THE ORGANIZATION, PLACE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF A RHYTHM
BAND IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Foreword

The little child should have as much opportunity as possible for musical experiences and musical expression, particularly in the form of rhythmic response to music. Music justifies itself as a vital factor in daily living. Since instruction in performance on musical instruments has become an increasingly important phase of public school music, the first contact with instruments should be with those which the child can play, such as those of the rhythm band and toy orchestra. The early intimacy with the simple materials of music should lead naturally into other musical experiences that will be a means of happiness and comfort throughout life. Through the various phases of work with the rhythm band, the child becomes acquainted with the different orchestra instruments and forms his own ideas as to which instrument he wants to play in the school band. The correct handling of the simplest percussion instrument is pre-orchestral training.

Rhythmic development is fundamental in the education of every child. Philosophers and educators of all time have

1Helen Christianson, Bodily Rhythmic Movements of Young Children in Relation to Rhythm in Music, p. 16.
recognized its importance. It has been said that Aristotle saw in music not only enjoyment, relaxation, and recreation, but also release from the tension of disturbed emotional states, and incentive to the positive development of character. Plato believed that rhythm and harmony, components of music, find their way into the innermost soul and become a part of the personality.²

Rhythm was the first element of music to be developed among primitive people. Since the dawn of history, man has turned to music and rhythm as a way of expressing his emotions and creating a richer, fuller life. It appeals to the young child with his desire for activity. When a child is helped to develop a sense of rhythm, he is given the opportunity to learn bodily coordination, and mental and auditory alertness.

The place of the rhythm band in the modern curriculum should merit support equal to that given any other experience. Since rhythm is an age-old expression of emotions in which both children and adults enjoy participating, why should not the child be given an opportunity to utilize this form of expression frequently?

Rhythm band work in the schools will help children appreciate good music. Through rhythmic response to music, the children become familiar with it and gain an awareness of the

²California State Department of Education, Music Education in the Elementary School, p. v.
close connection between rhythm and music and begin to apply the rudiments of musical composition.

Justification of the Study

The elementary school teacher, in most of our schools, has the full responsibility of teaching and guiding those children in the growth and development of the different types of rhythm and mood. Even though rhythm is the most elemental feature of music, children rarely have an extensive background for rhythms when they come to school.

Since the foundation of music is rhythm, the feeling for rhythm must first find expression through the body. With this knowledge in mind, the teacher will organize a rhythm band for the child to feel rhythm physically. Coleman advises that the body is the medium through which musical thought must be expressed.\(^3\) Then, since vocal and instrumental music both depend so vitally upon bodily freedom and muscular coordination, it is of great importance that this foundation be laid in the beginning of the child's musical study, and as early in his life as possible.

Some children need a great deal of encouragement and help in the development of their native rhythmic responses. It is the teacher's responsibility to guide and encourage these

\(^3\)Satis N. Coleman, *Creative Music for Children*, p. 83.
children, and to assist each child to respond to a wide variety of rhythmic activities.

The need for more efficient and comprehensive teaching in the field of rhythms justifies the writer in making a more thorough study of the organization, place and significance of a rhythm band in the elementary school curriculum.

Source of Data

Books by Satis N. Coleman and the California course of study on Music Education in the Elementary School will be used greatly in developing this study. The books, bulletins, pamphlets, and other periodicals of the North Texas State College and Texas State College for Women libraries will be used extensively. The students of the Midland, Texas, elementary schools will provide practical study.

Limitations

This problem will be limited to the first and second grades of the elementary school and will be limited to practical study of the rhythm band activities of the first grade in the Midland, Texas, elementary school.

Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter I contains the foreword, the justification of the study, the source of data, the limitations, the organization of the study, and related studies.
Chapter II shows the significance of the rhythm band in the elementary school curriculum. In this chapter a list of aims of the rhythm band are given.

Chapter III presents the techniques of organizing a rhythm band. Chapter III includes preparation for the rhythm band through story, dramatization, play, and song; presentation of instruments; and equipment for rhythm band.

Chapter IV discusses the rhythm band as curriculum material.

Chapter V gives a summary of the study and suggested recommendations as possible ways of organizing the rhythm band in the elementary school curriculum.

Related Studies

Much of the material used with this paper was drawn from and influenced by three sources that can well serve as a guiding plan for work with the rhythm band. Two of these studies were reported in books written by Satis N. Coleman. The first one, Creative Music for Children, embraces the creative growth of children. The other one, Creative Music in the Home, gives valuable information concerning the making of instruments.

Christianson has made a curriculum study concerning rhythm.\(^4\) She is concerned, in her book, with an organized curriculum in bodily rhythms.

\(^4\)Christianson, op. cit.
The present study differs from the related studies in that it is concerned with music and rhythm only as they contribute to the organization of the rhythm band in the elementary school curriculum or show the significance of the rhythm band in the elementary school curriculum.
CHAPTER II

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RHYTHM BAND IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

There is no phase of music education more interesting than the development of a rhythm band. But, you ask, what is a "rhythm band"? This name is given to a group of children playing various types of percussion instruments as an accompaniment to a musical composition performed on the phonograph or the piano. The joy and stimulus of active participation are made possible for the pupils and truly artistic effects may be produced.¹

This activity is also known by other names: melody band, rhythm orchestra, percussion band, or toy orchestra.

When the term "toy orchestra" is used, it generally implies the inclusion of at least a few instruments which produce actual pitch, such as the xylophone, set of bells, chimes, and other related instruments.

According to psychologists, music contributes to the life of the young child. Stern, in a chapter on "The Child and Music," says that of all the arts, music is first in importance because it is so early available as a source of enjoyment.² Before the young child can talk, he shows pleasure in listening to singing and instrumental music. If it is a

¹ Osborne McConathy, and others, Music in Rural Education, p. 111.

gay rhythmic melody, he shows his delight not only by facial expression, but by vivid bodily movement. Rhythm, according to Stern, makes a special impression on young children because "music, to begin with, sets in motion in the child involuntary sensory-motor action."³

Jersild calls attention to the young child's pleasure in bodily movement and suggests that markedly rhythmic music may enhance satisfaction in activity.⁴

The degree to which bodily reverberations can affect emotional states, particularly in inducing pleasantness, is seen in studies of the effects of music. The rhythm of muscular movement imposed from without by the lilt of the music will often promote feelings similar to those experienced after a triumph or a happy event.

Lee and Lee⁵ give the assurance that rhythm is a form of music in which freedom of expression should be encouraged so that children will give their own interpretation of the music. They advise that:

It is a vital and essential experience in the child's musical growth. By this is meant, not the finger-tapping insisted upon by many teachers, but the response of the whole body of the child. It is only through such wholehearted unselfconscious response that a child can sense the full beauty of music. Besides this, it is one of the most integrating experiences a child can have. Every phase of the child, his thoughts, his feelings, his physical body are all responding to the same moving force and directed toward fulfilling the same purpose.

³Ibid.
Perham believes that playing simple instruments should have a place in the elementary program for two psychologically sound reasons. First, the immediate satisfaction which the child's experiences give him the feeling that "music is fun, and isn't hard; you don't have to have lessons in order to take part in music." This tends to build the favorable attitude that music is a natural thing, that it comes from the inside out, and that it is not primarily an acquired skill.

Second, these simple instruments have proved to be a very logical and psychological approach to the learning of physically difficult orchestral instruments. Educationally, the child's experiences with these simple instruments are very valuable, because from the standpoint of growth in music they form a very worthwhile basis for more challenging experiences to come.

To the teacher who is organizing a rhythm band for the first time will come various questions, such as: What is the place of the rhythm band in the curriculum? What will be the return for an outlay of money, time, and effort?

Rhythmic experience should develop control and appreciation. Through such activity the children are led to perceive and appreciate rhythm as an element in making beautiful things, and in the giving of their bodies that they can use rhythm. The attempts to make active response to a rhythmic stimulus will increase

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tenfold their powers of perception and appreciation. The child learns to listen to music. He learns to feel music, to absorb it, and to give his body over to it.

Work in the rhythm band develops a feeling for rhythm. It puts the child in step physically, mentally, and spiritually. Because it is teamwork of the finest sort, it teaches the child to contribute his best to the success of the whole. It gives an opportunity for attentive listening. To that listening there comes a physical response which calls on musical feeling, memory, and judgment.7

The reading of a rhythm band score is part of the new work introduced in the toy orchestra of the second grade. Teaching the child rhythm, so that he will recognize and interpret rhythmic problems whenever he meets them is part of the work of the band.

The work of the rhythm band helps to keep parents interested in the school and in the subject of music. Public appearances of the rhythm band unite the parents in a common interest. In many instances, a child's participation in this activity has shown to the parents evidence of musical talent and has led to the child's further musical education.8

Above and beyond the training which rhythm band offers as a preparation for vocal and instrumental music, is the

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7Lillian Vandeveer, The Instructor Rhythm Band Book, p. 5.  
8Ibid., p. 6.
part it plays in character development. Through this group work those qualities which mean further happiness and success are instilled. The child who tinkles a pair of bells must, first of all, be alert. To play his instrument on time, he must be attentive, obedient, and accurate. His movements must be controlled from within if his part is to fit into the musical whole. Those who tend to lag are gently spurred by the impersonal and gentle force of the music itself. Those who are impetuous learn to subject their speed to the ordered pace of the rhythm as it speaks.

The dreamer and the dawdler must watch what is going on and have attention fixed on one purpose only, or find themselves conspicuously out of place. In listening to the whole and keeping track of an individual part, the child learns one of life's great lessons, the preservation of individuality while contributing to the welfare of the group.

To summarize this chapter a list of aims of the rhythm band will be given to show the significance of the rhythm band in child development. The aims are as follows:

1. To develop in the child an awareness of the rhythmic and tonal element in music through habits of attentive listening.

2. To afford the child a source of enjoyment.

3. To afford the child opportunities to acquire rhythmic sensitivity through physical responses to music.
4. To afford the child an added channel for self expression through interpretative and creative rhythmic activities.

5. To develop in the child the habit of contributing to the success of the whole. (Work in the rhythm band develops teamwork of the finest sort.)

The general aim of the rhythm band is to create an understanding of rhythm, and to develop and improve the feeling for rhythm within the child--through natural ways of expression. In the teaching of rhythm, it is hoped to stimulate in each child enjoyment of good music, and to develop in each one the latent abilities of expression and appreciation through musical experiences and activities.
CHAPTER III

TECHNIQUES OF ORGANIZATION OF THE RHYTHM BAND

The children should be given a great deal of rhythm play. Rhythm is a means of conscious expression throughout life, and in the primary grades the child should gain a well-developed feeling for rhythm, acquired through rhythmic games and activities. This work may consist of tapping, clapping, marching, skipping, running, high-stepping horses, galloping horses, walking folk dances, and singing games. There should be dramatization of songs, stories, and poems.

In beginning this rhythmic work, music should be used that definitely suggests an appropriate response. Other compositions that suggest brownies, dancing leaves, the wind, elephants, bears, clowns, the organ man, and the circus band may be used later when the rhythmic sense is more fully developed. Moods may be interpreted also, such as quite, gay, noisy, sad, and thoughtful. Large body movements should be stressed. This can be done by encouraging the children to create their own dances to folk tunes or simple songs.\(^1\)

\(^1\)California State Department of Education, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 13.
Along with this work the pupil should have the growing experience of listening to good music of a kind which is appropriate to his interest and of making spontaneous responses which the music suggests. If the child learns to listen carefully for the tone and the rhythm of the music, he will respond with appropriate movement. This response should come as a natural and enjoyable activity.\(^2\)

Most kindergartens afford a splendid beginning in rhythmic development, and the child who has experienced kindergarten training before he enters the first grade will be prepared to continue the work in the rhythm band as presented there.

There are any number of good ways to start a rhythm band, but one of the most interesting approaches is the one suggested in the *Etude* for September, 1942, by Clara Kara Novich, who is a member of the National Federation of Music Clubs, and an expert in rhythm band. Knowing how little children love and respond to stories, she first stimulated an interest by telling a story of a musical nature. The one about Apollo and his lyre, Pan and his pipes, or a study of the child life of a famous musician tends to instill further interest.\(^3\)


\(^3\)Ibid., p. 596.
When the children are ready to start a rhythm band, the four major instruments—triangle, drum, tambourine, and cymbal—are introduced by sound. The children close their eyes while the teacher plays a simple measure of two or three counts on each instrument. Upon recognition of sound, the children are shown the instruments and are allowed to try them individually. All the children examine the instruments. Then the teacher demonstrates the correct way to hold them and to play them, discussing the names of the instruments, and guiding the children in describing the various tonal effects produced, such as a tinkle, a click, or a jangle.4

At this point, unison playing begins. Those children not having instruments clap or tap the rhythm to keep them occupied and out of mischief while the others are performing. With all fairness, every one must have a chance to do ensemble work. Several children should take turns if there are not enough instruments available at first. The teacher should always keep in mind that music is for every child and that it can be fun. The secret of success in this work is found in the well-known saying of Satis Coleman: So long as a child's whole-hearted interest is in his work, he will go as far as opportunity and his natural capacity will allow.

When all the different instruments have been presented and the children have become familiar with each one, its name

4Ibid.
and the various possibilities of playing it in different tempo and degrees of force, select a march with strong rhythmic accent and let the class hear it several times. Then, let all play and keep time to the music. It is well to play several marches or other selections with marked rhythmic accent. The children should trade instruments after each selection. By exchanging them often, each child becomes familiar with the sound and possibilities of playing each instrument; thus, he develops a discriminative sense in his choice of the one which best interprets the music he hears. He also learns the names of the instruments through natural conversation about them.5

Another approach to starting a rhythm band is to present all the instruments at one time and let the children examine them. Of course, they will be filled with curiosity, interest, and excitement. They will want to make sound on their instruments and respond rhythmically to music. The most appropriate teaching practice is to show each child how to hold his instrument in his hands and how to make it say something in sound. Any one who has observed little children has seen their shining eyes, glowing faces, and happy expressions when the instrument does actually talk. It is, therefore, by example and by imitation of the teacher that the beginning is made in playing an instrument.6

5Lillian Fox and Thomas Hopkins, Creative School Music, p. 140.
6Brooks and Brown, op. cit., p. 133.
Next, play familiar songs on the piano and let the children decide what they would like the instruments to play. Always begin with simple material, songs that are familiar to the children as: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep," "Sing a Song of Sixpence," and many others. At first, permit the children to play the rhythm as they sing the song. This participation should be of free accord and in the spirit of fun. They will enjoy working out their own orchestrations; and in this way they are learning and growing musically.

As a further step, the teacher may dictate various patterns and ask the children to remember where to come in. They will respond eagerly, especially if in the months passed the class has had much experience in singing beautiful songs as a background for the interpretative effect of the rhythm band. Just as they sense and feel the mood of the song itself, so will they respond to the spirit of the music by themselves. 7

The teacher must know the material he is to present and be thoroughly familiar with its phrase structure or contrasting themes. He should have in mind a suitable instrumentation, but should not impose it upon the children. Their creative thinking is the objective. They should sense that not all the instruments will be playing at the same time.

7 Osborne McConathy, and others, The Music Hour, Elementary Teacher's Book, p. 15.
Their choice of instruments to be played at any one time is an evidence of their creative thinking.  

If the children are led to feel that each instrument may say something musically, it becomes an added means for rhythmic interpretation, and not an end in the fundamental viewpoint of keeping time.

If the rhythm of a drum is always associated with the rhythmic movement of inspiring music, it is always a musical instrument to the child. A drum inspires the strong beat of a march, the light taps of a running horse, and the various dignified rhythms of Indian dances.

