with essential tasks. These students set the standard for others and instill a culture of success.



National Band Leadership Student Award



Winners receive the (5" x 7") **Student Award** (above right) made from solid walnut with a nameplate to engrave the winner's name.

The matching (10.5" x 13") **Wall Plaque** (left) to displays a permanent record of their achievements for the band room.

Award image by Joe Bonello, B. Johnson Photography

Marching Award Prices

Marching Student Award (33AW)	\$64
Marching Wall Plaque (33PL)	\$126
Marching Add-on Plaque (33AO)	\$85

Color Guard Award Prices

Color Guard Student Award (34AW)	\$64
Color Guard Wall Plaque (34PL)	\$126
Color Guard Add-on Plaque (34AO)	\$85

Band Leadership Prices

Leadership Student Award (37AW)	\$64
Leadership Wall Plaque (37PL)	\$126
Leadership Add-on Plaque (37AO)	\$85

Note: if you present these awards at your school, you must give the official student award to the winner(s).
These awards do not have quantity limits.



**The Quincy Jones Award
honors outstanding students in
band, orchestra, and choir for their
creativity and musicianship.**

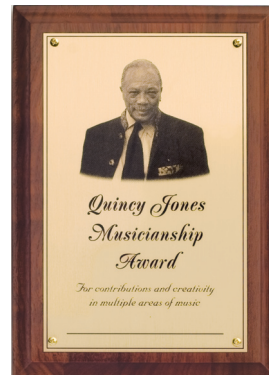


Wall Plaque
(10.5" x 13")

Quincy Jones Musicianship Award

In his long musical career Quincy Jones did it all as a composer, arranger, performer, producer, and teacher. Every music program has students who share this boundless energy and musical versatility. With his approval we offer this award to encourage students in their pursuit of music.

Each year give the winning students the walnut **Student Award**. The award may be given to multiple deserving students.



Student Award
(5" x 7")

Order the walnut wood **Wall Plaque** (left) for the rehearsal room to inspire students for years to come. When the original plaque is filled, there is a matching **Add-on Plaque** with 12 additional plates is available. (See p. 23)

Quincy Jones Prices

Quincy Jones Student Award (28AW)	\$64
Quincy Jones Wall Plaque (28PL)	\$126
Quincy Jones Add-on Plaque (28AO)	\$85

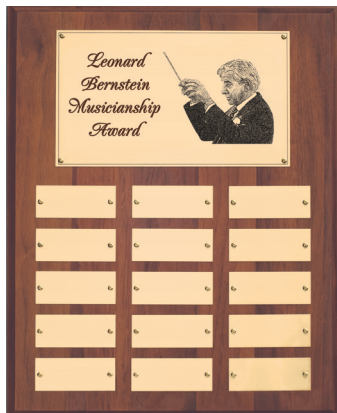
(Note: If you present this award at your school, you must give the official student award to the winner/winners).

Turn to page 28 for biographical information on Quincy Jones to share with students.

Leonard Bernstein Musicianship Award

Leonard Bernstein made an indelible mark on the musical world as a conductor, composer, and teacher. The **Leonard Bernstein Musicianship Award** was introduced in 2016 to honor top music students.

Directors may use this award in a manner most appropriate for their school, but it is intended to honor students who participate in any area of the music program whose contributions, dedication, and creativity set them apart as deserving of the highest recognition for their achievements.



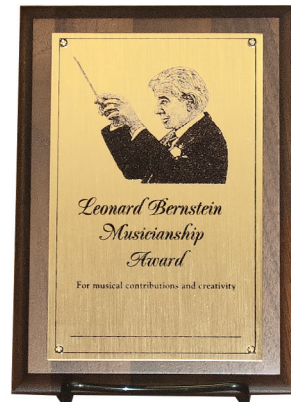
Bernstein Wall Plaque (10.5" x 13")

Order the beautiful walnut **Wall Plaque** (left) to hang in the band room as a permanent record of your students' achievements.

