

A Brief History of the Birmingham School Bands

Most folks in Michigan's Birmingham-Bloomfield area do not realize, nor consider, that the Birmingham Concert Band is not only the only "Town Band" in the greater township area, but is the first such town band in Birmingham. Until, with the support of the public school district, BCB was formed, Birmingham had relied on the school bands for half a century as the source of music for civic events, parades and ceremonies. Before the advent of music in the schools, the only band near Birmingham was the Franklin Cornet Band, shown here in an 1886 photograph from the *Eccentric*, now in the collection of the Franklin Historical Society.



Like so many around the country, the Franklin Band was part of a phenomena of returning Civil War soldiers, who had experienced such bands in the service, returning and establishing local town bands. A few Birmingham residents played in the Franklin Band, as it was the only such organization nearby. One of these is cornetist Birmingham Dentist John Rainey, back row at right, who practiced dentistry out of a small accessory building behind his home on the Southwest corner of Park and Oakland where the Park Street parking deck stands today. Dr. Ed Deer, a later Birmingham musician pictured at left at age 17 ahead of the band participating in a parade in Port Huron, recalled that Rainey's fillings were always recognizable in his older patients by the finger-print Rainey had left in them pressing the silver amalgam in place without

gloves. Ed Deer played in the reconstituted Franklin band (the original ceased in 1895) as well as the schools when growing up in Birmingham in the 1920s. Another is, back row third-from-left flute, player Edward Smith Sr., who operated the former Slade Lumber and Coal yard along modern day Woodward north of Maple on the East side (formerly Hunter Avenue). His grandson, historian Hart Smith, contributed much of the early knowledge and identifications for this paper.

Among the Franklin residents in the band who were also Birmingham fixtures were two Brooks brothers, whose family farm was at Telegraph and Twelve Mile on the Southeast corner. One was George Brooks, and the other Joseph Brooks or possibly James Brooks as identified by the eccentric many years later. The later's home still stands on 12 Mile just East of the shopping center. His son Harry was a pilot, and while tinkering with an airplane in the front yard of the home on 12 mile, was approached by Henry Ford who happened to pass by. He became a test pilot for the Ford tri-motors and was ultimately killed in an offshore crash of a Ford Fliver while attempting a long distance record from Dearborn to Miami.

Toothpicks inserted in the fuel cap vents to prevent condensation while parked overnight (following a landing 200 miles short, but setting a 1200 mile record and bending the propeller on landing) were not removed prior to take-off and the resultant vacuum starved the engine of fuel while in flight. His packed memorial service was held in the Birmingham Theater and Hart Smith recalls that his picture was near the top of the main steps inside the Chester Street entrance of Baldwin High, from which he graduated.

In the picture of the band the members are: Back row—left to right, Frank Gravelin, Arthur Bowden, Edward Smith, Russ Haskins, Edward Roberts, Andrew Bowden, Joe Gravelin and Dr. John M. Rainey; second row, Judd C. Cummings, James Brooks, Bethune Bigelow and William Leet; bottom row, George Gordon, Noble Gravelin, Eliza Farmer, Joseph Brooks and R. C. Cummings.

The full list of those in the picture is in this extract from the Eccentric at right above.

In the days before school music programs, those wishing to learn to play an instrument had only a few options. One was to attempt to do so themselves, reading how-to pamphlets and mail-order training manuals. Keyboard instruments were commonly taught out of homes, as occasionally was violin and voice in the Victorian era also. Otherwise, it was a matter of learning in the church, or after they became common, in town bands. Instrument makers often looked to sell to towns rather than individuals and town bands often were single-source in terms of the instruments played. For someone just learning, an instrument was an expensive proposition. And while catalogs offered a variety of imported cheap (and poor quality) instruments, a loaned instrument from the local band was the most economical option. Even the legendary cornetist Herbert L. Clarke learned to play on band-owned cornets.

Around 1900, the Birmingham schools reacted to the loss of the Franklin Band by briefly sponsoring a group of mostly adults and a few students who made up a civic orchestra. The effort persisted for a number of years, but with sporadic and less than notable results.

Birmingham was then among the first regionally to establish an instrumental music program in the schools. This program was established in the fall of 1927 when Birmingham hired a graduate of the

University School of Music in Ann Arbor, Arnold A.W. Berndt as the first teacher. Berndt's beginnings in music were like the rest of his generation, his first instruction coming from his parents and the small German Reformed church in their farm and lime-quarry town of Genoa Ohio, outside of Toledo.



In the photo of the St. John's choir from the collection of OhioMemory.org above, Berndt's mother Lydia Niehaus Berndt is at the far left, and his father Wilhelm, who emigrated from Stettin East Prussia (now Szechin Poland) in 1881 is in the back row, third in from the right. Arnold Berndt began playing cornet very young, and is pictured with the town band circa 1910, at which time he would have been 8 years old, holding a King Long Model cornet. It is notable that many other instruments in the picture are also Kings, a brand Berndt favored and which was manufactured in nearby Cleveland starting around 1900.



Arnold Berndt graduated from the University School of Music before it was, through the efforts of Earle V. Moore for whom the music building is named, incorporated into the University of Michigan. Among his classmates were the Falcone brothers. Leonard became Director of Bands at Michigan Agricultural College, while his older brother Nick Falcone replaced their teacher, Wilfred Wilson, in Ann Arbor. Wilson was a close friend, and frequent host of, John Phillip Sousa, with whom he is pictured below on campus. Sousa wrote *Pride of the Wolverines* as a thank-you to Wilson for his many stays at his home.



Arnold Berndt's original Michigan Teacher's license, which bears among others the signature of Joe Maddy, the founder of the Interlochen Arts Academy & National Music Camp, is below.

State of Michigan.

MUSIC

* * * Teachers' Certificate * * *

Ann Arbor, Michigan June 16 1925

This Certifies, That Arnold W. Berndt *is a person of good moral character and has completed a course of 2 years in Music in University School of Music and was graduated from the Music Department of the aforesaid institution June 10, 1925.*

Charles A. Fink
Secretary

J. E. Maddy
Head of Public School Music Dept.

This Certifies, That Arnold W. Berndt *having complied with the provisions of Sec. 2 of Act No. 166, 1901, as amended, is deemed legally qualified to teach Music in any of the public schools of this State unless this certificate shall be revoked or suspended by lawful authority.*

Dated at Lansing, June 27, 1925.

