David Whitwell

A Short History of the Band

Maxime's Music

Edited by Craig Dabelstein

PUBLISHED BY MAXIME'S MUSIC

WHITWELLBOOKS.COM

MAXIMESMUSIC.COM

First printing, October 2024

A Short History of the Band

To begin with, one must remember that before 1550 the professional instrumentalist was a wind instrument player. Until this date the string players were individual wandering entertainers, frequently referred to in early literature as "beer fiddlers," and before this date virtually no civic or church records document the purchase of string instruments. Therefore it should be no surprise that from the time courts, towns and churches began to identify ensembles of instrumentalists in their records, these ensembles were identified as wind bands.

From the time instrumental ensembles began to appear until the present day, all such ensembles also had some functional, ceremonial and entertainment duties. In addition, until 1800 there were very few concerts reflecting our present use of the word—performances with programs, special dress, special lighting and listeners with no other purpose but to listen. There are, for example, very few extant examples of printed programs for the public appearances of Mozart. And during the Baroque there were a number of paintings of court scenes where some guests are gathered around the players listening, while others are seen at tables playing cards, etc.

Nonetheless, from the Renaissance on there is clear evidence that some music was listened to, and was not just background music, and it is this kind of music that we call "Aesthetic music." There is no more striking, nor more modern, evidence of this than in an account by Pontus de Tyard of a performance by Francesco da Milano in 1555.

> The tables cleared, he took up a lute and, as if merely essaying chords, he began, seated near the foot of the table, to strum a fantasy. He had plucked no more that the first three notes of the tune when all the conversation ceased among the festive throng and all were constrained to look there where he was, as he continued with such enchanting skill that little by little, through the divine art in playing that was his alone, he made the very strings to swoon beneath his fingers and transported all who listened into such gentle melancholy that one present buried his head in his hands, another let his entire body slump into an ungainly posture with members all awry, while another, his

> mouth sagged open and his eyes more than half shut, seemed, one would judge, as if transfixed upon the strings, and yet another, with chin sunk upon his chest, hiding the most sad face ever seen, remained abstracted in all his senses save his hearing, as if his soul had fled from all the seats of sensibility to take refuge in his ears.[1]

1. Quoted in Pontus de Tyard, *Solitaire second,* 1555.

There are also accounts of early wind bands whose performances were aesthetic in nature. An extraordinary example can be seen in the autobiography of the famous Benvenuto Cellini. Having previously studied as a cornetto player he discusses how he was invited to join the wind band of the pope, Clement VII, in a performance, replacing a regular member who was ill. He describes eight days, two hours each day, of careful rehearsal of "motets of great beauty," transcribed for a wind ensemble of eight players. After the performance the pope declared he had never heard music more sweetly executed and with better ensemble (*unita*).

The public was also listening and their appreciation is mentioned by Gottfried Reiche in the preface to the publication of his 1696 collection for winds, *Vier und zwanzig Neue Quatricinia.*

> Nothing in all art can claim finer qualities than Noble Music. My pen is much too weak either to repeat here, or to say better what professional and highly-learned men have affirmed so competently. As this matchless art spreads its charms in many ways, we find in most cities the praise-worthy custom of having the so-called "Abblasen" sounded from churches and town halls.[2]

2. Quoted with original German text in Mary Rasmussen, "Gottfried Reiche . . ." *Brass Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (1960), 10, fn. 30.

The Baroque

In Music History classes the beginning of the Baroque Period is indicated by a chalk-line on the year 1600, drawn to represent the beginning of opera. While this date is quite accurate in so far as the beginning of opera, the fact is that the rest of music and musicians didn't see the chalk-line and continued past the year 1600 unchanged in their work and music. In his great book on performance practice, *Syntagma Musicum,* published in 1619, two decades into the "Baroque," Praetorius states that he is publishing his book because he believes that Music has reached its highest point of development and he can foresee no changes in the future. In his extensive discussion of the kinds of wind bands which can be used in the new Church Concerti performances, Praetorius mentions the possibility of a violin ensemble (*capella fidicinia*) to "make his list complete" and for "those listeners in Germany who still do not know what to make of this new style." He is reflecting the fact that it would take some time before enough violins were made and distributed to create the great orchestral *concerti* and *concerto grossi* of the late Baroque. Reflecting the

cutbacks necessitated by the Thirty Years War, there are a great number of extant works for small bands of winds and singers intended for use in the church. They remain an undiscovered valuable resource for town bands and church choirs today.

Hautboisten

A major new aesthetic wind band becomes very influential in French music during the Baroque, the *Les Grands Hautbois* of the French court in Paris. The origin of this band is found under the court of François I, c. 1530, as six oboes (shawms) and (Italian) trombones. By the reign of Henri III it is called an ensemble of twelve "hautbois, sacquebuttes, et cornets á bouquin." The number twelve remained but by its most productive period it was 8 oboes (now the new French oboes, not shawms) 2 cornetts and 2 bassoons. This ensemble is fully documented performing as an aesthetic ensemble during the reign of Louis XIV, in addition to performances for various court functions.

Louis XIV, whose reign (1643–1715) was the longest in European history, was known as the "Sun God" for the magnificence and wealth of his court. Other nobles, including Germans, sent their sons to visit the court to observe how a court should be organized. In return the French court had a very strong influence on the rest of aristocratic life, leaving Frederick the Great to complain in 1750, "The French taste rules our food, our furniture and our clothes!" It should be no surprise, therefore, that the most important ensemble of the French court, the *Les Grands Hautbois,* was soon imitated in Germany. By about 1680 several German towns can be documented with this new aesthetic band, now with a half-French, half-German name, "Hautboisten," together with the new French oboe being played by players with French names.

