

Jena E. Gardner, DMA

Associate Professor of Horn
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Education

Doctor of Musical Arts in Horn Performance. Northwestern University. June 2018.

- Cognate: Music Theory
- Dissertation: *Applied Lesson Pedagogy: an Embodied Approach to Music Performance Learning and its Application to Teaching the Horn*

Master of Music in Horn Performance. Carnegie Mellon University. May 2011.

Bachelor of Music in Horn Performance. Northwestern University. June 2008.

Administrative & Leadership Experience

Director, Western Illinois University Community Music School. 2021–present.

Oversee the strategic, fiscal, and operational direction of a revenue-generating community music program that serves as a regional recruitment pipeline, a platform for student experiential learning, and a sustained community engagement initiative.

Achievements:

- Rebuilt the [Community Music School](#) from zero enrollment in 2021 to 300+ students annually by 2024, and established a sustained regional recruitment pipeline into the School of Music.¹
- Scaled the program into a self-sustaining enterprise with annual revenue of \$76,410.74 (FY2025), \$93,204.68 (FY2024), and \$66,996.42 (FY2023).
- Hired, supervised, and evaluated 20+ instructional staff per term, including university faculty, graduate assistants, interns, and private instructors, ensuring instructional quality and program effectiveness.
- Directed comprehensive marketing and outreach efforts, significantly increasing program visibility, enrollment, and regional brand recognition.
- Developed partnerships with regional schools and educators, increasing prospective student engagement and early pathway development into WIU academic programs.
- Expanded year-round programming, significantly increasing program capacity, access, and revenue streams.
- Designed and implemented integrated operational systems and new financial infrastructure, including the restructuring of the Summer Music Institute, to advance enrollment growth and sustainability.
- Established and funded three graduate assistantships that provide high-impact experiential learning opportunities.

Coordinator, Winds & Percussion Area, Western Illinois University School of Music.

2023–present.

Provide academic and operational leadership for the Winds and Percussion area, leading faculty collaboration, recruitment strategy, and program initiatives that support enrollment growth and student success. Direct recruitment planning, coordinate faculty engagement in outreach efforts, and

¹ [See Appendix: Community Music School Enrollment](#)

contribute to talent identification and scholarship allocation processes aligned with School of Music priorities.

Achievements:

- Developed and led a faculty-driven recruitment system, generating 20+ visits across 15+ regional high schools and establishing sustained recruitment partnerships to support enrollment goals.
- Maintained stable enrollment in the Winds and Percussion area during a period of broader institutional enrollment decline, reflecting effective recruitment leadership.²
- Implemented a data-driven recruitment tracking system and established a database of 1,300+ prospective students by instrument and degree interest to drive targeted outreach and faculty coordination.
- Developed two annual recruitment events, [WindFest](#) and the [ILMEA Audition Clinic](#), bringing junior high and high school students to campus for clinics, ensemble experiences, and direct faculty engagement.
- Expanded regional recruitment reach by engaging thousands of prospective students at Illinois and Iowa District and All-State music conferences.

Institutional Leadership and Governance

CHASE Dean Search Committee, Co-Chair (Elected), College of Humanities, Arts, Sciences, and Education. 2025–2026.

- Co-led a college-level executive search process, guiding committee deliberations and candidate interviews, and coordinating input from faculty, staff, and administrators throughout the process.

Academic Program Elimination Review (APER) Committee (Elected), Western Illinois University. 2024–2025.

- Assessed institutional-level program viability by analyzing enrollment trends, resource allocation, and program sustainability, and submitted recommendations directly to the Provost.

Music Advisory Committee, School of Music. 2023–present

² [See Appendix: Wind and Percussion Area Enrollment](#)

- Authored the Community Music School, Winds and Percussion, and Musician's Wellness sections for the NASM accreditation self-study and provided editorial oversight for the recruitment and community engagement narratives.
- Represented faculty perspectives in consultations with NASM accreditation reviewers, addressing institutional challenges and contributing to the strategic evaluation of program improvement.

Recruitment and Retention Committee, School of Music. 2018–present.

- Led recruitment and outreach efforts following the loss of the recruitment coordinator, including design of print marketing materials, coordination with admissions, and planning and execution of prospective student events.
- Co-developed Music Major Discovery Day, a flagship on-campus recruitment event engaging 230+ prospective music majors since 2022.
- Organized and represented the School of Music at the Illinois Music Educators convention college fair, a primary regional recruitment event, engaging prospective students and driving enrollment efforts.

Music Personnel Committee, School of Music (Elected). 2024–present

- Evaluated retention, tenure, and promotion for Unit A music faculty, guiding faculty development and advancement.
- Contributed to the revision of departmental workload equivalency guidelines, aligning faculty workload with programmatic and institutional priorities.

