

Patrick Conway (1865–1929) was one of America's foremost bandleaders. His professional band was as famous as John Philip Sousa's band, playing throughout the country for state fairs, expositions, and concert series. Conway's band also recorded for the Victor and Edison labels and, during the late 1920s, was a regular attraction on the General Motors Family Hour radio show.

While the Conway Band enjoyed tremendous success during the 1910s and 1920s, other bands declined in popularity, possibly victims of competition from other forms of amusement like the automobile and phonograph. The incipient establishment of school bands created a great demand for trained band teachers and musicians, yet little formal education for band musicians existed. Realizing this state of affairs, Conway opened one of the first schools for the training of the band musician: the Conway Military Band School. This article traces the influences and environment that led Conway to establish this institution. Also included is a description of the school and its development during the seven years of its existence.

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The Patrick Conway Military Band School, 1922–1929

Patrick ("Patsy") Conway (1865–1929) was one of America's foremost band conductors. The son of Irish immigrant parents, Conway excelled on the cornet during his early years. When he was thirty, he formed a professional concert band in Ithaca, New York. Through tours, recordings, and various concert appearances, Conway and his band became celebrated throughout the United States.

Conway's contribution to the American music scene had another dimension. In 1922, he organized a school for the initial purpose of training professional band musicians. Soon this school's charge expanded to embrace a band director training component, and it graduated many of the generation's top band directors and musicians. Affiliated with the Ithaca Conservatory of Music, the Conway Military Band School was described as the only institution of its kind in the country.

This study has two purposes: First, it establishes the experiences, events and developments in Conway's life and times that influenced the development of his institution. Second, the Conway Military Band School itself is examined to recount the development of that organization from its inception in 1922 until the death of Patrick Conway in 1929.

Preprofessional Influences

Martin and Bridget Conway's second child, Patrick, was born on the fourth of July in 1865¹ near Troy, New York. When Patrick was still an infant, the Conway family relocated and settled in the central New York village of Homer. Martin, a soldier for the North during the American Civil War, contracted tuberculosis during his tour of duty. This illness, then called consumption, is highly contagious. Although there were four other children born to Martin and Bridget, only Patrick and one other child survived past their teens. Martin died when Patrick was fifteen years old. Patrick's father and siblings were all victims of tuberculosis.²

The environment of Conway's boyhood town of Homer (population 3,691)³ exerted a decided influence on his career in music. The townspeople held education high in importance, and they were fiercely proud of their local school, the Homer Academy and Union School.

Nowhere can a community be found more highly educated, more liberal in sentiment, or upon which the influence of solid education is more noticeable than the people of this vicinity. No institution of the kind in the state has exerted a more marked influence for good.⁴

A student's education at the Homer Academy and Union School included music instruction. According to an 1874 source, two music lessons per week were provided by a music teacher.⁵ In that same source, the name "Patsy" Conway was listed in the enrollment of the Second Intermediate A Grade.⁶

Given the normal development of music education in schools at the time, it is likely this musical instruction included only singing and not instrumental music, but it is possible that instruments were taught. J. W. Fenner, the assistant leader and second cornetist of the Homer Cornet Band, was a respected teacher at the Homer Academy. His presentation "Music in the Common Schools" received praise at the Cortland County Teachers Association Convention.⁷

Patrick Conway's formal education at the Homer Academy and Union School was interrupted toward the end of grammar school. To help support his mother and family during his father's illness and after his father's passing, Patrick had to take a job as a laborer at a Homer carriage factory. Then, as the illness spread through the family, Patrick was also diagnosed with a weakness of the lungs. A doctor recommended that "Patsy" play a wind instrument for the purpose of strengthening them.⁸

Charles H. Bates, a coworker in the carriage factory, happened to be the leader of the Homer Cornet Band. Bates sold Conway a cornet for fifteen dollars and agreed to teach him to play it. Conway joined the Homer band within a short period of time and later became known as the "boy wonder with the cornet."⁹

By several accounts, the Homer Band was a cut above the typical small-town brass band of the day. Organized and sponsored by the community in 1874, the ensemble was soon described as "one of the best bands in Central New York," then "one of the very best musical organizations in the entire state."¹⁰ Charles Bates was a fine cornetist and an aggressive leader. He arranged to have a finely ornamented bandwagon built and an impressive pagoda-shaped bandstand constructed in the town square to show off his group. He also sponsored the first of what was to become several "brass band conventions." These two- or three-day invitational workshops would bring in a guest band expert, and musicians from several area town bands would be rehearsed and given many tips on how to improve their bands.

During the 1877 convention, the famous march composer Thomas H. Rollinson assembled the musicians into a sixty-piece band (a massive ensemble for the time). The group was taught new band music, most of it penned by Rollinson, and equipment and music was sold. The convention culminated with a grand concert.

Only think of an immense band of 60 pieces, all combined in one grand swelling chorus, and the reader will then only glean a faint conception of the reality.¹¹

Bates, with the help of other visiting specialists, gradually enlarged his band to include woodwinds and more brass. This was undoubtedly influenced by the visits of Patrick Gilmore's Band and Jules Levy's Band.¹² The Homer Band took to the road often, playing in numerous Central New York hamlets, in Buffalo, and in Washington, D.C. Such was the milieu for the impressionable Patrick Conway.