Rhythm sticks can be the clock ticks or soft rain pats. If the children have watched the playing of a violinist, two rhythm sticks will easily become both violin and bow to be held and played with musical care. Again, a rhythm stick may be a flute or piccolo as the length allows movement of the music.

Triangles and bells ring for gay songs and dances. The use of either instrument strengthens responsibility for rhythmic regularity and precision. Triangles contribute advantageously to accompaniments of clocks, bells and mechanical toy song.

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A concerted use of rhythmic instruments may follow the children's particular enjoyment of an instrumental number which has marked rhythm and simple dynamic changes.

Through experiments with different combinations and their appropriate use in various parts of the music, the children rapidly develop a discriminating analysis. They soon learn to frown upon too much noise and appreciate responsibility in helping to make a musical accompaniment to lovely music. By the time a child has completed the first grade, he has gained such a well-balanced sense of musical activities that he is ready for the new responsibilities of the advanced rhythm band.

Beginning with the second grade, the rhythm band evolves into what is known as the toy orchestra. The difference is marked by the use of a few instruments which produce actual pitch, such as xylophone, set of bells, chimes, bird whistles, simple flutes, etc. These instruments have musical color and quality and will enable the children to express the qualities which they find in music.\(^\text{10}\)

The children should now be able to listen intelligently to fine music. Encourage them to discover the mood of the selection to which they are listening, urge them to create their own rhythmical responses, and have them identify the instruments performing. The teacher should provide appropriate

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information which is related to the music through pictures, stories, poems, and historical facts.

The toy orchestra continues to be a part of the creative expression of the children.\(^{11}\) It is conducted like the rhythm band, but more is demanded of the individual players. Each one must learn to play all the instruments in order to be ready to substitute in case of an emergency. There must be quality and balance of the instruments for a musical performance with either band.\(^{12}\)

In the toy orchestra the children learn the beginning of orchestral behavior. They must be quiet, orderly, alert, and prompt in obedience. They learn to handle instruments with due respect. They learn to follow a leader. It is one of the best possible means for developing concentration and for encouraging whole hearted teamwork.\(^{13}\)

There should always be a leader or conductor for the rhythm band and toy orchestra. Conducting these activities should be very simple at first, so that the children concentrate on the pulse rather than on what they are doing. Choose one member of the class for the child conductor, but give each child an opportunity to direct. At this stage they

\(^{11}\)California State Department of Education, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 19.


may learn definite movements which are recognized as the correct ways of beating time; these are acquired through imitation and repetition. It is easy for the children when the teacher is directing, for they simply copy his movements. But when the child conductor is left to continue beating time, he is one among many, and it needs conscious effort on his part to remember and to do the movements correctly.\textsuperscript{14}

Conducting constitutes excellent training; therefore, the teacher should stimulate pupil leadership from the beginning.\textsuperscript{15} Provide a conductor's baton and encourage various children to try, at first letting them merely mark the pulse with any kind of a movement, but gradually training them in the conventional conducting movements for double, triple, and quadruple measure.

Single out a few who show greater aptitude than the rest and give them special training. Karl Gehrken's in his book, \textit{Music in the Grade Schools}, suggests that the class vote for a boy and a girl who are to serve as the regular conductor for a given time or period. At the end of this time, the whole matter is opened up again; and if the same conductors are chosen for the next period, it should be because they still demonstrate greater proficiency, rather than for personal reasons. If this matter is well managed, competition

\textsuperscript{14}Louis E. de Russette, \textit{Children Percussion Bands}, p. 18.  

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 19.
will be keen; and the influence of such conducting upon the rhythmic ability of those who compete will vary considerably.\textsuperscript{16}

The rhythm band and toy orchestra may be used with piano, phonograph records, or radio. In addition to this material, there is an abundance of singing games and folk dance music in the school music program.

The instruments included are:

1. The bells which may be of four varieties: sleigh bells, which are on a strap, to be held in the hand; bells on a handle, which can be held easily; rhythm bells, whose tone is sweet and clear; and tuned resonator bells, which take the place of a xylophone.

2. A triangular which is a bar of steel with an open corner is known as the triangle; the larger the triangle the better the tone.

3. The rhythm sticks which may be of three styles. One style consists of plain sticks in various bright colors. Another style has one plain stick and one notched stick.

4. The Chinese wood block which is an oblong block of wood with slots in it.

5. The tone block which is light and easy to hold. The tone is clear.

6. Tambourines that are like small drums with an open head. For a satisfactory tone, buy the one with a genuine skin head and a firm heavy rim.)

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 116.
7. A flat wooden handle with one pair of jingles mounted on it which is called a jingle clog.

8. Finger castanets which are hollow shells of wood held together by a cord.

9. Cymbals which are two curved sheets of metal, with straps on handles for grasping.

10. The drums which are of three styles. The snare and orchestra drums; the Chinese drum; and the hand drum, which is best for small players.

11. Tuned bars of definite pitch that make up the xylophone. There are wooden xylophones and metal xylophones. The metal xylophones are a more lasting tone.

