

Bands of the Middle West

By A. C. E. SCHONEMANN

NO. 16—CHICAGO FIRE DEPARTMENT BAND

THE Chicago Fire Department Band, which completed its first year of work recently, has a personnel of 75 men who have been recruited from the force of several hundred men in the stations of Chicago. The band was organized June 27, 1921, and is one of the several bands that has been sponsored by bureaus or departments of the City of Chicago.

James V. Sylvester, bandmaster and instructor of the band, has been identified with the

give the men an opportunity to appear in public. The band made its debut May 30, 1922, and the firemen were equal to the occasion when the band of 75 with its drum and bugle corps swung onto Michigan Boulevard in the annual Memorial Day parade.

The success of the Chicago Fire Department Band has been due to the fact that Bandmaster Sylvester and his men have from the beginning been intent in perfecting first the individual, then the section, and finally the band as a complete unit. This has necessitated individual instruction for every man, as only about five per cent of the men had a knowledge of



THE CHICAGO FIRE DEPARTMENT BAND

organization since the first day the firemen assembled for assignment to instruments and preliminary instruction. Bandmaster Sylvester has not only supervised the work of the men in the one hundred or more rehearsals that have been held in a year's time, but he has given up four hours of every Tuesday and Friday for private instruction during the time that the band has been working as a unit.

The question of a public appearance of the band has been secondary during the formative period of the organization, as it has been the desire of Bandmaster Sylvester to put his men through a year or more of intensive work and then, after having developed the sections of the band and finally the band as a whole, to

things musical in the beginning. The firemen, however, have entered into the band idea with a spirit of enthusiasm and co-operation that has been productive of results which have been of such a nature as to insure the future success of the band.

John Cullerton, business manager of the Chicago Fire Department, is the sponsor of the band, and his two aides who have assisted materially in building up the band are Lieut. Tony Sweeney and Lieut. Samuel Wilson. Messrs. Sweeney and Wilson, with Bandmaster Sylvester, have been active in the work of development, and from the beginning they have directed the band's affairs.

Following the organization of the band, the

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An attachment customarily as illustrated that fits into the mouthpiece of your instrument and in which the mouthpiece is placed.

Used in practice only, with just a fair amount of persistence, it eliminates entirely the "strong arm" or "pressure" system of playing, gives your lips the freedom they must have to vibrate freely, literally steps between you and your instrument—a traffic officer—ensuring the technique that is driven for by every competent teacher of a band instrument.

In reaching with this attachment as pressure is applied "NO PRESSURE" contracts, the outer sleeve telescoping the inner tube until fully contracted when the vibrations or air current is diverted through outlets formed by the telescoping or contraction of the "NO PRESSURE" attachment, absolutely preventing you from playing with pressure.

Comparatively simple in its operation, "NO PRESSURE" is scientifically and accurately designed as to the correct amount of pressure resistance, with due regard to the fundamental principles of correct playing as approved by the foremost soloists and teachers of America, and will help to overcome in a short time the demon called pressure that ruthlessly crushes and bruises the tender muscles of the lips and stops the circulation in an attempt to get what is called "embouchure" or "lip."

Practice with this attachment will give your lips the soft tenderness of those of a babe in arms—will bring into play the natural muscles of the cheeks and jaws and teach you to use the tremendous energy and power that is within the abdomen and chest, overcoming the weakness so common to all players of cup mouthpiece band instruments, imperfect attack, fuzzy intonation, over or under blowing, lack of endurance, weak lips.

No more practice is required than you ordinarily have and you will find you will increase your "No Pressure" range on your instrument week by week after the first week's practice, encouraging you to go on.

You can have "NO PRESSURE" on trial for one week to convince yourself that this is the solution of the greatest handicap that besets you. \$5.00 with 25c war tax will bring "NO PRESSURE" to you on a week's approval giving you an actual demonstration of the tremendous value to you of this attachment.

Hit the trail to success by sending for "NO PRESSURE" to-day.

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"No Pressure" will solve the problem of brute force."—Frank Scherz. "No Pressure" means better control and cleaner technique."—Frank Simon.

"No Pressure" overcomes all lip trouble."—Leon Handlick. "No Pressure" is a wonderful aid to the pressureless system of playing."—Jas. E. Miller.

A SURE ROAD TO SUCCESS

LA. John Phillip Sousa, the famous Bandmaster, in an interview in the "Akron Beacon Journal" said: "To my knowledge there is only one other cornetist in the world that has the breath control of Frank Simon, and that is Herbert Clarke."

Both Clarke and Simon play with almost no pressure and to this can be attributed their wonderful breath control.

And this wonderful breath control which both Clarke and Simon have can be yours and without it you cannot be a success on a band instrument using a cup mouthpiece.

Have you ever stood before a mirror and watched yourself as you played especially when you go after the upper register? Isn't it a wonder you have any lips left considering the unmerciful way the lips are ground between the teeth and the mouthpiece by main force, crushing the sensitive nerves and forming a hard callous that is like a piece of tough leather and is anything but desirable?

Is it any wonder your lips are swollen and puffed out after playing a little while, which is the case unless you are using "NO PRESSURE" in your playing or have formed this hard leather-like callous over the lips that makes them to a great extent impervious to pain, but the forming of which has destroyed the delicate, fragile nerves and muscles so necessary to a satisfactory performance on your instrument? Don't you realize that by learning to play without pressure you not only have that flexibility of the lips so essential to a satisfactory performance but you also bring into play those tremendous reservoirs of power, the abdomen and chest?

