History of Montana community orchestras through 1989 in towns of population less than 20,000

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A HISTORY OF
MONTANA COMMUNITY ORCHESTRAS
THROUGH 1989 IN TOWNS OF
POPULATION LESS THAN 20,000

by

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The purpose of this thesis was to provide a historical narrative to the year 1989 of the community orchestras in Montana towns having a population of less than 20,000 people. Excluded from this study were ensembles that only played popular music for dances, groups affiliated with public or private schools, and groups organized for the purpose of getting paid for their services. This thesis was part of a larger project, the purpose of which was to construct a history of all community orchestras in Montana to the year 1989.

The chief primary sources for this original research were interviews in person and by telephone, concert programs, and newspapers. The writer began research by identifying the community orchestras currently active in the state at the time of research, finding out the people associated with those orchestras, interviewing them, and locating newspaper articles, concert programs, and other information relevant to the current orchestra. Inquiries were made of some interviewees concerning the existence of other orchestras prior to the current one, and newspapers were then searched for any evidence of these earlier groups.

The writer found current orchestras in Scobey, Miles City, Dillon, and the area near Kalispell, with evidence of earlier orchestras in Glendive, Sidney, Dillon, and Kalispell. The histories of these groups were given in detail, depending on the amount of primary source information available on each group. The study noted that orchestra life cycle has a stage of initial excitement, a leveling off or plateau stage, and a potentially difficult growth stage. Some groups began with one person generating the initial excitement, while others were formed from a small group that grew in size. The contribution of women to the community orchestras in this study was noted. Various similarities and differences were described concerning a number of aspects: programming, furthering education, the trend of groups to become more regional, interaction with other musical organizations, and organizational issues. Also noted was the presence of "do it yourself" attitude that may play a role in explaining why these orchestras came into being.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is indebted to his parents, for their love and support throughout this project, to his wife, for her love, understanding, and encouragement in the process of bringing this project to its completion, to all who were interviewed, for their willingness to share their part in the history of community orchestras in Montana, and finally, to a certain butterscotch-colored 1976 Datsun B-210 that, during the course of research for this project, carried the author safely over the "miles and miles of miles and miles" that comprise the state of Montana.
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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM, NEED FOR THE RESEARCH, LITERATURE REVIEW, DEFINITION OF TERMS AND LIMITS OF RESEARCH, AND METHODOLOGY

The Problem

The purpose of this thesis is to present a historical narrative through the year 1989 (the hundredth anniversary of Montana's statehood) of the community orchestras found in towns that are currently inhabited by less than 20,000 people. This thesis forms only a part of the originally planned project, which was to present a historical narrative of the community orchestras that have existed in all the communities of Montana through the year 1989. In writing a first draft of this research, it was discovered that it was possible to construct a history of orchestras in one of the larger Montana communities that would run well in excess of fifty pages. If the orchestral ventures in the larger communities of Billings, Great Falls, Missoula, Butte, Helena, and Bozeman were included with those of Montana's smaller communities, this writer and the writer's committee would have been faced with a masters thesis that could quite easily approach four-hundred-fifty to five-hundred pages. In order to present a smaller, more manageable thesis that would be less daunting to
read as well as to write, it was decided that the original project could be narrowed by a population limit, and still retain a scope that could be considered somewhat comprehensive within that limit.

Need for the Research

The idea for this thesis project came while the writer attended a class in graduate school on the history of music in the United States. The text used for this class was H. Wiley Hitchcock's *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 3rd edition, 1988). In this text (p. 54-55) Hitchcock makes a distinction between two types of music traditions found in North America. The vernacular tradition refers to music that emanated from the common people of the New World and was appreciated for its "utilitarian or entertainment value." The cultivated tradition, on the other hand, refers to music that was imported from the "Old World" and appreciated both as a sign of a civilized people that employed an art-form which held a spiritually and morally edifying value.

Although Montana's musical history is a rich source of music from the vernacular tradition (particularly in the music of the Native American tribes dwelling in the region that consists of present-day Montana), there is also a large amount of information available that deals with Montana's experiences
in the cultivated tradition of music. As Montana grew in population and became more similar to the "civilized" states in the east, it also began to take on more of the signs of this civilization. One of these hallmarks of a more sophisticated society was the organization of a local community symphony orchestra. However, most historical works that deal with Montana do not cover much of the cultural development of the state, but discuss instead the economic and political issues that have affected Montana. Consequently, the historical development of the arts in Montana in general, and of music in the cultivated tradition in particular, has remained an unchartered frontier. In writing this thesis on the history of community orchestras in Montana's smaller communities, the writer seeks to contribute to Montana's history by providing a historical work that surveys at least a portion of that frontier. In short, as historian Merrill G. Burlingame told the author over the phone one day, a history of this sort "needs doing."

The piecing together of the history of community orchestras, even limited to communities of smaller population, has inevitably led to a list of names that have become part of Montana's musical heritage. Some of these people were interviewed, and the interviews were taped by this writer and cited in this work. If this history were not done, those names might possibly slip into oblivion, with little left to
enlighten the interested reader of the future on these people, except for a newspaper article reference here and there.

For the above reasons, a history of this sort may be deemed useful. Just as Montana's history represents a part of the history of an expanding and maturing United States, the history of community orchestras in Montana represents a part of the history of community orchestras in the United States, and a history of community orchestras in Montana's smaller communities represents a part of the history of community orchestras in Montana as a whole. The point here, is that a history of this type may reveal in miniature a characteristic of people in the grand scale of history: that settlers in a new land do not as a group leave their heritage behind them, but in fact will find ways to keep their heritage alive, and will eventually find ways to "cultivate" or "improve" their cultural tastes. In this way a history like this serves as a shred of evidence that humanity will continue to strive to satisfy its needs for intellectual stimulation and sophistication once its basic needs for safety, food, and shelter are met.

When the writer was asked by various interested people what the writer's thesis topic was, the answer to that question drew a wide spectrum of responses, ranging from, "I think what you're doing is laudable!" to "... Why?" Laudable though the reasons listed above may possibly be for
writing this history, one must inevitably be drawn to the question of why such a work should be done.

Montana is known to most as a wild, untamed land, full of stories about trappers, farmers and ranchers, cowboys, Indians, vigilantes, Copper Kings, rugged countryside with mineral treasures underground, and rough Western towns like Virginia City and Butte. Very little emanates from Montana's artistic side that would make a person used to the sonorities of the nation's top professional orchestras sit up and listen. There can be no doubt that the towns in Montana cannot rival cities like New York or Los Angeles in terms of music of the cultivated tradition. Why then, would anyone want to know about the history of this aspect of Montana's arts? The answer, from this writer's perspective, is that it serves to help bring balance to the two-dimensional picture of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Montana described above. A work that addresses part of Montana's musical history assists in helping the reader already acquainted with some of Montana's history to develop a more "holistic" or three-dimensional view of the State. The reader can be made aware that there is more to Montana than mountain men, wilderness, cowboys, and Indians. In addition, wherever the arts have thrived in the United States, they have stemmed from humble beginnings. Montana's musical heritage is no different, and the description of the history of community
orchestras in Montana's smaller communities serves as a reminder of the beginnings of the history of orchestral ventures in the United States as a whole.

**Literature Review**

The available literature on Montana's community orchestras amounts to a handful of articles found in a few journals. A check through the multi-volume histories of Burlingame and Toole,¹ Raymer,² and Sanders reveals little concerning orchestras, let alone music, in Montana. Similarly, the works of Joseph Kinsey Howard⁴ and K. Ross Toole⁵ cover little that has to do with community orchestras in Montana.

The richest source (in relative terms) of information concerning Montana's orchestras appears to be in the journal published by the Montana Institute of the Arts, or MIA. An interesting, concise, and informative article is Robert


Taylor's "Montana's Community Orchestras: A Survey," (Montana Institute of the Arts Quarterly, vol. 8, no. 3, (Spring 1956), pp. 6-12). In a few short pages Taylor gives a fairly complete view of the community orchestras in existence at the time of writing. Included are remarks on the history of the orchestra in each town mentioned, budgets and instrumentation of the various orchestras, and other general comments about programming, reasons for being, and problems the orchestras were facing at the time. The article, however, is brief in information and narrow in scope. Viewing the community orchestra movement in Montana as a product of the period following World War II, the article spends little time on orchestral ventures that occurred before World War II, and completely ignores those ventures that occurred in towns other than Bozeman or Missoula prior to 1950. However, the article is important as a picture of Montana's orchestral scene in the mid-1950s.

Janet Cox's article, "Symphonies in Harmony," (Montana Arts, vol. 25, no. 2 (Winter 1973), p. 67) recorded a historic meeting where representatives of the orchestras in Helena, Missoula, Great Falls, Bozeman, Butte, and Billings met to discuss ways of sharing resources for scores and parts, as well as sharing expenses for guest artists. The meeting resulted in the formation of a group called the Montana Association of Symphony Societies (MASS), and was the
forerunner of what became known a few years later as the Montana Association of Symphony Orchestras (MASO). Little is mentioned, however, about each of the symphonies and their accomplishments to that point in time.

An updated version of Robert Taylor's article was produced in Patricia K. Simmons' excellent article on "Music in Montana," (Montana Arts, vol. 27, no. 4 (April-May 1975), pp. 150-54). Here a survey of six orchestras in Montana was presented, with information that included the founding date, past conductors, beginning and current size, sources of performers, sources of financial support, budget figure, frequency of guest artists, presence of a chorus or chorale, support organization, and changes over the years. While it is concise, well-organized, and informative, it deals only with the then-current organizations and does not cover the history that lead to the founding of these organizations. Additionally, although it is systematic in the coverage of information about each orchestra, and can be helpful in making comparisons between one organization and another, the article is limited by the fact that it is an article in a journal, and the information presented is little more than a skeletal framework of facts. The reader learns nothing, for example, of the turmoil the Billings Symphony went through in the mid-1960s concerning the issue of paying the musicians, the present Great Falls Symphony being a reorganization of earlier
efforts in the 1950s, or the steps involved in the founding (or, more accurately, reorganizing) of the Bozeman Symphony in 1968. In relation to this thesis, none of the symphonies mentioned in the article were based in Montana towns whose population as of 1990 were less than 20,000 people. Therefore, while the article is an important source of information about the community orchestras and other musical activities in Montana as of the mid-1970s, it is out of the scope of this thesis, since all the orchestras mentioned in the article are from towns whose population in 1990 was greater than 20,000 people.

