COLONEL EARL D. IRONS:
HIS ROLE IN THE HISTORY OF MUSIC EDUCATION IN THE SOUTHWEST TO 1958

DISSERTATION

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By

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The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between the professional activities of Col. Earl D. Irons and the overall development of bands in the Southwest. The need for the study was determined after researching the related literature, which revealed gaps in the historical record of instrumental music education, and in particular a dearth of biographical studies dealing with music educators in the band field.

Procedures for the research followed the guidelines set forth in the generally accepted historical method. A significant amount of data was derived from the use of oral history techniques through the cooperation of memoirists having first-hand knowledge of bands during the early part of the twentieth century.

Earl D. Irons, born on March 10, 1891, received his initial music training on violin and cornet from family and from municipal band programs. Without continuous formal training beyond the high school level, he developed skills in cornet performing, conducting, and composing which enabled him to be most active in the formative years of school bands in the Southwest. These regional activities led to involvement in music education at the national level,

resulting in various honors being bestowed upon him, such as the presidency of the American Bandmasters Association.

Irons was a charter member of three professional music organizations in Texas which largely controlled the development of band programs in that state. These were the Texas Band Teachers Association, the Texas Music Educators, and the Texas Bandmasters Association. He served these organizations in various capacities, including office holder, policy maker, lecturer, and clinician.

Irons' concept of brass pedagogy involved both traditional and innovative approaches. He was particularly creative in the teaching of embouchure flexibility and range development, culminating in the 1938 publication of his book Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises.

As a participant in band contests Irons established his reputation by consistently taking highest honors in his class. When band competition activities moved toward a greater educational orientation, he was involved primarily through several professional music organizations. It is established that the relationship between the professional activities of Col. Earl D. Irons and the overall development of bands in the Southwest was a positive one, touching virtually every aspect of this part of instrumental music education.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Research in the field of music education has seen a dramatic increase during the years following World War II, as more people have taken up the pursuit of advanced degrees. A survey of titles indicates the diversity of subject material. There was, during the post-war period, considerable disagreement as to what music education research was and how it was to be accomplished. According to Britton there were two philosophical camps, scientific and historical, both having strong proponents.[1]

Since that time, areas of research have become more distinct and definable. Best listed three areas in 1959; descriptive, experimental, and historical.[2] Later, six categories were proposed by Morgan. This listing included studies of the following types: status, regression-correlation, developmental, case, experimental, and historical.[3]

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[1]Allen P. Britton, "Research in Music Education," Education, LXXIV (September, 1953), 40-41.

[2]John W. Best, Research in Education (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1959), p. 12.

[3]Hazel B. Morgan in collaboration with Clifton A. Burmeister, Music Research Handbook (Evanston, Illinois, 1962), pp. 2-7.

Most recently in 1980, the research classifications of analytical, philosophical, descriptive, experimental, and historical appeared.[4]

While through the years the variety and description of research options have fluctuated, the historical classification has remained constant. Barzun provides some insight into the stature of the discipline. Writing in 1974, he states, "History gives us what nothing else provides. Science denies it and art only invents it. That is presentation of continuity, attained in the midst of disorder, and purpose in the world."[5]

In defining historical research, Best states:

> History is a complete, accurate, and meaningful record of man's achievements. It is not merely a list of chronological events, but a truthful, integrated account in which persons and events are examined in relation to a particular time and place.[6]

The ongoing significance of historical research in music education lies in its potential benefit to the profession it serves. Some consequences of well-executed historical research are, according to one authority, "(1) a richer basis of information, better understanding of the present, (2) a more accurate account of what has taken

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[4]Roger P. Phelps, A Guide to Research in Music Education, 2nd ed. (Dubuque, Iowa, 1980), p. 7.

[5]Jacques Barzun, Clio and the Doctors: Psycho-History, Quanto-History, and History (Chicago, 1974), p. 124.

[6]Best, Research in Education, p. 85.

place, (3) a more complete record, and (4) the clearer explanation of complex ideas."[7] In order for historical studies to remain a viable force in research, some feel the results must apply to the actual practice of the profession.

Historical research can show the effects of past education practices. It can also offer explanation of how past practices developed and why they prevail.[8] Furthermore, due to the cyclical nature of some teaching practices, an awareness of the past may prove useful to future generations.[9]

Various types of historical studies have the potential to provide some of the above benefits. These, as observed from examination of prior research, include (1) music instruction in specific institutions, (2) general histories of music, (3) specific schools of pedagogy, and (4) biographical examinations of music educators. Of these the biographical study may provide additional benefits. In a recent speech before an assembly of music educators, Heller stated, "Honest and thorough biography serves not only to provide

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[7]George N. Heller, Historical Research in Music Education: A Prolegomenon (paper written in collaboration with Bruce D. Wilson and presented at the Music Educators National Conference convention, Miami Beach, Florida, April 11, 1980), P. 7.

[8]Best, Research in Education, p. 86.

[9]Edgar M. Turrentine, "Historical Research in Music Education," Council for Research in Music Education (Urbana, Illinois: Bulletin No. 33, Summer 1973), p. 4.

worthy models, but also to cast notables of the past in accurate, life-like (and therefore replicable) human models of behavior."[10]

By applying greater control over the biographical topic and its development, the chances improve that the resulting study can be of value to the profession. Figures worthy of research should have had direct and far reaching influence in music. In further defining the ideal subject, Garraghan states, "The career of an individual has historical meaning only to the extent to which it influences an organized group of individuals or is influenced by it."[11] Nevins refers to relating the subject to his world, and "defining his position and significance in the broad stream of events."[12]

The need for biographical research has been expressed regularly over the past three decades. In 1958, Johnson decried the dearth of data on the American musician and described this person as a unique individual, "serving as a living example to amateurs, teacher of the young, and civil servant leading bands, choruses, and operas."[13] In the

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[10]Heller, Historical Research in Music Education: A Prolegomenon, p. 10.

[11]Gilbert J. Garraghan, A Guide to Historical Method (New York, 1946), pp. 8-9.

[12]Allan Nevins, The Gateway to History (New York, 1938), p. 330.

[13]H. Earle Johnson, "The Need for Research in the History of American Music, Journal of Research in Music Education, VI (September, 1958), 53-54.

conclusion of his dissertation, McCarrell indicated the need for further study of musicians, in this case band directors.[14] Most recently, the call was made to MENC members for biographical study, referring to its place in a "gapped and uneven," historical knowledge.[15]

Far-sighted pioneers provided the impetus for much of what we enjoy in music education today.[16] Earl D. Irons was one of these pioneers; defining his position and significance in the broad stream of events has potential for benefit to the music education profession.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between the professional activities of Col. Earl D. Irons and the overall development of bands in the Southwest.

Problems

1. To determine Irons' influence upon bands through his activities in professional and fraternal music organizations.

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[14]Lamar Keith McCarrell, "A Historical Review of the College Band Movement from 1875 to 1969," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, 1979, p. 215.

[15]Heller, Historical Research in Music Education: A Prolegomenon, p. 14.

[16]Turrentine, "Historical Research in Music Education," p. 4.

2. To determine Irons' influence upon bands through his activities in music competition-festivals.

3. To determine Irons' influence upon students and teachers through his brass pedagogy.

Delimitations

1. This study deals with Irons' activities in professional and fraternal organizations only as they relate to music education in the Southwest.

2. This study deals with Irons' brass pedagogy only. His compositions for brass instruments will not be analyzed and they will be referred to only as they relate to brass instructions.

3. This study deals with Irons' activities in music competition-festivals. His compositions for band will not be analyzed and they will be referred to only as they relate to music competition-festivals.

Methodology

The research proceeded under the generally accepted methodology known as historical method. While stating this procedure with slight variation, sometimes with steps numbering as many as five, many authors agree as to the basic content of this method. Reference is made to historical method in the writings of authorities such as

Gottschalk, Morgan, Turrentine, Hockett, and Garraghan.[17]

For research of the career of Earl D. Irons, the four specific steps in historical method as outlined by Louis Gottschalk were followed. These essential points are

> (1) collection of the surviving objects and of the printed, written, and oral material that may be relevant, (2) the exclusion of those materials (or parts thereof) that are unauthentic, (3) the extraction from the authentic material of testimony that is credible, (4) the organization of that reliable testimony into a meaningful narrative or exposition.[18]

Other writers have provided guidelines which establish the ground rules for historical method. The basic assumption underlying the four steps is expressed in the idea that truth is obtained in much the same way that it would be in daily life; that is, through the mental operations of common sense.[19] One definition of scientific method also seems applicable to historical method. In it Phelps gives qualities common to all research: logical organization, objectivity in

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[17]Louis Gottschalk, Understanding History: A Primer of Historical Method (New York, 1950); Morgan, Music Research Handbook; Turrentine, "Historical Research in Music Education" Homer C. Hockett, The Critical Method in Historical Research and Writing (New York, 1968); Garraghan, A Guide to Historical Method.

[18]Gottschalk, Understanding History: A Primer of Historical Method, p. 28.

[19]Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, The Modern Researcher (New York, 1957), p. 136.

implementation, and precision in interpretation.[20] All of these ideas can provide a broad foundation for research.

The primary or heuristic phase of research, concerning collection of data, involved several sources. Of particular importance was the Earl D. Irons collection contained in the archives of the University of Texas at Arlington. The materials in this collection consist of over three thousand leaves. Through the efforts of Mrs. Lena Irons from the years 1917 through 1967, a rather full representation of Irons' life is readily available. Items of value to the researcher include certificates, programs, pictures, instruments, newspaper clippings, medals, awards, letters, and magazine articles.

The holdings of the Southwest Collection at Texas Tech University in Lubbock were surveyed. Within the Dewey O. Wiley collection is a wealth of information dealing with bands in Texas from 1930 through 1975. Data on instrumental music education are housed there, as well as specific information on Irons. Related directly to him are personal letters, programs, minutes, and pictures.

Through the assistance of Pearl Z. Tubiash at the University of Maryland, additional source material was made available. The American Bandmasters Association archives housed there were useful in this research endeavor. Numerous

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[20]Phelps, A Guide to Research in Music Education, p. 13.

documents pertain to Irons, in particular his service as president of this organization in 1951.

Part of the research was based upon the use of oral history techniques. Skepticism of historians concerning this technique has largely disappeared in recent years. In its early development by Allan Nevins at Columbia University in 1948, oral history served to fill in gaps and provide the kind of details not found in written records.[21] While this function is still appropriate, a realization that more can be derived from these techniques has taken place.

Advantages to the oral interview include being able to create a previously non-existent record of some event.[22] The memoirist's account of this event sometimes may be acquired in no other way. Harris further states,

> New information about an individual or event gathered through interview may send the writer back to written records that had been bypassed earlier or even to records he had not known existed; or an informant may possess personal records (diaries, letters, or other memoirs) that add to his research.[23]

Hooper writes that the interview may at times be superior to the written record, due to the interviewer's active participation. The good researcher knows exactly

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[21]Oscar Handlin, Truth in History (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979), p. 127.

[22]Ramon I. Harris and others, The Practice of Oral History: A Handbook (Glen Rock, New Jersey, 1975), p. 4.

[23]Ibid., p. 74.

what he needs and seeks that from the memoirist.[24] The researcher must be cautious of procedure in order to derive the maximum benefit from responses. As far as the dependability of the memoirist's testimony, four checks were applied: "(1) Was he there? (2) Was he in a position to know? (3) Does he have a reputation for probity? (4) Was he of sound mind at the time of the interview?"[25]

Mrs. Earl D. Irons' written and verbal information and responses were of immense value in the research. Her responses provided much insight into Col. Irons' career and suggested additional sources of documentary evidence.

Irons' closest professional associate, Jack Mahan, likewise provided valuable recollections through oral history transcripts now housed in the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. Other memoirists were sought from the ranks of Irons' professional peers, students, and personal acquaintances. Maximum effort was made to select individuals who knew him best and were in a position to view his career from various perspectives. Tapes and transcripts of all interviews are available to researchers in the Willis Library on the campus of North Texas State University.

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[30]Handlin, Truth in History, p. 133.

[31]Garraghan, A Guide to Historical Method, pp. 12-13.

[32]William W. Brickman, Guide to Research in Educational History (New York, 1949).

The second phase of the research (steps two and three of Gottschalk's historical method) is often referred to as the critical method. During this phase, the actual evaluation of materials took place.[26] Each item was labeled as a primary or secondary source. Primary source materials include oral or written testimony by actual participants or witnesses of an event, remains or relics associated with a person, and documents, including such items as programs, letters, newspaper accounts, and pictures.[27] Secondary source material is defined as any account other than that of one present at an event.[28]

The critical method most importantly involves the application of external and internal criticism to each item. External criticism is the establishment of authenticity or genuineness. It is necessary that elements of data be consistent with available knowledge and known facts. Internal criticism or trustworthiness is derived from evaluation of the data's value and worth.[29]

The use of corroboration applied to both written and spoken material was necessary in the critical phase. This

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[26]Detailed instruction on the critical method can be found in the previously cited works of Hockett, The Critical Method in Historical Research and Writing, pp. 14-62 and Garraghan, A Guide to Historical Method, pp. 168-204.

[27]Best, Research in Education, p. 89.

[28]Gottschalk, Understanding History: A Primer of Historical Method, pp. 53-54.

[29]Best, Research in Education, p. 90-91.

necessity is stressed by Handlin when he states,

> Rhetoric must fit in with the other survivals of the people who uttered it: the testimonies of observers, artifacts in all their variety, and the records of their transactions. The more abundant the evidence and the more various, the firmer the structure composed from it. Although none are free of fault, one will offset the weakness of another.[30]

At the conclusion of data evaluation, the final research phase of synthesis took place. There are three possible approaches to this final portion of historical research. They are the narrative, didactic, and genetic. Of these, the genetic is most appropriate to the present research. The genetic approach strives for presentation of facts to reveal growth, evolution, and development as well as cause and effect.[31]

In organizing the paper according to chapter, it is imperative that unity be achieved so that data presented is easily discernable by the reader. It is important that the organization relate to the stated research problems. With this in mind, organization using a combination of chronological and topical sequence was employed. Chronological development is carried forward through chapters devoted to specific topics.[32]

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[30]Handlin, Truth in History, p. 133.

[31]Garraghan, A Guide to Historical Method, pp. 12-13.

[32]William W. Brickman, Guide to Research in Educational History (New York, 1949).

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

Related Research and Literature

In 1958, attention was called to the area of historical research in music education by Allen Britton. He called for study of the profession's past, and Turrentine credits Britton's article with generating interest, resulting in doctoral dissertations.[1] That activity in historical research has increased markedly can be observed by inspection of lists of dissertations from the past three decades.

Particularly in biographical research, a noticeable increase is seen. McKernan's study of Will Earhart[2], completed in 1958, is one of several dealing with the contributions of early music educators. Other studies such as those on Peter Dykema of Columbia Teachers College and Otto Miessner[3] of Northwestern University have added to the record

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[1]Turrentine, "Historical Research in Music Education," p. 2.

[2]Felix E. McKernan, "Will Earhart, His Life and Contributions to Music Education," unpublished doctoral dissertation University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California, 1958.

[3]Henry E. Eisenkramer, "Peter William Dykema: His Life and Contribution to Music Education," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, New York, New York, 1963; Samuel D. Miller, "W. Otto Miessner and His Contributions to Music in American Schools," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1962.

of leading figures in early twentieth century music education.

The activities of educator-researchers are chronicled in studies by Platt and Olenchak.[4] Platt examined the work of Osbourne McConathy, including his interests in musical aptitude testing at Northwestern University. A similar study by Olenchak attempted to show the significance of Glenn Gildersleeve's research in the field of educational testing and musical achievement. The contributions through academic and fraternal institutions of Price Doyle while on the faculty at Murray State University were presented by Reichmuth.[5] These dissertations provided an introduction to biographical research and insight into means of researching, organizing, and writing.

To acquire a broad knowledge relevant to the topic, dissertations on early teacher training in general, in addition to music education in Texas specifically, were

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[4]Melvin C. Platt, Jr., "Osbourne McConathy, American Music Educator," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1971; Frank R. Olenchak, "Glenn Gildersleeve and His Contributions to Music Education (1894-1970)," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1977.

[5]Roger E. Reichmuth, "Price Doyle, 1896-1967: His Life and Work in Music Education," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, 1977.

researched. Studies by James, Smith, and Collins[6] deal with national developments in education for music teachers. Smith examined the changing level of preparation expected of music teachers during a time of dramatic music student increase. Each state adopted its own requirements and considerable variation is evident. Likewise, state variation in certification reflected different regional levels of music education development as shown by Collins.

A number of studies have proven helpful in compiling background reading on early instrumental music education in Texas. State Department of Education publications are a source of official data dating back to the beginning of this century. Annual reports and bulletins clearly outline music education development. Two studies in particular deal with organizations related to the professional activities of Col. Earl D. Irons. In a thesis, Mahan[7] compiled a history of the Texas Music Educators Association as it

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[6]Richard L. James, "A Survey of Teacher Training Programs in Music from the Early Musical Conventions to the Introduction of Four-Year Curricula," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 1968; Andrew W. Smith, "Undergraduate Music Education Curriculums for Public School Music Teachers from 1920 to 1930," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1970; Charlotte A. Collins, "Public School Music Certification in Historical Perspective," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1970.

[7]Jack H. Mahan, "The Texas Music Educators Association 1920-1949," unpublished master's thesis, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, 1949.

developed from a small organization of municipal band directors in 1920. Concerns of state band leaders are chronicled, such as the 1923 discussion of a "Band Tax Law" which had been quite successful in Iowa.[8] A study by Cook[9] deals with Texas music competition developments associated with the University Interscholastic League. The changing philosophies of music teachers toward contests are apparent throughout.

Other studies on Texas music education are those by Johnson and Sloan.[10] While very broadly conceived, the Sloan study does provide some details of public school music development. Primarily through examination of State Department of Education bulletins, perspective is given to music as seen through the eyes of those at various levels of the state education bureaucracy. The Sloan study offers an overview of the topic not available elsewhere. In 1920, "Bands were becoming more numerous around the state, yet their presence in schools was not deemed important enough by state

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[8] Ibid., p. 13.

[9] Bruce F. Cook, "Twenty-five Years of Music Competition Under University Interscholastic League Administration," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1975.

[10] Ray J. Johnson, "Music Education in Texas Higher Institutions, 1840-1947," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1951; David Walter Sloan, "History of Texas Public School Music," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1970.

officials to demand more than cursory acknowledgement in state music guides."[11]

When band instruction did exist, it frequently was tied to contests. In Texas, such band contests were noted as early as 1920.[12] Two research studies deal with early contests at the national level. The 1923 national contest sponsored by instrument manufacturers in Chicago to stimulate the sale of instruments is documented in research by Holz,[13] and Moore's[14] study covers the 1926-1931 national school band contests, which began in Fostoria, Ohio.

Parallels can be noted between the development of early contest bands and bands at colleges and universities. Early research on the college band was completed in 1929 by Buckton at Columbia University, where thirty of the most prominent bandmasters of the day participated through questionnaires.[15] General reference works on college bands are those

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[11] Ibid., p. 11.

[12] Ralph W. Beck, "History of the Band Association of Texas," Minutes and Procedures of T. M. E. A., Vol. I 1924-1961, p. 210.

[13] Emil A. Holz, "The National School Band Tournament of 1923 and its Bands," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1960.

[14] James E. Moore, "The National School Band Contests from 1926 to 1931," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1968.

[15] Laverne Buckton, "College and University Bands," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, New York, 1929.

by Fennell[16] and Graham.[17] Fennell provides a concise statement on the history of the college organization and its acceptance into the total music program. Graham singles out the University of Illinois and University of Michigan bands for detailed commentary. Starting with the leadership of Albert A. Harding, the history of the University of Illinois bands is traced by C. C. Burford.[18]

Haynie[19] arranges his research on college bands topically, covering repertoire, curricula, instrumentation, and leadership. Of particular interest to the present writer is the data on the leadership and a chart showing the movement of civic and military bandmasters into the colleges. Mention is made here of Col. Earl D. Irons and his teacher, Patrick Conway.[20] McCarrell[21] traces the history of college bands

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[16]Frederick Fennell, Time and the Winds (Kenosha, Wisconsin, 1954).

[17]Alberta Powell Graham, Great Bands of America (New York, 1951).

[18]C. C. Burford, We're Loyal to You Illinois (Danville, Illinois, 1952).

[19]Jerry T. Haynie, "The Changing Role of the Band in American Colleges and Universities," unpublished doctoral dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1971.

[20]Ibid., p. 196.

[21]Lamar Keith McCarrell, "A Historical Review of the College Band Movement from 1875 to 1969," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, 1971.

from their beginnings as student-directed groups. Much of the data are derived through the techniques of oral history. Insight into the early years of the college band movement was gained through interviews with Harold Bachman, Mark Hindsley, William Revelli, and Paul Yoder. Others interviewed were Glenn C. Bainum, Raymond Dvorak, and Leonard Falcone. McCarrell's narrative commences at the turn of this century and ends in 1969.

Cornet soloists were an integral part of most bands during the first part of the twentieth century. Since Irons was one of these, information was sought that would help to place his career into perspective with those of other famous soloists. Bridges[22] gives biographical sketches on not only cornetists but also trombonists of the era. Insight into the performance characteristics of the best known players is found in Bands of America, by Schwartz.[23] Among the players mentioned are Herman Bellstedt, Alessandro Liberati, Bohumir Kryl, and Herbert L. Clarke.

Biographical studies of instrumental music educators prominent in the band field number fewer than ten. One of these is the Weber[24] dissertation on the influential career

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[22]Glenn D. Bridges, Pioneers in Brass (Detroit, 1965).

[23]Harry W. Schwartz, Bands of America (Garden City, New York, 1957).

[24]Calvin Earl Weber, "The Contribution of A. A. Harding and his Influence on the Development of School and College Bands," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, 1963.

of Albert A. Harding. Harding was a key figure in the transition from professional touring bands to bands affiliated primarily with universities.

Leonard Falcone and William Revelli are two other college band directors featured in research. Welch[25] examined Falcone's professional influence through his years at Michigan State University. Specifically he looked at Falcone's philosophy, professional affiliations, relation with public schools, euphonium pedagogy and contributions to the university band. Cavanaugh[26] chose a specific time frame for his study of William Revelli. The years 1925-1935 are covered, during which time the Hobart, Indiana, high school band under Revelli's leadership, was active in the national band contests.

Research on the lives of Harold Bachman, Karl L. King, and H. A. Vandercook was also of particular interest in the present research. All three were contemporaries of Earl Irons and points of similarity can be found in their careers. The Tipps[27] study of Bachman shows the evolution of the famous

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[25]Myran Delford Welch, "The Life and Work of Leonard Falcone with Emphasis on His Years as Director of Bands at Michigan State University," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, 1973.