Conway became close friends with Bates and he began his cornet solo career in 1887 accompanied by the Homer Band.¹³ At the annual meeting of the Homer Band, Conway was elected trustee for 1891. "Happy Bill" Daniels, a local violinist, engaged Conway to perform with his country dance orchestra. Conway also took a position as cornetist with the Guy Brothers Minstrel Show and toured the East Coast during the winter of 1890.¹⁴

When the Village of Homer was forced for financial reasons to repossess many of the Homer Band's instruments, several of the band members started a new band in nearby Cortland. Bates became its director. Bates was forced to vacate this post when he suffered a stroke, and Conway replaced Bates as the director of the Cortland Band. Patsy maintained and then improved the organization, and it won acclaim throughout central New York.¹⁵

Conway's career soon focussed predominantly on music. Having gained local prominence with his Cortland Band, in 1895 he accepted an offer to instruct the Cornell Cadet Band and teach brass instruments at the Ithaca Conservatory of Music in Ithaca, New York. Shortly after that, he organized the Ithaca Band, a municipal ensemble that became famous throughout the East Coast, playing for firemen's conventions, excursions, and other concerts during the summer.

The firemen's conventions deserve special mention. During the years 1893 to 1900, the Central New York Volunteer Firemen's Association held band contests in conjunction with their annual conventions. These band contests were highly competitive events, and it was during this time that Conway honed his ensemble into a fine group. In addition, double reeds were added, and the ratio of brass to woodwinds was balanced more evenly. Band composer D. W. Reeves was among the judges for these competitions and ranked Conway's band highly. In addition, it was during these competitions that Conway began to hire professional musicians such as cornetist W. Paris Chambers to perform with his group.

In the winter, Conway conducted the orchestra at the Lyceum Theater in Ithaca. By leading these two ensembles, Conway was able to offer year-round employment to the area's finest musicians. By 1900, Conway was able to make a comfortable living as a professional conductor.

The first two decades of the twentieth century were the heyday of the professional band in the United States, and Patrick Conway quickly became one of the most successful bandleaders of that era. His Ithaca band played at the Willow Grove Park near Philadelphia in 1903 and was invited back for at least seventeen more summer sessions. John Philip Sousa's band was also a regular attraction at Willow Grove, and Sousa and Conway became close friends. Reportedly, Sousa suggested that Conway identify his organization as "Conway and His Band" rather

than "The Ithaca Band under the direction of Patrick Conway."¹⁶ Conway took this advice and in 1908 began booking throughout the country. With his reputation growing, he was successful in using his name as enticement.

Conway toured the country with a core of approximately fifteen professional musicians. His brother Martin, who acted as business manager and librarian, engaged local talent forming the approximately fifty-piece professional band. The band performed the state fairs of New York, Wisconsin, Iowa, Texas, Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, Utah, and Indiana. They also performed at the St. Louis World's Fair, Young's Pier in Atlantic City, the Cincinnati Zoo, the Canadian National Exhibition, the Corn Palace in South Dakota, and the Pan-American Exposition. He was a friend since boyhood with John McGraw, manager of the New York Giants baseball team, and performed at numerous opening days of the National League baseball season at the Polo Grounds.¹⁷ In 1915, Conway and his band accepted a prestigious ten-week engagement to perform at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco.

A year later, the Air Service of the United States Army offered Conway a captain's commission for the purpose of organizing an official band and music program for that service branch. Conway accepted the commission and was stationed in Waco, Texas at Camp McArthur. There he organized the first band program for what was to become the U.S. Air Force. After World War I, Conway retained his commission even though he returned to his native central New York.

Conway's band continued to tour and remained popular through the 1920s and made numerous recordings on the Victor, Edison, and Okeh labels. During 1927 and 1928, he and his band were a regularly featured attraction on the nationally broadcast General Motors Family Hour radio show.¹⁸

Educating the Band Musician, 1900–1920

Formal school programs for band musicians were rare during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Activity in public schools was limited to a few exceptions. There was no paucity of schools of music and conservatories in America, but most of these schools provided primarily for the study of vocal culture, piano, and stringed instruments. One exception was the U.S. Army Music School, which opened in October 1911 at Governor's Island, New York.¹⁹ Another was Dana's Musical Institute located in Warren, Ohio.

Dana's Musical Institute (DMI), established in 1869 by William H. Dana, proclaimed itself as the oldest military band and orchestra school in North America.²⁰ It was well-known in its day and had a curriculum that included a daily lesson on a chosen instrument, solfeggio, music history, theory, and a band rehearsal with a concert once a week.

Another avenue to becoming a proficient band musician early in the twentieth century was the correspondence school. Music lessons by mail were started as early as 1903.

No better plan has thus far been evolved, and after careful study of some of the printed lessons of these [correspondence] schools I find them of inestimable value to the student who is unable to secure a capable instructor....²¹

Many correspondence schools eventually sent instructions on how to become a bandmaster. Correspondence courses in band instruments and directing were offered by Frederick Innes, H. M. VanderCook, W. M. Eby, and Fortunato Sordillo, among others.

Perhaps the most pervasive method for learning to play a band instrument during this era was to simply be a member of a town band. After all, famed cornetist Herbert L. Clarke and Sousa Band trombonist Frank Holton claimed to have been virtually self-taught.²² The band was evolving into a more sophisticated ensemble, however, and it was becoming evident that a more organized and efficient system needed to develop. Conway, in an article for *Musical America* magazine, stated that brass instrument study was neglected.²³

The Twilight of the Professional Band

Concomitant with the dearth of band education curricula was a felt loss of enthusiasm for the town and professional band in general. While Conway and his band enjoyed tremendous success during the 1910s and 1920s, other less celebrated professional bands actually declined in popularity. Holz states that by 1920, most town and professional bands had fallen victim to competition from the newer forms of amusement such as jazz, the automobile, the moving picture, and the phonograph.²⁴

As the popularity of professional and community bands peaked and began to decline in the 1910s, bands were just beginning to gain a foothold in America's schools. Already in 1918, Aldrich claimed there was a shortage of band instructors in colleges and high schools and urged good teachers of band instruments "to quit taking a job here and there and take a steady position with good regular hours in a school or college."²⁵ This was the commencement of the school band movement era.