J. E. Johnson
Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The instrumental music program in Birmingham began with a group of 16 students at the high school and expanded within a year to grades 4-12 with both band and orchestra. The first band photo, taken in front of the entrance to Baldwin in 1928 is below. This and the Genoa band photo were always on Arnold Berndt's desk at school, and then on his dresser at home after he retired.




Below is the 1930 band. A 2014 Birmingham Museum exhibit included copies of 2 trumpets pictured. Arnold Berndt is at the right holding Bozo's leash, and Ed Deer holds a trombone at 2nd from left.



With the Birmingham music program beginning only shortly before the Great Depression, there was little money available to grow the program or to provide instruments. Students struggled to raise money for uniforms and for second hand or the new, less expensive, student line instruments. Band parents, and particularly Mr. Thomas R. Navin and his wife Blanche came forward to keep music in the Birmingham schools. The Navin's considerable financial support significantly helped the program grow and develop a reputation that brought guest conductors and clinicians to Birmingham such as Joe Maddy, the founder of Interlochen, composer and Bandmaster Edwin Franko Goldman, and others. A 1935 concert program with Maddy as guest conductor and Mrs. Navin as boosters Chairman is below.

BIRMINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL
Band and Orchestra Concert
 High School Auditorium
 TUESDAY EVE, FEBRUARY 5, 1935



DR. J. E. MADDY - *Guest Conductor*
 ARNOLD W. BERNDT - *Conductor*

ORCHESTRA

Sheik's Patrol	Rudolph Friml
Mystic Moonlight	Rudolph Friml
Barcarole from "The Seasons"	P. Tschaikowsky
Cello Solo "Sonate in G"	Benedette Marcello
William Gail	
Rosemunde Overture	Franz Schubert

INTERMISSION

BAND

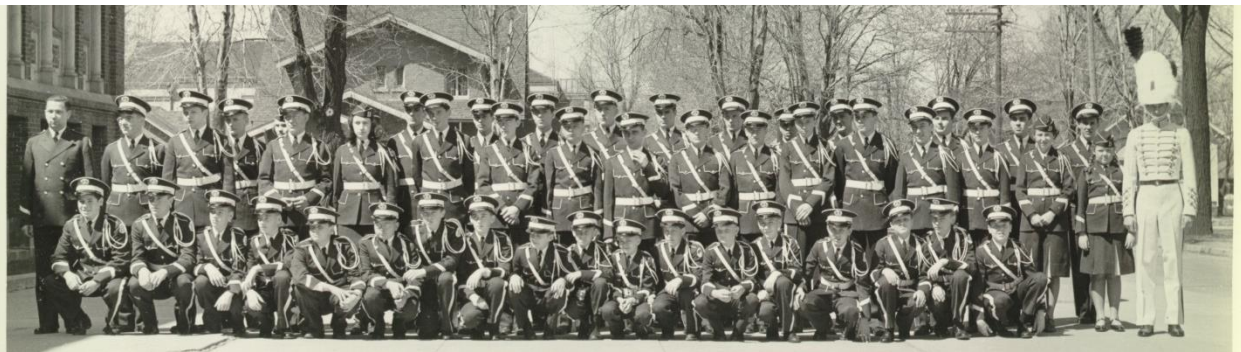
Northern Pines March	John Phillip Sousa
Morning, Noon and Night in Vienne Overture	F. von Suppe
Dr. J. E. Maddy, Conducting	
Irish Tune from County Derry	Percy Granger
Dr. J. E. Maddy, Conducting	
Don Quixote from "Don Quixote Suite"	V. F. Safranek
Southern Rhapsody	Lucius Hosmer

NOTE—This concert sponsored by parents of band and orchestra
General Chairman -- MRS. THOMAS NAVIN

Civic contribution was seen as a duty of the high school bands from the first days of the Birmingham program. Playing in parades and for civic events taught citizenship and repaid public support. Below are photos from the Birmingham Memorial Day Parade 1929, the first parade participation by the bands.



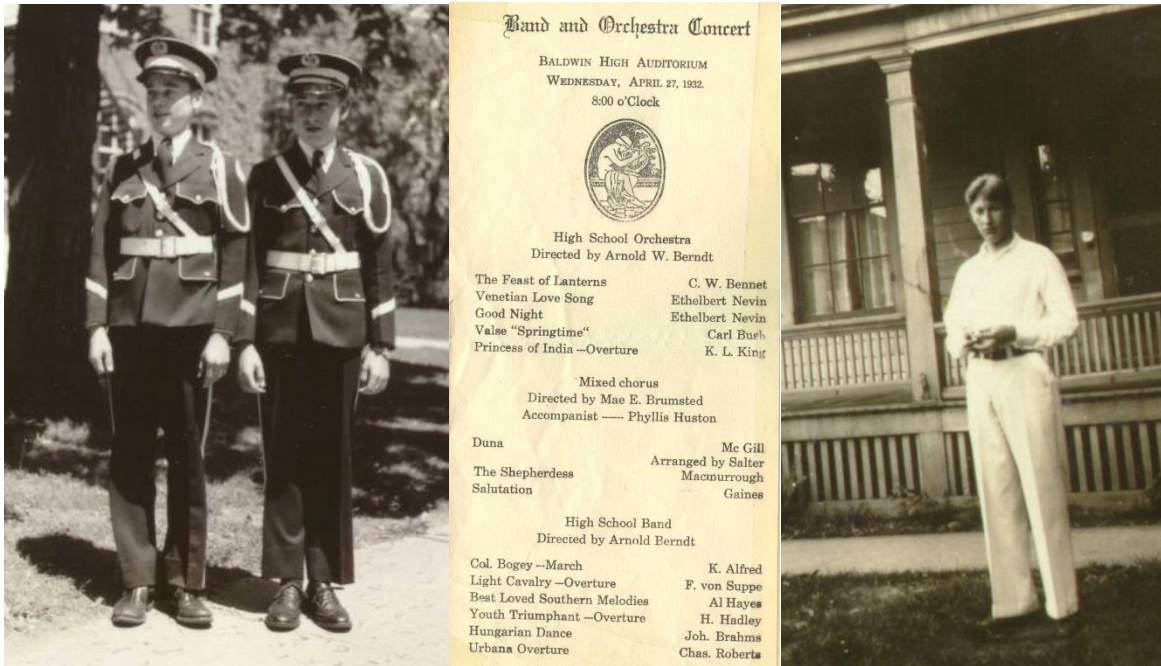
By 1940, the band had grown too large to be photographed in front of the high school door and instead had to assemble across the plaza out front where they also practiced marching.



In the Spring of 1941 they returned to the building as a backdrop. WorldWar II would shortly reduce the size of the band as students enlisted early, leaving school to fight in the war.



