

# The Conn Conservatory of Music at Elkhart, Indiana: 1896-1903

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to document the history of the Conn Conservatory of Music operated by the C. G. Conn musical instrument company of Elkhart, Indiana. Research questions focused on the school's origin, curriculum, pedagogy, faculty, and students. Instrument manufacturer Charles G. Conn opened The Conn Conservatory in 1896 to boost the sale of instruments and fill the need for an institution devoted to training musicians for the increasing number of bands in the United States. Although the student population never attained the size for which the managers hoped, the Conservatory attracted students from across the United States who came to study with Jules Levy (cornet), Edward A. Lefebre (saxophone), and other prominent members of the faculty. In addition to class and private lessons, students at the Conservatory studied harmony and instrumentation as they worked toward medals and diplomas at advancing levels of proficiency. Administrators eventually expanded the curriculum to include piano, voice, orchestral strings, and popular instruments such as the guitar to attract local residents and generate additional income. The school closed in early 1903, probably because of the loss of its most famous faculty members and a dwindling student population.

## Keywords

nineteenth century, music education history, instrumental, band, higher education, institutional history, American conservatory

A number of circumstances led to an increase of brass bands in the United States during the nineteenth century, including improvements in instrument design and availability, and the

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versatility of these ensembles to play indoors and outdoors.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the repertoire of the band consisted largely of marches, dances, popular airs, and light classics that appealed to the masses and provided appropriate music for social affairs and civic activities.<sup>2</sup> By 1889, at least ten thousand professional, military, town, and juvenile bands existed in the United States.<sup>3</sup> The importance of these organizations within a community prompted William H. Dana of Warren, Ohio, to write that “A town without a brass band is as much in need of sympathy as a church without a choir. The spirit of a place is recognized in its band.”<sup>4</sup>

The numerous bands in the United States provided an opportunity for some of the best musicians to work as full-time professionals. Many others, however, earned most of their living in a trade and used music as a secondary source of income. This arrangement especially was common in smaller communities or company-sponsored bands. Placement notices in *C. G. Conn's Truth* illustrated the life of a part-time musician at the turn of the twentieth century:

WANTED—Band leader who plays either Eb or Bb clarinet, who is by trade a baker, miller, painter and paper hanger or cooper willing to work at his trade and teach young band for part pay. Good chance to start an orchestra. Fenton, Mich.

WANTED—To hear from a good band man at once, teacher or clarinet player preferred who will buy a steam feed mill valued at \$2,500, doing rapidly increasing business of \$2,500 a year. Address Box 45, Belmont Wis[.].<sup>5</sup>

Despite the popularity of bands, few opportunities existed for the formal, systematic training of bandsmen in the United States during the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Widespread interest in instrumental music in the public schools did not begin until the early 1900s.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, most conservatories followed their European counterparts and

<sup>1</sup>Most bands of the mid- to late nineteenth century consisted of mostly brass instruments, with snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, and sometimes a few woodwinds. Margaret Hindle Hazen and Robert M. Hazen, *The Music Men: An Illustrated History of Brass Bands in America, 1800-1920* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press), 106–7.

<sup>2</sup>Richard K. Hansen, *The American Wind Band: A Cultural History* (Chicago: GIA, 2005), 2–3, 22–29; Stephen Joseph Patterson, *Jules Levy (1838-1903): Cornet Virtuoso Extraordinaire* (DMA diss., University of Kansas, 2000), 12–14; Richard Franko Goldman, *The Concert Band* (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1946), 7–15, 41–44.

<sup>3</sup>Leon Mead, “The Military Bands of the United States,” *Harper's Weekly*, September 28, 1889, 785–88.

<sup>4</sup>William H. Dana, *J.W. Pepper's Practical Guide and Study to the Secret of Arranging Band Music: Or, The Amateur's Guide* (Philadelphia, PA: J.W. Pepper, 1878), as cited by Hansen, 45.

<sup>5</sup>“Wants,” *C. G. Conn's Truth* 2, no. 10 (June 1894): n.p.

<sup>6</sup>Michael D. Martin, “Band Schools of the United States: A Historical Overview,” *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 21, no. 1 (1999): 45.

<sup>7</sup>Edward Bailey Birge, *History of Public School Music in the United States*, new and aug. ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Oliver Ditson Company, 1937), 178–88.

focused solely on art music for voice, piano, and orchestra. There were exceptions including Baxter University in Friendship, New York (1870); Dana's Musical Institute in Warren, Ohio (1870); the Mansfield Normal School of Music in Mansfield, Pennsylvania (c. 1871); the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts (c. 1877); the Broad Street Conservatory of Music in Philadelphia (c. 1884); and the Northwestern University Conservatory of Music in Evanston, Illinois (c. 1884). These schools offered private or class instrumental instruction, experience in institutional bands, and courses in harmony, counterpoint, composition, and music history.<sup>8</sup>

Students with limited means or living in remote areas often learned through a combination of self-study, lessons with local musicians, on-the-job training, and correspondence schools.<sup>9</sup> Charles T. Howe of Columbus, Ohio, for example—an active soloist and teacher who also designed Boehm flutes and conducted the Ohio State University Orchestra and Glee Club—offered flute lessons by mail beginning in 1889.<sup>10</sup> Tuition for three terms of instruction (sixty lessons total) in 1898 ranged from \$10.00 to \$15.00 dollars, depending on the payment plan.

The purpose of this study was to examine the history of the Conn Conservatory of Music operated by the C. G. Conn musical instrument company from 1896 to 1903 in Elkhart, Indiana. Charles G. Conn established the C. G. Conn company in 1874 and grew the business into the largest instrument manufacturer in the world by the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Unlike other music schools in the United States, the Conn Conservatory focused on the development of band music and sought to provide students the opportunity to study with the world's greatest bandsmen.<sup>12</sup> Research questions focused on the school's origin, curriculum, pedagogy, faculty, and students.

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<sup>8</sup>Martin, 47–50; *New England Conservatory of Music, Boston Music Hall* [prospectus] (Boston, MA: Press of the New England Conservatory, 1877), 10–11; “Conservatory of Music,” in *Catalog of the Northwestern University: 1884-85* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1884), 49–55; “Young Musicians Graduate,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 6, 1900, 6. Other conservatories, especially in large cities, offered wind instrument instruction in the late 1800s, but focused solely on orchestral music. Examples included the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, the New York College of Music, the Grand Conservatory of Music, and the National Conservatory of Music in America in New York City. See William Smythe Babcock Mathews, *A Hundred Years of Music in America* (Philadelphia, PA: Theodore Presser, 1900), 457–58, 472, 506; “The Grand Conservatory of Music of the City of New York [advertisement],” *New York Herald*, January 20, 1889, 15; “Conservatory Examinations,” *New York Herald*, July 14, 1890, 6.

<sup>9</sup>Martin, 45.

<sup>10</sup>Charles T. Howe, *All about the Flute* (Elkhart, IN: Buescher Manufacturing Company, 1898), 48, 59–60.

<sup>11</sup>Margaret Downie Banks, *Elkhart's Brass Roots: An Exhibition to Commemorate the 150th Anniversary of C. G. Conn's Birth and the 120th Anniversary of the Conn Company* (Vermillion, SD: The Shrine to Music Museum, 1994), 1-2.