When the 15 plates on the plaque are filled, a matching **Add-on Plaque** is available. (See p. 23)

(Note: If you present this award at your school, you must give the official student award to the winners).

Bernstein Student Award



(5" x 7")

Each year give the **Bernstein Student Award** to the winners. The award is made from solid walnut to last a lifetime. Engrave the student's name on the line at the bottom.

Bernstein Prices

Bernstein Student Award (35AW)	\$64
Bernstein Wall Plaque (35PL)	\$126
Bernstein Add-on Plaque (35AO)	\$85

(Quantities are not limited.)

The name and likeness of Leonard Bernstein are U.S. registered trademarks owned by The Leonard Bernstein Office, and are used under license.

Turn to p. 29 for biographical information on Leonard Bernstein to share with students.

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National School Orchestra Award®

The **National School Orchestra Award** began in 1960 as the counterpart to the **Sousa Band Award**. It recognizes outstanding contributions and dedication to the ensemble and superior musicianship.

National Orchestra Student Combination Set

The official Orchestra Student Award is the **Orchestra Combination Set** that consists of the deskpiece with white marble base and medallion, a certificate with embossed gold seal, and a pin.



Orchestra Certificate (11" x 8.5")
(frame sold separately, see p. 11)



pin



Deskpiece
(Base: 3" x 2.5", Height: 3")

Do not put certificates through a printer.

The National School Orchestra Award is the counterpart to the Sousa Band Award and the highest honor you can bestow upon a member of a high school orchestra.

Wall Plaque

Order the beautiful walnut **Wall Plaque** to hang in the music room as a permanent record of outstanding achievement each year. (16" x 13")

Add-on Plaque

A matching **Add-on Plaque** is available when the original is filled. It has 12 additional name plates and is designed to hang directly below the wall plaque. (16" x 4.75")



Award Policies:

1. To preserve the integrity of this top award, schools are limited to one set of student awards per year (or two in the event of a tie). The Director's Award for Orchestra (p.18) may be used to honor additional students. In the event of a tie, each winner must receive identical components of the NSOA student award.
2. Students must receive at least one part of the official student award. You may not just add the student's name to the wall plaque.

All of these awards (including the names and images) are registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and are protected by registered marks. Duplication of these awards or the creation of similar awards is prohibited. See p. 30 for full policy details.

National Orchestra Award Prices

National Orchestra Combination Set <i>(24CB Deskpiece, pin, and certificate)</i>	\$75
National Orchestra Wall Plaque <i>(24PL)</i>	\$142
National Orch. Add-on Plaque <i>(24AO)</i>	\$85
Certificate Frame <i>(29PL see page 11)</i>	\$37

Deskpiece alone \$71 (24DN), Pin \$11 (24PN),
Certificate \$11 (24CT)

The Director's Award for Orchestra®

Use as a Middle School Orchestra Award or as a Runner-up to the National School Orchestra Award

The Director's Award for Orchestra® honors outstanding members of a middle or high school orchestra. Each year present the winning students the walnut **Student Award**. The award may be given to multiple deserving students. The large plate offers room to engrave the name of the recipient, school, director's name, and presentation date.



Wall Plaque
(10.5" x 13")

Add the beautiful walnut wood **Wall Plaque** to your order to hang in the school and display the names of the winners as inspiration for students.

An **Add-on Plaque** with 12 additional name plates can be purchased when the original is filled (See page 23).



Student Award
(5" x 7")

The Director's Award for Orchestra

Dir. Orch. Student Award (26AW)	\$67
Dir. Orch. Wall Plaque (26PL)	\$126
Dir. Orch. Add-on Plaque (26AO)	\$85

Quantities are not limited.

Award Policy: You must give the official student award to the winner(s) each year you present the award.

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Frédéric Chopin Piano Award

The **Frédéric Chopin Piano Award** was started in 1964 to honor outstanding pianists in the school music program. It recognizes exceptional dedication and superior musicianship.

Chopin Student Award

The official Chopin Student Award is the **Chopin Combination Set** that includes the deskpiece with a white marble base and medallion of Chopin, a certificate with an embossed gold seal, and a pin of Chopin.