Many well-known Birmingham figures were a part of the music program. Author Kate Gilmore played French horn in the late 1940s at Baldwin. Below, in the left-hand 1941 picture are Roger Commings at left, he was the brother of Clarence Cummings, known to Birmingham residents as Milky the Clown, and on the right, Alfred Peabody, of the pioneer Birmingham family and long-time market and restaurant in the old barn on Woodward. The right-hand photo shows Jack Moss.



Birmingham bands were also notable in their own right, with the Birmingham music curriculum being copied by districts across the United States. Birmingham bands have been a part of the MSBOA band festivals since the very first in 1938, and the 1941 Baldwin band was the first to be recorded at MSBOA festivals. Listen to part of that recording at <http://www.trumpet-history.com/1941.mp3> .

By 1943, the band was noticeably smaller in their photograph below.

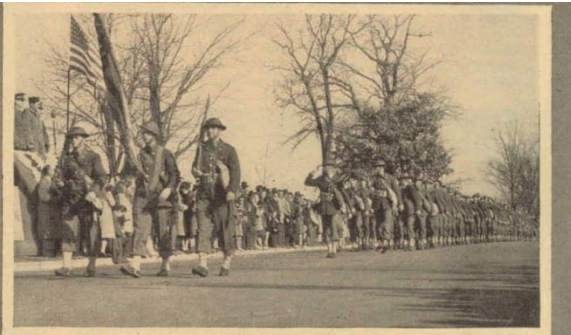


In the fall of 1943, the band joined 60,000 residents at a parade as the military paid tribute to Oakland County's war production effort.

More than 60,000 persons witnessed special ceremonies recently when the United States Army paid tribute to the men and women of Pontiac and Oakland County for their substantial contribution in producing the weapons for victory.

Following a parade by naval and military units, officials representing branches of the services, civic officials and spokesmen for the various war industries pledged continued cooperation in the production of armament.

Demonstration of tactical combat methods were staged by infantry units billeted at Pontiac, and a precision drill exhibition by sailors from the Grosse Ile naval base near Detroit concluded the events of the day.



The band also still took part in holiday parades, such as in this Memorial Day photo by Ken Burnett



By 1947, the Birmingham program had been one of the founding organizations in the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association in 1934 (originally called the South-east Michigan Band and Orchestra Association) and had been the first to be recorded competing at an MSBOA festival as Berndt mixed his love of electronics and technology with his avocation, using his own ensemble for proof-of-concept. Recording of festival performances became standard within a decade of the first recording in 1941. On the 20th anniversary of the program, the many achievements of the first two decades were recognized by the city and the schools.

City of Birmingham
MICHIGAN

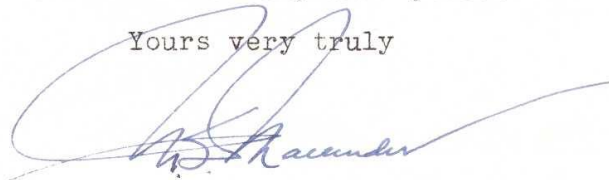
March 21, 1947

Mr. Arnold W. Berndt
Birmingham
Michigan

Dear Arnold:

I wish to express the deep appreciation of the people of the City of Birmingham for the many kind services which you have rendered to them and to their children during your long years of residence; and I also extend their congratulations and their hope that you will remain with us as one of our first citizens for many more years.

Yours very truly

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W. Alexander", written over a large, stylized flourish.

Mayor

MF
kg



Hail to the Chief

In honor of Arnold W. Berndt's twentieth anniversary as director of instrumental music in the Birmingham Public Schools, a banquet was held March 21 at the Community House. Hundreds of Mr. Berndt's former musicians were contacted, only a handful being given up with "address unknown." Many of the musicians turned out with their instruments. Among other interesting and significant activities of the evening, they played a few bars with "Chief" directing.

Few of us realize what a job Mr. Berndt does. Almost all of the students in the high school band started under him in grade school. "Chief's" weekly schedule takes him to all the elementary schools, including Franklin, as well as to Barnum and Baldwin.

—Russ Davies

The Anniversary year year-book tribute is above The last concert program of the 19th year is below.

Berndt Announces Program for Band Concert on May 1

The program for the annual Baldwin band concert, to be given Thursday evening, May 1, at the school auditorium, has been announced by Arnold W. Berndt, director, and will include three solo performances by leading instrumentalists of the band, Harris Jackson, cornet; Dick Adams, trombone; and Jerry Neff, piano.

The following selections comprise the program: "Second Connecticut National Guard March" by Reeves; "Second Norwegian Rhapsody" by Christmann; "Beautiful Colorado" by De Luca, featuring Dick Adams, trombone, accompanied by Mrs. A. W. Berndt; "Sunday Morning at Glaston" by Berndt; "By the Shores of the Mighty Pacific" by Clark and featuring Harris Jackson, cornet, accompanied by Mrs. A. W. Berndt, and "Sweet Song-Overture" by Rosenberg.

After the intermission, the program will continue with "March of the Steel Men" by Behrlerling; "Daphnis Overture" by Holmes; "The Clock and the Dresden Figures" by Ketschey featuring a piano solo by Jerry Neff, with band; "Cypress Silhouettes" by Bennett and "Mightier Than Circumstances" by Frankiser.

Achievements Cited

Harris Jackson and Dick Adams have both received highest honors in district and state festivals for several years. Jackson played first chair cornet in the Michigan State Clinic Band last year and was featured in this year's variety show. Jerry Neff won two first prizes for his original compositions in

the 1946 Scholastic Magazine National contests. He also played in the Variety show.

Tickets for the concert may be purchased from any member of the band or Variety Club.

ANNOUNCE FOR MAY 1

The annual concert of the Baldwin band, sponsored by parents of band members, is scheduled for May 1, according to Arnold W. Berndt, director.

Tickets are now on sale and

preparation for this highlights of the band's activities.

ANNUAL
CONCERT

BALDWIN HIGH SCHOOL
BAND

ARNOLD BERNDT
Conductor

HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

THURSDAY, MAY 1, 1947

8:15 P.M.

**al Concert by
vin, Barnum
s Is Tonight**

ing Birmingham's celebration National Music Week, Arnold W. Berndt will with the Baldwin and and in the annual concert at 8:15 p.m. in the high school auditorium.

lar group will begin am with "His Honor" and "The High Vision Overture" by Reiner. Two a clarinet quartet, composed of Shirley Green, Glenn Ewert, Sally Smith and Helen W. West.

Following the war, Birmingham would hire additional instrumental music teachers as the schools grew through the baby-boom years. Among those teachers were Burt Bronson, who composed the Groves HS fight song and Harold "Spike" Jones, who went on to be an administrator in the district. A 1938 concert program with Harold Jones, then a student, as featured cornet soloist is below.

CONCERT
Birmingham High School Band and Orchestra
Under the Direction of
ARNOLD BERNDT
THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 1938
8:15 P. M.
SOLOISTS—HAROLD JONES, *Trumpet*; GORDON EIS, *Piano*

Orchestra

Così fan Tutti Overture	Mozart
Sounds from the Hudson	Clark
Soloist -- Harold Jones Accompanist -- Mrs. Arnold Berndt	
In Apollo's Temple	Gluck
Cossack Dance	Moussorgsky
Sarabande	Handel
Humoresque	Tchaikowsky
"Old King Cole" Fantasia	Brockton

Band

The Calif of Bagdad Overture	Boieldieu
Bridal Song from "Rural Wedding Symphony"	Goldmark
Valse in E Flat	Chopin
Soloist -- Gordon Eis	
Arabian Nights Descriptive Overture	Yoder
"La Poloma" Spanish Serenade	Yradier
Serenade from "The Student Prince"	Romberg
Tannhauser March	Wagner

Sponsored by parents of band and orchestra members
MRS. THOMAS NAVIN, *Chairman*

Grand piano furnished by Grinnell Bros.

Harold Jones served in the Navy as a cornetist and powder monkey aboard the battleship USS Iowa. His brother Lt. Ken Jones, Baldwin class of 1937 and a chemical engineer, received the Distinguished Flying Cross as a bomber co-pilot in the Army Air Corps.

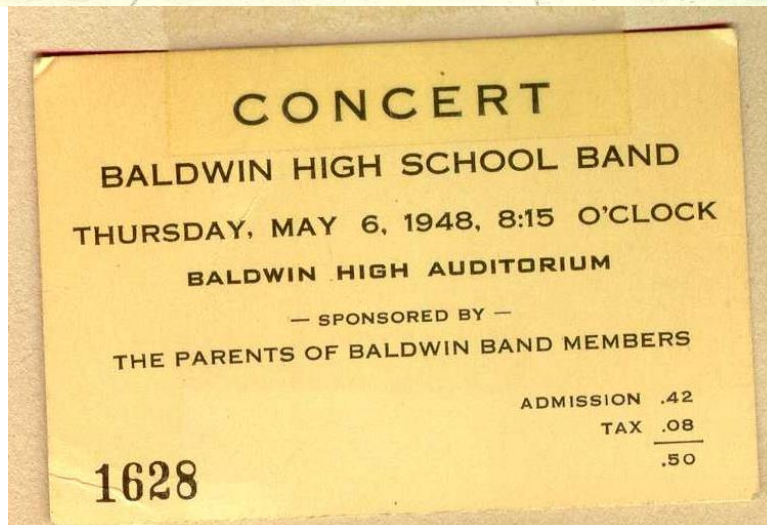


Large numbers of Birmingham alumni, many from the band, served in combat in World War II, and many with such distinction including Capt. Walter Jensen who flew in combat over China (showing his mother his flying jacket in the Eccentric photograph below).



Not all of the band alumni who left to serve in the armed forces returned from World War II. Band members served in every combat theater from France, to Italy, to China, to North Africa, to the South Pacific where a former band member died when the carrier USS Wasp was sunk by kamikaze attack.

The band had consisted of nearly 60 members when the war depleted its ranks. Following the war, by 1948 the band had only recovered to 37 students. The 1947-48 Birmingham Baldwin High School Band is pictured below.



Having started with only 16 musicians, the band did not shy away from continuing to perform in concerts and for parades. Festival judge and friend of Birmingham Leonard Falcone, the long-time director at Michigan State, would periodically stop by and give private tutorials to the band. By 1949, the band was once again receiving first divisions at festivals and growing.

The association between Leonard Falcone and Arnold Berndt extended into a productive association between Michigan State and Birmingham. Many Birmingham students took part in the Music at Michigan State summer programs Falcone hosted such as the one shown below in the early 1950s.



The Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, of which Falcone was an early supporter, and which hosts the Tuba and Euphonium competition annually held in his honor, replaced the Music at Michigan State program Falcone provided the Birmingham program with access to the resources that only a major University could boast, and the two director's exchanged ideas and remained collaborators throughout their lives. The families even vacationed together, such as at the Lake cottage of the aforementioned Jones family.



Birmingham students at Michigan State were often featured in the Birmingham Eccentric.



Pictured here is the band on Memorial Day circa 1948, parading to city hall and sounding Taps near the war memorial, which had been moved out of the intersection and onto the lawn by this time.



By the 1950s, as the student population expanded, pressure to replace Baldwin grew. The facilities were dated, the infrastructure was in need of replacement and the building was too small.



The band performs on the gym floor above left, no longer able to perform on the old stage behind them. The all-district concerts had routinely used both such as in 1938 at right. The band actively campaigned for a new high school as the entire district was mobilized to turn-out the vote for a millage to build Birmingham High School at the corner of Evergreen and Lincoln across from the Lincoln Hills Golf Course. Stories of broken floors, stuck windows, leaking radiators, and classroom overcrowding were placed in the Eccentric, and speakers urged the public to support the bond effort for a new building at virtually every public event.

In 1951, construction began on the new building with School Board Treasurer Wylie Groves, who had been instrumental in the effort. The Eccentric, as always, covered the story in detail including the band.

BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN, THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 1951

Highlights at Ground-Breaking Ceremony 800 Witness Ceremony at School Site



Ground Is Broken for \$2,109,765 High School

In a simple but impressive ceremony witnessed by about 800 persons last Thursday afternoon, Wylie Groves, treasurer and veteran member of the Birmingham Board of Education, officially broke ground for the construction of the school district's new high school.

It is believed that the \$2,109,765 project is the largest single school contract ever awarded in Michigan by a school district of comparable size.

Afternoon classes at Baldwin were dismissed for the occasion. Led by the Baldwin band, 650 students marched the five miles to the Lincoln-Cranford road site where they joined school and city officials, faculty members and other interested citizens.

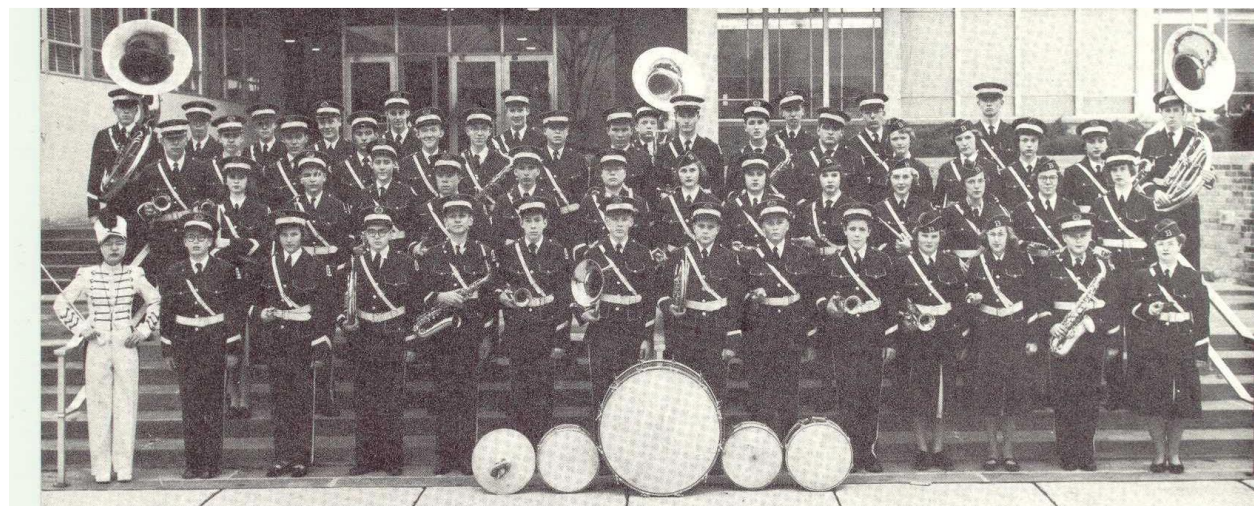
AFTER THE BAND had played the National Anthem, June graduating class president Bob Elliott picked up the shovel and handed it to 12B class President Ronald Phillips.

Ronald Phillips, junior class president, then took the shovel and

REV. ARNOLD RUNKEL SUPT. D. B. IRELAND WYLIE GROVES

New high school officially gets under way

The first band photo in front of what would become Seaholm HS was taken in 1953.



Music Director Tells Why He Doesn't Play

Like asking the mailman how long a walk he takes after delivering the mail is the question we asked Arnold W. Berndt this week. So he tells us, at least.

As we congratulated him on his thirtieth year with Birmingham schools, we asked the schools' music education director what instruments he himself played.

"I used to play several instruments," he said. "But I haven't had time to play for years now."

LOOK AT THE status of the public schools' instrumental music program today, and you see why Mr. Berndt has had no time to play himself.

When he joined the local school system in charge of instrumental education, he had 16 students. Today there are 1014 student instrumentalists in the Birmingham schools, about one in every ten pupils. Four additional teachers—Harold Jones, Robert Kutscher, Burton Bronson and Maurice Pelton—work with instrumental music students.

And today Mr. Berndt directs vocal as well as instrumental education.

Fifty talented instrumentalists, members of the Birmingham high school band, are now rehearsing under the Berndt baton for their annual concert, May 9 in the high school gym.

THE 50 TEENAGE BHS musicians again this year copped a first division rating among southeastern Michigan school bands and orchestras. The rating makes the group eligible to enter state competition, but as in previous years, spring vacation conflicts with the date.

The leader of the top-rated band came to Birmingham, where he now lives at 2539 E. Maple, after only "a year or two" of teaching elsewhere after college.

At the University of Michigan he received the teacher's certificate which he says, "You just can't get until you take a test to prove your proficiency in woodwind instruments, percussions, brasses, and even in sight singing."

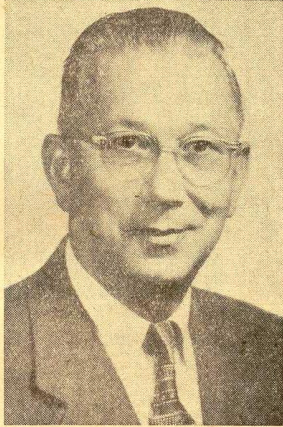
HIS GREATEST emphasis, back in the days when he played instruments himself, was on the violin and cornet.

"It takes many hours of practice a week to play well," he said. "Because I don't have the hours to practice, I just don't play at all."

Whether it allows time to play well or not, music education must have appeared an inviting field to Arnold and Alice Berndt's son, William. Now 22, William is completing his first year of teaching at Ortonville, where his subject is instrumental music.

This summer Mr. Berndt plans to direct the Birmingham recreation board's summer music program, which provides classes for hopeful musicians "from the rank beginner to the finished student."

WHEN HE'S NOT directing music and an educational program, he heads an American school band



ARNOLD W. BERNDT

in music education.

Idea is to facilitate students' learning through use of sound and picture devices.

Maybe he'll discover a way to make teaching music so easy that he'll find time to dig out the old violin and cornet!—J. C.

In 1957, the 30th anniversary of the instrumental music program in Birmingham, one astute reporter noticed that Arnold Berndt did not seem to play an instrument. This quickly evolved into an entire news article, explaining that he felt playing required a level of commitment and dedication to practice that would be in conflict with the same dedication of time and energy to teaching. That story is at left here.

What is missing from the story is that when he was playing, Berndt had been the youngest member of his home town band shown previously above, and that he had also played in not just college, but professional ensembles. His favorite playing role was as a cornet player in circus bands. Circus bands were also a favorite of one of the later instructors added to Birmingham, Burton Bronson, who played tuba with circus band well into the 21st century after his retirement from teaching.

Moreover though, Arnold Berndt firmly believed that a teacher had to be able to explain ideas in detail to students so that they could not just learn what to do, but how and why. In the teaching of music, an instructor who relies on "just do what I am doing" and demonstration, does not truly teach, but only demonstrates to be emulated. Teaching, according to the philosophy guiding music education in Birmingham, meant leaving the student with comprehension that he or she could apply to new situations, not just a memory of how to address specific ones.

Not playing left Arnold Berndt with little choice but to work tirelessly to be the best communicator of knowledge possible, and he fostered the same in the rest of the Birmingham music staff.

Concurrently in the 30th anniversary year, the program, and the curriculum developed for it which had spread nation-wide with the assistance

of the American School Band Director's Association, was considered influential enough in the school music movement for the head of the department, Arnold Berndt, to be featured in the "They are Making America Musical" of the School Musician Magazine.

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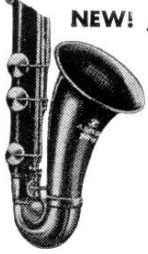



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"They Are Making America Musical"



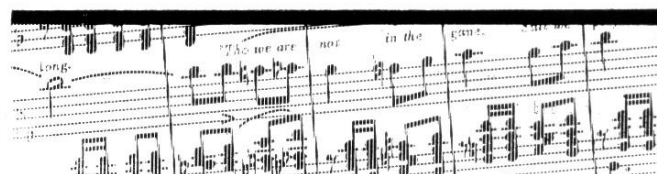
Arnold W. Berndt of Birmingham, Michigan
Member, American School Band Directors Association

"Music is one of the finest character building experiences that our schools are offering to the young people of today. I agree wholeheartedly with Dr. John J. Tigert, former United States Commissioner of Education who said, 'after the three R's, music is of greater practical value than any other subject'. I am proud to be a teacher in this field," says Arnold W. Berndt, National Chairman of the Audio-Visual Aid sub-committee of the committee for the Continuing Program for the Improvement of School Bands of the American School Band Directors Association, and Director of Music Education, Birmingham Public Schools, Birmingham, Michigan.

Mr. Berndt received his advance degrees from the University of Michigan, majoring in Public School Music and Music Education. His major instrument is cornet. He started his teaching career in Ohio but after two years moved to his present location where he has presented a successful program for 29 years. In addition to directing the school band and supervising the entire music program, he is in charge of the city's recreational music program.

During his 29 years as director of the high school band, his groups have won a long string of first division ratings in both state and district festivals. He is extremely proud of his lovely family, his wife Alice who accompanies all of his soloists, and his son Bill who has started his second year as an instrumental teacher. Though extremely busy with his national obligations with the A.S.B.D.A., his school band, supervision, and recreational music programs for the city, he still finds time to relax with his favorite hobbies of gardening and building Hi-Fi recording and reproducing equipment.

THE SCHOOL MUSICIAN is extremely proud to present Arnold W. Berndt, a man of deep integrity who is truly helping to "Make America Musical."



In 30 years, the Birmingham bands had become a role model for programs elsewhere, and continued to serve the community both as a means of assuring students could develop creative and innovative abilities in addition to the three R's as well as fulfilling the civic function of a town band, which as of 1957, Birmingham still lacked.

For the bulk of the twentieth century, the bands themselves received excellent media coverage from the Birmingham Eccentric as well as other media outlets.

—THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 1949

School Musicians to Take Part in State Festival Saturday

By Jack Adams

The annual state solo and ensemble festival will be held this Saturday at the University of Michigan. Six soloists and the ensemble groups will attend, representing Birmingham high school. All persons taking part qualified at the district solo and ensemble festival in February. The qualifying rate is the first division, the highest division awarded.

The festival is sponsored by the University of Michigan and the Michigan High School Band and Orchestra Association.

Attending will be soloists Ronald Phillips, cornet; Kate Kelley, violin; Roberta Connor, flute; Glen Emery, clarinet; Susan Fricker and Jack Adams, trombone.

The flute duet consists of Elizabeth Henshaw, Roberta Connor; clarinet duet, Roberta Connor, Glen Emery; cornet trio, Ronald Phillips, Bill Berndt and Jim Craig.

The junior high school will also be represented by two ensembles. Cornet trio, Bill Berndt, Willard Dare and Ed Nordstrom; clarinet quartet, Dick Emery, Bud Deloria, Bill Nicholas and Bill Donaldson.

—THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 1949

BHS Musicians Win Several Awards in State-Wide Event

By Jack Adams

"Superior" and "excellent" were the two ratings received by the 11 soloists and ensembles that represented Baldwin in the annual state solo and ensemble festival last Saturday at the University of Michigan. Six superior divisions and five excellents were awarded.

First divisions of superior were awarded to soloists Roberta Connor, Glenn Emery; flute duet, Roberta Connor, Elizabeth Henshaw; flute-clarinet duet, Glenn Emery, Roberta Connor.

Both senior and junior high school cornet trios received first division. The senior high school trio consisted of Ronald Phillips, Jim Craig, Bill Berndt while the junior trio was made up of Willard Dare, Edward Nordstrom, and Bill Berndt.

Second division of excellent was received by soloists Susan Fricker, Ronald Phillips, Jack Adams, and Kate Kelley. Also receiving a second division was the junior high school clarinet quartet consisting of Dick Emery, Bud Deloria, Bill Nicholas, Bill Donaldson.

Mrs. Arnold Berndt was the accompanist for all the soloists and ensembles entered in this festival.



A. W. Berndt, director of music in the Birmingham schools for 23 years, works with two of his pupils, Betty Osler and Herb Strasler.

THE BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC—THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1948

and Sidelights From State Music Festival

Many Baldwin Music Festival Entries Will Participate in State Program

Barnum, Baldwin Bands Qualify for State Music Festival at MSC on May 1

By Mary Ann Wilkinson

The Barnum and Baldwin bands attended the Southeastern Michigan band and orchestra festival last Saturday at John Pierce Junior High School, Grosse Pointe.

Two Concerts By Federated Junior Music Clubs Set

The first of two concerts scheduled by federated...

Clarinet Ensembles Place

Second division winners were solos played by Kate Kelley, violin; Glenn Emery, clarinet; Phil Allen, French horn.

The two senior high school clarinet ensembles, a quartet composed of Shirley Green, Glenn Emery, Sally Smith, and Helen Woolson; and a duet by Glenn Emery and Shirley Green, received first and second divisions.

Jack Adams received a third division on the trombone.

Junior high school entries were:

received a second division rating.

Jerry Mills, grade school representative, received second division on the cornet.

Very Good Judges

Michigan's best musical minds were present as judges, or adjudicators, at the festival. Brasses were judged by Leonard Falcone, director of bands at Michigan State College, and Clifford Lillya, teacher of cornet at the University of Michigan.

Woodwinds were judged by Keith Stein, instructor of Woodwinds at Michigan State; Larry Teal of the Detroit Symphony, and

First Division Rating

Baldwin's band was rated first division in concert playing by Harry Clark, Cleveland, Ohio; Cliff Lillya, University of Michigan; Leonard Falcone, Michigan State College; and third division in sight reading by Roy Miller of Wayne University, making their final rating second division.

Both bands under the instruction of Arnold W. Berndt, music director for 21 years, show that Birmingham should be very proud of its music department. The bands have qualified for the state festival to be held at the

Dent Smith, Wallace Smith, Bob Taylor, Ronald Thompson, Tom Tracey, Charles Tyson, John Vise, Dick Wagner and Don Westerby.