<sup>12</sup>“Best in the World: Conn's Conservatory of Military Band Music Nearing Completion,” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, August 20, 1896, 1.

Methodology involved collecting and analyzing information of historical import from diverse primary and secondary sources including articles from music periodicals and newspapers, advertisements of the institution, and biographies of prominent participants. Local sources were especially important in providing evidence for this study and included the *Elkhart Daily/Weekly Truth* and *Elkhart Daily/Weekly Review* newspapers, and the Conn company periodical, *C. G. Conn's Truth*.<sup>13</sup> After gathering all available source material, I organized the information and composed a chronological narrative.<sup>14</sup>

## Elkhart and C. G. Conn

The City of Elkhart is located 110 miles east of Chicago, Illinois, at the junction of the Elkhart and St. Joseph rivers in the north central region of Indiana. Although situated in the middle of the prairie, the community became an important railroad hub between different regions of the United States and grew into a modern industrial and residential center of approximately 15,184 citizens by 1900.<sup>15</sup> In addition to instrument manufacturing by C. G. Conn and his former employee F. A. Buescher, the city provided a headquarters for the Dr. Miles Medical Company—who eventually developed Alka-Seltzer, One-A-Day vitamins, and S. O. S. steel wool pads—as well as carriage and harness companies, a brass foundry, and other industries.<sup>16</sup> Elkhart also was a musical center, due in part to the number of musicians who worked in the instrument companies and played in local bands, orchestras, and theater productions.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>I accessed the *Elkhart Daily/Weekly Truth* and *Elkhart Daily/Weekly Review* through GenealogyBank.com and NewspaperArchives.com. Weekly editions of the *Elkhart Truth* and *Elkhart Review* simply reprinted stories from the daily editions. I obtained issues of *C. G. Conn's Truth*, through the Saxophone Museum on the Saxophone.org website, <http://www.saxophone.org/museum/publications/id/31>. This publication carried advertisements for Conn products and the conservatory, as well as endorsements from satisfied customers and other articles of interest to bandsmen. The periodical became *C. G. Conn's Musical Truth* in April 1911.

<sup>14</sup>For a description of this process, see Roger P. Phelps, Ronald H. Sadoff, Edward C. Warburton, and Lawrence Ferrara, *A Guide to Research in Music Education*, 5th ed. (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 208–13.

<sup>15</sup>Anthony Deahl, ed., *A Twentieth Century History and Biographical Record of Elkhart County, Indiana* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1905), 158, 161–63, 171; Indiana Business Research Center, “Indiana City/County Census Counts: 1900–2010,” [http://www.stats.indiana.edu/population/PopTotals/historic\\_counts\\_cities.asp](http://www.stats.indiana.edu/population/PopTotals/historic_counts_cities.asp) (accessed May 29, 2013).

<sup>16</sup>Abraham E. Weaver, ed., *A Standard History of Elkhart County Indiana* (Chicago, IL: American Historical Society, 1916), vol. 1, 368–74; Joseph Manfredo, “The Selmer Company, 1885–1927: Historical and Socio-Economic Factors That Influenced Its Development and Relocation from Paris to New York City to Elkhart, Indiana,” *Journal of Band Research* 46, no. 1 (2010): 12–13, 23–38.

<sup>17</sup>“Elkhart Music,” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, October 25, 1900, 6.

Charles Gerard Conn, founder of the C. G. Conn musical instrument company, was born January 29, 1844, in Ontario, New York. His family moved to Three Rivers, Michigan, in 1850 and to Elkhart, Indiana, the following year. In 1861, he enlisted in the Union Army to fight in the US Civil War and served in the regimental band. He eventually rose to the rank of Captain and spent time as a prisoner of war before his discharge in 1865.<sup>18</sup> Following the war, Conn directed the town band and worked in a factory in Buchanan, Michigan, and played cornet in the Harvard Minstrels performing troupe. Upon his return to Elkhart in 1872, he dabbled in several occupations before opening a bakery and grocery store. In the fall of 1874, Conn invented an “elastic face” cornet mouthpiece with a rubber cushion around the rim. After attaching the rim to mouthpieces of other manufacturers, he began producing his own product and eventually hired three additional workers to keep up with demand. In 1876, he expanded the business with the help of French instrument maker Eugene Victor Jean Baptiste Dupont (1832–1881), who partnered with Conn to produce a cornet that would play in the keys of E flat, C, A, and B flat. In 1879, the men dissolved the partnership, making Conn sole owner of the company.<sup>19</sup>

By 1881, Conn employed eighty-four workers and manufactured a complete line of brass and percussion instruments. He also imported woodwinds, published sheet music, sold accessories, and operated an instrument repair service.<sup>20</sup> After recovering from a devastating fire that destroyed the factory in 1883, he expanded the business by opening a subsidiary plant in Worcester, Massachusetts (1886–1898), and introduced his new “Wonder” line of musical instruments. He also produced the first American-made saxophone (1888), developed his own brand of clarinets, flutes, piccolos (c. 1890), and violins (c. 1897), and produced the first commercially available bell-up “rain-catcher” sousaphone (1898). The company mostly was a mail order business until Conn opened retail stores in New York City (1897) and his hometown of Elkhart (1900).<sup>21</sup>

Charles Conn sought to be involved in all aspects of music making by catering to the professional musician on stage and the amateur at home. Although mainly focused on band instruments, violins, accessories, and sheet music, his company also produced a portable reed organ, accordions, harmonicas, and a “Wonder Talking Machine,” to capitalize on the new recording industry. Musicians throughout the country read *Trumpet Notes* and *C. G. Conn’s Truth* (later *Musical Truth*), which carried advertisements and endorsements for Conn products, listings of used instruments, and notices for bands in

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<sup>18</sup>Weaver, *A Standard History of Elkhart County Indiana*, vol. 2, 930–32.

<sup>19</sup>Weaver, vol. 2, 932; *History of Elkhart County, Indiana* (Chicago, IL: Chas. C. Chapman & Co., 1881), 760; Banks, 1–2.

<sup>20</sup>*History of Elkhart County*, 1881, 760; *Trumpet Notes* [Conn periodical] 9, no. 6 (June 1881): passim. See front cover for a table of contents, which includes catalogs and other information.