[26]George A. Cavanaugh, "William D. Revelli: The Hobart Years," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1974.

[27]Alton Wayne Tipps, "Harold B. Bachman, American Bandmaster--His Contributions and Influence," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1974.

bandmaster's career from his early days as a cornetist to his final position as band director at the University of Florida. Highlights in Bachman's career include experience as cornet soloist, circus performer on Chatauqua circuits, military and professional band leader, and educator.

The problems of the Gerardi[28] study include ascertaining significant influences in the life of Karl L. King, and cataloging his published music. As with Bachman, King began his career as a cornetist with circus bands. Gerardi shows how this early experience led to the development of composing and conducting skills. Gerardi employed techniques of oral history to gather data from King's professional associates.

The career of H. A. Vandercook as presented by Wilson[29] is the most parallel to that of Irons. Accomplished cornetist and composer, Vandercook devoted himself to developing teaching techniques and composing music suitable for young musicians. Through the Vandercook School of Music the training of early school band directors was achieved according to his principles of pragmatic education. Vandercook's dedication to the practical approach needed

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[28]Jess Louis Gerardi, Jr., "Karl L. King: His Life and His Music," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, 1973.

[29]Gilbert Edwin Wilson, "H. A. Vandercook, the Teacher," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri, 1970.

during his time is humorously noted in his skepticism of the, "long-haired, symphonic necktie system" that is ineffective in dealing with, "a bum bell-front Sears Roebuck E-flat alto that is sharp on low D."[30] The Vandercook study, as well as other biographical studies cited, serve the function of telling of an educator's achievements and also giving insight into the changing attitudes toward pedagogy and performance practice.

Biographical and General Information

Earl D. Irons was born on March 10, 1891, in Hopkins County, Texas, north of Sulphur Springs. His parents, John D. Irons and Martha Helen Grant Irons, managed a family farm. Both parents, while lacking formal instruction, were active in music, with John Irons performing on fiddle and cornet and Martha Irons performing on piano.[31]

As a small child, Earl received instruction from his father on a half-sized violin and at age ten took up the drums in order to participate in the town band. He started playing cornet one year later, again under his father's tutelage. After acquiring sufficient proficiency to enter the band as a cornetist, he received sporadic instruction from G. W. Black, an itinerant British bandmaster.[32]

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[30] Ibid., p. 14.

[31] Personal interview with Lena Irons, Arlington Texas, June 4, 1980.

[32] Personal interview with Lena Irons, Arlington, Texas, February 10, 1981.

During the first part of this century, there were no school bands in the region except for one that met occasionally in Terrell.[33] Consequently, outlets for performing were sought actively by student instrumentalists. Irons played in local theaters, and during high school this playing developed into a steady engagement with a local pianist.[34] In 1907 at age sixteen, Irons was recognized as an outstanding regional soloist. At this time he was chosen to endorse the cornets of the C. G. Conn Company.[35]

Following graduation from Sulphur Springs High School, Irons trained to be a tailor in Dallas because of the limited professional opportunities in music. During this period he maintained his skills on the cornet by occasional performances with traveling tent shows. This limited activity with music continued until his entry into the United States Army Air Corps in July, 1918.[36]

Irons was assigned to Camp MacArthur, in Waco, Texas. Camp MacArthur served as a replacement depot and school for

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[33]David W. Sloan, "History of Texas Public School Music," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1970, p. 19.

[34]Irons, interview, February 10, 1981.

[35]Advertisement picture postcard printed by C. G. Conn Company, Elkhart, Indiana, 1907.

[36]Irons, interview, February 10, 1981.

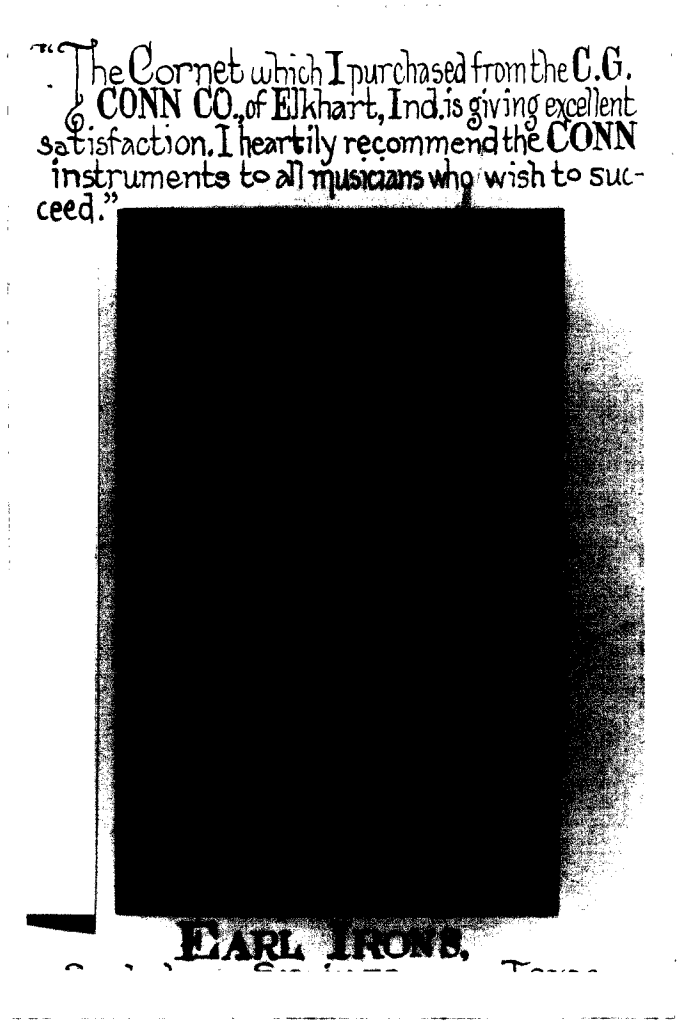

Fig. 1--Irons' endorsement of Conn instruments, 1907.

the training of musicians. His duties included auditioning incoming musicians and playing solo cornet with the camp band.[37]

During military service Irons had his first opportunity

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[37]Earl Irons, "Cornet Column," Texas Music Educator, VI (February, 1942), p. 4.

to study harmony, arranging, and composition. His teacher was Captain Patrick Conway, who by 1918 had established himself in the civilian band field by touring with his own professional band and recording for the Victor Company.[38] Conway was a prominent conductor of the period, leading an organization that appeared at the Panama-Pacific Exposition and featured such players as Ernest S. Williams, Joseph DeLuca, and Isadore Berv.[39]

After being discharged from the Air Corps in December, 1918, Irons returned to eastern Texas, and again due to financial difficulties he was forced to resume his career as a tailor. During these post-war years, he became discouraged by his inability to find work as a musician and vowed never to play again. It was not until 1920 at a tent show in Commerce, Texas that he became inspired to perform. Eddie See, known for his feats of virtuosity during intermissions of repertory shows, was the cornet soloist. After hearing this performance, Irons ordered a cornet from Whittle Music Company of Dallas and "commenced to practice from four to six hours a day."[40]

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[38]Alberta P. Graham, Great Bands of America (New York, 1951), pp. 89-90.

[39]Pat Conway and His Band, concert program, July 7, 1915.

[40]Irons, interview, Arlington, Texas, February 10, 1981; personal interview with Cothburn O'Neal, Arlington, Texas, May 20, 1981.

From 1920 to 1925 a career blossomed in teaching, directing ensembles, and performing. Teaching duties centered around his position at Burleson College in Greenville, Texas, as instructor of violin and wind instruments. Concert programs show his students playing a variety of instruments, with violin and cornet being the most common.[41]

Irons organized a municipal boys band at Sulphur Springs in 1920 and a similar band for the Greenville American Legion in 1922. These organizations provided the first band instruction in the area and furnished civic support to the city and civic organizations. On September 1, 1921, the Sulphur Springs Chamber of Commerce recommended a bandmaster's salary of one hundred dollars per month, thus assuring some financial stability in the music profession.[42]

By 1923 Irons was well established as a capable soloist. In January of that year he was heard over Dallas Radio Station WFAA and later over Fort Worth Radio Station WBAP, giving renditions of standard pieces including Clarke's Maid of the Mist and Llewellyn's Premier Polka.[43] In 1927 he became the solo cornetist with the Dallas Municipal Band under the direction of F. W. Barrows.[44]

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[41]Burleson College, music programs, 1922-1925.

[42]Sulphur Springs Gazette, September 2, 1921.

[43]Sulphur Springs Gazette, January 5, 1923.

[44]Dallas Municipal Band, program, July 1, 1927.

At the end of the decade, advance billings declared Irons, "one of the most efficient and capable cornet soloists of the Southwest." Irons' solo performances were compared favorably with those of Walter Paris Chambers, renowned cornetist of the late nineteenth century. The 1927 Texas State Fair solo performances by Irons with the Paul Ashley Concert Band, marked the first time featured musicians had not been imported from northern states for this event.[45]

In addition to professional responsibilities during the 1920's, Irons made time for further study. Correspondence courses in arranging and composition augmented his prior study with Conway. Trumpet lessons with Giuseppe Cinquemani, principal trumpet of the Dallas Symphony, and violin lessons with Walter Freid of Southern Methodist University provided needed formal training in performance skills.

During this same time Irons sought lessons with Herbert L. Clarke of Long Beach; however, these did not materialize until some years later.[46] In 1928, Irons joined ten other Texas bandmasters for a two-week course of study in band techniques conducted by Victor Grabel, director of the Chicago Symphony Band. Grabel, who at this time was director of the Sherwood Music School, director of the Chicago

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[45] Dallas Herald, October, 1927.

[46] Letter from Herbert L. Clarke to Earl D. Irons, Long Beach, California, September 17, 1924.

Symphony Band, and band editor of Etude Magazine, offered a level of expertise uncommon to the southwestern region of the United States.

Irons left eastern Texas in 1925 to assume leadership of the military cadet band of North Texas Agricultural College in Arlington. For the summer months this twenty-five-man group was called the Lone Star Military Band, traveling a thirteen-week tour of the midwest for the Redpath-Vawter Chautauqua. Eighty-one concerts in eight cities were given, with Irons as conductor and cornet soloist.[48]

At tour's end the honorary rank of ROTC Colonel was granted to Irons though upon entering faculty status in the Fall he had no earned degree in music. This situation was not uncommon at the time, however, as Albert A. Harding, an engineering major, directed the University of Illinois Bands, and likewise Charles A. Mann directed the band at the University of Wisconsin.[49] Thus Irons began an affiliation with North Texas Agricultural College in which he served in various posts including band director, brass teacher, and head of the Fine Arts Department, that would last until his retirement in 1958.[50]

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[47] Dallas Morning News, August 31, 1928.

[48] Lone Star Military Band, program, summer season, 1925.

[49] McCarrell, "A Historical Review of the College Band Movement from 1875 to 1969," p. 233.

[50] At retirement in 1958, the school was known as Arlington State College. It is today the University of Texas at Arlington.

As a campus organization, the NTAC Band continued to travel, entering contests and performing at conventions such as those of the Texas Band Teachers Association. These travels provided exposure for the young director, resulting in invitations to perform, conduct clinics, and adjudicate.[51] In addition, interest in the band developed to the point where during the thirties membership increased to nearly one hundred, and even during war years a good instrumentation was maintained.[52]

Irons' judging activities included thirty years at the Tri-State Music Festival in Enid, Oklahoma, starting in 1934, when he participated with the renowned conductors Albert A. Harding and Edwin Franko Goldman.[53] Many appearances as performer and clinician at such events as the Texas Tech Band Camps were to follow.[54]

Irons continued to have an interest in composition, and in the summer of 1935 traveled to the Chicago Conservatory to seek composition lessons with Prof. George Dewitt. His compositional activity increased markedly upon return to Arlington, as marches, overtures, and brass instrument solos were produced on a regular basis. Publishers such as Belwin,

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[51]Irons, interview, Arlington, Texas, February 10, 1981.

[52]Letter from Earl D. Irons to D. O. Wiley, Arlington, Texas, October 14, 1943.

[53]Tri-State Music Festival, official programs, 1934-1965.

[54]Texas Tech Band Camp, programs, 1934-1941.

Chart, Carl Fischer, Fillmore, Rubank, and Volkwein have offered over fifty of these in print.[55]

These compositions were appropriate training material for young bands and were a response to a dearth of original band works during the era. The brass solos were of the cornet coloratura style of the period, complete with multiple articulations, cadenzas, and other technical demands. Many of the compositions are described as being functional and well-received during the period.[56]

While studying composition in Chicago in 1935, Irons also took cornet lessons, and these were his first formal tutoring with a teacher of national stature. Richard Stross, former soloist with John Philip Sousa's band, was Irons' teacher for the summer. According to publicity for the Sousa concert at Willow Grove in 1920, Stross was billed as the "high note King" and "lip trill King."[57] His range was said to have been to C^3 and an octave above.[58] Cornet solos completed by Irons after 1935 employ some of the high-register notes for which Stross was famous.

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[55]Appendix A provides a listing of the compositions and their publishers.

[56]Personal interview with Milburn Carey, Fort Worth, Texas, May 15, 1981; personal interview with J. W. King, Plainview, Texas, January 19, 1981; Paul Yoder, tape recorded response to prepared questions, Troy, Alabama, April 20, 1981.

[57]Sousa Band Concert, program, 1920.

[58]Schwartz, Bands of America, p. 286.

As a conducting teacher and guest conductor, often for his own compositions, Irons was quite active. At various times from 1938 to 1941 his advice to students was printed in the Texas Music Educator and the School Musician. He made a guest appearance with Karl L. King and the Fort Dodge, Iowa, Municipal Band in 1930,[59] and in 1939 was one of several conductors featured at the National Music Clinic at the University of Illinois.[60] Beginning in 1935, he conducted the Tri-State Festival Band numerous times, sharing the stage with such figures as Edwin F. Goldman, Frank Simon, Albert A. Harding, Joseph Maddy, Henry Fillmore, and Glenn Cliffe Bainum.[61]

In the early forties, he spent several summers in southern California, teaching and performing. One such trip in August, 1941, involved west coast brass players at the twentieth annual Summer Master School sponsored by the Hollywood Conservatory and Professional School.[62] During the same period, an acquaintance dating back to 1924 was renewed when Irons appeared on two occasions as a guest of Clarke, conducting the Long Beach Municipal Band.[63]

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[59]Texas A & M System News, August, 1930.

[60]National Music Clinic, program, January 5-7, 1939.

[61]Tri-State Music Festival, programs, 1934-1960.

[62]Hollywood Conservatory, brochure, 1941.

[63]Texas Music Educator, VI (December, 1941); Fort Worth Star Telegram, February 3, 1942.

Through the years Irons was active in various music organizations such as the band fraternity Phi Beta Mu and the state groups of Texas. Along with D. O. Wiley and R. J. Dunn, he was one of the first members of the Texas Band Teachers Association. Furthermore, he was a participant in the prestigious American Bandmasters Association, serving in 1951 as president of that group.[64] Figure 2 shows Irons shortly after being elected on March 9, 1951.

Fig. 2--ABA president Earl D. Irons with Washington D. C. military band conductors.

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[64]American Bandmasters Association eighteenth annual convention program, 1952.

Numerous honors were bestowed upon Irons during his lifetime. Among these was a commission as a Lieutenant Colonel on the staff of Texas Governor James Allred in 1935, awarded for "outstanding achievement in teaching, conducting, and judging."[65] Once the nomination process was initiated, Irons actively sought the honor, the benefit being added prestige for his military music organization at NTAC.[66]

The Zoellner Conservatory in Hollywood, California awarded an honorary doctorate to Irons in 1942. In conferring the degree, Dr. Amandus Zoellner paid tribute to "the high merit of his contribution to the art of music in the field of research, pedagogy, and professional ethics."[67] Irons was elected honorary lifetime president of Phi Beta Mu in honor of his role in the founding of that fraternity, and in 1965 was selected by the Texas Bandmasters Association as their "Bandmaster of the Year."[69]

Upon his retirement from Arlington State College in 1958, the board of regents granted Irons the honorary rank

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[65]Commissioning Certificate, May 6, 1935.

[66]Letter from Earl D. Irons to D. O. Wiley, Arlington, Texas, January 5, 1934.

[67]Zoellner Conservatory D.Mus. diploma, February 3, 1947.

[68]Texas Music Educator, VI (March, 1942).

[69]Telegram from Ralph Burford to Earl D. Irons, July 30, 1965.

of Professor Emeritus, in recognition of thirty-three years of service to the institution.[70] Some years after his death, on May 11, 1967, one final honor was granted. During the nation's bicentennial year, the National Music Council and Exxon Corporation presented two historic landmark plaques to the State of Texas. One was to Texarkana, honoring Scott Joplin, while the other was to Arlington, honoring Col. Earl D. Irons.[71]

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[70]Letter from President Jack Wolf, Arlington State College, January 16, 1962.

[71]Arlington Citizen-Journal, May 26, 1976.

CHAPTER III

IRONS' INVOLVEMENT IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Texas Band Teachers Association

The primary function of the Texas Band Teachers Association from its beginning in 1924 was to oversee the development of municipal bands and later the transition of bands into the public schools. As stated specifically in the charter, the association was incorporated "for the purpose of the promotion and betterment of municipal bands."[1] Toward this end, emphasis was given to certain topics of concern, as evidenced by the record provided by association minutes. These topics were bandmaster ethics and image, bandmaster educational standards and certification, bands in the public schools, and band contests.

Irons' involvement in this association and its undertakings can be traced back to the initial statewide organizational meeting of bandmasters held in Sherman, Texas, on June 21, 1924. At this time he was appointed to the first of his many committee posts, that of chairman of the finance committee.[2] From this time forth, Irons

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[1]Texas Band Teachers Association Charter, January 19, 1925, p. 107.

[2]Minutes and Procedures of T. M. E. A., 1924-1961 (Austin, Texas), I, p. 2.

was prominent in the Texas Band Teachers Association, serving as office holder, committee member, and lecturer.

According to bandmasters who witnessed the growth of band activities during the 1920's, the image of band leaders was frequently negative.[3] The popularity of bands as recreational outlets for children gave rise to a situation where people were eager to become involved in bands, not thinking about the quality of instruction. Frequently this interest was answered through the efforts of the itinerant bandmaster,[4] some of whom made a practice of "selling the instruments, getting things going, then moving on and doing it again in the next town without delivering adequate instruction."[5]

Associated with the public's view of the bandmaster was an image of financial irresponsibility and drunkenness. Individuals forced into debt by low salaries often resolved their problems by leaving town. The public's perception of musicians as excessive users of alcohol further served

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[3]Personal interview with R. T. Bynum, Abilene, Texas, March 13, 1981; personal interview with Jack Mahan, Arlington, Texas, October 17, 1981; personal interview with Wesley May, Midland, Texas, February 21, 1981; personal interview with Weldon Covington, Austin, Texas, November 21, 1980; personal interview with Robert Fielder, Dallas, Texas, March 6, 1981.

[4]Clarence Bryn, "Public School Training in Vocational Schools," Jacobs Band Monthly (June, 1926), pp. 5-6.

[5]Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981.

to tarnish the image of the early bandmaster.[6]

Well into the thirties, problems stemming from the image of early bandmasters were evident. As an example, in 1935 Wesley May, then a young band director in Pecos, Texas, was greeted with disdain by people who had observed itinerant bandmasters. May stated, "When the school superintendent would introduce me to someone, they would laugh in my face, absolutely laugh out loud."[7]

That this problem was of concern to the TBTA is evidenced throughout the association's minutes. At one convention session in 1932 a majority of the period was spent on this topic, with members discussing their profession and how to place it in better favor with the public. Members went so far as to admit the existence of "peddlers and financial grafters" within their ranks.[8]

As early as 1929, Irons was involved in association efforts to purge the profession of undesirable elements. In a January 18 meeting he took part in a discussion of ethics, resulting in the formation of a committee to study the same, and Irons along with others was charged with the responsibility of drawing up guidelines for professional

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[6]Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981; Covington, interview, November 21, 1980; personal interview with Nelson Patrick, Austin, Texas, November 20, 1980.

[7]May, interview, February 2, 1981.

[8]Minutes and Procedures, p. 45.

behavior to be included in a code of ethics.[9] A year later the situation had progressed to the point where the behavior of certain individuals was openly discussed before the membership. At this time the "financial looseness" of two members was discussed by Irons and others.[10]

That Irons was vocal in his disdain for those unscrupulous within the profession is confirmed by May, as well as R. T. Bynum, director at Abilene High School, both who were present at his speeches during the TBTA meetings and social events.[11] At one such meeting in 1931, Irons spoke on high standards and their effect upon school music in particular. According to Bynum, "The thrust of the Colonel's speech was to try to build an image so that parents and school people would want to have their children under our guidance."[12]

Further evidence of Irons' dedication to uplifting the image of the bandmaster can be found in the TBTA Code of Ethics, authored by Irons and others, which was distributed to Texas band directors in 1933. The major points made in the document are,

> To be a member of the Texas Band Teachers Association one must consider himself to be primarily a

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[9] Ibid., p. 21.

[10] Ibid., p. 25.

[11] May, interview, February 21, 1981; Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981.

[12] Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981.

> teacher of music and wind and percussion instruments. Other vocations or side lines, especially that of selling musical instruments or merchandise, should be considered subordinate except when one is employed by a music house and has a fixed location. The practice of temporarily locating as a band teacher but ostensibly to sell musical instruments is condemned by this association. The band teacher should be scrupulous in the prompt payment of bills, and careful in the incurring of financial obligations.[13]

The association's vigorous efforts led to the eventual elimination of the behavior and image of bandmasters as a point of major concern. Irons' leadership role in motivating bandmasters to emulate high standards of professional conduct and impose sanctions against offenders was significant in altering the situation. The practice by Irons and other board members of investigating new applicants as to past record, character, and worthiness[14] resulted eventually in an improvement of the image of association members that made further discussion unnecessary after 1935.[15]

The second major area of concern for members of the TBTA was bandmaster educational standards and teaching certification. Due to the lack of band training programs in the colleges of the Southwest, directors were assuming jobs at various levels of preparedness during the twenties and thirties, some having only a high school diploma and others a college degree in a field outside of

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[13]Texas Band Teachers Association Code of Ethics, 1933.

[14]Minutes and Procedures, p. 13.

[15]Ibid., p. 74.

music. Preparation for teaching is illustrated in a 1916 survey conducted by the Texas State Department of Education, which shows the education level of music teachers and their involvement in school programs. Of the classified high schools in the state, only eight reported having music teachers of any kind, and only two of these held degrees.[16]

As late as 1925 there is indication that at least some members of the TBIA had never even conducted a band.[17] Noting that such conditions were not limited to the Southwest, Victor Grabel, band editor for Etude Magazine, in 1928 lamented the shortage of qualified band teachers available to fill the ever increasing number of post-war band positions,[18] and corroboration of this situation is provided by all memoirists who were active in band work during the period.[19]

As an example of lack of preparation and minimum standards, one memoirist, R. T. Bynum, assumed his first band job at Abilene High School in 1926 with a college degree in

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[16]Texas State Department of Education, Texas High Schools, Bulletin No. 58 (Austin, Texas, 1916), pp. 21-30.

