Utah State University
DigitalCommons@USU

All Graduate Plan B and other Reports | Graduate Studies, School of

5-1-2012

"Next Year in Jerusalem": The Trials and Triumphs of Music in the Schools of Preston, Idaho, 1888-1995

Jill Durant
Utah State University

Recommended Citation
Durant, Jill, ""Next Year in Jerusalem": The Trials and Triumphs of Music in the Schools of Preston, Idaho, 1888-1995" (2012). *All Graduate Plan B and other Reports*. Paper 177.
http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/gradreports/177

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies, School of at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Plan B and other Reports by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usu.edu.

"NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM": THE TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF MUSIC IN THE SCHOOLS OF PRESTON, IDAHO, 1888-1995

by

Jill Durrant

A plan B submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

History

Approved:

Norm Jones Major Professor	Robert Parson Committee Member
Lawrence Culver Committee Member	Mark R. McLellan Vice President for Research and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

2012

Utah State University

"Next Year in Jerusalem": The Trials and Triumphs of Music in the Schools of Preston, Idaho, 1888-1995.

By

Jill Durrant

Logan, Utah
April 2012

Of all educators, the music educator must continually fight to give reality to an obvious truism; i.e., music is necessary and important enough to give every child an opportunity to discover and develop his potential in it.[1]

On a chilly, October night in 2011, the high school band from the small, southern Idaho town of Preston took the football field to perform a medley of Beach Boys tunes for the homecoming half-time show. They had spent weeks rehearsing during and before school, preparing to continue the long-standing tradition of a marching band at homecoming, something both the band and the school administration desired. Decked out in their blue and white uniforms, the admittedly small group was ready and excited to entertain the crowd. They started their program with enthusiasm, but somewhere around the middle of their second piece the night began to go horribly wrong. Spectators refused to yield the field, cutting back and forth across it during the show. Children, undeterred by their parents, continued makeshift games, throwing footballs over and into the marching musicians then darting through the players to retrieve them. Twice Mr. Manning, the band director, had to halt the show to demand that people clear the field so his band could continue, taking valuable minutes away from their allotted performance time. The band finally hit their marks for the beginning of the last piece—the big finish—and started into the first measures, but the public and student body of Preston could not wait. The football team had appeared at the field entrance and students streamed from the stands, rushing across the grass to form a human tunnel for them, heedless of the still performing band. The final blow came when the announcer, spurred

---

[1] Hyman I. Krongard, "Why Music in the Public Schools?" *Music Educators* Journal, Vol. 50, No.1 (Sep-Oct 1963): 123.

by the team, the students, and the little amount of time left on the clock, cut across the music to start the second half of the game, loudly welcoming the crowd back. Humiliated and disgusted, the band halted their performance without finishing the song and exited the field.

Throughout time, music has played a pivotal role in the lives of people. In every country, among every ethnicity, and as part of every culture, music has a presence. Music often acts as a mirror, reflecting aspects of society and history in ways that even the ordinary person can understand. No matter what the form—religious, popular, classical, folk—music has the ability to reveal something about the people who created it, performed it, and enjoyed it. Because of this overarching presence of music in the structure of almost every civilization, it is no surprise that music has always had some part in the way those societies choose to educate their children. Music has long been included in the public schools of the United States, but that history in education is a rocky one—as evidenced by the story above—fluctuating up and down according to the whims of administration, economic situations, educational policies and reforms, and the desires of communities. Music has been continually under pressure to prove its value as an educational subject and hold its own against other subjects and activities despite centuries of evidence in its favor. A study of the music offered in the schools of Preston, Idaho provides an example of how one rural community dealt with these issues, a micro-capture of what was happening in the nation at large with regards to music education. However, because of Preston's unique location and cultural history, it also offers an opportunity to observe how an individual school's decisions toward music in the curriculum are effected

by the community that produces it, sometimes creating marked contrast to national trends.

The history of music education in Preston cannot be examined in a vacuum. It must be looked at with knowledge of where music and education have come from over time, as well as music's place as a historical subject. To comprehend why humans place sufficient value on music to teach it to their children, an attempt must first be made to understand why music is so important.

> The question of why humans value music has eluded all efforts to answer it conclusively despite many attempts throughout history. However, useful explanations have accumulated over time, serving well to provide enough agreement, or persuasiveness, to allow communities of people…to feel that they share a common belief system upon which they can build cooperative actions. One significant orientation to the values of music has been toward its role in enhancing the depth, quality, scope, and intensity of inner human experience… Music makes human experience "special." It aims to achieve a level of experience different from the commonplace. Music makes ordinary experience extraordinary, or insignificant experience significant. Music creates an alternative to the reality of the everyday; an alternative to the ordinary way of being.[2]

This ability to take the ordinary and make it somehow unique is not the only reason music has always been highly valued. Music is a bearer of culture and identity, a repository for memories and experiences, both shared and individual. "Music is the expression of people in society," writes author Jeremy Yudkin. "And, like the other arts, music is formed in a historical and social context."[3] It is something that almost anyone can participate in. From the jewel-crowned elite of Classical Europe to the flower-crowned youth of the 1960's American counterculture, music is accessible and valuable to all. It is also used as an outlet for emotions, as an expression for that which seems

---

[2] Michael L. Mark, *Music Education: Source Readings from Ancient Greece to Today*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 195.

[3] Jeremy Yudkin, *Understanding Music*, (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1996), xix.

inadequate in words, as part of religious worship, and to make statements and opinions heard. The social rebellions of teenagers at the beginning of the "generation gap" of the 1950's were embodied in the swaying hips and crooning songs of Elvis Presley,[4] while the civil rights movement and political upheaval of the 1960s found expression in protest songs by singers such as Bob Dylan. As American society rapidly fragmented, rap music with its harsh beat and angry lyrics resonated with the disillusioned youth and rose to popularity. These are just a few of the numerous examples of how people have found importance and expression in music, and how that music plays a role in culture and society.

It is not unexpected that something so important to the expression of communities and society found its way into education. As authors Charles Leonhard and Robert House wrote in their book *Foundations and Principles of Music Education*:

> The story of music education is inextricably associated with the cultural history of mankind. Culture is the manmade part of one's environment—it constitutes the way of life of a particular group of people. Furthermore, it is a vital concern of any such group to transmit the valuable features of their way of life to the succeeding generation. Evidence from ancient artifacts and from all contemporary cultures underlines the point that making music is a regular pastime of man, and was probably one of his earliest accomplishments. Essential musical skills and traditions have thus been passed along from generation to generation, moving naturally into the curriculum when the necessity for formal schooling finally arose.[5]

Early societies around the world used music to teach their children about traditional values, cultural identity, and the environment around them. The ancient Greeks and Romans placed music education firmly in their schools' curriculum. In imagining his

---

[4] Ibid., 454, 471.

[5] Charles Leonhard and Robert W. House, *Foundations and Principles of Music Education*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1959), 45.

ideal state, the great philosopher Plato held music education second only to gymnastics. "Education in music is most sovereign, because more than anything else rhythm and harmony find their way to the inmost soul and take strongest hold upon it" he wrote in *Republic: III*.[6] Once again one of the values of music and the justification to include it in schools was because it helped elevate human existence to something more than the mundane of every-day life.

Throughout the Middle Ages in Europe, music continued to maintain a presence in formal education. Schools during this time were almost exclusively controlled by the Christian church, which resulted in three different types—monastery, cathedral, and parish. The latter two were originally schools which focused on music, preparing musicians to participate in the music of the church, and this helped establish music as one of their seven core subjects of a standard education.[7] Eventually, with the founding of conservatories and the sponsorship of wealthy patrons, the Christian church lost its dominant hold over music education, but the link between religion and music in schools would remain extremely important. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the training of students to participate in music for religious services served as the main goal of most music education programs that existed, a tradition that was carried from Europe to what would become the United States.

That connection between music and religion has always been strong and influential. Over the centuries, music and religion have been intertwined and mingled so much that at times it is hardly possible to examine one without digging deep into the

---

[6] Mark, *Music Education: Source Readings*, 6.