<sup>21</sup>Banks, 2–3; “New Music Store,” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, March 1, 1900, 1.

need of players or musicians seeking employment.<sup>22</sup> A number of high-profile bandmen endorsed Conn instruments, including John Philip Sousa, who stated that “many of the stars of my organization are using your instruments, and that alone is positive proof that they are worthy of the highest consideration.”<sup>23</sup> Locally, Conn sponsored a professional ensemble of mostly company employees called the Trumpet Notes Band and helped establish the Elkhart chapter of the American Federation of Musicians.<sup>24</sup>

Conn, in addition to his musical interests, participated in municipal, state, and national politics. He served as Elkhart’s Mayor from 1880 to 1883 and as a representative in the Indiana State Legislature (1889–1890) and the US Congress (1893–1895). He founded the *Elkhart Truth* newspaper in 1889 and owned the *Washington Times* in Washington DC from 1893 to 1896.<sup>25</sup> Conn sold all of his holdings in 1915 to Carl D. Greenleaf and retired to Los Angeles, California, where he died in 1931.<sup>26</sup>

## The Conn Conservatory of Music

Charles Conn announced plans for a conservatory of military band music in a letter to employees read at the annual company meeting on January 29, 1896. He stated that he was “greatly disappointed . . . that the hard times [had] greatly diminished the profits of the factory” but that he planned to establish a retail outlet in New York and open a conservatory of music in Elkhart to increase sales.<sup>27</sup> The first week of July, workers began remodeling a building owned by Conn on the corner of Strong and Michigan Avenues to serve as a facility for the school (see Figure 1). The structure included a large recital hall and ten classrooms, steam heat, and electric lights, and sat in a scenic location near the St. Joseph River.<sup>28</sup>

The first term of the Conn Conservatory of Military Band Music opened on September 15, 1896, with twelve pupils in attendance. In addition to band instruments, the school

<sup>22</sup>See examples of notices from across the United States in *Trumpet Notes* 9, no. 6 (June 1881); *C. G. Conn’s Truth* 4, no. 6 (August 1899), and 4, no. 12 (November 1901): passim; Banks, 3.

<sup>23</sup>“The Conductors of America’s Great Bands and Their Endorsements of the C. G. Conn Wonder Instruments,” *C. G. Conn’s Truth* 2, no. 10 (1894), 1. Other famous musicians endorsing Conn products in this article included Frederick Neil Innes (trombone and conductor), D. W. Reeves (cornet and conductor), and Alessandro Liberati (cornet and conductor).

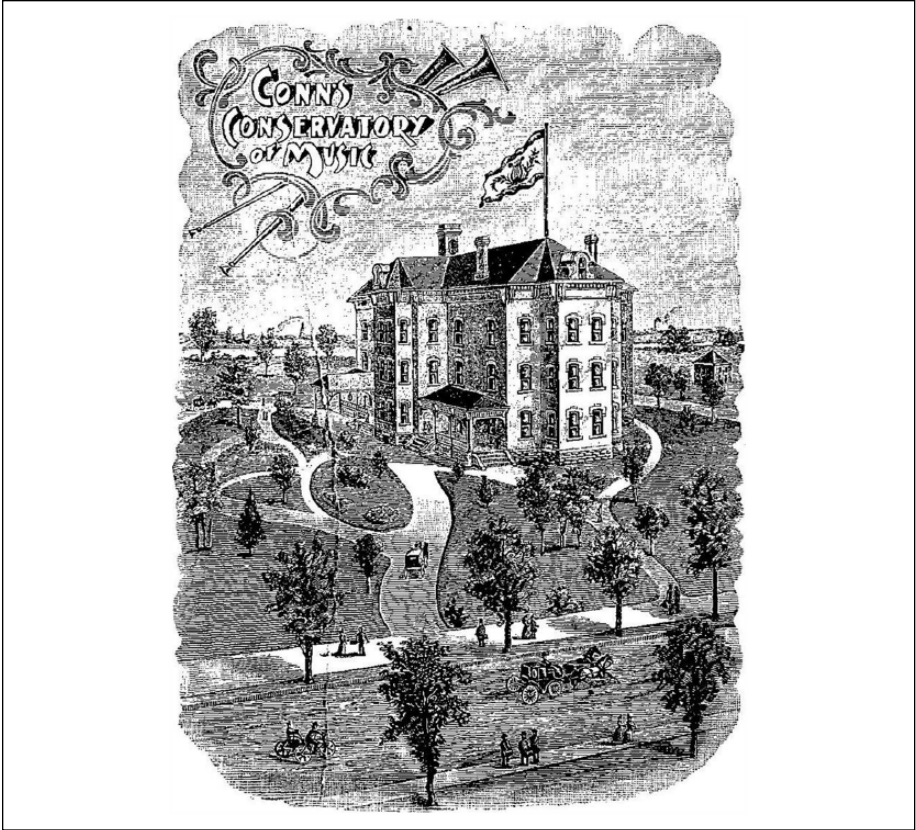
<sup>24</sup>“Musicians Union being Formed,” *Elkhart Daily Truth*, May 3, 1902, 1. The Trumpet Notes Band was named after a C. G. Conn periodical by the same name issued beginning in 1875. “Local Brevities,” *Elkhart Daily Review*, May 26, 1875, 3; “William J. Gronert,” *Jacob’s Band Monthly* 4, no. 9 (1919, September): 25.

<sup>25</sup>Weaver, vol. 2, 932–33; *Pictorial and Biographical Memoirs of Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Indiana* (Chicago: Goodspeed Brothers, 1893), 28. Chronicling America, “About the Washington Times,” Library of Congress, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026749/> (accessed June 29, 2013).

<sup>26</sup>“C. G. Conn Sells Controlling Interest,” *Elkhart Daily Review*, August 2, 1915, 1; “Charles Gerard Conn Dies,” *Conn Musical Truth*, 22, no. 51 (spring 1931): 6.

<sup>27</sup>“Nearly \$60,000” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, February 6, 1896, 1.

<sup>28</sup>“Best in the World,” 1.



**Figure 1.** Conn Conservatory of Military Band Music: 1896.<sup>29</sup>

accepted a limited number of students on violin, piano, and voice but did not require them to participate in other activities of the conservatory. The curriculum included private and class instruction, as well as a course in harmony and instrumentation. Class instruction was common in European and American conservatories and typically involved the teacher dividing instruction time among the individual pupils. This system sought to capitalize on students playing for each other and hearing the instructor's criticism to their peers.<sup>30</sup> Table 1 provides the weekly schedule announced for the fall 1896 term.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>James A. Keene, *A History of Music Education in the United States* (Centennial, CO: Glenbridge, 2009), 295–97. Based on available information, it appears that band instruments were taught in classes and that other lessons sometimes were taught privately. According to one announcement, “Mr. C. A. Peterson, the talented mandolin and guitar expert . . . accept[ed] pupils . . . either in class or individual lessons.” “[announcement],” *Elkhart Daily Review*, June 29, 1887, 3.

**Table 1.** Proposed Weekly Schedule of the Conn Conservatory, Fall 1896.<sup>31</sup>

	A. M.	P. M.
Monday	Class instruction, Reed Instruments— Lefebre	Harmony and Instrumentation Class— Boyer
Tuesday	Class Instruction, Cornet - Levy	Band Rehearsal—one of the directors
Wednesday	Class Instruction, Flute/Piccolo - Davis	Class Instruction, Low Brass—Johnson
Thursday	Class instruction, Reed Instruments – Lefebre	Band Rehearsal—one of the directors
Friday	Class Instruction, Cornet—Levy	Military Drill & Dress Parade— Johnson
Saturday	Class Instruction, Low Brass—Johnson	Military Band Concert

Although initial plans for a military band did not materialize, pupils participated in regular recitals sponsored by the school and other organizations, and might have performed with local ensembles such as the Trumpet Notes Band.<sup>32</sup>

The academic year of the institution included three terms that lasted three months each with sessions beginning September 15 (fall), January 15 (winter), and May 1 (summer). Tuition for the standard conservatory course cost \$60.00 per term with room and board available at \$3.50 to \$6.00 per week at the homes of local residents.<sup>33</sup> Students studying piano or violin paid \$1.00 for each half-hour lesson and had the option of one or two lessons per week.<sup>34</sup> An advertisement in the December 1900 issue of *C. G. Conn's Truth* listed the following rules and regulations for the conservatory:

1. All students must present themselves for registration on the first day of the week in which the term commences.
2. Tuition is payable strictly in advance, and no place in the Classes will be assigned until this condition has been complied with.

