

# The Beginnings of TBA

Recollections by Alfred Sturchio, TBA Past President-1986 and TBA Executive Director 1986-2008

During the years of 1920 to 1947, there were meetings of Texas bandmasters during the TMEA conventions. These get-togethers were not formally organized. From time to time, there were discussions of why band directors of Texas needed their own association to offer better marching band instruction as well as showcasing new music for the concert band.

At the TMEA Convention of February 12-14, 1948 more progress was made in establishing an independent bandmasters association for the state. On the morning

of February 14, 1948, it was agreed by the directors present to establish the Texas Bandmasters Association, independent of the Texas Music Educators Association. Pat Arsers was elected President, Ken Vaughn Vice President and Dick Young Secretary-Treasurer. The goal for the new association was to provide a clinic for bandmasters that would focus on the newest marching band techniques as well as provide the opportunity to hear the latest concert band music presented in reading sessions.

As a result of the meeting at TMEA, the first Texas Bandmasters Association Clinic/Convention was held in September of 1948 in San Antonio at Alamo Heights High School. At this time the meeting was titled "The New Music-Marching Clinic". Two companies, Southern Music Company and Sol Frank Uniforms were the only two companies to have displays at the first convention.

The first New Music Reading Band, sponsored by the American Federation of Musicians Local 23, included many people that had been in service bands during World War II. These musicians had returned home to attend college and were working on becoming band directors. Some members of this first reading band included Bob Geisler (1962 TBA President), Marion Busby (1954 President), Phil Busche (1956 President), Doug Williamson (1957 President), Vernon Mayfield, Arnold Boca (1958 President), Pat Patterson (1959 President and later TBA Executive Secretary), Al Sturchio who was a student at St. Mary's University, and Jan Marty—now Jan Sturchio.

Most of the music played by the reading band was furnished by Southern Music Company. However, directors were encouraged to bring

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SAN ANTONIO - AUGUST 28, 29, 30, 1950

**THIRD ANNUAL New Music MARCHING BAND CLINIC**

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Michigan City, Ind.  
author of the Belwin Band Course will demonstrate with a 60 piece Junior High School Band.

**BERNARD FITZGERALD**  
University of Texas

**CARL GILKERSON**  
Fort Worth

**GEORGE T. BENNETT**  
Elizabeth City, N. C.

**JAMES NEILSON**  
Oklahoma City, Okla.

**DONALD I. MOORE**  
Baylor University

**PAUL YODER**  
Chicago, Ill.

**New Music! New Features!**

**★ GUEST BANDS Will Include:**

- THE SAN ANTONIO MUSICIANS' SOCIETY BAND OF LOCAL 23.
- THE AIR FORCE BAND OF THE WEST, LACKLAND FIELD.
- THE ALZAFAR SHRINE BAND OF SAN ANTONIO.

**★ FINAL DEMONSTRATION Will Include:**

- ALL STATE MARCHING BAND OF 100 PIECES.
- ALL CITY OF SAN ANTONIO JUNIOR HIGH BAND OF 60 PIECES.
- FLAG SWINGING DEMONSTRATION BY C. W. O. SAMUEL KURTZ.
- BATON TWIRLING DEMONSTRATION BY NATIONAL CHAMPION NORMA NIFFEN.
- CONCERT BY THE ALZAFAR SHRINE BAND OF SAN ANTONIO.
- EXHIBITION BY A 35 MAN DRILL TEAM OF FORT WORTH.

← All required Contest Material will be played.

← A session will be devoted to manuscript music.

← A session will be devoted to marching problems, movies of outstanding marching units.

← Micro-film of all scores will be shown.

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music that they owned, especially music they had played successfully with their own band program. Selections included marches, transcriptions, and newly published concert music. During these early days, music written for public school bands was not very plentiful. Therefore the sharing of music between directors and the exploration of new music was critical to the development of band programs throughout the state.

The other main event of the very first TBA convention was the Directors Marching Band. In order to learn how to teach the most up-to-date marching techniques, the directors formed a marching band and learned a show at the convention. In the early days, George T. Bennett was brought in to teach the directors. He was author of a comprehensive series of *Marching Books*. His marching bands during the days of the national contest created a sensation when they made their appearance. Mr. Bennett was the director of the Elizabeth City, North Carolina HS Band when he served as clinician for the Directors Marching Band. Even though Al Sturchio did not participate in the marching band, Janice Sturchio was the twirler featured with this group. She was quite a sensation as she twirled, did back flips, and was featured as the "monkey-grinder" during one part of the show. Even though the Directors Marching Band was very helpful in promoting new techniques for Texas bands, the participants did not enjoy participating in the September heat of San Antonio. Therefore before long, the TBA New Music - Marching Band Clinic no longer featured the Directors Marching Band. Clinics were moved indoors for the directors and the reading bands continued.