12. The wooden rattle that has cogwheels operated by a handle. This instrument is very good for Indian music.

13. The bird whistle which is a small metal cylinder with a tube in the side to be filled with water.

14. Sand blocks which are two blocks of wood on handles. One surface of each block is covered with sandpaper.\(^{17}\)

The instruments to be used in a rhythm band should be of as good quality as possible. Care in the selection of xylophones and orchestra bells is most important of all, for here it is not only tone quality, but intonation as well that must be watched. The better instruments cost a little more, but they will be worth the extra money. It is actually an

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\(^{17}\) Lillian Vandeveere, *Instructor Rhythm Band Book*, pp. 6-7.
advantage to begin with a few good instruments. The teacher must see that all the children have their turn at learning to play these; then add others, one at a time, as skill in playing and listening develop.\textsuperscript{18}

Beatrice Perham, in her book entitled \textit{Music in the New School}, makes this statement concerning the rhythm instruments.

The value of having many instruments so simple that a child can readily make music on them is inestimable. Moreover, there is a great educational value in having as many different kinds of instruments as possible, and in having instruments exemplifying the many ways in which tones are produced. By experimenting in such a situation, children are led to discrimination in the matter of tone quality; their feeling of security and enjoyment increase as they discover that they can play the same tune on many different instruments; a broad background for the development of skills is present; a knowledge of transposition comes naturally, since they find that different instruments are pitched in different keys.\textsuperscript{19}

When a teacher is faced with the problem of equipping a school for rhythm band activities, the first questions usually asked are: "Where do all these instruments come from? And isn't it too expensive a proposition for the ordinary school to consider?"

If funds are lacking, many of these instruments can be made. It is known that the best growth of the child comes through efforts that create something new, either by hand or of mind.

All children love to make things, and the making of a

\textsuperscript{18}Karl Wilson Gehrkens, \textit{Music in the Grade School}, p. 114.

\textsuperscript{19}Perham, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 57.
musical instrument has a stronger appeal than many other things, for it is making something with a voice. If a child is given music that is within his group; and is guided in making drums, rattles, tambourines; if he is permitted to experiment with the sounds of wood, metal pipes, and string; his musical power will grow naturally as his interest and achievements grow. 20

It is very interesting to note how a collection of instruments grows when children become interested in this phase of music. Drums can be made from such materials as nail kegs, buckets, large coffee cans, round paper boxes, oat meal boxes, flower pots, bowls, and coconut shells, using shellacked muslin, canvas, inner tubes, and skins as coverings.

Large nails, suspended by a string, make very nice sounding triangles. Tambourines can be devised by stretching skin over embroidery hooks with tin washers for jingles, or using pie tins with washers attached to them. Take the lids from tin cans, and fasten them to three inch pieces of broom handles for cymbals. Castanets and wood blocks can be constructed from pieces of hardwood. Sand blocks are very quickly made by tacking sand paper over one side of the blocks of wood. Gourds, when they are dried, cleaned, painted, and partially filled with B.B. shot, small stones, or shells,

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20 Salis N. Coleman, Creative Music in the Home. (Taken from the author's comments entitled: "To Parents and Teachers," found in the front of the book.)
make good rattles. Chimes can be made from scraps of steel pipe cut in different lengths. Take bottles, put various amounts of water in them, and strike them with a rhythm stick. The tones are lovely.

Other materials suitable for use in the rhythm band are pieces of iron or steel that sound well when struck; the right type of wood, cut in correct lengths for xylophone or marimba; strings, broken drumheads, and old pegs; dried seed pods, bamboo sticks and old fishing poles; and baking powder cans partially filled with beans.

Search for materials to be used in the construction of musical instruments will afford the children excellent opportunity to become thoroughly acquainted with the neighborhood stores. It will also help them to be resourceful. 21

In making these instruments, the children should be encouraged to work very carefully and with great accuracy. This helps them to become self-directing in their musical efforts and stimulates the use of their creative power.

The public appearance and the seating of the rhythm band are problems to be considered. The appearance of the rhythm band is very important. Careful attention should be given to correct posture and the appropriate type of uniform or costume used in public appearances.

First, discourage any unnecessary noise during, before, and after rehearsals. The first rule of the band should be to keep the instruments quiet when they are not being played. If public appearances of the rhythm band are to be successful and given the best impression, then the seating should be carefully arranged. The semicircular arrangement is attractive. If the group is large, use a semicircle two rows deep. As you look at the stage, place the bells at the left end, so their tone will carry. Next are the triangles. In the center are sticks and blocks. Put the tambourines, cymbals, and drums at the right end. Place the xylophone at the far left, beyond the bells. Any other instruments are between the tambourines and the cymbals.\textsuperscript{22}

Toy orchestra performance is always an attractive feature on school programs. However, it should never be developed as a "fad," "side show," or "stunt" to achieve publicity. The important point is that the program performance should always be the outcome of natural daily work, conceived, developed, and possessed by the children themselves. It should not be an elaborate outline of instrumentation imposed upon the children and drilled upon for perfection in performance.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{22}Lillian Vandevere, \textit{Instructor Rhythm Band Book}, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{23}Fox and Hopkins, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 139.
CHAPTER IV

THE RHYTHM BAND AS CURRICULUM MATERIAL

Any proposed addition to the school curriculum should be justifiable to that curriculum and should be able to support the advancement of the purpose of the school. If the purpose of the school is to improve the quality of living, then the curriculum must be a living curriculum. Every phase of that curriculum must contribute to better living.

The elements that contribute to better living will necessarily be determined by the society in which the individual lives. In order for the individual to live better in the American democratic society, the curriculum, through which the individual learns to live, must be democratically sound.

