



# HILLSDALE COLLEGE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Hillsdale College Symphony Orchestra Performs Commencement Eve Concert**

*The concert was the final performance for Professor of Music James A Holleman, director of orchestras and choirs, who is retiring after 29 years.*

HILLSDALE, Mich. — The Hillsdale College Symphony Orchestra performed its annual Commencement Eve Concert on May 8 in Christ Chapel. The sold-out concert was the final performance for Professor of Music James A Holleman, director of orchestras and choirs, who is retiring after 29 years at Hillsdale.

“Jim Holleman has served our college for 29 years. When he came to this choir, it was small. I’ve seen a recording of the choir singing on the front steps of Central Hall, and there were 18 of them. I’ve counted more than a hundred in the various choirs that are in your program, and something over 85 in this orchestra,” said Hillsdale College President Larry P. Arnn. “Jim has filled our college with sound.”

The concert opened with Dimitri Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 5, which received a standing ovation from the full-capacity audience. Following intermission, the orchestra was joined by soprano Emily Douglass for the world premiere of “Stellified,” a musical setting of Nicole Coonradt’s poem about the northern lights. Andrew Maxfield composed the piece as a retirement gift for Holleman.

The orchestra concluded with “Ode to Joy,” the last movement of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9, joined by the College Choir, Chamber Choir, and Choral Scholars, as well as the Hillsdale Arts Chorale and several soloists. Finally, as an encore, the combined choirs treated the audience to an a cappella arrangement of “The Circle of Life” from “The Lion King.”

“I’ve always said that the baton does not make a sound,” Holleman said. “I’m the only person on stage who doesn’t make a sound. And I have to love, respect, and cherish and nurture all those that do. So to all the student musicians, to our orchestra, to our choir, to all that came before them, thank you. You made the beautiful sounds.”

The concert was followed by a reception and champagne toast in Holleman’s honor. Following Holleman’s retirement, Bradley Holmes will serve as director of choirs, and Timothy McDonnell will serve as director of orchestra and Choral Scholars.

Holleman was appointed director of orchestras and choirs and Music Department chair at Hillsdale College in 1997 and received the College’s Daugherty Award for Teaching Excellence the following year. He has served as national president of the College Orchestra Directors Association and served as chairman of Hillsdale’s John E.N. and Dede Howard Department of Music for 25 years. Under his leadership, Hillsdale’s music program grew and expanded, and the College’s performing ensembles received national honors.

More than a quarter of Hillsdale’s student body participates in one of the College’s music ensembles, which include the College Choir, Chamber Choir, Symphony Orchestra, and Jazz Big Band.

For photos from the concert, click [here](#). For photos of Holleman, click [here](#). For recordings of Hillsdale College music performances, click [here](#). For more information about Hillsdale’s performing ensembles, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

### **About Hillsdale College**

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, *Imprimis*, with a circulation of more than 7.5 million. For more information, visit [hillsdale.edu](http://hillsdale.edu).

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