From these humble beginnings in 1948, TBA has grown into the largest state band director organization in the country. One thing that has remained constant with TBA is the dedication of Texas band directors and their quest for learning the most up to date teaching techniques. The clinics, demonstration groups, concerts, and large exhibit hall have helped Texas band directors improve their teaching skills throughout the years. In addition, military bands and ensembles have played an integral role in our Convention/Clinics, providing unparalleled expertise and entertainment for our enjoyment and edification.

### PROGRAM MONDAY

MONDAY — AUGUST 28th

- 8:00—10:00 Registration of members, Lobby, Alamo Heights School.
- 9:00—10:30 Organization of the All City of San Antonio Junior School Band, G. Lewis Doll, director. Demonstration of the Belwin Band Method by Fred Weber. Auditorium.
- 10:30—12:00 Organization of the All State Marching Band, Herman Vetter, organizer. Rehearsal of show music under the direction of George T. Bennett, Elizabeth City, N. C.
- 2:00— 4:00 San Antonio Musician's Society Band, New Music Clinic. Auditorium. Donald I. Moore, Baylor University, James Neilson, Oklahoma City, and Paul Yoder, Neil Kjos Music Co., Chicago, directing.
- 4:00— 6:00 All State Marching Band Rehearsal, Alamo Heights School practice field, George T. Bennett, director.
- 4:00— 6:00 All City of San Antonio Junior School Marching Band rehearsal, Alamo Heights School practice field, Carl Gilkerson, director.
- 7:00— Banquet of Texas Bandmaster's Association members and guests. Musical treats by Tony Rozance and his Accordion Ensemble, Dancing to Cliff Gillette and His Orchestra. Seven Oaks Night Club on Austin Hi-way.

### PROGRAM TUESDAY

TUESDAY — AUGUST 29th

- 8:00— Additional registration of members, Lobby, Alamo Heights School.
- 8:00—10:00 All State Marching Band rehearsal. A. H. S. practice field. George T. Bennett, director.
- 10:00—12:00 San Antonio Musician's Society Band. New Music Clinic. Auditorium. Bernard Fitzgerald, University of Texas, James Neilson, and Paul Yoder, conducting.
- 1:30— 2:30 All City of San Antonio Junior School Band, demonstration of the Belwin Band Methods. Fred Weber, director.
- 2:30— 4:30 San Antonio Musician's Society Band. New Music Clinic. Fred Weber, James Neilson, Paul Yoder, conducting.
- 4:30— 6:30 All State Marching Band rehearsal. A. H. S. practice field, George T. Bennett, director.
- 4:30— 6:30 All City of San Antonio Junior School Band, marching rehearsal, Carl Gilkerson, director.
- 7:30— 8:30 Bar-B-Que — Olmos Park.
- 8:30— 9:30 Band Concert — The Air Force Band of the West. C.W.O. Samuel Kurtz, director. Olmos Park.

### PROGRAM WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY — AUGUST 30th

- 8:00—10:00 All State Marching Band rehearsal, Alamo Heights High School Stadium, Broadway and Rosalie Streets. George T. Bennett, director.
- 9:00—10:30 All City of San Antonio Junior School Band, demonstration of the Belwin Band Method, and the SYB Intermediate Band Methods. AHS auditorium, Fred Weber and Paul Yoder conducting.
- 10:30—12:30 San Antonio Musician's Society Band. New Music Clinic. AHS auditorium. James Neilson and Paul Yoder conducting.
- 11:00—12:30 All City of San Antonio Junior School Marching Band rehearsal. AHS Stadium, Broadway and Rosalie Streets. Carl Gilkerson, director.

### PROGRAM WEDNESDAY

(Continued)

WEDNESDAY — AUGUST 30th

- 2:00— 4:00 Marching Band Movies, Marching Band Forum. AHS auditorium. George T. Bennett, and Carl Gilkerson coordinators.
- 4:00— 5:00 Texas Bandmaster's Association Business Session and Open Forum. Pat Arsers, President, presiding.
- 8:00— Final Exhibition, Alamo Heights School Stadium, Broadway and Rosalie. Members free - open to the Public. Concert by the Alzafar Shrine Band of San Antonio, "New Music" by the Alzafar Shrine "Rube" Band. Flag Swinging Demonstration by C. W. O. Samuel Kurtz. Demonstration by the All City of San Antonio Junior School Band, Carl Gilkerson, director. Twirling demonstration. Miss Bobbie Priest, featured twirler of the University of Texas Longhorn Band. All State High School Band Marching demonstration, George T. Bennett, director.

Schedule pages, taken from the 1950 TBA convention program.