Due to the existence of several seventeenth-century engravings which show a handful of double reeds marching behind a trumpet player, early musicologists dismissed this ensemble as a military band. In fact the libraries of Europe have almost no military music for the Hautboisten, while they have great quantities of music for indoor use. Like the French model, the German Hautboisten ensembles consisted at first of oboes, English horns and bassoons, with parts carrying indications of doubling. The implication is that again, like the model in Paris, the number twelve was the actual size of the German Hautboisten, as is also reflected in the Eisenberg Hautboisten which called itself, the "Apostles." While unnoticed by scholars, this number twelve seems to have remained for a time in association with wind music, as can be seen in the original autograph scores of Handel's *Royal Fireworks Music,* the Gossec *Te Deum* of 1790 and Mozart's

Gran Partita for winds. By about 1705, two horns begin to appear as regular members of the German Hautboisten and now the wind band is identical in instrumentation with the first generation of the Harmoniemusik of the Classical Period.

These German Hautboisten bands played concerts, even made concert tours and created schools for music education. The surviving repertoire of the Hautboisten, like that of the later Harmoniemusik, documents players of great technical skill, as can be seen, for example in the Trios of Menuets for unaccompanied bassoons. The basic forms were the four-movement *Concerto [da camera]* and the multi-movement *Overture.* The first movement of the Overture was always a lengthy movement in a meter of three, followed by a fast fugal section in a duple meter. Then followed short instrumental dance movements, curiously often ending with a Menuet (all of which characteristics are found in the well-known *Royal Fireworks* music of Handel). The last chapter of the German Hautboisten repertoire includes works by important Italian composers, such as Venturini in Dresden, who were moving North into Germany following the spread of the popular new Italian Comic Opera, not to mention music by Telemann and the pre-Classical Austrian, Wagenseil (1715–1777). All in all, here is a vast repertoire of original aesthetic Baroque wind band music, still completely unknown to band conductors everywhere.

Finally, it was the Hautboisten which was the bridge between the Baroque and Classical Periods, the four-movement Concerto [da camera] of the Hautboisten becoming the Partita and Symphony of the Classical Period and the multi-movement Overture of the Hautboisten becoming the Divertimento of the Classical Period.

The Classical Period

Harmoniemusik

The Baroque Hautboisten wind band, in addition to carrying over its forms into the Classical Period, by virtue of being an ensemble supported financially by the highest levels of society, and not the public, was perfectly positioned to transform after 1750 into one of the most extraordinary chapters in the history of the aesthetic wind band: the activity and repertoire of the Harmoniemusik, an ensemble of pairs of oboe, clarinets, horns and bassoons. After 1780 virtually every important noble in Vienna established their own private Harmoniemusik, with nobles in nearby southern Germany and northern Italy following suit.

Before 1968, when the repertoire of Harmoniemusik began to be rediscovered, hardly any scholar was aware of more than the two octets by Mozart, two by Haydn, one by Beethoven and an incomplete work by Schubert. While these were acknowledged as important pieces of music, they were seen as isolated peaks in a desert, with no hint of any connection among them or other aesthetic music traditions. Today we can document more than 10,000 original Partitas for Harmoniemusik by all the best composers in Central Europe, in addition to their being the accompanying ensemble for original compositions for soloists, including piano and vocal and instrumental soloists, and in complete wind transcriptions of orchestral symphonies, and even the complete Haydn Oratorios, *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, for Harmoniemusik without voices![3] Obviously the existence of *The Creation* for eight winds with no voices must still be considered as aesthetic music, music to be listed to, for it is impossible to imagine this music being used for the purpose of two hours of popular music. In addition, we know that Beethoven specified that his contribution of Harmoniemusik was "for a concert" and that a Viennese publisher published a Harmoniemusik transcription ("under the master's supervision") of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony for Harmoniemusik before publishing the original version for orchestra. Again, in no way can one imagine the Seventh Symphony as popular music.

3. The first oboe part of *The Creation* is more than 60 pages long!

Moreover, from a practical point of view, it seems impossible to believe that an arranger would be employed to transcribe so massive a work as the Haydn *Creation* for Harmoniemusik to be used as mere popular music. Even in a period when time as yet had little value, such an effort staggers the imagination. This brings us to what at first sight appears to be the most extraordinary part of the Harmoniemusik repertoire, the transcription of entire operas without singers. Today it is possible to document more than 2,000 copies of such works, including almost all the operas popular between 1780 and 1835. The earlier examples tend to consist of the overture and 10 to 12 arias and in the second, and final, period works such as the Rossini opera, now with 20 or more arias. It is very important to understand that none of these are "pot pouri" in character, the brief procession of themes from a particular opera, but are rather the full arias heard now with winds alone.

As far as I know there are no surviving scores for any of these 2,000 copies of these opera for Harmoniemusik. But then, full scores were not yet used in performance of the original operas. La Scala in Milano once had an exhibit which included a manuscript score for two-hand keyboard in Mozart's own hand of his entire *Marriage of Figaro* with, again in his own hand, at the top of the score the word "score" (Partitur) for his own use in conducting this opera. Why

would Mozart go to all the trouble to write out the entire opera for keyboard to use in performance when he was not only the composer but still owned the full scores? Because any one of the three massive volumes of the original scores would crush the music stand of the harpsichord and would, moreover, make Mozart so busy turning pages that he could not effectively conduct.

The very size and scope of this activity of making versions of operas for Harmoniemusik alone is a testimony of the importance to the aristocrats in hearing this form of the music. We know from a letter to his father that even Mozart himself worked for a while in turning his *Abduction from the Seraglio* into a version for Harmoniemusik, only to give up the project as being too difficult.