[7] Michael L. Mark, *A Concise History of American Education,* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2008), 4.

other. Different religions and religious movements in history have conceived their own particular types of music, and developed their own mores and values for dealing with that music. The American religious sect of the early nineteenth century that came to be known as "Mormonism" is no exception. From the earliest years of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) on down to its modern form in the twenty-first century, music has been intricately mixed with the teachings and doctrines of the faith.

Many early Protestant groups existed in an uneasy love-hate relationship with music. The majority eschewed it—especially instrumental music—believing it frivolous, sacrilegious, or even blasphemous, but they could not deny its power.

> The asceticism at the heart of many religions implicitly calls their adherents to forswear music's pleasures. But music is so much a part of man's profoundest utterances that religion must rely on music's effects. …Generations of Christians since have vacillated between their evident need for music and their wish to transcend it.[8]

Mormons, however, did not have this identity crisis. They embraced music, for religious purposes as well as for pleasure and enjoyment. In 1847, Brigham Young—second president of the LDS church—wrote, "If thou art merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing and with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving."[9] Mormons enthusiastically responded, bringing their love of music with them as they crossed the plains to settle a new home in the Salt Lake Valley. From there they took that enjoyment of music and the arts and spread it up and down the Rocky Mountains as they founded new towns and cities.

---

[8] Michael Hicks, *Mormonism and Music: A History*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), x.

[9] Hicks, *Mormonism and Music*, 77.

In 1860, a group of Mormon pioneers, believing they were still in Utah territory, began the settlement of what would become Franklin, Idaho. They brought with them their distinct religion and culture, including a profound appreciation for music and the arts. One of the first acts that took place in any Mormon settlement was the starting of a school. Education was of highest importance to these Saints, as they called themselves, because they were trying to do more than simply eek out a living from the hostile land.

> When the Saints drained a swamp in Illinois or dug ditches to carry water into western desert valleys, they weren't just building cities and farms—they were out to create a civilization. And Nauvoo didn't fit at all into the mold of an austere puritanical community: from the beginning music and dancing celebrated the Saints' great occasions, while hymns and poetry were used to worship God along with their prayers.[10]

By the fall of 1860, school was being taught in Franklin in the home of teacher Hannah Comish, and by the end of the following spring a small log-cabin had been erected as a schoolhouse.[11] Families soon spread out into the other areas of northern Cache Valley, and by 1866 there was a small settlement at Worm Creek which would eventually merge with other settlements to become known as the town of Preston, Idaho. By 1877, school was being held in Mr. Robert M. Hulls' granary while a real schoolhouse was constructed.[12]

From the beginning, there is evidence of music in these first schools. In the little granary school in early Preston, teacher Verena Foster, barely older than the pupils herself at only sixteen, would have the students sing their time tables to the tune of

---

[10] Ronald W. Walker and D. Michael Quinn, "Virtuous, Lovely, or of Good Report: How the Church Has Fostered the Arts," *Ensign,* (July 1977): 1.

[11] Walker and Quinn, "Virtuous, Lovely, or of Good Report": 7.

[12] International Society of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, *Pioneer Pathways,* (Salt Lake City: Talon Printing, 2005), 18.

"Yankee Doodle." On Fridays, the best day of the week according to students, time was set aside to "speak a piece" or sing favorite songs such as "The Sword of Bunker Hill."[13] The importance these Mormon pioneers placed on culture and the arts is evident by the fact that as they were building homes, barns and log schools they were also constructing cultural halls and opera houses, presenting plays and forming brass bands.[14] In his book about the history of Cache County, F. Ross Peterson says

> Culture is more than what one does with his or her leisure time; but how people recreate in a frontier society is very important. People often do not have much spare time, and it is valuable when a community can come together to enjoy each other's talents. In earlier times, many country people played instruments and music was central to dancing, singing, theater, and life.[15]

The very fact that a people who had such limited time for pleasure and relaxation would choose to spend it making music says volumes. These people found time for it, however, "because the arts were not considered to be 'extras.' They were a vital part of Zion."[16] By 1913 when the city of Preston was formally incorporated, it boasted several meeting houses and theaters, an opera house, a music store, multiple private instructors of piano, voice, and other instruments, a central elementary school that was already too crowded, and the beloved Oneida Stake Academy.[17]

In the year 1888, the LDS church established its Church General Board of Education and on June of that year a letter was sent out to all stakes, urging them each to build an academy where a secondary education could be provided to its youth. During

---

[13] "History of Early Schools in Preston", *The Franklin County Citizen,* Dec. 11, 1929.

[14] Newell Hart, *Hometown Sketchbook: Preston's Main Street in Transition*, (Preston, ID: The Cache Valley Newletter Publ. Co., 1981), 9, 20 & 23.

[15] F. Ross Peterson, *A History of Cache County*, (Logan, UT: Utah State Historical Society & Cache County Council, 1997), 247.

[16] Walker and Quinn, "Virtuous, Lovely, or of Good Report": 1.

[17] *The Preston Booster*, 1913.

the next twenty years, thirty-five of these schools would be set up in Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Arizona, and the colonies of Mexico and Canada.[18] The Oneida Stake in southern Idaho responded faithfully, and in 1890 the Oneida Stake Academy was dedicated in Preston. It offered courses in all the standards of a solid education for the day: literature, mathematics, history, and religion. It took several years to grow into the four-year curriculum it would eventually offer, but one subject was present from day one: music. Long before the Church's Board of Education was in place, there had been a push to include music in formal learning. In 1852 Willard Richards, a counselor to President Young, was advocating for the inclusion of the subject in Utah schools, "and from them to reach our domestic circle."[19] He quoted a Reverend Todd's argument that said the subject was important for "the happy influence of music upon domestic life and social habits."[20]

This was not an entirely unique proposition. Many schools around the country had started to include a regular course of music in their schedule. In 1838, the Board of Education in Boston, thanks to the persistence of music teacher Lowell Mason, formally included vocal music in their curriculum. Mason became the first officially recorded public school music teacher in the United States.[21] Instrumental music, however, lagged far behind. The first official record of a school having an instrumental program is from

---

[18] Kevin Stoker, "Academy Era Short-Lived but Impact Long-Lasting," *LDS News* (May 28, 1988): http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17577/Academy-era-short-lived-but-impact-long-lasting.html (accessed March 29, 2012).

[19] Hicks, *Mormonism and Music*, 45.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Harold F. Abeles, Charles R. Hoffer and Robert H. Klotman, *Foundations of Music Education*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1984), 3 & 12.

1857, again in Boston, and it is interesting to note this date is five years after Richards called for music to be taught in Utah schools.

> Compared to the relatively steady spread of vocal music instruction, instrumental music was slow to take its place in the school curriculum. School bands and orchestras existed only sporadically in the nineteenth century, and where they did exist they generally did not receive official recognition from school administrators. They were considered *ad hoc*, often meeting outside regular school hours, and were usually taught by a teacher of another subject who happened to be an amateur musician. According to Edward Bailey Birge, the primary reason for instrumental music's belated entrance into the school curriculum was prejudice against secular music, with its instrumental associations, in favor of sacred music and its perceived associations with vocal music.[22]

Local people could often sing and teach the art of singing with some level of proficiency, but instrumental music was another story. While many communities in the post Civil War period had a brass band of their own, most of these musicians were self-trained and very few of those communities had the resources to hire a trained musician to teach instruments in their schools, or could afford the cost of instruments. Since so few people had the opportunity to hear professional instrumental music, there was no real desire to include it in the curriculum.[23] The Mormons were different, though. Not only did they lack the above-mentioned prejudice against secular music, they had been forming brass bands and string orchestras since their days in Missouri.[24] By the time of the founding of the Oneida Academy, an entire generation in Utah and southern Idaho had been raised with instrumental music as a part of life. Added to this was the fact that converts to the LDS church from all over Europe arrived steadily during this period, many of them

---

[22] Jere T. Humphreys, "An Overview of American Public School Bands and Orchestras before World War II," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, No. 101 (Summer, 1989): 50.

