

Steve Widenhofer is Director of the School of Music at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. Besides coordinating the vocal jazz program since its inception in 1986, he is also founder of *First Step Records*, Millikin's own record label and publishing company which is run by students as a hands-on learning experience. The vocal jazz program annually hosts an educational Vocal Jazz Festival on campus for high school and collegiate ensembles.

Vocal jazz ensembles under his direction have been specially recognized by DOWN BEAT magazine and have been invited to perform at various educational conferences and collegiate jazz festivals in the United States including the IAJE national convention in New York City (2001) and San Diego (1989), the UNC/Greeley Jazz Festival in Colorado and four times at the Illinois State Music Educator's Association state conference in Peoria. Dr. Widenhofer is active as a guest clinician/conductor throughout the midwest and has directed numerous IMEA District Jazz Choirs as well as the All-State Honors Jazz Choir at the 1998 state conference and the Wisconsin Honors Jazz Choir in 2002.

He holds undergraduate and masters' degrees in music from Ball State University and a Doctor of Arts degree from the University of Northern Colorado. Dr. Widenhofer is also on the music staff at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Decatur and performs regularly as keyboardist with the Millikin Faculty Jazz Group.