Origin of the Conway Military Band School

Seemingly aware of the professional band's failing market and the demand for teachers in the budding school band market, Patrick Conway added yet another facet to his remarkable life as a musician: He took on the role of a music educator. Conway was in his mid-fifties when he began organizing his band school. It was Conway's belief that only through some agency like a band school could American bands ever hope for healthy and artistic growth and development.

At present, there are practically no opportunities for the young student of any band instrument to secure proper instruction. As a rule, they are either self-taught or acquire this knowledge through a correspondence school.²⁶

Conway's solution to this problem was to establish the Conway Military Band School. Conway declared: "I desire to establish a school where any young, ambitious student possessing musical ability may secure the best instruction possible on any band or orchestral instrument."²⁷ Founded in 1922 as one of the affiliated schools of the Ithaca [New York] Conservatory of Music, the Conway Military Band School was described as the first and only institute of its kind in the United States.²⁸

The claim made good press, although a few "band schools" had been in place before Conway's, including famous cornet virtuoso Frederick Innes' School of Band Music, which opened in Denver by at least 1919.²⁹

Conway chose the Ithaca Conservatory of Music as the school with which he would associate because of his longtime relationship with the school and the city of Ithaca. The *Ithaca Journal-News* and other sources claim Conway also took classes at the Conservatory early in his career.³⁰ The 1900–1901 Ithaca Conservatory of

Music General Catalog has him listed as one of three band and orchestral instrument faculty members.³¹

Details outlining Conway's original meeting and terms with the Ithaca Conservatory administration are sketchy. There is only one known source that even mentions their agreement. George C. Williams recalls:

I had known "Patsy" Conway for many years ... and I had little trouble persuading him to become director of our band school.³²

This quote gives the impression that it was Williams, not Conway, who conceived of the band school idea at Ithaca. This claim can neither be confirmed nor refuted. There is no known existing record of the official agreement between the two parties, although newspaper accounts clearly give Conway the credit for the idea. Conway's salary was to be based on enrollment, and, although the size of the budget is unknown, it was probably minimal. The music stands were made from old lumber, and the band building was located in a converted carriage house.³³ The music used was from Conway's personal library, which was described as one of the largest and most complete band libraries in the country.

On December 7, 1921, a public announcement was made stating the Conway Military Band School would open its doors in September 1922, and that it would be affiliated with the Ithaca Conservatory. By January, Conway's countenance graced the cover of the nationally distributed weekly, the *Musical Courier*.³⁴ The immediate motive for the school was to provide a "feeder system" for his professional band.³⁵

Advertising in the music periodicals of the day was the means used to attract students to Conway's school. Many of the interviewed alumni recall learning of the school from serials such as *Jacob's Band Monthly*, *The Etude*, *Musical Courier*, *Melody*, *Musical Messenger*, and *Musical America*. Composer and educator Acton Ostling recalls:

Few high schools had guidance counselors in the 1920s. The choice of a life work and where to train for it was left, for the most part to the individual student. These problems were solved for some of us who were interested in band music by the ... [Conway advertisement] ... which appeared in magazines of that time.³⁶

The Conway Military Band School was promoted as being "the only institution of its kind in the country."³⁷ Emphasizing the unique qualities of the institution, Conway assured enrollees that they would receive expert instruction taught by specialists on every band instrument.³⁸

To that end, he engaged the best soloists from major symphony orchestras and his professional band as faculty members for his new school. In addition, virtuosos such as trombonist Gardell Simons and flutist Joseph LaMonica of the Philadelphia Orchestra and cornetist Ernest F. Pechin of the Conway Band were among the visiting master teachers.

Conway established his first curriculum, a three-year diploma, based on one that had been in use at the Ithaca Conservatory since at least 1920. It required not only lessons on a major and minor instrument, but also subjects like harmony, solfeggio, music history, counterpoint, and class instruction on all band instruments. Although students reportedly complained of taking courses that took time away from playing their instruments,³⁹ Conway believed a professional musician needed musical training as broad as that given a teacher in a school of music. He stated:

... I insist upon a thorough musical training before a diploma is granted any student in my school—a knowledge of all band instruments, of directing and organizing a band, of composing, and a thorough acquaintance, not only with band literature, but also of all other musical literature.⁴⁰

During the band school's early years, the entrance requirement for student enrollment was minimal. The application form for admission requested that the applicant list any previous instruction in band instruments, but added "This information is for reference only. *Previous instruction is not required for admission to the Conway Military Band School.*" [italics added]⁴¹

According to the catalog, students entering "without preparation" were given the opportunity to make up this deficiency through special courses organized for that purpose. Students who had already completed a course described in the curriculum were eligible for transfer credit. George Howard, a member of the school's first graduating class (1925), stated that although entrance requirements were minimal, "every student who entered while I was there had played an instrument prior to their enrolling. No student came in with no musical experience."⁴²

Tuition for each seventeen-week term was \$175.00. In addition, students could elect to supplement their education by requesting additional private lessons at a rate from \$3.50 for the regular teachers to \$10.00 for the visiting master teachers. Scholarships were available and students in the band school competed with all students at the Ithaca Conservatory for twelve awards ranging from \$87.50 to \$600.00.

According to one newspaper account, the new band school had far exceeded its projected enrollment claiming "nearly 50 men from all parts of the country were registered."⁴³ Further investigation revealed that the band school's first year was not quite that successful.

First of all, Conway and many of the teachers he engaged for his school from his professional band were not present at the September 22 opening of the fall semester. They were touring until October 1. Furthermore, during the first term, Conway was present at his school only Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of each week, devoting the remainder of his time in Syracuse conducting a Syracuse theater pit orchestra. In Conway's place was Frank R. Seltzer, assistant dean.⁴⁴ Student newspaper and recital program records indicate that it was Seltzer, not Conway who conducted the school band's first two performances as part of Ithaca Conservatory's regular Tuesday afternoon general recitals. Included on the program were "Melody of Peace" by Martin on October 24 and, on November 14, two Handel compositions, "Air" from *Rinaldo* and "Minuet" from *Samson*. Only ten students were listed as having participated. Seltzer's tenure at the school was apparently short-lived. He resigned in mid-year along with reed instructor and original Ithaca Band member Fred Livingston.⁴⁵

Our progress was somewhat impeded by a change of teachers when Mr. Seltzer and Mr. Livingston were replaced by Mr. Richards and Mr. Delgato. We have had our troubles but have outlived them all, and everyone who helped live them down feels himself a conqueror and is finishing the year "on top."⁴⁶

George Howard, a member of the first enrolled class at the Conway Band School clarifies:

Frank Seltzer always said that he was there merely as a substitute for Mr. Conway. I had the feeling that Mr. Seltzer was Ass't Dean as a favor to Mr. Conway. He and Conway were close friends. Certainly he was not looking for a job. I can guarantee that he did not leave the Band School because of inefficiency.

Mr. Livingston was my first clarinet and saxophone teacher (at the Band School). He complained about traveling and when Angel Delgado moved to Ithaca, I felt that he (Livingston) was delighted.⁴⁷

Conway's public debut with the Conway School Band was on January 24, 1923. At that time, he was also the conductor of the Ithaca Conservatory Orchestra. The two ensembles shared a program with contralto and violin soloists. The concert was reviewed favorably. The *Ithaca Journal-News* reported:

The band played only three short numbers at the beginning of the program, ... but the audience would willingly have heard another selection. There are hardly a score of students in the band at present, but their playing did not sound thin or ineffective.⁴⁸

The band performed "Lustspiel Overture" by Kelar, "Valse Intermezzo" by Drumm, and "The Merry Lark" (subtitled "an Episode in Birdland") by Bendix. Personnel in the band numbered eighteen with at least five members being either faculty or constituents of Conway's professional band. The instrumentation included one flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two saxophones, three cornets, two French horns, two trombones, two basses, and two drums.

The Conway School Band performed at least three other times during that spring term. Its repertoire expanded to include "The Beautiful Galatea" by von Suppe, "Airs" from *Sally* by Kern, "Two Hindoo Pictures" by Hansen, "Famous Minuet" by Paderewski, "Evolution of Dixie" by Lake, "Scenes That Are Brightest" by Henton, "Irish Whispers Waltz" by Ancliffe, and the "Dance Suite" of Tschakoff.

The Growth of the Conway Military Band School

While the Band School experienced growing pains its first year, there was an undercurrent of optimism from yearbook and newspaper sources that seemed to carry confidence into the 1923–24 school year. Enrollment did increase during the second year of the band school's existence. The instrumentation of the band (one flute, one oboe, five clarinets, one alto saxophone, one tenor saxophone, six cornets, two trumpets, three French horns, six trombones, one baritone, one bass, and two drums) reflected that growth. Of these 30 instruments, at least three were played by faculty members.

Retired Air Force Band Conductor Colonel George S. Howard describes the band rehearsal room as one "not built with the band rehearsal in mind":

It was fine for 18 players but very cramped when 28 players rehearsed.... Percussion instruments and tubas were furnished by members of Conway's professional band and were brought in only at concert time.⁴⁹

The larger band instruments were not purchased by the school while Conway was dean.

Unfortunately, only two band programs are extant from the 1923–24 school year. The difficulty of the music did increase from the previous year, however, giving another positive sign of development. This is the program from the January 20, 1924 concert, which was held in the Ithaca Conservatory gymnasium:

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| 1. "March—Spirit of Minstrelsy" | King |
| 2. "Hungarian Overture—Ilka" | Doppler |

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|------------------------------------------|----------|
| 3. "Midsummer Night's Serenade" | Albenez |
| 4. "Fantasia—Dixie" | Lake |
| 5. "Cornet Solo —Grand Russian Fantasia" | Levy |
| Ernest F. Pechin—Conway's Band | |
| 6. Airs from <i>Lilac Time</i> | Schubert |
| 7. "Scene—In The Tavern" | Jensen |

This is the program performed on March 16, 1924:

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|--------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. "Overture—If I were King" | Adam |
| 2. "Midsummer Night's Serenade" | Albenez |
| 3. "Grand Fantasia—Dixie" | Lake |
| 4. "Scenes from <i>La Traviata</i> " | Yerdi |
| 5. Trombone Solo—"The Lost Chord" | Sullivan |
| Joseph DeLuca, soloist—Sousa Band | |
| 6. a. "Valse—Springtime" | Drumm |
| b. "Dreamy Melody" | Koehler |
| 7. "Airs from <i>Sally</i> " | Kern |

The first graduates of the Conway Military Band School received their diplomas in spring 1925. Eight of the thirty registered band school students graduated that year. Of those eight, cornetist Sandy Smith and clarinetist George Howard were hired by Conway to perform with his professional band during the summer. They had already been teaching applied lessons to less experienced students at the Band School during their senior year.

Band instrumentation for the 1924–25 school year began to fill out and resemble that of a typical professional band of that era. The thirty-three-piece ensemble still claimed as members no fewer than three Band School faculty. The increased enrollment also brought congested conditions in the rehearsal room. The student publication *The Key Note* states Conservatory Hall (also known as the Little Theater) was promised for daily rehearsals for the next season to alleviate the overcrowding. Band rehearsals were increased to two per day during this school year, with Conway conducting both sessions. The December 13, 1925 band program reported an instrumentation of two flutes, six clarinets, one alto saxophone, one tenor saxophone, two C melody saxophones, eight cornets, four horns, three trombones, two baritones, two basses, two drums, and eight associate members. The associate members (as they were designated in the program) were used as alternate players. These were younger or less experienced students who only observed during rehearsals and contributed their playing skills when Conway believed their input would enhance the band's performance. Auditions throughout Conway's years were organized loosely, and decisions for placement rested solely with him. Ostrander recalls entering as a freshman and being put into the top group immediately not because of his performance prowess but because he was the only trombonist able to read tenor clef.⁵⁰

Selections performed during the 1924–25 school year included "Scenes from *The Bohemian Girl*" by Balfe, the "Petite Bijouterie Waltz" by Bohm, Airs from "Rose Marie" by Friml, the "Raymond Overture" by Thomas, "In a Moonlit Garden" by King, "The Rocking Horse Parade" by Hager, Beethoven's "Coriolanus Overture," Wagner's "Rienzi Overture," Bizet's "The Pearl Fishers Overture," "Beautiful Colorado" by DeLuca, and "Spanish Ballet Music" by Desormes.

In 1926, the Ithaca Conservatory and Affiliated Schools received a new charter from the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York. This proceeding allowed adoption of a four-year curriculum leading to a Bachelor of

Music degree. Although the three-year diploma remained in place through 1929, the new degree met the recently developed requirements for a teacher's license in New York and other states.

The addition of the four-year curriculum seemed only to fuel the momentum of Conway's brainchild. The school's original mission, that of training students for careers as professional bandsmen, gradually evolved in emphasis to embrace the music teaching profession.

The school extends equal advantages to those who wish to be concert artists, orchestra or band conductors or soloists, and those who intend to be teachers.⁵¹

Interviewed alumni recall that the morning band rehearsal of the two-rehearsal-per-day regimen instituted by Conway around 1924 gradually evolved into a practicum for senior conducting students. The plan required underclassmen to play their instruments while those enrolled in conducting took turns working on various conducting techniques under Conway's supervision. Conway would choose a senior student conductor who would eventually be paid under scholarship to act as assistant teacher. The morning group eventually evolved into a freshmen band because ever-increasing enrollment allowed for more selectivity.

Private thirty-minute music lessons both on the student's major and minor instruments were a major drawing factor for many interviewed alumni. Conway's lessons consisted of having the student play music assigned from the "World Method" cornet book and from various band music excerpts. He would suggest musical and expressive ideas, but would never correct a missed technical passage. It was expected that that would have been worked out by the student. Conway apparently never played a note on any instrument to demonstrate. He would sing the passage to demonstrate the style or phrasing, however.⁵²

Students had the opportunity to study with several of the Conway Band virtuosos through the years. Angel Delgado, a woodwind specialist in Conway's professional band, was a marvelous technician on the clarinet and saxophone, but also had the responsibility to teach the oboe and bassoon. Les Brown recalls several students having to correct their oboe embouchures after leaving Delgado's lessons. He stated that virtually no one entering knew how an oboe really sounded so they followed Delgado's advice faithfully.⁵³

Private minor instrument lessons were often taught by students who majored on the instruments. Conway used students George Howard, Paul Lester, and Carleton Stewart to teach the minor instruments, and these students were given a tuition credit or scholarship for remuneration.

All conducting lessons were taught by Conway. He always taught the class while seated, even while he demonstrated a particular technique. The student conductor would often be allowed to use the freshman band as his laboratory ensemble. No one interviewed recalls working on anything except beat patterns and cuing. Items such as curing intonation problems or teaching articulations were never an issue at any time.⁵⁴ Students were expected to pick up such information during the band rehearsals.

In promoting the virtues of his band school and curriculum, Conway provided "a dozen ... advantages available to all students."⁵⁵

1. Two Band Rehearsals each day—one under Dean Conway and one under an assistant teacher.
2. Professional Experience in a series of Band Concerts in the Little Theater, and in short Concert Tours.

3. Possible positions during the summer—when the student is sufficiently advanced in the famous Conway Concert Band. Twenty students of the school are playing with this organization during the coming summer.
4. Degree of Bachelor of Music upon completion of the Regular Course of instruction—also privilege of teaching in the schools of New York and other states without further examination.
5. Ithaca is essentially a school-town. Approximately six thousand students are brought to this city each year by the Ithaca Conservatory, Cornell University and various Preparatory schools.
6. Two private lessons each week are included in all courses of instruction. Students have the privilege of choosing their instructors for these private lessons, instead of being arbitrarily assigned to inexperienced teachers as is so often the case.⁵⁶
7. Complete course of Theoretical Instruction including Theory, Harmony, Counterpoint, Composition, Solfeggio, Ear Training, etc.
8. A distinctive academic course of collegiate grade forms a direct part of the musical instruction so that the Band School graduate not only possesses a knowledge of the best in music but also has a broad cultural background.
9. Selective courses from a thoroughly equipped institution of Public School Music are included in the Band Course.
10. Opportunity of studying other branches of Music, Expression, or Dramatics under prominent teachers of the other affiliated schools.
11. Broadening effect of a real College Life in a College Town.
12. Prestige of graduating from an old and established institution with a nation-wide reputation and endorsed and chartered by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York.

The broadened philosophy to include a teacher-training component apparently attracted even more students. The Band School flourished in student enrollment during the later years of the decade. Numbering thirty-five during the 1925–26 school year, the enrollment grew to forty-eight in 1926–27,⁵⁷ then to sixty in 1927–28, and to well over eighty during Conway's last year, 1928–29. The *Musical Courier* reported the Band School would probably resort to starting a waiting list because the Fall 1928 registration was so large.⁵⁸

The instrumentation of the band also matured through the decade's later years. By dropping obscure instruments like the C melody saxophone and filling the reed and brass sections with more personnel, the band developed a more symphonic band approach. This situation corresponded with the national trend of school bands growing into larger and more completely voiced units. The development of the band is shown in Table 1.