[23] Humphreys, "Overview of School Bands and Orchestras before WWII," 50.

[24] Hicks, *Mormonism and Music*, 56 & 57.

highly trained musicians who brought with them their skills. This created a unique musical culture, different from many other rural communities in America, that allowed instrumental music to flourish in the communities and the schools long before it did in those other places. Preston was just as much a part of this culture as anywhere else the Mormons settled. Even though the city gradually saw an influx of non-LDS residents, the Mormon influence never really faded.

"Preston Ahead as to Music" read the title of an article from the March 8, 1912 edition of *The Preston Booster*. "Preston has more first-class music teachers than you usually find in towns twice its size. Everyone seems to be interested in music here. This interest in music reflects the high standing of the community and their genuine desire for high art and culture is worth boasting of."[25] This is not the only shout of praise for Preston's apparent high culture. The newspaper pages from this time are filled with articles and notices about musical happenings from around the town. Local bands played for weekly dances, the Engar-Priday Music Co. ran advertisements for pianos and sheet music, and the Oneida Academy was alive with music.

Little is known of the first few instructors of music engaged by the Academy to teach, but by 1912 when the school had an enrollment of 270, Charles J. Engar was heading the department and creating quite a reputation. Recruited from Rick's Academy in Rexburg, Idaho, where he had been much loved, he set to work turning the music program at the Oneida Academy into something in which the community took great pride. He was an accomplished violinist and vocalist who also held his own on several other instruments. By that same year, when most communities and schools were just

[25] "Preston Ahead as to Music" *The Preston Booster*, March 8, 1912.

beginning to consider instrumental music programs, Engar's boasted two good sized ones.

> Under the present musical instructor of the institution Prof. Engar the students are making rapid advance in the different courses of studies presented. The school now has a first-class band and orchestra of twenty pieces composed entirely of males, while it has a ladies' orchestra of fifteen pieces, as well as a ladies' choir and ladies' chorus. The instruction in instrumental and vocal music is most complete and the ladies' chorus of the academy is one of the most harmonious organizations that has been seen at the school.[26]

Other LDS academies in the region could compare with this in music, but no public high school in Idaho could claim a music program of this size and skill.

Another remarkable aspect of the Academy's music program is that all these classes were offered for credit. Students participated in music as part of the structured school-day and not outside of it as an extra-curricular activity, and these courses counted toward graduation. According to the listings of teachers for each year that appeared in the *Preston Booster*, Engar was hired solely for the purpose of instructing in music[27]—another rarity in a time when music was usually taught by "regular" teachers who doubled as music instructors outside of class time, or community musicians who came in after hours to help out. In Preston, the citizens were proud of their Academy music groups and they were often asked or hired out around the community to provide music and entertainment for everything from church services to dances and socials. They were more than just classes offered at a school; they were a tangible expression of the culture and achievement a frontier town like Preston could attain.

---

[26] "What the Oneida Stake Academy is Accomplishing," *The Preston Booster*, March 21, 1912.
[27] *TPB,* March 21, 1912.

The music groups at the Academy were not all that Professor Engar did for music in the Preston schools. As not all students attended the LDS Academy, many of the small communities around Preston operated their own public elementary and secondary schools. Engar traveled to these other schools to establish smaller music groups. In 1912 he helped the boys in Riverdale establish a band,[28] and he also worked to establish a summer school of music, a program that would last into the 1960s. During his eleven years at the Academy, many concerts were given and several operas performed, a tradition that was developing around the nation. Building on the strong culture of music that already existed in the LDS community and the schools, Prof. Engar's music programs laid the foundation for a tradition of excellent music, and the precedence to place value on music education as part of the school curriculum at both the Academy and what would later become Preston High School.

The early years of the twentieth century were very important for the field of music education. This was the age when the American high school really came into existence. Before this time, many schools, especially in rural communities, would conclude with the eighth grade. The beginning of the new century brought an emphasis on secondary education and students began to continue farther in their education. Music—vocal and instrumental—was beginning to be established as a part of these new high schools. Frequently, music was being accepted as curricular, not just an activity that should occur outside of the school-day, and most schools were beginning to offer academic credit for students' participation in music programs. Across the nation, schools began to tangibly support their music programs, providing them with a budget, instruments, music, and

[28] *TPB*, March 14, 1912.

space to rehearse.[29] For the first time, method books and music arranged specifically with students' abilities and skills in mind started to appear. The instrumentation of the band was also standardized and many of the wind and brass instruments were modernized to make them easier to play. The ideas and philosophies of the general education experts of the time were giving new credibility and importance to music as part of the school day.

> Early in the twentieth century the pragmatic philosophy of John Dewey initiated an emphasis on and concern for educating the whole child. To attain this goal it was essential that the arts be considered a part of the total school experience. Furthermore, this was a period of prosperity and postwar euphoria, in which society began to concern itself with the quality of living. This concern included an awareness of the necessity for developing a cultured America…[30]

Dewey's ideas would launch the Progressive Education Movement which would dominate the first half of the century and help "solidify music as a part of school curriculum.[31] Before this time, music education in schools was valued because of its connection with "good" living – it gave students joy and an overall sense of wellbeing, but "by the end of World War I, progressive education leaders viewed expanded music programs as an integral part of a new progressive American school system intended to be an 'instrument of socialization,' designed to help citizens take their places in the nation's emerging complex industrial society."[32]

Another vitally important moment in music education was the founding of The Music Educators National Conference (MENC, now known as NAfME) in 1907. Over the decades, it grew from a small group organized to offer limited support to music educators into a national agency, the official organization of the music education

---

[29] Humphreys, "Overview of School Bands and Orchestras before WWII," 53.
[30] Abeles, Hoffer and Klotman, *Foundations of Music Education*, 16.
[31] Humphreys, "Overview of School Bands and Orchestras before WWII," 5.
[32] Ibid.

profession. It was the existence and growth of MENC that allowed for the development of real "music education," and made America, not Europe, the leader in the field.

> Although some instruction in music was generally given in classrooms throughout the world, it was in the United States that the term "music education" and the reference to its instructor, "music educator," were first conceived. The American program far exceeded any instruction carried on by educators anywhere else in the world. …Much of music education's success in becoming an integral part of the school curriculum can be directly attributed to the efforts of…the Music Educators National Conference.[33]

MENC would become the single strongest voice of music educators and the force behind its progress through the century.

In Preston, the 1920s and '30s were not as remarkable as they were for the music education profession as a whole. Changes did occur, but they were not the ground-breaking ones that were happening elsewhere. Much of this is because the innovative events that were happening in music education in other schools had already taken place in Preston. Instrumental music, both band and orchestral, was already firmly established as part of the school. Music classes had been offered for credit from the creation of the Academy, with competent, certified musicians hired as the instructors. The changes that occurred in Preston during these decades were internal ones that often had very little to do with what was happening in music education at large. They did, however, follow the trends in general education and the other LDS academy schools.

The single greatest change that occurred in Preston during this time was the conversion of the Oneida Stake Academy in 1922 from an LDS church-owned school to a state-run public school, Preston High School. The beginning of the twentieth century saw the birth of the high school movement. Schools around the country were expanding

---

[33] Abeles, Hoffer and Klotman, *Foundations of Music Education*, 23 & 24.

their curriculum up through the twelfth grade and more students in both cities and rural communities had access to this higher education. Just like what was happening across the nation, public high schools were beginning to multiply in Utah and the other areas of Mormon settlement to the point where people "found themselves supporting a duel system of education."[34] (The Central and Jefferson Schools in Preston that served the first through eighth grades were public, state-sponsored schools.) This duality was not practical or economically possible to continue, so in 1922 the church academies were closed and the Seminary Program implemented instead. The facilities of these schools were turned over to the state in various contracts or rental agreements,[35]and Preston followed suit. The Academy Orchestra played the commencement march and the choir sang on May 19, 1922 for the last time, and the following September Preston High School (PHS) opened its doors to students for the first time.