[17]Minutes and Procedures, p. 5.

[18]Victor J. Grabel, "Practical Rehearsal Routine for High School Band and Orchestra," Etude, XLVI (March, ;928), p. 199.

[19]Maddox, interview, March 14, 1981; Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981; Covington, interview, November 21, 1980; O'Neal, interview, May 20, 1981, Arlington, Texas; May, interview, February 21, 1981, Midland, Texas; personal interview with Earl Ray, Lubbock, Texas, January 10, 1981.

Spanish and no band training.[20] Robert Maddox's business degree from Baylor University allowed him to teach typing, shorthand, and general business, as well as band after school at Ranger, Texas, in 1928, though he had never had a music course.[21] That same year Earl Ray taught band in Monahans, Texas, with no degree at all and continued to do so for the next twelve years.[22] In addition, Cothburn O'Neal and Wesley May began teaching band with degrees in English and mathematics respectively, with May's first teaching occurring at the relatively late date of 1935.[23]

The TBTA effort to gain better training for bandmasters was led by Irons and others, who stressed the "importance of more music schools in Texas."[24] A short-term approach to the problem resulted in summer programs designed to provide directors with at least basic skills in directing. Irons is seen as an instrumental figure in the development of this type of educational program, starting with his establishment of the first Texas college summer band school in 1929.

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[20]Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981.

[21]Maddox, interview, March 13, 1981.

[22]Ray, interview, January 10, 1981.

[23]O'Neal, interview, May 20, 1981; May, interview, February 21, 1981.

[24]Minutes and Procedures, p. 29.

The North Texas Agricultural College Band School ran for six weeks from June 10 to July 20, under the guest leadership of Ed Chenette, who along with A. R. McAllister was active in the development of band programs in Illinois.[25] In announcing his program to teachers at the 1929 TBTA convention in Dallas, Irons described the venture thus: "The purpose of the school is to meet a need that now exists in Texas public schools for trained bandmasters and for adequate instruction in the use of the various band instruments."[26]

The idea of supplemental study for music teachers was not original with Irons, as the University of Illinois and Albert A. Harding had aided directors for several years prior to 1929.[27] In addition, a summer normal institute in general music was offered by the Texas State Department of Education in 1922,[28] and Whittle Music Company in 1928 sponsored a two-week workshop with Victor Grabel, conductor of the Chicago Symphony Band.[29] However it can be stated that Irons' effort was the first in Texas aimed exclusively at

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[25]North Texas Agricultural College, official brochure, 1922.

[26]Dallas Morning News, June 8, 1929.

[27]Letter from Albert A. Harding to D. O. Wiley, Urbana, Illinois, April 11, 1947.

[28]Texas State Department of Education, Summer Normals, Outline of Course of Study, Bulletin No. 147 (Austin, Texas, 1922), p. 72.

[29]Dallas Morning News, August 31, 1928.

bandmasters in large numbers, and that it provided the impetus for development of further programs.

While the summer course introduced by Irons lasted but one year, his support of this type of program remained strong. He was an advocate of establishing an annual summer program under the auspices of the TBTA when the idea was first presented on January 23, 1931, and he led discourse over the proposed encampment, offering the facilities of his campus at North Texas Agricultural College.[30] The following year he again gave his support and extolled, "the great benefits derived from such a school." At this same meeting in 1932 Irons recommended that a board of directors be formed to direct the school, at which time he nominated R. J. Dunn of Texas A & M as top administrator, a move that was later approved by the membership.[31]

The TBTA Summer Camp School began operation in 1931 in Lampasas in much the same form as had been employed by Irons two years earlier. Echoing Irons' statement of 1929, a TBTA announcement read,

> The objects of the summer camp are, raising the standards of bands and band music in Texas, the development and improvement of bands in the public schools, and to coach and refresh the band teacher in the various subjects which concern him.[32]

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[30] Minutes and Procedures, pp. 30-32.

[31] Ibid., p. 46.

[32] Texas Band Teachers Association Summer Camp School, program, 1931.

Irons' influence is seen also in other summer training programs that followed, like the one at Texas Tech. From this camp's beginning in 1934 through 1941, he conducted and presented his ideas on brass pedagogy and band arranging to large numbers of practicing and prospective band directors.[33]

Other avenues pursued at conventions for improvement of membership educational standards were the presentation of concert literature in live concerts and clinic-work-shops. As early as 1925 the role of the association in elevating standards was noted by Irons in a motion to "set aside some given time at the conventions for instruction in teaching bands and round-table talks."[34] References to time devoted to band teaching technique are found throughout association records. That such activities took place is verified by the accounts of individuals in attendance. According to Ralph Mills, R. T. Bynum, and others, directors were anxious to work on their weaknesses, and oftentimes such work took place during informal sessions led by Irons.[35]

Throughout the thirties the TBTA was divided into regions, and under Irons' leadership as president of the Western Division from 1930 to 1935, lengthier clinic sessions

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[33]Texas Tech Band Camp, programs, 1935-1941.

[34]Minutes and Procedures, p. 3.

[35]Personal interview with Ralph Mills, Huntsville, Texas, May 19, 1981; Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981.

were arranged to give directors more opportunity for in depth study. One such clinic sponsored by the Western Division took place in Fort Worth on December 11, 1935. The clinician was Albert A. Harding, of the University of Illinois, who rehearsed and lectured a full day, using a ninety piece demonstration band made up of students from Irons' band at NTAC as well as students from Texas Christian University and Highland Park High School.[36]

It was Irons' desire that clinics of such significance be held on a regular basis,[37] and in 1936 this idea was realized when annual clinics featuring major national band figures were instituted. In expanding upon the ideas of the Western Division, the TBTA selected an individual to work with a student clinic band while observed by directors. William D. Revelli of the University of Michigan was the first clinician for this event, appearing at the 1936[38] and 1937 conventions.[39] With this development can be seen the continual addition of more convention time for improving band techniques, initially emphasized by Irons a decade earlier.[40]

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[36]Fort Worth Star Telegram, December 11, 1935.

[37]Letter from Earl D. Irons to D. O. Wiley, Arlington, Texas, November 3, 1935.

[38]Texas Band Teachers Association, convention program, January 31-February 1, 1936.

[39]Minutes and Procedures, p. 96.

[40]Ibid., p. 5.

The practice of presenting concert literature through live performances at TBTA conventions was also initiated by Irons, in 1932. On this program as well as others, in 1934 and 1935, the NTAC Band under his direction performed representative works of the period, such as "Invercargil March,"[41] and new compositions by Irons.[42] Regular concerts by guest bands and the performance of new band compositions became standard features of conventions, utilizing such college groups as the Baylor University Band in addition to the NTAC Band.[43]

As the quality of bandmaster training improved, a movement came about to more closely regulate membership in the TBTA according to musical competency. Suggesting the total lack of training of some of the men seeking membership in 1925, Irons and others presented a motion stating that "All members of the association that have never successfully directed a band, and are absolutely incapable, be ejected from the association."[44]

Memoirists consulted had clear recollections of Irons' position on control of membership and his related orations

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[41]Texas Band Teachers Association, official program, January 27, 1934.

[42]Texas Band Teachers Association, official program, January 29, 1932.

[43]Minutes and Procedures, p. 55.

[44]Ibid., p. 5.

at TBTA gatherings.[45] In describing such presentations it was stated that, "He was very definite and very blunt with his criticism and praise. You knew where you stood at all times with Colonel."[46] Weldon Covington, former supervisor of music in Austin, Texas stated, "If there was anything dealing with standards, he was in on it."[47]

Irons' involvement with the regulations of TBTA membership is further confirmed by his service on association committees. In 1927, he served on one such committee that drafted plans for an examining board.[48] An amendment to the constitution eminated from this panel, stating that each new applicant be given

> Such written and other examinations as the Association may adopt, a grade of seventy-five percent being necessary to pass such examination. All work to be graded by the president and secretary and such applicants as may make a grade of less than seventy-five percent and more than fifty percent may be accepted as associate members.[49]

Irons continued in efforts to elevate new member standards of the association through his years as vice-president from 1931 to 1933.[50] His place on examining boards and committees

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[45]Maddox, interview, March 14, 1981; Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981; Covington, interview, November 21, 1980.

[46]Maddox, interview, March 14, 1981.

[47]Covington, interview, November 21, 1980.

[48]Minutes and Procedures, p. 12.

[49]Texas Band Teachers Association Constitution, Article 3, Section 4.

[50]Minutes and Procedures, p. 29.

was a continual one, and through it he was able to be in contact with new directors wishing to qualify. Eventually opportunities brought about by better college curricula and TBTA educational programs elevated bandmaster standards to the point where concerns on standards were alleviated and examinations halted. TBTA records show no mention of association standards being discussed after 1933.[51]

The fervor over membership standards in the TBTA during this era carried over into state public school administration, where the TBTA began moving to have band teachers certified. Association records show that Irons, himself a teacher with neither a degree nor certification of any kind until 1938,[52] was inactive in this movement, which finally resulted in the baccalaureate degree with a minimum of forty-two hours in music being required for certification to teach in Texas,[53] a requirement advocated by the TBTA in 1939.[54]

The third basic concern of the TBTA, as alluded to earlier, was the role of music in the public schools. The inclusion of music in the public school curriculum was

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[51] Ibid., p. 58.

[52] Texas Teacher Permanent Special Certificate, September 1, 1938.

[53] Texas State Department of Education, Teaching Music in Texas Schools, Bulletin No. 422 (Austin, Texas, 1942), pp. 13-14.

[54] Minutes and Procedures, p. 159.

part of a process begun around 1920, when bands first appeared in rehearsals scheduled after school hours. By 1920, band was being recommended by the Texas State Department of Education, but only "as a means of creating interest among boys."[55] The movement away from municipal bands into the schools was a continuous one, and as stated by R. J. Dunn in 1932, "Demand for municipal bands to play has diminished rapidly within the past fifteen years. The growing importance of school and college bands is the principal cause of this."[56]

Having bands as a permanent fixture worthy of credit in the curriculum was a prime goal of Irons and the TBTA. During the thirties Irons was active in promoting this goal, according to directors who taught during that decade.[57] In meetings he frequently made his convictions known, as at the January 23, 1931 TBTA session in which he joined others in a discussion of the "value of music in the schools that should be recognized by the school board," saying, "it is up to us to see that it [music] be recognized as it should be."[58]

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[55]Texas State Department of Education, Texas High School Music, Bulletin No. 119 (Austin, Texas, 1920), pp. 11-13.

[56]Fort Worth Star Telegram, January 30, 1932.

[57]Maddox, interview, March 14, 1981; Ray, interview, January 10, 1981; personal interview with Joe Haddon, Wichita Falls, Texas, November 14, 1980.

[58]Minutes and Procedures, p. 29.

In 1933 the transformation from bands primarily of a municipal nature to school organizations meeting during class time came about through recommendation by state authorities, resulting in a change in the state course of study. Accreditation was offered for band and orchestra in the form of two units credit for four years of study.[59] A corresponding growth in school band activity is readily seen in the graph shown in Figure 3, taken from a 1939 study by Edward Brewer.[60] Although Irons was not directly involved with the public schools, it has been noted that he was instrumental in the advance of bands into the schools,[61] and based upon correspondence, association records, and other material from the period, it is evident that he, to a great extent, was responsible for the initial success of band teaching, once bands were incorporated into the schools.

In a 1933 memorandum to Irons and other band activists, Nell Parmley, state supervisor of music in Texas, made it clear that the success of academic band programs hinged on the effective standardization of band teaching and teaching

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[59]Texas State Department of Education, The Teaching of Music in Texas Public Schools, Bulletin No. 318 (Austin, Texas, 1933), p. 25.

[60]Edward Brewer, "The Status of Instrumental Music in Texas," unpublished master's thesis, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1940.

[61]Haddon, interview, November 14, 1980; Maddox, interview, March 14, 1981; Ray, interview, January 10, 1981.

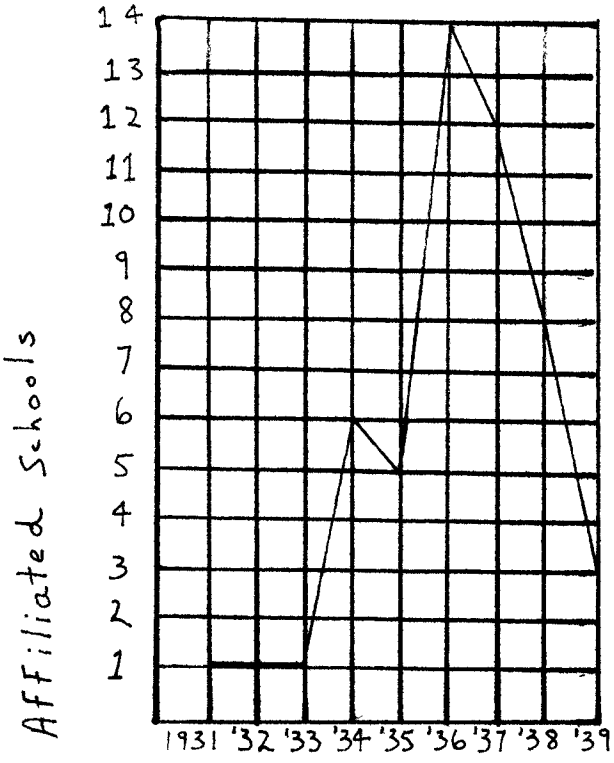

Fig. 3--Growth in instrumental music.

materials statewide.[62] Efforts on behalf of teaching standardization were immediately made by the TBTA during the 1933 convention in Waco. Through his position as vice-president, Irons presided over the January 28 meeting, directing discussion for much of the session toward standardization. Irons himself spoke on standards of school band performance, specifically the areas of tone quality, attack, and phrasing, and appointed a committee to present association recommendations on band teaching standardization to the

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[62]Letter from Nell Parmley to Earl D. Irons, Austin, Texas, February 27, 1953.

Texas State Department of Education.[63]

With the ensuing adoption of a statewide standardized instructional method book by the Texas State Department of Education,[64] progress was made toward the goal of a unified approach to band teaching. The Method of Class Instruction by John Victor, noted trombonist and brass teacher, provided a vehicle for standardized instruction. However, some state officials were still not content, feeling that more in this area needed to be done.[65] In an effort to alleviate any skepticism about the use of a standardized method in the schools, the TBTA scheduled two three-day workshops in 1937 in cooperation with the Texas State Department of Education. Regions were established, with the eastern section meeting in Austin on November 1-3 and the western section gathering in Lubbock on November 4-6.[66]

The classes held during these three days were part of the effort to have band subjects taught statewide at a similarly high level, and were "designed to dispense better knowledge of the course of study."[67] Eminating from

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[63] Minutes and Procedures, p. 52.

[64] The Teaching of Music in Texas Public Schools, Bulletin no. 318, p. 25.

[65] Letter from L. A. Woods to Lyle Skinner, Austin, Texas, July 3, 1935.

[66] "State Will Hold School of Instruction," Texas State Band and Orchestra Magazine, II (September, 1937), pp. 3-4.

[67] State School of Instruction, souvenir program, November 4-6, 1937.

this was the ultimate student objective as stated in the Texas Department of Education Bulletin of 1937. It read, "By proper use of the textbook material, the students should develop the ability to sight read program material."[68]

As an active member and former president (1930-1935) of the Texas Band Teachers Association Western Division, Col. Irons was a key figure in the organization and presentation of the Lubbock clinic, encouraging attendance of all band directors and serving as toastmaster of the convocation of directors in attendance.[69] In addition, he taught one of several classes established to provide a unified approach to the teaching of the various instruments in conjunction with the Victor Method. Other classes instructed by musicians like Bruce Jones, H. E. Nutt,[70] Weldon Covington, and Robert Maddox, covered various aspects of class instruction, again as they related to this method.[71]

The State School of Instruction was the final major activity for the Texas Band Teachers Association as the

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[68]Texas State Department of Education, Teaching Music in Texas High Schools, Bulletin No. 378 (Austin, Texas, 1937), p. 37.

[69]"It Had Never Been Done Before," Texas School Band and Orchestra Magazine, II (December, 1937), p. 3.

[70]Bruce Jones of Little Rock High School was known nationally for his work in instrumental education, as was H. E. Nutt of the Vandercook School of Music.

[71]State School of Instruction, souvenir program, November 4-6, 1937.

success of their teaching standards and standardization of method capped a steady evolution of bands which began at the beginning of the century. A similar growth in other music organizations brought about additional influence by choirs and orchestras which resulted in the 1938 transformation of the Texas Band Teachers Association into a diversified organization serving all music teachers of the state, called the Texas Music Educators Association.

Texas Music Educators Association

Growth in music education areas other than band resulted in an increasing agitation among choir directors, in particular, to become affiliated with a comprehensive state music organization, and advantages in this affiliation were noted in 1938. It was argued that having one representative organization for all groups would provide an uplift for choral programs, since directors would be able to take advantage of an established association format for the organization of contests and convention educational programs. In addition, some felt that there were benefits to be gained by having a unified voice for all music education in Texas. Most important, it was believed that school superintendents would look favorably upon such an affiliation, as they had previously announced a preference for "an organization to include all phases of music."[72]

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[72]Minutes and Procedures, p. 127.

Opposition to association changes was strong within the ranks of the band profession. Expressing this sentiment in a 1938 meeting on the issues, Everett McCracken stated, "It's going to be rather hard for some of the old timers to take the idea that the band will not occupy the spotlight."[73] Indeed, opposition to reorganization was initially expressed by Irons out of concern that the bandmasters who had developed the Texas Band Teachers Association might lose their identity. Bynum, Mahan, and Ray have furnished similar accounts of Irons' position, with Bynum stating, "The directors, including Colonel, felt we'd be overwhelmed vote-wise, interest-wise, and project-wise by the preponderance of choral people."[74]

The Texas Music Educators Association, which combined band, choral, and orchestra areas, became a reality in 1938 but dissatisfaction with the new arrangement continued among bandmasters until the convention of February 1, 1940. At this time problems were presented in an open forum entitled, "Shall We Change Our Present Form of Administrative Organization." At the conclusion of this meeting, a dismantling of the association was avoided with the three divisions, choral, band, and orchestra, accepting greater

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[73] Ibid., p. 128.

[74] Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981; Mahan, interview, October 17, 1981; Ray, interview, January 10, 1981.

independence in administering their areas.[75]

Once the reorganization issue was resolved, it appears that Col. Irons, through his considerable influence, served as a force of reconciliation and stabilization among the divisions. He actively promoted the various phases of the TMEA as well as the band organization formed in 1940, known as the Texas Bandmasters Association. His support of all sections of music education is seen in his commitment to the vocal section, when he served as Region III vocal chairman in both 1944[76] and 1945.[77] Additionally, Irons showed his interest in orchestra education through a lecture delivered before the TMEA on February 2, 1940, dealing with the high school and college orchestra.[78]

In addition to being a cohesive force offering support in diverse areas, Irons' leadership within the TMEA after 1940 developed into two distinct areas. On the one hand, he was a comprehensive clinician-teacher, and on the other he was a motivator and inspirational speaker, while his duties as office-holder and policy-maker became less frequent.

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[75] Texas Music Educator, IV (March, 1940), p. 3.

[76] Letter from Grady Harlan to Earl D. Irons, Arlington, Texas, June 3, 1944.

[77] Texas Music Educators Association, Bulletin No. 15 (Austin, Texas, 1945), p. 3.

[78] Texas Music Educators Association Convention, Program, February 2, 1940.

As a respected teacher, Irons was a prominent figure in TMEA educational output during the decade from 1940 to 1950, appearing not only on brass clinics but on band sessions as well. His brass pedagogical ideas were regular features of association publications, the Texas School Band and Orchestra Magazine and the Texas Music Educator, as these ideas were presented in his cornet articles, which appeared sixteen times.[79] His brass clinics were the only ones presented in formal sessions before the membership during those years.[80]

Starting in 1941 with the first TMEA instrumental clinic, Irons addressed the top student cornetists in the state, those who were All-State Band members, and their directors.[81] That interest in his teachings was considerable at the time is verified by association records showing an attendance of seventy-four student observers,[82] who paid a one-dollar fee for the privilege of attending.[83]

This session in 1941 followed a format which became

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[79]Texas State Band and Orchestra Magazine, April 1938-June 1938; Texas Music Educator, September 1939-April 1942.

[80]Texas Music Educators Association Convention, programs, 1941-1949.

[81]Texas Music Educators Association Convention, program, February 13, 1941.

[82]Texas Music Educator, V (March, 1941), p. 11.

[83]Letter from Weldon Covington to participating directors, Austin, Texas, February 1, 1941.

common to later clinics.[84] According to this format, a student or students, in this instance John Haynie of Mexia, Texas, was chosen for a demonstration of lip flexibility and range through lip slurs. Irons' own composition, Emerald Isle, was used as a vehicle for the demonstration.[85] It has been noted by some in attendance that Irons clearly presented ideas at these sessions different from those generally known to students and teachers of the time.[86]

The success of the 1941 session was such that instrumental teaching events like those begun by Irons took a permanent place in the agenda of future TMEA conventions. Figure 4 shows Irons demonstrating during one of these sessions. Other cornet clinics by Irons, such as the one described, took place in 1948[87] and 1941.[88] Based upon the fact that Irons' ideas about brass playing were the only ones formally presented during the forties, and that the following generation of cornet clinicians were his students and exponents of his ideas,[89] it can be deduced

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[84]Maddox, interview, March 13, 1981; Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981.

[85]Texas Music Educator, V (March, 1941), p. 3.

[86]May, interview, February 2, 1981; Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981.

[87]Minutes and Procedures, p. 337.

[88]Ibid., p. 369.

[89]Texas Music Educator Association Convention, programs, 1951-1959.

Fig. 4--Irons' cornet clinic at 1949 TMEA Convention.

that Irons' brass pedagogy was the dominant influence on students and teachers attending TMEA conventions for more than a decade.

Irons' role as a comprehensive clinician-teacher is further exemplified in his leadership of the convention clinic bands which were begun under the direction of William Revelli in 1936. With many directors in military service and travel restricted, the engaging of a clinician from outside of Texas became less feasible. However the practice

of involving school students in an honor ensemble, giving the directors the chance to hear well prepared concert compositions, was carried on by Irons and others.[90]

In 1946, two clinic bands were formed, allowing for greater student participation, with Irons sharing conducting duties with other Texas music educators, including Alto Tatum, Jerome Zoellner, and G. O. Allessandro.[91] Again in 1947, the two clinic bands were used, one being designated for concert and the other for sight reading. Irons was responsible for the latter, and as had been his practice since his first conducting appearance in 1932, he performed a new work for the occasion, the selection being his own Elder Statesman March.[92]

The second distinct area of involvement for Irons after 1940 was motivational and inspirational speaking. A number of times during TMEA functions, he was heard delivering talks which were described as inspiring by members present. The first such occasion was at the February 1, 1940, convention in Mineral Wells, at which time he spoke on "the band movement in Texas from a college director's viewpoint."[93] Exact details of this speech are

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[90] Minutes and Procedures, p. 311.