As the instrumentation increased in sophistication, so did the amount of music and level of musical difficulty in repertoire. Table 2 shows the numerical listing of repertoire in various categories performed by Conway's school band from the school years 1925–1926 through 1928–1929.⁵⁹

Conway's programming practice for his school band was based on the customs as developed by Sousa and standardized by his profession. Transcribed orchestral overtures constituted the serious part of each program. Each program had at least one soloist, usually two or three. During the early years, Conway paid men from his professional band from \$8.00 to \$15.00 to solo with his school band. When he deemed his students capable, they would perform solos, or he would use a Conservatory voice student or a faculty member.

Conway brought a bit of his professional band showmanship into the school band programming by including novelties as part of each concert. Selections that featured trombone smears or humorous narrations were among the novelties Conway chose. Medleys and selections from Broadway musicals were the popular fare of choice. Conway was not above programming jazz music into his concerts on occasion.

Table 1
Instrumentation of Student Band at Conway's Military Band School, Ithaca, New York, 1925-29

1925-26	1926-27	1927-28	1928-29*
1 flute	2 flutes	2 flutes	3 flutes
1 oboe	1 oboe	1 oboe	? oboe
1 E-flat clarinet	1 E-flat clarinet	2 E-flat clarinets	2 E-flat clarinets
8 clarinets	13 clarinets	15 clarinets	13 clarinets
2 alto saxophone	2 alto saxophones	6 saxophones	8 saxophones
1 tenor saxophone	2 tenor saxophones	(unspecified)	(unspecified)
1 bassoon	1 bassoon	0 bassoons	1 bassoon
6 cornets	6 cornets	9 cornets/trumpets	? at least 9
6 trumpets	6 trumpets		cornets/trumpets
4 horns	5 horns	4 horns	? at least 2 horns
3 trombones	7 trombones	5 trombones	7 trombones
	2 euphoniums	3 euphoniums	3 euphoniums
2 baritones	1 baritone		
1 bass	2 basses	3 basses	3 basses
2 drums	3 drums	4 drums	? drums
39 total	50 total	54 total	61 total

* Instrumentation is available only through a band photograph from that year. A head count reveals sixty-one students but instrument identification accuracy was hindered by students in front rows obscuring the instruments held by others behind them.

Table 2
Musical Selections of Varying Styles Performed by the School Band at Conway's Military Band School, Ithaca, New York

	Overtures	Dance selections	Solos	Novelties	Miscellaneous	Total
1925-26	2	2	4	2	5	15
1926-27	12	1	9	0	5	27
1927-28	12	4	14	2	8	40
1928-29	14	2	14	0	11	41

As was the custom since Sousa had popularized the practice, Conway placed encore selections between each piece on the printed program. These encores were usually marches, and newspaper accounts indicate there were as many as three encores for every selection printed on the program (although one encore was standard). Where a program contained seven or eight printed selections the actual number of pieces performed including the encores went as high as twenty or more.

By 1928, many students graduating from Conway's school already held desirable positions in the music profession. These included directors of bands in various colleges and universities, directors of bands in public schools in many states, members of traveling dance orchestras, two were members of Sousa's band, several were engaged in radio and theater orchestra work and, of course, a number played in the Conway professional band every summer season.⁶⁰ Conway stated:

For the past three years I have had more requests for men to fill positions than I have had graduates to fill them.... The demand in this particular field certainly does seem to exceed the supply.⁶¹

When the school reached a mature stage in the late 1920s, concerts were programmed three weeks apart and each year the band made a promotional/recruitment tour of several of the surrounding communities. The band was featured at the New York Teachers Association meetings and the community institutes held in Ithaca. They also performed for numerous charities including the Crippled Childrens Fund and the Nurses Alumnae Association. Press reviews and releases attest to the high acclaim won from audiences when the band performed. It is plainly evident that the Conway School Band was achieving the kind of eminence held by his professional band.

Conway's Death and Its Effect on the Band School

At the end of the 1928–29 school year, Conway decided not to book his professional band for the summer season due to physical problems. He entered the hospital for a routine prostate operation. Complications arose during the second stage of the two-stage operation and on June 10, 1929, Conway died at the age of sixty-three. He was survived by his wife and daughter.

The news shocked the band world. After all, the Patrick Conway Band School was one of the most successful schools of its kind in the country. John Philip Sousa stated, "Mr. Conway enjoyed the respect of everybody in his profession, and his loss will not be easy to replace."⁶² George C. Williams, President of Ithaca College and Affiliated Schools stated, "The boys of his school all but worshipped him, and to find someone to 'carry on' in his place will be a most difficult undertaking."⁶³

During the summer of 1929, it was announced that cornet virtuoso Ernest S. Williams was named the successor to the late Patrick Conway as dean of the school, now known as the Ithaca Military Band School. Williams had been soloist in Conway's band for several seasons. He also was soloist with the Sousa and Goldman bands and had six years' experience with the Philadelphia Orchestra. He was conductor of the Kismet Shrine Band of Brooklyn at the time of the appointment. A brochure issued by Ithaca Conservatory promoted the appointment with endorsements by Arthur Pryor and John Philip Sousa.

Williams left the school after two years to reorganize his own music school, which he had started in Brooklyn during the early 1920s. He took with him all the records of the Ithaca Band School, including the applications of prospective students, which had to be recovered by legal action.⁶⁴

By the 1931–32 school year, the Band School was absorbed by the department of music education. Jay W. Fay was listed as "Head of the Band and Orchestra School." The era of the Patrick Conway Military Band School had ended at about the time when professional bands were considered vestiges of the era of high-buttoned shoes and straw hats.

