

James Mismas

Class of 1969

Some WHS alumni do not make it very far past their hometown, but for WHS Fine Arts Hall of Fame Inductee James Mismas, he dreamt of something more.

Mismas took up playing the piano at age five and never stopped playing. “I knew that I wanted to be a musician when I was five years old sitting in church and hearing the organ play. And then, after receiving both a Bachelor’s and a Master’s degree in organ, I went on to pursue singing and acting,” Mismas said.

He received a Bachelor of Music in Organ Performance from Oberlin Conservatory in 1973, Master of Music in Organ Performance from University of Illinois in 1976, and Master of Music in Vocal Performance from University of Akron in 1980.

With his impressive musical education, Mismas went on to perform in numerous concerts and opera roles, including over twenty performances in the Ohio Light Opera.

Currently, Mismas serves as Director of Music/Organist at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Akron, and Professor of Voice at The University Of Akron.

“Wooster High School gave me so many opportunities to develop as a musician: playing in the band, accompanying the choir, being in the chorus of a show or two. It fueled my excitement and honored my interest about it all and I will always treasure the time that I spent in the high school,” Mismas said.

About those who influenced him as an artist, Mismas says, “I had many wonderful teachers, but several stand out to this day — William Shepherd, Edith Frey, Sara Moore, and Terri Ling. They each, in their own areas, modeled excellence, commitment and dedication, attributes which I hold dear and teach to this very day.

— David O’Donnell, *student interviewer*



“The fine arts take over where regular living stops. They give food to the spirit and enrichment to the soul. Our lives and souls without the arts would be empty indeed.”