[91] Texas Music Educators Association, Bulletin No. 17 (Austin, Texas, 1946), p. 4.

[92] Texas Music Educators Association Convention, program February 5-8, 1947.

[93] Texas Music Educators Association Convention, program, February 1-3, 1940.

unclear, but accounts by two directors present relate that Irons' words were enthusiastic and geared to motivate those present.[94]

Again in 1944, with a reduced wartime membership necessitating a curtailment of normal annual activities, Irons spoke before his fellow members at the April 8 board of directors' meeting. At this time he challenged them to actively recruit members in order to maintain strength within the association, saying, "If the program is to be a success, the membership of the TMEA must be larger."[95] Irons' role of inspirational leader is referred to in an account of this event describing the "fine and inspirational speech encouraging us to go ahead with our important music work."[96]

Irons' activities as both clinician and motivator, such as those mentioned, qualify him as a key figure in the early development of the TMEA. Particularly during World War II, his leadership along with that of a few others provided a cohesiveness that allowed the association to remain intact. Later the TMEA resumed its full original function, and eventually developed into a diverse vehicle for the promotion of music education, and became the largest music

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[94]Maddox, interview, March 14, 1981; Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981.

[95]Minutes and Procedures, p. 297.

[96]Texas Music Educators Association, Bulletin No. 4 (Austin, Texas, 1944), p. 1.

organization of its kind in the United States.[97]

Texas Bandmasters Association

As a charter member of the Texas Bandmasters Association, Irons' role can be viewed as similar to that which he assumed in the TMEA, especially during the years of World War II, when organizational activity was reduced to a minimum. Starting in 1940 and continuing through the first years of the TBA, he endorsed the coexistence of that organization with the TMEA by being an enthusiastic supporter of both.

Some controversy exists both in written and oral accounts as to the early years of the TBA as well as Irons' involvement in it. In part, this confusion stems from the fact that the original music association in the state, the Texas Band Teachers Association, is similar in name to the Texas Bandmasters Association, even though there is no relation between the two. Also the TBA, during World War II, was somewhat different in personnel and activities than the post-war group, leading some memoirists to feel that there were two separate band associations during the forties bearing the same name.[98] To set the record

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[97]1981 active membership statistics on state music organizations available from Southwestern Musician-Texas Music Educator, XXXXIX (May, 1981), p. 2 and Don Dillion, Executive Director, Music Educators National Conference, Reston, Virginia.

[98]Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981; May, interview, February 21, 1981.

straight, it can be deduced from the careful examination of records that the TBA during and after World War II was the same organization, with continuous membership held by Irons and others.

As stated previously, the TBA emerged as an outgrowth of TMEA band men during the February 1, 1940, meeting on statewide reorganization. The original contingent of thirty dissident band men, including Irons, sought to protect their interests against the increasing influence of the choir directors. The originally stated objectives of this group were "to foster fraternal relationships and professional advancement among bandmasters."[99] It is noted by several that Irons strongly promoted the TBA as a stand-by organization, designed to take action if the TMEA failed to meet the needs of band men.[100]

In this stand-by role, it is apparent that the fraternal aspect of the group received the most attention initially, as indicated by the occurrence of regular social events. Evidence that the organization was in continual existence, even though limited to social gatherings such as "smokers" during TMEA conventions, is available from convention

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[99]Texas Bandmasters Association Constitution, February 1, 1940.

[100]May, interview, February 21, 1981; Ray, interview, January 10, 1981; letter from R. T. Bynum to Gary Barrow, Abilene, Texas, July 5, 1981.

records,[101] and extand articles such as membership cards show that TBA memberships were available at least through February of 1941.[102]

Irons' leadership posture in the early TBA is exemplified by his speeches such as one on February 12, 1942, before a session of the TMEA convention. He promoted the young band organization in a speech entitled, "The Need for a Texas Bandmasters Association Among Texas Band Men,"[103] this presentation being the only one of an official nature concerning TBA to be heard before that year's TMEA assemblage. Still another event during this convention points to his position of TBA leadership, his election to the presidency of the association.

At the conclusion of the 1942 meeting, Irons was elected to a one-year term of office. This election is another point of controversy in the early history of TBA, as alluded to previously, with several memoirists consulted expressing doubt that this event occurred. To substantiate that the event actually took place, it was necessary to consult both written and oral sources.

TBA written records from 1942 do not exist; however,

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[101] Texas Music Educator, February, 1942 through Southwestern Musician, January, 1940.

[102] Texas Bandmasters Association, membership card, 1940-1941.

[103] Texas Music Educator, VI (February, 1942), p.22.

there are a number of news reports describing convention happenings. Three such accounts can be found in the Texas Music Educator,[104] The Galveston Daily News,[105] and The Hopkins County Echo,[106] all reporting that Irons'election took place. By looking to these alone, it can be conjectured that an inaccurate news release was printed. However, one testimony reinforces the fact that Irons held office, and a process of elimination returns the event logically to the year 1942. R. T. Bynum, as secretary-treasurer of the TBA from 1940[107] through 1942[108] was in a position to witness the proceedings at first hand. While Bynum's recollection of date is not definite, he confirmed that Irons at one time did serve as president, and 1942[109] is the only year mentioned in extant written accounts.

After World War II the TBA placed more emphasis upon its professional development needs, and with an increase in membership brought about by the war's end, it implemented a plan for annual summer conventions emphasizing new music and marching bands. The first such clinic, directed by

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[104] Texas Music Educator, VI (March, 1942), p. 3.

[105] The Galveston Daily News, February 14, 1942.

[106] The Hopkins County Echo, February 15, 1942.

[107] Texas Bandmasters Association, membership card, 1940-1941.

[108] Texas Music Educator, VI (March, 1942), p. 3.

[109] Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981.

Irons as well as Paul Yoder and D. O. Wiley, was held in San Antonio on September 2 through September 4, 1948.[110] The idea of new compositions being presented at conventions dates back to Irons' first appearance with the North Texas Agricultural College Band at the TBTA convention of 1932.[111] The new emphasis upon marching band drills was also promoted by Irons, according to Mahan and Irving Dreibrodt of Southern Methodist University.[112] The marching band clinic made use of a clinic band consisting of high school students from San Antonio.

As originated by Irons and others, this basic convention format of the TBA, catering to the practical concerns of band directors, has continued until the present, with slight variation.[113] This convention has continued to serve the needs of large numbers of Texas directors for Fall preparation, much in the same pragmatic way that the first TBTA convention clinic did in 1936,

The TBA board of directors gave much credit to Irons for state music organizations when in 1965 they gave him the TBA Bandmaster of the Year Award.[114] Irons' influence upon this

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[110] Texas Music Educator, XII (September, 1948), p. 12.

[111] Minutes and Procedures, p. 38.

[112] Personal interview with Irving Dreibrodt, Dallas, Texas, August 5, 1981; Mahan interview, October 17, 1980.

[113] Texas Bandmasters Association Convention, program, July 27-30, 1980.

phase of band development in the Southwest, through activities previously described, is confirmed by memoirists[115] and is expressed by Joe Haddon, who stated, "There was something about the Colonel. He stood out from the people he was around. He was head and shoulders above the others. To me, when you say 'Irons,' you say the band program in Texas. I don't suppose anybody has been more influential."[116]

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[114]Telegram from Ralph Burford to Earl D. Irons, July 30, 1965.

[115]Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981; Ray, interview, January 10, 1981; Dreibrodt, interview, August 5, 1981; King, interview, January 19, 1981; Haddon, interview, November 13, 1980; May, interview, February 21, 1981.

[116]Haddon, interview, November 13, 1981.

CHAPTER IV

IRONS' CONCEPT OF BRASS PEDAGOGY

For the convenience of the reader, this chapter is organized in the following manner. Irons' concept of brass pedagogy will be explored as far as the development of his ideas, relation to other teachings, explanation of his ideas, and influence upon students and teachers in the Southwest.

Basic Tone Production

The embouchure, or facial muscles involved in tone production on cupped mouthpiece instruments, is an element of basic instruction that has always received attention by teachers. Starting in the late nineteenth century, a common concept related to embouchure frequently used the words "stretch" or "smile" to describe the posture of the lip muscles involved in brass instrument tone production.

Two respected methods mentioned most frequently by music educators active during the first four decades of the twentieth century both describe the embouchure in this manner. J. B. Arban pictured the lips as being stretched,[1] while Saint-Jacome gives the following

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[1]Jean B. Arban, Complete Method of Instruction for the Cornet à Pistons and Saxhorn (Paris, 1864), p. 5.

instructions for embouchure formation, "In placing the mouthpiece, first the lips rest on the teeth and should be extended equally as in a smile."[2]

Music educators interviewed who were students during the era attest to the prevalency of this method of embouchure setting. Both Weldon Covington[3] and John Haynie[4] were involved with such instruction as band students in Texas. As lip stretching was a largely accepted practice, teachers promoted this explanation of embouchure, and additional writings of the period confirm the practice. O. A. Peterson in his 1924 treatise on the cornet related how as a beginner he was instructed to make the lips form "as if smiling"[5] when playing. In directions to band teachers, John Victor stated, "draw the muscles back just a little as if smiling."[6] It was Victor's Method for Band that was widely distributed in the Southwest and became the

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[2]Louis Antoine Saint-Jacome, Saint-Jacome's New and Modern Grand Method for the Cornet or Trumpet (New York, 1894), p. 2.

[3]Personal interview with Weldon Covington, Austin, Texas, November 21, 1980.

[4]Personal interview with John J. Haynie, Denton, Texas, February 10, 1981.

[5]O. A. Peterson, The Cornet (New York, 1924), pp. 32-33.

[6]John F. Victor, Victor Method of Class Instruction for Band and Orchestra (Abilene, Texas, 1936), p. 208.

state recommended band text for Texas in 1937.[7]

An embouchure setting contrary to the prevalent one was advocated by Irons as early as 1925,[8] his idea being that excess stretching of the lips encouraged a thinning of the tone. He emphasized holding in or firming the corners of the mouth and described the embouchure thus:

> I recommend placing the mouthpiece firmly to the lips with the mouth in a natural position, the teeth and lips practically together; then pull the teeth rather wide apart to take a breath, but do not stretch the part of the lips that are inside the mouthpiece. Leave the teeth about one-fourth inch apart and bring the corners of the mouth in toward the mouthpiece and blow.[9]

A perusal of texts dealing with embouchure shows that while not alone in his opposition to the "smile system," Irons was among a minority of instructors with similar views. Relating to embouchure is the placement of mouthpiece upon the lips and the mouthpiece and instrument angle to the lips. Some disagreement early on is seen in regard to placement, with Arban recommending one-third of the mouthpiece on the top lip[10]

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[7]Nell Parmley, "The Teaching of Music in Texas Public Schools," State Department of Education Bulletin No. 378, XIII (1937), p. 45.

[8]Covington, interview, November 21, 1980.

[9]Earl D. Irons, "Cornet Column," Texas Music Educator September, 1939), p. 14.

[10]Arban, Complete Method of Instruction, p. 5.

and Saint-Jacome the opposite.[11] Other authorities, such as Goldman,[12] Clarke,[13] and Williams,[14] established positions through their writings. Irons, like Clarke and Williams, taught a compromise placement, with half of the mouthpiece on the top lip and half on the bottom lip, the idea being that this arrangement allowed for proper vibration from the top lip and adequate support from the lower lip.[15]

Instrument angle parallel with the floor was common practice, particularly in military bands. Irons made his position on this matter clear through two instructional articles in 1941. In one he advised that the instrument angle should be parallel with the floor only if the front teeth are in perfect vertical alignment. The feeling was that conforming to an unnatural position simply for the sake of appearance resulted in strain and possibly

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[11]Saint-Jacome, New and Modern Grand Method, p. 1.

[12]Edwin Franko Goldman, Foundation to Cornet or Trumpet Playing: An Elementary Method (New York, 1936), p. 5.

[13]Herbert L. Clarke, Setting Up Drills (New York, 1935), p. 4.

[14]Ernest S. Williams, The Ernest S. Williams Modern Method for Trumpet or Cornet (New York, 1936), p. 7.

[15]Covington, interview, November 21, 1980; letter from Earl D. Irons to Hugh Fowler, Arlington, Texas, 1939.

undue pressure on the upper lip for some players.[16]

A second instructional article followed his experimentation with instrument angle. The result was a function described as "rocking of the mouthpiece" upon the lips with changes in register.[17] It was not until some years later that Irons came to use the term "pivot" in referring to instrument angle and alignment with the teeth. This practice of pivoting the bell upward for low pitches and downward for high pitches, as described by Donald D. Reinhardt in the book Pivot System,[18] became a standard part of his cornet demonstrations. Even though he did not always use the term "pivot" specifically, this motion was observable in his playing and taught in his later lessons.[19]

Development of controlled lip vibration as a part of basic tone production was stressed by Irons and others. Hale A. Vandercook of Chicago was an early advocate of lip buzzing to develop the proper embouchure vibrations in beginning pupils. In his Modern Method of Cornet Playing

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[16]Earl D. Irons, "Cornet Column," Texas Music Educator, VI (December, 1941), p. 15.

[17]Earl D. Irons, "Cornet Column," Texas Music Educator, VI (October, 1941), p. 7.

[18]Donald S. Reinhardt, Pivot System for Trumpet (Philadelphia, 1942).

[19]Personal interview with Hugh Fowler, Jr., Dallas, Texas, February 10, 1981; Haynie, interview, November 21, 1981.

of 1922, he presented the following steps for the beginner: (1) lip buzzing without the mouthpiece, (2) buzzing the mouthpiece, and (3) blowing the instrument.[20] Irons was familiar with these ideas and used them as early as 1924 as evidenced by a personal letter to Vandercook dated October 6 of that year.[21]

Lip buzzing and mouthpiece buzzing were used in Irons' teaching of beginners and were related to his sustained tone exercises.[22] Both types of practice were used to create sensitivity in the embouchure and to strengthen the performer's tone.[23] For tone improvement specifically, he instructed cornet and trumpet players to "practice sustained tones in all registers, starting softly with a gradual crescendo up to about F, then diminuendo to ppp, listening to see that the tone does not raise or lower in pitch."[24]

The significance of exhalation in basic tone production

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[20]Hale A. Vandercook, Modern Method of Cornet Playing (Chicago, 1922), p. 22.

[21]Letter from Earl D. Irons to H. A. Vandercook, Arlington, Texas, October 6, 1924.

[22]Sustained tone exercises as described here can be found in groups three, fifteen, and sixteen of Irons' Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises.

[23]Earl D. Irons, "Cornet Column," Texas State Band and Orchestra Association Magazine, II (April, 1938), p. 9.

[24]Earl D. Irons, "Cornet Column," Texas Music Educator, VI (April, 1942), p. 5.

was emphasized by Irons, but his explanation of the process, as with many of his colleagues, was not totally accurate from a physiological standpoint. In explaining breath support, the role of the diaphragm was routinely stressed. Emphasizing this function of the diaphragm, he quoted Herbert L. Clarke as having said, "Breath and wind power, which if controlled and put to proper use by the diaphragm, is ninety percent of correct cornet playing."[25]

Such emphasis upon the diaphragm was common during the 1940's and earlier. As examples, Joseph Gustat, principal trumpet with the St. Louis Symphony, suggested "expanding the diaphragm for upper register playing."[26] Likewise Max Schlossberg wrote of air "supported by the diaphragm,"[27] and problems resulting from "overuse of the diaphragm" were discussed by Ernest S. Williams.[28]

Lip Flexibility

Irons' concept of lip flexibility development was based primarily upon the lip slur. Of all the pedagogical

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[25]Earl D. Irons, "Cornet Column," Texas Music Educator, VI (January, 1942), p. 4.

[26]Joseph Gustat, "Breath Control," School Musician, VIII (October, 1936), p. 23.

[27]Max Schlossberg, Daily Drills and Technical Studies for Trumpet (New York, 1941), p. 1.

[28]Ernest S. Williams, "Problems in the Teaching of Brass Instruments," School Musician, VII (1936), p. 13.

ideas presented to students and educators of the Southwest through the years, none stand out in the minds of the individuals interviewed more than his lip slur concept.

The lip slur as discussed here is common to brass instruments and can be defined as movement between tones in the harmonic series of an uninterrupted air stream, without the aid of valves or slide. Its importance in developing lip flexibility, or the ability to move between the various registers while keeping the mouthpiece in contact with the lips, can be traced to the nineteenth century writings of the French cornetists Saint-Jacome and Arban. Preceding slur exercises in his method, Saint-Jacome wrote, "Suppleness of the lips is a very important quality to be acquired; you should therefore apply yourself to practicing carefully the following exercises."[29] Similarly Arban's introduction to his slur studies states, "This portion of my method is undeniably one of the most important."[30]

The traditional explanation of the physical movement required for the lip slur is alluded to in Arban's Complete Method for Cornet. He explained that movement between pitches while slurring is accomplished by "the

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[29]Saint-Jacome, New and Modern Grand Method, Vol. 1, p. 109.

[30]Arban, Complete Method of Instruction, p. 37.

tension of the muscles and also by the pressure of the mouthpiece on the lips." Furthermore he stated, "the above embellishments (lip slurs) are produced solely by the movement of the lips."[31] Similar explanations, giving sole responsibility for the slur to the movement of the lips, are found throughout the literature. An examination of the instructional literature prior to 1930 by this writer found few explanations substantially different from Arban's in 1865.[32]

Phenomenal feats requiring great fluidity of embouchure were common to the cornet virtuosi at the turn of the century. Included in this illustrious group of performers were Walter Paris Chambers,[33] Herbert L. Clarke,[34] Allesandro Liberati,[35] and Jules Levy.[36] In the instructional literature these great artists sometimes referred to certain techniques vaguely in terms such as "the right kind of practice."[37] For example, in the writings of

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[31] Ibid., p. 38.

[32] The reader is referred to the bibliography for specific titles consulted.

[33] Glenn D. Bridges, Pioneers in Brass (Detroit, Michigan, 1965), pp. 19-20.

[34] John Philip Sousa, Marching Along (Boston, 1928), p. 323.

[35] Herbert L. Clarke, How I Became a Cornetist (Saint Louis, 1934), p. 39.

[36] Clyde E. Noble, Psychology of Cornet and Trumpet Playing (Missoula, Montana, 1964), p. 22.

[37] Bridges, Pioneers in Brass, p. 19.

Herbert L. Clarke can be found references to skills attained through "secrets of playing without exertion"[38] and avoiding exertion "when one knows."[39] Clarke did not, however, provide specific written information concerning these concepts.

In 1925 an initial effort was made by one of the virtuosi to write down instructions for techniques of lip flexibility through slurring which were different from those of Arban. Alesandro Liberati, writing in his Method for Cornet, made an effort, although unclear, to show a relationship between the oral cavity and slurring. He stresses the mental operation of thinking the syllable name corresponding to each scale degree. He stated, "First speak the syllable names, then alphabetical names to help place the voice for cornet singing and likewise help form an embouchure without forcing the mouthpiece hard against the lips."[40] One interpretation of this vague concept is that the slur may be accomplished without great physical effort of the lips.

Similarly in the same year as Liberati, O. A. Peterson presented his unconventional ideas on slurring. He agreed

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[38]Letter from Earl D. Irons to D. O. Wiley, Arlington, Texas, March 30, 1930.

[39]Letter from Herbert L. Clarke to Earl D. Irons, Long Beach, California, March 29, 1937.

[40]Alesandro Liberati, Alesandro Liberati's Method for Cornet (New York, 1925), p. 4.

with Arban and others that slurring helps develop strength and flexibility; however, in method he departed from the standard explanation and instead vaguely espoused techniques attributed to Walter Paris Chambers. Like Liberati, Peterson referred to the inside of the mouth in stating that the technique "is sort of a syllable, tu-ee, yu-ee, yu-ee, and so on."[41]

During this same time period Irons was developing technical skills on cornet which resulted in his being praised as a nationally ranked performer, whose "solos during and since the war have placed him in the ranks of the real artists."[42] By the later twenties his successful playing motivated his curiosity, resulting in experimentation with concepts in lip slurring.[43] This experimentation was carried forth through his work with student cornetists and culminated in his Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises, which he published on January 14, 1938.

By the 1930's other brass pedagogues began to develop their own explanations of embouchure flexibility through lip slurs similar to those of Irons, even though none were as complete or as thorough. Ernest S. Williams recognized

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[41]Peterson, The Cornet, p. 36.

[42]Dallas Times Herald, October, 1927.

[43]Covington, interview, November 21, 1980; Irons interview, February 10, 1981.

through his own playing that flexibility was not so much lip and manipulation as it was "a certain movement of the larynx and the base of the tongue."[44]

Pattee Evenson, of Eastman and the Rochester Philharmonic, acknowledged in 1936 that in fact the tongue had some function in slurring.[45] In his book, Lip Flexibility, Walter M. Smith provided the most detailed explanation of the oral cavity as it relates to slurring that had been done up to that time. Alluding to the infancy of such ideas in print, he wrote, "this type of playing has never to my mind been properly stressed."[46]

The system of slurring presented by Irons was based primarily upon two separate but related physical movements. The first movement involves the raising and lowering of the middle section of the tongue to alter effectively the size of the oral cavity. To ascent in pitch, the tongue center would arch toward the roof of the mouth. On the contrary, a descent in pitch would be accomplished by the lowering of the center of the tongue.[47]

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[44]Williams, "Problems in the Teaching of Brass Instruments," p. 13.

[45]Pattee Evenson, "Trumpeters! Mind Your Cue," School Musician, VIII (November, 1936), p. 18.

[46]Walter M. Smith, Lip Flexibility on the Cornet or Trumpet: Forty-One Studies for Embouchure Development (New York, 1935), p. 2.

[47]Earl D. Irons, Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises (Arlington, Texas, 1938), p. 3.

In Irons' words, the ascending lip slur "is actually performed with the tongue by placing the end of the tongue at the base of the lower teeth and arching it in the middle slightly."[48] Furthermore he stated,

> In the actual use of the tongue for pitch variation, it is well to note that the rise of the tongue is more pronounced between tones in the lower register. Just as the tones possible with the same fingering are closer together in the upper register, so too are the tongue positions closer together, making the rise of the tongue hardly perceptible as it approaches the roof of the mouth.[49]

The second physical movement in slurring involves the lips themselves. Irons taught that the corners of the mouth were never to be pulled tight as in a smile, but rather that they would be "always kept firmly against the teeth."[50] As the pitch lowered, the portion of the lower lip inside the mouthpiece rim would "turn over slightly and away from the upper lip. For the high tones, it will be necessary to pull the lower lip slightly in toward the upper lip."[51]

The lip flexibility exercises used in Irons' teaching were designed to make use of the gamut of pitches

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[48]Earl D. Irons, "Cornet," Texas Music Educator, V (October, 1940), p. 16.