<sup>31</sup>[Conn Conservatory of Military Band Music advertisement], September 1896, n.p.

<sup>32</sup>I found no evidence of rehearsals, concerts, parades, or drill instruction after initial announcement in [Conn Conservatory of Military Band Music advertisement], September 1896, n.p.; and “Best in the World,” 1. For examples of recitals, see *Elkhart Weekly Review*, “Local Brevities,” March 10, 1897, 3; “Recital,” April 17, 1901, 3; “Musical Notes,” May 22, 1901, 3; “Local Brevities,” June 14, 1901, 3; “Local Brevities,” June 26, 1901, 3; “Splendid Music,” *Elkhart Truth*, January 21, 1902, 1.

<sup>33</sup>[Conn Conservatory of Military Band Music advertisement], September 1896, n.p.; “The Conn Conservatory of Music [advertisement],” *C. G. Conn's Truth* 4, no. 10 (December 1900): 33.

<sup>34</sup>“City and County,” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, October 1, 1896, 6. Private lessons outside of the standard conservatory course in 1897–1898 ranged from \$0.75 cents for a piano lesson with Boyer to \$1.50 for a voice lesson with J. Reidy. Reidy’s fee was reduced to 1.25 per lesson for students studying twice per week. These fees likely were set by the instructors. “The Conn Conservatory of Music [advertisement],” *Elkhart Weekly Review*, October 21, 1897, 2.

3. Sheet Music, Instruction Books, Methods, etc., will be furnished at professional prices; all unnecessary expense in this direction will be carefully avoided.
4. Students are not expected to play in public unless permission has been obtained from the instructor, who will render assistance in selecting and preparing the number for rendition in public.<sup>35</sup>

Instructors divided students into classes based on musical proficiency and graduated those who qualified through examination at a ceremony held at the end of the summer term. Graduates of the first class generally entered the conservatory as beginners and earned an aluminum medal and a diploma stating that they could credibly play section parts in standard grade band and orchestra music. Students graduating in the second class earned a silver medal and diploma indicating that they had attained the proficiency to play first part in standard grade repertoire. Pupils in the third class earned a gold medal and diploma signifying that they were qualified as a soloist and—with completion of the harmony and instrumentation course—a bandmaster. Graduates of the third class also were eligible for postgraduate study.<sup>36</sup>

### *Conservatory Faculty*

The Conn Conservatory faculty consisted of musicians with both local and international reputations as well as “auxiliary instructors” who taught “under the immediate supervision of the great masters.”<sup>37</sup> Jules Levy (cornet) and Edward Abraham Lefebvre (saxophone) were famous soloists in Europe and America. Arthur Johnson (slide trombone, euphonium, E flat bass) graduated from the Royal Military School in London and had served as a musician in the British and US armies.<sup>38</sup> Additional instructors included Hobart A. Davis (Boehm flute and piccolo), who had studied in Europe and performed with many prominent ensembles; Henry W. Geiss (clarinet), an employee in the Conn factory and conductor of the Trumpet Notes Band; Jules Levy’s wife, Stella Costa Levy (voice); and local musicians, Frederick Ingersoll (violin) and James

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<sup>35</sup>“The Conn Conservatory of Music [advertisement],” 1900, 33. These rules were typical of other US conservatories of the time. E.g., see “School Regulations,” *Prospectus of the New England Conservatory of Music, Franklin Square, Boston, Mass.* (Boston, MA: New England Conservatory of Music, 1896), 64–65; “Doan College Conservatory of Music,” *Doan College Bulletin*, series 1, no. 1 (August, 1909): 21–22.

<sup>36</sup>[Conn Conservatory of Military Band Music advertisement], September 1896, n.p.; James Russell Noyes; “Edward A. Lefebvre (1835-1911): Preeminent Saxophonist of the Nineteenth Century” (DMA diss., Manhattan School of Music, 2000), 136, 225.

<sup>37</sup>I found no evidence of auxiliary instructors, probably due to the limited number of students at the Conservatory.

<sup>38</sup>[Conn Conservatory of Military Band Music advertisement], September 1896, n.p.; “Best in the World,” 1.

Franclyn Boyer (piano, harmony and instrumentation).<sup>39</sup> Boyer was a gifted musician, conductor, and composer who eventually held several executive positions at C. G. Conn.<sup>40</sup> Allesandro Liberati (1847–1927), a famous bandmaster and cornet soloist, served as a director at the conservatory along with Levy and Lefebre.<sup>41</sup> It is likely, however, that these were honorary titles given by Conn to lend credibility to the institution. Hobart Davis also was listed as a director, but in fact performed administrative duties at the school.

Charles Conn understood the importance of high-profile endorsements and enlisted the help of celebrity bandsmen such as Gilmore, Sousa, and Liberati in marketing his line of musical instruments.<sup>42</sup> He also promoted the Conservatory using the names of its faculty, especially Jules Levy and Edward A. Lefebre, in advertisements and promotional materials.<sup>43</sup> This effort helped attract aspiring musicians from all over the United States who wished to study band music with the distinguished Conservatory faculty.<sup>44</sup>

*Jules Levy—Chief cornet instructor.* Many people considered Jules Levy (Figure 2) the greatest cornet soloist of the nineteenth century and often compared him to virtuoso violinist Niccolò Paganini (1782–1840).<sup>45</sup> Levy was born in London, England, in 1838 and performed with the band of the Grenadier Guard and at the Princess Theater and Royal Opera House. He was a member of Patrick S. Gilmore's band from 1875 to 1890 and directed his own military band from 1891 to 1892.<sup>46</sup> Levy became an

<sup>39</sup>[Conn Conservatory of Military Band Music advertisement], September 1896, n.p.; "The Summer Term at the Conn Conservatory of Music," *Elkhart Daily Review*, April 30, 1897, 3; "Trumpet Notes Band," *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, February 20, 1896, 2; "Geiss Still Undecided," *Elkhart Daily Truth*, March 31, 1903, 1.

<sup>40</sup>Weaver, vol. 2, 709–712; "In Memoriam: James F. Boyer," 1871–1934," *Conn Musical Truth* 24, no. 54 (May 1934): 14.

<sup>41</sup>"Best in the World," 1; Glenn Bridges, *Pioneers in Brass* (Detroit, MI: Sherwood Publications, 1965), 60–62. Liberati purchased property in Elkhart in 1888 and lived in the community for several years, but often was away on tour with his band. [local news], *Elkhart Sentinel*, December 6, 1888, 5.

<sup>42</sup>"C. G. Conn," in *Musical Instruments of the Columbian Exhibition* (Chicago, IL: Presto Company, 1895), 63–65.

<sup>43</sup>See, e.g., advertisements for the Conn Conservatory of Music in *C. G. Conn's Truth*, September 1896, n.p.; May 1899, 25; December 1900, 33.