In 1989, the one hundredth anniversary of Montana's statehood, the community orchestras in Montana received national recognition with an article in Symphony magazine, the magazine of the American Symphony Orchestra League. In his seven-page piece ("Under the Big Sky," (September-October 1989), pp. 46-53), senior editor Matthew Sigman gives a brief view of nine orchestras in Montana. Included are quotes from interviews with key persons associated with each organization, and the article informs the reader of most of Montana's community orchestras as of 1989, which is the ending date of the scope of this thesis. Three of the orchestras described in this article (Scobey, Kalispell, and Miles City) fall within the population constraint for this thesis. However, one orchestra was not mentioned that also can be included in
the present work: the Dillon Community Orchestra. This is unfortunate, particularly in the case of Dillon, as its orchestral activities can be traced to the early 1930s.

For the originally-conceived project of a history of community orchestras in all towns of Montana, the above articles of Taylor, Simmons, and Sigman would be invaluable in providing information of the current state of affairs of Montana's orchestras in the 1950s, 1970s, and 1980s. However, these articles do not allow in their limited space for a historical perspective that provides depth of information on the people involved or the issues and events as they unfolded in the story of each orchestra. It was the aim of the original thesis project to provide this perspective, and to "flesh out" the skeletal framework of facts provided by the articles of Taylor, Simmons, and Sigman. This remains the aim of the present thesis, only within the more narrowed scope as described in the first paragraph of this chapter.

Regarding the historical past of the community orchestras in Montana, relevant works have been found in only a few places. In a work sponsored by the Federal Writers' Project, the author or authors devoted barely one page of its four hundred twenty-nine pages to the entire subject of music in Montana. One sentence relates that "Butte and Great Falls

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6Montana: A State Guidebook. Compiled and written by the Federal Writers Project of the Works Projects
have amateur symphony orchestras." Nothing is stated about orchestras in other Montana towns. Joseph Kinsey Howard, in an article published in 1947, made a statement about Butte that either refutes, or at least updates, the work of the Federal Writers' Project, when he notes that Butte "has no civic orchestra." The only other journal article found on a Montana orchestra was the July, 1927 issue of *Sunset: The Pacific Monthly.* This article presented the story of the first statewide professional orchestra in Montana and its only statewide tour that took place in the autumn of 1926. Other newscollections, programs, and brochures have been found that cover the story of this ensemble, known as the Montana Symphony Orchestra, and the efforts of its director, Joseph Adam. However, this was a professional orchestra, not an amateur one, and further, this was a select orchestra of musicians from various communities in the state, and not a group that came from any one community. For these reasons, 

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9"First State-Wide Concert Tour of the Montana State Symphony Orchestra," concert tour program, 18 October-12 November, 1926.
this orchestra, as interesting as it is, as well as other
groups that are considered professional, must fall outside the
boundaries of this thesis.

The question of whether a professional ensemble should be
included in a history that is concerned with amateur community
orchestras raises the more general topic of the limits of the
present study, and calls for a definition of terms used in
this work. The definition of terms and the limits of this
study are the subjects for the next section of this preface.
Certain groups will be mentioned in passing as examples of
kinds of ensembles. These groups were evaluated to be outside
the scope of this study, but have been mentioned not only to
assist in drawing the boundaries for the limits of this
research, but also to alert the reader to the diversity of
musical ensembles that have played a part in defining
Montana's musical heritage.

Definition of Terms and Limits of Research

The word "orchestra" can mean different things to
different people. To some it means a group that contains any
member of the string family, usually the violin, viola,
viloncello, or double bass. Since the time limits of this
study were intended to stop in 1989 and to begin at the
earliest date possible, a researcher using the above
definition could possibly go back as far as the Lewis and
Clark Expedition somewhere between the Marias River and the Great Falls of the Missouri, where Lewis noted on June 9, 1805, "... Cruzatte gave us some music on the violin and the men passed the evening in dancing singing &c and were extremely cheerful." However, one may want to stop short of defining an "orchestra" as consisting of at least one musician.

For some the word "orchestra" may carry an implication of the type of music that the group plays. For someone focused on "classical" or "cultivated" music, an orchestra plays literature composed for a general instrumentation by composers like Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms. On the other hand, a typical orchestra could also play music written originally for public dancing, as did the orchestras that played waltzes composed in the nineteenth century by various members of the Strauss family in Vienna.

Indeed, the word "orchestra" could also be taken to mean a generic ensemble of musicians, not necessarily including strings, that provide entertainment. The newspapers of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Montana contain all kinds of references to dance orchestras, dance bands, and theater orchestras that either include or exclude strings.

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More recently, in the 1930s and 1940s, was the use of "orchestra" to describe the popular dance bands of the so-called "Swing Era" of jazz (e.g., "Glenn Miller and His Orchestra"), many of which contained no string instruments, except for the guitar and the plucked double bass.

The present study will ignore those bands and other ensembles that have excluded the instruments of the string family. For the purposes of this thesis, the word "orchestra" will be taken to mean an ensemble of musicians that include stringed instruments, and play those works written by the European composers of the Classical and Romantic periods in the music history of the Western Civilization. Therefore, those groups that played chiefly dance music will be excluded. Groups in Montana like the Hilla orchestra, the Fort Keogh orchestra, the Italian String Band, and other organizations mentioned in connection with dances or balls are eliminated on this point. However, groups that play arrangements of popular tunes and music from musicals in addition to some works from the standard literature of the symphony orchestra are admitted in this study.

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11 Havre (Mont.) Plaindealer, 1 February 1908, p. 2. A picture of this orchestra can be found at the Montana Historical Society in Helena (from the collection of Al Lucke).

12 Billings (Mont.) Gazette, 25 April 1889, p. 5.

13 Billings (Mont.) Post, 12 February 1885.
Also out of the scope of this history are those ensembles known as theater orchestras. Groups that played at local theaters like the Babcock in Billings, the Montana Theatre in Virginia City, or the Ming Opera House in Helena fall into this category. It must be quickly added, however, that many of the musicians playing in the theater orchestras were often important contributors to the musical life of the community, and they usually participated in the local community orchestras that were formed.

Theater orchestras are eliminated moreover on the point that they were generally professional groups, i.e., they were paid for their services. This history will concentrate on groups that have been formed from the volunteer effort of members of the community that each group represents. Playing in a community group is seen as a recreation, not a means of livelihood, and it is this group of recreational community orchestras that is the focus of this project. In recent years, some of the community orchestras have chosen to pay some or all the orchestra members, so the criterion of pay cannot by itself eliminate an orchestra from this history. Of prime importance here is the emphasis on involvement from the community in the formation of their orchestras mentioned in this work, and not the formation of an ensemble chiefly for the purpose of the majority of the musicians receiving pay for the performance of music.
As groups that primarily are formed largely from adult volunteers of a community, the community orchestra is quite different from the orchestra formed within the framework of the public or private school. For this reason, school orchestras are eliminated from the scope of this thesis, although it is recognized that many of Montana's school orchestras have fed the state's community orchestras with able young musicians. Some ensembles affiliated with a college have been included, however, because they were a product of both the community as well as the college.

Finally, as mentioned previously, this study will concentrate only on those orchestras from Montana towns whose populations as of the 1990 Census were less than 20,000 people. This constraint eliminates the towns of Billings, Great Falls, Missoula, Butte, Helena, and Bozeman, all of which have populations greater than 20,000 people.

14 It is unfortunate that a group from the Fort Shaw Indian School, probably from around 1904, must be excluded on the grounds of the ensemble being affiliated with a school. A picture of this orchestra exists in the Montana Historical Society in Helena, Montana (negative 949-399). The formation of this orchestra represents an interesting attempt to introduce a part of the European white culture to the Native Americans of Montana. Articles in the Great Falls (Mont.) Tribune (31 January 1904, p. 12, and 4 February 1904, p. 6) are the source for supplying an approximate date for the picture at the Montana Historical Society.

15 Collier's Encyclopedia (New York: P. F. Collier, Inc., 1993), s.v. "Montana," by Michael Malone. The plates between pages 490 and 491 contain a list of Montana towns and their corresponding populations as of the 1990 Census. It is on the basis of these figures that the towns with populations greater than 20,000 people have been eliminated from this study.
which have histories of community orchestras that reach back at least as far as the first or second decade of the twentieth century. As has been previously stated, writing detailed narratives on the orchestral history of these larger Montana towns would create a voluminous work that would far exceed the requirements of a candidate for a Master of Arts in Music History and Literature. To concentrate on one or two of these larger towns seemed unfair to those towns that would be excluded, suggesting some prejudice for the selection of the towns to be covered by the thesis. Since it is this writer's opinion that the orchestras in Montana's smaller towns are the ones that receive less attention in print than those in the larger towns, it might be more fair, as well as more practical, to limit this study by the size of town rather than by the writer's personal preferences. The population size of 20,000 treats the larger community orchestras equally by eliminating all of them, and allows the writer to concentrate on those orchestral ventures in smaller communities that have not received as much attention in print as the ensembles of the larger Montana communities.

In light of the preceding discussion, and for the purposes of this thesis, the term "community orchestra" will be taken to mean an organization of amateur musicians from a particular community or regional area, but not from a particular theater or educational institution, formed as an
entity that is not a means for the livelihood for most of its members, containing instruments of the string family (violin, viola, cello, and double bass), and chiefly engaged in performing concerts of music of the cultivated tradition (or "classical music," as opposed to "popular music"). This history will attempt to trace orchestral history through the year 1989 in Montana towns having a population of less than 20,000 people as of the 1990 Census.

**Methodology**

In an ideal situation the researcher would probably want to begin research on this topic by searching all the Montana newspapers for any instances of a musical ensemble. One could then evaluate the ensemble to see whether it fits the definition of "community orchestra" that was formed from the above discussion. Those groups that do not fit the definition would be ignored in this study, while those groups that do fit the description would be followed in later issues of the newspapers, so that the history of that ensemble, and some of the people involved in that ensemble, could be written down in one study. One would also want to seek out the libraries and museums in Montana to discover if any information on orchestras in Montana resides in these institutions. Finally, for the more recent history of orchestras in Montana, one would also want to seek out the administrative office of each
orchestra for news clippings and programs, as well as to record interviews and oral histories of various individuals involved in Montana's orchestras, including musicians, conductors, and those involved in the administrative end of the orchestral organization. From these primary sources of newspapers, and information housed in libraries, museums, orchestra offices, and oral histories, one should ideally be able to construct a historical narrative for all the possible orchestras that would hopefully be both comprehensive and accurate.

However, the reality is that the work described above would be impossible to accomplish except with unlimited funds and unlimited time. The first problem with the above ideal situation is that of all the newspapers that have existed in Montana, only one, the Great Falls Tribune, is completely indexed. While a few others, namely the Billings Gazette, the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, and the Missoulian, are indexed at least for part of their run, the newspapers for the towns within the focus of this thesis are not indexed. This means a great deal of time would be spent looking through each issue of each unindexed newspaper in order to be sure every instance of a community orchestra could be found. Additionally, the indexing problem immediately creates a bias in terms of access to information. In Great Falls, for example, one can go to the local newspaper, meet the indexer, and find most, if not
all, the instances of items in the paper pertaining to the town's community orchestras. In smaller communities like Kalispell, however, one has no such luxury, and the daunting task of pouring over issue after issue of each paper must be faced. Kalispell and other smaller communities in the state are thus at a disadvantage in terms of researching the primary sources exhaustively. For this reason the writer can make no claim as to the completeness of this history.