But why would an aristocrat want to hear a Mozart opera for winds with no singers? The operas of this period followed in the wake of the great enthusiasm for Italian comic opera which had spread rapidly throughout Europe. These Italian comic operas, much like daytime television today, had plots surrounding a young damsel strutting back and forth on the stage, weeping and wailing over her misfortune. This focus on the single soprano, and her emotional circumstances, quickly transformed ensemble music, which was now focused on the upper melodic line, unlike the older polyphonic influenced style with each part being equally important. Thus when an aristocrat in Vienna attended for the first time a new opera, what he carried home with him was not the story but the profusion of new and singable melodies. One would like to hear these melodies again, but how? Even the emperor did not have a palace room large enough to have the entire opera cast, scenery, etc., come and perform the opera so he could hear these melodies again. But an eight-member wind band could play these melodies (and without the listener having to bother with following the Italian words).

The body of original Harmoniemusik, with contributions by all the best composers of central Europe, contains many examples of music of the highest artistic level, many long serious compositions. The performers themselves were also artists of the highest level, as is made evident by the technical and musical levels of the music itself. A typical representative might be Josef Triebensee whose first position was as an oboist in the Imperial opera orchestra in Vienna. His next position was as the director of the personal Harmoniemusik of Prince Lichtenstein in Vienna, a period when his occupation was entirely given over to composing and arranging for the prince's wind band. Then his final position was as Director of the court opera in Prague, following and replacing Carl Maria von Weber.

Finally, we must point out that this brief period in which the Harmoniemusik flourished in Vienna was the same period as Mozart's

residence there. Shortly after he first established his residence there, he was approached by Prince Lichtenstein who wanted to form his own Harmoniemusik and wanted Mozart to be the leader and composer. Negotiations followed, Mozart was seriously interested not only by the attraction of a regular income, but because he was aware of the strong interest in Harmoniemusik in Vienna by which he could introduce himself to the court, but there was one of Mozart's demands that the Prince could not agree to—a life-time tenure. Instead, Triebensee got the job and Mozart went on to compose his greatest works during the following decade. But for those interested in the history of the aesthetic wind band, one cannot help being fascinated by the thought of what it would have meant to the history of the wind band if Mozart's residence in Vienna had instead been devoted to the composition of music for wind band!

The Nineteenth Century

Napoleon said, "Music is the voice that tells us that the human race is greater than it knows."[4] The Napoleonic Wars became the dividing point between the Classical Period and the 19th Century in Music. These wars, with their enormous political and economic impact on Europe, not to mention the tremendous loss of life,[5] also marked the beginning of the end of the monarchical form of government which had existed for centuries. This change, together with the examples of Mozart and Beethoven, brought to the attention of the aristocracy the fact that musicians could no longer be equated with stable assistants and kitchen helpers. Musicians today owe to these two the fact that we have been freed from being household servants.[6]

The other great change the Napoleonic Wars created, which impacted the aesthetic wind band, was that music became public. The broad public now for the first time heard the great ensemble music of the earlier masters. Music which had previously been heard in the palace by a small number of nobles and guests now was heard outdoors by vast numbers of the public and by necessity bands became larger. Complete Beethoven Symphonies were now heard transcribed for wind band. The significance of this continued for a long time and even later composers such as Liszt and Wagner arranged to have the public hear their music, including *The Ring,* long before it was made available for orchestra.

The wider consequences of music becoming public can be seen in the final chapter of Harmoniemusik where, in a deliberate break with the past, the main solo instrument now became the clarinet, instead of the oboe, which was associated with the earlier aristocratic performances. Also there was an important improvement in the

4. www.brainyquote.com.

5. I have read that on the march to Moscow and back, Napoleon lost, among others, 2,000 musicians!

6. "Thus there may—as I have done—many a young musician have taken a walk out to the Währing cemetery in Vienna in order to leave behind a floral offering on those graves." Schumann in his article on the C Major Symphony of Schubert.

self-awareness of the player, who instead of being an anonymous sound behind the curtain in the palace now became a public celebrity ("My neighbor is a member of the band!"). And conductors became famous!

Birth of the Modern Band

From the perspective of the history of the aesthetic band the greatest change during the 19th century was the evolution of the eight-member Harmoniemusik into the large modern band. The initial realization of this transformation occurred as part of a great festival in Paris known as the Festival of the Federation, on 14 July 1790, the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille which had begun the French Revolution. After one year most people thought the revolution was over, having resulted in removing the king from his throne and the writing of a new constitution. A great celebration was in order and was held on the Champ de Mars, in front of the old Military School, where today the Eiffel Tower stands. A great stadium designed to hold 400,000 persons was built for the purpose of a ceremony during which this vast public would together take an oath to the new constitution.

A leading older composer, François-Joseph Gossec (1734–1829), was chosen to compose the music for this festival. Imagine the challenge he faced. No composer in history had ever composed a work to be heard by 400,000 listeners, nor performed by such a large group of performers. One account said the performance was done by 300 winds, 50 serpents and percussion.[7] The leading Paris newspaper reported 1,200 musicians.[8] In addition, since there would also be no rehearsal possible, Gossec had the brilliant solution of writing for this band as if it were a great organ.[9] Even with it's notation in long note values, which solved the problem of no rehearsals, I can testify that this *Te Deum,* W. 79, is a very moving composition. Again because no one had ever heard music of such breadth and volume, the performance on this occasion in 1790 was an enormous success and "stole the show" in place of various speeches and the taking of the oath, none of which could be heard out of doors by an audience of this size. The impact of music on the public caught the officials by surprise but they did not fail to learn the lesson. Henceforth for the next 50 years when the government wanted to impress the public with some principle, like "Honor your Parents," they would organize a festival with a large band and a choir to sing the words of the political message. The last of these public festivals in Paris featured the Berlioz *Symphony for Band* in 1840.