<sup>44</sup>"Elkhart Music," 1900, 6.

<sup>45</sup>Sam L. Jacobson, "The Cornet," *Music: A Monthly Magazine*, 13, no. 5 (March 1898): 628. Jules Levy's given name was Isaac Levi. Henry Fredric Redall, ed., *Fact Fancy, and Fable: A New Handbook for Ready Reference on Subjects Commonly Omitted from Cyclopaedias* (Chicago, IL: A. C. McClurg, 1892), 291.

<sup>46</sup>Patterson, 6, 12; "The Jules Levy Concert," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 15, 1891, 12; "Sunday Concerts," *Boston Herald*, November 28, 1892, 5. I found no evidence of Levy's band after 1892.



**Figure 2.** Jules Levy, c. 1896.<sup>49</sup>

American citizen in 1893 and recorded a number of solos for the Victor and Columbia phonograph companies over the next decade.<sup>47</sup> C. G. Conn published *Levy's Cornet Instruction Book* in 1895, by which time he had publicly endorsed Conn instruments for several years.<sup>48</sup>

Levy joined C. G. Conn in 1896 where he served as Chief Cornet Instructor in the Conservatory and tested newly manufactured instruments in the factory. He earned \$7000 per year (approximately \$200,000 in 2015) and lived on a large country estate formerly occupied by the Conn family outside of Elkhart.<sup>50</sup> Levy had a reputation for being “cranky” and “autocratic.”<sup>51</sup> According to one former student at the Conservatory,

<sup>47</sup>“Amusements,” *Riverside Daily Press*, January 4, 1893, 3; Bridges, 59. Several of Levy’s recordings are available from the “National Jukebox” database on the Library of Congress website at <http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/>.

<sup>48</sup>Jules Levy, *Levy's Cornet Instruction Book* (Elkhart, IN: C. G. Conn & Co., 1895); June 1881, n.p.; “The Artist Model Cornet [advertisement],” *Trumpet Notes* 9, no. 6 (June 1881): n.p.

<sup>49</sup>“Grandest Entertainment Ever Given,” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, February 4, 1897, 1.

<sup>50</sup>“The Conn Conservatory of Music at Elkhart, Indiana [advertisement],” supplement to *C. G. Conn's Truth*, 4, no. 8 (April 1900): n.p.; David Manuel, “Inflation Calculator,” available from <http://www.davemanuel.com/inflation-calculator.php> (accessed May 24, 2016). Another report placed Levy’s salary at \$4,000. “Conn Answers Levy,” *Goshen Mid-Week News-Times*, June 16, 1903, 2.

<sup>51</sup>“Gilmore’s Successor,” *Grand Forks Herald*, October 16, 1892, 11; Patterson, 7, 12; “Death of Jules Levy,” *C. G. Conn's Truth*, 5, no. 8 (February 1904), 13.

He has always been an indefatigable worker, and has no patience for a pupil who does not love to study. . . . He is a bundle of emotion. Songs and arias from grand operas are his favorites. A pupil is seldom interrupted by him in the midst of a whirling variation; but in simple songs, requiring artistic phrases . . . patience and perseverance must be exhibited. . . . When the song is hurried, the pupil will hear, "Ah, spread it out more." And if the playing lacks feeling, he will be stopped with an exclamation, "You have no more feeling than an oyster." Or, "You are as cold as an iceberg."<sup>52</sup>

Regardless, students spoke highly of Levy and acknowledged his stature as both a performer and teacher. J. D. Ross, a student from Genoa, Nebraska, said, "I do not hesitate in pronouncing you not only the finest cornet player in the world, but also the finest instructor. I cannot tell you how delighted my parents are over my playing. Everybody who has heard me play thinks that my improvement is wonderful."<sup>53</sup>

Around 1899, the Conn Conservatory of Music began offering a cornet course by mail at the cost of \$10.00 for twelve lessons. This program—under Levy's supervision—provided instruction for the amateur or professional unable to attend the Conservatory due to location, expense, or time. In a letter describing his success, one correspondence student from Monticello, Iowa, wrote:

Mr. J. Levy,

As you requested me to write in regard to my progress, I now take pleasure in doing so. My lips are becoming very strong. After playing the very long notes for one hour, I then take the notes from the bottom G to G above the line. I can play then for a full hour without resting or breaking a note. Then I take up the study in bottom G, playing four notes first, then the shorter ones gradually playing them faster. I find it a great study in the art of tonguing [*sic*]. I have improved very much since practicing that study.

You say that giving lessons by mail is something never heard of before. Well, I can say that I am satisfied that it is a perfect success, so plain are your instructions that I know at once just what you wish me to do. It would be a dull student that failed to make rapid progress if they followed your instructions.

I think I have the last lesson and believe I am ready for the next one. I can play now about four times as long as I ever could before without my lips tiring.

Hoping to hear from you at your earliest convenience.

J. C. Sutherland<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup>"The Conn Conservatory [advertisement]," April 1900: n.p.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>"Expert Cornet Lessons by Mail [advertisement]," *C. G. Conn's Truth* 4, no. 6 (May 1899): 7.

Charles Conn terminated Levy's ten-year contract in December 1900 because of ongoing disputes between the two men. Charges against Levy included unreliability in business relations, undesirable habits inimical to business interests, waning powers as an instructor and cornetist, discourtesy to customers and pupils, and an inability properly to pass upon the merits of instruction.<sup>55</sup> Conn furthermore claimed that Levy was "dissipated, profane, overbearing, and aged beyond the power of valuable services," and that the cornetist represented another manufacturer at an Elks convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.<sup>56</sup> Tensions ran high and led to Conn delivering "a heavy blow to [Levy's] face, stunning him and disfiguring his countenance" at a chance meeting at the Hotel Bucklen in Elkhart.<sup>57</sup>

Levy filed for bankruptcy before leaving Elkhart and claimed that his financial condition was the result of a breach of contract by Conn. According to reports in local newspapers, Levy held only \$650.00 in assets but owed creditors \$19,373.15 including \$12,200 to Conn.<sup>58</sup> Levy moved to Chicago in late January 1901 to represent the Lyon and Healy Instrument Company but continued his battle with the Indiana manufacturer.<sup>59</sup> In 1902, Levy initiated a \$100,000 libel suit in Federal court alleging that Conn had damaged his reputation through false reports in company periodicals.<sup>60</sup> The suit remained unresolved at the time of Levy's death on November 28, 1903, following a stroke.<sup>61</sup>

**Edward A. Lefebre—Chief saxophone instructor.** Edward Abraham Lefebre earned a reputation as "The Saxophone King" for his extraordinary playing and work as a champion for the recently invented instrument.<sup>62</sup> He was born in Holland in 1835 and built a career as a leading clarinetist and saxophonist in Europe before coming to the United States in 1872 to perform in the clarinet section of the Festival Orchestra for the World Peace Jubilee and International Music Festival, organized in Boston by Patrick S. Gilmore. Lefebre quickly built a reputation as a saxophonist in the United States and, in the fall of 1873, become principal saxophonist of Gilmore's newly organized Twenty-Second Regiment Band in New York City. Lefebre remained in this ensemble

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<sup>55</sup>"Levy, the Cornetist Wanted Damages," *Fort Wayne Morning Journal-Gazette*, October 28, 1902, 5.

