

Hints on Band Organization

By Fred E. Waters

THERE has been a long-felt need for something definite as to the methods of forming and organizing bands. We are often asked how to organize a band, the method to follow and the maintenance of same. With this thought in mind we have compiled the following data which we hope will assist those interested in forming organizations of this character. If this article accomplishes the purpose in part or gives any idea which can be worked out to fit in general we will feel that we have accomplished our purpose.

The First Consideration

There are various kinds of bands to be considered—Municipal, Fraternal, Industrial and School Bands. These may be sub-divided into various classes, but a general outline will be discussed which can be applied to any of the subdivisions.

Personnel

In selecting the personnel of the band the organizers must exercise sound judgment. They must see to it that all have a common interest at heart. That is, the welfare and success of the organization. Each one must be personally ambitious and eager to succeed and to see others succeed in order that the ensemble may attain the highest point of perfection possible. Any one instrument is just as important as another in developing a score of music. Therefore, each member should recognize his importance to the whole and give his best efforts to that end.

Discipline is the next important feature as no organization will succeed without it. The conductor must be in supreme command in all questions as to rendition of music and each member should put forth his best effort to play his part as near to the conductor's interpretation as his ability will permit, accepting the conductor's interpretation and instructions as final.

The Conductor

The conductor should be a man of recognized musical ability and should be familiar at the use of the various instruments which form a band, the instrumentation to obtain the best results in the different sized organizations, the ability to interpret the author's intention and obtain the results which go to make up the musical pictures which the rendition of a score should portray. In order to do this, as we have learned from the above, he must have a knowledge of instrumentation and interpretation and to this must be added the use of the baton. It is not essential that he be familiar with Harmony B Thorough Bass and Counterpoint, but he must know baton movements and what they mean in order to convey his interpretation to the organization he is conducting.

An organization which pays a salary for a conductor should ascertain in advance whether or not the applicant has these qualifications. A band which cannot afford a salaried leader usually has someone who is more proficient and more experienced than the others on whom they rely for instruction and who is ambitious to become a conductor. To those we would suggest a study of instrumentation, interpretation and the method of baton uses and movements, which oftentimes develops first-class conductors of wide reputation. There are several courses which may be studied of which the most convenient is the correspondence course, which has proven very satisfactory, which is accompanied with printed instructions together with pictured illustrations which give the student the fundamental principles of this work and with practice he can accomplish a great deal along, these lines.

Instrumentation

The next most important step to be considered is the instrumentation to be used in various sized bands. No band should be considered of less than sixteen men and a conductor or leader.

Therefore, we will consider instrumentation from this point up...

Flutes and Piccolos				1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Eb Clarinets			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bb Clarinets	4	4	5	5	6	6	8	8	10	10	12	14	16
Oboes						1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Saxaphones		2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
Bassons						1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Bb Cornets	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	7	7	7	7	7	7
Altos or French Horns	2	2	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
Trombones	2	2	2	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6
Baritones	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Basses	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Drums	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	16	18	20	25	30	35	38	40	44	46	48	50	56

A band of sixteen players can play all popular and a large variety of the lighter standard classics and some of the more advanced classics and as the instrumentation enlarges so does the possibility of the range of the music which can be handled. The above instrumentations are compiled to meet modern requirements of bands for all-around playing such as concert, parades and all various classes of ensemble requirements. Numerous features can be worked out from the above instrumentations which lend brilliancy and snap to the programs. For example, cornet, trombone and baritone solos; cornet duets; horn trios; brass and saxophone quartettes, all of which add to the importance and popularity of the organization.

Encouragement

It is a well conceded fact that most men join an amateur band merely for their own pleasure and amusement; also for the love of music itself, some of whom develop so rapidly that they soon step into the semi-professional class and earn considerable money on such. Others go further and attain the professional class in which modern musicians are receiving large compensations together with enviable reputations. Nearly all of our leading conductors and instrumentalists started with amateur bands and are today receiving the plaudits of the entire world. Amateur bands promote good fellowship and have a good influence in every direction. Wherever you find an amateur band, either Municipal, Fraternal or Industrial, you will find men who desire to better themselves intellectually, artistically and socially and who are also tremendously interested in promoting the interests and welfare of those they represent. Surely nothing more than this could be asked for and therefore merits the financial and moral support of all.

Financial Aid

The financing of bands is a somewhat complicated question. Therefore, we will consider each separately and trust the suggestions we have to offer will help in working out a plan for this purpose.

Municipal Bands are those supported by a city or town for the benefit of the community in which they are located and usually a great interest is manifested in their progress. There are a number of ways in which they can be financed. First, by popular subscription; second, by community chest

or fund; third, by taxation. The first mentioned is very good when the start is made and when it is necessary to purchase all the equipment for a band. In this manner everyone becomes interested and a booster for our band and takes pride in promoting its interests. After this, probably the second is more desirable for perpetual maintenance as nearly every city or town has a community chest to which all citizens contribute more or less.

Budgets for band maintenance should be estimated and that amount set aside, insuring the continued success of the organization. Each city or town can work out the details in this regard to its own particular requirements. It will suffice here to suggest by what means the organization can be maintained. In the third consideration where Municipal Bands are supported by taxation, every citizen pays his proportion with the regular city tax which is a very model way of distributing the cost proportionately to each citizen's wealth. There are several states which now have such a law, of which Iowa was the first, and recently such a law has been passed in Texas.

Fraternal organizations recognize the great benefits derived from bands for parades, entertainments, picnics and social gatherings of all kinds. Equipment is usually purchased and owned by the lodge or society of which the band is a part and is financed by the lodge or society, by vote out of the treasury which can be reimbursed by social benefits and entertainments of various kinds in which the band can take an important part.

Industrial bands are usually a part of the welfare organization. It is difficult to measure their benefits in dollars and cents.