Chopin Deskpiece
(Base: 3"x2.5", Height: 3.5")



Chopin Pin



Chopin Certificate (11" x 8.5")
(frame sold separately, see p. 11)

Do not put certificates through a printer.

Engrave the winners' names on the beautiful walnut wood **Wall Plaque** (10.5"x13") and hang it in the music room to inspire students for years to come. (Note: If you present this award at your school, you must give the official student award to the winner/winners).

When the 12 plates on the original are filled, a matching **Add-on Plaque** is available with 12 more plates (see page 23).



Chopin Prices

Chopin Combination Set (27CB)	\$75
Chopin Wall Plaque (27PL)	\$126
Add-on Plaque (27AO)	\$85
Certificate Frame (29PL)	\$37

Note: You may order the pin, certificate, and deskpiece separately, but all parts of the combination set awarded must be given to the same student. If multiple students receive awards, they must be given the same part(s). Deskpiece \$71 (27DN), pin \$11 (27PN), certificate \$11 (27CT).

National School Choral Award®

The **National School Choral Award** was started in 1964 to be the counterpart to the **Sousa Band Award** and **National School Orchestra Award**. It is the highest honor for high school choral performers and recognizes the dedication and musical achievement of the program's top two choral students.



Choral Deskpiece
(Base: 3" x 2.5", Height: 3.4")



Pin



Choral Certificate (11" x 8.5")
frame sold separately, see p. 11

National Choral Student Combination Set

The official **Choral Student Combination Set** consists of the deskpiece with white marble base and bright medallion, a certificate with embossed gold seal, and a pin.



photo by Kirby Fong

We suggest that you do not put certificates through a printer.



Choral Wall Plaque
(12" x 15")

Order the beautiful walnut **Wall Plaque** as a permanent record of outstanding achievement each year.



Choral Add-on Plaque (12" x 6")

When the 15 plates are filled, a matching **Add-on Plaque** is available with 12 additional plates.



photo by Kirby Fong

Official National Choral Policies:

1. To preserve the integrity of this top award, schools are limited to two sets of student awards per year (or four in the event of a tie). The Director's Award for Chorus (p.22) may be used to honor additional students. In the event of a tie, each winner must receive identical components of the National Choral student award.
2. Students must receive at least one part of the official student award. You may just add the student's name to the wall plaque.

All of these awards (including the names and images) are registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and are protected by registered marks. Duplication of these awards or the creation of similar awards is prohibited. See p. 30 for full policy details.

National Choral Prices

National Choral Combination Set (22CB)	\$75
National Choral Wall Plaque (22PL)	\$142
National Choral Add-on Plaque (22AO)	\$85
Certificate Frame (29PL)	\$37

Deskpiece alone \$71 (22DN), Pin \$11 (22PN), Certificate \$11 (22CT)



Wall Plaque (10.5" x 13")

Student Award (32AW)	\$67
Wall Plaque (32PL)	\$126
Add-on Plaque (32AO)	\$85

Note: If you are presenting this award at your school, you must give the official student award to the winner(s).

The Director's Award for Chorus®

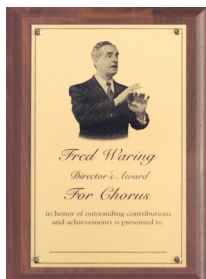
The Director's Award for Chorus honors the top leaders of a middle or high school chorus. It can be used as a secondary award after the **National School Choral Award**.

Each year present the **Student Award** to the winners. The large plate offers room to engrave the name of the recipient, school, director, and presentation date. **Quantities are not restricted.**

The beautiful walnut **Wall Plaque** hangs in the school to inspire students and generate enthusiasm. When the 12 plates are filled, a matching **Add-on Plaque** is available with 12 additional plates. (See p. 23)



Student Award
(5" x 7")



Fred Waring Director's Award for Chorus

Due to ongoing demand, we will continue to offer the **Fred Waring Director's Award for Chorus**. If you do not request the Waring format, you will receive the standard Director's Award for Chorus (*shown above*).

