
In Search of the Wind-Band: An International Expedition

By Daniel Rager

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In Search of the Wind-Band: An International Expedition is a new interactive E-book, exploring 16 countries. The first-of-a-kind, interactive encyclopedic e-book uses text, video, mp3 and pdf files to bring the history and development of the wind-band to life.

The following pages contain a sample of
Chapter 4: American Wind Music

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In Search of the Wind-band

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CHAPTER 4: American Wind Music

Music in America was created by a blending of cultural influences that continues to evolve. The wind-band is no exception in that its roots are deeply buried in the musical traditions of Western Europe. Many of our modern wind-bands can be traced to France, Germany or Italy as early as the 17th century. By the mid-18th century, most towns had a band of some type (brass/civic/military) to march in parades, perform concerts or ceremonies. Throughout the centuries, immigrants brought their instruments and musical traditions to their new homeland, America, creating new genres and melding world cultures together to create truly American music.

There were many types of bands in Europe that are mentioned in this book, but were unknown during the period America was being founded. Today's wind-band has evolved because of past traditions, but the paradigm was neither planned nor anticipated. There are a myriad of reasons why European traditions did not stay the same as in the old world. A melding of cultures, new ideas and fresh thoughts that reflected society, politics, religion and economics are all seeds from which change occurred. Just as America changed, so did the wind-band and its music. Like a hand and glove, one was made to fit the other.

Unlike any other musical organization including the symphony orchestra, the wind-band has been a phenomenon formed by the American way of life. Whether the function is social, religious, political or economic, events of daily life have become inseparable from the music of the wind-band.

There is more historical data documented, published in books, journals, and theses in libraries across America than any other country mentioned in this text. Information regarding the evolution of the modern day wind-bands can easily be found. Higher educational institutions are largely responsible for this deluge of data followed by music publishers, wind-band recording labels and an ever growing list of organizations dedicated to wind music such as the American Bandmasters Association (ABA), the Association of Concert Bands (ACB), the National Band Association (NBA) and The World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles (WASBE) to name a few. Americans know more about the American wind-band than bands of any other country, and this is the reason for this book.

With so much historical information available, it is not the intent of this author to recreate another book or submit new evidence on behalf of the American wind-band, but to present a condensed history that is clear and concise.

To better understand the American wind-band and its evolution, I will divide the chapter into sections chronologically, by famous names and events as they occurred in history. What we know of the American wind-band has its roots in Western Europe. The tradition can be traced to France, Germany and Italy as far back as the 17th century. By the mid-18th century, small ensembles of mixed brass and winds were performing in parades, concerts and civic and social ceremonies. Even in the earliest days of the American colonies (1585-1732 respectively) wind music was performed for various functions including military bands.

Harmoniemusik

During the time of the American Revolution (1775-83) musical wind groups were called Harmonie bands. Mainly composed of six to eight musicians, paired instruments of clarinets, oboes, bassoons, natural horns and drums were most common. Early instruments were handcrafted therefore they were expensive and not readily available. Although there were craftsmen in New England making instruments as early as 1760, most instrument makers were still in Europe, so merchants purchased instruments from manufactures in Europe.

The music timbre of Harmonie bands was unique in that the ensemble was primarily made up of woodwind instruments. This was ideal for playing the music of Haydn, Beethoven or Mozart for indoor concerts, but was not well suited for outdoor use. The wooden instruments were dynamically too soft, hard to hear at a distance and too delicate for weather and temperature changes. The all-brass natural horn had limitations, too; the instrument could not play chromatically, since it had no key or valve system. The instrument was similar to the hunting horn, limiting notes to the open harmonic series.

This problem was not new and something with which instrument makers in Europe were experimenting during this period. The keyed (chromatic) horn had a long and arduous journey with many improvements over a century. More information on the development and European inventors is mentioned in the Introduction chapter of this book, including the composers who wrote for these keyed bugles.

Church music and alto bands (see Misc. Bands) in North America had a long, tenuous struggle during this period. Religious wind harmony bands began to blend new styles into the new world. While most religious denominations had their own style and beliefs regarding what should or should not be played in the church, most ideologies and traditions came from Europe.

The Moravians, for example, placed a high value on musical activities and thus formed bands in the communities in which they settled. Also known as the Bohemian Brethren, they were well versed in the European Classical tradition of music. They wrote thousands of anthems, solo arias, duets, and the like for their worship services. To accompany their choirs they used the organ, string orchestra and a complementary assortment of woodwinds and brass. They also wrote and performed secular music with chamber ensembles and concert bands. Their first bands were actually trombone choirs. The trombone choirs and later church bands (included other woodwind & brass) focused their attention primarily on chorales. Their community bands and chamber ensembles primarily played what we would now call secular music or non-religious music that included the musical styles of marches, dances and arrangements of popular music.