The change from church to public school appears to have had different degrees of impact on student life. Various clubs and activities that had not been sponsored under the Academy began to appear, and the athletic department was formally organized. There had been athletics at the Academy but now the teams were eligible to compete against the other public schools in the area. By the start of the 1922 school year, enrollment had swelled to 949 students, 327 of them registered at the high school—numbers that did not reflect all the students attending smaller schools in outlying communities such as

---

[34] Kevin Stoker, "Academy Era Short-Lived but Impact Long-Lasting," *LDS News* (May 28, 1988): http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17577/Academy-era-short-lived-but-impact-long-lasting.html (accessed March 29, 2012).

[35] Ibid.

Franklin and Mink Creek— and mention was made of the promising football team being trained.[36]

There were other areas of student life, however, that remained virtually unchanged by the switch from church to state. The school itself had not physically moved anywhere—all the same buildings and facilities were being used and most of the faculty were retained. Engar continued to lead the music department, with band, choir, and orchestra pushing on uninterrupted. The separation of church and state was far from firm. The band and orchestra were still often called on to provide music for church dances and parties, and the PHS choir was performing in LDS and other church services clear into the early 1990s.

The departure of Professor Engar caused some minor changes within the music department of the Academy. The band, orchestra and choir programs remained strong but for the first time there was a division of musical duties. Dewey Olsen took control of the vocal program in 1924 and over the course of a few years several different instructors headed the instrumental groups. The department was condensed again only a few years later in 1933, but the precedence had been set. Except for at times of economic hardship or when there were emergency hiring issues, this division of music along instrumental and vocal lines would persist, at least at the high school level.

Olsen and the instructors who came and went in the instrumental division continued to uphold Engar's strong musical tradition. Membership in the choir grew steadily; *The Franklin County Citizen* reported its numbers at fifty by 1926.[37] Band and

---

[36] "Preston City Schools Have Large Roll," *FCC*, Oct. 4, 1922.
[37] "Preston High Has Choir of Fifty," *FCC*, April 21, 1926.

orchestra numbers remained consistent over the years despite the fluctuation in directors.[38] The focus of the community at this time was mostly on the choral program and the production of operas or operettas, although it would shift toward the end of the thirties to the band. The high school, Jefferson, and Central school all regularly put on these dramatic musical performances for the community—with large, full casts and complete orchestral accompaniment—to the delight of the audience. Rave reviews always followed in the local paper. By the mid-twenties, because of these operettas, music programs had been fully extended into the younger grades and a junior band established. Concerts were regularly given at local theaters because the high school did not have a hall large enough to accommodate the performers and the audience.[39]

During this time, the Preston High music department was the pride of the town. "Go to Blackfoot, Root for Band," one article read in 1930,[40] and "Preston Band Makes Fine Showing" stated another in 1932.[41] Drawing on that Mormon pioneer heritage, music was still a huge part of community life in Preston. There were many prominent local musicians who played in bands or wrote music who were making names for themselves far beyond Preston's borders. In 1929 the "Preston Musical Arts Society," a large singing group, was formed, and the city began holding an annual music week.[42] This love of music and support of the PHS music programs translated into good things for the department. The citizens gave the large opera presentations one-hundred percent

---

[38] *Quiver,* Yearbook pictures, various years.
[39] *FCC*, various years.
[40] "Go to Blackfoot, Root for Band," *FCC*, Sep. 24, 1930.
[41] "Preston School Band Makes Fine Showing," *FCC*, May 4, 1932.
[42] "Music Week Scheduled by Chamber of Commerce", "Preston City Has Another Child," *FCC*, Dec. 11, 1929 & May 1, 1929.

of their approval and with school and public support the different groups began to travel. The high school and junior bands often went to Logan, Ogden, or the other rural southeastern Idaho schools. Soloists traveled to Boise or Moscow to represent the school in competitions, usually bringing home superior ratings.[43] The summer music schools that had been started by Engar were continued. Olsen left in 1933 and the work of the entire music department was taken up by Harry A. Dean. Dean promptly added to the curriculum by starting a glee club,[44] a trend that was popular across the U.S. at the time. A year later, he left and was replaced by Harold C. Christensen. By the beginning of the 1934-35 school year, there were four teachers of music in Preston: Christensen at the high school, Reed Hyde at the Jefferson, Florence Goodliffe in the fifth and sixth grades, and Sarah Gerrard in the Central school. Courses in music offered at PHS were Music 1, Glee Club (which had replaced the chorus), Advanced Band, Beginning Band, Advanced Orchestra and Beginning Orchestra, (with the lower grades coming to the high school to participate in band or orchestra.)[45]

By the time Christensen took the helm of the music department in 1934, the Great Depression was in full swing. Preston was not immune to its effects. Teachers took a salary cut and the school year was shortened by roughly thirty days to help save money.[46] The ideals of Dewey's Progressive Education movement were still the driving force of education in the country, but economic realities often interfered. In schools across America, hard decisions were being made and many of the "frills" of education were

---

[43] *FCC,* various years.
[44] "Glee Club Organized by High School Professor," *FCC,* April 4, 1934.
[45] *FCC*, Aug. 29, 1934.
[46] "What Does the School Year Promise?" *FCC*, Aug. 23, 1933.

being cut because funds were simply not available. Often music was the first thing to go. Preston, however, for once bucked the norm. That strong Mormon heritage to educate their children and build a civilization out of the wilderness was still firm in the hearts of the community. Not only did the music programs remain, they thrived. The production of operas and cantatas continued, as did travel for the various groups. Even in these lean times, the school board approved the continued hiring of the music instructors to provide free summer instruction. "Let's work together for more and better music in Preston," urged an article from the April 25, 1934 issue of the *Franklin County Citizen*.[47] During Christensen's first year of teaching, a Parent's Music Club was organized and together they managed to rally the citizens and local businesses into funding the purchase of band uniforms.[48] The PTA sponsored concerts and by 1938 even the Junior Band was getting uniforms.[49] The musical activities hardly seemed to stop; perhaps they were the distraction people needed from the hard times. Music Week became a fixture of Preston, something that would last for decades, and the high school band became the apple of the communities' eye. Reprinted in the 1938 *Quiver* was an article by Irene Johnson for *The School Musician*.

> Preston High School band activities never stopped last year. The band traveled to many near-by towns and cities and played at rodeos and celebrations. On Sunday afternoons, public concerts were given. July 22 was a red-letter day, for Preston was the honor band at the Ogden, Utah, Annual Pioneer Celebration. It performed along with Wallace Berry in the Parade, gave a concert in the afternoon, and played for thousands in the evening.[50]

---

[47] "School District to Provide (Free) Band Instruction," *FCC*, April 25, 1934.
[48] "Band Suits," *FCC*, Feb. 13, 1935.
[49] ""Jr. Hi Orders New Band Suits," *FCC*, March 23, 1938.
[50] *Quiver*, 1938.

This enthusiastic support of the arts during such economic hardship reiterates Preston's strong commitment to music at this time.[51]

As the movement for youth to attend secondary school gained strength in the 1930s, the enrollment at PHS reflected that with a continued increase. By the mid-thirties, the need for a new building to house more classes was desperate but no solution seemed available. Despite their solid support of education over the years, Preston has never been a wealthy community. Much income has always been derived from agriculture or family-owned businesses, and there has never been much to spare. The citizens of Preston, while willing to give their support and money to various programs they deemed important for their children, have always been reluctant to pay for new buildings. They readily answered the LDS church's call for funds to build the Oneida Academy, but when the local, public school boards requested votes on school bonds and levies that would increase taxes for the purpose of building schools, there would typically be years of bargaining and delay. The Central elementary school was overcrowded for years before taxpayers approved the funds to construct the Jefferson in 1914.[52] Additional buildings since then have only been approved after multiple failed attempts and impassioned pleadings from school boards, superintendents, educators, and citizen groups. But in 1935 when a new high school building was needed, the Great Depression was actually the one thing that made it possible. Preston was able to file for building money from the Public Works Administration—part of President Roosevelt's economic

---

[51] An interesting comparison to this is the response Preston had to the recession that began in 2008. Support for the music programs remained, but unlike the Depression years, budgets were drastically cut and travel for the various groups almost completely halted.