Academic Advisor, Western Illinois University School of Music. 2021–2023; 2024–present.

Provide academic advising for undergraduate and graduate students in music, advancing student success and retention, degree progression, and timely completion through coordinated academic planning and faculty collaboration.

Achievements:

- Founded the *Musician's Wellness Project* (2022), a student success and retention initiative addressing physical and mental health challenges among music students.
- Established an ongoing monthly wellness series supported by grant and institutional funding, providing wellness education for music students in collaboration with faculty and external specialists.

- Received recognition from accreditation reviewers for advancing student-centered practices through wellness programming focused on holistic student development.
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Academic Appointments

Associate Professor of Horn. Western Illinois University, College of Fine Arts and Communication, School of Music. 2018–present.

University Courses

Applied Instruction

- MUS 227/427/527 — Applied Horn Lessons and Studio Class

Graduate and Undergraduate Seminars

- MUS 490/590 — Literature & Pedagogy of the Applied Field

Core Music Curriculum

- MUS 183/184 — Aural Skills I & II
- MUS 283/284 — Aural Skills III & IV
 - Led curriculum coordination for the four-semester Aural Skills sequence, resulting in adoption of a new textbook and establishment of shared learning benchmarks across sections taught by rotating faculty.

Ensemble Direction

- MUS 121/501 — Brass Ensemble/Chamber Music

Horn Studio Recruitment & Outreach Initiatives

- Engaged prospective students through organization and leadership of studio-specific recruitment events, including the Western Community Horn Choir, Western Horn Festival, Tri-States Horn Day, and BrassFest.
- Increased enrollment through regional outreach and relationship-building, including clinics, sectionals, masterclasses, and individualized recruitment efforts (lessons, studio visits, audition preparation) for prospective students.
- Performed with the Camerata Woodwind Quintet and La Moine Brass Quintet as part of targeted regional outreach and recruitment initiatives.
- Updated recruitment infrastructure through applied study recruitment videos and website improvements.

Additional Service

- Writing in the Disciplines Committee (Recording Secretary), Faculty Senate. 2019–2022.
- Provost’s Award for Academic Excellence in Teaching Committee, Provost’s Office. 2019, 2023, 2024.
- Scholarship and Talent Grant Committee, School of Music. 2021–2023.
- Assistant Professor of Trombone Search Committee (Chair), School of Music. 2023.
- Recruitment, Admissions, and Retention Coordinator Hiring Committee, School of Music. 2019.
- Assistant Professor of Tuba Search Committee, School of Music. 2019.

Instructor of Horn and Music Theory. Henderson State University, Ellis College of Arts and Sciences. 2017–2018.

University Courses

Applied Instruction

- APM 3251/3422/3423 — Applied Horn Lessons and Studio Class

Core Music Curriculum

- MUS 1251 — Sight-Singing and Ear Training I
- MUS 2631 — Sight-Singing and Ear Training IV
- MUS 1823 — Introduction to Music Theory

General Education

- MUS 3473 — Survey of Non-Western Music

Teaching Assistant for Horn and Aural Skills. Northwestern University, Bienen School of Music. 2015–2017.

Adjunct Instructor of Horn. University of Pittsburgh, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. 2013–2014.

Publications

Books

- [*Long Tone Duets for Horn*](#). Mountain Peak Music, 2024.

Invited Columns

- *Whole Self Horn Playing*, recurring column in *The Horn Call*, journal of the International Horn Society. (2025–present).
 - “Fitness and the System That Supports Learning and Resilience.” April, 2026.
 - “Sleep and the Ecosystem of Recovery.” January, 2026.
 - “A New Lens on Injury, Recovery, and Resilience.” October, 2025.

Review Articles

The Horn Call, journal of the International Horn Society

- “*Chamber Works for Horn Ensemble* by Herman Jeurissen (after Beethoven, Bruckner, Franck, Händel, and others).” 2024.
- “*The Embouchure Project* Podcast and Website.” 2024.
- “*Hard to Argue for Horn Choir* by Catherine Likhuta.” 2021.
- “*Out of the Woods? Toccata for Horn, Violin and Piano* by Catherine Likhuta.” 2021.
- “*Rose Strewn Course* by Calliope Brass.” 2021.
- “*Celdas for Horn and Piano* by Darwin Aquino.” 2020.
- “*Pastoral, Op. 81 for Horn in F* by Ricardo Matosinhos.” 2020.
- “*Nicholas Perrini Plays Mozart: Four Mozart Horn Concerti*.” 2020.
- “*From Screen to Concert Hall: Solo and Chamber Works for Horn* by Dafydd Bevil.” 2019.
- “*Carl Fischer: Schumann, Abendlied and Träumerei* arranged by L. Klemcke.” 2019.