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Technology Improvements

Technology had been contributing to the success of brass instruments since the early 1800's. In 1835, John Holloway (dates unknown) composed a piece called "Wood Up Quickstep". The work became closely associated with Edward "Ned" Kendall (1808-61), a virtuoso keyed bugle musician in the days before piston valves. Kendall continued to play the keyed bugle all of his life despite the new piston valve improvement. To prove his loyalty to the keyed bugle, he took part in a contest with Patrick

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Gilmore (1829-92). This famous contest pitted the two virtuosos against each other, Kendall on his keyed bugle and Gilmore on the new piston cornet. Both performed sections of the Wood Up Quickstep, one after the other. The winner was..... a tie. It could not be determined which man played better. The result, however, signaled the end of the keyed bugle as the piston instrument began its reign.

View complete score and recording (mp3) of Wood Up Quickstep



[SOME PAGES ARE OMITTED]

The Civil War Era

In the period from early colonization through the Civil War (1861-65), military bands were small. The early groups consisted of fife and drum corps, otherwise known as military field bands. Their function was to provide signals, telling soldiers when to wake up, eat, go to bed and carry out other daily routines. Drummers and fifes of a regiment often played together, providing cadences or signals for formal occasions. During battle, they provided instructions for soldiers through signaling calls or gave encouragement through music, much like a pep band. In case of hazy fog or other unforeseen elements in battle, visual command was impossible, so the fife and drum bands played orders to the troops.

By the mid-19th century, the military used brass bands, which served many capacities from social events such as picnics, parties to parades. Regimental bands became popular serving dual roles, military and political. With recorded music and radio 50 to 70 years in the future, people wanted live music. Military bands relieved the boredom and loneliness of soldiers separated from home. The music performed was generally patriotic songs, popular tunes of the day and sung serenades.

The band of this era was the brass band. Loud and durable, brass instruments became more popular during this period than any other time. They were used to march into battle, accompany and entertain soldiers and civilians alike. The brass band became a vital part of the community as it set the mood and enthusiasm during the war.

By the 1870s the brass band craze found a band in almost every town in America. Ensembles of ten to twenty musicians performed for social gathering of all types. People of diverse trades became amateur bandsman (town musicians) and used music as a vehicle to entertain town's people and enjoy camaraderie with fellow tradesman. Playing in a brass band became a hobby for many, as it provided a social life for the community outside of the established church.

Manufacturers began to produce economical instruments and the first effective marketing of instruments began. Companies had advertising campaigns to market their products which included

sheet music, music accessories, maintenance products, keys, pads, screws, reeds, cleaning supplies, repair kits, uniforms and everything a band needed to operate. By the 1880s, creative marketing had propelled the image of bands across America like nothing before it. There were dazzling uniforms, bright shiny brass instruments and rousing music, all of which could be heard and seen in most towns across the country. The enthusiasm to play in one of these groups led to the formation of some 10,000 bands in America by 1889.

A town with a good band gave its citizens pride. Better yet, joining the band was considered patriotic and fulfilling ones civic duty for all generations. The culture and refinement of the bands reflected on the performers as well as audiences.

By the latter half of the century, wind-bands of all sizes and types were traveling the country. There were circus bands, fraternal or lodge bands, police and fireman bands, militia bands, Wild West show bands such as Buffalo Bill's traveling company and professional bands, such as Patrick Gilmore, and later John P. Sousa. An organization known as Chautauqua had a circuit of traveling artists, singers and bands that toured the country well into the 20th century. This educational organization promoted all types of art and education through minstrel shows. They presented the first Native American Indian concert bands to rural America. More information on the Chautauqua movement and American Indian bands can be found in the "Native American Indian" band chapter.

There were also black military bands that performed during the Civil War. In the post-war era, many military bands disbanded, leaving an overabundance of inexpensive military instruments. This scenario created an opportunity for many societies and organizations such as African American societies. In Charleston, South Carolina, for example, an orphanage all-black boy's band was created in the 1890s by Rev. Daniel Joseph Jenkins (1862-1937). The band was so popular that the orphanage added subsidiary units. At one time, the orphanage had as many as five musical groups traveling at once.

[SOME PAGES ARE OMITTED]



Patrick Gilmore

The Rise of the Professional Musician

With so many bands across the country one would think that a few iconic figures would emerge from the field. People wanted to belong to a band and be a part of the excitement in the community. The days when simple groups could extemporaneously play together were disappearing. Local schools were beginning to develop instruction in instrumental music. This step spelled the rise of the professional musician. Some musicians made a living teaching and performing, often traveling and touring to display their virtuoso expertise. Modern transportation was improving making life easier for traveling musicians and bands but the road was argumentatively difficult and not always successful.