7. Paris National Archives document AD VIII. 16.

8. *Moniteur,* July 23, 1790.

9. Since the 10th century the organ had been a surrogate wind band and even today has stops with names like "Crumhorn."

There were also large original band works following the progress of the Napoleonic Wars. Beethoven composed an original work for a large wind band to celebrate the Battle of Vitoria, the *Siegessinfonie,* for the first time the troops of Napoleon were defeated, even though Napoleon himself was not present. And of course the Battle of Leipzig in October 1813, when Napoleon was finally defeated, came as a great sigh of relief for all of Europe and was celebrated by a great number of compositions with that title. One I like is the *Battle of Leipzig, 1815,* by Paul Maschek of Vienna. It is a programmatic work of high musical value consisting of 30 movements which follow the arrival of various national armies, the battle and its victory followed by prayers; chasing the French troops back to Paris and the allied occupation of Paris; the return of the emperor and the Austrian troops back to Vienna with individual movements depicting the greeting by civic officials, by church officials and even one movement titled "Even the young people praise the emperor." This music exists in a complete version for Harmoniemusik and an alternate version for large band, although this version is incomplete.

Another *Battle of Leipzig* of great interest was composed by the head of Prussian bands, Wilhelm Wieprecht, for three separate bands: a large Prussian infantry band, a cavalry (brass) band and a French infantry band. This composition, in which the bands alternate quoting actual military music from the period, has subtitles which follow the battle and its various generals. Near the end all players lower their instruments and sing the doxology ("Praise God from whom all blessings come"), reflecting a previous time when soldiers sang. This large-scale composition also follows a tradition earlier in the 19th century in Germany for "Monster Concerts," (using the English title) in which groups of individual bands would gather and perform together in some large space.

From 1815, the period just after the Battle of Leipzig, two more important large original wind band compositions of very high quality appeared. One was the *Requiem for Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette* by Charles Bochsa, for band and chorus. After the loss of a generation of young Frenchmen during the Napoleonic Wars, France had grown tired of Napoleon. Now, after their long history of always having a father figure, they looked back to Louis xvi, whose head and that of his wife they had chopped off 20 years before, and thought, "Actually Louis xvi wasn't so bad; he never killed anyone." And so a ceremony was arranged where the remains of Louis and his wife would be brought to the surface and reburied in a stately new site, following the performance in a church of a full Requiem for chorus and band by Bochsa. Bochsa was a very talented musician

and composer who unfortunately ran into trouble with the law in France and England, which, under the ethics of early musicology, caused him to be ignored. But this *Requiem* is a great work with 15 movements, with a beautiful beginning funeral march featuring the newly popular gong sounding during measures of rest, some beautiful choral and band movements, some movements with solo voices with Harmoniemusik accompaniment and one movement for soli horn and harp. Of unusual interest is a great fugal "Amen" for band and chorus in which Bochsa amazingly recreates the cacophony one hears in a great cathedral as the harmonies stack up creating a special dissonance. I know of no other example where a composer actually tried to create this phenomenon through notation. The original materials include a separate work, not intended to be performed with the Requiem in the church, but probably afterwards when the caskets were lowered into their new memorial site. This "Apotheosis" for the Entrance of Louis XVI into Heaven is a fast march with very noisy military natural trumpets. I consider this *Requiem,* together with the *E Minor Mass* by Bruckner, also for band and chorus, to be the equal of any similar works for chorus and orchestra.

The other extraordinary composition of 1815, after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, is the *Symphony for Band* by Anton Reicha (1770–1836). Reicha was a well-known composer during his life-time[10] and as a professor of harmony in the famous Paris Conservatory was the teacher of Liszt, Berlioz and César Franck. The autograph score of this *Symphony* has a very long introductory discussion in Reicha's hand, in Czech and French, which explains that the purpose of this Symphony is to provide music needed for any special occasion which honors great men or great events. These introductory comments also include other interesting general comments, such as recommendations on acoustics for an outdoor performance and the need for a conductor who will study the score! Also, in the original score, expressed through a numerical code in the margins, are provisions for adding two or more bands which come and go in the style of Baroque *ripieno,* but the *Symphony* as it stands in the autograph score is distinctly a work for one band.

The first movement of this *Symphony* for large band by Reicha is a deeply felt funeral march, with ear-marks in style similar to the style of his close friend, Beethoven. The second movement is an amazing slow theme and variations with very fast and difficult woodwind passages, and one connecting passage for unaccompanied contrabassoon! The third movement is a very noble slow march in the style of Handel and the final movement is a fast and brilliant work much in the manner of Rossini. The final two movements also

10. His refusal to allow his music to be published resulted in his music, excepting his wind Quintets, being immediately forgotten. This Symphony was found in a trunk in his apartment where he kept works he considered his most important. The National Library in Paris also has an unpublished treatise on Aesthetics by Reicha.

have optional parts for 4 cannons, intended for use in great outdoor performances. These 4 cannons are carefully notated at separate individual times. Because of their interest in connection with the rest of the score, I perform these movements with 4 timpanists, one in each corner of the hall, surrounding the listeners where they are heard in an almost aleatoric fashion, one after the other.

Before continuing, with the new developments in 19th century civic bands, I must add that among a thousand original works for chorus and band in European libraries, there is a special category for chorus and military band music for the church. The Catholic Church has always included in its calendar Sundays for special celebrations, one of which, for example still included today is a special Sunday for the blessing of animals. In the 19th century, in which there was a wide interest in things military,[11] there was a Sunday set aside to honor the military. On this annual day a military band replaced the organ in performing the music of the service. Consequently, in France especially, there are hundreds of original manuscript compositions for band and chorus intended for this purpose. Especially interesting to me are numerous slow works which were played during communion. These I have always thought would make a valuable addition to the band's huge repertoire of fast and loud music.