The burden of finding source material is lessened somewhat by beginning research with the orchestra currently in place in a particular town and obtaining permission to go through that orchestra's newspaper clippings files, which are generally available through that orchestra's business office. This was generally the most fruitful way to begin research on the recent history of an orchestra. Unfortunately, there were many instances in the files of a few towns' orchestras where an important article was saved and filed in a presumably orderly fashion, but the citation of the newspaper issue from which it came was never recorded on the clipping. This led to a hunt for the exact, or at least approximate, date of the newspaper article, an exercise in deductive reasoning that was as challenging at times as it was time-consuming.

A number of public libraries in towns that boasted a community orchestra had newspaper clippings files on music or orchestras among their holdings. These, combined with
clippings from the local orchestra office, were very helpful, not only with the town's recent orchestral history, but also in providing glimpses of the town's earlier history of orchestral ventures.

Finally, the author sought out persons in various communities who had some association with a town's past or present community orchestras. The writer recorded interviews with most of these people on cassette tape, and these oral histories serve as yet another primary source of the story behind various community orchestras in Montana.

Problems arise, though, when a person was asked about events that may have occurred twenty, thirty, or forty years ago. Even the best memory can be expected to fail in describing events of the distant past. Therefore, one person's statement on an event could not necessarily be taken as being the truth of the matter. However, newspapers are often accused of printing the incorrect date or time of an event, or of misspelling a name or a title. Newspapers, then, cannot be considered an infallible source of truth, either. By attempting to record as much information from both the primary sources of newspapers and oral histories as possible, it is hoped that some thread of truth will always be present throughout each town's narrative in this thesis. At the very least, there should be enough information given here from primary sources to invite further research that might either
support or refute the claims in this history.

The practical, realistic methodology for the research in this project, then, consisted of arranging to visit the business offices of the present-day community orchestras, looking at clippings and programs at those offices and at the local public or college libraries, asking the present-day orchestra office for names of individuals associated with the orchestra at various points in time, and interviewing as many of these individuals as possible. Often, individuals in the larger orchestras were aware of orchestras in smaller communities, so "word of mouth" served to put the writer on the right track to locating information and persons in regard to some of these ensembles. In the case of the orchestras in Miles City, Sidney, and Dillon, certain key interviews provided the essential information, and clippings and programs were sent to the author, so that travelling to these towns was not necessary.

Concerning the presentation of the information found, this writer has decided to treat each town's orchestral history as an individual narrative. The narratives presented in the following five chapters are presented in the order that each town appears on the map, from the eastern-most to the western-most. The orchestras found in Sidney and Glendive are combined into one chapter, while the rest of the chapters each treat one town's orchestral history. The final chapter will
attempt to tie all the histories together with some concluding remarks on similarities and differences among the ensembles in this thesis.

While this work cannot claim to have found all the instances of community orchestras in the smaller communities of Montana, it is hoped that the research described above will have unearthed orchestral activities that were nearly forgotten. Perhaps it will help pave the way for more in-depth research in other Montana towns concerning past orchestral activity. At the very least, this research can be considered a first attempt to put on paper a history of part of Montana's musical heritage in the cultivated tradition.
CHAPTER 2
SIDNEY AND GLENDIVE

Sidney

The community orchestra in Sidney, Montana was formed in 1967 by a Reverend Ed Cunningham, a minister who had recently become minister of the Peoples' Congregational Church in Sidney. Cunningham was described as a very optimistic, energetic, older man (i.e., nearing retirement from the ministry) who was able to radiate his enthusiasm in such a way as to get people interested in participating in his projects. According to one source, he had started other musical ensembles of the orchestral type in the previous churches where he had been a minister.\(^1\) The immediate reason for the formation of this orchestra was to perform the *Gloria* by Antonio Vivaldi during the week that preceded Easter Sunday that year. Orchestra rehearsals began in early February, 1967 at the Peoples' Congregational Church,\(^2\) and met twice a week in preparation for the concerts, which were to take place in

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\(^1\) Mrs. Wayne Cumming, telephone interview by author, 12 June 1990, tape recording.

\(^2\) *Sidney (Mont.) Herald*, 8 February 1967, 7.
Glendive on Palm Sunday, March 19, and in Sidney on March 22.  

The orchestra was small in number, but included three people from the nearby town of Fairview, as well as the members who were from Sidney. The ages of the members ranged from a violinist from Fairview who was 15, to another violinist who was in her late 80s. The rehearsals were directed by Cunningham, who was the orchestra's double bass player. The production of these concerts was not considered to have come from one church, but rather from the community as a whole, and for this reason was included in this history. The concert was directed in Sidney by Mrs. Wayne Cumming, who was the choir director of the Peoples Congregational Church, and who also rehearsed the chorus, which had been formed of members of various churches in Sidney. The performance in Glendive was directed by Robert Prescott, who was on the faculty at Dawson College, the community college at Glendive. Although Prescott used the Glendive Choral Society for the Glendive performance, any chorus member was allowed to participate in both performances. The concert in Glendive was performed at the Zion Lutheran Church, and the concert at

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3Sidney (Mont.) Herald, 22 February 1967, 3.
4Mrs. Wayne Cumming, telephone interview by author, 12 June 1990, tape recording.
5Sidney (Mont.) Herald, 8 February 1967, 7.
6Sidney (Mont.) Herald, 8 February 1967, 7.
Sidney was performed at the Peoples' Congregational Church.\(^7\) The instrumentation of this orchestra consisted of two 1st violins, two 2nd violins, a violin who played the viola part,\(^8\) one cello, one double bass, one flute, possibly a clarinet, two oboes, two trumpets, and organ.\(^9\) After the performances of the Vivaldi Gloria in Glendive and Sidney, it was thought that the orchestra continued to rehearse, although what they rehearsed and for how long they continued is not known. The ensemble was organized chiefly for the members' enjoyment, and they didn't care whether they performed in public or not. Rev. Cunningham moved away to Eureka, California in 1969, and when he left, the other members in the ensemble stopped meeting together to play. As of 1990, two or three of the members were thought to have continued to play on occasion with the Williston Strings, a group based in North Dakota.

What is interesting about this orchestra is that it was able to be formed at all. It is possible that Sidney could have had a history of strings in the area, or perhaps an earlier orchestra program in the public schools that could have fed the community with adult string players later on. Just what the history was that spawned the musicians in this

\(^7\)Sidney (Mont.) Herald, 15 February 1967, 1.

\(^8\)Mrs. Wayne Cumming, telephone interview by author, 12 June 1990, tape recording.

\(^9\)Sidney (Mont.) Herald, 15 February 1967, 1.
musical group is not known at the time of this writing. Whatever the musical influences in the area, with the leadership and organization skills of Rev. Cunningham, the handful of string players that did exist in Sidney formed into an ensemble at least for awhile. One observer attributed this formation also to the resourcefulness, creativity, and self-reliance of the people dwelling in small communities that rarely witness the cultural events that larger communities are able to present. As that person stated, "... out here people do tend to make things happen, because if you sat around and waited for someone to bring it to you, you would never have it."\(^\text{10}\)

**Glendive**

In 1951 the Montana Institute of the Arts, an organization founded in 1948 for the purpose of furthering interest and growth in the arts in Montana,\(^\text{11}\) had organized an art exhibit that would travel\(^\text{12}\) to various towns in Montana. The art exhibit was constructed from items in the second annual Montana Institute of the Arts festival exhibit shown in Virginia City, Montana.

When the travelling art show reached Glendive, it was

\(^{10}\)Mrs. Wayne Cumming, telephone interview by author, 12 June 1990, tape recording.

shown at the Knights of Columbus hall on Sunday, February 25, 1951. At this exhibit a "salon" orchestra played that was formed by local members of the Montana Institute of the Arts. This "orchestra" was composed of nine people, although what instruments were involved and exactly what kind of music was played is unknown. The travelling art show consisted of eighteen canvasses that were brought as one exhibit for the fourth annual Business and Professional Women's Club Art and Hobby Show, held in Glendive. This show was presented under the auspices of the Glendive Business and Professional Women's Club, and the Glendive branch of the Montana Institute of the Arts. Over five hundred people attended this event, and the proceeds from the show were to be used for the Dawson County Junior College scholarship fund.

After this performance, no other record of any other performance that year or in the next year by the salon orchestra was found. The history of when the orchestra was formed, whether it was formed for purposes other than the art show described above, and when the group disbanded, are not known at the time of this writing. The members of the orchestra were listed in the article on the show in the March

\(^{12}\text{Dawson County Review (Glendive, Mont.), 22 February 1951, 1.}\)

\(^{13}\text{Dawson County Review (Glendive, Mont.) 1 March 1951, 1.}\)
1, 1951 issue of The Dawson County Review. Although nothing is known of the repertoire played by this orchestra or its instrumentation, it was decided to include this ensemble in this thesis, and not disregard it, in hopes that someday more information may reveal whether the group played music of the cultivated orchestral tradition, or if it only played popular songs or dance music.
CHAPTER 3

SCOBED

"We're our own little people up here, doing our own little thing." This statement is the essence of the Prairie Symphonette, the community orchestra that serves the area of Scobey and its nearby towns.

A drive to Scobey from other points in Montana that are west and south is a lonely one. Scobey is located in the northeast corner of Montana, not far from the Canadian and North Dakota borders. The roads in this region are paved, but small drifts of sand and dust have been blown onto the roads by the strong prairie winds. Because of its geographic location, Scobey and the towns surrounding it are very much isolated from the activity in the rest of Montana. Very little of Scobey's news is covered in the Great Falls Tribune or the Billings Gazette. The television reception in Scobey comes chiefly from North Dakota.2

However, Scobey's isolation from the rest of Montana's

1Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.

2Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.
life has fostered a strong "do-it-yourself" attitude among Scobey's population, which has ranged over the years from around 900 to about 1600 people in size. The majority of the population makes its living through farming, and because of the long distance to larger towns, the farmers there need to be self-sufficient not only to be farmers, but also to be mechanics, plumbers, and electricians. The founders of the Prairie Symphonette credit this "do-it-yourself" attitude as being an important element in keeping the ensemble alive and healthy since its beginnings in 1976. As one person noted, "It's a state of mind that if we want something to happen, we don't think about buying it, we think about doing it."

