

Michael Hatfield

An Indiana native, Michael Hatfield studied both trumpet and French horn in his youth but also had early ambitions towards a career in the television industry as a producer or director. Concentrating on horn for a career, Mike was accepted into the studio of Verne Reynolds at Indiana University. In 1958 he earned the Bachelor of Science degree and also had the great honor of earning the first (and highly coveted) Performer's Certificate in Horn granted by the IU School of Music. During his time at IU, Mike also studied each summer at the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado with Christopher Leuba and Philip Farkas of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Upon graduation from IU in 1958, Mike joined the Indianapolis Symphony as the assistant principal horn. It is rare for a young musician to obtain such a position immediately upon graduation from college. The following season he moved to third horn, which he performed until 1961, when he was appointed principal horn of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, a position he held for the next 23 years. While in Cincinnati, Mike also served as adjunct professor and chair of the brass, woodwind, and percussion division at the College-Conservatory of Music of the University of Cincinnati, and was a member of the Cincinnati Woodwind Quintet, which was made up of principal players of the Cincinnati Symphony.

During the summers he returned to Aspen where he played second horn to Philip Farkas in the Aspen Festival Orchestra from 1960 to 1968. In 1972, he became co-principal of that orchestra and joined the faculty of the festival. He remained in those positions for 17 years. As faculty member of the Grand Teton Orchestral Institute, he also played with the Grand Teton Festival Orchestra in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Called by Indiana University, Mike joined the faculty of the School of Music in 1984 to replace his mentor, the legendary Philip Farkas, who was retiring. He served admirably for many years as professor of music and chair of the brass department. Hatfield horn students populate orchestras and schools around the world. A fixture in the Jacobs School of Music, he is at once revered and respected, but everyone who knows Mike Hatfield would offer affability as his strongest attribute.

Mike is also well known in the International Horn Society (IHS). He was a guest artist/soloist at the IHS conventions in 1983 and 1985 and has lectured at many other regional and international IHS events, including the 1998 Midwest Regional and Southwestern Horn Workshops. He has served as the scholarship chairman for the IHS and for several terms on the IHS Advisory Council. In 2000 he was elected to the board of directors of Cormont Music, where he offers input into the planning and execution of the Kendall Betts Horn Camp and its scholarship program.

In 2003 the IHS presented Mike with the coveted Punto Award. The protocol for the award reads:

Individuals selected for the Punto Award shall have made a major contribution at the regional or national level to the art of horn playing. This contribution can be in any of a variety of areas, such as performance, teaching, research, or service to the IHS. The international workshop host or any Advisory Council member can nominate individuals for this honor, and selection will be by majority vote of the Advisory Council.

Mike was also made an honorary member of the IHS in 2006. This is a recognition accorded to only one or two people each year by a vote of the IHS Advisory Council during their meeting at the International Horn Symposium.

The Michael Hatfield philosophy of pedagogy and performance might be summed up in a statement that he made recently:

It is essential that we know the repertoire. My hope is that we learn to be flexible musicians and players to facilitate working with various conductors, section mates, and ensembles; to this end, I believe that exposure to different teaching styles and approaches to learning can be very beneficial in many ways. Additionally, I make certain each of my students is aware of and knowledgeable of the various styles and playing concepts within the horn community, as well as of the current trends in horn playing around the world.

Mike Hatfield has been, and continues to be, a legendary force in the world of brass music.

M. Dee Stewart