[52] *TPB*, 1912.

recovery plan.[53] With this federal grant and loan money in hand, the public passed a bond for the remaining funds with only eight dissenting votes.[54] In the fall of 1939, the school moved into the new building, although the old Academy would continue to house the music department until well into the 1970s.

Toward the end of the 1930s, the music departments in Preston began to shift and change. Support was still firm in the community for these activities, but for the first time the national trends in music education began to be easily identifiable within the local programs, although not always in exactly the same ways or on the same timeline.

Almost all music educators and music historians will agree on one thing: the first two decades of the twentieth century were the golden age of school orchestras.[55] They were the first instrumental groups to become readily accepted in school programs, with many having their own elementary feeder programs and receiving accreditation by 1905.[56] By the mid-thirties, however, a disturbing pattern had emerged: school orchestras were disappearing across the United States at an alarming rate.

> Once upon a time the orchestra was the predominant instrumental group in the school music department. In those days the school band was an inferior music body. More often than not it was limited in instrumentation… The balance was invariably bad, with a great predominance of brass that resulted in overblowing, poor intonation, and resultant unmusical tone quality from the reeds. Times have changed; the band as a musical unit has gained the respect of the discriminating musical public, but more than that, the school orchestra field as a whole has not kept pace with the rapid expansion in the field of wind instrument teaching and performance.[57]

---

[53] "School Board May ask for Funds for New Building," *FCC*, June 12, 1935.
[54] *Quiver,* 1939.
[55] Humphreys, "Overview of School Bands and Orchestras before WWII," 54.
[56] Ibid., 53.
[57] Gene Chenoweth, "Shall We Save the Orchestras?" *Music Educators Journal,* Vol. 26, No. 6 (May, 1940): 14.

Many reasons were cited for why the orchestras had apparently failed to keep up with the bands. Strings were harder to teach and took longer for students to become proficient on, so schools who were looking to quickly build up good reputations for their music programs often turned to bands. Many accused orchestra teachers of being resistant to change, not willing to abandon the old one-on-one ways of teaching in favor of the group methods advocated by modern education. Affordable string instruments of the time were often poorly made and unable to produce anything close to a good sound, but great advancements were being made in cheap band instruments for beginners. The Great Depression was also very detrimental to the orchestra movement. Because string instruments were more difficult to play, many programs relied on private lessons from outside teachers to help students master their skills, but money for those lessons rapidly dwindled in the depression years.[58] "The collapse of private means of financing the child's music study meant a shifting of the burden to the public school music department. This period marked the rapid rise of the wind program and the decline of the string program."[59]

At a time when the slogan "Music for Every Child, Every Child for Music,"[60] was becoming the mantra for music educators, some felt that orchestra promoted an elitist version of music education. Only children with the best musical talent could succeed in orchestras, those educators argued, but many different children could participate fully in bands.

---

[58] Chenoweth, "Shall We Save the Orchestras?" 14.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education*, 93.

Rural schools were especially at risk for losing their orchestra programs. While most schools had separated their music programs into vocal and instrumental departments by this time, only the largest were able to further divide into band and orchestra. The general rule was that the instrumental teacher gave instruction in both strings and winds. The influx of trained bandsmen after WWI meant that for many of these teachers, strings were not their instrument of choice. Add to that the greater masses of students who purportedly could participate in bands, the ease of learning band instruments versus difficulty of strings, and the cutbacks in time and money given to teachers during the Depression, and it was no wonder that these teachers chose band over orchestra.[61]

Finally, two issues practically sealed the coffin on school orchestras: entertainment and sports.

> The band in any school is capable of greater flexibility in meeting the various needs of the school than the orchestra. These needs are not purely musical needs. They can often be classed as entertainment, but they rank high in the minds of the student body, the principals and the parents. Owing to the nature of the orchestra, it cannot hope to compete with the band in this respect.[62]

School orchestras were nice for playing for graduation or accompanying the school opera, but when that extra boost of school spirit was needed in an assembly or on the playing field, the band was the one to call. Marching bands and pep bands developed simply to fill these needs, and the music they played was exciting and new, while music for string orchestras was still comprised of the old, "worn-out" classics. "With its flash, pomp and splendor, [the band] is a magnet that attracts many thousands of boys and girls

---

[61] Chenoweth, "Shall We Save the Orchestras?" 16.
[62] Chenoweth, "Shall We Save the Orchestras?" 14.

to membership. Many of these recruits would possibly never have the desire to participate in music of any kind if it weren't for this kind of thrill."[63]

Not all music educators believed the loss of the orchestra to be lamentable. "Let's stop mourning for the orchestras!" read an article published in 1941.[64] No orchestras in smaller schools meant that limited budgets no longer needed to be divided two ways, and children were getting a better musical education by playing the easier to learn band instruments than they ever would have attained on strings. Directors were relieved of some of their large loads and no longer felt the need to try and keep up with schools that had more economic means and resources.[65] "We have just lost some poor orchestras which have been replaced by good—or fairly good—bands. The net result is gain for music education."[66]

It is unclear whether the music teachers and administrators of the Preston School District were aware of this trend in orchestras and purposefully chose to agree with it, or if Preston was just a prime example of events gradually leading to a program's demise, but in the end, it did not matter. That strong musical heritage once again came into play because it took Preston almost twenty years longer than most rural schools to close their orchestra program down, but eventually it happened. It began very small, in hardly noticeable ways. PHS yearbooks from the thirties into the sixties show pictures of strong, well-balanced orchestras with fairly good numbers.[67] They continued to play for

---

[63] Ibid., 63.

[64] Walter, B. Wright, "Let's Stop Mourning for the Orchestras," *Music Educators Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Feb., 1941): 16.

[65] Wright, "Stop Mourning for the Orchestras," 16.

[66] Ibid.

[67] *Quiver*, 1930-64.

graduation and the school musical through these years, as well as give regular concerts and receive superior ratings at competitions. Many string students went to state sponsored solo contests on their instruments, doing exceptionally well.[68] But subtle hints show a change in attitude toward the orchestra that differed from the early days with Professor Engar. Mention of the orchestra and its happening virtually disappears from the newspapers by the end of the thirties.[69] The subject was taught faithfully until 1964, with many of the instructors apparently seeking the growth of the program, according to the yearbooks, but it was still extremely telling that none of the instrumental instructors hired after Engar were string specialists, and not one of them after Christensen even played a string instrument.

In 1964 a decision was made by the superintendent to end the orchestra program at Preston High School. It may never be known exactly why he chose to end it when it was apparently flourishing against all odds, but there are many possible reasons. The current instrumental teacher, John Manning, was leaving and the incoming one, J. Golden Ward, might have had no desire to teach strings. Perhaps the budget simply could not continue to support both programs, or the public and school could not see a need for the orchestra any longer. The sports program had gained huge prominence in school and community life by this time and as the orchestra had no active role in supporting athletics, perhaps that was another factor. For whatever reason, at the end of the 1963-64 school year the string students were told that they would need to find a different class to

---

[68] Ibid.
[69] *TPC,* various years.

register for the next year as orchestra would no longer be offered.[70] "The superintendent came to us and said there was some junk in the attic of the Academy that needed to be taken to the dump and told us to do it," said one former teacher who wished to remain anonymous. "We went upstairs to get it and it was the orchestra instruments! We just took them to the dump, and we never dared tell anyone what happened."[71] The orchestra program at Preston had been discarded, quite literally.