The Prairie Symphonette began with two men who decided to get together to play their violins one Sunday. One of these men was John Stentoft, who arrived in Montana from Denmark in about 1951. He was part of an exchange program that allowed various Scandinavian people to work in the United States for a summer, and then return to their native countries. As it turned out Stentoft decided to stay, and farmed in a community south of Scobey. He had learned to play the violin at home from his father in Denmark, and his associates in the

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3Jack Reiner, interview by author, 4 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.

orchestra have enjoyed stretching the truth somewhat by telling others that Stentoft "studied music in Denmark."\(^5\)

The other man playing with John Stentoft was Jack Reiner. Reiner grew up in St. Claire, Missouri, near St. Louis. Raised in a family that formed its own dance band, Reiner learned to play drums at age 11 and trumpet at age 12. He learned to read music from his mother, and learned to play in the jazz style by ear, through listening and imitation. But the first instrument he played in public was the violin, and his introduction to the symphony orchestra as an ensemble occurred at age 6, when his parents took Jack to see the St. Louis Symphony while the family was on vacation. He eventually abandoned playing the violin, however, in favor of the instruments that were more prevalent in the playing of dance work from that period (i.e. 1940s).\(^6\)

Reiner graduated from high school in 1945, went to help his aunt and uncle on their farm near Scobey, and ended up settling down there.\(^7\) The musical scene in Scobey in the 1940s is described by Reiner as consisting of a few dance

\(^{5}\)Jill Sundby, "'Prairie Symphonette' Enriches Scobey," Great Falls Tribune, 11 November 1990, 7B.

\(^{6}\)Jack Reiner, interview by author, 4 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.

bands and country-western groups. At that time there was no
music being produced locally that was of the cultivated
tradition, although a community music club was later formed
that sponsored around four or five concerts each year. As
time went by, though, people got older and less energetic, and
the interest in the community music club waned.

Reiner started playing with the local groups soon after
he arrived in Montana. One of the groups he eventually joined
was the Stardusters, a small combo that included Scobey's
musical mainstay, Nellie LaPierre (about whom more will be
mentioned later in this chapter), on piano. As Reiner played
more, he found that there was a need for different instruments
in different situations. He became interested in playing
other instruments, particularly saxophone and trombone. He
learned about his chosen instruments by listening to and
conversing with performers with professional experience who
would pass through town on an engagement.®

In addition to his work on his uncle's farm (which he
eventually took over when his aunt and uncle retired), Reiner
later became a funeral director, and for a time also played on
a semi-professional baseball team.

Yet another job he held was that of the school band
director in the nearby community of Flaxville. Reiner's

®Jack Reiner, interview by author, 4 September 1989,
Scobey, Mont., tape recording.
interest in instruments and his experience in teaching school
music caused him eventually to learn the fundamentals of
playing nearly all the band and orchestral instruments, with
the exception of the double reeds. The violin, however,
remained his first love, and it rested on top of his piano at
home.

One day in 1973 John Stentoft was visiting at Jack
Reiner's house, and he noticed the violin. Reiner had never
told John that he had played violin, but although Reiner
admitted that he was "no violinist," he told Stentoft that he
enjoyed playing on the instrument. Stentoft admitted that he
was in the same league as Jack concerning violin. They
decided to get together in the future in order to play violin
duets. About a week or two later Reiner and his wife were
having Sunday dinner at the Stentofts, and during this meeting
Stentoft and Reiner took out their violins and began playing
from their church hymnal, with one playing the soprano voice
and the other playing the alto. It is possible that they were
accompanied by piano at this point. The important thing about
this musical meeting was that they both enjoyed themselves
immensely.

It wasn't long after a few of these sessions that
Stentoft and Reiner learned that the wife of one of the local

9Jack Reiner, interview by author, 4 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.
farmers had played violin. This was Marlys Farver, who, in addition to being a wife and mother, was a registered nurse at a nursing home. Marlys had grown up in Fargo, North Dakota, taking violin lessons and eventually receiving orchestral experience by playing with the orchestra in Fargo-Moorhead. When she came to Bozeman, Montana to enter the Montana State University nursing program, Farver also played in the Bozeman Symphony under Creech Reynolds. Marlys married a native from Scobey in 1969, and after graduating from MSU in 1970 with a degree in nursing, she and her husband moved to Scobey.

While Stentoft and Reiner knew that Marlys played violin, they were conscious of their own limitations, and were hesitant to ask her to join in their hymn-reading sessions. Finally, one Sunday they mustered the courage to ask her to play some music with them, and she consented. The three of them belonged to the Lutheran Church in Scobey, and were soon playing hymns for church services on Sundays. By 1975 the son of a new pastor of their church had been added to their number on string bass, and with the addition of the bass line of the hymns, it became apparent to Jack Reiner that the tenor line needed to be played as well. Jack solved this problem by

\[10^\text{Jill Sundby, "Prairie Symphonette Enriches Scobey," Great Falls Tribune, 11 November 1990, 7B.}\]
\[11^\text{Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.}\]
teaching himself to play a cello he had bought from a supplier of equipment for the school district he was working for in Flaxville. This "string quartet" was soon augmented with Stentofts' and Reiners' children, who had been studying violin from Marlys.

Meanwhile, John and Jack, in getting to know newcomers to the Scobey area, would find out if those new people played an instrument, and would ask them to participate in the ensemble. While at first the group was formed from people who attended the Lutheran Church in Scobey, others from outside the church were gladly accepted. Marlys Farver and Jack Reiner also were soon being asked to teach string students in Scobey and the surrounding area. The newly-formed string ensemble then provided a means for Marlys's young (7th-9th grade) violin students and Jack's violin and cello students to experience playing together in a large ensemble.

The group became known as the "Scobey Strings," and their performances consisted of playing music for church services, no longer just at the Lutheran Church, but at other local churches as well. The music used at this time was whatever hymnal that particular church was accustomed to using, plus

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12 Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.

13 Jack Reiner, interview by author, 4 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.
some pieces from some string ensemble collections. Although the exclusive use of the treble and bass clefs in most hymnals might have posed a problem for many elementary and intermediate violists, the Scobey ensemble didn't have a violist among their number at this point. Later on, they did add to their number a violist who was also able to read from the treble and bass clefs.

The first appearance of the Scobey Strings in a concert cannot be charted for certain. Marlys Farver has indicated that the Scobey Strings participated in a concert in the Fall of 1976, when a concert was put together locally at the Catholic Church in Scobey for the occasion of the bicentennial of the United States. Each church in the area that had some musical group contributed to the concert program. In May of that same year there was also a concert on the theme of the bicentennial of the United States, but whether the Scobey Strings played for this concert is not known.

It was around this same year (1976) that Jack Reiner realized that it wouldn't take much effort to gather some woodwind, brass, and percussion players and add them to the Scobey Strings to make a full orchestra. Jack and others in

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14 Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.

15 Daniels County Leader (Scobey, Mont.), 13 May 1976, 1.
the ensemble immediately started looking for wind and percussion players, both young and old, who were interested in joining the group. The group that originally hailed from Scobey gradually included more performers on different instruments from other nearby towns. The group's name, Scobey Strings, was quickly becoming a misnomer, since its members played more than the string family, and came from places other than Scobey. So, to reflect the regional nature of the organization, as well as the fact that it was becoming more of a symphony orchestra instead of a string ensemble, the group adopted the name, Prairie Symphonette. This was the name used in the organization's first full orchestra concert, and this name was still the name of the orchestra as of 1989.

Most of the music teachers in the surrounding area had heard about this group, and wanted to come and play. Although the orchestra wanted them to play, they also felt somewhat uncomfortable, knowing that the skill-level of the ensemble was very basic. They had acquired a few orchestral arrangements by this time, but most of these were for the skill-level of junior high orchestras. The idea of having trained music teachers come to play in this group caused a number of the ensemble's members to wonder what these teachers would think when they heard the ensemble. But, according to Jack Reiner, "Bless their hearts. They were perceptive enough to see what was really happening--just a group of people who
have a burning desire to have an orchestral experience—that they were willing to grub it out."\textsuperscript{16} "Grub it out" they did, and by May of 1977 the ensemble was ready for its first concert as a full orchestra, which took place at the Scobey Catholic Center on Mothers Day, May 8, 1977.\textsuperscript{17} The program contained a "range of music . . . designed to provide listening pleasure for all" who attended.\textsuperscript{18}

This concert also marked the first time the ensemble used a conductor. Up to this point, the Scobey Strings had played their performances without a conductor. There was usually a pianist who accompanied the group, and the presence of the piano part helped the group to play together. The beginning downbeat of each piece was given by the concertmistress, Marlys Farver. Generally, she would beat one full bar in the tempo of the piece to be performed, and then the ensemble would start. In performances by the string section only, this is still the way the ensemble is led, i.e., by the concertmistress and not with a conductor. The full orchestra would also rehearse without a conductor, and when the orchestra had the music learned as a group, they would then search for someone to conduct them in a concert. This was to

\textsuperscript{16}Jack Reiner, interview by author, 4 September 1989, Scobey, Mt, tape recording.

\textsuperscript{17}Daniels County Leader (Scobey, Mont.), 5 May 1977, 1.

\textsuperscript{18}Daniels County Leader (Scobey, Mont.), 5 May 1977, 1.
remain the standard procedure for this orchestra for many years.

For their first concert in May, 1977 the group found a music teacher from the nearby town of Outlook who consented to conduct them. His name was Ken Lentz, and he was said to be a graduate of Concordia College in Moorhead. This concert was to be Lentz's only occasion to conduct the ensemble. At this stage in the orchestra's development, it was apparent that the forward momentum of the organization was not generated by a conductor, but by the members themselves. The ensemble rehearsed with Lentz only two or three times before the actual concert, but countless hours had already been spent learning the music by the orchestra previous to working with the conductor.¹⁹

The Mothers Day concert was attended by over 200 people. This must have been considered a successful venture in a town that may have been around sixteen hundred people in population at the time. After this concert, there was talk of another concert in the fall, and Marlys Farver maintains that there was a concert similar in format to the Bicentennial concert event. Apparently it was spearheaded by the Prairie Symphonette, in that they were the ones who took charge of the management of the concert. The event was represented by a

¹⁹Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.
number of churches in the area, each church again having some sort of musical group that performed one or two pieces. At the end of the concert was a grand finale number for a large choir combined from all the churches in attendance, accompanied by the Symphonette. This kind of concert was to continue for about three or four years after the first Bicentennial concert in 1976.\textsuperscript{20} After 1976 the concerts usually took place in the fall.\textsuperscript{21}

The attitude of being flexible and open to accommodate novice musicians remained an important aspect of the social atmosphere that was desired when the orchestra met together to play. The ensemble also had room to allow for people changing the instruments they played. Reiner's switching from violin to cello is one example of this, but one of the more dramatic examples was that of John Stentoft. One day, in 1978, Stentoft was jumping off a truck, when his wedding band caught on a bolt on the truck, and tore his left ring finger off. Among the changes this meant in Stentoft's life was that it seemed his days as a performer in Scobey's new musical group appeared to be over. While this was true in terms of Stentoft's violin-playing days, it turned out not to be the

\textsuperscript{20}Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.

case in terms of his performing days in the Scobey area. Jack Reiner encouraged John to take up the double bass, since the left ring finger is not used on double bass except for the higher positions, which were beyond the normal range of most of their orchestra's bass parts anyway. John Stentoft responded by purchasing a double bass and learning to play it. In this way the ensemble was still able to benefit from Stentoft's experience, and Stentoft was able to do something music-related within the new limitations of his hand, as well as maintain a valuable musical-social contact with his friends and neighbors.\textsuperscript{22,23}

All the performances of either the Prairie Symphonette or the Scobey Strings have been given free of charge. Generally an offering has been taken in the churches where they play, and in other situations donations have always been accepted. Marlys Farver took care of the money and set it aside for buying more music and defraying small expenses. In May of 1978, Marlys began to formally keep books for the organization by opening a checking account for the orchestra with a deposit of $131.61. Some local organizations, like the Scobey Women's Club and the Scobey Lions Club, have offered help by giving

\textsuperscript{22}Jill Sundby, "'Prairie Symphonette' Enriches Scobey," Great Falls Tribune, 11 November 1990, 7B.