<sup>56</sup>"Salty Answer to Levy," *Elkhart Daily Truth*, June 11, 1903, 1; "Jules Levy Files Suit again for \$100,000 Damages for Libel," *Elkhart Daily Truth*, October 28, 1902, 1.

<sup>57</sup>"Jules Levy Disfigured," *Goshen Daily Democrat*, January 12, 1901, 1.

<sup>58</sup>"May Sue Mr. Conn," *Goshen Daily Democrat*, December 14, 2; "Local Brevities," *Elkhart Daily Review*, January 25, 3.

<sup>59</sup>"With Lyon and Healy," *Goshen Daily Democrat*, January 25, 1901, 1.

<sup>60</sup>"Levy-Conn Libel Suit," *Goshen Mid-Week News-Times*, July 1, 1902, 4; "Jules Levy Files Suit Again," 1902, 1.

<sup>61</sup>"Death of Jules Levy," 1904, 13. I found no evidence that the suit between Levy and Conn reached a settlement or judgment.

<sup>62</sup>Noyes, ii–iii.

until Gilmore's death in September 1892, and then performed in John Philip Sousa's band from February 1893 to January 1894.<sup>63</sup> Lefebvre contributed a great deal of solo and ensemble literature to the evolving saxophone repertoire and pioneered the saxophone quartet, which became a regular feature in Gilmore's band.<sup>64</sup>

Lefebvre worked with C. G. Conn in the design of his new Wonder saxophone line beginning around 1890, and became the full-time supervisor of clarinet and saxophone production in 1895. The Wonder saxophones were the first mass-produced saxophones in the United States and helped increase the demand for this instrument in America.<sup>65</sup> Lefebvre originally taught both saxophone and clarinet at the conservatory until Henry Geiss took responsibility for the clarinet class shortly after the institution opened in 1896.<sup>66</sup>

The saxophone virtuoso continued to perform solos and in ensembles throughout the Midwest United States during his employment with Conn. In September 1897, Lefebvre organized the Conn Wonder Quartette with Hobart Davis (piccolo), Henry Geiss (clarinet), and James Boyer (piano). The ensemble represented the conservatory that same month on a program held in conjunction with the Northern Indiana Band Association tournament in nearby Wolcott, and in August 1898, during a one-week appearance with the Zimmerschied Military Band in Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>67</sup> In addition to their primary instruments, all four men played saxophone and likely performed saxophone quartets together on a regular basis.<sup>68</sup>

Lefebvre resigned his duties with C. G. Conn in 1901 to resume his performing career and left Geiss responsible for both clarinet and saxophone instruction at the Conservatory.<sup>69</sup> Before leaving Elkhart, he organized the Lefebvre Saxophone Quartette with William R. Yeagle (alto), his former Conservatory student; Clarence Bartlett (tenor), a former member of the Chicago Marine Band; and James Boyer (baritone). A farewell concert given for Lefebvre on August 8, 1901, featured members of both the Conn Wonder Quartette and the Lefebvre Saxophone Quartette (see Table 2).<sup>70</sup>

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 15–17, 27, 90, 100.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 32–33, 118–21.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 122–24, 132–34.

<sup>66</sup>“Grandest Entertainment Ever Given,” 1.

<sup>67</sup>“Mons. Lefebvre has organized a quartet . . .,” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, September 30, 1897, 4; “There Was Only One,” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, September 16, 1898, 1; “At Fairmount To-day,” *Kansas City Journal*, August 28, 1898, 3; “Fairmount Park [advertisement],” *Kansas City Star*, August 27, 1898, 3.

<sup>68</sup>“The Benefit Concert,” *Elkhart Daily Review*, October 2, 1900, 3. The Conn Wonder Quartet performed a saxophone quartet on this program. See Noyes, 139, for information regarding the saxophone experience of Geiss, Davis, and Boyer.

<sup>69</sup>Noyes, 146; “Henry W. Geiss, Expert Clarinetist and Teacher of Clarinet and Saxophone [advertisement],” *C. G. Conn's Truth* 4, no. 12 (November 1901): 17.

<sup>70</sup>Noyes, 146–148; “Mons. E. A. Lefebvre's Farewell Concert,” *Elkhart Daily Review*, August 8, 1901, 3.

**Table 2.** Lefebre's Farewell Concert, August 8, 1901.<sup>71</sup>

"Grand Entry"	Lefebre
a. "Lullaby"	Strauss
b. "Carnival of Venice"	Stegilli
<b>Lefebre Saxophone Quartette</b>	
"After the Ball" (an improvisation)	Flute Solo
<b>Hobart A. Davis</b>	
"Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep"	
<b>Mons. E. A. Lefebre</b>	
"Happy Days," trio	Anton Strelitzky
<b>Messrs. Geiss, Lefebre, and Boyer</b>	
<i>Intermission, twenty minutes</i>	
a. "Rose of Killarney"	J. R. Thomas
b. "[premiere]"	Boyer
<b>[artist(s) unlisted]</b>	
"Triumph" (clarinet solo)	Ryan
<b>Mr. Henry W. Geiss</b>	
"Johnnie Jones" (by request)	Transcription, Boyer
<b>J. F. Boyer</b>	
Prison Scenes (Il Trovatore)	Verdi
<b>Messrs. Lefebre and Yeaglea</b>	
"Austrian Wedding March"	Terschack
<b>Messrs. Lefebre, Geiss, Davis, Boyer, Bartlett, and Yeaglea</b>	

Lefebre toured as a soloist and led various quartets until his retirement in May 1909. He remained loyal to the Conn brand and continued to promote the Wonder saxophones until his death on February 22, 1911.<sup>72</sup>

### *Student Band Musicians*

Students of all ages traveled from across the United States to study at the Conn Conservatory. J. Paul Waite of Sturgis, Michigan, entered the institution at the age of thirteen and later played saxophone with Brooke's Chicago Marine Band and the Bellstedt-Ballenger Band in Denver.<sup>73</sup> William R. Yeagle—band director at Howe Military Academy in nearby Howe, Indiana—graduated with a silver medal (Second Class) for both clarinet and saxophone at the end of the summer term on July 30, 1897. He continued his studies the following year and accepted a position in Liberati's band during the 1898 summer season at Washington Park in Philadelphia.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup>"Mons. E. A. Lefebre's Farewell Concert," August 8, 1901, 3.

<sup>72</sup>Noyes, 175–79, 187.

<sup>73</sup>E.g., "Local Brevities," *Elkhart Weekly Review*, April 15, 1898, 3; Noyes, 166.

<sup>74</sup>Noyes, 136–37, 225; "Local Brevities," April 15, 1898, 3.