Waring Student Award (36AW)	\$64
Waring Wall Plaque (36PL)	\$126
Waring Add-on Plaque (36AO)	\$85

Add-on Plaques

Four styles of matching add-on plaques are available to accommodate additional names of recipients when the original wall plaques are filled.

Please specify which add-on plaque you need as the plates match the style of the original, and the plaque is designed to be the appropriate width to hang under the original wall plaque.

- **Sousa/Choral Add-on** for the Sousa Band and National School Choral awards.
- **Armstrong Add-on**
- **National School Orchestra Add-on**
- **Director's Add-on** *This style add-on plaque is used with all of our other wall plaques* including the Director's Awards for Band, Orchestra, and Chorus/Waring, as well as the Herman, Gilmore, Leonard Bernstein, and Quincy Jones awards. Also available with silver plates for the National School Marching and National School Color Guard awards.

All add-on plaques are \$85.



Sousa/Choral Add-on Plaque
(12" x 6")



Armstrong Add-on Plaque (14" x 5")



National School Orchestra Add-on Plaque
(16" x 4.75")



Director's Add-on Plaque
(10.5" x 6.5")

Save time, stress, and money each year with a Standing Order.

Each spring we get frantic calls from directors who have forgotten to place their award order and face rush shipping charges in order to receive their awards in time. The end of the school year is always a busy time. Avoid the rush and put the awards you order each year on a Standing Order. **Even if you make frequent changes, it is simple to adjust the order from year to year and add a purchase order before shipment.**

How it works:

1. You receive a confirmation form and a catalog each January. The confirmation lists the awards you placed on the standing order as well as the current prices.
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John Philip Sousa

(1854-1932)

John Philip Sousa was a trail-blazer as a composer and as a band director. He wrote 136 marches, 15 operettas, 70 songs, 11 waltzes, and 20 band fantasies. He also wrote seven books, of which two were novels. Some of his most famous marches are *Stars and Stripes Forever*, *Semper Fidelis*, *The Washington Post*, *El Capitan*, and *The Thunderer*.

Sousa was born in Washington, DC in 1854. He learned to play the violin and wanted to join a circus band at age 13. His father was a Marine and decided that the boy should enlist in the Marines as

an apprentice musician instead. Sousa spent almost 20 years in military service over several stints. He became the leader of the Marine Band

at age 26. It was there that he perfected his musical skills.

When Sousa left the military, he formed the Sousa Band, which played everywhere for huge crowds. He hired the best musicians and always programmed sev-



eral featured soloists. The Sousa Band brought performances of fine music to smaller cities that did not have symphony orchestras. He was always eager to help struggling young composers, and his band probably played more new, unpublished American music than any other musical organization in the country at the time.

The John Philip Sousa Band Award was created in 1954 on the 100th anniversary of Sousa's birth with the enthusiastic approval of his daughters, Helen and Priscilla.

Patrick S. Gilmore

(1829- 1892)

Father of the American Concert Band



Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore (1829-1892) played for every president of his day, including Abraham Lincoln. He was the music director for the dedication of the Statue of Liberty. In 1891 he made some of the earliest commercial recordings at Thomas Edison's laboratory in New Jersey. Among Gilmore's most famous compositions are *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, *Good News from Home*, *We Are Coming Father Abraham*, *Seeing Nellie Home*, and *Famous 22nd Regiment March*.

Gilmore was known for grandiose performances and





enthusiastic promotion. At the 1864 inauguration of a Louisiana governor, he enlisted a brass band of over 500, a chorus of 6,000, a battery of artillery, 50 anvils, and the church bells of the city. Later performances would employ an even grander scale of ensemble and helped build Gilmore's reputation and fame.

Gilmore's career came to an end just two days before the inaugural concert of John Philip Sousa's newly formed professional band. As a tribute, Sousa chose Gilmore's own composition, *The Voice of a Departing Soul*, for the opening number on his program. Thus, as one era in American bands ended, another was just beginning.