\textsuperscript{23}Jack Reiner, interview by author, 4 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.
donations to the ensemble, or, as in the case of the Women's Club, by offering a scholarship to assist local students with the expense of attending a summer music camp.

Some of the non-musical contributions to the functioning of this organization should be mentioned. Early on, the concert programs were being printed free of charge by the Lutheran church in Scobey. When the ensemble started thriving financially, they soon took over this task. There has been one person that is responsible for the majority of the extra-musical operations involved in the performances, and that person is Marlys' husband, Gary Farver. He has helped set up chairs and stands, moved the piano, driven the truck to transport equipment, run errands, taken photographs, and even taken the collection of free-will donations at concerts.

Since the 1977 Mothers Day concert through 1989, there has usually been some form of annual spring concert given. In the following year (1978) and for the next few years the concerts were conducted by Nellie (Mrs. Raymond) LaPierre. Mrs. LaPierre had taught music in the grade school and high school in Scobey for many years. She had studied music at the University of Montana, and upon coming to Scobey, was the

24Daniels County Leader (Scobey, Mont.), 19 April 1979, 1.

25Daniels County Leader (Scobey, Mont.), 27 April 1978, 12.
person to call if there was a pianist needed. She was not only the public school teacher there for many years, but a private piano teacher as well. She directed a number of school and community stage productions, and in addition, found time to play piano and make musical arrangements for some of the area dance bands and combos.

The music that was used for the annual concerts of the Prairie Symphonette was usually a combination of arrangements of popular tunes as well as a number of pieces from the orchestral repertoire that were easy to play, pieces rearranged for a young orchestra, or works that were "light," i.e. easy to listen to and comprehend. A typical example would be the program from the spring concert given on April 2, 1978. In this concert were pieces from the "cultivated" realm, such as Processional and Finale by Pergolesi, Aria with Variation by Handel, Bourree by Bach, Russian Sailors' Dance by Gliere, and Czardas by Monti (with the violin solo performed by Marlys Farver). Also included in this concert were popular arrangements, like Sounds of the Carpenters arranged by Robert Lowden, On a Clear Day by Burton Lane, Life is Just a Bowl of Cherries by Brown and Henderson, Fiddler on the Roof by Jerry Bock, and Sleigh Ride by Leroy Anderson. Added to this fare were also some small ensembles: a clarinet ensemble.

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26Daniels County Leader (Scobey, Mont.), 16 March, 1978, 4.
duet playing a Rondo by Pleyel, and a violin duet playing Autumn Holiday by J. F. Muller.\footnote{Prairie Symphonette Spring Concert," concert program, 2 April 1978, Scobey, Mont.}

In later concerts the Symphonette has shared the performance with a local group called "The Jazz Squad," a 1940s-style dance band that plays dance jobs in the area around Scobey. Many of the members of the Symphonette play in the jazz band as well.

For the first few years the orchestra obtained some of their music by borrowing some from the Bozeman area, since Marlys had made connections there while a student at Montana State University. After the Symphonette started to make a little money, though, they also started to amass their own library as well. Marlys, on occasional trips back home to Fargo, would stop at Nels Vogel, a music store in Moorhead, Minnesota, and pick out some pieces for orchestra that she thought the Symphonette could play. Later on, when Nels Vogel was going out of business, they began to sell their orchestra parts and arrangements for as much as 80% off retail. Marlys jumped on this opportunity, and purchased a large number of orchestral works, both popular and otherwise. In this way, the Prairie Symphonette began to expand their library.

As the number of skilled performers has grown over the years, the limits of their playable orchestral repertoire have
also been stretched. By 1983 the orchestra was able to include Beethoven's *Egmont Overture* in its spring concert. A milestone in their repertoire was reached in 1985, when the Symphonette performed concerts at churches in celebration of the birthday of J. S. Bach. One of these concerts, given at a church in Opheim, included not only the orchestra's customary playing of hymns at the service, but also works by Bach, including a minuet, a march, and surprisingly, the *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2*.

At the same time, the orchestra has been mindful of its audience. Farver says that the Symphonette likes to pick music that could be classed as "easy-listening music" for the core of their programs. "You're playing for Scobey, Montana," says Marlys. "You have to play something that the people will enjoy. Once in a while we'll sneak [a standard orchestral piece] in to let them know that we're getting to be a pretty good professional group." However, in the main, the Symphonette plays music they think "will please the crowd now and in the future," and the trend appears to be that the orchestra will continue to provide more of the same programming that has been provided in the past. Since the early 1970s up through 1989, the population of Scobey has decreased to the point where the people that come to stay in Scobey are those that are planning to retire there. Consequently, the preferences of these older people for the
type of music played at concerts are different than those of a larger town, where ages and musical tastes are more diverse.

The Prairie Symphonette concerts generally have had good attendance. Marlys estimates that each concert will draw between two hundred to three hundred people, which is a good-sized crowd in a town where the population has hovered around one thousand. Attendees at a concert might come from towns within a forty mile radius of Scobey. Sometimes they might show up from places as far away as Wolf Point, which is about eighty miles away.

In the Fall of 1978 the Symphonette was approached by a Dr. Woolfry, who was a dentist in Crosby, North Dakota. Nearly every year around this period Woolfry would organize an orchestra and a choir to perform a Christmas cantata or play selections from Handel's Messiah near the First Sunday in Advent. Performances would take place both in Crosby, North Dakota, and across the U.S.-Canadian border in Estevan, Saskatchewan. Woolfry was interested in having the Prairie Symphonette augment his orchestra by joining them in this venture. The Symphonette accepted this offer at least two times since their formation. This concert involved transporting the Symphonette from Scobey to Crosby in time for an all-day rehearsal on Saturday. The motel rooms for the Symphonette were paid for by Crosby's community orchestra (known as the Northwest Orchestra). The concert was performed
in Crosby on Sunday. The concert would be performed later on in Estevan. The only expense that the Symphonette had to pay for these engagements was transportation. Since the Scobey school bus driver was in the Symphonette, the orchestra was allowed use of the bus for only the price of the gas consumed. In some of these concerts the Symphonette was allowed to play some things on their own.

Other ventures where the Symphonette combined with other groups have included concerts with the Scobey High School musical groups (e.g. the Symphonette's participation in the annual Christmas concert, as in December of 1982\(^{28}\)), and theater orchestra accompaniment to musicals put on either by the high school or the community of Scobey. On February 5, 6, and 7, 1980, members of the Scobey community performed *Fiddler On the Roof*, with the Symphonette accompanying. The Symphonette sponsored this venture, and it netted close to one thousand dollars for them. In March of 1985, when the high school was to perform the musical, *Sound of Music*, the Symphonette again provided the accompaniment.

The Prairie Symphonette has played for many kinds of gatherings in and around Scobey, almost always for no fee. There is also the string ensemble formed of the orchestra's string section, as well as a recently-formed string quintet, "

\(^{28}\text{Daniels County Leader (Scobey, Mont.), 16 December 1982, I.}\)
which plays for weddings and receptions. The availability of
the symphonette, or smaller ensembles from this group, to play
at functions for no fee has given them opportunities for them
to play at any gathering that could be considered a social
event in a small town. Some of these gatherings include
playing for TOPS meetings (TOPS is an acronym for Take Off
Pounds Simply, a weight-loss group), Daniels County Junior
Miss Pageant (for several years), high school graduation
ceremonies, weddings and wedding receptions, a benefit for the
hospital in 1981, the dedication of the St. Phillips Catholic
church in 1982, performances at the Daniels County Fair, and
the dedication of the nursing home. Additionally, the
Symphonette has played for conventions and meetings of
organizations like the Order of the Eastern Star, the Knights
of Columbus, and the Home Extension Agents. As can be seen
from this list, the Symphonette rarely misses an opportunity
to play. Marlys is usually the person called for engaging
some or all of the orchestra. She answers for the group, and
will take the job if it fits within her personal time
schedule. It is estimated that the symphonette, or a smaller
formation of it, performs around two to three times a month,
though some seasons, and indeed some years, have been more
busy than others. One year, for example, the string ensemble
had twenty-three performance engagements. For a number of
years the Symphonette would give one full concert a year. By
the late 1980s however, they were playing at least two concerts a year.

They have continued to play hymns and service music in the local area churches on special occasions, or when the pastor goes on vacation. Some of the Symphonette members are Gideons, and once in a while these people are asked to give a short sermon in addition to the music that is provided in these services. It is estimated that most of the money the Symphonette has made over the years has been attributed to the donations given at these churches.²⁹

In addition to conductors Lenz and La Pierre mentioned above, others have been asked to conduct the Symphonette. In the April 24, 1980 spring concert the guest conductor was Dale Hallock, who was a music teacher in eastern Montana, and had formerly been the music teacher in Scobey. The spring concert on May 10, 1981 was conducted by Jack Reiner, in his conducting debut. The paper commented on Reiner being a little nervous, but that he "worked up a good sweat with his arm motion." Also, the paper thought Reiner's conducting was similar to the "pegs to second he used to make when he was star catcher with the Plainsmen baseball team."³⁰

²⁹Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.

