

## **Dr. Andrew Yozviak '91**

Dr. Andrew Yozviak grew up in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania, known in its heyday as an anthracite coal-mining town just south of the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton metropolitan area. Andrew is the oldest of five children born to Joseph and Carol Ann Yozviak, four of whom attended West Chester University.

Upon graduating from Nanticoke's John S. Fine High School in 1987, Andrew had committed to attend the University of Scranton to major in pre-med, but soon realized that his true calling was a career in music. Andrew's high school music teachers spoke highly of WCU's reputation and encouraged him to visit the campus. An impromptu audition during summer orientation saw him admitted to WCU as a music education major in the fall of 1987.

After graduating in the spring of 1991 with a B.S. in Music Education, Andrew was accepted to Indiana University (Bloomington) where he earned a Masters in Music Composition. He then went on to direct middle school and high school bands in the Pennsylvania public schools for thirteen years. In 2004, Andrew was asked to serve as Interim Director of Bands at Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania. At this same time he was admitted to Rutgers University where he studied conducting with William Berz and earned a DMA in Instrumental Conducting in the fall of 2008.

Currently, Andrew serves as the Director of Bands at West Chester University where his primary responsibilities include conducting the WCU Wind Ensemble and Chamber Winds, directing the *Incomparable* Golden Rams Marching Band and overseeing the graduate wind conducting program. A typical day sees Dr. Yozviak teaching undergraduate and graduate conducting classes, meeting with students in an advisory capacity and leading one of the instrumental ensembles to which he is charged.

Andrew has enjoyed the challenge of building upon the strong reputation and tradition of the bands at WCU. Andrew views following in the footsteps of WCU icons like James Wells, John Villella and Kenneth Laudermilch as a great responsibility. "They were professors I had a lot of respect for and who regularly challenged me as a student. I hope that I am able to approach the kind of impact these professors had on me with our current WCU students."

Directing the WCU ensembles and having the opportunity to influence the next generation of band directors are the things that Andrew finds most rewarding about his position at WCU. Andrew regularly cites experiences from his public school time when relating concepts and teaching techniques to his students.

Andrew offers the following advice to his students seeking careers in music: "Take advantage of every musical opportunity that presents itself and get all you can out of every professor you study with. You have no idea how often you will be able to relate these experiences in your own teaching." Andrew cites his education at West Chester University as integral to his own approach to music. "My time at West Chester taught

me about standards and the importance of seeking excellence. Musicians spend so much time honing their craft. It just seems that if you're going to put that much time into something, it may as well turn into a product you can be proud of. I also learned *how* to teach at West Chester. I think being a great teacher requires you first, to be a great musician. Then having the skills to communicate all of the musical concepts you have developed to others is what sets outstanding teachers apart."

He added, "In my first teaching position, a colleague and I used a phrase with our students that pretty much sums up my philosophy – work hard, strive for excellence and good things will happen. It's served me well thus far."

Andrew lives in West Chester with his wife and fellow WCU faculty member Elizabeth Pfaffle. When he is not busy working with the WCU bands he tries to sneak in an occasional round of golf and works with Elizabeth on regular home improvement projects.