Louis Armstrong

(1901-1971)

Louis Armstrong was a jazz pioneer and one of America's best ambassadors of goodwill abroad. From his fabled beginning in a New Orleans orphanage, he was introduced to the trumpet by a band director.

Early on he played with several New Orleans bands but soon left for the bustling musical city of Chicago. He went on to play with Joe Oliver, Fletcher Henderson, and Coleman Hawkins and later formed his own band.

When the Great Depression hit in the late 1920s the music industry suffered greatly. A number of clubs closed, and some musicians had to take jobs in other professions.

In the 1930s Armstrong moved to Los Angeles and gained popu-



© Louis Ouzer

Louis Armstrong in 1956

larity among the Hollywood stars who came out to see his club dates. He appeared in several movies and also performed extensively throughout Europe.

In 1948 he appeared on one of the earliest television broadcasts, a show called *Toast of the Town* that would later be known as the *Ed Sullivan Show*. Armstrong's trumpet playing would continue to inspire jazz musicians for decades to come. As Miles Davis once said, "you can't play anything on a horn that Louis hasn't played." Armstrong helped bring the American art form of jazz to the world, and his influence on music will never be forgotten. Outstanding examples of Armstrong's playing can be found on the albums *Louis Armstrong Plays W.C. Handy*, *Satch Plays Fats*, and *Ambassador Satch*.

Woody Herman

(1913-1987)

A Life on the Road

Woodrow Charles Herman grew up in Milwaukee but did not spend much time there. “By the time I was nine, I was on the road as a song and dance kid. My father was a frustrated ham, so he got me into the business.”

Herman became a professional saxophone player at age 15. Perhaps remembering his youthful beginnings, Herman often took time to encourage young players throughout his career. He sometimes signed autographs long after a concert had ended.

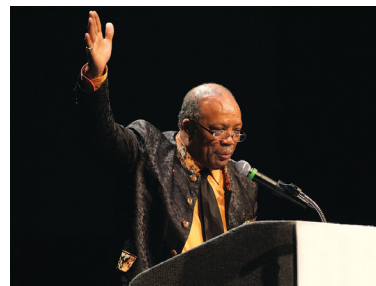
Herman’s bands were known as Herds and performed under such names as Herman’s Herd, the Thundering Herd, and the Anglo-American Herd. His Second Herd began in 1947 and was known as The Four Brothers Band for its notable sax section with three tenors and a baritone. Herman’s groups also gained a reputation for adapting their playing style over the years but always maintained the common thread of great musicianship. Some of Herman’s most well-known songs include: *Woodchopper’s Ball*, *Four Brothers*, *Apple Honey*, and his band’s theme song, *Blue Flame*.

He commented in 1986, “when high school kids ask me if they can make a career in music I strongly advise them to continue if they love it because in music they have something real. The more deeply they get involved in it, the more music will do for them in their life. When you are involved in either playing or listening to music, you are completely on your own; you have complete solace from anything that might try to creep into your mind. I call it the great escape.”



Quincy Jones

(1933-2024)



Quincy Jones, legendary composer, songwriter, arranger, and producer, collaborated with the biggest names in music including Frank Sinatra, Count Basie, Ray Charles, Duke Ellington, and Michael Jackson. He received 80 Grammy nominations and won 28 Grammy Awards.

Jones accompanied Dizzy Gillespie on State Department tours of the Mideast and Africa in the 1950s and credits these travels for broadening his musical horizons. In a 2007 interview in *The Instrumentalist* he noted that “Good musicians have an interest in many types of music. We studied Ellington, Bill Evans, and everyone else.”

His musical portfolio expanded in the 1960s when he became vice-president of Mercury Records in 1964. That same year, film director Sidney Lumet invited

him to compose music for the film, *The Pawnbroker*. Jones ended up scoring nearly 40 motion picture scores, including *The Color Purple*, for which he received an Academy Award nomination. He became highly in-demand as an arranger and record producer.