³⁰Daniels County Leader (Scobey, Mont.), 14 May 1981, 3.
Rehearsals of the Prairie Symphonette were being held weekly around the time of rehearsals for the third annual spring concert in 1979.\(^1\) The large Symphonette would usually meet during the fall, winter, and spring, would take a break after the spring concert, and then resume rehearsals the next fall. The string ensemble would continue to function through the summer, since they were a small enough group that they would receive more and varied engagements (e.g. weddings, various social gatherings, and church services while the clergy was on vacation). In more recent times the Symphonette has continued its weekly rehearsal schedule, meeting every Thursday for two hours during the fall, winter, and spring.\(^2\)

By the time of the May, 1981 concert, a standard attire of dress was in force for orchestral performances. Everyone was to wear a white shirt, and either black pants or a black skirt. In addition, everyone wore a vest that was black on one side and red on the other. The vest could be reversed depending upon the occasion and/or the whim of the orchestra on a particular engagement.\(^3\)

The following year three people from the Symphonette were

\(^1\)Daniels County Leader (Scobey, Mont.), 19 April 1979, 1.

\(^2\)Jill Sundby, "'Prairie Symphonette' Enriches Scobey," Great Falls Tribune, 11 November 1990, 7B.

\(^3\)Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.
to share the conducting task for the May 9, 1982 concert: violists Karen Lucas of Outlook, and Carla Rask of Scobey, and Ed Retzer (on bassoon, flute, or sometimes cello\textsuperscript{34}), formerly a music teacher from Crosby, North Dakota who had moved to Westby, Montana. However, Ed Retzer had to cancel his conducting stint as a result of a bizarre accident. While roller skating with some of his music students at a music festival they were attending, Retzer broke both his arms, rendering him unable to conduct. Jack Reiner again obliged by filling in for Retzer as conductor for this concert. Another player in the orchestra, clarinetist Bill Rask, was scheduled to play some special music at this concert, but this had to be cancelled because Rask had caught his finger in a grinding mill. It was noted in the local paper following the concert that both Rask and Retzer amazingly had played in their usual positions in the orchestra despite their injuries.\textsuperscript{35}

The conductors have usually been chosen as they became known in the area. Jack Reiner has usually been the liaison between the orchestra and the conductor. If the Symphonette could afford it, they tried to pay the conductor about $100 for a weekend concert.

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\textsuperscript{34}Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.

\textsuperscript{35}Daniels County Leader (Scobey, Mont.), 13 May 1982, 1.
It wasn't until 1986 that the Symphonette was able to engage a relatively permanent conductor. The job fell to Ed Retzer, who accepted the post, apparently quite willingly. When he first started playing with the Prairie Symphonette, he drove 105 miles each way from Crosby, North Dakota to Scobey for rehearsals. When he moved to Westby, Montana, life was made a little easier: as a resident of Westby, he only had to drive about 70 miles each way for rehearsals. According to one report, he rarely missed a rehearsal. Perhaps Retzer was awarded the position as conductor not only for his experience in teaching music, but also for his faithful attendance as well. The conducting position included the challenge of selecting the music that would interest both the more experienced as well as the novice musicians in the orchestra. Over the years, though, since he began as the regular conductor, Retzer has successfully been able to keep musicians of all levels interested in the orchestra, and he has done so without asking for any pay from the Symphonette. Marlys Farver has asserted that having someone working with the orchestra all the time has consequently improved the quality

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36Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.

37Jill Sundby, "'Prairie Symphonette' Enriches Scobey," Great Falls Tribune, 11 November 1990, 7B.
of the orchestra's playing as a whole. ¹⁸

The year 1986 was an important year in the history of the Prairie Symphonette. In addition to acquiring a conductor who could (and would) attend rehearsals regularly, another event occurred in 1986 that brought the Symphonette some attention nationwide: the Prairie Symphonette was featured in a segment on a nationally-aired television series called Portrait of America, a production of the Turner Broadcasting System in Atlanta, Georgia.

The way the Symphonette was chosen to appear on this television series began when two women from the Turner Broadcasting System (also known as TBS) came to Montana in the fall of 1985. They were going to travel the state of Montana and collect approximately fifty unique events or gatherings that could serve as possible subjects for a planned television series that would cover all of the fifty United States. The women from TBS heard about the Prairie Symphonette in the course of their travels around the state. However, they had either been misinformed or had misinterpreted the information given to them, because they were under the impression that they were looking for something called the Shelby Symphonette. Apparently they were redirected to Scobey after calling a Montana radio station to find out where this ensemble might be

¹⁸Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.
Arriving on Halloween, the women from TBS found the Symphonette as it was playing a performance. They listened to the group, taped them, and interviewed some of the members to find out some of the individuals' stories. After that, the interviewers left to move on to observe other events in Montana.

At some point later that year, or perhaps early in January, 1986, Marlys was notified that the Prairie Symphonette had been one of twelve subjects chosen from about fifty-six to be filmed for the TBS series, Portrait of America. At some point, the number of subjects chosen may have been narrowed further, because the local paper reported in January, 1986, that the Symphonette was to be one of seven Montana-related items to be featured in the television series. The filming and production of the Symphonette was scheduled to occur in July, 1986, and the final piece was to be aired sometime in March, 1987.

Meanwhile, the annual spring concert in 1986 was held on April 27, but this year there was to be no easing up on the number of performances scheduled for the rest of the spring

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39 Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.
40 Daniels County Leader (Scobey, Mont.), 16 January 1986, 1.
and summer. An identical concert to the spring concert was performed in Peerless at the high school. The string ensemble played for the opening of the Fort Peck Summer Theater in June, playing before and after the performances, as well as during intermission.\(^{41}\) There was also a Junior Miss Pageant engagement, along with similar commitments to perform at a wedding reception, a church anniversary, and a wedding ceremony.\(^{42}\) The summer's most unusual performing situation, however, came in late July 1986, when a television crew from TBS came to Scobey to get footage for their series (mentioned above) for the following year.

The crew spent two days on location at Scobey, capturing various scenes that could be edited and combined into a segment that would feature the Prairie Symphonette.\(^{43}\) This included recording the audio portion in one location, the video portion in another location, and combining the two during the editing. The audio portion was recorded at the Full Gospel Church in Scobey. The video portion, by contrast, was filmed on the prairies of Montana, about a mile east of Scobey. The logistics of this operation were somewhat

\(^{41}\)Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.

\(^{42}\)Daniels County Leader (Scobey, Mont.), 1 May 1986, 5.

\(^{43}\)Daniels County Leader (Scobey, Mont.), 31 July 1986, 1.
complex. Setting up the orchestra out in the middle of a field somewhere involved not only carting instruments, chairs, and stands out to the location, but moving a piano there as well. The camera crew filmed the orchestra not only from a few feet away, but also from an airplane. The shooting was done on a beautiful late afternoon in the end of July.

The recollections of Marlys Farver give some insight as to the novelty of this experience for the orchestra members: "We played Allegro in C [by Mozart], and we played it over and over; I think we played it four full times, so they [the TBS crew] could match the music to our playing. Their plane would come up this cooley, and we couldn't see them until they were right on top of us. [We were] playing this thing over and over, and [it was] hot, and then this plane comes up: VRROOOM!! [There were] also ground crews with their cameras right up to you . . . it was an exciting thing to do."

Apparently, the insects were not too bothersome, but care had to be taken by the musicians in order to avoid the cactus that was prevalent in that field. The Prairie Symphonette segment was broadcast on WTBS's Portrait of America series the following spring: May 3, May 16, May 22, and May 28, 1987.

The social aspects of the Prairie Symphonette are easy to observe. For the performers as well as the audience, the concerts have served as an activity where people can meet with others that dwell in the same region of the state. After the
concerts there is usually a social time, with orchestra and audience alike bringing cookies and coffee. As Marlys said, "We don't have the things to go to like bigger towns. You either make it happen or else it isn't going to happen at all." Jack Reiner adds, "It's a carryover from the day-to-day making-a-living attitude. We can't go somewhere to hear an orchestra." Reiner also points to the notion of raising the cultural awareness of people in northeastern Montana, noting that a number of people in their area of the state were unaware that anything like an orchestra ever existed.

One social event that was important to the Prairie Symphonette was that of the Daniels County Jubilee. This celebration of Daniels County's seventy-five years of existence took place in mid-July, 1988. The Prairie Symphonette contributed to this celebration by holding a concert on Sunday, July 17, at the Scobey Catholic Center. However, this was to be no ordinary concert. Well ahead of time, Marlys Farver sent out a newsletter to former members of the orchestra, notifying them of the concert date and inviting them to attend. Over one hundred ten newsletters were sent to people who had once played in the orchestra and had since moved away. The concert held on July 17, 1988 was intended to be a reunion concert that would allow former members to play

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"Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording."
once again in the Prairie Symphonette. About forty to fifty former members of the orchestra came back to play the concert. One of the people who came back to play in the orchestra was Nathan Rodning, the minister's son who was the double bass player that had joined Farver, John Stentoft, and Jack Reiner in the early days of the Scobey Strings. At that time Rodning was about junior high age.\footnote{Jack Reiner, interview by author, 4 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.} By the time Rodning returned to Scobey to play the Daniels County Jubilee concert, he had finished his Ph.D. in Physics and was teaching at the University of Edmonton. The concert was directed by Ed Retzer, but Nellie LaPierre was called back to conduct a few of the concert selections.

A great deal of work went into the production of this concert. Part of the celebration activities included a parade, for which the Symphonette contributed a float. A large poster was made for the concert, and for advertisement the poster was placed in an old wagon which was parked on Scobey's Main street for the week previous to the concert. Apparently the advertising and the extra work paid off, because Farver reported receiving "some big checks that summer."\footnote{Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.}
The Prairie Symphonette has appeared to be willing to bring their ensemble to various towns that have had no exposure to live orchestra music. For example, during the 1988-1989 season, the orchestra played a concert locally, and later travelled by bus to perform the same concert in the town of Ray, North Dakota, for their centennial celebration. As with other out-of-town engagements, the orchestra only needed to provide the gas money for the use of the school bus. The concert was very well received, being attended by about two hundred people.

