

Singing Hoosiers Spring Concert
Presentation of Distinguished Service Medal to
Professor Michael Schwartzkopf

Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie
President, Indiana University
IU Auditorium
Saturday, March 31, 2012
8:00 p.m.

1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you, Lee (Hamilton).

Well, this evening has seen another wonderful performance by the Singing Hoosiers at this bitter-sweet concert to farewell Michael Schwartzkopf. Is there a better student vocal ensemble anywhere in the world?

I'd like to make a special presentation, but first I'd like to say a few words about Michael and to convey my gratitude—and the gratitude of the entire university community—for his exceptional service as the group's director for the last 17 years.

2. "MAKING AND MOLDING MUSIC WITH PEOPLE WHO LIKE TO SING"

Michael's affiliation with the group goes back much further, of course. He became a member of the Singing Hoosiers in the fall of 1964, while pursuing his Bachelor's degree in Music Education. When he returned in 1974 to pursue a Master's degree in Choral Conducting, Michael served as Assistant Instructor to Professor Robert Stoll, who was then the group's director.

Since joining the faculty of the Jacobs School of Music in 1995, in addition to leading the Singing Hoosiers, Michael has taught in the Choral Conducting and Music Education Departments. He has helped to train the new generation of music educators, mentoring countless graduate and undergraduate students who are now teaching in K-12 schools and at universities and leading choral groups around the world.

Michael also served the school as chair of the Music Education Department and as interim chair of the Choral Conducting Department. He has also served often as Music Director and Conductor of musical theater productions in the Theatre Department and the School of Music.

Since becoming the director of the Singing Hoosiers 17 years ago, Michael has upheld the very high-standards for the group set by his predecessors, Professor Stoll and George Krueger.

Michael has said that "making and molding music with people who like to sing" is what he loves to do.¹

His extraordinary talent at doing just that keeps him in high demand.

He is called upon often to serve as an adjudicator, a guest lecturer, to lead clinics, to conduct festival orchestras, and to conduct state, regional, and all-state choirs across the United States and Canada.

¹ "Choral Conducting Tips From One of the Nation's Top Choral Directors," IU Homepages, August 2008. URL: <http://homepages.indiana.edu/web/page/normal/8626.html>

3. INDIANA UNIVERSITY'S "AMBASSADORS OF SONG"

Michael, the Singing Hoosiers have certainly excelled at entertained us all during your tenure, but in an age when technology gives us near instantaneous access to almost any piece of music we want and allows to store and listen to it on a device we can carry in our pocket, your efforts do more than entertain us.

You remind us of the intrinsic value of live music, its timelessness, its power, and its immediacy.

You also help to keep alive the great standards of American popular music, songs that younger performances and audiences might not otherwise experience.

And, of course, one of the most important roles the group plays is its role as an ambassador for Indiana University.

Under your direction, Michael, the Singing Hoosiers have performed for audiences throughout the United States and in Wales, England, and Greece. In 2011, you toured China, giving concerts in some of the opulent concert halls of Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Beijing.

In these international performances, in particular, the group reflects the words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who wrote: "music is the universal language of mankind."²

As Lee Hamilton said, you truly are Indiana University's "ambassadors of song."

Having had the pleasure of sharing the bill with the Singing Hoosiers at numerous national and international alumni events, I have witnessed the manner in which the group represents Indiana University with distinction around the world.

² Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Outre-mer: A Pilgrimage Beyond the Sea, (Houghton, 1883), 197.

The outstanding students who have represented IU so well have had an excellent role model in you, Michael, as the group's distinguished director.

You have not only taught countless young people how to be better choral conductors and performers, but you have also instilled in them life skills that have helped them to thrive in a wide variety of careers and situations: discipline, self-confidence, determination, and the value of hard work and collaboration.

4. PRESENTING THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL

Michael, in recognition of all that you have done for Indiana University, for the Jacobs School of Music, and for the many students to whom you have been a teacher, a mentor, and a friend, it is my great pleasure to present to you the Indiana University Distinguished Service Medal.

The Distinguished Service Medal is awarded by the President of Indiana University for outstanding service to Indiana University and the academic community.

This is only the tenth time the medal has been awarded.

The medal itself is a reproduction in silver of the Indiana University seal surrounded by an image of the trailing arbutus, Indiana University's official flower. The medal is accompanied by a parchment that reads: Indiana University gratefully recognizes the outstanding contributions of Michael L. Schwartzkopf, Pam and Jack Burks Professor of Music, Music Director of The Singing Hoosiers, 1995-2012, by bestowing upon him the Distinguished Service Medal in recognition of sustained contributions and tireless commitment to the university. Given this thirty-first day of March, two thousand twelve at Indiana University Bloomington.

Michael, thank you and congratulations.