[49]Earl D. Irons, Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises, p. 5.

[50]Ibid., p. 4.

[51]Ibid.

available to the performer. In the Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises certain exercises call for a range from f sharp to g^3. Common to most all of the exercises is a final tone in the low register of the instrument (c^1 down to f sharp on the cornet or trumpet). This did not occur by chance, the purpose being definite, according to Irons' students. He told to both John Haynie[52] and Keith Amstutz[53] that low tones at the finish of an exercise were necessary to relax the lip and maintain control.

Furthermore according to Haynie, Irons felt that there was a potential problem with tongue arch in that one tends to keep the tongue arched too highly. Playing at full volume on these low pitches, he felt, "forced the tongue down and opened the jaw."[54] The importance of the final low tones was emphasized also by Irons in his explanation of his fifth through tenth groups of exercises.[55] In referring to group five, (see Figure 5) he stated, "The last note in each group or phrase is an octave below the starting tone and provides the relaxation of the tongue and lips which is

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[52]Haynie, interview, February 10, 1981.

[53]A. Keith Amstutz, tape recorded response to prepared questions, Columbia, South Carolina, July 7, 1981.

[54]Haynie, interview, February 10, 1981.

[55]Irons, Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises, p. 8.

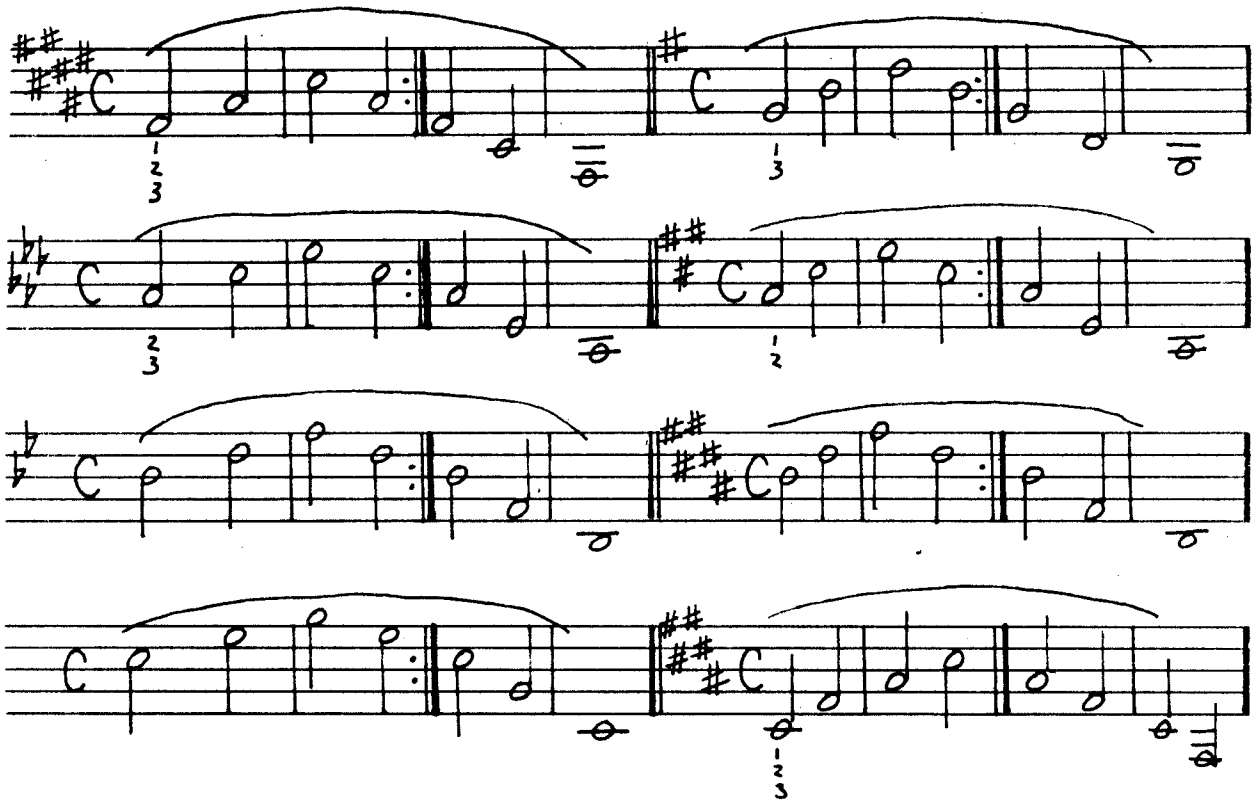

Fig. 5--Use of low tones in the Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises.

of vital importance to progress in this method of embouchure development."[56]

As an extension of the lip slur exercise, Irons made use of glissando exercises in his teaching. The glissando on cornet or trumpet is an arpeggio or scale executed with a continuous air stream, touching the notes in passing and employing a uniform fingering.[57] Such figures, as

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[56]Ibid., p. 6.

[57]Smith, Lip Flexibility on the Cornet or Trumpet, p. 11.

found in his study groups twenty-three and twenty-four, required the same physical maneuvers as the previously explained lip slurs but demanded much greater speed of execution.[58]

Figure 6 shows one glissando designed to test a player's lip flexibility and breath control as illustrated through measures one, eight, and fourteen. Irons instructed the

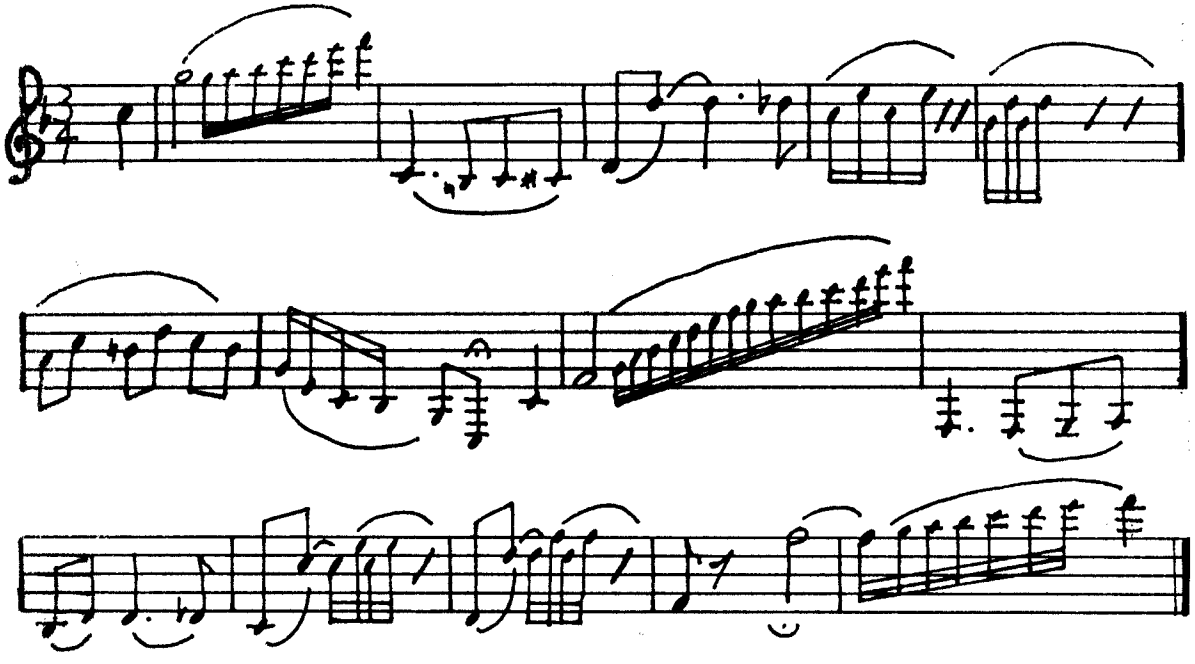

Fig. 6--Exercise using glissandi.

student to finger measure one with the first and third valves and likewise measure fourteen. The eighth measure was to be played with normal fingerings until the top of the staff, at which time first and third valves would be

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[58]Irons, Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises, pp. 18-19.

used for the balance of the measure.[59]

Numerous other examples of the glissando are to be found in the writings and compositions of Irons. Both of his solos, Grand Canyon and Emerald Isle, have such passages requiring this technique. Figure 7 is the opening cadenza from Grand Canyon. As can be observed, extensive use is made here of the glissando.[60]

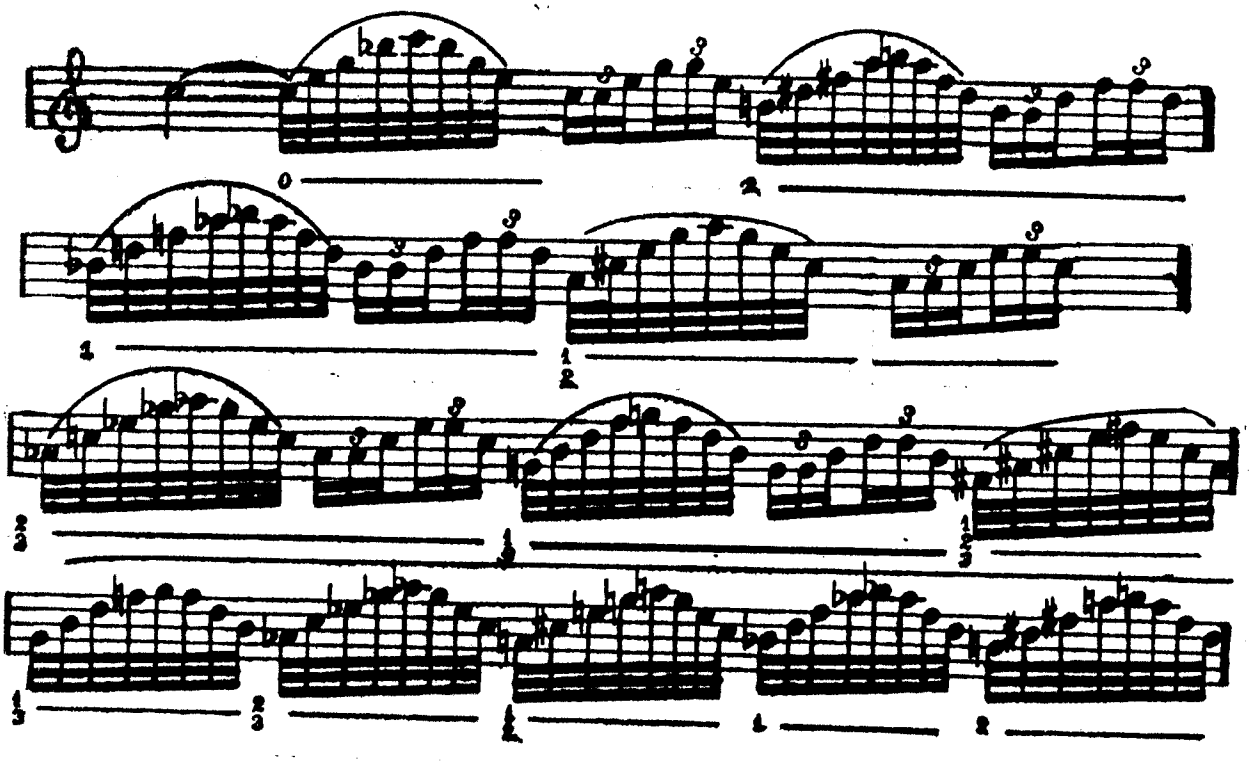

Fig. 7--Grand Canyon, cornet solo.

As mentioned previously, Irons' concept of embouchure

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[59]Earl D. Irons, "Cornet Column," Texas Music Educator, V (January, 1941), p. 12.

[60]Earl D. Irons, Grand Canyon (New York, 1942).

flexibility was the result of experimentation alone and with his students, as well as advice from professional colleagues. A number of his students have related that throughout the period between 1925 and 1935 he was constantly involved with the explanation and refinement of this pedagogy both in the private lesson and the clinics.

Both Alfred Riley and Weldon Covington were exposed to these concepts during cornet lessons at North Texas Agricultural College during this period, suggesting that the ideas on slurring with an arched tongue were in present use long before Irons wrote his book.[61] Clinic sessions provided another outlet for development of these ideas.

One such proving ground was the summer band schools held at Texas Tech, in Lubbock starting in 1934. A large number of band directors and students were present at those sessions, including several who were interviewed. Joe Haddon,[62] Charles Wiley,[63] and Earl Ray[64] all remember Irons' early explanation of flexibility as being tied directly to his lip slur method of instruction. In the

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[61]Covington, interview, November 21, 1980; personal interview with Alfred Riley, Fort Worth, Texas, February 6, 1981.

[62]Personal interview with Joe Haddon, Wichita Falls, Texas, November 13, 1980.

[63]Charles A. Wiley, Tape recorded response to prepared questions, Beaumont, Texas, March 30, 1981.

[64]Personal interview with Earl Ray, Lubbock, Texas, January 10, 1981.

words of Wiley, son of D. O. Wiley, who was Texas Tech music director at the time, "The Twenty-Seven Groups were used during the Texas Tech camp years. His proof sheets were seen at the camps and a demonstration of every page was given."[65] Irons routinely talked of placing the tongue high in the mouth for upper pitches and demonstrated this by playing the cornet and illustrating on the blackboard.[66]

In the Foreword to Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises, Irons credits his exercises to some extent to study and conversation with "the very finest cornet players in the country."[67] Based upon a rather complete collection of correspondence, it is recorded that Irons was a personal friend of several leading cornetists of the day, like Walter M. Smith, Herbert L. Clarke, and Frank Simon. While he never studied with Frank Simon, their friendship can be traced back to a contest meeting in Abilene, Texas, in 1930.[68] Numerous meetings and opportunities for the exchange of ideas occurred through the years at American Bandmasters

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[65]Wiley, tape recorded response to prepared questions, March 30, 1981.

[66]Haddon, interview, November 13, 1980.

[67]Irons, Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises, p. 2.

[68]Letter from Frank Simon to Earl D. Irons, Cinncinati, Ohio, July 6, 1931.

Association functions,[69] regional contests in Texas,[70] and the Tri-State Music Festival in Enid, Oklahoma.[71] Simon's professional background was extensive, with study as a pupil of Herman Bellstedt and playing with Sousa's band. Consequently a mutual interest was found, and, according to observers, Irons discussed cornet playing frequently with Simon.[72]

Of the fine soloists mentioned, it is difficult to link Irons' ideas on lip flexibility to any of them, with the exception of Herbert L. Clarke. Their first personal meeting was on May 29, 1930, when Irons played first chair cornet in a massed band concert conducted by Clarke. In a letter confirming this occasion, Clarke refers to "secrets of how to play the cornet without exertion."[73]

While judging together in Lawrence, Kansas, on May 10, 1935, Irons observed Clarke's lecture entitled

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[69]American Bandmasters Association, official program, July 6, 1931.

[70]National School Band Association Festival, official program, May 19-21, 1938.

[71]Tri-State Music Festival, official programs, 1936-1938; personal interview with Milburn Carey, Fort Worth, Texas, May 15, 1981.

[72]Carey, interview, May 15, 1981; Irons, interview February 10, 1981; Covington, interview, November 21, 1980.

[73]Letter from Herbert L. Clarke to Earl D. Irons, Long Beach, California, April 10, 1935.

"Cornet Playing, Its Possibilities and Difficulties."[74] It was rare for Clarke to present information in such a formal setting. Normally, informal sessions or lessons were held between the two, according to persons present. These persons reported a close relationship between the two cornetists[75] fostered by frequent mutual judging assignments such as the 1937 division contest in Lubbock[76] and several Tri-State Music Festivals starting in 1938.[77]

While these meetings can only hint at the possibility of pedagogical exchange, correspondence is again the key to establishing such a situation. Following the 1937 meeting in Lubbock, Clarke refers to a discussion held there. "I was so pleased to meet you again and have a real old chat," Clarke wrote. In reference to "artificies" [sic] learned many years ago, he states that these "enable the player to do his work with so much ease, without the torture of the old days." "As I told you," he continued, "it's so simple when I learned and practiced, and the

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[74]National Music Festival Program, May 10, 1935; letter from Herbert L. Clarke to Earl D. Irons, Long Beach, California, July 6, 1935.

[75]Covington, interview, November 21, 1980; Carey, interview, May 15, 1981; Irons, interview, February 10, 1981.

[76]Texas Band Teachers Association Western Division Contest, program, April 29-May 1, 1937.

[77]Tri-State Band Festival, official program, April 21, 1938.

results prove in my daily practice."[78] Three months later in reply to another Irons' letter, Clarke wrote, "It pleases me that the suggestions I gave you have proved beneficial."[79]

One final letter dated after the publication of Irons' book confirms the instruction therein to be like that practiced by Clarke. He wrote,

> Let me congratulate you for carrying out the first elementary exercises for both lip muscles and breath control, which are most necessary for any good soloist to master lip flexibility and muscular embouchure. Your forward [sic] illustrations of the back of the tongue raised to make the inside of the mouth shallow, is the "knack" of producing high tones. Such exercises have been my practice for years. I am using your book in my practice now to make my playing easy and effective after my retiring from solo work, as a demonstration to my pupils.[80]

The "knack" that Clarke refers to had been presented by Walter Smith and others; however, Irons' detailed explanation of tongue arch as it relates to specific syllables was unique. While working on the manuscript, Irons brought ideas to Cothburn O'Neal, who was at the time an English professor and student of linguistics. Together they collaborated upon selected vowel sounds to

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[78]Letter from Herbert L. Clarke to Earl D. Irons, Long Beach, California, May 29, 1937.

[79]Letter from Herbert L. Clarke to Earl D. Irons, Long Beach, California, August 9, 1937.

[80]Letter from Herbert L. Clarke to Earl D. Irons, Long Beach, California, May 9, 1938.

correspond to the movement of the tongue for the various registers.[81]

The Development of Modern English, by Stuart Robertson, a linguistics text, served as the primary source in the development of an explanation. The illustration in Figure 8

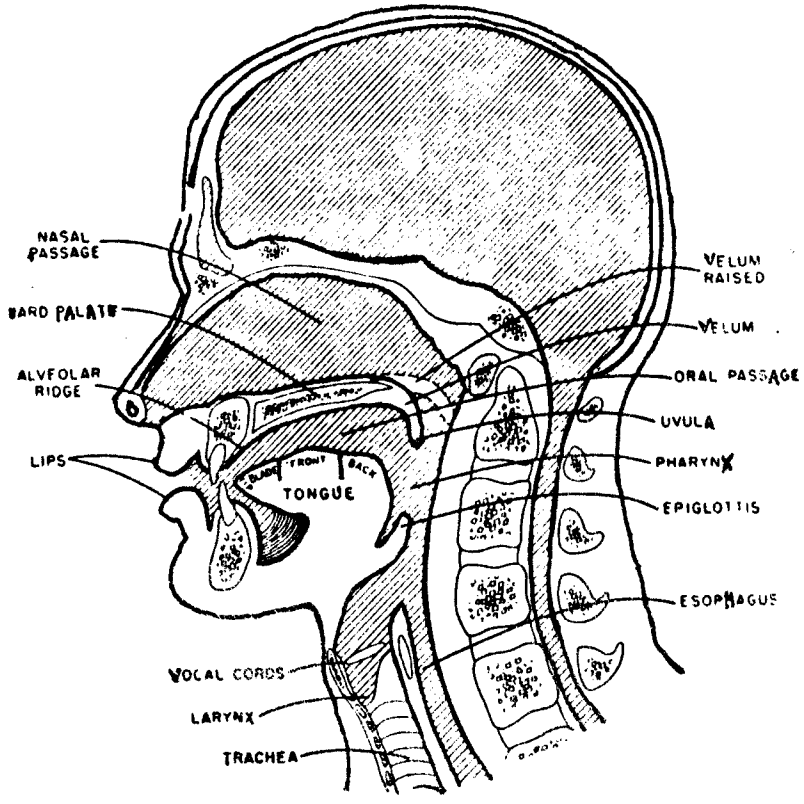

Fig. 8--Oral cavity.

is Robertson's diagram of the oral cavity, upon which the diagrams on page three of the Twenty-Seven Groups

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[81]Personal interview with Cothburn O'Neal, Arlington Texas, May 20, 1981.

of Exercises are based.[82]

The tongue positions corresponding to syllables ranging from "ah" for lower pitch to "ee" for high pitch were taken from page fifty-nine of Robertson's book.

Upon publication of Irons' book in 1938, a number of letters were forthcoming from musicians impressed with the exercises and, above all, the clarity and simplicity of the explanation. In addition to Clarke, Frank Simon, Ed Chenette, and Eddie Mear responded. In particular, Mear took note of the relationship to prior techniques and alleged teaching practices. He stated:

> You have made one of the greatest contributions of all time to brass instrument playing. The tongue theory was originally taught by the great Schlossberg and endorsed by the school of Ernest Williams and the late Walter Smith. It is of my opinion that it must have been a part of the playing habit of every great artist of the past, though they did not realize the extent to which they exercised it, nor the theory of teaching it. It has remained for you to develop it and put it on paper.[83]

Range Development

Development of the upper register of the cornet or trumpet in Irons' teaching was closely linked with the

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[82]Stuart Robertson, The Development of Modern English (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1934), p. 56.

[83]Letter from Eddie Mear to Earl D. Irons, Whitewater, Wisconsin, July 7, 1938.

concept of embouchure flexibility, that is the raising and lowering of the tongue, as previously described. As with his technique of lip flexibility, it cannot be said that he was the first to produce these sounds on the instrument, but he was one of the first to place tongue arch in the realm of clear pedagogical thinking.

Writing in 1938, Irons states, "A cornet player who has any pride in his playing should not be satisfied with his range until he can play up to second 'G' above the staff."[84] For proper perspective, this statement must be viewed in relation to the standard methods of teaching of this time, which hardly recognized such range as a possibility.

Arban's Complete Method for Cornet, a standard method during this period, contains no exercises that ascend past c^3.[85] Likewise the band method by John Victor, which during the 1930's was widely distributed in the Southwest and was the state-recommended band text in Texas, listed the range for the cornet as extending from b to b^{b^2}. The text further stated that this practical range would be extended only "when special effects are to be obtained or exceptional passages played" at which time the compass

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[84]Earl D. Irons, "Cornet Column," Texas School Band and Orchestra Magazine, II (April, 1938), p. 9.

[85]Arban, Complete Method of Instruction.

might be extended two or three tones.[86] In addition, a survey of the literature of the time shows a dearth of educational pieces with tones ascending above c^3.