Are you going to continue to struggle along against this terrific handicap, which is gnawing at the very vitals of your endurance, shortening your playing days and making your playing anything but a pleasure?

Send for "NO PRESSURE" today if for no other reason than to see if it will help you. Don't continue to relentlessly bruise and crush the tender flesh and muscles of your lips.

\$5.00 with 25c war tax will bring "NO PRESSURE" to you for a week's trial with the distinct understanding that you can return it and have your money refunded if you don't find it necessary to your success.

"No Pressure" will raise the standard of cornet and trombone players."—Arthur Pryor.

"No Pressure" means better control and cleaner technique."—Frank Simon.

"No Pressure" is a wonderful aid to the pressureless system of playing."—Jas. E. Miller.

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first three months were devoted to individual work and development of the various sections. After playing as a unit, and regularly since that time, rehearsals have been held every Monday and Thursday at which two and a half hours are devoted to work while the individual instruction is carried on from week to week.

During the last six months the band has been working on programs, and its first public appearance on May 30, 1922, Memorial Day, gave the firemen an opportunity to prove that their work of the year or more during which they have been organized has been of a character that generally culminates in success. The band is now working on a series of programs that are to be given in connection with the Pageant of Progress Exposition which is to be held in August.

The men in the band are granted extra time for rehearsals. Every man is expected to devote a part of his time to practice, and rehearsals of sections are being continued from week to week. The men are provided with instruments by the fire department, and about \$6,000 has been expended in this way thus far.

Samuel Wilson is president of the band and Tony Sweeney is secretary. These two officers are the only men aside from Bandmaster Sylvester who bear titles, although in the fire-

fighting organization many of the bandsmen have the rank and position that are parts of the Chicago Fire Department.

Bandmaster Sylvester was born and raised in Chicago. When a youngster he studied with the late A. F. Weldon, devoting five years to study with that master of the cornet. Sylvester played with the Chicago Daily News Band when he was nine years old. At the age of fourteen he went to Europe, spending three months in Paris, and later going to Italy where he spent four years in study at the Musical College of Naples.

Upon his return to Chicago he played trumpet in the old Whitney Opera House, and later was identified with Sorentino's Band, Collindo's Concert Band and the Chicago Italian Symphony Orchestra. Later he began teaching band instruments and for a number of years he has devoted his time to band work. At the present time he is director and instructor for the Chicago Fire Department Band, the Hull House Boys' Band and the Addison Band of Addison, Ill.

During the war Bandmaster Sylvester had charge of the band attached to the 149th field artillery, 42d division, the outfit being known as "Reilly's Bucks." He went overseas with the band, the unit remaining intact throughout

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LOVE DAYS

the war and returning to the states after the armistice was signed. The unit was discharged in 1919. The band numbered 106 men.

Bandmaster Sylvester is an enthusiastic supporter of army bands, and is an advocate of a plan whereby bandmasters of army bands will be musicians not only in name but in fact. He believes these men should be accorded the rank and standing of the higher officers in the

THE CORNETIST

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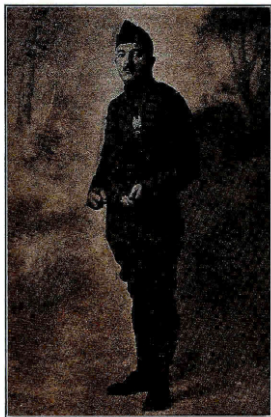
days will be over. That old saying to "Watch your step" is no more important than the advice to "Watch your teeth," for therein lies the secret of a prolonged life as a player-musician. A few dollars spent now will mean an income of many hundreds of dollars later in life, so the question is, can we afford to be negligent in this respect? If a little care and expense means so much to us in the future, then we should heed the advice immediately.

G. R. L., (Lady Cornetist)

Q. Does it pay to procure one of the high-priced instruments for ordinary purposes, or would one of the cheaper, foreign makes be adequate for the general run of professional engagements?

A. I have frequently been asked this same question in regard to using the cheaper grade of instruments for student purposes, but have always held that the better the instrument the more easy to learn to play, and the more interest one will take in the work. It stands to reason that a cornet which is built carefully as regards intonation, valve action, general workmanship, etc., will appeal to one's interest and hold it, more than would the abominable atrocities turned out by many of the foreign and some of the domestic factories. Choose your instrument with the same care that you should exercise in the selection of a husband, for up to date very few of the foreign-made have proven satisfactory and it seems the BIG money was paid for all of them.

Call in the aid of an experienced performer, and permit him to exercise his judgment for you in selecting an instrument. Suppose he does receive a commission? Is that any reason why you should attempt to handle an expert's job and thereby run chances of being "stung" in your deal? Get the best you can when procuring your cornet, and you will find the work much lighter in every degree. It is not necessary to send to Europe at all, for the best grade of brass instruments are now made in the United States, and this has been proven beyond any doubt.



JAMES V. SYLVESTER
Bandmaster and Instructor

army. He contends that by recognizing musicianship and according it the place it should have in the army, the army bands will be better organized and that the best musicians will eventually be attracted to such bands.