Just as the orchestra program at Preston eventually echoed the path to extinction occurring for school orchestras on a national level, the band program of the late 1930s through to the middle of the century started to follow national trends and explode in popularity. By the end of Christensen's tenure at Preston, it is easily apparent from examination of both the newspaper and the high school yearbooks that the band was the local favorite. Bands had evolved from a different style of music than orchestras and to fulfill entirely different musical needs. Military bands were meant to stir the patriotic emotions of listeners or inspire courage and dedication in soldiers. When WWI ended and these bands came home, this music came with them. "Stirring band music and highly visible military bands had become associated with America's success in war. After the war, bandmasters and band performers trained in military service became available to the schools in larger numbers."[72]

Bands, far more than orchestras or choirs, had always been tied to entertainment. Amusement parks used to hire concert bands to provide music, communities used bands to play for dances, and the great bandmasters like Patrick Gilmore and John Philip Sousa

---

[70] Interview: Anna Gray, June 23, 2011.
[71] Interview: June, 22, 2011.
[72] Humphreys, "Overview of School Bands and Orchestras before WWII," 54.

used superb showmanship to awe their audiences.[73] The invention of radio, recordings, television, and other modern media tools meant that professional concert bands were gradually replaced in most venues, but thanks to some creative manipulation on the part of instrument manufacturers, they managed to survive in public schools. These companies, realizing that they were about to lose their main source of income, created national music contests for schools to enroll in, with cash and instrument prizes as the rewards. This, coupled with many of the reasons mentioned for the demise of school orchestras, revitalized the band movement.[74]

> By 1930, American Professional Bands had virtually disappeared, but they left their legacy behind. American musical taste had been formed, to a large extent by the professional bands which emphasized entertainment and virtuosity rather than a highly musical repertoire. …It is one of the ironies of history that the professional band, now a thing of the past, is re-created and emulated in the schools, while the symphony orchestra, which is held in esteem by society, is not as prevalent in the schools.[75]

The gradual rise of high school sports to the supreme level of importance it holds in today's society began during these decades, and the band's ability to adapt and entertain helped it survive and thrive when other music programs were often losing ground to athletics. Band instruments were mobile and could be brought to the playing fields and gymnasiums, and the music that had once been used to inspire men in battle was now employed to raise school spirit and inspire courage in the game. Pep bands and marching bands became indispensable parts of the school athletic programs, often insuring the survival of the band program against all odds. "A good school band can add

---

[73] Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education*, 123.
[74] Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education*, 126.
[75] Stanley Schleuter, *A Sound Approach to Teaching Instrumentalists,* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 14.

more than perhaps anything else to the prestige of its school and town."[76] Music historian Mark Hindsley wrote, "The value of the marching band to music education in general lies in its advertising power. It provides a strong incentive to all youth to study music so as to participate in band activities. Parents are quick to realize the worth of such an organization…"[77]

The band in Preston fulfilled all of these needs. By 1934 there was a pep band, a marching band, a concert band, and a dance band. The band was playing at all the football and basketball games, doing parades, and basically giving "service whenever demands have been made for the same."[78] The band had become a fixture of the school and community that it could not live without.

Christensen left at the end of the 1940 school year. Once again the music duties were divided with Lyle Shipley taking over the vocal program and several different but excellent teachers heading the band and orchestra. The year 1955, however, is an important one in the history of the band program at Preston. This is when John P. Manning was hired to instruct instrumental music and the band at Preston experienced its heyday.

Manning began almost as soon as he was hired to focus on building up the program. His method, while it produced results, was a rather controversial one. In order to find those who were most likely to succeed in music he administered a series of tests to all students designed to test musical aptitude and ability.[79] This was hardly a new idea.

---

[76] Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education*, 126.
[77] Ibid, 130.
[78] *Quiver*, 1934
[79] "About 250 Students Complete Tests for Musical Ability," *TPC*, Sep. 22, 1955.

As early as 1919 Carl E. Seashore had developed a music test to measure musical talent.[80] This test and many others just like it were reported to save money and time by not wasting efforts on students who clearly had no musical ability, a completely counter idea to the teachings that music was for every child. The tests were soundly rejected by many music educators across the nation, but in Franklin County and some of the neighboring communities they were all the rage. Manning was not alone in his use of these tests to build his program—the band instructor at West Side High school was doing the same thing, and both were getting good results.

During the nine years that Manning taught at PHS, the band program enjoyed phenomenal success. (It is also worth noting that his orchestras were considered some of the best in the state, even though the program would die when he left.) There are more articles about the PHS band in the local newspaper during these years than the previous three decades combined. The numbers in the band swelled to the highest they had ever been, while recognition and accolades poured in. Annual tri-band and "bandtasia" concerts attracted prestigious guest ensembles and conductors, some from local universities, and the Preston music department twice played host to a music festival featuring more than fifteen other schools. Two records of the band's concerts were cut during this time, and according to the newspaper the number of copies sold was extremely impressive for a small school.[81] The crowning achievement, however, was the hosting of famed trumpet player Rafael Mendez. He appeared as a soloist with the PHS

---

[80] Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education*, 155.
[81] *TPC,* 1955-61.

concert band two different times.[82] After the departure of Manning it would take twenty years for the band program to again rise to a comparable level of prominence in the school and community.

The mid-sixties to early eighties were not wonderful times for the music program at Preston. The orchestra program, once so strong and desired in the community, was gone. Manning departed in '64 and afterward the band program fell into a pattern of steady decline, losing numbers and going through more than half a dozen directors in a twenty year period. By rights, based on the national movements of the time, it too should have disappeared, but stubborn tradition and that long held desire for music kept it barely alive. The band, with is ability to stir school spirit and provide good public relations for the city was apparently much more important to save than the orchestra had been. Preston "had always had a band"—a concert band, a dance or jazz band, a pep band for games, and a marching band for halftime—and the community was not ready to give that up, no matter how low the institution had fallen. Once again, that inherited sense that music was somehow good for their children kept it going in the public schools. Even more than public justification, the band program had the support and blessing of administrators who believed in its importance and therefore continued to hire band directors in a time when most national trends urged that music was pointless and not worthy of educational attention. The significance of this support in a time of national coldness toward the arts cannot be underestimated.

Several attempts were made to revitalize the band program. John Manning was asked to return and help establish an elementary band.[83] Some instructors would begin to

[82] Ibid.

find success with the program, only to leave it after a year or two, and then the numbers would again crumble. Finally, the right solution was found. In 1988 Tom Nelson was hired to rebuild the comatose music department. Nelson was a veteran bandsman who had already retired twice from other valley schools. He had a reputation for running excellent band programs. He proved to be exactly what Preston's band needed. He started with seventeen students in the high school band and in the space of four years enrollment had grown to seventy-one. "Step aside Robert Preston: Preston has its very own 'music man'" exclaimed the paper in 1991.[84] When asked how he did it Nelson responded that Preston just had great kids who wanted to participate in band, and the support of Principle Alfred Koch and Superintendent Dr. Orson Bowler was fantastic. "That was the best equipped school I ever taught at," he said. "I went to Dr. Bowler with a list, set it down in front of him and said he could prioritize it. He said, 'What do you want?' so I answered 'All of it,' and they got it."[85] This was a time when the United States was coming out of a severe recession and music programs across the country had been slashed or completely cut. For a rural school to show this much support of its ailing band program was remarkable, a testament to the importance music still carried. By the time Nelson retired (for the fourth time) the band program was 130 members strong and held top ratings in the state of Idaho.

Throughout all these decades and the ups and downs of the music program, a quiet but unshakable giant of music education emerges: the choir. Of the three music programs established at Preston and maintained over different years, the vocal program

---

[83] *TPC,* various years.
[84] "Meet Preston's Own 'Music Man'," *TPC*, Oct. 23, 1991.
[85] Interview: Tom Nelson, June 21, 2011.

has always been the steadiest. It has had its trends and fads, sometimes following national cycles and sometimes holding true to unique Preston traditions, but since the days of Christensen until the present day, it has been consistently supported and always popular. Remarkably, it has had only six instructors since Christensen left in the thirties, and all of them shared a very similar vision of what the choir program should accomplish.