As for the musical quality of the orchestral product, Reiner is quick to qualify his opinion. "It's actually borderline madness," he said. "But here we are, a town of less than twelve hundred people, and we have an orchestra of a sort . . . we're limited. We do have some very good [musicians], but they have to make concessions, [and] play down to include the level of our junior high and high school."^47 Generally, though, the musicians are happy with the way things are. Most of them have been in the area for a relatively long time. Others have shown up for rehearsals, and then have stopped coming. Interestingly enough, most

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^47Jack Reiner, interview by author, 4 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.
In terms of the orchestra as an organized business entity, it has been the preference of the members to keep the organization a loose, informal group. There have been deliberations over the years concerning whether they should charge for concerts or not. According to Marlys Farver, the Symphonette had at some point started to keep track of the number of people in attendance at concerts relative to the amount of money taken in at performances. The result was that the average amount of money received at a performance for a given attendance figure never was more than a dollar per person. At times the notion of charging for performances has been in discussion, but the feeling was that if the orchestra began to charge for performances, then they would have to become a legal organization, complete with a constitution and by-laws, boards of directors, taxes, and other types of "red tape." The members of the Prairie Symphonette, and particularly Jack Reiner, have tried to avoid these types of organizational features, on the premise that they tend to take the group away from their primary reason for being: that of gathering together to make some music. As of September, 1989, the Symphonette had a cash balance of about $800 in their checking account, a sizable increase from their initial

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48Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.
deposit of $131.61 in 1978. Apparently, it hasn't been thought necessary to organize in a legal fashion. As a reflection of their isolation from other musical activities in Montana, the Symphonette was unaware (as of 1989) that an organization such as MASO (Montana Association of Symphony Orchestras) even exists. Marlys has entertained the notion that the symphonette should perhaps join the Montana Arts Council, or some similar organization, but the idea was never pursued. The Prairie Symphonette, as of 1989, was therefore content to continue as they have in the past, feeling that they have functioned well, both as a service to themselves as well as to the communities that hear them.\footnote{Marlys Farver, interview by author, 3 September 1989, Scobey, Mont., tape recording.}
CHAPTER 4

MILES CITY

One of the most recent orchestral endeavors in Montana has been the formation of the Miles City Community Orchestra. This group began on July 21, 1988, when about five or six townspeople gathered together for a rehearsal/organizational meeting in response to an announcement in the local Miles City newspaper. The gathering was to take place at the Eagles Manor in Miles City, and the main purpose of the rehearsal/meeting was to determine the level of interest of the community in the formation of a chamber ensemble of local people that wanted to play music. The chief contacts at this stage were Vicki Bergerson (piano), Lisa Durkee (viola), and Noelle Rice (violin).\(^1\)\(^2\)

The motivation to form a larger group probably came from a smaller group that gave a number of performances entitled, "Us and Our Friends."\(^3\) The group was composed of four or five string players and a flutist. It was the existence of the

\(^1\)Miles City (Mont.) Star, 7 July 1988, 2.
\(^2\)Miles City (Mont.) Star, 15 November 1988, 1.
\(^3\)Miles City (Mont.) Star, 15 November 1988, 1.
flutist among four string players that led to the group being known as "Mostly Strings."

Generally, the instrumentation at this time was three violins, a viola, flute, and piano. The performers would take music for two or three violins with piano and try to spread the parts among themselves. The flute player for "Mostly Strings" was apparently extremely interested in playing with the group, and did not want to be refused an opportunity to play in this situation. Therefore, even when there were no flute parts available, the flutist would double the violin parts, play them an octave higher, or change a note here and there. The group was made up of people who were already friends with each other, so the atmosphere for rehearsal was relaxed, with everyone at ease.

Gradually, people started hearing about this group, and began to ask "Mostly Strings" to play for social gatherings like teas, receptions, or dinners. The publicity tended to be word-of-mouth at this point, but the group felt encouraged by the service they were providing, and began to think they could form a more permanent organization. Performances for the Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs, as well as at Miles City's Range Riders Museum helped to pique the interest of other people in town who played an instrument at one time. At some point a

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4Vicki Bergerson, telephone interview by author, 25 April 1990, tape recording.
trumpet was added, but the main emphasis was still on the strings of the group.⁵

From the first rehearsal of the more public chamber ensemble in July, 1988, the personnel kept growing. The intention was still to have a string chamber ensemble with a few added wind instruments. No one imagined that the group would grow so big so fast.⁶ In September of that year the ensemble was known as the "Miles City Chamber Group," and in a report of a performance given at a Retired Senior Volunteers Program Banquet, the group was "continually growing in number."⁷ By mid-November, the ensemble had grown to approximately twenty-five players and was known as the Miles City Chamber Music Ensemble.⁸ With this many performers, "keeping together" musically became a big problem, so Allan Eve was asked to conduct the ensemble.⁹

Allan Eve was at this time the band director for the Custer County District High School, located in Miles City. He had received his bachelors degree in education from the

⁵Vicki Bergerson, telephone interview by author, 25 April 1990, tape recording.

⁶Vicki Bergerson, telephone interview by the author, 25 April 1990, tape recording.


⁸Miles City (Mont.) Star, 15 November, 1988, p. 1.

⁹Allan Eve, phone interview by author, 3 October 1989, tape recording.
University of Montana, studying conducting there with Butler Eitel and Donald Carey. His masters degree was obtained at the University of Idaho, where he studied conducting under Robert J. Spevacek and LeRoy O. Bauer. Further training was received by attending a seminar under John P. Paynter, who was for many years Director of Bands at Northwestern University.

Eve was asked to conduct most likely because of both his training as well as his involvement with other musical groups that had existed prior to the formation of the Miles City Chamber Ensemble. Examples of groups that he had led that were composed of musicians from the town were the City Band and the Community Big Band. Additionally, he had led various adult pit orchestras for a few community musicals, and also had played in a brass quintet that had been formed from local musicians.¹⁰

Because Eve was band director at the high school, the orchestra was able to move their rehearsal site from the Eagles Manor to the high school band room. Rehearsals occurred on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, beginning at 8:15 p.m. For the remainder of the Fall and throughout the Winter the ensemble sought and obtained opportunities to perform. There were performances in churches, for banquets, receptions, and service club

¹⁰Allan Eve, telephone interview by author, 3 October 1989, tape recording.
gatherings. In some cases the lack of enough performance space caused the ensemble to break into smaller performing groups, so that the interest in performing chamber music was preserved even during the growth of the interest in performing orchestral music. The performers came mostly from Miles City, although a horn player came from Jordan to play with the orchestra.\textsuperscript{11}

As the year of 1988-1989 progressed the ensemble came to be called the "Miles City Community Orchestra." Allan Eve conducted the orchestra in about a half dozen of the kind of performances mentioned above.\textsuperscript{12} These performances finally led up to the first full concert by the orchestra which occurred on the afternoon of May 21, 1989 at Custer County District High School. The orchestra consisted of twenty-six performers, composed of three first violins, three second violins, two violas, one violoncello, one bass, two flutes, three clarinets, one oboe, one bassoon, three trumpets, one horn, one trombone, timpani, and two pianists. The program included \textit{Overture "Theodora"} by Handel, \textit{Rhosymedre} by Vaughan Williams, \textit{Eine Kleine Nachtmusik} by Mozart, \textit{Concerto "L'Autunno} (from the Four Seasons) by Vivaldi, the trumpet \textit{Concerto in E Flat} by Haydn, \textit{March from "Scipio"} by Handel.

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Miles City} (Mont.) \textit{Star}, 15 November 1988, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{12}Allan Eve, telephone interview by author, 3 October 1989, tape recording.
(arr. Woodhouse), and *Concertata* by Corelli.\(^{13}\)

Although the concert was scheduled during the same weekend as another community event (i.e. Bucking Horse Sale weekend), the crowd that came out for the concert was relatively large.\(^{14}\) Encouraged by the success of the first concert, the orchestra planned to put on two concerts during the 1989-1990 season. The first was to be a performance of Vivaldi's *Gloria* in February, employing the voices of the Community Chorus (organized through the local Northwest Community College). The second concert was to be given later on in the spring of that year (1990),\(^{15}\) along with a children's concert that took place in April.\(^{16}\)

During the orchestra's second season, there was some talk that went on regarding the administrative structure of the organization. According to Eve in October, 1989, the organization was in the process of electing a board of directors, but other organizational matters (e.g. memberships and subscription series) had not even been discussed. The

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\(^{13}\)"Miles City Community Orchestra," concert program, 21 May 1989, Miles City, Mont.

\(^{14}\)Vicki Bergerson, telephone interview by author, 25 April 1990, tape recording.

\(^{15}\)Allan Eve, telephone interview by author, 3 October 1989, tape recording.

\(^{16}\)Vicki Bergerson, telephone interview by author, 25 April 1990, tape recording.
funds obtained to this point had come via the efforts of a couple women who solicited local businesses and generous individuals for donations. The orchestra personnel received no compensation, and it was felt that this policy would continue. At the concerts, donations were accepted with the stipulation that the funds received would be used for the purchase of music, as well as other incidental expenses. Thus far, the Northwest Community College had lent some of the orchestra music, and, as mentioned above, rehearsal facilities were provided by both the Eagles Manor and the high school.^

By the spring of 1990, the Miles City Community Orchestra had become a member of the American Symphony Orchestra League (ASOL), as well as the state organization, the Montana Association of Symphony Orchestras (MASO). However, the ensemble was still in the process of incorporating and electing a board of directors.^

The orchestra grew to about thirty to thirty-six players in the year 1989-1990, so the slow-paced organizational

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\begin{itemize}
\item ^17 Allan Eve, telephone interview by author, 3 October 1989, tape recording.
\item ^18 "Miles City Community Orchestra," concert program, 21 May 1989, Miles City, Montana.
\item ^19 Vicki Bergerson, telephone interview by author, 25 April 1990, tape recording.
\item ^20 Allan Eve, telephone interview by author, 3 October 1989, tape recording.
\end{itemize}
process had not diminished the enthusiasm that had been generated in the town and within the orchestra. In two years' time, this youngest member of Montana's orchestral family had made great strides. As one member commented, "... it shows what kind of a vacuum there was here, and what a need that this is filling."  

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21Vicki Bergerson, telephone interview by author, 25 April 1990, tape recording.
Orchestral activities in Dillon have always been connected in some fashion with the local college. According to one source, however, the beginnings of the community orchestra in Dillon rested with a man who taught music in the town's public schools in the 1930s and 1940s, Lynn A. Gregory.

Not much is known about Gregory, but he apparently had organized some student orchestras in the schools, and sometime around 1930 he organized an adult orchestra. This orchestra included some of the instructors at the local college, then known as the Montana State Normal College. In order to make the group larger, students from the high school and grade schools were included if they were skilled enough to make a contribution to the ensemble. But this adult orchestra was an extra burden to Gregory, who was already busy enough with his work in the schools. Gregory gave the orchestra to Miss Frances Robinson, who was a violinist and music instructor at the Normal College. Around the time that Miss Robinson assumed the leadership of the orchestra, the organization then became associated with the College, and it was known as the
Montana State Normal College Little Symphony Orchestra.¹

A local paper stated that the Little Symphony began in the Fall of 1930, but it is unclear at this writing whether the orchestra was under Gregory's or Robinson's direction at that time.² At any rate, the first concert by the Montana State Normal College Little Symphony Orchestra under Robinson's direction was given on April 20, 1931, and included works by Schubert, Beethoven, Haydn, and Levitzki. The program was shared by a piano solo, a cello duet, a cornet duet, and a string orchestra from the larger orchestra (playing Mock Morris Dance by Grainger).³

The next year saw an increase in activity for the orchestra. The second annual concert took place early in March, 1932, with a format similar to the first concert, i.e., orchestral selections interspersed with solo selections.⁴ Following this, the Little Symphony and the Normal College Women's Glee Club were scheduled to perform a one-hour concert to be broadcast on the NBC radio program, Around the Network.⁵ The concert was to take place on May 28 of that year, and was

¹Leone Tayne, telephone interview by author, 28 March 1990, tape recording.
²Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 22 April 1931, 1 and 8.
³Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 15 April 1931, 5.
⁴Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 9 March 1932, 1.
⁵Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 1 June 1932, 1.
broadcast by remote control to station KGIR in Butte. The program was then fed to NBC's KPO network, and was heard not only in Butte, but also in San Diego, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Denver, Seattle, Portland, and Spokane. In the spring of 1933, the Little Symphony was again scheduled on radio, this time for two half-hour programs. After this, however, it is not certain whether the orchestra made subsequent broadcasts; the Dillon Examiner newspaper appears to give no other information on this matter, with the exception of the remark that the group "several times presented programs over the radio."

