

PH0685275

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED SEP 27 1978  
DATE ENTERED NOV 16 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Wagner-Mozart Music Hall

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

1st Street NE and Delaware Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Mason City

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Iowa

VICINITY OF  
CODE

COUNTY  
Cerro Gordo

CODE

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mason City Community School District

STREET & NUMBER

120 East State Street

CITY, TOWN

Mason City

VICINITY OF

STATE

Iowa 50401

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Cerro Gordo County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Mason City

STATE

Iowa

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Mason City, Iowa: Historic Heritage

DATE

1977

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Div. Historic Preservation, Iowa City, Iowa

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Wagner-Mozart Music Hall was completed in 1936. It is rectangular in plan, with dimensions of 75' x 91'. The exterior is characterized by massed geometric forms ranging from one to about 2 stories in height. The building has a concrete structural frame and foundation, and is faced with brick backed up with hollow clay tile. Concrete is used for belt-coursing, and for the heavy "caps" which top the large, blocklike pavilions in which the entrances are located. One of these "caps" is marked "Wagner", the other, "Mozart". Windows are extremely plain, with narrow brick sills. Decorative features are limited to the keystone entrance frames, belt-coursing, and layered piers of varying height, most of which are concentrated on the entrance pavilions.

Most of the interior space is occupied by an auditorium with stage at one end, concrete risers at the other, located in the southwest corner of the building. Practice rooms are arranged along the north side of the building, with offices, music library area, and the original string room on the east. In the original plan, practice rooms were located to either side of the auditorium stage; these are now storage areas. The practice rooms now located on the north wall of the building take the place of the original instrument room.

The building is located on a corner lot near the central business district of Mason City. It is within a portion of school property that has been recently offered for sale. There is some local concern that sale of this building will lead to its demolition.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES                      1936                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT Hansen & Waggoner, Mason City

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The opening of the Wagner-Mozart Music Hall in 1936 initiated a "new era" in the development of adequate facilities for school instrumental music programs in the U.S. Until that time, school band and orchestra leaders were forced to make do with regular academic classrooms or gymnasias, which were neither acoustically, nor in their arrangement physically suitable for ensemble rehearsals. The greatest need in this respect was for housing facilities "suited to the particular needs" of instrumental music departments, which would include not only appropriate rooms for practice and rehearsal, but storage space for music and instruments (Prescott, p. 201).

The Wagner-Mozart Music Hall was perhaps the first instance in which the needs of school instrumental music programs were fully met. The building received coverage in The School Musician (Feb. 1935), a national publication for school band and orchestra leaders and teachers, and was featured in Gerald Prescott's textbook Getting Results with School Bands, issued in 1938 by two of the US' most prominent music publishers. Principal features of the Music Hall were the large band and orchestra room, with 16'9" ceiling of acoustical tile, concrete risers and small stage for recitals; the separate room for strings; and a 36' x 12' instrument room with extra space for the storage of instrument cases -- altogether a carefully-planned and self-contained unit for the performance and practice of music.

In Mason City, the Wagner-Mozart Music Hall was also intended for an additional function: that of "community building", a place for public meetings and other not necessarily musical activities. This dual purpose was reflected in the building's plan, with its two quite separate entrances. The first, on the north side, was the "students' vestibule", which opened onto the corridors leading to string room, practice rooms and instrument storage area. The west entrance led into the "public vestibule" and then directly into the auditorium/band room. The specifically musical areas of the north and east sides could be completely sealed off from activity in the auditorium, if necessary, thus allowing both school music and community meetings to take place simultaneously.

Thus the Wagner-Mozart Music Hall, built with local WPA labor and using local materials, achieved a certain status among school instrumental music teachers and band leaders, and encouraged the erection of similar facilities in other cities around the country, as well as serving the local community as a small-scale civic center.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Prescott, Gerald. Getting Results with School Bands. New York: Carl Fisher, Inc.; Minneapolis: Paul A. Schmitt Music Co., 1938, pp. 201-206.  
 The School Musician:  
 Rae, James. "How Mason City Built Her High School Music Hall". Vol. VII, Feb. 1935, pp. 8-11.  
 Listiak, M.R. "The School Music Building Boom is On", Vol. VIII, Jan. 1937, p. 22.  
 "Another Scoop for the School Music Boom", Vol. VII, Feb. 1937, p. 18.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME Mason City, Iowa

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1,5	4,8,3	8,3,0	4,7,7,7	5,6,0
ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	

B 

ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	

C 

ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	

D 

ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	

E 

ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	

F 

ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	

G 

ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	

H 

ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Block 26, except the West 125 feet of the South 170 feet, Mason City. The lot is on the northwest corner of Block 26, measuring 94' north and south, 125' east and west.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

F. Stanley Davis, Instrumental Music Department Chairman

ORGANIZATION

Mason City Community Schools

STREET & NUMBER

120 East State Street

CITY OR TOWN

Mason City

STATE

Iowa 50401

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Adrian D. Anderson*

TITLE Director, Division of Historic Preservation

DATE 9/21/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Wm. H. ...*

DATE 4/16/78

ATTEST: William Helsovich

DATE Nov 15, 1978

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION