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Music Literature for Band and Wind Ensembles

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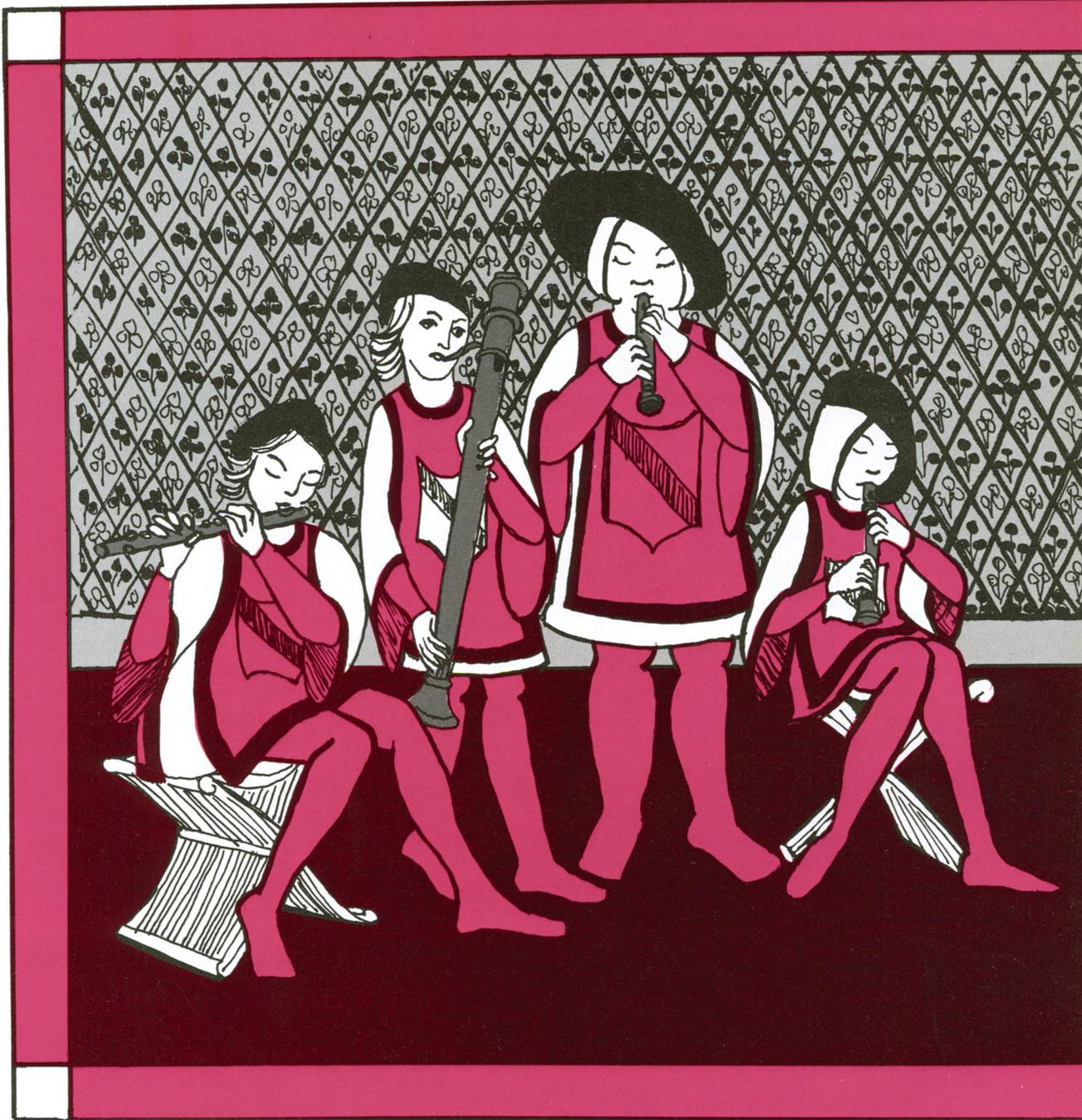
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Music Literature for

Derald De Young

For performing wind groups, the literature is the most important aspect of the curriculum. The lasting educational value of band experience for an individual derives not from the technique that has been acquired on an instrument but from the music literature the individual helped to recreate. The curriculum must evolve around the music, the quality and selection of which are among the most critical

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decisions the band director makes.