In a study prepared for the Horace Mann Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation, Teachers College, Columbia University, Florence B. Stratemeyer and her associates proposed the following democratic principles for curriculum construction.

1. We are committed to a belief in the worth and dignity of the individual.
2. We believe that decision and action should be based on the scientific approach to the study of problems.
3. We are committed to faith in cooperative intelligence as a means of improving life.
4. We are committed to the translation of democratic values into action.¹

From the discussion given by Stratemeyer and her associates for each of the above listed democratic principles, the following criteria of democratic soundness for curriculum material has been formed:

**Principle:** Society is committed to a belief in the worth and dignity of the individual.

**Criterion:** A curriculum must be designed to give to children and youth a respected and a vital part in society in keeping with their maturity and in terms of the problems and situations which they face. A curriculum must be one through which children and youth grow to respect the unique worth of each individual including themselves.

The rhythm band as proposed in preceding chapters of this study is designed to give each individual a high regard for the worth of the other members of the band. It is easy for even a small child to realize that the whole of the band is dependent upon each part that comprises that whole and that each member of the band is of paramount importance. He also realizes that he is a very important unit in the band as a whole.

This realization will also help his attendance record. If he is deeply conscious of his individual uniqueness as a vital asset to the whole, he will be eager to attend and contribute his best.

**Principle:** Society believes that decision and action should be based on the scientific approach to the study of problems.

**Criterion:** A curriculum must be one which develops children and youth able to make reasoned decisions based on the values they hold.

The rhythm band provides for and encourages creative ability. In selecting, repairing, and building new instruments the child's imagination and creative ability is unlimited. He is also given the right to experiment with his invention and discover for himself.

The opportunities that are given a child in choosing various musical arrangements for different occasions and many other decisions that he is to make help the child to develop the ability of basing his decisions on scientific reasoning.

**Principle:** Society is committed to faith in cooperative intelligence as a means of improving life.

**Criterion:** A curriculum must be one which develops children and youth committed to working with others for the common good. A curriculum must be one which develops children
and youth committed to make constructive use of their powers and those of others for the common good.

The high degree of cooperation that is necessary in a rhythm band enables the individual to become highly skilled in the principles of democratic cooperation.

**Principle:** Society is committed to the translation of democratic values into action.

**Criterion:** A curriculum must be one which in every aspect is directed toward the development of democratic values.

Every phase of the rhythm band as proposed in this study has been based on democratic procedures. The presentation of instruments, selecting tunes, selecting leaders, and daily activities have been designed to help the child develop a high respect for democratic action and to allow for a high degree of child participation in democratic thinking and procedures.

While all interaction of the individual with the environment is experience, the school cannot promote experiences of low educative quality. Pupils, teachers, and others can find too many of these in every walk of life. The school must be concerned with experiences of high educative quality since it should aid each individual to raise the level of his experiencing in all aspects of living. To do this, educators must have some criteria for testing incipient experiences to see whether they warrant study through the school.

1. The experience must begin with and continue to grow out of the real felt needs of pupils.
2. The experience must be managed by all of the learners concerned—pupils, teachers, parents, and others—through a process of cooperative democratic interaction.
3. The experience must be unified through evolving purposes of pupils.
4. The experience must aid each individual to increase his power to make intelligent choices.
5. The experience must aid each individual to mature his experiences by making progressive improvements in the logic of each experience.
6. The experience must increase the number and variety of interest which each individual consciously shares with others.
7. The experience must help each individual build new and refine old meanings.
8. The experience must offer opportunity for each individual to use an ever-increasing variety of resources for learning.
9. The experience must aid each individual to use a variety of learning activities compatible with the variety of resources.
10. The experience must aid each individual creatively to reconstruct and expand his best past experience in the developing situation.
11. The experience must have some dominating properties which characterize it as a whole and which usually give it a name.
12. The experience must close with a satisfactory emotional tone for each participant.²

Principle: The experience must begin with and continue to grow out of the real felt needs of pupils.

Criterion: Does the experience begin with and continue to grow out of the real felt needs of pupils?

A need represents any disturbance which an individual feels so keenly about that he wants to resolve it in order to achieve a new equilibrium. The movement toward the restoration of equilibrium is search and exploration. The recovery is fulfillment or satisfaction.³

Of all the arts music is first in importance because it is so early available as a source of enjoyment. Before the

³John Dewey, Logic, the Theory of Inquiry, p. 27.
young child can talk, he shows pleasure in listening to singing and instrumental music. If it is a gay rhythmic melody, he shows his delight not only by facial expression, but by vivid bodily movement. Rhythm, according to Stern, makes a special impression on young children because "music, to begin with, sets in motion in the child involuntary sensory-motor action."4

**Principle:** The experience must be managed by all of the learners concerned—pupils, teachers, parents, and others—through a process of cooperative democratic interaction.

**Criterion:** Is the experience managed by all of the learners concerned through a process of cooperative democratic interaction?

There is a high degree of democratic interaction between all learners in rhythm-band activities. The rhythm band, as presented in preceding chapters, provides for democratic cooperation between pupils, teachers, and parents. The program places emphasis on the gaining of proficiencies in the techniques of democratic action.

**Principle:** The experience must be unified through evolving purposes of pupils.

**Criterion:** Is the experience unified through evolving purposes of pupils?

The rhythm band provides for dynamic purposes which evolve

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with the progress of the whole program. Current purposes
when analyzed and appraised will necessarily point to new pur-
poses, and new behaviors will result from attempting to
achieve them.

**Principle:** The experience must aid each individual to
increase his power to make intelligent choices.

**Criterion:** Does the experience aid each individual to
increase his power to make intelligent choices?

The scientific method of solving problems and making
decisions is a vital part of the rhythm band as proposed in
this study.

**Principle:** The experience must aid each individual to
mature his experiences by making progressive improvements
in the logic of such experiences.

**Criterion:** Does the experience aid each individual to
mature his experiences by making progressive improvements in
the logic of such experiences?

The experiences involved in a rhythm band are unified
and dynamic. The experiences must be organized into logical
sequence so that each will make its maximum contribution to
the whole program.

**Principle:** The experience must increase the number and
variety of interests which each individual consciously shares
with others.

**Criterion:** Does the experience increase the number and
variety of interests which each individual consciously shares with others?

The activities experienced in a rhythm band, as proposed in this study will increase the number and variety of interests for the individual to share with others. All interests, discoveries, and achievements become the common property of the band and yet remain the individual's contribution to the group.

**Principle:** The experience must help each individual build new and refine old meanings.

**Criterion:** Does the experience help each individual build new and refine old meanings?

The rhythm band provides for the building of new meanings and for refining old meanings. It does not set a definite time for meanings to appear, or to be refined. However, the many experiences that the pupil participates in will be very important in determining what, when, and how meanings will be differentiated.

**Principle:** The experience must offer opportunity for each individual to use an ever-increasing variety of resources for learning.

**Criterion:** Does the experience offer opportunity for each individual to use an ever-increasing variety of resources for learning?

The rhythm band provides for the pupil's usage of an ever-increasing variety of resources for learning. The type
of resources for learning are not restricted to the field of music. It is very probable that from his interest in music, a child will express an interest in some related fields, such as physics, mathematics, and literature. When this happens the child is encouraged to follow his interest in research and activities of that field.

**Principle:** The experience must aid each individual to use a variety of learning activities compatible with the variety of resources.

**Criterion:** Does the experience aid each individual to use a variety of learning activities compatible with the variety of resources?

The rhythm band, as proposed in this study, is an interacting part of the whole curriculum in which the child learns to live. Since the band is a part of the whole, this study provides for the child to pursue a variety of resources and the learning activities which should accompany those resources into any area of living. The resources and activities will vary with individual differences.

**Principle:** The experience must aid each individual creatively to reconstruct and expand his best past experience in the developing situation.

**Criterion:** Does the experience aid each individual creatively to reconstruct and expand his best past experience in the developing situation?
Creative music integrated with democratic action, as advanced in this study, is probably one of the best methods of encouraging a child creatively to reconstruct and expand his best past experience in the developing situation.

**Principle:** The experience must have some dominating properties which characterize it as a whole and which usually give it a name.

**Criterion:** Does the experience have some dominating properties which characterize it as a whole and which usually give it a name?

The rhythm band, as presented in this study, is easily identified as a whole. However, each unit and experience that comprise that whole can be easily studied and analyzed in light of its contribution to the whole experience. It is also easy to examine each part of the whole as to its value to the growth of the learner.

**Principle:** The experience must close with a satisfactory emotional tone for each participant.

**Criterion:** Does the experience close with a satisfactory emotional tone for each participant?

The experience, as indicated in this study, does not end abruptly. It does not leave the child in a new complex and disturbing situation. On the contrary, a rhythm band, as given in this study, will give the child confidence in his
ability to deal with persistent life situations and produce satisfactory conclusions.

The foregoing pages of this chapter have been concerned with justifying the rhythm band as part of the curriculum. This chapter is concerned only with the democratic soundness of the program and educative quality of the experiences. If the criteria used for evaluating these characteristics were sound, then, the rhythm band qualifies as curriculum material.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the study indicate that a psychological sequence of experience is better for child development than a logical organization of subject matter. Rhythm band in the elementary school should have a two-fold purpose: (1) children should experience music for their own development, and (2) rhythm band should enrich other areas of learning whenever there is an opportunity to do so.

There are a few things to avoid in order to assure success with the rhythm band. First, do not scold if the children make mistakes. Remember to always keep them happy. Second, avoid competition. Music is an individual pleasure, and enjoyment of music does not always increase in proportion to one's ability to excel in it. Third, avoid monotony, repetition, and carelessness. What is worth doing at all is worth doing well. Fourth, let the teacher be careful that in her enthusiasm or anxiety for perfect response the lesson does not become tiresome. Continue practice only as long as the children enjoy participating in the lesson. More than anything else, the organization of a rhythm band should develop
an atmosphere of happiness. It is an outlet for self-expression which is always a pleasant and worthwhile experience. The children will learn a technique in handling the instruments which will make them more sensitive to the beauty in and the appreciation of good music. Music can do much to develop group spirit and cooperation, and a good rhythm band is a subject for school and community pride.

The teacher of rhythm band will not produce a good performance for its own sake, but will work to foster musical growth and musical responsiveness in the children by their own experimenting, creating, choosing, and purposing. Before her will always be the old, but ever new, expression, "Where there is joy, there is quick learning."

The result of this study indicates that a rhythm band qualifies as elementary curriculum material. Any addition to the curriculum should be selected, among other things, on its ability to further the development of the child in democratic living. If the democratic criteria given earlier in this study is sound, then, the rhythm band is a good tool for democratic development.