Thomas H. Davies of McKeesport, Pennsylvania, began work with Levy in the fall of 1896 at age twenty-two and soon earned the reputation as “one of the cleverest cornet soloists in western Pennsylvania.” He graduated with a gold medal (First Class) in July 1897.<sup>75</sup> The *Elkhart Truth* described Robert Higgins of Bridge Hampton, New York, as “an old band man” who had played with many organizations in the Eastern United States when he enrolled in Levy’s studio during the winter 1897 term.<sup>76</sup> Ennis Tunison of Jacksonville, Illinois, and Miss Marie Mable Keith of Holdrege, Nebraska, met at the conservatory and graduated with gold medals (First Class) in cornet before marrying in December 1900.<sup>77</sup> Keith eventually became a popular soloist, entertainer and “able directress [*sic*] of ‘The Ten Liberty Girls,’ one of Vaudeville’s greatest musical acts.”<sup>78</sup>

J. A. Crews from Wilmington, North Carolina studied trombone at the conservatory in 1896-1897 and eventually played professionally in bands and orchestras across the Eastern United States.<sup>79</sup> Willard Learn from Spearfish, South Dakota, entered the conservatory in November 1901 as a beginning flutist but “rapidly develop[ed] into an artist of merit” and earned a gold medal six months later, in spite of the fact that he had been blind since birth. In the summer of 1917, he performed as a soloist with the Colonial Orchestra of Iowa on a tour of the national Chautauqua circuit.<sup>80</sup>

### Changing Program

William J. Gronert (1851–1919), Secretary of the Conn Conservatory, stated in an interview with the *Elkhart Daily Truth* that he expected one hundred students by the end of the second term.<sup>81</sup> This number did not materialize, however, which led to changes at the institution. Arthur Johnson severed ties with the Conservatory probably

<sup>75</sup>“The Conservatory of Music,” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, October 8, 1896, 1; “City and County,” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, December 17, 1896, 5; “His Second Term,” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, January 21, 1897, 2; Noyes, 225.

<sup>76</sup>“Students are Arriving,” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, January 14, 1897, 1.

<sup>77</sup>“Local Brevities,” *Elkhart Weekly Review*, December 22, 1900, 3; “The Musical Educational Success of the Century. The Fourth Year of the Conn Conservatory of Music [advertisement],” *C. G. Conn Truth* 4, no. 6 (August 1899): 25; “Personal Mention,” *Elkhart Daily Review*, April 16, 1900, 2.

<sup>78</sup>“Entertainer was Once Cornet Student Here,” *Elkhart Truth*, February 2, 1920, 8. Keith divorced Holdrege and then married cornetist, John S. Leick, in 1916.

<sup>79</sup>“The Conn Conservatory of Music at Elkhart Indiana” [advertisement], *C. G. Conn’s Truth* 4, no. 7 (December 1899): 3; “Piney Ridge. Governor’s Foot Band Guard to Play,” *Springfield Union*, August 6, 1911, 7.

<sup>80</sup>“Blind Flutist Will Play,” *Elkhart Daily Truth*, January 15, 1902, 1; “Remarkable Achievement of a Blind Musician,” *Elkhart Daily Truth*, June 7, 1902, 1; “Blind Flute Soloist Joins Orchestra for Chautauqua Season,” *Elkhart Truth*, March 27, 1917, 6.

<sup>81</sup>“Conn Conservatory,” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, September 17, 1896, 1.

because of a lack of students. Levy then assumed responsibility for all brass instruction until the fall of 1897, when James Ratzer joined the faculty as professor of tuba and string bass.<sup>82</sup> In addition, the managers reduced tuition to \$35.00 for students in the beginner or preparatory classes studying with auxiliary instructors, and allowed local residents to begin lessons on the first day of any month in the term.<sup>83</sup> These changes led to an increase in Elkhart residents studying at the conservatory and a greater demand for non-band-related instruction. By the end of the 1896–1897 academic year, the Conn Conservatory of Military Band Music became simply the Conn Conservatory of Music—which better represented the diverse offerings of the school—and moved from its spacious location on Strong Avenue to a suite of five rooms in the Bucklen Opera House on Main Street.<sup>84</sup> The faculty expanded the following year to include an additional voice teacher and an instructor of mandolin and guitar.<sup>85</sup>

James F. Boyer (1871–1934) became director of the Conn Conservatory in July 1900, by which time the institution had developed into “a thorough school in every branch of Musical Art, Elocution, Dramatic Art and the Languages.” In addition to instructors on band instruments, the faculty included two voice professors, two instructors on piano and organ, and teachers of zither, mandolin, banjo, guitar, elocution, and drama. The violin department also evolved into a full strings program, with Frederick Ingersoll (violin), Bernie G. Young (violin), A. Hoershman (viola), W. V. Pezzoni (violincello), August Yenn (violincello), and James Ratzer (string bass) as instructors.<sup>86</sup> By the fall 1900 term, students progressed through up to six grade levels of proficiency, depending on their course of study. Advanced players also could participate in a pedagogy course that led to a teacher’s certificate, in addition to diplomas in their respective classes.<sup>87</sup> In 1901, Young (1868–1937) organized a Conservatory orchestra composed of eighteen pieces to give students ensemble experience and perform for

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<sup>82</sup>“Mr. Crews’ Second Term,” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, January 28, 1897, 3; “Summer Term at the Conn Conservatory,” April 30, 1897, 3; “Local Brevities,” *Elkhart Weekly Review*, September 25, 1897, 3. It is unclear if in fact Johnson ever taught at the Conservatory.

<sup>83</sup>[Conn Conservatory advertisement], *C. G. Conn’s Truth* 3, no. 9 (January 1897): 13, as cited by Noyes, 136.

<sup>84</sup>“Local Brevities,” *Elkhart Daily Review*, April 20, 1897, 3; “Summer Term at the Conn Conservatory,” April 30, 1897, 3.

<sup>85</sup>“Conn Conservatory of Music [advertisement],” October 21, 1897, 2.

<sup>86</sup>“Local Brevities,” *Elkhart Daily Review*, July 9, 1900, 3; “The Conn Conservatory of Music [advertisement],” *Elkhart Daily Review*, September 5, 1900, 3. Levy and Lefebvre, originally listed as directors in 1896, were “promoted” to first and second vice presidents, respectively. This organizational change allowed Boyer to act solely as the chief administrator of the conservatory. “Great Career Looked Forward to by Conn’s Conservatory,” *Elkhart Weekly Truth*, August 30, 1900, 1.

<sup>87</sup>“Great Career Looked Forward to,” 1; “Recital,” *Elkhart Daily Review*, April 17, 1901, 3; “Musical Notes,” *Elkhart Daily Review*, May 22, 1901, 3; “Local Brevities,” *Elkhart Daily Review*, June 14, 1901, 3; “Local Brevities,” *Elkhart Daily Review*, June 26, 1901, 3.

public engagements.<sup>88</sup> Along with his duties at the Conservatory, Young worked as a composer and arranger, owned a music publishing business, and operated the Conn retail store in Elkhart.<sup>89</sup>

### *Final Years of the Conservatory*

In the fall of 1900, Charles Conn signed a contract for a new building on South Main Street in Elkhart that would house the Conservatory of Music. The design included retail space and a storeroom on the first floor and the Conservatory offices, classrooms, and auditorium on the second floor.<sup>90</sup> Conn also announced plans for a juvenile band and orchestra academy that would be located on his farm one mile outside of Elkhart to provide impoverished youth between twelve and eighteen years of age with a musical education. He also expected the academy to teach a public school curriculum and operate with military rules.<sup>91</sup>

Neither the new Conservatory building nor the juvenile band and orchestra academy were completed. Beginning with the winter 1902 term, the Conservatory closed its facilities at the Bucklen Opera House and moved classes and lessons into teachers' homes. According to the *Elkhart Daily Review*, Conn intended that "a new and handsome edifice, for use as a conservatory exclusively" would open for the fall 1902 term on "one of [Elkhart's] quieter streets, Main street being too noisy for successful work."<sup>92</sup> In reality, the departure of Levy and Lefebre and the lack of prominent faculty to replace them probably resulted in a decline of students and the need for a permanent teaching space.