'Excellent' Rating Earned by Barnum, Baldwin Bands

Appear on Program

Appearing on the program are Ward Abbott, Marion Adams, Marlene Barnes, Sonya Eader, Betty Beardsley, Charles Burnham, Millie Chapman, Josephine and Roberta Connor, Carson Dalton, Clifford Dunn, Jr., Glenn Emery, Shirley Green, Elizabeth Henshaw, Kate Kelley, Fred Mallendshaw, Jess Marson, Priscilla Martz, Hardy Patterson, Bill Reid, Phil Savage, Sallie Smith, Kinch Swartz, Joyce Thomas, David Williams, Helen Woolson and Don

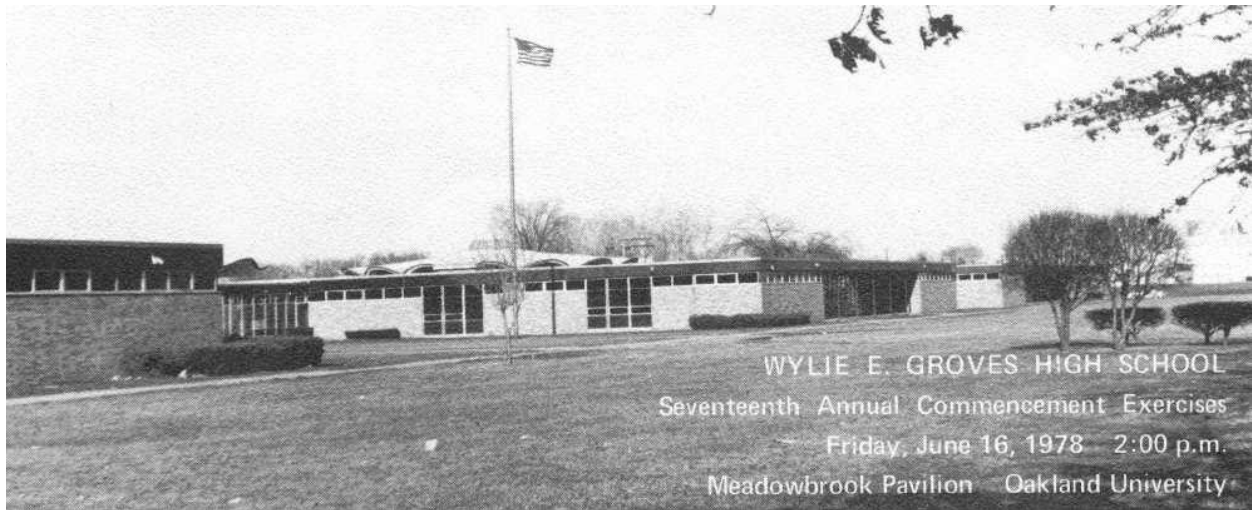
Volumes of newspaper clippings related to the Birmingham bands can be found in the collections of the Birmingham Historical Museum and Park.

In 1959 Birmingham High School would be renamed for Earnest W. Seaholm, the School Board President, and the new building which opened on 13 mile road in Beverly Hills would be named for Wylie Groves in recognition of the key roles played by each in making possible the new buildings.

Wylie Groves' nephew Michael, a graduate of the Birmingham High School class of 1954 only missed attending class in the school named for his uncle by a few years. He would go on to earn distinction in the United States Army and was a Captain in the First Brigade, Third Infantry, The Old Guard at Ft. Myer in Arlington Virginia in 1963. He became a legend in Washington DC ceremonial circles that continues to this day – as a cautionary tale.

When President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas Texas, Capt. Groves was assigned to command the honor guard details for the mourning and internment proceedings over the period of November twenty-third through November twenty-fifth. It is said that he remained awake and on duty virtually this entire time. Much of that time was spent enduring the physical and emotional strain of standing with the casket guard. Eight days later, while at dinner with his family, Capt. Mike Groves died of cardiac failure at age 27 and was interred at Arlington a short distance from President Kennedy. On May 19, 2012, Arnold Berndt's grandson represented the past Birmingham music program sounding Taps at Capt. Groves' grave as part of a celebration of the sesquicentennial of Taps and its designation as the national song of remembrance.





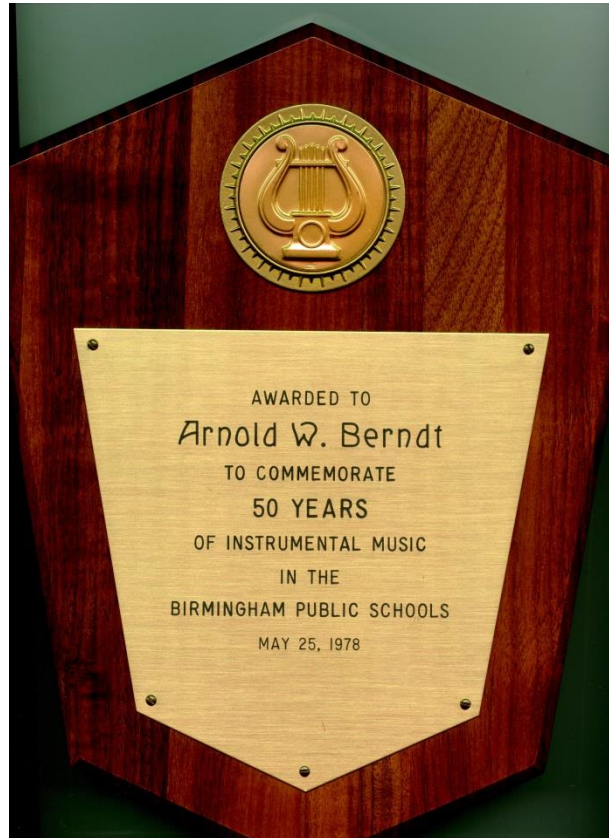
With the addition of the second high school, shown as it appeared in 1978, Birmingham needed a second high school band director. The first director of the Groves Band was Burt Bronson, an accomplished tuba player and educator. As mentioned above, as of 2009, Bronson was still playing in Florida, helping to record circus band music for circusmusic.org. He was followed by Gene Hanson, a Birmingham and Michigan State graduate, who, as a percussionist continued to play professionally throughout his career - including performing with Leonard Smith's Detroit Concert Band for many years. He taught band at Groves from the 1960s into the 1980s. A graduation program listing Hanson is below.