11. Lincoln was the only world leader who did not wear a military uniform in office.

After the fall of Napoleon, together with the spirit of government by the people stemming from the Revolution, in France a window of peace prompted rapid growth of civic wind bands of an aesthetic nature. An example is the *Musique muncipale du Mans,* which converted from a military band to a civic band in 1817. It performed operatic overtures and arias of Rossini, Spontini, Boieldieu and Auber together with original works based on the Harmoniemusik of Krommer, Meyerbeer and Nicolini.

In 1833 an organization called *Orphéon* was established to help in the development of civic choirs. In the following decade civic bands were added to this organization which sponsored composition contests for original literature and also published band compositions. The famous music critic, Eduard Hanslick, commented on the great growth in the numbers of these civic bands,

> Every city and village in France has their Musique d'harmonie [bands of woodwinds and brass], or at least a "Fanfare" [brass bands]. In general, they recruit from the same social levels as the Orphéons [the choral societies], from craftsmen, businessmen, lower government officials, etc., only the wind societies go somewhat lower and higher in age—one sees there twelve and fifteen year boys alongside old grey-beards. Among the latter are veterans, an important element, as

> veterans of military bands for the most part founded the civic bands after they retired to their home town.
>
> .....
>
> Only the best of the French Harmonie Societies achieve that which is musically perfect or even special, but even the least of them can take pride in drawing some souls away from drink and card playing. For the working man, even a crude encounter with art has something which frees and ennobles; his desire to belong to a musical group gives a further push upwards.[12]

A survey published at the end of the century by the *Orphéon Society* documents a tremendous growth in the number of bands in France.[13] It found 1,711 Harmonie societies (bands of mixed winds and brass), of which 68 were in Paris alone, and of the total 62 were classified *Division d'Excellence.* The survey also found more than 4,000 Fanfare societies (brass bands), representing more than 100,000 participants!

The survey found among those of the best of the *Division d'Excellence,* a number of bands with very large numbers of players, including the *Musique municipale de Douai* (127), the *Musique municipale de Reims* (130), the *Musique municipale de Rouen* (115) and the *Musique municipale de Tourcoing* (118). The *Hamonie de la Bénedictine of Fécamp* had regular rehearsals three times per week. The number of concerts varied from four per week (!) all year by the *Musique municipale de Nice* to 12 per year by the *Musiques des sapeurs-pompiers de Nîmes.* The repertoire of these large wind orchestras, in addition to the usual transcriptions of opera overtures, etc., included some major works. The *Musique municipale de Reims* won the *Prize of Honor* at the Paris Exposition of 1889 with a performance of Mendelssohn's *Reformation Symphony.* The *Harmonie des mines de Lievin* included in its repertoire the 3rd and 6th Symphonies of Beethoven. The *Société philharmonique d'Armentières* held a concert in 1890 of works transcribed by Massenet, conducted by the composer.

The more than 4,000 brass band societies, fueled by the many inventions by Adolph Sax, also included ensembles with many players. The same survey gave the brass band, *La Siréne de Paris,* 123 players, the *Port-Brille,* 104, and the *Trith-le-Poirier,* 110. Several of these brass band societies formed schools which met in the evenings to prepare young persons to become members of the band. And in the medieval tradition of a son following in the same trade as his father, the *Fanfare Trélonnaise's* conductor, M. L. Nicolas, was preceded in that position by his father and grandfather!

ONE CANNOT THINK OF THE AMAZING GROWTH of aesthetic wind bands in France during the 19th century without mentioning Adolph Sax (1814–1894), one of the 19th century's most gifted inventors.

12. Quoted in Eugen Brixel, "Musikpapst und Blasmusik," in *Oesterreichische Blasmusik* (October, 1975), 5. This concern for the idle hours of working men was the primary reason for the development of British brass bands, during the same period.

13. Maréchal & Parés, *Monographie Universelle de L'Orphéon.*

Moving to Paris from his native Brussels for the purpose of manufacturing musical instruments, he suffered unending attacks from the local firms. Berlioz called these persecutions worthy of the Middle Ages:

> His workmen are enticed away, his designs are stolen, he is accused of madness, and driven to litigation. A trifle more and they would assassinate him.[14]

14. Ernest Newman, *Memoirs of Hector Berlioz* (New York, Dover), 308.

In 1845 a commission was formed to study the conditions of French military music, which included well-known composers Spontini, Auber, Onslow, Adam and Halvéy under the leadership of Général de Rumigny (to whom the Berlioz *Symphony for Band* was dedicated). After much discussion the commission decided a field test was needed and a number of bands were invited to perform on the Champ de Mars, the present location of the Eiffel Tower on 22 April 1845. As this turned out to be too broad to achieve recommendations, the commission next decided to have only two bands of 45 players perform, one under the leadership of Sax and the other under Michele Carafa, a professor from the Gymnase de Musique Militaire and his students.

Carafa, whose reputation in Paris was at stake, was determined to stop at nothing to win and had his agents kidnap seven key members of Sax's band. Carafa began performing the test composition, a new *Andante* composed by Adolphe Adam, which the audience was reported to have applauded, but without enthusiasm.[15] Sax, trying without success to locate his missing players, arrived late for the contest, carrying two instruments which he himself alternately played in an attempt to cover the missing parts. His band was conducted by A. Fessy, music director of the Regiment of the 5th Parisian National Guard, and was heard as "more bold, open, sonorous, noble, sustained ... and was followed with cries of enthusiasm and applause." Anyone with experience in outdoor band performance would have not been surprised. Carafa's band was based on the old traditional extension of the Harmoniemusik principle, with 60 per cent woodwinds, including oboes and bassoons which are nearly useless in the open air. Sax's band, on the other hand had only 24 per cent woodwinds resulting in a darker homogeneous sound with a stronger bass. It was no contest.