For many years, the choir at Preston was unintentionally relegated to the background. "The meteoric rise of instrumental music in the public schools of the United States temporarily eclipsed high school choral singing. …High school singing did not disappear, of course, but was merely taken for granted in the flurry of curricular activity during the first two decades of the century."[86] A new influence in choral singing developed, however, that sent a jolt of reviving energy through the vocal music programs: the a cappella choir. It all started with the Musical Art Society of New York. This society, led by their director Frank Damrosch, wanted to return to a more *renaissance* type of singing, and they were the first choir to specialize in singing without accompaniment, or *a cappella*. The use of straight tones instead of vibrato with clear tone and perfect intonation were characteristics of this type of singing. This trend caught on throughout the States and many *a cappella* groups began to tour, and from there it quickly spread to the public schools. The glee clubs of the first two decades of the century were replaced, and by the middle of the 1930s any school whose vocal program was worth anything boasted an a cappella choir.[87] Preston was no exception. Yearbooks show that by 1939 the Preston Glee club had been renamed the A cappella Choir and

---

[86] Keene, *A History of Music Education*, 305.
[87] Keene, *A History of Music Education*, 305, 325.

much work was being done to teach this new type of singing.[88] The truly incredible thing, however, was that over the next sixty years this choir would remain. During all that time, it would never drop below thirty members and often peaked at over a hundred. Different styles of music were introduced by the various directors, but that straight-toned, extremely in-tune a cappella singing for which the group was named would remain the core and tradition of its repertoire.

In 1945 the Preston School District hired as its new choir director a home-grown young man by the name of Lyle Shipley. Although they did not know it at the time, this was the single most important decision they would ever make regarding the choir program. For thirty-two years Shipley would be involved with the music in the Preston schools, instilling a quiet love of it into the hearts of thousands of children. He never sought accolades for himself or his program, but that did not stop others from recognizing quality when they saw it. Many times he was offered attractive salaries from other schools, but he chose to remain in Preston with the people and the program he loved.[89]

The early years of his teaching at Preston were overshadowed by the drastic rise of the band program. As seen around the nation, the choir program was eclipsed by band fervor. Newspaper articles for Shipley or the choir are slim during the late forties and dwindle to one or two per year once Manning arrives to teach the band. Still, Shipley was building an incredibly strong program during this time. His choirs consistently received top ratings at local and state competitions, and he continued the tradition of an

---

[88] *Quiver,* 1939
[89] "Service Award to Lyle Shipley, Music Director," *TPC,* Jan. 20, 1949.

annual school opera or musical. In fact, with the exception of one year, a musical drama has been produced at Preston High by the choral department every year since 1916!

Over the years, Shipley became a fixture in Preston society. He headed the Lions Club, was elected mayor, and participated in many civic and church activities. Under his direction, the choral department took the shape it would retain into the present day, with a competitive a cappella choir, an intermediate chorus, and various women's or men's choruses depending on the needs of the students from year to year. Throughout the rocky sixties and seventies, when education was struggling to maintain its integrity, music education was losing ground. While the band program in Preston was barely holding on for the sake of tradition only, Shipley's choir program remained rock solid. In 1965 he turned the reins of the high school program over to Carl Hoffman and moved to the Jefferson Junior High to finish out his last ten years, but his legacy never left. Hoffman added his own twist to things, introducing a swing choir in the late '70s to keep up with the poplar trends. He even took over the band program for a few years when no teacher for it could be found.[90] Everything he did, however, was still built upon the foundation established by Shipley. In 1985, Hoffman followed in the footsteps of his mentor and turned the high school program over to a new teacher, choosing to finish his teaching at the Junior High. Matthew Montague and Jeff Coletti followed Hoffman, both maintaining an extremely high standard for the choir. Under Montague's direction the choir traveled extensively, including a ten day trip to Poland over Christmas Break in 1989.[91] The choir might not have been in the limelight of the community for much of the

---

[90] *Quiver*, 1971-74.
[91] *TPC*, 1989-1990.

proceeding decades, but it had certainly developed into a musical force to be reckoned with.

Until the 1950s, schools had been under the management of local communities and state governments, but had been largely ignored by the lawmakers at the federal level. In 1953 that changed with the formation of the Bureau of Health, Education, and Welfare. The "HEW was the first attempt of the federal government to influence the school curriculum."[92] Then, in October of 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, officially out-pacing the United States in the space race for the first time. That single event changed education in America more than anything else prior had.

> A sense of urgency overtook the United States as Americans feared that Soviet technological dominance would lead to another war. As the public became aware of the relationship between education and national security, school improvement became a national priority.[93]

This initiated the age of school reform. "The nation's youth must be taught to appreciate the importance of science or the United States' way of life is doomed to rapid extinction,"[94] said Dr. Elmer Hutchisson, director of the American Institute of Physics. In 1958, President Eisenhower signed the *National Defense Education Act* and the battle cries of "back to basics"[95] and "the pursuit of excellence"[96] became the new themes in education. Math, science, and language were the focus and everything else was considered frivolous. The progressive, aesthetic education ideas espoused by Dewey were quickly discarded in favor of skills-based education.

---

[92] Michael L. Mark, "MENC: From Tanglewood to the Present", *Music Educators Journal*, (2000), http://www.menc.org/documents/onlinepublications/vision2020/MENCFromTanglewood.pdf (accessed August 15, 2011).

[93] Mark, *A Concise History of American Music Education*, 137.

[94] Abeles and Custodero, *Critical Issues in Music Education,* 4.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Abeles, Hoffer and Klotman, *Foundations of Music Education*, 19.

This push for more math, science and academic excellence in schools continued into the 1960s where it crashed head on with the era of free-thinking. The sixties were a turbulent decade marked by rapid change in everything. A President and social activists were assassinated. A war that sent American soldiers far across the world to Vietnam without any clear reasons led to protests and a radical counterculture movement among the nation's youth.[97] Schools became the battle ground for these movements, with the students' ideals of social freedom of expression often at odds with the government's desire to pursue excellence. In the midst of this upheaval, an extremely important event in music education occurred: the week-long Tanglewood Symposium, a conference uniting music educators with the leading professionals in many different fields. "We look upon a vast body of social change, as do many in other disciplines, and see enormous upheavals in every phase of life,"[98] wrote the attendees. Their reaction to this chaos was a call to revolutionize the music education profession so as to secure its place in the new reality of such an uncertain future. Music might have gained ground in educational circles by the time the Symposium was held, but the fact remained that its battle for guaranteed inclusion in America's education system was far from over. The truth was that music, no matter how much people tried to quantify it, measure it or explain it, always remained partly undefined.

> Music especially is in a difficult position. By its nature it is intangible, abstract and mysterious. …As such it has no obviously useful role in general education. This has been aggravated by the long-standing belief that the most valuable aspects of education are those that express ideas in words or numbers. …The arts are considered to be of lesser importance simply because they are not based upon

---

[97] Diane Ravitch, *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 366 & 367.

[98] Mark, *Music Education: Source Readings*, 254.

> the same kind of 'evidence' as, for example, history, geography, mathematics and the sciences.[99]

Because many people enjoyed music in one form or another, it was often linked to entertainment and leisure. Dewey's progressive ideas, with their focus on the well-being of the child and good living allowed this idea of music to exist in a school curriculum without too much resistance, but by 1967 those justifications simply were not enough. They were confining music to the position of a bonus or frill, and as seen over and over again in the history of music education, when money was tight or schools under attack to improve and reform, the "frills" are the first to be cut. "The argument that music could promote democratic living, health, profitable leisure, and improved human relations now seemed counterproductive and could only relegate the study of music to the curricular sidelines."[100] If music was going to maintain a place in American education in the future, music educators needed to rethink their profession and revolutionize the way their subject was taught. They needed to prove music's place in the core curriculum of schools. This was the foundation behind almost every aspect of what was discussed at the Tanglewood Symposium—how to reinvent the profession to preserve music in the schools for the future. By the end of the week, a plan for the future of music education had emerged with several key points.

The first was the need to unify the profession. Music educators needed a vision, a shared philosophy of why music should be in the schools. Second, music education needed an up-to-date curriculum. The Civil Rights Movement had changed American

---

[99] Janet Mills and John Paynter, eds., *Thinking and Making*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 73.