His eclectic musical journey and humanitarian efforts have led to dozens of awards and honorary degrees. His university honors include honorary degrees from Berklee College of Music, Morehouse College, the University of Pennsylvania, and Princeton University, among others.

The Harvard School of Public Health named him its Mentor of the Year in 2007 and simultaneously launched the Q Prize to recognize extraordinary advocacy on behalf of the world's children. He was inducted into the California Hall of Fame, the Dance Music Hall of Fame, the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, and received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Even with his unprecedented career and success, Quincy Jones encouraged others to focus on music, not accolades. "The cardinal rule is that you approach your creativity with humility and treat your success with grace." He died at the age of 91 in November 2024.

Leonard Bernstein

(1918-1990)



Leonard Bernstein was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1918 and studied music at Harvard University and the Curtis Institute of Music where he studied conducting with Fritz Reiner. In 1943 he was appointed assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic and made his conducting debut with the orchestra when guest conductor Bruno Walter was stricken with the flu. This nationally broadcast performance brought him instant fame and led to many additional conducting appearances with other orchestras.

He was appointed music director of the New York Philharmonic in 1958 and held this post until 1969. He continued to conduct periodically with the orchestra throughout his life. Bernstein also gained great acclaim as a compos-

er of such music as *West Side Story*, *Candide*, *On the Town*, and many concert works.

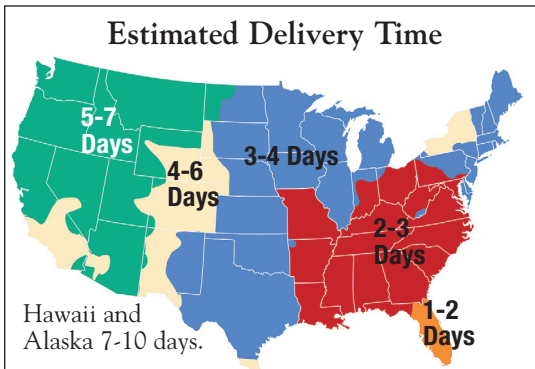
Bernstein was particularly proud of his work as an educator. One of his many projects was a series of 53 telecasts of Young People's Concerts between 1958 and 1972. These concerts, which were a Philharmonic tradition when Bernstein began leading the orchestra, became a centerpiece of his educational mission. They were broadcast on CBS and covered the works of many great composers, some of the nuances of musical theory, and the meaning of music. The programs were syndicated in 40 countries. Leonard Bernstein died in 1990, leaving a rich musical legacy that continues to inspire people today.



Award Policies

- Limited Quantities:** The John Philip Sousa Award®, Louis Armstrong Jazz Award®, and the National School Orchestra Award® are limited to one student per school per year. The National School Choral Award® is limited to two students per school per year. In the unusual instance of a tie, the director should certify this fact to us and present an extra award. All portions of a combination set must be given to the same student, not divided among students. In the event of a tie, each student must receive identical award(s).
- Unlimited Quantities:** The Patrick S. Gilmore Band Award®, National School Marching Award®, National School Color Guard Award®, National Leadership Award®, Woody Herman Jazz Award®, Director's Awards for Band®, Orchestra®, and Chorus®, Quincy Jones, Leonard Bernstein, Chopin, and the Merit, Musicianship, and First Chair Certificates are available in unlimited quantities.
- Awards Recipients are selected by the director, music department, or other school officials, not by The Instrumentalist. **We do not offer engraving services.** (These awards should be rotary engraved, not laser.)
- Money-Back Guarantee:** An award that is defective or damaged in transit will be replaced. Any award may be returned in good condition for full credit.
- Awards will be sold only to schools and never to individuals. The only exception is the certificate frame. **We will initially bill another entity, such as a booster club or teacher, but the school receiving the awards is responsible for payment of these items.** If an order is placed for multiple schools, the name of the school giving each award must be specified. **Note: if ANY director at a school has an outstanding balance from a previous year, we will ship no further awards to the school until the past due amount is paid.**
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National Band Leadership Award

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