Interviewed Conway Band School students remember “Mr. Conway” as “friendly, but never buddy-buddy,” although he could be seen having an intense game of checkers with students at the end of the day. He was known to have had little tolerance for tardiness or absenteeism and demanded as much or more from his students as from his musicians in his professional group. He was also generous: one former student recalls Conway offering several students financial assistance beyond the usual scholarships. Disciplining a student was apparently never necessary because the students acknowledged Conway’s reputation as an authority.⁶⁵

Conway’s rehearsal manner was much more strict with his students than with his professional band. McHenry recalls Conway was easily upset by students’ mistakes and would often run his baton through his white hair or adjust his pince-nez glasses while uttering curses.⁶⁶ The only female in the band through Conway’s tenure was flutist Genevieve Herrick Owen. She recalls him swearing but stamping on the ground to drown out the sound of the curse. Then, remembering there was a female present, he would look sheepishly at her and apologize.⁶⁷ Despite his mercurial temper, he was idolized by his students and got along well with his faculty colleagues.

Conclusion

Although there is no evidence that Conway grew up in a musical family, it is clearly evident that his early experiences in Homer played a vital role in his development as a musician and conductor. Conway grew up when the activities of the Homer Band aroused the enthusiasm of an entire region and in becoming part of that band, Conway eagerly learned that trade. In the process, he became aware of the instrumentation, programming, and conducting techniques of some of the country’s finest band musicians. Through various experiences as a conductor, Conway learned band literature and rehearsal techniques thoroughly.

He also became aware of the state of band musician training in the country and realized it was not conducive to adequate advancement of the art. Correspondence schools, scattered specialty schools and self-teaching were the modes of gathering knowledge on band performance before Conway’s school and it was apparent he was unimpressed by the quality of band musicians he encountered.

It is not difficult to establish what motivated Conway to organize his school. The popularity of the municipal band had peaked, and the professional bands had been getting stiff competition from newer forms of entertainment like the moving picture, the phonograph and other developments. He had already secured a national reputation as a bandleader, yet it may have been apparent to him that another source of income would bring more security during his retirement years. He was fifty-five years old when the school opened, and perhaps the many years of touring had motivated him to settle down and begin to improve the band instruction scene. It is totally plausible that Conway wished for a wider acceptance of the band as a legitimate musical medium and sought to improve band teaching and performance. Perhaps author and band historian H. W. Schwartz is correct with this assessment. In the beginning he was a teacher, and he remained essentially a teacher to the end.⁶⁸

In fashioning the Conway Band School curriculum, Conway borrowed liberally the format already in place at the Ithaca Conservatory. The applied music offerings did not change significantly through the seven years of the school. However, the addition of pedagogical studies such as school management, and a history of

education course seemed to broaden the field of study. This development followed the trend of many colleges and universities in the country as music education became a legitimate course of study. Most significant, for the first time the music education curricula now included provisions for band musicians. This development, not in place prior to Conway's school, was crystallized by successful schools such as the Conway Band School.

The role of the Conway Band School was not to create a new trend, but to improve existing conditions. It would be unwise to conclude that the school spearheaded revolutionary developments in bands in the way that the University of Illinois's A. A. Harding or Eastman School of Music's Frederick Fennell revolutionized wind band instrumentation. Conway's role in the evolution of the bands in the college curricula was less dramatic, but no less important. His school represented a pioneering effort, and his imprint lies in the thoroughness of preparation of which Conway Band School alumni speak. The seven years of Conway's influence helped establish the strong Ithaca College band tradition, a tradition that continues to this day.

As a professional bandmaster, Conway's legacy was significant, but Conway's most important contribution was his role as a music educator. In a tribute to Patrick Conway, Evans wrote:

Thousands have fallen under the spell of his baton, and it would be impossible to number the young men who have turned to a musical career after finding a master teacher and loyal friend in Patrick Conway. He was not only a sterling musician and inimitable leader, but he had that faculty of inspiring his students with his own musical ideals. His men loved him.⁶⁹

As if hoping to insure Conway's immortality, professor Harold Hill, Meredith Wilson's character in *The Music Man*, stated, "Conway was one of the greats that came to town." Those who love the rich tradition of bands in the United States will not forget him as a conductor and bandleader. It is my hope that this research will contribute to our knowledge of and respect for Patrick Conway's contributions as an educator.

Notes

1. Conway's birth year is unconfirmed. There were no birth records kept at that time by state or local governments. Census data indicate that he was born in 1865, and his grave marker also shows that year. However, his death certificate lists his year of birth as 1867.
2. George S. Howard, "Patrick Conway," *Journal of Band Research* 17, no. 1 (Fall 1981): 47.
3. The *Homer Republican*, 24 July, 1890.
4. The *Cortland County Republican*, 20 October, 1876.
5. The *1874-1875 Catalog of Homer Academy and Union School*, p. 17.
6. Conway's nickname was a common Irish sobriquet of the time. His closest friends knew him only as Patsy throughout his adult life.
7. *Cortland County Republican*, 25 May, 1877.
8. Letter from Katherine Conway White, Patrick Conway's daughter, to Karen Haun, dated 2 March, 1965. Quoted from "Patrick Conway," an unpublished monograph by Karen E. Haun dated 18 March, 1965. This "remedy" was apparently commonly prescribed during this period. See Margaret H. Hazen and Robert M. Hazen, *The Music Men: An Illustrated History of Brass Bands in America, 1800-1920* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), 19.