[100] James, A. Keene, *A History of Music Education in the United States*, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1982), 357.

society forever, but music education was still stuck in the past focusing on Western European music only. Music educators recognized the need to broaden that scope by including many types of music from all cultures. Once the broadening of their own curriculum was complete, music educators had to establish its place as part of the core curriculum of schools. "Many reformers lost sight of the fact that the basic skills—reading, writing, and mathematics—are simply the tools that open the gate to education but are not an education in themselves."[101] A few of the points they agreed on were:

- Music serves best when its integrity as an art is maintained.
- Music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures belongs in the curriculum.
- Schools and colleges should provide adequate time for music…
- Instruction in the arts should be a general and important part of education…[102]

Music, they asserted, was part of what makes that education whole and complete.

The end result of this week of discussion was a document known as the Tanglewood Declaration. "We believe that education must have as major goals the art of living, the building of personal identity, and nurturing creativity," they stated bodily. "Since the study of music can contribute much to these ends, we now call for music to be placed in the core of the school curriculum."[103] Theoretically, this document would become the foundation of all music education in the future, but not all educators or schools responded to its suggestions in the same way.

In the movie *Fiddler on the Roof,* the main character Tevye is asked how his community can maintain their shaky balance. "That I can tell you in one word," he says, "Tradition! Because of our traditions we've kept our balance for many, many years.

---

[101] Mark, "MENC: From Tanglewood to the Present", 3.
[102] Mark, *Music Education: Source Readings*, 262.
[103] Ibid.

Here in Anatevka we have traditions for everything: how to sleep, how to eat, how to work, how to wear clothes… You may ask how did this tradition get started? I will tell you… I don't know. But it's a tradition!"[104] By 1994, music had been in the Preston schools for more than a hundred years. The early Mormon settlers had brought with them a love of music and a desire to see their children educated in the finer things of life. This established a precedence for music in the schools that for the first third of the twentieth century completely out-paced much of the rest of the country. During the middle decades, outside influences in music education reached Preston and the music programs began to conform more to the national trends. But by the end of the decade, this musical tradition had come full circle. New ideas and programs were being promoted by the music education leaders of the day, but Preston was too stuck in their "traditions" to embrace these. The music program that used to lead was now trailing behind because it refused to change. Music was still important to the citizens of Preston, but much like the people of Tevye's Anatevka and their mandates on how to work and how to eat and how to wear clothes, the real reasons for that musical importance had often been forgotten. "Preston had always had a band, therefore it must continue to always have a band, or a choir, or a musical" was often the public feeling. It was a part of how the community defined themselves, how they "kept their balance for many, many years," but no one really remembered why it had been started. It had become tradition for tradition's sake and nothing more. The community still paid lip-service to the ideals of wanting music for their children in the public schools, but values were beginning to change.

---

[104] Fiddler on the Roof, 1971.

Today, Preston once again has three music programs: band, orchestra and choir. The choir, ever the pillar of consistency, has remanded strong. The band program has struggled, moving through several directors but is starting to stabilize, and the reborn orchestra program is still relatively young. Obviously, support for these programs is there or they would not exist, but how much of that support is just mindless repetitions of a long-standing community tradition? How long can that tradition stand without real, passionate understanding instead of entitled indifference? Less than twenty years ago students and public streamed into the PHS stadium to watch the band perform their half-time spectacular "Aladdin"[105], wild with excitement, and yet the band in 2011 was forced off the field before the end of their show so the game could resume.

On the surface, the music program in Preston is strong and well-supported by a deep musical heritage, but whether that heritage is strong enough to see it through the future remains to be seen.

[105] *Quiver,* 1994.

Bibliography

Abbreviations Key

TPB = The Preston Booster

TPC = The Preston Citizen

FCC = The Franklin County Citizen

I. Primary Sources

Boston University College of Fine Arts. "Tanglewood II Declaration." http://www.bu.edu/tanglewoodtwo/declaration/declration.html (accessed August 15, 2011).

Durrant, Colleen. Interview by Jill Durrant, 10 April 2011. Notes in the possession of Jill Durrant.

Franklin County Citizen, The, 1913-1942.

Gray, Anna. Interview by Jill Durrant, 23 April 2011. Notes in the possession of Jill Durrant.

Hoffman, Carl. Interview by Jill Durrant, 22 April 2011. Notes in the possession of Jill Durrant.

Mark, Michael L. *Music Education: Source Readings from Ancient Greece to Today*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Nelson, Tom. Interview by Jill Durrant, 21 April 2011. Notes in the possession of Jill Durrant.

Preston Booster, The, 1912-1913.*

Preston Citizen, The, 1942-1994.*

Quiver, The, 1921-1994.*

*Archived at the The Preston Citizen in Preston, Idaho.

II. Secondary Sources

Abeles, Harold F., Charles R. Hoffer and Robert H. Klotman. *Foundations of Music Education*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1984).

Abeles, Harold F. and Lori A. Custodero. *Critical Issues in Music Education: Contemporary Theory and Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Chenoweth, Gene. "Shall We Save the Orchestras?" *Music Educators Journal* Vol. 26, No. 6 (May, 1940).

Cremin, Lawrence A. *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1988.

Gates, J. Terry, ed. *Music Education in the United States: Contemporary Issues*, Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1988.

Hart, Newell. *Hometown Sketchbook: Preston's Main Street in Transition*. Preston, ID: The Cache Valley Newsletter Publ. Co., 1981.

Hicks, Michael. *Mormonism and Music: A History*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003.

Humphreys, Jere T. "An Overview of American Public School Bands and Orchestras before World War II." *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* No. 101 (Summer, 1989).

International Society of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers. *Pioneer Pathways.* Salt Lake City: Talon Printing, 2005.

Keene, James A. *A History of Music Education in the United States*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1982.

Krongard, Hyman I."Why Music in the Public Schools?" *Music Educators Journal* Vol. 50, No.1 (Sep-Oct 1963).

Leonhard, Charles and Robert W. House. *Foundations and Principles of Music Education*. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1959.

Mills, Janet and John Paynter, eds. *Thinking and Making*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Mark, Michael L. *A Concise History of American Education.* Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2008.

Mark, Michael L. "MENC: From Tanglewood to the Present." *Music Educators Journal*, (2000),http://www.menc.org/documents/onlinepublications/vision2020/MENCFromTanglewood.pdf (accessed August 15, 2011).

Mark, Michael L. *Music Education: Source Readings from Ancient Greece to Today*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Peterson, F. Ross. *A History of Cache County*. Logan, UT: Utah State Historical Society & Cache County Council, 1997.

Ravitch, Diane. *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

Schleuter, Stanley. *A Sound Approach to Teaching Instrumentalists.* New York: Schirmer Books, 1996.

Stoker, Kevin. "Academy Era Short-Lived but Impact Long-Lasting." *LDS News* (May 28, 1988): http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17577/Academy-era-short-lived-but-impact-long-lasting.html (accessed March 29, 2012).

"Tanglewood." http://homepage.mac.com/wbauer/hpmused/archive/tanglewood.html (accessed August 15, 2011).

Walker, Ronald W. and D. Michael Quinn. "Virtuous, Lovely, or of Good Report: How the Church Has Fostered the Arts." *Ensign,* (July 1977).

Wright, Walter B. "Let's Stop Mourning for the Orchestras." *Music Educators Journal* Vol. 27, No. 4 (Feb., 1941).

Yudkin, Jeremy. *Understanding Music*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1996.

Special Thanks:

This paper would not have been possible without the help of many people.

- To all the many teachers and professors at USU I've worked with over the years. Your mentorship has been invaluable.

- To the staff at the *Preston Citizen*, especially Nancy, for allowing me access to the records. You stayed after hours and came in on weekends for me and were truly amazing. Thank you!

- To Jeff Sessions at Preston High School for allowing me access to the *Quiver* issues in the archives.

- To the former music teachers at Preston High School who gave their time for me to come and conduct interviews.

- And last but certainly not least, thank you to my family for the years of support, prodding, nagging and encouragement. You sacrificed so much time and energy to help me do this! I can't tell you how much that means to me.

Dedication:

This paper is dedicated to my students – the future of Preston's music program.