Misconceptions about the production of these upper tones abounded. In warning students about trying for high notes, they were advised that "the heart and lungs as well as the lips can be permanently injured by violent exertion in blowing the trumpet." The author tells of further alleged dangers of trying for high notes when, in his words, "to do so causes an over-expansion of the air cells, a condition called emplazema [sic]."

Despite these prevailing attitudes, Irons was capable of producing tones on the cornet in excess of the standard range, which were frequently displayed throughout the region in his solo performances and demonstrations. Alfred Riley and Earl Ray, among others, heard Irons perform frequently and attested to his superior upper range.[88] One tape recording of Irons is extant on which he is heard ascending and lip trilling up to g^3.[89]

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[86]John F. Victor, Instructor's Manual for Band and Orchestra (Abilene, Texas, 1936), p. 581.

[87]Peterson, The Cornet, p. 35.

[88]Riley, interview, February 6, 1981; Ray interview, January 10, 1981.

[89]Tape recording of clinic by Earl D. Irons, Gaston High School, 1937.

In explaining his approach to this register, Irons frequently used the expression "non-pressure system." He made use of the term as early as 1923, when he advertised cornet lessons featuring "the non-pressure method that makes playing easy."[90] This system was referred to commonly at the time in terms of the brass players' embouchure.

Hale A. Vandercook promoted a no-pressure system of playing in his cornet correspondence course, contending that it did no more pressure to play a tone on the cornet than it did to buzz on the mouthpiece.[91] Other advocates were O. A. Peterson,[92] Walter Eby,[93] and John Victor. Victor extolled the benefits of the system but failed as did other writers to explain adequately the no-pressure system.[94]

Some recall demonstrations of pressureless playing by Victor and others. One such demonstration involved blowing an instrument suspended from the ceiling by string, while another had the cornet rigged to a music stand so that it

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[90]Earl D. Irons, business card, Greenville, Texas.

[91]Vandercook, Modern Method, p. 23.

[92]Peterson, The Cornet, pp. 32-33.

[93]Walter M. Eby, Scientific Method for Cornet and Trumpet (Boston, 1929), p. 20.

[94]Victor, Instructor's Manual for Band and Orchestra, p. 202.

would topple with the slightest pressure.[95]

Irons' concept of non-pressure playing differed somewhat from those described in that he felt that with such total lack of pressure, the tone quality suffered; thus the approach was impractical. According to those present at his demonstrations, Irons felt that a small amount of pressure was necessary, and that by keeping lip corners firm and the air stream flowing, a better tone could be achieved.[96]

To compensate for the absence of an excess of force against the lips, and to achieve a comfortable level of pressure throughout the registers, Irons referred students to the system previously described, relating the size of the oral cavity to the pitch, as done in slurring.[97] In the preface to upper register exercises ascending to g^3, Irons advised, "If the student has devoted sufficient time and diligent effort to the preceding exercise in this book [lip flexibilities], he will encounter no serious difficulty."[98]

Another integral part of upper range development as

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[95]Personal interview with Ralph Mills, Huntsville, Texas, May 19, 1981; personal interview with Robert Fielder, Dallas, Texas, March 6, 1981; personal interview with R. T. Bynum, Abilene, Texas, March 13, 1981.

[96]Riley, interview, March 6, 1981; Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981.

[97]Fielder, interview, March 6, 1981; personal interview with Thomas Hohstadt, Midland, Texas, March 15, 1981.

[98]Irons, Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises, p. 20.

taught by Irons was his ideas on projection of the air stream. This idea was sometimes expressed as getting the air through the horn. Haddon,[99] Mahan, and May witnessed similar explanations by Irons of projection linked with tongue arch. Wesley May's recollections are from clinics at Texas Music Educators Association meetings in 1947 and 1949.[100]

Even before that time Irons experimented and expressed his ideas on range through demonstrations of projection. The recollections of Jack Mahan are from 1933, when he served as Irons' assistant at North Texas Agricultural College. Irons would use an empty band hall in which to play individual high tones, placing the tongue in a position for the syllable "ee" and projecting the tone to reflect off a distant wall. To further illustrate the concept, he would use the golf club stroke as an analogy to projection. Hitting golf balls to a specific target some distance away allowed for a comparison of the follow through and accuracy of the golf swing to the follow through in mental capacity as the tone is projected.[101]

As for the subject of extending the cornet or trumpet range in the lower register, Irons made some use of pedal tones, or false tones below the lowest tone of the instrument.

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[99]Haddon, interview, November 14, 1980.

[100]May, interview, February 2, 1981.

[101]Personal interview with Jack Mahan, Arlington, Texas, October 17, 1981.

As with tones in the extreme upper register, these were rare in the literature of the day but can be found in his works such as the cornet solo Grand Canyon and the concerto excerpt cited earlier (see Figure 7).

As a way of teaching openness and relaxation in the lower registers, the more advanced students were taught to play pedal tones with a minimum of change in embouchure. Irons started teaching this concept in the 1940's. While not strongly emphasized in lessons, pedal tones were used in the tutoring of students, including Thomas Hohstadt[102] and Hugh Fowler, Sr. In reference to the range progress of Fowler in 1942, Irons stated, "Fowler has phenomenal range, two C's below low C to B^b above C."[103] Evidence like this shows Irons' interest in range expansion in both directions on cornet and trumpet.

Articulation

As with previous topics, it is useful to refer to other accepted teachings of the time in order to place Irons' ideas on articulation in proper perspective. Regarding the basic detached articulation motion, known as single tonguing, some agreement among writers is evident in regard to the purpose of this motion. Arban's teachings concerning articulation were in agreement with those teachings of

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[102]Hohstadt, interview, March 15, 1981.

[103]Letter from Earl D. Irons to Bob Liessman, Arlington, Texas, April 28, 1942.

Irons and other teachers when he wrote,

> It should never be lost sight of, that the expression "coup de tonge" (stroke of the tongue) is merely a conventional expression; the tongue does not strike; on the contrary, it performs a retrograde movement; it simply supplies the place of a valve.[104]

Some variation occurred when the authorities attempted to express this tongue stroke in terms of a spoken syllable.

Arban himself used "Tu" as the most likely syllable to match the correct motion of the tongue,[105] as did Williams[106] and Taylor in his Easy Steps to the Band.[107] Saint-Jacome strayed from this syllable, noting that in his opinion the tongue "must touch the borders of the lips outside the teeth."[108] In varying from both of these viewpoints, Goldman recommended that the tongue match the pronunciation of the letter "T" [Ti].[109]

In presenting a slightly different view, Clarke altered the basic tonguing syllable concept by saying that there is a difference in the way the tongue is used

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[104]Arban, Complete Method of Instruction, p. 6.

[105]Ibid.

[106]Williams, Modern Method for Trumpet and Cornet, p. 8.

[107]Maurice D. Taylor, Easy Steps to the Band (New York, 1942), p. 13.

[108]Saint-Jacome, New and Modern Grand Method, p. 3.

[109]Goldman, Foundation to Cornet or Trumpet Playing, p. 40.

"When playing in either high or low registers." When articulating higher notes "contract the tongue slightly and for the lower notes, relax the tongue," he wrote,[110] suggesting that the tongue motion should approximate a variety of syllables throughout the range of the instrument.

It is evident that Irons similarly altered tongue position according to register. It cannot be stated positively when he began this practice, but he did include this approach to tonguing in his instruction during the later years of his career according to Ashlock and Amstutz.[111] The relationship between the syllables "Ta", "Tu", and "Ti" and those used for slurring (page three of Irons' Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises) can be readily perceived.

Another approach to single tonguing was experimented with by Irons between approximately 1925 and 1934. With two of his students in particular, Alfred Riley and Weldon Covington, he shared his experiments, which involved anchoring the tip of the tongue low in the mouth and having the center of the tongue as the point of contact.[112] This method was given up after a trial period and Irons did not

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[110]Herbert L. Clarke, Characteristic Studies for the Cornet (Huntsville, Ontario, Canada, 1915), p. 5.

[111]Personal interview with Randall Ashlock, Arlington, Texas, January 20, 1981; Amstutz, tape recorded response to prepared questions, July 7, 1981.

[112]Riley, interview, February 6, 1981; Covington, interview, November 21, 1980.

pursue it further through his writings.

This method of tonguing can be traced to the teachings of Herbert L. Clarke. Writing in 1915 in the first edition of his Characteristic Studies, he states that his own method of tonguing is rather unique, and describes it thus

> My tongue is never rigid when playing, and rests at the bottom of my mouth, the end pressed tightly against the lower teeth. I then produce the staccato, by the center of the tongue striking against the roof of the mouth.[113]

Apparently Clarke, like Irons, abandoned this approach to single tonguing in his teaching as no further reference to it is made in his writings.

Irons' methods of teaching triple tonguing provides perhaps the most radical departure from the majority of instructional writings. Going back to the 1930's again he experimented with variations in this technique and encouraged his students to do the same. By far the most widely advocated arrangement for the triple tongue at this time was that given by Arban[114] and Clarke.[115] An examination of the literature reveals that his pattern TTK [the various vowels a, e, i, u, are omitted for the purpose of this explanation] was widely accepted as the proper execution.

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[113]Clarke, Characteristic Studies, p. 5.

[114]Arban, Complete Method of Instruction, p. 153.

[115]Clarke, Characteristic Studies, p. 11.

His basic premise in teaching triple tongue was to experiment with syllables. Unconventional syllable arrangements resulted such as the ones described by Irons in his response to a student inquiry. Writing in 1938, he stated,

> Start very slowly, playing as written TTK. If you concentrate you will notice that the tone, when the attack is on K, is not of the same quality and is more difficult to produce. This is your problem. To overcome this, reverse the attack and play KKT very slowly. Practice regularly for a week or two and then change to KKK using no T's (this is for practice purposes only).[116]

Such arrangements placing emphasis upon the weakness of the "K" syllable were developed in lessons with students. Practicing repeated K's as mentioned above was designed to make the attack on all tones of the triplet more equal and was offered as a practice aid to band directors and students. Robert Maddox[117] received such tips at a Lubbock clinic, and Thomas Hohstadt[118] likewise during private lessons. Both men reported that Irons made it a practice also to play simple melodies using only the K consonant, to strengthen his articulation of it.

As an alternate system of triple tonguing, Irons began to use K in the middle of the triplet and had his students

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[116]Earl D. Irons, "Cornet and Trumpet," Texas School Band and Orchestra Magazine, II (May, 1938), p. 15.

[117]Robert Maddox, handwritten lecture notes, Texas Tech Band School.

[118]Hohstadt, interview, March 15, 1981.

do the same. Both Riley and Hohstadt were taught this in lessons, with Irons explaining that he considered it a more effective way to gain evenness in the triplet.[119] He was not the first to teach this type of triple tongue as an alternative to TTK, since Saint-Jacome had done likewise in a brief statement and exercise in 1895.[120] He did however revive interest among his followers in an idea that had remained largely dormant for some time.

Based upon the improvements thought to be inherent in this revision of triple tonguing, Irons continued with one further innovation in 1952, adding a completely different arrangement of syllables to the revised edition of his exercise book. This arrangement alternated the T and K continuously so that every other triplet began with a T. Figure 9 shows an example of this arrangement. He felt that this style of triple tonguing was easiest for the student to group as he suggests in the following statement.

> You will notice that the triple tonguing is nothing more than double tonguing divided into triplets. After this type of tonguing is perfected, it should make no difference whether the attack is on the T or K.[121]

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[119]Riley, interview, February 6, 1981; Hohstadt, interview, March 15, 1981.

[120]Saint-Jacome, New and Modern Grand Method, p. 124.

[121]Earl D. Irons, Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises for Cornet and Trumpet, revised edition (San Antonio, Texas, 1952), p. 2.

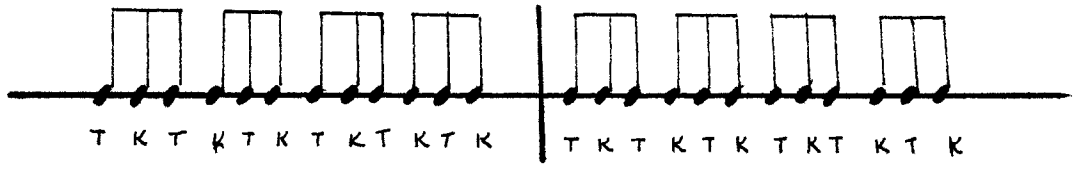

Fig. 9--Alternating syllable triple tonguing.

Apparently Irons had worked with this idea for some time prior to 1952. In 1940 J. W. King, then a music student at Texas Tech, heard this idea of shifting the accent on a double tongue pattern during an Irons' clinic for the first time.[122] A short time later he presented the idea similarly in lessons with Ted Crager.[123] According to these memoirists, Irons used this in his own playing and felt it could be used, if for no other reason, simply as a means to gain control of articulation. In Irons' own words, these exercises were added "with the sincere hope that they will help to eliminate some of the faulty triple and double tonguing that is noticeable among most school age players."[124]

The foundation of Irons' philosophy toward the playing and teaching of brass instruments was built upon experimentation. In the development of his own career and when

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[122]Personal interview with J. W. King, Plainview, Texas, January 9, 1981.

[123]Ted Crager, tape recorded response to prepared questions, Miami, Florida, July 13, 1981.

[124]Irons, Twenty-Seven Groups, revised edition, p. 2.

advising students, this idea appeared continuously as one of prime importance. Based on the background information as presented in Chapter II, it becomes evident that early in his career, experimentation was born out of necessity, due to the unavailability of formal training.

In developing his own theories and practices of teaching, particularly in regard to lip flexibility, range development, and multiple tonguing, trial and error was apparent as shown in previous references. Implying this specifically concerning his developmental exercises, he wrote in the foreword of his book, "These exercises are a result of much experimentation."[125] He furthermore mentions on this same page the various systems of embouchure development and how each was attempted and rejected, further emphasizing the role of experimentation in his pedagogy.[126]

Later in life, Irons was forced by necessity to explore again the basic tenets of brass playing. In 1946 following a freak accident on the golf course in which he was struck in the mouth with a golf ball, he was forced to try new and different approaches. According to those that observed his recovery, this accident resulted in the placement of bridges and a malignancy that led to surgery. Such physical problems caused a reappraisal of the basics in order that

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[125] Ibid.

[126] Irons, Twenty-Seven Groups, p. 2.

he might play again.[127]

During lessons and conversations in 1947 and 1948, Rapier, Hohstadt, and Crager were made aware of the experimentation that took place in the recovery process.[128] Through determination and innovation involving low brass practice on his lip flexibilities and the invention of a cushion-rimmed cornet mouthpiece, Irons was able to rebuild his embouchure satisfactorily. Rapier in particular related how "at his age had come back and discovered the right way to do it. He started with almost no sound, just a buzz, a small vibration, then came range as he always had it."[129]

In the years following his recovery Irons encouraged his students more than ever to try new approaches in dealing with playing problems. Three of his students during these years were among those upon whom he impressed the need to experiment.[130] Both Ashlock and Amstutz in a similar manner

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[127]Irons, interview, February 10, 1981.

[128]Leon Rapier, tape recorded response to prepared questions, Louisville, Kentucky, June 4, 1981; Hohstadt, interview, March 15, 1981; Crager, tape recorded response to prepared questions, July 13, 1981.

[129]Rapier, tape recorded response to prepared questions, June 4, 1981.

[130]Hohstadt, interview, March 15, 1981; Ashlock, interview, January 20, 1981; Amstutz, tape recorded response to prepared questions, July 7, 1981.

were told to "experiment with it," and "see what works for you."[131] In explanation of Irons' bent toward exploration in his teaching Hohstadt explained, "He was a man of ideas and part of his greatness as an individual is that he always taught in terms of possibilities and new creative ways of doing things."[132]

The second major point of Irons' approach to brass pedagogy was the belief that fundamentals were at the base of all performance improvement. Throughout his work with students in lessons and clinic sessions, this philosophy was a major point of stress.[133] To Irons, the fundamentals included lip slurs as well as practice material embodied in the writings and exercises of J. B. Arban.[134] Of the literature of the time, he felt that the basic rudiments were more available in Arban, as opposed to many of the technical solos and etudes. Frequent mention is made of his references to this method, including the statement, "A cornet player without an Arban is like a preacher without

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[131]Ashlock, interview, January 20, 1981; Amstutz, tape recorded response to prepared questions, July 7, 1981.

[132]Hohstadt, interview, March 15, 1981.

[133]Paul Yoder, tape recorded response to prepared questions, Troy, Alabama, April 20, 1981; personal interview with Robert Maddox, Odessa, Texas, March 14, 1981.

[134]Covington, interview, November 21, 1980; Riley interview, February 6, 1981; Maddox, interview, March 14, 1981.

a Bible."[135]

Starting in 1938 and immediately prior to that, the fundamentals element of Irons' approach showed itself also through the Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises, for he taught that many of the problems of playing could be improved by this type of practice.[136] All persons questioned, including Haddon, King, and Haynie, agreed that the lip slur was a prime area of discussion in Irons' presentations.[137] The belief in the importance of fundamentals as presented in Arban's studies, of lip slurs, and of experimentation formed the major points of Irons' philosophy of brass teaching.

In determining Irons' influence upon students and teachers through his brass teaching, it is necessary to look at the body of persons he came in contact with and the needs of this group, and to see how he confronted their needs and what he was able to accomplish. Basically, the group Irons came in contact with was composed of band directors who actively sought his help for their students.

As was discussed in Chapter III, teachers were inadequately trained when school bands developed during the 1920's, and this condition remained a problem for the profession well

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[135]Robert Maddox, written notes from Irons' clinic.

[136]Irons, Twenty-Seven Groups, p. 2.

[137]Haddon, interview, November 13, 1980; King, interview, January 9, 1981; Haynie, interview, February 10, 1981.

into the next decade. Particularly in the area of instruction in the playing of the individual instruments, the directors felt unprepared. This point is illustrated by the fact that of the eleven bandmasters interviewed from this period, all confirmed the situation.[138]

As late as 1936, only four institutions, Baylor University, Southern Methodist University, Simmons College, and Our Lady of the Lake College, were certified by the National Association of Schools of Music to grant music degrees.[139] A survey of class offerings by these schools and others having music courses reveals that cornet instruction by faculty was offered only at North Texas Agricultural College through the two-decade period 1920-1940.

Due to these educational circumstances, directors who learned pedagogy of the instruments did so outside of the curriculum through local musicians or private lessons at

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[138]Ray, interview, January 10, 1981; May, interview, February 21, 1981; Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981; Maddox, interview, March 14, 1981; O'Neal, interview, May 20, 1981; Haddon, interview, November 13, 1980; Mahan, interview, October 17, 1981; Covington, interview, November 21, 1980; Fielder, interview, March 6, 1981; Riley, interview, February 6, 1981; personal interview, Nelson Patrick, November 20, 1980.

[139]Texas State Department of Education, "Report on Higher Education in Texas," (January 28, 1937), p. 33.

places like the Southwestern Band School,[140] the Amarillo Conservatory, and the Fort Worth Conservatory.[141] Irons taught the brass instruments[142] at the latter, and none were established before 1930.

Besides needing instruction themselves, it was evident to the bandmasters that their deficiencies on various instruments necessitated private lessons for their students on those instruments. The dearth of instrumental experts has been established. Further complicating the situation was the geographic isolation of many active band towns, particularly in western Texas and eastern New Mexico. For example, by observing a contest program from 1934, it can be seen that more than twenty of the twenty-eight towns represented were situated one hundred twenty-five miles or more from a major city or college offering music instruction.[143]

Both bandmasters and students involved in the expanding band movement of the Southwest sought outside assistance. As the only college brass teacher in Texas,

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[140] Minutes and Procedures, 1924-1961, p. 44; Ray, interview, January 10, 1981.

[141] Fort Worth Conservatory, brochure, Fall, 1930.

[142] Texas Association of Music Schools, proceedings, 1939, p. 13.

[143] West Texas Band Teachers Association, contest program, April 27, 1934.

Irons responded to these needs by leaving the Arlington campus frequently to give brass clinics. Many of these clinics, especially during the 1930's, were as a direct result of bandmaster requests for aid.

Irons was a frequent guest lecturer for Jack Mahan during these years, as well as Robert Maddox, Wesley May, Alfred Riley, Earl Ray, Charles Eskridge, and many others.[144] Such clinics were often in remote locations like Wink[145] and Cisco,[146] or Abilene, Kansas.[147] The one thing common to these clinics was Irons' desire to work with the needs of the specific directors and students.[148] An example of this is found in a letter from Charles Eskridge to Wink area band directors telling of Irons' clinic: "All directors are encouraged to submit to Col. Irons the things you want worked on."[149]

By far, the largest number of persons coming in

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[144]Maddox, interview, March 14, 1981; May, interview, February 21, 1981; Ray, interview, January 10, 1981; Riley, interview, February 6, 1981.

[145]Letter from Charles Eskridge to area West Texas directors, Mexia, Texas, February 8, 1939.

[146]Letter from Robert Maddox to area West Texas directors, Mexia, Texas, January 21, 1938.

[147]Abilene, Kansas Summer Band School, program, June 13-18, 1939.

[148]Lubbock Band Clinic, program, March 2, 1940.

[149]Letter from Charles Eskridge to area West Texas directors, February 8, 1939.

contact with Col. Irons' brass teaching were at the Summer Band Schools at Texas Tech. These clinic sessions were of critical importance because of the position of this school during the late 1920's. Starting in 1934, this program of practical bandmaster training was the only one of its kind in Texas, and consequently, young directors like those mentioned before, with a shortage of band training, were regular in attendance.[150] Irons gave sessions in these schools until 1940, and based on the interviews of those in attendance, it can be deduced that he touched a majority of the first generation of Texas School bandmasters. All of the teachers contacted who were active at that time received some instruction from Irons at Texas Tech.[151]

To understand why Irons was in such demand and why he had the opportunity to extend far-reaching influence, one must understand the stature of this man, particularly during the years 1920-1950. The record shows that he was able to gain the attention and respect of students, due in part to

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[150]Texas Tech Summer Concert Band, program, July 14, 1938 and July 13, 1939.

[151]Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981; May, interview February 21, 1981; Ray, interview, January 10, 1981; Riley, interview, February 6, 1981; Crager, tape recorded response to prepared questions, July 13, 1981; Covington, interview, November 21, 1980; Maddox, interview, March 14, 1981; Haddon, interview, November 13, 1980; Fielder, interview, March 6, 1981; Patrick, interview, November 20, 1980.

his heroic image. He is described by all teachers interviewed during this period in terms such as "the name we always heard as the authority,"[152] and "the figure on the cornet in Texas."[153] Summing up the views of many students concerning Irons' ability to influence, Haynie stated,

> To kids like myself, he was a hero. There was no one else we knew anything about. Col. Irons' reputation was as "Mister Cornet" in the state through all those years. Kids of that time were rather awe-struck by this man and what he could do and what he meant.[154]

The stature of Irons was further elevated by his close association with Herbert L. Clarke, Frank Simon, and other legendary cornetists of the period. As the only cornetist from Texas in the American Bandmasters Association,[155] he had the closest contact with the players who were famous in Texas but rarely seen there. For most students and directors in the state, he served as a link to these legendary figures, relaying their ideas through his clinics.[156] Referring to a clinic on March 2, 1940, one observer stated,

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[152]King, interview, January 9, 1981.