15. The eyewitness accounts are found in Oscar Comettant, *Histoire d'un inventeur au dix-neuvième siécle* (Paris: Pagnerre, 1960), 103.

Debates within the government continued, with more experiments in instrumentation until 1854 and a new ordinance from the government. Now the acknowledged band instrumentation included a number of instruments made by Sax, including for the first time a full family of saxophones (pairs of soprano, alto, tenor and baritone).

Finally, with regard to France, we must mention a tradition for large ensembles of wind instrument chamber music, which followed the Reicha Quintets for winds which were actually popular in Paris during the first half of the 19th century. Of special note is the *Société de Musique de Chambre pour Instruments à Vent,* founded by the flautist, Paul Taffanel (1844–1908). This ensemble performed original wind music by Beethoven, Mozart, Rubinstein and Spohr and commissioned a number of works, including the well-known Gounod *Petite Symphonie* (1885).[16] After the death of Taffanel, this society changed its name to *Société Moderne pour Instruments à Vent* and commissioned original works by Roussel and Schmitt. Students of the original members of these groups moved to Boston after the turn of the century to become members of the Longy Club, which was also a large ensemble of wind instruments. When its founder, Georges Longy, who was principal oboe in the Boston Symphony retired, the repertoire of this ensemble was deposited in the library of the Curtis School in Philadelphia where it was used by the first university wind ensemble in the U.S., the Curtis Wind Ensemble, which performed and recorded under the direction of the famed Tabuteau, principal oboe of the Philadelphia Orchestra, a decade before the creation of the Eastman Wind Ensemble.

16. This is the publisher's title, the autograph score is called "2nd Symphonie."

In England, during the Napoleonic Wars, there was an interesting brief period when marches were written and dedicated to individual town's militias, for the purpose of helping the citizens vicariously feel some relationship with the great news of the day. These little marches have no musical value but carry the distinction of being the very first published full scores for band.

Otherwise, during the 19th century something went wrong in England. Perhaps it was the interest in colonialism, or economic emphasis, but the great movement toward aesthetic band music that was found in France and Germany failed to develop in England.[17] Providing entertainment for the public became the goal, resulting in the observation one would commonly hear, "There is no concert today, but the band is going to play."[18]

17. Notwithstanding the enthusiasm for competition among brass bands.

18. Henry Farmer (1882–1965), *The Rise and Development of Military Music,* 127.

In contrast to the English civic world, in the court of George IV an unusually fine aesthetic band was formed under the leadership of a German musician, Christian Kramer. Kramer recruited far and wide, including in prisoner-of-war camps and prisons, for the best possible players for this band. Kramer also arranged for this band full symphonies, including Beethoven's 5th, Mozart's "Jupiter" and final E-Flat, symphonies of Haydn and the entire opera, *Joseph,* by Méhul. While the band had some functional duties, like playing from

a boat while the King went fishing, the aesthetic concerts were always highly praised by its listeners.

> From the most delicate song to the magnificent symphonies of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, and even the grandest of Handel choruses, Kramer has preserved the bearing of each class throughout in their pristine beauty and design, and with so nice an attention to the particular cast of expression appertaining to each instrument, that he has left nothing to be desired. Those are the daily services rendered by Mr. Kramer.[19]

19. *Quarterly Musical Magazine* 1, Nr. 2 (1818), 150.

Civic bands in Italy only began to make important aesthetic progress in bands after the unification (*risorgimento,* 1860–1870) of the country.[20] According to one contemporary, by 1888 there were 6,000 civic bands in Italy. Among them the *Musique municipale de Milan* had a repertoire of 2,000 compositions! Another band, the *Musica civia de Novare,* had a reputation for playing contemporary works.[21] The *La Banda di Roma,* after 1885, was conducted by one of the great figures in band history, Alessandro Vessella (1860–1929), who was also a composer and taught at the Santa Cecilia in Rome. He was the author of a famous book, *La Banda,* which was one of the first to detail the history of bands in Italy and gave helpful information on instrumentation.

20. Alceste Murri, *Sulle bande musicali: Pro-memoria* (no publisher), 1888.

21. Ibid.

Recently, great progress has been made in the cataloging of individual civic libraries in Italy which is resulting in an ever expanding perspective of 19th century civic bands in Italy. For example, we used to know of only a handful of original compositions for band by Amilcare Ponchielli, the famous composer of the opera *La Gioconda,* and who was himself a band director, but today we find he composed more than 70 original compositions for band and another 70 arrangements of opera excerpts. Some of his compositions for band are of the highest aesthetic standard.

In the German-speaking countries after the Napoleonic Wars, there arose a great number of singing societies which gave concerts. Many of these concerts included music accompanied by a wind band including music by the finest composers. Brahms for several years was the conductor of a ladies chorus for which he composed several works for female choir and small ensembles of wind instruments. His most important work for chorus and band was his *Begräbnisgesang,* Op. 13, which Clara Schumann called, "most glorious." A similar aesthetic work, *Beim Abschied zu singen,* was composed for band and chorus by Robert Schumann.

A growing sense of German nationalism is reflected in a large number of compositions for civic bands and chorus honoring its great men. In 1840 in Leipzig there was a celebration of the 400th

anniversary of the printing of the Guttenberg bible, for which Mendelssohn composed his *Festgesang* for male chorus and two brass choirs.[22] Other similar works for chorus and band honored Hegel, Schiller and Albrecht Dürer, the latter celebration featured a Cantata by Mendelssohn for male chorus and band. A German-Flemish Choral Festival in Köln in 1846 commissioned the *An die Küstler,* Op. 68 by Mendelssohn, who also composed his *Begrüssung* for male chorus, winds and celli for a Nature society in Berlin.