All curriculum material should be based on a sound psychology of learning. The rhythm band, as outlined in this study, complies with a modern psychology of learning and is psychologically sound curriculum material.
It has been pointed out in this study that training through rhythm can be carried out in a way that is joyful to the child. Responding to the rhythm of music makes a universal appeal to young children, for it is another means of joyful self-expression associated with music and it lays an important foundation for future study and appreciation. Primary children enjoy expressing their appreciation of rhythm physically.

There are three factors of chief concern in this study: (1) young children, (2) markedly rhythmic music, and (3) child growth. Attention has been focused primarily on rhythmic responsiveness of children in relation to rhythm in music and child development. In making preliminary provision for music as curriculum material, the experimenter set up criteria for selecting markedly rhythmic music in keeping with children's interests and growth needs.

Recommendations

It is suggested that the school music teacher explore the enormous field for developing right attitudes toward music. It is the belief of the investigator that children can be guided into deep interest in music through continuous and broadening experiences.

Emphasis on attitudes of growing children rather than on fixed standards of achievement should bring about a new conception of the meaning of appreciation. The ideal program in
music education will be a composite of the educator who brings the principles of child development to bear on music, and the well-rounded musician who believes that the development of the child through the agency of music is the prime aim of school music education.

As a result of this study, it is recommended:

1. That rhythmic play should be related closely to the child's experiences, either real or vicarious.

2. That the chief aim of rhythmic activity should be pure enjoyment; the festival spirit should not be killed by too much formality.

3. That every child's idea should be respected, for he has a right to his own conception about how airplanes fly or fairies dance.

4. That positive suggestions, not criticisms, should be used to raise the level of the children's work.

5. That the teacher should be a member of the group and play with the children, at least occasionally.
APPENDIX

A Suggested List of Phonograph Records

The following phonograph recordings are suggested by the California State Department of Education, *Music Education in the Elementary School*, 1944.

- **Victor Record No. 2276613**
  - "Come Lasses and Lads"
  - "Military March in D"

- **Victor Record No. 22169a**
  - "Ratoplan"

- **Victor Record No. 2216913**
  - "With Castanets"

- **Victor Record No. 22766a**
  - "Lavender's Blue"
  - "Polly Put the Kettle On"
  - "Waltz"

- **Victor Record No. 20079a**
  - "Andantino"
  - "Buing Bells"

- **Victor Record No. 2007913**
  - "Light Cavalry"

- **Victor Record No. 73366**
  - "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers"

The next four selections are from the R. C. A. Victor Record Library. They are given with general suggestions for orchestrations.¹

"Ratoplan" (Donizetti) 45-5079
Tune A:
1. Sticks, tom-toms, drums play the steady "1-2".
2. Triangle or cymbal on accented, first beats.
Tune B (Interlude):
1. Sand blocks play the steady "1-2".
2. Tap tambourines, jingle clogs, and wood blocks on accented first beats.
Tune A: See above.

"Amarylles" (Ghys) 45-5076
Tune A:
1. Large nails suspended on string, or a high tone on the xylophone played lightly following the rhythmic pattern of the melody. Rhythm sticks on steady "1-2-3-4", paralleling pizzicato strings in the accompaniment.
2. When the melody is repeated, triangle on accented beats, and jingle clogs on "2-3-4".
Tune B:
1. The three chords at the beginning of this tune are heard four times. Two drums, one high and one low pitched, would be a good accompaniment here, with cymbals on the third chord of each group.
2. Tambourines strike with the firm chord and shake at ends of short phrases.
Tune A: See above.
Tune C:
1. Bird whistles and triangles on alternating short phrases.
2. When the tune is repeated bells and tambourine (shaken) on alternating short phrases.
Tune B:
1. Drum and temple blocks or wood blocks on three firm chords. Cymbals on third chord of each group.
2. Tambourines struck with firm chords and shaken at ends of short phrases.
Tune C: See above. The melody is played only once this time.
Tune A: See above.
"With Castanets" (Runecke) 45-5079

Introduction: Large triangle struck twice, then rung on "long" chord. Repeat with smaller triangle.

Tune A:
1. Rhythm sticks play rhythmic pattern of the melody.
2. Wood blocks follow the uneven rhythmic pattern of the castanets in the record. (This is almost the same as the rhythmic pattern of the melody.)
3. Tom-toms and drums play the steady "1-2". (This piece is in 6/8 measure, but is counted in "two's").

Tune B:
1. Shake tambourines and jingle clogs twice, tap twice, then shake again to accompany the first short melody. Repeat.
2. Large triangle on accented beats in the short interlude at the close of this tune.

Tune A:
1. Same as above, under points 1, 2, and 3.
2. When melody is repeated, add jingle bells on steady "1".

"Shadows" (Schytte) 45-5079

Tune A:
1. Rhythm sticks following the fast rhythmic pattern of the melody.
2. Wood blocks playing the steady beats.
3. Triangle on accented beats.

Tune B:
1. Drum and tom-toms on steady beats, symbols on loud chords.
2. When melody is repeated the third time at a low pitch, add bass drum and gong.
3. Tambourines and jingle clogs throughout, playing "tap, tap, shake; tap, tap, shake; tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, shake."

Tune A: See above.
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