[153]Rapier, tape recorded response to prepared questions, June 4, 1981.

[154]Haynie, interview, February 10, 1981.

[155]American Bandmasters Association Convention, program, March 12, 1940.

[156]King, interview, January 9, 1981; Haynie, interview, February 10, 1981; Ray, interview, January 10, 1981.

"At the clinic, it was like having Clarke visit us even though that wasn't possible. That's the feeling Col. Irons generated in the early forties."[157]

As far as brass pedagogy, it is probable that the greatest impact Irons had upon those he came in contact with was what he accomplished through his own personality and concepts, and this impact can best be judged by those who felt it. As explained in this chapter, Irons' ideas were frequently different from accepted standard materials. For many students and teachers, these ideas were totally foreign to previous teachings. Regarding high register, lip flexibility, and articulation, the consensus from them is that these improvements in playing and teaching were heard of first from Col. Irons.[158]

His presence was an inspiration to numbers of students in the early years of the band movement in the Southwest,[159] and his influence was perpetuated by a line of these students who continued to present his ideas to others.

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[157]King, interview, January 9, 1981.

[158]Rapier, tape recorded response to prepared questions, June 14, 1981; King, interview, January 9, 1981; Riley, interview, February 6, 1981; May, interview, February 2, 1981; Hohstadt, interview, March 15, 1981; Haynie, interview, February 10, 1981.

[159]Hohstadt, interview, March 15, 1981; Rapier, tape recorded response to prepared questions, June 14, 1981; Haynie, interview, February 10, 1981; Ashlock, interview, January 20, 1981.

The larger gatherings of brass students for three decades in Texas were dominated by Irons' teachings, through his students and himself. In addition to many individual clinics, band students at Texas Tech Band Camps were subject to Irons' influence in 1935-1941 and 1946-1964.[160] This was true also at clinics of the Texas Music Educators Association in 1947-1949, 1951, 1955-1957, and 1960.[161]

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[160]Texas Tech Band Camp, programs, 1946-1964; Texas Music Educator, VI (September, 1941), p. 3.

[161]Texas Music Educators Association Convention, programs, 1947-1960.

CHAPTER V

IRONS' INVOLVEMENT IN BAND COMPETITION-FESTIVALS

Throughout the records of contests in the Southwest, as well as in accounts by memoirists, reference is made to the active involvement of Col. Earl D. Irons. As the development of bands was closely tied to competition, credit is given to the contest for the way in which the band movement evolved. To determine the extent of his influence it is useful initially to establish Irons' posture within the contest movement.

Early Contest Participation

A careful survey of contest history dating back to the time before TBTA records of such events were kept confirms the assessment of some early participants[1] that Irons indeed was a notable figure among bandmasters, setting a standard for both band and conductor performance. His early contest activities were in connection with the performances of five different organizations: the Sulphur Springs American Legion Band, the Greenville American Legion Band, the Grand Prairie Municipal Band, the Fort Worth Ladies Band, and the North Texas Agricultural College Band. The performances of these groups contributed to the establishment of Irons'

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[1]Ray, interview, January 10, 1981; Riley, interview, February 6, 1981.

reputation, enabling him to be an influential part of competition-festivals in the Southwest.

Band contests of a limited nature began in Texas around 1920, but the earliest record of Irons in a contest was an event in 1922. The Southwest Durbar Spring Music Festival held in Dallas on May 22 of that year was the first in Texas to offer large monetary prizes and draw entries from outside of the immediate area.[2] It was at this contest that a classification system was established whereby bands at various stages of development would be paired with others having comparable experience.

This system of classification, which was prevalent in Texas for a decade, grouped bands having as little as three months experience, as well as those organized for several years. Bands in each classification could have not more than twenty percent of their members with experience greater than that indicated by the classification.[3] The relative infancy of organized bands is reflected in these classifications with the most established bands being in the five-year bracket.

In 1922, the Sulphur Springs American Legion Band, organized by Irons two years earlier, was one of twenty-five municipal bands to participate in the Durbar Contest,

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[2]Whittle Music Review, May 1922, p. 4.

[3]Ninth Annual West Texas Band Contest, program, May 29-31, 1930.

the largest band competition ever held in the state up until that time. Under Irons' direction the Sulphur Springs group won first place in the two-year division and second place overall. As was the practice at this time, winners were offered various prizes, one of which was normally a cash award. In this instance the prize was a trophy cup and seventy-five dollars.[4]

It was during the same year that the American Legion Band began rehearsing under Irons' leadership in nearby Greenville.[5] This band entered competition for the first time on April 20, 1925, in the first annual Corsicana contest sponsored by the Eastern Texas Division of the TBTA. This event marked the beginning of the practice of dividing bands into East and West sectors for the purposes of organizing and conducting contests. Entering the three year class, the Greenville band placed second while competing with a variety of ensembles including club, fraternal, municipal, military, and railroad bands.[6] The Corsicana contest was the last at which an Irons band received a rating lower than first place.

After moving to Arlington, Texas, in the summer of 1925, Irons participated in contests with various groups

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[4]Sulphur Springs Gazette, May 23, 1922.

[5]Greenville American Legion Band Concert, program, May 15, 1922.

[6]Corsicana Banner, April 21, 1925.

in addition to the cadet band at North Texas Agricultural College. One such group was a youth band in nearby Grand Prairie, which he reorganized in January of 1926.[7] With a membership of forty-three boys, the Grand Prairie Municipal Band four months later performed at a Waco contest sponsored by the Texas Band Teachers Association Eastern Division. For earning the top score of the four bands entered in the three-year class, the group was presented a cash award of two hundred fifty dollars.[8]

Irons' appearance at this contest helped establish him for the first time as one of Texas more accomplished bandmasters. At the conclusion of the judging, he was named "outstanding director" of the competition and given a gold medal.[9] Precedent was set for recognizing conductors' achievement as far back as 1923. Rated on a point system similar to that of bands, winning directors were rewarded by music companies with trade certificates, medals, instruments, and even cash. At a 1923 event two directors with highest scores received new instruments. Conway King, director of the Weatherford Municipal Band, accepted a Conn gold-plated cornet and likewise James King, of the Fort Worth Boys Rotary

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[7]Sulphur Springs Gazette, May 23, 1926.

[8]Arlington Citizen Journal, May 5, 1926.

[9]East Texas Band Contest, a gold medal awarded for outstanding director, 1926.

Band, a silver King cornet.[10]

Recognition of Irons' abilities in rehearsing and conducting bands for competition increased during the late twenties due to the success of the Fort Worth Ladies Band, a group of approximately forty amateur musicians that he established in 1926. Starting with its first contest appearance on May 4, 1927, when the band took top honors in the one-year class of the West Texas Chamber of Commerce contest,[11] statewide attention was directed toward Irons. From 1927 through 1930 the Fort Worth Ladies Band annually took premier honors in its class.

That attention was being focused on Irons is evidenced by statements made by the judge of the 1928 West Texas Chamber of Commerce Contest in Fort Worth. Included in the critical commentary was praise for the director's leadership qualities as well as the musicianship of the band. The judge stated, "This organization is very fine, the best ladies band I have ever heard. I enjoyed the performance immensely and I say without flattery, [this is] the finest ladies band in the United States."[12]

Again in 1929 after moving into the three-year class,

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[10]Ralph W. Beck, "History of the Band Association of Texas" Minutes and Procedures of T. M. E. A., 1924-1961 (Austin, Texas) I, p. 211.

[11]Fort Worth Star Telegram, May 5, 1927.

[12]West Texas Chamber of Commerce Contest, rating sheet, June 18, 1928.

the Fort Worth Ladies Band won first place and Irons received highest director's honors for accumulating ninety-four points out of a possible one hundred.[13] This was the second time in four years that superlative marks for a contest band director were given to him.

The May 31, 1930 performance by the Fort Worth Ladies Band was its final one for competition purposes. At a contest co-sponsored by the TBTA and the West Texas Chamber of Commerce, the band was recognized as the premier organization through its rendition of the Poet and Peasant Overture, by Von Suppé. In rating Irons' ensemble higher than all other West Texas bands entered, the adjudicator, Herbert L. Clarke of the Long Beach Municipal Band, chose the Fort Worth Ladies Band to be the "Official West Texas Chamber of Commerce Band," designated to represent the region for a period of one year.[14] That the ensemble was rated even higher than its four-year classification would normally allow is suggested by a contest rule printed in the official program, designed to limit the highest contest honor to a band in the more advanced five-year class "having the highest number of points."[15]

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[13] Fort Worth Star Telegram, October 23, 1929.

[14] D. O. Wiley, "All-Ladies Band Wins Signal Honors and Title of West Texas Chamber of Commerce Official Band," West Texas Today, June, 1930, p. 11.

[15] Ninth Annual West Texas Band Contest Program, May 29-31, 1930.

Perhaps Irons' stature within the early contest ranks in Texas was most significantly enhanced by his performances with the cadet band of North Texas Agricultural College. This fact can be attributed both to the longevity of the group's contest participation and the dominance of its classification in each contest. His work with the NTAC Band was observed continually during the formative years of contests when Texas directors were shaping their own musical identities and forming their own standards and concepts of what a winning band should be.

During the late twenties, directors in the Southwest were still seeking expertise concerning bands from sources outside of the region. Examples of this outside dependence during the period are seen in the selection of contest adjudicators and the availability of professional advice and training. For Texas contests, the reported experts in the field chosen as contest critics were from either the Midwest or the eastern United States. Included in this group were Karl L. King of Fort Dodge, Iowa,[16] Victor Grabel of Chicago,[17] and Ed Chenette, director of the highly rated DeKalb, Illinois High School Band.[18]

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[16]Texas State Fair Contest, program, October 22, 1929.

[17]Corsicana Banner, April 21, 1925.

[18]West Texas Chamber of Commerce Contest, rating sheet, June 19, 1928.

In seeking professional advice and training, as has been noted previously, directors had little choice but to travel to areas of the country where bands were better established, since little expertise was locally available. Written records and interviews[19] with those Texas directors active in contests during the twenties show that band leaders who were able to obtain extensive professional guidance did so primarily by studying with other directors in the North or by observing an authority like Victor Grabel give periodic clinics in the state.[20] Leading band authorities and their training programs included Patrick Conway, who in 1922 was founder of the Conway Band School in Ithaca, New York,[21] and Hale E. Vandercook, who headed his own professional school in Chicago[22] and offered training via correspondence beginning in 1916.[23] In addition, the Sherwood School of Music in Chicago began educational programs for directors in 1929.[24]

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[19]Covington, interview, November 21, 1980; Ray, interview, January 10, 1981.

[20]Dallas Morning News, August 21, 1928.

[21]"Pat Conway," Etude, XLVII (September, 1929), p. 639.

[22]Gilbert Wilson, "H. A. Vandercook, the Teacher," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri, 1920, p. 13.

[23]Hale A. Vandercook, A Course in Band and Orchestra Directing (Chicago, 1916).

[24]Sherwood School of Music, brochure, 1929.

It has been asserted by contest participants of this period that Earl D. Irons set a standard for the state in band and conductor performance. Haddon, Ray, and Riley[25] have all attested to the quality of the NTAC Band and its high level of proficiency in relation to other participating bands of the region. Futhermore, Haddon specifically rated it as "one of the few good college bands."[26] In reference to the establishment of local band standards and concepts, it has been stated that "Col. Irons' band is one of the bands that helped us eliminate looking to the Midwest because of the way his band was coming along in the early days."[27]

The foregoing statements, while providing corroboration in and of themselves, are further substantiated through contest records from 1926 to 1932. The first contest entry for the NTAC Band was on June 21, 1926, at the Amarillo contest sponsored by the West Texas Chamber of Commerce, at which time the band won first prize while competing in the one-year class.[28] Two years later in 1928, the band again participated, winning the top honors in its class.

In a number of ways, the 1928 contest was a turning

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[25]Haddon, interview, November 13, 1980; Ray, interview, January 10, 1981; Riley, interview, November 13, 1980.

[26]Haddon, interview, November 13, 1980.

[27]Ray, interview, January 10, 1981.

[28]West Texas Chamber of Commerce Contest, first prize medal, 1926.

point in the establishment of Irons as a Texas contest authority due to the fact that not only was his band compared favorably with those outside of the Southwest, but also his conducting was given a superior rating by a judge from outside of the Southwest. Referring to the NTAC band's performance, Ed Chenette, who was brought to Fort Worth from Illinois, offered a positive response in the areas of tuning, harmonic balance, and overall effect. In reference to the bands from NTAC and Simmons College, he wrote, "I can say without hesitation that the two college bands in the contest will rate with most any of the college and university bands in the East."[29] Commenting further on Irons' groups, Chenette wrote, "This band would prove serious competition with our northern organizations."[30]

At this same event held in conjunction with a Chamber of Commerce convention, Irons was honored for the third time in his career by being named the "outstanding director" of the competition, scoring slightly higher than D. C. Wiley of Simmons College. As was the accustomed practice at this time, he was given a gold medal by C. L. Barnhouse of Iowa.[31] Writing in a letter to the TBTA, Chenette commended

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[29]Arlington Citizen-Journal, June 21, 1928.

[30]Letter from Ed Chenette to Texas Band Teachers Association, Chicago, June 25, 1928.

[31]West Texas Chamber of Commerce Band Contest, first prize medal, 1928.

again the band work of Irons. In this letter are details as to the positive elements of the performance and insight into what must have been the conducting standards of the time.

Emphasis on appearances is evident, as discipline and deportment headed the list of comments. Chenette lauded the band's "erect posture with feet together and instruments raised in unison." Irons' own physical presence likewise was looked upon favorably, in particular his podium stance with "feet together, lack of body movement, and correct conducting patterns with the right hand and left hand used for shade and cue." In addition, Irons rated high marks for conducting without a score "as practiced by all the better conductors" and selecting appropriate tempi.[32] With Chenette's emphasis upon the most basic of conducting elements, it is suggested that other conductors in this contest with less experience may not have even mastered basic elements.[33]

The NTAC Band competed and won the top division prize in two more contests, both judged by Karl L. King. The 1929 TBTA event held in Dallas included participation by the largest number of school bands up to that date. Entered at the college level were bands from Tarleton Junior College, Hillsboro Junior College, and North Texas State Teachers

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[32]Letter from Ed Chenette to the Texas Band Teachers Association, Chicago, June 30, 1928.

[33]During this same year [1928] Earl Ray reported conducting the Breckenridge Band without having training in fundamentals, further supporting this conclusion.

College, among others.[34] In addition to winning its class, Irons' band received the highest score of any entered[35] and Irons was again named "outstanding director."[36] The final contest entry for the NTAC Band was three years later, in 1932, when they were awarded first prize in the junior college class at a TBTA event in Dallas.[37]

Contest Adjudication

Coinciding with the final contest appearance by the NTAC Band was the emerging dominance of contests by public school bands, an occurrence that was apparent not only in Texas but throughout the nation. A decline in the number of municipal and college organizations participating was accompanied by an increase in school groups. This is evident as early as 1927 in Texas, when a separate classification for school bands was created for the TBTA contest.[38] One year later four high school bands entered the TBTA event.[39] By 1934 all participating bands were affiliated with public schools,[40] and at the 1937 Lubbock contest their numbers

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[34]State Fair of Texas Band Contest, program, October 27, 1929.

[35]Dallas Times Herald, October 23, 1929.

[36]State Fair of Texas Band Contest, outstanding director medal, October 22, 1929.

[37]Arlington Citizen-Journal, October 23, 1932.

[39]West Texas Today, June 1, 1930.

[40]TBTA Western Division Contest Program, April 27, 1934.

had increased to forty-five.[41]

National contests, which began in 1923, also were totally school-oriented by the following decade and were held under the auspices of the National School Band Association.[42] In other band events school groups likewise received the focus of attention, such as at the First National Band Festival in Lawrence, Kansas, where organizations from sixty-four high schools were the exclusive entrants.[43]

With an increase in the number of competition events and participating school bands came the need for additional qualified adjudicators. Irons, having established his name through contest performances, was among a new cadre of individuals drawn primarily from the ranks of professional bandmasters and successful contest band leaders. Others frequently listed on programs during the thirties were Frank Simon,[44] director of the ARMCO Band of Cincinnati, Edwin F. Goldman,[45] director of the Goldman Band, and Herbert

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[41]Ninth Annual West Texas School Band and Orchestra Contest Program, April 19, 1937.

[42]National School Band Association Bulletin No. D306, 1933.

[43]National Band Festival Official Program, May 9-11, 1935.

[44]Region VI National School Music Competition Festival, program, May 19-20, 1938.

[45]Tri-State Band Festival Program, April 3, 1936.

L. Clarke,[46] director of the Long Beach Band. Harold Bachman,[47] director of his own professional band in Chicago, and D. O. Wiley,[48] of Simmons College and later Texas Tech, were also among the most active adjudicators.

That Irons' services were in demand for contest events is evidenced by the inclusion of his name on lists of qualified adjudicators compiled by music educators administering the events. In Texas, Irons was among those certified to judge for the first time on October 3, 1937.[49] Again in 1938, adjudicators were selected by state music teachers, with specialists being designated for both choral and band areas.[50] A nationwide list of recommended contest specialists, which included Irons and sixty-nine others from various regions, was compiled in 1939 by the National School Band and Orchestra Association.[51]

In establishing Irons' position among his generation of adjudicators, it is important to examine why his commentary was sought and what influence if any it had upon

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[46]Ninth Annual West Texas Band Contest, program, May 29-31, 1930.

[47]Tri-State Band Festival, program, April 21, 1938.

[48]Region VI National School Music Competition Festival, April 27-29, 1939.

[49]Minutes and Procedures, p. 104.

[50]Ibid., p. 153.

[51]National School Band and Orchestra Association, "National Band Contest and Adjudicators," 1939.

directors and students. It is apparent that his contest comments were felt to be significant and in contrast to those of some of his predecessors. Concerning Irons' adjudication, memorists unanimously referred to his remarks as being "constructive criticism,"[52] and examples of such criticism are available through examination of contest rating sheets. In comparison to the commentary of some of Irons' predecessors, a marked change in approach is apparent.

A perusal of the contest rating sheets of two early judges active in the Southwest, Ed Chenette and Karl L. King, reveals the thrust of criticism directed toward negative aspects of a performance. Such emphasis is seen in Chenette's ratings at the West Texas Band Contest on June 18, 1928.[53] Likewise in King's rating sheets for the Texas State Fair Contest in 1929, remarks concerning inadequacies of performance were frequent and seldom accompanied by remarks about correcting these inadequacies.[54]

The "constructive criticism" practiced by Irons often was aimed specifically at young directors, many of whom found him to be an inspirational leader, having witnessed

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[52]May, interview, February 21, 1981; Maddox, interview, February 21, 1981; Haddon, interview, November 13, 1980; Wiley, interview, March 30, 1981; Sawhill, taped response to prepared questions, June 15, 1981.

[53]West Texas Band Contest, rating sheets, June 18-20, 1928.

[54]Texas State Fair Contest, rating sheets, October 22, 1929.

the success of his bands in competition during prior years.[55] According to May, Irons' suggestions "were a challenge to them [directors] rather than criticism of what they were doing,"[56] and Fielder, referring to any early teaching experience related how Irons "encouraged when he could have been very critical."[57]

Irons' encouragement was accepted by the young directors whose bands he evaluated, some of whom as mentioned earlier were not adequately trained to rehearse or conduct a band. Memoirists like Maddox recounted Irons' manner of offering advice at contests and how that advice "had a way of inspiring young people and setting directors straight on what they should do."[58] Irons "challenged the directors to do a good job" according to May, and "people considered what he said and went home and did it."[59]

As a supporter of band programs in the public schools, Irons addressed issues of concern to school bands through his comments at contests, often directing statements to persons other than the bandmaster. Both Maddox and May described Irons' remarks as being significant, particularly

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[55]Ray, interview, March 13, 1981; Fielder, interview, March 6, 1981; Bynum, interview, March 13, 1981; Crager, taped response to prepared questions, July 13, 1981.

[56]May, interview, February 21, 1981.

[57]Fielder, interview, March 6, 1981.

[58]Maddox, interview, March 14, 1981.

[59]May, interview, February 2, 1981.

in the areas of school sponsorship and community support of young directors.[60]

Examples of Irons addressing band issues of the day are available from rating sheets such as those for the 1938 National Music Competition Festival held in Abilene, Texas. Concerning the Cisco, Texas High School Band he wrote,

> You have a smooth playing band but are badly handicapped for the want of French horns, bassoons, bass and alto clarinets. The proper tone color for concert band is just not there regardless of the fine preparation you have made. I feel like the city of Cisco should get behind this fine band and give them the proper equipment.[61]

The following year Irons again judged the Cisco Band, awarding them a second division. As before, his statements clearly called for support of the developing band program. He stated:

> The Cisco school superintendent and the entire citizenship should give this very fine conductor their moral and financial support. I can see an improvement over last year in instrumentation. I hope that the people in Cisco see the need and the benefits of a really fine concert band. If you give this young conductor the support he deserves, I have no doubt as to the result.[62]

One consequence of contests in the evolution of bands was the creation of incentive brought about through

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[60] May, interview, February 21, 1981; Maddox, interview, March 14, 1981.

[61] National School Music Competition Festival, rating sheet, May 19-21, 1938.

[62] National School Music Competition Festival, rating sheet, April 27-29, 1939.

competitive spirit. In addition were the elements of encouragement and instruction to the students afforded by the contest environment. According to memoirists, these elements were the essence of Irons' approach to adjudication.[63] A 1946 letter from Ralph Beck, band director at Highland Park High School, concerning some post-contest tutoring at a Waco event provides one example of Irons' commitment to students at contests. In commending Irons' efforts, Beck wrote,

> You may not realize it but you are making more and more friends for yourself and your school by being human enough to see that the kids are taken care of. It means extra time for you, but these kids don't forget such accommodations.[64]

With the publication of his innovative approach to brass teaching in 1938, students and teachers alike sought out Irons' constructive criticism at contest events, according to Carey.[65] Such student interest is shown by the addition of brass clinics at contests such as one during the Tri-State Music Festival in 1940.[66] The involvment with large numbers of students at these events allowed for dissemination of his brass teaching ideas, as well as observation

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[63]Haynie, interview, February 10, 1981; Rapier, taped response to prepared questions, June 14, 1981.

[64]Letter from Ralph Beck to Earl D. Irons, Dallas, Texas, May 10, 1946.

[65]Personal interview with Milburn Carey, Fort Worth, Texas, May 15, 1981.