Americans were beginning to enjoy their leisure by attending concerts performed by touring professional bands. This new era became known as the "Gilded Age" or "Golden Age" of touring bands. The excitement of hearing a professional wind-band raised the expectations of musicians playing in local town bands.

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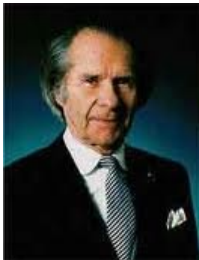
By the 1880s, the iconic band figures Americans envisioned were being recognized. Two bandsmen inevitably brought the image of the professional concert band to the forefront. Patrick Gilmore (1829-92) and John Philip Sousa (1854-1932) became household names and international superstars.



Patrick Gilmore's Band Instrumentation, 1880 for 66 musicians was...

John P. Sousa's Band Instrumentation, 1892 for 43 musicians was...

[SOME PAGES ARE OMITTED]



Frederick Fennell

Frederick Fennell (1914-2004) is the third icon in history to development and change the 20th century wind-band. His reign began as professor at the Eastman School of Music, when he asked Dr. Howard Hanson (1896-1981) director of the Eastman School of Music, to let him organize the institution's first symphonic band. This led to the founding the Eastman Wind Ensemble in 1952. Fennell's concept was to use one (1) player to a part providing more control of sonority. Only the Bb Clarinet parts were doubled with two (2) on a part. This wind ensemble concept used up to 45 players and created a new and balanced sonority. This idea was revolutionary and has become a model for high school, university and professional wind-bands globally. Fennell simply expanded the symphony orchestra instrumentation doubling woodwind parts that were once played by the violin and viola parts. Wind-band composers have embraced his ideological concept which has led to some standardization of instrumentation.

The Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble Instrumentation, 1952-53 for 45 musicians was...

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The First National School Band Contest

The wind-band and everyone involved in it needed a boost. This included the band instrument industry that was looking for a new market to sell instruments. With band programs on the rise they saw an opportunity to sell instruments to school systems and individuals. In 1923, the Chicago Piano Club was looking for entertainment for their annual dealers' association convention. Victor J. Grabel (1886-1965), band director of the Western Electric Company at the Cicero, Illinois plant suggested that a band contest be held. The Piano Club enthusiastically embraced Carl D. Greenleaf (1876-1959), President of C. G. Conn, Ltd. and asked the instrument maker to organize the concert. \$10,000 was raised from donors to fund the event.

The contest was poorly run and accommodations were limited, as the boys in the bands had to sleep on army cots in a barracks-like room at Chicago's Navy Pier. The performance venue was not suitable as the contest was held outdoors in Grant Park, Chicago, on a portable bandstand located between Michigan Ave. and the Illinois Central Railroad tracks. The bands had to contend with traffic, railroad yard noise and the sounds of competing bands warming up. Each band performed for a single judge, Lieutenant William H. Santelmann (1863-1932), who was director of the United States Marine Corps Band from 1898 to 1927.

There was no required music list from which to choose. Directors simply worked up whatever music was at their disposal, not to mention the short six or seven weeks of time allowed to prepare from the date they received notification of the contest. There were no standards for the instrumentation, nor were there any grade levels of difficulty provided. In the end, the winner was a band from Fostoria, Ohio, directed by John W. Wainwright (1875-1951).

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American Evolution of Repertory and Composers in the 20th Century

The American wind-band has seen a rapid growth of repertory by American composers since the beginning of the 20th century. Significant progress has presented original works of varying styles including arrangements of orchestral works that have propelled the genre into the 21st century. Although the trend to create music was slow at the beginning of the century, the amount of new material being published by the end of the 20th century was staggering. Originally, the wind-band relied on the orchestra for much of its repertoire. Arrangements and transcripts were the only things being written and composers of original works were writing in an orchestral style, leaving the listener to ponder if the music was original or a transcription. The only exception was the march. Over time, this would change as musical styles in America changed.

In the years between 1917 and 1928, 49 compositions were written for winds by international composers such as Busoni, Webern, Berg, Hindemith, Ives, Piston, Poulenc, Sibelius, Milhaud, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Roussel, Shostakovich, Villa-Lobos, Vaughan Williams and Ibert. Stravinsky alone wrote seven works scored for winds between 1916 and 1924. They included a Duet for Two Bassoons, The Soldier's Tale, Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo, Rag Time, Symphonies of Wind Instruments, Octet for Wind Instruments and Concerto for Piano and Winds. Most of these works were

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composed for small ensembles. Composers with varied backgrounds were beginning to show an interest in writing for the wind-band, but the process would be slow.

The following chronological listings are by no means the only compositions written during the years mentioned, but are considered staples in the repertory for the most part.

List of works and composers from 1902 – 1998.

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END OF CHAPTER 4 SAMPLE

For more information, or to purchase the *In Search of the Wind-Band*, contact Daniel Rager at windbandhistory@gmail.com

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