Audio Recordings

- *American Classics*. River City Brass Band. 2014.
- *Mosaics*. Arabesque Winds. Self-Released. 2013.
- *Dairies: Music of Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez*. Eastman BroadBand Ensemble. Urtext Digital Classics. 2012.

Grants, Honors & Awards

- [Provost’s Award for Academic Excellence in Teaching](#). Western Illinois University, 2023.
- College of Fine Arts and Communication Excellence in Teaching Award. Western Illinois University, 2022.
- Summer Research Stipend: Overuse Injury Prevention in Brass Pedagogy. Western Illinois University Foundation & Office of Sponsored Projects, 2020.
- Professional Horn Quartet Competition, First Place (Cobalt Quartet). International Horn Society, 2018.
- Arts Grant: Musician’s Wellness Series. Performing Arts Society, 2023 & 2026.

- Arts Grant: Western/Tri-States Horn Festival. Performing Arts Society, 2023 & 2025.
- Provost Award for Faculty Travel. Western Illinois University, 2019.
- Regional Workshop Assistance Grant, Funding for WIU Horn Festival. International Horn Society, 2018.
- Summer Study Scholarship. Early Music America, 2016.
- Silberman Chamber Music Competition, First Place. Carnegie Mellon University, 2011.
- Paul's Scholar. Civic Orchestra of Chicago, 2007–2009.
- John and Marietta Paynter Orchestra Award. Northwestern University, 2007.

Lectures & Masterclasses

Invited & Adjudicated Lectures *indicates adjudicated

“Demystifying the Embouchure: The What and How of Embouchure Anatomy.”

University of Kentucky, 2026.

University of Missouri–Kansas City, 2025.

University of the Pacific, 2025.

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, 2025.

Northwestern University, 2024.

University of Iowa, 2024.

University of Northern Iowa, 2024.

Arkansas State University, 2024.

*International Horn Society Conference (56th), Colorado State University, 2024.

“Sleep Smarter, Perform Better: A Guide for Musicians.”

Southeast Horn Workshop, University of Tennessee–Knoxville, 2026.

George Mason University, Health and Wellness for Musicians Series, 2025.

*International Horn Society Conference (57th), James Madison University, 2025.

“Small Ensembles, Big Impact: Elevating Your Band Through Chamber Music.”

*Iowa Bandmasters Association Conference, 2025.

*Illinois Music Educators Association Conference, 2025.

*Iowa Music Educators Association Conference, 2024.

“Expanding Your Quartet Library with Cobalt Quartet.”

*International Women's Brass Conference, University of North Texas, 2022.

*International Horn Society Conference (53rd), 2021.

“Overuse Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation in Horn Pedagogy.”

*International Horn Society Conference (53rd), 2021.

“2020 IHS Composition Contest Winners.”

*International Horn Society Conference (53rd), 2021.

“Practice Smarter, Not Harder.”

Northeast Horn Workshop, 2021.

“Setup for Success: The First Day on the Horn.”

*Illinois Music Educators Conference, 2020.

Collegiate NAFME Teachers Workshop, 2021.

“Applied Lesson Pedagogy: An Embodied Approach to Music Performance Learning.”

*International Horn Society Mid-South Conference, University of Central Arkansas, 2019.

*International Horn Society Conference (50th), Ball State University, 2018.

“Practicing for Performance: Strategies for Getting It Right in the Moment.”

*International Horn Society Mid-North Conference, Ball State University, 2016.

Masterclasses and Guest Artist Teaching

Cobalt Horn Quartet — Guest Artist Recital Tours and Masterclasses

- Midwest Tour: Cincinnati Conservatory of Music; Indiana University; University of Kentucky; University of Tennessee–Knoxville, 2025.
- International Horn Society Mid-South Conference — Arkansas State University, 2023.
- Louisiana Tour: Louisiana State University; University of Louisiana Monroe, 2019.
- Texas Tour: State University; University of Texas Horn Day (University of Texas at Austin), 2019.

Other Masterclasses

- O Academy — Fundación Azteca, Mexico, 2021.
- University of Mississippi, 2021.
- University of Tennessee–Knoxville, 2020.
- Western Michigan University, 2020.
- Southern Illinois University, 2020.
- Texas State University, 2020.

Digital Scholarship & Media

BrassInjury.com. Creator and editor. Online resource on overuse injury prevention and wellness in brass performance. Website launched 2021; expanded 2022–present.

Horn Hacks Video Series. Creator and producer. Educational video series on brass pedagogy and performance skills (13 episodes). YouTube and Facebook, 2019–2021.

ILMEA Horn Etude Demonstration Videos. Performer and producer. Annual instructional recordings distributed statewide to drive regional recruitment and support Illinois Music Educators Association audition preparation. YouTube and Facebook, 2018–2025.

Selected Recorded Performances (Digital Publication)

- Beethoven, *Sonata for Horn and Piano, Op. 17*, 2023.
- Rochberg, *Trio for Clarinet, Horn, and Piano*, 2023.
- Kern, *Eight Southern Jazz Duets*, 2023.
- Gillie, *Reverie for Horn and Piano*, 2021.
- Gipps, *Sonatina, Op. 56*, 2021.
- Hirayama, *Parallel Universe for Solo Horn*, 2021.
- Yengue, *Tanguito*, 2021.
- Nielsen, *Canto Serioso for Horn and Piano*, 2020.

Selected Performances

- Cobalt Horn Quartet. *First Prize*, Professional Horn Quartet Competition, 50th International Horn Society Conference. Ball State University, 2018.
- Orchestral performances with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, and other regional ensembles. 2007–present.
- Cobalt Horn Quartet Performance Tours. Cincinnati Conservatory of Music; Indiana University; University of Kentucky; University of Tennessee–Knoxville; Louisiana State University. 2020–2025.
- Cobalt Horn Quartet Guest Artist Recital. Texas Music Educators Convention. San Antonio, Texas. 2026.
- International Music Festivals
 - ManiFeste Academy with Heinz Holliger, Solo Horn. Paris, France. 2013.

- Lucerne Festival Academy, Section Horn. Lucerne, Switzerland. 2011 & 2012.
- Youth Orchestra of the Americas, Principal Horn. Mexico Tour. 2011.
- Pacific Music Festival, Section Horn. Sapporo, Japan. 2007
- NU Corno Ensemble. International Horn Society Conferences, 2018, 2020, 2024, 2025.
- Soloist with Western Illinois University Symphony Orchestra. 2018.
- Faculty Recitals, Western Illinois University. 2019, 2021, 2022.
- La Moine Brass Quintet and Camerata Woodwind Quintet. Recitals throughout Illinois and Iowa. 2018–present.

Professional & Community Service

- Illinois State Representative, International Horn Society, 2019–present.
- Organizer, Musician’s Wellness Series, Western Illinois University, 2021–present.
- Organizer, Western Horn Festival / Tri-States Horn Day (annual), 2018–present.
- Organizer, ILMEA Winds, Brass, and Percussion Clinics (annual), 2018–present.
- Organizer, Adopt-a-Classroom Program (Lincoln Elementary, Mrs. Scott’s 1st Grade Class). Monthly instrument demonstrations by Community Music School teachers, 2024–2025.
- Mentor, CITR Faculty Success Program, Western Illinois University, 2022–2023.
- Gonfalon Carrier, Western Illinois University Fall Commencement, December 17, 2022.

Professional Affiliations

- International Horn Society
- International Women’s Brass Conference
- Illinois Music Education Association
- American Federation of Musicians
- Music Teachers National Association
- Early Music America

Professional Development

- Certificate, Performing Arts Medicine Association. *Essentials of Performing Arts Medicine – Instrumental Music*, 2021.
- Alexander Technique Study with Stasia Siena. Private lessons and group classes (Levels 1–3), 2020–2021.

- Embouchure Study with Francesco Lo Surdo, 2023.
- Non-degree coursework in Exercise Science, Western Illinois University.
 - KIN 170 Introduction to Exercise Science, Spring 2025.
 - KIN 270 Motor Behavior, Fall 2025

Appendix

Community Music School Enrollment

| | F21 | SP22 | F22 | SP23 | SU23 | F23 | SP24 | SU24 | F24 | SP25 | SU25 | F25 | SP26 |
|--------|-----|------|-----|------|------|-----|------|------|-----|------|------|-----|------|
| Totals | 40 | 47 | 84 | 87 | 129 | 105 | 124 | 164 | 88 | 106 | 109 | 96 | 107 |

Winds & Percussion Area Enrollment

| Degree | SP2024 | F2024 | SP2025 | F2025 | SP2026 |
|--------------------------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|
| Music Education Instrumental | 38 | 49 | 39 | 41 | 40 |
| Applied Studies Instrumental | 18 | 18 | 16 | 15 | 18 |
| Graduate Instrumental Performance | 8 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| Totals | 64 | 73 | 61 | 61 | 64 |