22. The second movement of this work was stolen by an English publisher and became the widely-known Christmas carol, "Hark! the herald angels sing."

On many occasions a town would commission a work to celebrate some civic achievement, such as for the laying of a corner stone (the Köln Cathedral and the University of Vienna) or in the case of the *Das Dampfschiff* by Joseph Stuntz (1793–1859), for the launching of a new ship on the Starnberger See in 1851.

By the end of the 19th century, the *Orphéon Society* documents many large numbers of German band societies. For the Alsace-Lorraine, 40 band societies, one of which in Schiltigheim had a band of 70 members. In Mannheim, with a population of 160,000 there were 53 adult musical societies, including choral, band and orchestra. The city of Hanover had eight band societies and three schools of music devoted only to wind instruments. The Province of Prussia had 63 band societies and the Realme of Württemberg, 73 band societies.

Switzerland was cited with having an astounding total of 800 civic wind band and brass band societies! One of these, the *Harmonie nautique of Genève* in 1889 had 92 members, toured and performed a transcription of the Berlioz *Symphonie fantastique* by G. Parès. In Vienna there were 10 band societies, but we should also mention that some of the famous waltz composers were also conductors of civic militia bands, including Johann Strauss, Sr. and Josef Lanner.

There are also records of huge numbers of brass band societies, Württemberg counting no fewer than 1,560 civic brass bands and Switzerland some 597 brass band societies! Some of these individual brass bands were also large, Strasbourg having one with 90 players. The *Musique militaire du Locle* was a civic brass band of 60 members which included saxophones.

IT WAS DURING THE 19TH CENTURY, again after the Napoleonic Wars, that aesthetic wind bands reached a great climax, ironically, with the performances of military bands. Between 1815 and 1870 there were no major military duties for these professional musicians and they could now be used to perform before the public and there was a public excited by hearing great music live. It was also a period when manufacturers were making improvements in all the wind instruments, especially valuable in the appearance of the tuba by Adolphe Sax in 1835, solving centuries of poor substitutes to be used

on the bass line. But for the famous Viennese music critic, Eduard Hanslick, it was the influence of military discipline which brought to the talents of the musicians the great successful results. After hearing a regimental band in Prague perform the music of Berlioz, Hanslick wrote,

> The many and strenuous rehearsals for this concert allows us to see the value of military subordination for artistic reasons; no conductor, of any civic orchestra would have been able to manage the performance at that time. It may go against some idealistic theories that art could be encouraged through something so very different from personal freedom as subordination, however it is so. Every art has in its technique one facet which can only be developed through constant work, and this technical side is even more important in the work of many together than by the individual virtuoso. The conductor's baton and the corporal's stick both have the purpose of bringing many heads together under one hat.[23]

23. Quoted in Brixel, *Das ist Osterreichs Miliar Musick,* 107.

Here we must introduce the man most influential in the development of these artistic accomplishments, Wilhelm Wieprecht (1802–1872). Wieprecht came from an exceptional musical family[24] and began his own career among the court musicians of Dresden and in 1824 was employed among the court musicians in Berlin. It was in Berlin that he heard an outdoor performance by a large military band which changed his life.

24. His father, it was said, could play in the third octave of the small E-flat clarinet so softly that one could not distinguish it from a flute!

> I was seized by an emotion I have never been able to explain to myself … When I heard them play the Overture of Mozart's Figaro there came in to my heart the firm decision that I would dedicate myself from now on to military music.[25]

25. Quoted in Kalkbrenner, *Wilhelm Wieprecht*, 18.

And so Wieprecht began working his way up through smaller military bands until in 1837, when playing some marches at a garden party, he came to the attention of the king.

> Included was a march from the time of Frederick the Great, which I had found among my father's music. The king called to me saying, "I know that old march and I can sing it to you, so exact is my memory of it."[26]

26. Quoted in F. Bücker, "Beim Generalkapellmeister Wieprecht," in *Der Bar* (1897), Jahrgang 23, Nr. 2.

This resulted in Wieprecht's soon becoming Director of all the music of the Berlin Guard. In this position he organized the first "Monster Concert" consisting of 16 infantry bands and 16 cavalry bands totaling more than a thousand musicians. He organized several of these massed concerts to everyone's astonishment, including the visiting Hector Berlioz who heard for the first time an arrangement of his *Franc-Juges Overture* performed by 320 players, "performed with marvelous exactness, and furious fire."[27]

27. Letter to Monsieur Desmarest, in *Memoires,* 325ff.

It was from his experience of working with these various bands that Wieprecht began a long study of band instrumentation and instrumental balance, which influenced the development of European bands. Also, to help improve the repertoire which these military bands performed before the public, Wieprecht composed original works and numerous transcriptions of the music of Beethoven (Symphonies 2, 3, 5, 7 and 9), Handel, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Rossini, Wagner and Weber. Indeed, it was a Prussian band concert, conducted by Gottfried Piefke, which included on the same program the Fifth and Seventh Symphonies of Beethoven, arranged by Wieprecht, which so impressed the famous Hans von Bülow in 1858. Bülow was the most recognized expert on Beethoven at this time.[28]

> The A Major Symphony by Beethoven, Wagner's Overture to Tannhäuser ... which we heard were satisfying, as one would not have thought in this sphere and brought to the conducting and the entire band the highest honor. The choice of the Seventh Symphony of Beethoven appeared to us genuinely successful; this apotheosis permitted a unity of character with that which had been played earlier, for example the transcription of Beethoven's C Minor Symphony by Wieprecht—a work by which he had obtained his great reputation. The Scherzo and Trio, as well as the last movement, were in this transcription of such an overpowering and compelling effect that it was possible for one at the moment to completely forget the original instrumentation.[29]

28. He once observed that if by some natural tragedy all the symphonies of Beethoven were destroyed it would not matter because he could write them all out from memory!