While the instrumental techniques, ear training, knowledge of composers, theory, and history are necessary parts of the curriculum for the band class, they are still premusical in that they are means rather than the end. The end is experiencing music aesthetically; this rather than knowledge of music has the potential for developing understanding and appreciation. It is crucial, then, that the literature selected for rehearsal and performance be of the highest artistic caliber and content. Litera-



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ture that is chosen mainly because it challenges or advances the technical skills of the students may do little to develop their aesthetic sensitivity.

If one examines a large number of band programs, it is apparent that there is an ambivalence among educators about the function of the school band. Some programs are predominantly aimed at entertainment, while others freely mix music written primarily for the aesthetic experience with entertainment music. The two are not necessarily mutually

exclusive. But there is a need to draw a distinction between them; otherwise audience expectations become confused. An audience that comes expecting to be entertained may resist music written purely for the aesthetic experience. In the end, it is the band director who controls audience expectations by the quality of his or her programming over a period of time.

A school band cannot and should not avoid entertainment music completely—such music can be used at pop concerts, sports events,

and other appropriate occasions. The major concerts of the band can then be reserved for aesthetic music. If the band director can define the educational basis of his program in aesthetic terms, he will develop a *raison d'être* for his program that no administrator can break.

The general artistic quality of band literature has risen in recent years, and much of this music is readily available through local music stores. There is, however, an enormous body of music literature for bands and chamber wind ensembles that has not yet become a part of the repertory of school band programs. This literature is by both composers of major status and relatively unknown composers. Some of this music was not written specifically for school music programs, but this might make it especially worthwhile because the sounds will seem fresher and less traditional.

With quality literature, programming for the concert band can attain an integrity equal to that of a symphony orchestra and result in the same aesthetic expectations in audiences.

One of the best sources of information about wind literature for solo, chamber ensembles, and band written by the major composers of Western music is David Whitwell's *A New History of Wind Music* (Evanston, Illinois: The Instrumentalist Company, 1972). In this volume one can read about the wealth of published material for chamber wind ensembles by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Strauss, Poulenc, and Hindemith, to name just a few, that is within the reach of high school performers. Examples of this literature are Beethoven's *Octet* and *Rondino*, both scored for pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns; a Haydn octet; and, with flute part added, Gounod's *Petite Symphonie*. One of the finest pieces ever written for wind ensemble is Dvořák's *Serenade*, which includes cello and bass parts. Richard Strauss' *Serenade* and *Suite* in

B♭ for winds are rarely heard gems of the literature.

The purpose of Whitwell's book is to "steer wind music back into the mainstream of music history."¹ The teacher will gain knowledge of a vast amount of fine literature appropriate for school groups that can also give the student a sense of music history.

A source with a similar historical thrust is Frederick Fennell's *Time and the Winds* (Kenosha, Wisconsin: Leblanc Publications, 1954). Along with a historical account of the evolution of the use of wind instruments by major composers, Fennell discusses the most significant wind music literature written by these masters. This slim volume is engagingly written and will open up the rich heritage of wind literature to the band director.

Richard Franko Goldman has written an authoritative book entitled *The Band's Music* (New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1938). A section on original wind instrument music has information similar to that found in the Whitwell and Fennell books but in a more condensed form. A large section is devoted to works arranged for band. While this source is dated as far as recent literature is concerned, it does provide the most complete listing of music for the wind band published up to 1938.

A more recent book by Goldman is *The Wind Band* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1961). The section on the repertoire of the band is especially valuable. Goldman discusses original band music from 1760 to 1960 and lists the best compositions written in the twentieth century. Also included are complete band programs given by such notable bands as the Eastman Wind Ensemble, the University of Michigan Band, the University of Illinois Band, and the Joliet High School Band.

The best recent source is *Wind Ensemble Literature*, edited by Richard Reynolds and others, Second edition (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Bands, 1975). This volume is a selective catalogue of the finest wind literature available today. It includes works for chamber-sized groups (for which instrumentation specifications are given), wind ensembles, and band. Publishers and recordings, when available, are listed. In this comprehensive catalogue, one will come across many familiar pieces, but these are far outnumbered by the many unfamiliar works that have as yet to be included in the school band repertory. For example, there are these little-known compositions by well-known composers: Malcolm Arnold's *Trevelyan Suite*; a jazz ensemble piece by Milton Babbitt; several

¹David Whitwell, *A New History of Wind Music* (Evanston, Illinois: The Instrumentalist Company, 1972), p. 75.

rental works by Warren Benson; and a number of seldom-heard band pieces by American composers Henry Cowell, Roy Harris, and Mel Powell. This catalogue also contains sections listing literature for soloist and wind ensemble and for chorus and wind ensemble.