[66]Tri-State Music Festival, official program, April 19, 1940.

of students and their responses. Thus in 1939 Irons wrote, "After hearing hundreds of high school soloists in both state and national-regional contests this year struggling with the high register, it makes me more anxious than ever to help them."[67]

Ensemble teaching as well as individual counseling was often part of the contest setting. The regional and national contests in addition to the band festivals that began in the thirties offered ample opportunities for Irons to work with ensembles, as conducting and lecturing frequently were a part of the contest environment. The vehicle for such instruction usually was a massed band of contest participants.[68]

Beginning in 1937, when he rehearsed and conducted a massed band of participating students at the West Texas School Band Contest, Irons traveled extensively, delivering his philosophies from the podium in conjunction with competition-festivals. Sites such as Jackson, Mississippi,[69]

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[67]Earl D. Irons, "Cornet Column," Texas Music Educator IV (September, 1939), p. 14.

[68]TMEA Region II Contest, program, April 25, 1941; Second Annual Dia Grande Band Festival, December 6, 1941; Tri-State Band Festival, program, April 3, 1936.

[69]Region VII National School Music Competition Festival, May 16-17, 1941.

Palm Beach, Florida,[70] Gilmer, Texas,[71] Shreveport, Louisiana,[72] Waurika, Oklahoma,[73] Lawrence, Kansas,[74] and Enid, Oklahoma were frequented by Irons between 1934 and 1965. Particularly at Enid, site of the Tri-State Music Festival, was Irons' presence noted both as teacher and adjudicator, serving each year but one between 1934 and 1965.[75]

Through his appearances as guest conductor at contests and festivals, Irons made further contributions to the band movement by writing new compositions for specific events. As early as 1934, the need for more original band works was expressed by Irons, as the bulk of available literature at the time was transcriptions of orchestra literature. At the 1934 meeting of the Texas Band Teachers Association he promoted sponsorship of an original composition contest to help fill the void in band literature.[76]

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[70]Florida State Band Contest, program, April 3, 1941.

[71]Letter from Jack Mahan to Gary Barrow, Arlington, Texas, September 22, 1981.

[72]Region VII National School Music Competition Festival, May 10, 1940.

[73]Waurika, Oklahoma Band Festival, program, May 20-21, 1951.

[74]First Annual National Band Festival Program, May 9-11, 1935.

[75]Tri-State Music Festival Fortieth Anniversary, program, 1974.

[76]Minutes and Procedures, p. 63.

Toward this end, March Yam was written in 1938 for the Marchiesta Band Festival in Gilmer, Texas, an annual marching exhibition featuring school bands from eastern Texas.[77] As was the custom, a massed band of participating students conducted by Irons performed the new work, which served as the festival finale.[78] For a similar event in southern Texas, he composed March Dia Grande in 1941 honoring the festival by the same name.[79]

Other compositions were written to commemorate the larger festivals of the Southwest. The Highlander Music Festival in Dallas, Texas, starting in 1946, attracted students from throughout the state and was based upon the idea that "non-competitive playing experience for high school bands, orchestras, and choruses with instruction and criticism from the best nationally known educators" was sound educational practice.[80] The Southern Music Company catalogue of 1948 listed Highlander March as a new Irons publication for that season, and it is confirmed by Mahan and Mrs. Lena Irons that Col. Irons was involved that year with the

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[77]Letter from Lena Irons to Gary Barrow, Arlington, Texas, September 20, 1981; letter from Jack Mahan to Gary Barrow, Arlington, Texas, September 22, 1981.

[78]Fourth Annual Marchiesta, program, October 29, 1938.

[79]Second Annual Dia Grande Band Festival, program, December 6, 1941.

[80]"The Highlander Music Festival," Texas Music Educator, XIII (September, 1948), p. 7.

festival and wrote the march expressly for the students entered there.[81]

Like a number of composers of his generation, Irons premiered new compositions at the Tri-State Music Festival. Southwest Classic was performed under his direction by the Phillips University Band, and was dedicated to festival director Milburn E. Carey in 1958.[82] The following year, concluding over two decades of adjudication at Tri-State, Irons conducted a massed band of select students in the premier of his Tri-State Reflections. According to Overture to '73, a historical account of the first forty years of the Enid festival, the contributions of Irons and others "were instrumental in the growth of the festival and helped maintain the emphasis on the education aspect."[83] The 1959 festival marked a change of role for Irons from cornet and band clinician to that of conductor and composer. This is illustrated in part by a turn toward a new generation of brass specialists signaled in 1959 by the appearance of trumpet soloist, Don Jacoby.[84]

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[81]Letter from Lena Irons to Gary Barrow, Arlington, Texas, September 20, 1981; letter from Jack Mahan to Gary Barrow, September 22, 1981.

[82]Tri-State Music Festival, program, April 30-May 3, 1958.

[83]Betty Carey, ed., Overture to '73 (Enid, 1972), p. 79.

[84]Tri-State Music Festival, program, April 29-May2, 1959.

Contest Organization and Administration

State band contests in the Southwest began in much the same way as did those at the national level; that is, through sponsorship from groups outside of the band field. Commonly such sponsorship was provided for the advancement of causes other than the betterment of bands and the musical interest of the students in them. In Texas, starting in the early twenties, a continual evolution toward greater educational orientation of contests can be seen. This evolution was largely influenced by the organizational and administrative efforts of a number of music educators, including Irons.

Texas bands initially were organized primarily as groups geared toward motivation of civic pride. Such purpose was particularly prevalent in West Texas, including all areas west of Fort Worth, where annual Chamber of Commerce conventions were held, providing an opportunity for bands representing the various municipalities to participate. An idea of the role of these early bands at such conventions can be deduced from an account given by Ralph Beck, director in 1923 at Midlothian, concerning a Chamber of Commerce convention in San Angelo. He stated, "The San Angelo convention again demonstrated the real value to those, who did not have one [band] to bring to the convention. The delegations without bands found it hard to make themselves known in a crowd so large, without a band to boost them."[85]

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[85]Beck, "History of the Band Association of Texas," p. 212.

The enthusiasm and civic pride generated at these gatherings inherently led to competition between the bands present. In fact, the TBTA discussed earlier was made up primarily of directors such as Irons who were involved in these contests.[86] It can be shown that the gradual transformation of contests from events that were controlled by outside interests and based upon monetary rewards to contests in which criticism and musical improvement were goals, was accomplished by Irons and other members of this association. Impacting upon this transformation were issues which came before the bandmasters through the years and when acted upon created new policy, resulting in a change in the direction of contests.

The contest environment of the twenties which provoked change by the directors is illustrated in accounts given by participating students and bandmasters. Pressure on bands to win in competition increased along with the cash prizes offered to winning bands and directors. The Dallas Chamber of Commerce offered $2000.00 in cash for their 1923 contest, and $3000.00 was presented to winners the following year at a contest in Brownwood.[87]

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[86] Minutes and Procedures, p. 2.

[87] Beck, "History of the Band Association of Texas," p. 213.

Further emphasis upon winning was generated through civic support at the competitions. According to Patrick and Mahan, both student participants during the twenties, directors were moved by this pressure to try to win at any cost.[88] Patrick described some supporters as being at times hostile in response to contest results. He stated that upon occasion guards were stationed around the judges to prevent "the throwing of cabbage, potatoes, tomatoes, or whatever, if they didn't think what the judges were doing was good."[89]

Pressure to compete and win is illustrated in the practice of some directors who added professional players at contest time to increase performance adequacy. Mahan, referring to his last contest as a student, witnessed such practice. He stated, "There was a band there from San Antonio playing at the time. We walked around backstage. There was a trombone player with a beard and he was behind a curtain, behind the trombones, playing their music."[90] That the use of extra players was common practice is confirmed by Beck in his account of the 1923 Chamber of Commerce contest at which some bands "had ten or twelve union musicians playing with them."[91]

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[88]Patrick, interview, November 20, 1980; Mahan, interview, October 17, 1980.

[89]Patrick, interview, November 20, 1980.

[90]Mahan, interview, October 17, 1980.

[91]Beck, "History of the Band Association of Texas," p. 212.

Another factor which influenced the bandmasters to eventually alter this contest environment was brought about by a changing band member constituency during the thirties. The percentage of school bands entering events steadily increased until in 1934, at the TBTA Western Division Contest at Abilene, all bands were school-affiliated.[92] By the end of that decade concern about the manner in which contests were administered was expressed by school officials, in some cases echoing feelings made known earlier by the bandmasters. Throughout the records of TBTA meetings, reference is made to school superintendents and their feelings about contest problems such as undue competition pressure and Chamber of Commerce control of contests. In a 1938 meeting, directors related how superintendents lamented the amount of control Chambers of Commerce had over contests and the fact that there were "so many Chamber of Commerce contests and festivals held for the purpose of promoting some of the cities."[93]

Evidence exists that even as late as 1941 school officials were dissatisfied with the way contests for school bands were handled. At a meeting of bandmasters in Waco during that year, D. C. McConnell, superintendent of the Gladewater, Texas, schools spoke as a representative of school superintendents. He addressed a variety of problems and stated in regard to the competitive aspect of contests, "We do

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[92]Abilene Herald, April 28, 1934.

[93]Minutes and Procedures, p. 131.

not want to see band music get on the level of football."[94]

Concern over the development of contests by bandmasters and school officials was addressed through an effort to have greater bandmaster influence over all phases of the activity. Contributing further to contest change in the thirties was the new socio-economic position of the bandmasters themselves. Many of these men who were formerly on the payroll of municipalities had by 1934 become salaried employees of educational institutions.[95] Men like Irons, who had profited from cash awards at contests were more likely than before to be in secure financial situations, possibly lessening some of the pressure to win solely for monetary gain.[96]

Irons, from the beginning, was involved in administrative and organizational efforts to exert more control over contests. In 1924 he was appointed to the TBTA finance committee,[97] and three years later served on the committee for contest arrangements.[98] Most significantly, the first state-wide contest sponsored by the TBTA was organized by Irons, according to O'Neal, who at that time was director of the

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[94]Minutes and Procedures, p. 235.

[95]Abilene Herald, April 28, 1934

[96]Earl Irons, Ralph Beck, Ward Moody, and Ralph Frazier were among those bandmasters that became school teachers. They served at North Texas Agricultural College, Highland Park High School, Odessa High School, and McKinney High School respectively.

[97]Minutes and Procedures, p. 2.

[98]Ibid., p. 17.

Weslaco Band.[99] Irons' role in the planning and implementation of this event is confirmed in the association minutes of January 18, 1929. At that time he led a unanimous vote to have the contest held in Dallas at the State Fair of Texas.[100]

Later in a move to gain more input into the organization of the West Texas Chamber of Commerce contest for the following year, Irons, as state contest chairman, led a motion to require all bandmasters entering bands to hold TBTA memberships.[101] A program from the Abilene contest shows that this regulation was implemented. In addition the TBTA was able to co-host the contest along with the West Texas Chamber of Commerce.[102]

Additional contests were held under the auspices of the TBTA, including state-wide events in 1932 and 1941, both of which took place at the State Fair of Texas. Irons was music superintendent of the fair in 1932, and coordinated the contest. He traveled extensively throughout the state to promote it and, according to one account, "contacted band directors to be of any assistance in getting their groups ready."[103]

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[99] O'Neal, interview, May 20, 1981.

[100] Minutes and Procedures, p. 19.

[101] Ibid., p. 25.

[102] Ninth Annual West Texas Band Contest, May 20-31, 1930.

[103] "State Fair Contest," State Fair of Texas Forward, (July 15, 1932), p. 10.

Irons again directed the event in 1941, when the name was changed to the State Fair Band Festival.[104]

By gaining control of these and other contests, the bandmasters were able to implement reforms designed to correct deficiencies found earlier. These reforms resulted in a movement toward greater educational emphasis. A major step in this direction was taken in 1937, when a rating system similar to that used at the national contests was implemented in Texas.[105] In this action can be seen a move away from the strong competition of early contests. Documentation of this move is found in a statement taken from the new rating plan. The statement reads,

> Adjudication of participants should be regarded as a means for evaluating the progress and musical status of the group or the individual rather than a mere comparison with other participants to secure an expert opinion of which is best, which is second, and so on.[106]

It is suggested by O'Neal that Irons was to some extent responsible for improvements in the adjudication system.[107] Few details surrounding this subject are available to substantiate this claim, other than the suggestion by Irons in a 1931 TBTA meeting that "rules for contests be the same as the

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[104]"State Fair Band Festival," State Fair of Texas Forward, (September 23, 1941), p. 2.

[105]National School Band and Orchestra Association, Bulletin No. D306, Chicago, 1932.

[106]Texas Band and Orchestra Association, Contest Rating Plan, State Department of Education Bulletin No. 738, 1937, p. 55.

[107]O'Neal, interview, May 20, 1981.

National contests."[108]

A change of emphasis in the contest movement continued into the forties, and resulted in a resolution stating that "the members of the TMEA continue their efforts to build a competition-festival program in line with the principles of education and fight against the commercial and advertising types of contests."[109] Supporting the spirit of this resolution, Irons promoted the 1941 State Fair of Texas Band Festival as one in which "work would be done for criticism rather than in the spirit of competition," with plaques awarded "not so much for competition, but for appreciation."[110]

Not only was there a new attitude toward the organization and administration of contests, but also new opportunities for students participating in them. These included group instruction, solo events, and the presentation of representative literature. Irons' involvement is seen in each of these areas. Information gleaned from a letter from Irons to D. O. Wiley suggests that Irons, through his position as Western Division President, was instrumental in having Herbert L. Clarke contribute to a 1930 contest.[111] In addition to adjudicating, Clarke lectured on the playing of the different wind instruments, a presentation that was free

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[108] Minutes and Procedures, p. 33.

[109] Ibid., p. 229.

[110] Ibid., p. 226.

[111] Letter from Earl D. Irons to D. O. Wiley, Arlington, Texas, March 30, 1930.

to students.[112]

Events for student soloists were begun in 1929. In that year, Irons organized and implemented the State Fair Contest, which featured critical commentary for each soloist by Karl L. King.[113] Again in 1932, under Irons' direction, the State Fair Contest included solo opportunities,[114] which later became regular parts of band contests.

The procedure of recommending solo and ensemble literature appropriate for contest was begun in 1927, when at a Waco directors' meeting a committee made up of Irons and others selected music for that years' contest.[115] Again music was recommended in 1930 during a meeting presided over by Irons.[116] During ensuing years, the prescribing of music appropriate for contest became a regular practice, with the Texas University Interscholastic League later assuming this responsibility.

The value of having literature periodically reviewed as to its worth to student musicians is expressed in the preface of a Texas contest publication for 1971-1974. According to

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[112]Ninth Annual West Texas Band Contest, program, May 20-31, 1930.

[113]Dallas Morning News, October 22, 1929

[114]"State Fair Contest," State Fair of Texas Forward, July 15, 1932, p. 10.

[115]Minutes and Procedures, p. 12.

[116]Plainview News, February 23, 1930.

this source, "It identifies that music of the society which, in the opinion of those who select it, is of sufficient aesthetic and educational value to be worthy of perpetuation." In addition, "It provides for the development of musical tastes and sequential technical skills which will aid the young to become musically responsive and eventually mature citizens."[117]

With the evolution of contest activities can be seen the corresponding development of bands in the Southwest. Each step in this evolution was affected to some extent by the professional activities of Irons.

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[117]University Interscholastic League, Prescribed Music for 1971-1974, University of Texas Publication No. 7113, Austin, 1963, p. 5.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the professional activities of Col. Earl D. Irons and the overall development of bands in the Southwest. The need for the study was determined after investigating the related literature, which revealed gaps in the historical record of instrumental music education, and, in particular, a dearth of biographical studies dealing with music educators in the band field.

Procedures for the research followed the guidelines set forth in the generally accepted historical method. Steps within this method included the heuristic phase, the critical phase, and the synthesis. A significant amount of data was derived from the use of oral history techniques through the cooperation of memoirists having first-hand knowledge of bands during the early part of the twentieth century. In the critical phase, items were labeled as primary or secondary source materials, applying external and internal criticism to each.

Earl D. Irons, born on March 10, 1891, received his initial music training on violin and cornet, as was typical

at the time, from family and municipal band programs. Without continuous formal training beyond the high school levels, he developed skills in cornet performing, conducting, and composing which enabled him to be most active in the formative years of school bands in the Southwest. The regional activities led to involvement in music education at the national level resulting in various honors being bestowed upon him, such as the presidency of the American Bandmasters Association.

His professional activities were divided into three areas for purposes of examination. These were involvement in professional music organizations, development of brass pedagogy, and the organization and administration of contests. Irons was a charter member of three professional music organizations in Texas which largely controlled the development of band programs in that state. These were the Texas Band Teachers Association, the Texas Music Educators Association, and the Texas Band Masters Association. He served these organizations through various capacities including office holder, policy maker, lecturer, and clinician.

Irons' concept of brass pedagogy involved both traditional and innovative approaches, culminating in the publication in 1938 of his book Twenty-Seven Groups of Exercises. Basic tenets behind his approach to brass playing as outlined in the book are that, when playing in the upper register, (1) the

embouchure should not be stretched, (2) the tongue is arched creating a narrower oral cavity, and (3) a lightening of mouthpiece pressure is achieved through lip slur practice.

Developments in school band programs were influenced by band competition-festivals, particularly during the twenties and thirties. As a participant in such events Irons established his reputation by consistently taking highest honors in his class while conducting the North Texas Agricultural College Band, as well as four municipal bands. Later he became one of the most active of adjudicators, serving the additional functions of festival band conductor, organizer, and clinician. As band competition activities moved toward a greater educational orientation, he was involved primarily through his contributions to the various professional music organizations.

Conclusions

Based upon research of the three problems of the study, it is established that the relationship between the professional activities of Col. Earl D. Irons and the overall development of bands in the Southwest was a positive one, touching virtually every aspect of this part of music education. His influence upon bands through involvement with professional music organizations is evident. The various state organizations in Texas of which he was active were responsible for elevating the position of instrumental

music education. This was done by systematically addressing the issues of the day, the most critical of which were (1) the negative image of bandmasters during the 1920's, (2) appropriate training for bandmasters, (3) statewide convention-clinics for the benefit of both students and teachers, and (4) band as a credit bearing entity in the public school curriculum.

Irons' influence upon bands is again apparent through his activities in music competition-festivals. Band contests provided the initial impetus for the organization of bands and at these events local standards for performance were established. Irons, more than any other director presented a level of performance which was the model for the first generation of bandmasters. This position was established by winning early competitions more consistently than any other director and receiving recognition from authorities from outside of the region. Irons' efforts on behalf of band competitions resulted in greater opportunities for students to have better educational experiences through solo performances, clinics, and the introduction of new compositions.

In addition, Irons' influence upon both students and teachers through his brass pedagogy is evident. His brass teachings, particularly dealing with lip flexibility and range extension, were the most frequently expressed at major gatherings of directors and students in the Southwest for thirty years. This information was disseminated initially

by Irons himself through his writings and appearances at clinics, and later by his students, who until 1955 were the only teachers to present cornet clinics at functions of the Texas Music Educators Association. Throughout the 1940's Irons was the primary link between students and teachers in Texas and the nationally recognized authorities on brass instruments.

Recommendations

Based upon the research completed in this study, several recommendations are made for future research in the history of music education:

(1) an updated history of the Texas Music Educators Association.

(2) a history of the Texas Bandmasters Association.

(3) a history of the American Bandmasters Association.

(4) a history of the Tri-State Music Festival in Enid, Oklahoma.

(5) a study of the cornet performances, compositions, and concepts of brass pedagogy of Herbert L. Clarke.

(6) a study of the cornet performances, compositions, concepts of brass pedagogy of Herman Bellstedt.

APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE MEMOIRISTS

INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE MEMOIRISTS

Dear _____:

I am a doctoral candidate in music at North Texas State University. My research project deals with the career of Col. Earl D. Irons.

With the help of Mr. Jack Mahan and Mrs. Lena Irons, I am presently compiling names of persons who may have had some professional association with Col. Irons. At this stage I wish merely to verify addresses and get a response as to availability for interviews at some future date.

It will be greatly appreciated if you will complete the enclosed form in order that I may get a better idea of the type of information I can expect from the interview. A stamped envelope is provided for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Gary W. Barrow

2216 Wellington
Denton, Texas 76201
(817) 382-0612

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

Would you be willing to participate in an interview and be quoted as a source for a dissertation dealing with Col. Earl D. Irons?

Yes_____ No_____

In which of the following areas do you feel you were best acquainted with Col. Irons? You may wish to check more than one area.

_____ Cornet pedagogy

_____ ABA activities

_____ TMEA activities

_____ Tri-State Festival

_____ Phi Beta Mu activities

_____ Cornet performance

_____ Adjudicating

_____ Band rehearsal and organization

_____ Other

Name _____

Address _____

APPENDIX C

COMPOSITIONS BY EARL D. IRONS

COMPOSITIONS BY EARL D. IRONS

Cornet Solos with Piano Accompaniment

* Cedarvale . . . . . .Fillmore-Carl Fischer . . 1941
Echoes of the Painted Desert-Fillmore-Carl Fischer 1951
* ** Emerald Isle. . . . . .Fillmore-Carl Fischer . . 1939
Everglades. . . . . .Fillmore-Carl Fischer . . 1941
* Fleur-de-lis. . . . . .Fillmore-Carl Fischer . . 1951
* Grand Canyon
Belwin-1942-transferred to Southern Music . . 1958
* Song of the Pines
Belwin-1942-transferred to Southern Music . . 1961

Marches for Band

*	American's Flying Legion . .	Belwin	.1942
	Blue Bonnet March.	Rubank	.1952
	Cadet Colonel.	Rubank	.1957
	Dia Grande	Belwin	.1941
	Dogwood Trail.	Belwin	.1941
	Elder Statesman.	Carl Fischer	.1946
	Honors of the Day.	Rubank	.1957
	Liberator.	Belwin	.1943
	The Highlander	Southern Music . . .	.1948
	Yam.	Rubank	.1938
	Welcome Texas.	Unpublished.	.1964

Concert Pieces for Band

*	American Grandeur.	Fillmore	.1948
	Bella Donna.	Sharpiro-Bernstein .	.1953
	Big State Polka.	Carl Fischer	.1953
*	Early American	Belwin	.1949
	Espana (Charbrier-Irons) . .	Belwin	.1953
	Fanfare.	Belwin	.1949
*	Inspiration.	Belwin	.1949
*	Mt. Scott.	Belwin	.1952
*	Starlet.	Southern Music . . .	.1949
*	Tradition.	Belwin	.1949
	Two Italian Minatures for Band . .	Rubanks. . . .	.1953
	Youthful Spirit.	Volkwein	.1950

* Appeared at least once on the Texas University Interscholastic League Contest List.
** Appeared at least once on the National Contest List.

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