Several signs indicated problems with sustainability at the Conn Conservatory. By fall 1901, tuition had dropped to \$30 for twenty lessons. In addition, the academic year no longer consisted of three terms and students could enroll anytime between September 1 and May 31.<sup>93</sup> Some faculty also severed ties with the conservatory. Bernie Young, for example, was teaching violin and brass instruments in his own studio on Middlebury Street by November 1902.<sup>94</sup> Although I found no official announcement that the Conservatory closed, the *Elkhart Daily Truth* printed the last report of the institution's activities on February 12, 1903. According to the article, C. H. Pool, a scholarship recipient who began flute lessons with Davis in November 1902, had finished his course and returned home to Colorado.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>88</sup>"Local Brevities," *Elkhart Weekly Review*, February 20, 1901, 3.

<sup>89</sup>Noyes, 145; "New Music Store," 1900, 1; See, e.g., Harry S. Chester and Bernie G. Young, *It was There in Indiana* [sheet music] (Elkhart, IN: Indiana Music Company, 1900).

<sup>90</sup>"Local Brevities," *Elkhart Daily Review*, August 24, 1900, 3.

<sup>91</sup>"Great Career Looked Forward to," 1.

<sup>92</sup>"Local Brevities," *Elkhart Daily Review*, September 28, 1901, 3.

<sup>93</sup>"Henry W. Geiss, Expert," 17.

<sup>94</sup>"Bernie G. Young, Teacher of Violin, Cornet, and all Brass Instruments," *Elkhart Daily Truth*, November 18, 1902, 3. Young moved to Hammond, Indiana, in March 1903 to conduct at the local opera house. "Bernie Young Leaves Elkhart to Locate at Hammond, Indiana," *Elkhart Daily Truth*, March 24, 1903, 1.

## Conclusion

Instrument manufacturer, Charles G. Conn, opened The Conn Conservatory of Military Band Music in Elkhart, Indiana, in 1896 to boost the sale of instruments and fill the need for an institution devoted to training musicians for the thousands of bands in the United States. Although the student population never attained the size for which the managers hoped, the institution attracted pupils from across the United States who came to study with Jules Levy, Edward A. Lefebvre, and other prominent members of the faculty. In addition to class and private lessons, students at the Conn Conservatory studied harmony and instrumentation as they worked toward medals and diplomas at advancing levels of proficiency.<sup>96</sup>

Administrators at the Conn Conservatory eventually expanded the curriculum to include instruction in orchestral strings, piano, organ, mandolin, guitar, zither, banjo, voice, composition, dramatic arts, and pedagogy.<sup>97</sup> This strategy attracted a number of local residents who studied music for their own enjoyment and helped sustain the professional program of the institution. The school closed in early 1903, however, probably due to the loss of its most famous faculty members and failure to attract students from outside the northern Indiana region.<sup>98</sup>

Conn continued to offer various forms of instruction for both students and teachers after the conservatory closed. In 1906, the company marketed lessons on phonograph cylinders for flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, cornet, trombone, and euphonium. The program included three series of ten lessons each for beginning, intermediate, and advanced students and a fourth series of twenty-four lessons intended to prepare advanced players as soloists.<sup>99</sup>

In 1923, Conn assumed control of the Frederick N. Innes (1858–1926) School of Music in Denver, Colorado. The institution remained under Innes's leadership, but relocated to Chicago and became the Conn National School of Music.<sup>100</sup> By 1925, the school offered in-person and correspondence instruction for instruments and voice, band and orchestra directing, and public school music.<sup>101</sup> This institution prepared a number of bandmasters who assumed leadership for school bands organized during

<sup>95</sup>“Points about People,” *Elkhart Daily Truth*, November 29, 1902, 12; and February 12, 1903, 8. The November article listed Pool's first initials as E. A. and stated he was from Freedom, Illinois. I found no further evidence of the Conservatory operating past this date in any local newspapers or Conn publications.

<sup>96</sup>E.g., [Conn Conservatory of Military Band Music advertisement], 1896, n.p.

<sup>97</sup>“The Conn Conservatory of Music [advertisement],” September 5, 1900, 3.

<sup>98</sup>“Points about People,” 1903, 8; “With Lyon and Healy,” 1; “Mons. E. A. Lefebvre's Farewell Concert,” 3.

<sup>99</sup>“C. G. Conn Musical Instruction Company's System [advertisement].” *C. G. Conn's Truth* 6, no. 4 (1906): inside front cover.

<sup>100</sup>Martin, 55–56. Innes was a famous trombonist and bandmaster who endorsed Conn instruments throughout his career.

<sup>101</sup>“The Summer Session of the Conn National School of Music” [advertisement], *C. G. Conn Ltd. Musical Truth* 15, no. 38 (1925): 8.

the first two decades of the twentieth century.<sup>102</sup> Today, the company who owns the Conn brand—the Conn-Selmer Corporation—provides professional education for preservice and in-service teachers through the Conn-Selmer Institute, held annually in Mishawaka, Indiana. This four-day workshop addresses topics that preservice preparation might not cover, such as recruiting and student motivation.<sup>103</sup>

The history of the Conn Conservatory of Music illustrates one effort on the part of the music industry to prepare aspiring bandmen when few educational opportunities existed.<sup>104</sup> Like its counterparts in Europe and the United States, The Conn Conservatory offered multiple levels of private and class instruction in instrumental and vocal music, as well as courses in harmony, orchestration, and pedagogy. However, the Conn Conservatory and others in the United States differed from those in Europe in that they catered to people of all levels and abilities rather than the talented elite. Often, this difference was philosophical in that American conservatories sought to generate a cultural renaissance among the masses.<sup>105</sup> In the case of the Conn Conservatory, however, administrators also probably viewed this approach as a practical means of supporting the institution.

Future studies should focus on other music companies, institutions, and individuals that trained band musicians, including those that offered lessons through correspondence. Authors could focus on the benefits and challenges of correspondence instruction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and relate these to distance education today. Researchers also should examine the history of conservatories in the United States and their relationship to European counterparts, as well as the role of these institutions in preparing American musicians, conductors, and music educators during the nineteenth century and beyond.

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<sup>102</sup>Martin, 55–56; “Big Demand for Conn School Graduates Exceeds Supply,” *C. G. Conn Ltd. Musical Truth*, 16, no. 40 (1926): 22.

<sup>103</sup>“Conn-Selmer Institute,” Conn-Selmer Web Site, <http://www.conn-selmer.com/en-us/education/conn-selmer-institute/> (accessed April 6, 2014).

<sup>104</sup>Martin, 45.

<sup>105</sup>Keene, *A History of Music Education*, 295–96.