A valuable source for determining if a particular composition is in print is *Band Music Guide*. This volume is published each year by The Instrumentalist Company and contains the most comprehensive and up-to-date listing of published band music. The *Guide* also has a rating system that indicates the level of difficulty of the listed works.

Another recent source of quality wind (as well as string and vocal) literature is the CMP Library Service. This is a loan service that has the compositions written under the Contemporary Music Project's Composers in Public Schools program on file. This service was begun in September 1976 with a grant from the Ford Foundation. Scores and parts may be borrowed for a loan period of up to two months with a nominal fee charged the borrower for postage and handling. The works in this library were written for and performed by school musicians. The band library contains about one hundred works by fifty composers. Most of the works are for full band, but there are a number for chamber groups and several for solo instrumentalists. A catalogue may be obtained by writing to CMP Library Service, MENC Historical Center, McKeldin Library, University of Maryland, College Park 20742.²

A source of original wind literature for large band and wind ensembles from the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras is the Wind Instrument's New Dawn Society (W.I.N.D.S.). One can obtain photocopy editions unobtainable elsewhere of original band works by Beethoven, Berlioz, Gossec, Haydn, Reicha, Schubert, Schumann, Sibelius, Strauss, Wagner, and many lesser-known early composers. Write the society at P.O. Box 513, Northridge, California 91328, for a catalogue.

Some publishers have fine wind literature available on a rental basis. Here is a list of these publishers and some of the composers listed in their catalogues who have written wind literature:

- Associated Music Publishers, Inc., 866 Third Avenue, New York City 10022 (Husa)
- Belwin-Mills Publishing Corporation, 16 West 61st Street, New York City 10023 (Harris, Hindemith, Mailman, Weinberger, and Toch)
- Boosey and Hawkes, Inc., 30 West 57th Street, New York City 10019 (Strauss, Stravinsky, and Xenakis)
- Carl Fischer, Inc., 62 Cooper Square, New York City 10003 (Adler, Benson, Brant, and Harris)
- C. F. Peters Corporation, 373 Park Avenue South, New York City 10016 (Adler, Amram, Badings, Benson, Bozza, Villa-Lobos)
- Theodore Presser Company, Presser Place, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania 19010 (Boulez, Erb, Milhaud, Riegger, and Stockhausen)
- G. Schirmer, Inc., 866 Third Avenue, New York City 10022 (Varèse)
- The Edwin A. Fleischer Collection of Orchestral Music, c/o The Free Library of Philadelphia, Logan Square, Philadelphia 19107, has a limited number of works for wind orchestra.

Wind music can also be found by consulting the list of works following a composer's entry in music dictionaries such as *The Dictionary of Contemporary Music* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1974), *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Fifth edition (London: Macmillan and Company, Ltd., 1966), and by referring to "New Music Reviews" published each month in *The Instrumentalist*.

In addition to these sources of wind music, one can discover wind literature by participating in program exchanges with other band directors, by writing to composers of unpublished works for band (there are many listed in *Wind Ensemble Literature*), and by attending concerts and conventions.

With quality literature, programming for the concert band can attain an integrity equal to that of the symphony orchestra and result in the same aesthetic expectations in audiences. Variety can be achieved in a musical way by programming music from different periods, styles, and countries. The size and instrumentation of groups can be varied. Everyone does not have to play all the time. Instead of letting the group dictate the instrumentation of the music so that everyone always has a part, it would be a refreshing change to occasionally start with the music and fit the players to its instrumentation.

Teachers form and develop the tastes of their students by the literature they choose to rehearse and perform. This places a tremendous responsibility on the teacher, for he must have a thorough background in music history-literature of all periods against which to judge the quality of the music that is available for the wind medium. There is now a large body of quality literature available for the band program that can give our students significant encounters with music of aesthetic worth. ☐

²For further information on this service, see "CMP Library Service Established," *Music Educators Journal*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (October 1976), pp. 76-78.