National Anthem		Wylie E. Groves High School Band <i>Gene Hanson, Conductor</i>
Processional		"March Processional" by Marcelli "Pomp and Circumstance" by Elgar
Invocation		Reverend Frank B. Cowick <i>Franklin Community Church</i>
Greetings and Presentation of Class Gift		Kathy Stepanian and Douglas Fregolle <i>Class Presidents</i>
Congratulations to the Class of 1978		Mrs. Donna K. Hartwig, President <i>Birmingham Board of Education</i>
Salutatorian		Therese Vincent
Senior Instrumental Ensemble		Tom Hitchman, Dirk Rankin Julie Smith, Larry Vernier
	"The Trumpeters" by Erik Leidzen	Donna Arons
Co-Valedictorian		Gayle Van Giesen
Senior Vocal Solo	"What I Did For Love" by Marvin Hamlisch	Nancy Pentiuik
Co-Valedictorian		Mr. Tom Bass
Groves Booster Awards		President, Groves Boosters
Carson Memorial Awards		Ronald H. Rolph, Principal
Presentation of Graduates		Dr. Roger H. Garvelink <i>Superintendent, Birmingham Schools</i>
Presentation of Diplomas		Carolyn Brown and Joe Middleton
Roll Call		Reverend Frank B. Cowick
Benediction		"Triumphal March from Aida" by Verdi
Recessional		

Arnold Berndt continued at Seaholm until his retirement from teaching in 1961. He served as head of the department, and then in 1961 the position of Music Administrator was created, which he filled for a few more years before retiring fully and limiting his teaching to a large number of private trumpet students, whom he taught at his home. His photo from an Eccentric article in the 1980s is below.



In 1977, Fifty years of instrumental music in the Birmingham schools was celebrated with concerts, a dinner, and the compilation of scrapbooks of mementos, recollections, and letters from 5 decades of program graduates, which now reside at the Birmingham Historical Museum and Park. Below is the plaque created for the occasion.



Shortly after this, Arnold Berndt was honored by the American School Band Director's Association with its lifetime achievement designation, the Edwin Franko Goldman Award. He appears at the microphone below at left. At the table to the right of him and in the next picture are Paul Yoder, prolific arranger for elementary bands and school music pioneer in Japan, Mrs. Revelli, Dr. William D. Revelli, long time director of bands at the University of Michigan for whom Revelli hall is named, and Dale C. Harris, founder of A.S.B.D.A. and principal organizer of the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association.



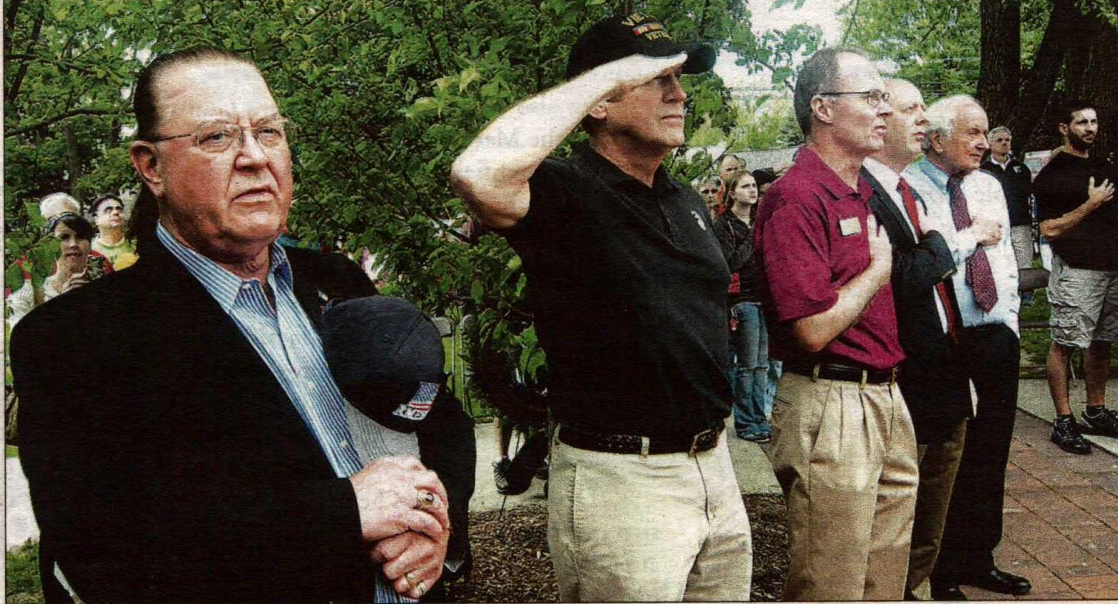
Arnold Berndt continued teaching trumpet and other instrumental music students privately until the late 1980s. Derek Lockhart, of the Empire Brass, Motor City Brass, Detroit Chamber Winds, Sarasota Symphony, and other prestigious roles, is just one of many of those students. He also continued the practice of advancing the role of technology in music education, routinely both supporting and promoting the Birmingham program by referencing it in national and internationally published articles on the subject. Having joined the American School Band Director's Association when it began, he was the only "Audio-Visual" ("Technology" in today's vernacular) chairman ASBDA knew until his death in 1990. His final report on new software and peripherals for reading music, sight-singing, music theory, ear training and other musical pursuits was published in 1988, and once again drew eyes to Birmingham and Michigan as a focal point for new approaches to music education.

After the successes of the early years were recognized, the program continued under teachers such as Hanson, Kutcher, and others. In the 1970s, the schools sponsored the first years of the Birmingham Concert Band, which originally met at Seaholm HS. While Birmingham finally had a civic ensemble, it was still only with the support of the schools that it came into being, over a century after most other communities had created their first bands. That civic ensemble continues today after half a century of service to the community.

In 2002, the Birmingham Historical Museum presented an exhibit honoring 75 years of instrumental music in Birmingham, and drew upon their collection again in 2014, making the school program a significant portion of an overall exhibit on music in Birmingham across all the years and all genres. Photos of some of the exhibits from 2002 are below.



The tradition of excellence and community service demonstrated by the first school bands in Birmingham continues to the present day. In the Twenty-first century, bands from Birmingham have performed abroad and at home to general acclaim. Pictured below, the Groves band plays at the dedication of the new Military Service Monument in Beverly Hills in 2014.



ABOVE: Beverly Hills resident Paul Kleppert, Vietnam veteran and United States Marines Capt. David Noyes, Judge Bill Richards, Council President Tim Mercer and Rep. Sander Levin pay their respects to fallen soldiers.

RIGHT: Members of the Groves High School marching band perform.



The future holds promise of the same.