29. *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (July 1, 1858)

There is much documentation to suggest that after 1850 the level of activity of bands, together with their quality, had reached a great climax. One reported that in the 1860s on a summer evening in Berlin (then a city of 500,000 residents) one could hear any of 20 or 30 band concerts. The same writer mentioned that in the 1830s one could hear a band concert at any hour of the day, beginning at 5 o'clock in the morning![30] In addition we have the testimony of great composers. Berlioz, on arriving in Mainz, sought out the band that "had performed several of my overtures with great verve and power, and immense effect."[31] And Wagner, in 1858, after hearing an Austrian band play in the Piazza in Venice, wrote to the conductor,

30. Max Thomas, "Heinrich Augusst Neithardt" (Dissertation, Freie Universität Berlin, 1959), 27.

31. Berlioz, *Memoires* (Paris: Garnier-Flammartion, 1969), 2:55ff.

> I could not find you in the Piazza yesterday to thank you for the wonderful performance of the Rienzi Overture. I appreciated it very much that your musicians had noticed everything, had marked everything so well and brought everything out correctly. From the very beginning it was perfect, with the tempo entirely correct.[32]

32. Quoted in Brixel, *Das ist Osterrichs Militär Musik*, 178.

With so many fine military bands available, the French band authority, Georges Kastner, organized a World Competition in Paris, in 1867, during a great international exhibition there. The jury consisted of 20 men, including the composers A. Thomas, Felicien David and Leo Delibes, together with the two most famous critics of the day,

Hans von Bülow and Eduard Hanslick. Bands came from Prussia, Baden, Bavaria, Austria, Spain, The Netherlands, Belgium, Russia, the Garde Républicaine Band of France and the French Guides of Paris. Eduard Hanslick gave a good picture of the event.

> It was a tiring piece of work to listen attentively to twenty military band performances in a hall filled with at least 23,000 people, from 1:00 PM until 7:00 PM. My favorite overture, Oberon, was made so repelling [through so many performances] at this event that I had to avoid it for several years. But the hard work of listening was repaid by the shining success of our Austrians. Immediately after the astounding performance of the Prussians, who had a harvest of applause which could not be exceeded, the Austrians played and the hall howled as if in a hurricane; everyone screamed and waved hats and scarves.[33]

33. Ibid., 207ff.

The quality of the performances was so high that the judges were unable to select a winner, giving instead 3 first prizes (Prussia, France and Austria), 3 second prizes (Bavaria, Russia and the Paris Guards), 3 third prizes (The Netherlands, Baden and Russia) and 2 fourth prizes (Belgium and Spain).

This great gathering of bands in Paris might be called the last high-point of the history of the aesthetic band. In 1870 the Franco-Prussian War broke out, changing the entire atmosphere for military band concerts. This was also the "Age of Imperialism," which claimed the attention of the public. The orchestras, which began to come out of the palaces (c. 1850), were beginning to take back much of the repertoire of the European bands. The band conductors, desperate to maintain the large audiences they enjoyed, made the fateful decision to turn to a more popular repertoire of instrumental dance music, waltzes, galops, schottisches, etc., but it did not work. It was at this moment that we turn the spotlight to America.

This last period of the 19th century European military band corresponded with the last great period of the professional band in the United States. Imitating the European bands, the famous Sousa Band, and several more like it, toured across most of the country wearing military uniforms and performing popular music. Indeed in his autobiography, *Marching Alone*, Sousa bragged about his purpose being entertainment. Comparing himself with Theodore Thomas, then conductor of the Chicago Symphony, Sousa wrote,

> He gave Wagner, Liszt and Tchaikowsky in the belief that he was educating his public. I gave Wagner, Liszt and Tchaikowsky in the hope that I was entertaining my public.[34]

34. Quoted in David Whitwell, *A New History of Wind Music*, 78.

But for both the Europeans and Sousa they were sowing the seeds for the death of their movement, for it is the nature of entertainment

music that, however interesting it is at the moment, it does not get inside the listener as does aesthetic music. The essence of the latter, introspection, universality and deeper emotions, is why we still want to hear Bach, Mozart and Beethoven after 200 years.

For a while, Sousa and his fine band were highly popular and Sousa became rich. But hiding in the wings was the industrial revolution. My old friend, Frederick Fennell, used to say that the Sousa Period was killed by the 5-cent movie, and that is quite true. The dramatic action of those first silent films created a level of entertainment which popular music could not match. And at nearly the same time radio became first available to the public and families would sit together around the radio listening to entertainment of a fascinating new kind.

Consequently the great period of American professional bands rather quickly died. Paul Yoder, a distinguished composer, once told me of his witnessing one of the final Sousa concerts, given in a small high school hall, in 1931. He described the small audience as clapping, but not involved in the music. And Sousa had been forced by the necessity of attracting listeners to turn to things he had always opposed, the saxophone, and even putting a little jazz combo on the program.[35]

WHICH BRINGS US TO THE QUESTION of the future of the large aesthetic band. It seems to me that the time is overdue for conductors to consider just how much entertainment the citizens of their town already have—numerous channels of TV, movies and sporting events of all kinds. How much entertainment can a person absorb? And how can a town band compete with the vast sums of money which the commercial entertainment spends to attract its public?

35. Quoted in David Whitwell, *The Sousa Oral History Project*, 83. And there was a sad personal tragedy for the members of these earlier bands. When I was in the university Arthur Prior, an amazing trombonist, member of Sousa's band and conductor of his own band, came to visit. When the local conductor asked him, "How should I introduce you?" Prior answered, "You don't need to introduce me; everyone knows who I am!" But, of course that was no longer true; no one knew who he was!