9. Acton Ostling, "Band Days with Conway," *The Instrumentalist* 19, no. 10 (May 1965): 30.
10. *Cortland Democrat*, 14 February, 1979, quoting from the *Syracuse Evening Herald* and the *Cortland Standard*, 4 March, 1894.
11. *Cortland Democrat*, 23 November, 1877.
12. These two famous professional touring bands gave no fewer than four concerts in the immediate Homer area between 1887 and 1890.
13. *Homer Republican*, 26 May, 1887.
14. *Homer Republican*, 30 January, 1890 and 18 December, 1890.
15. *Cortland Standard*, 11 June, 1929.
16. Howard, *Journal of Band Research*, 49.
17. The *Ithaca Journal News*, 13 April, 1922.
18. *Once-A-Week* 2, no. 8 (10 November, 1927): 4.
19. William C. White, "The Army Music School," *Jacob's Band Monthly* 8, no. 4 (April 1923): 73.
20. The *Musical Messenger*, XII, no. 9 (September 1916): 19.
21. Frank R. Seltzer, "A Correspondence Course in Music," *Jacob's Band Monthly* 7, no. 2 (February 1922): 5. The Siegel-Meyers School of Music started its correspondence school program in 1903 as cited in *Jacob's Band Monthly* 8, no. 6 (June 1923): 17.
22. Hazen and Hazen, 37.
23. *Musical America*, 11 February, 1922.
24. Emil A. Holz, "The Schools Band Contest of America, 1923," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1962): 5.
25. N. M. Aldrich, "The College and School Band," *Musical Messenger* XIV, no. 5 (May 1918): 12.
26. *Patrick Conway Military Band 1923–1924 General Catalog* 6.
27. *Ibid.*
28. The Ithaca Conservatory of Music was founded in 1892. Once it was established, founder Grant Egbert accepted several schools under its auspices including a physical education school, a choir school, and a drama school. These schools shared a board of directors even though they acted virtually autonomously. They also shared facilities such as the Little Theater and dormitories.
29. Frank R. Seltzer, "Famous Bandmasters in Brief: Frederick Neil Innes," *Jacob's Band Monthly* IV, no. 11 (November 1919): 18–20.
30. *Ithaca Journal-News*, 11 June, 1929.
31. *Ithaca Conservatory 1900–1901 General Catalog*. No pages numbered.
32. George C. Williams, "This is My Story." Unpublished monograph (1969), 97. Williams was general manager and later president of the Ithaca Conservatory during Conway's tenure.
33. Craig McHenry, interview with author, Ithaca, New York, 31 May, 1990.
34. *Musical Courier* 84, no. 2 (January 12, 1922).
35. *The Keynote*, "Patrick Conway to Start School Band Here," *The Keynote* XX, no. 2 (January 1922): 6.
36. Acton Ostling, "Band Days with Conway," *The Instrumentalist*, 19, no. 10 (May 1965): 30.
37. "Patrick Conway to Start School Band Here," *The Keynote*, XX, no. 2 (January 1922): 6.
38. This departed from the usual practice of the day of having the cornetist teach not only all brass instruments, but sometimes woodwinds and percussion instruments as well.
39. Howard, 53–54.
40. Patrick Conway, "Vocational Opportunities in Band Music," *Melody* 12, no. 4 (April 1928): 8.

41. *Ibid.*
42. Col. George S. Howard, telephone interview with author, San Antonio, Texas, 14 August, 1989.
43. *Ithaca Journal-News*, 15 September, 1922.
44. Seltzer must have been an accomplished cornetist/trumpeter in his own right. He reportedly was one of the first musicians engaged by Sousa when that conductor started his historic 1892 touring band. He also performed with the Arthur Pryor Band and was currently with the Philadelphia Orchestra (*Ithaca Journal*, 18 October, 1922). Seltzer was also a contributing editor to *Jacob's Band Monthly* and performed with Conway's band for twenty-five consecutive summers.
45. "Notes From the Conway Band School," *The Keynote* XXI, no. 1 (November 1922): 7; and General Recital Program dated "Tuesday, November 14, 1922."
46. "Conway Military Band School," 1923 *Conservatorium* (No pages numbered).
47. Letter from Col. Howard to author, dated 6 August, 1989.
48. *Ithaca Journal-News*, 25 January, 1923.
49. Howard interview, 14 August, 1989.
50. Allen Ostrander, interview with author, Ithaca, New York, 12 September, 1989.
51. *Patrick Conway Military Band School General Catalog 1927-1928*, 14.
52. McHenry interview, 31 May, 1990.
53. Les Brown, telephone interview with author, Pacific Palisades, California, February 1990.
54. McHenry interview, 31 May, 1990.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Private instruction expenses varied extensively. The rates for one lesson each week for the 1927-28 school year of thirty-three weeks were as follows: with assistant instructors, \$33.00; with instructors, \$66.00; with assistant professors, \$99.00; with professors, \$132.00; with Dean Conway, \$165.00.
57. Conway was able to devote his full attention to the band school by the beginning of the 1926-1927 school year when Wallingford Riegger accepted the responsibility to conduct the Ithaca Conservatory Orchestra.
58. *Musical Courier*, 5 July, 1928, 10.
59. Overtures refers to original band overtures as well as to orchestral transcriptions. Dance selections are all waltzes, gavottes, and so forth, whether original or transcribed. The miscellaneous category includes suites, idylls, fantasies, humoresques, patrols, and so on. This listing does not include marches, of which Conway programmed as many as six on a concert. These marches were often used as encore pieces and their titles were rarely included in the programs. Titles of the selections from this table are available from the author.
60. Conway, *Melody*, 9.
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Cortland Standard*, 14 June, 1929, 5.
63. "A Tribute to the Late Patrick Conway," *Melody* 13, no. 9 (September, 1929).
64. John B. Harcourt, *The Ithaca College Story* (Ithaca, New York: Ithaca College, 1983), 30.
65. These comments were gleaned from interviews from Les Brown, Craig McHenry, Allen Ostrander and George Howard.
66. McHenry interview, 31 May, 1990.
67. Genevieve Herrick Owen, telephone interview with author, Cortland, New York, 13 September, 1990.
68. H. W. Schwartz, *Bands of America* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1957), 244.

69. Gertrude Evans, "A Tribute to the Late Patrick Conway," *Melody* 8, no. 9 (September 1929).

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