In the summer of 1934, the Little Symphony presented a mid-summer program entitled, "Symphony Under the Stars." A second annual "Symphony Under the Stars" was presented in late-July, 1935. These concerts were performed outdoors on the College campus, and apparently were well-received.

One other performing opportunity was afforded the Little Symphony, in addition to the annual spring concert and the above-mentioned radio programs: the commencement exercises at the Normal College. This ceremony generally took place in the

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6 Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 27 April 1932, 1 and 4.
7 Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 22 February 1933, 1.
8 Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 28 February 1934, 1.
9 Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 17 July 1935, 1.
first part of June, and the orchestra was usually given the task of playing the processional and recessional for the program. The performances at commencement began at least as early as June of 1932.\(^{10}\)

Miss Frances E. Robinson conducted the Little Symphony until she resigned from her position at the Normal College late in the summer of 1935. Robinson left Dillon to take a position on the faculty of the San Jose State Teachers College in California.\(^{11}\) The Little Symphony was then directed by Ralph McFadden.\(^{12}\) McFadden was a Dillon native and was a music instructor at the Normal College. His major instrument was piano.\(^{13}\) McFadden conducted the orchestra for the remainder of its life.\(^{14}\)

Throughout the rest of the 1930s and early 1940s, the Montana State Normal College Little Symphony could count on annually playing a spring concert, participating in a variety show entitled the "May Fete," and playing the processional and recessional at college commencement in late spring. In 1941, the spring concert, which could be performed as early as

\(^{10}\) Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 8 June 1932, 1 and 4.

\(^{11}\) Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 2 October 1935, 1.

\(^{12}\) Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 18 March 1936, 1.

\(^{13}\) Leone Tayne, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 28 March 1990.

\(^{14}\) Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 2 June 1943, 8.
February (as the February 10, 1937 issue of the Dillon Examiner testifies), was then eliminated, or perhaps incorporated into the "May Fete." The "May Fete" appeared again in 1942 but apparently was discontinued after that time. Presumably, the concerns of World War II and perhaps the decrease of available musicians caused a loss of interest in the Little Symphony. No record of either the spring concert or "May Fete" was found in the year 1943, although the orchestra played at commencement that year. In 1944, the commencement duties were performed by pianist Ralph McFadden instead of an orchestra. After the 1943 spring commencement there is no evidence (as of this writing) of an orchestra. The Montana State Normal College Little Symphony probably was never reorganized after its commencement program in May of 1943.

Orchestral activity had been dormant in Dillon for about thirty-seven years when, in the fall of 1980, the college at Dillon (then called Western Montana College) hired Judy Paul as a music instructor. Paul, a native of Kalispell, received her Bachelors of Music Education from Willamette University in

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15Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 19? May 1941, 1.
16Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 6 May 1942, 5.
17Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 2 June 1943, 8.
18Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 31 May 1944, 1.
Salem, Oregon, and her Masters in Music Education from the University of Montana. That same Fall in 1980, Judy Paul organized a string quartet, comprised of herself and three of her students.\(^{19}\) They played on a Christmas program in December of 1980, and in the following months the group evolved into a string ensemble that contained community people as well as students.\(^{20,21}\)

In the summer of 1981, Dr. Robert Thomas, then president of Western Montana College, made plans to provide additional entertainment for all the people that would be attending the rodeo that is held annually each Labor Day in Dillon. Thomas had recently moved to Dillon from a prior job at Pepperdine University in Los Angeles, California. He and his wife decided that they could promote Dillon and Western Montana College by putting on a quality production of the Irving Berlin musical, *Annie Get Your Gun*. With Western Montana College underwriting the venture, the Thomas's went to work. But, instead of using local talent for the major roles, Thomas and his wife relied heavily on casting talent that was

\(^{19}\) *Wescolite*, 23 January 1981, 1 and 4.

\(^{20}\) Judy (Paul) Sine, telephone interview by author, 25 April 1990, tape recording.

imported from Pepperdine University and the surrounding area. Elsewhere in the production, the people of Dillon and nearby communities were used only in small parts. The pit orchestra used, though, was formed chiefly with local people. Three performances were given, and each performance was sold out. However, the musical lost money due to the great expense of importing people and equipment from the Los Angeles area, and Western Montana College was obligated to make up for the loss. Because of this, and also because the local talent hadn't been utilized, there was dissatisfaction among the local participants regarding this production.

One positive thing came from the Annie Get Your Gun experience, however, and that was the formation of the Dillon Community Orchestra. The musical director that was imported from Los Angeles for the performances of Annie Get Your Gun encouraged the pit orchestra to stay together as an ensemble. Upon resuming her teaching duties in the Fall of 1981, Judy Paul then found herself the conductor of not just a small

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22Richard Sietsema, telephone interview by author, 2 May 1990, tape recording.

23Ann Swanson, telephone interview by author, 20 February 1990, tape recording.

24Richard Sietsema, telephone interview by author, 2 May 1990, tape recording.


26Dillon (Mont.) Tribune-Examiner, 22 September 1981, 2.
string ensemble, but rather a fair-sized chamber orchestra.\textsuperscript{27} The group began rehearsing on Monday nights on the fourth floor of Western Montana College's Main Hall.\textsuperscript{28}

The Dillon Community Orchestra gave its first concert in November, 1981.\textsuperscript{29} Two more concerts followed in that academic year: one in March, and one in late-April of 1982. Generally these concerts were shared by the orchestra with choral groups from Western Montana College and sometimes with a jazz ensemble. The literature played by the orchestra included the Academic Festival Overture of Brahms, a movement of a Haydn symphony or a Mozart serenade, an arrangement of Bach pieces, a contemporary work by a Western Montana College student, as well as works in a more popular vein, such as Irving Berlin--A Symphonic Portrait, arranged by Hawley Ades.\textsuperscript{30} The conducting duties were not always taken by Ms. Paul; a few other members of the group would each be responsible for conducting a work on the concert.

In 1982, the end of her second year at Western Montana College, Judy Paul resigned from her position, got married,

\textsuperscript{27}Judy (Paul) Sine, telephone interview by author, 25 April 1990, tape recording.

\textsuperscript{28}Montana Standard (Butte, Mont.), 3 February 1982, 14.

\textsuperscript{29}Dillon (Mont.) Tribune-Examiner, 6 October 1981, B-6.

and moved with her husband to the Bitterroot Valley, south of Missoula. The position left vacant by Ms. Paul (her married name then being Judy Sine) was filled by one James Hearon. Whereas Judy Paul's major instrument was piano, Hearon was chiefly a violinist. He had received his bachelors and masters degrees from the University of Alabama, had taught public school music in Alabama, and then received his D.M.A. from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. In addition, Hearon played guitar, and was a composer.

In mid-September of 1982, the Dillon Community Orchestra resumed its weekly Monday night rehearsal schedule, now under the baton of Dr. Hearon. Again, three concerts were given that season, or one concert during each college quarter. The first concert took place in early November of 1982. It was noteworthy because the Butte Symphony Orchestra had been invited to come and share the concert. Each orchestra played half of the concert: first the Dillon orchestra under Hearon, and then the Butte orchestra under its director, Leopoldo

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31 Judy (Paul) Sine, telephone interview by author, 25 April 1990, tape recording.

32 Dillon (Mont.) Tribune-Examiner, 24 August 1982, Fall 1982 Back to School publication, 7.


Medina. For the finale, both orchestras joined forces and played Henry Purcell’s *Trumpet Voluntary* under the direction of Al Guinn, associate conductor of the Butte Symphony. This may have been the first time two Montana community orchestras had played together as a combined unit.\(^{35}\)

March 20, 1983 was the date for the next concert, which was the first full concert given by the orchestra, i.e., not shared with a jazz or choral group, or another orchestra. The concert included James Hearon as soloist in a violin concerto from *L'estro armonico* by Vivaldi. This work was conducted by an associate conductor, Leonard Ostwalt, and one other work on the program, a Mozart *Divertimento*, was conducted by another associate conductor, Don Resset. Both Ostwalt and Resset were public school music teachers.\(^{36}\)

The final concert of the 1982-83 year took place on April 24, 1983, and was shared by the Western Montana College Chorus. The orchestra played works in a more serious vein, including pieces for smaller chamber ensembles, while the chorus sang popular tunes from the early twentieth century. One combined work was performed: Faure’s *Pavane* op. 50 for Chorus and Orchestra. This was the first choral/orchestral

\(^{35}\)“Dillon Community Orchestra,” concert program, 7 November 1982, Dillon, Mont.

\(^{36}\)“Dillon Community Orchestra,” concert program, 20 March 1983, Dillon Mont.
combined work attempted by the Dillon Community Orchestra.

As the above description shows, the 1982-83 season contained a lot of "firsts." Whether these innovations were due to Hearon's leadership is not certain, but he must have been a primary moving force for the ensemble that year. This is reflected in the programming style, which attempted to reach for some of the standard orchestral repertoire in addition to playing lighter pieces. While the orchestra continued to play music like Selections from "Fiddler on the Roof" and Medley of Stephen Foster Songs, they also began playing overtures of Mozart and Rossini, and both movements of Schubert's Symphony no. 8 in B minor.

However, while Hearon was an important contributor to the growth that the orchestra made, he quite possibly saw the musical atmosphere as a source of frustration for himself. One orchestra member observed that while Hearon was a "marvelous musician," he was also "terribly distressed at our lack of . . . finesse." In any case, Hearon stayed in Dillon for one academic year, and then left to take a teaching position in California.37

Western Montana College then hired David Beier to take Hearon's place as music professor. Beier, a brass player with

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37 Ann Swanson, telephone interview by author, 20 February 1990, tape recording.
a doctorate from the University of Colorado, shared the conducting responsibilities of the orchestra's 1983-84 season with Leonard Ostwalt. A highlight of this season was a performance of Faure's Requiem in March of 1984 by the orchestra and the Dillon Community Chorus, a community group founded by Beier.

The following season of 1984-85, Beier assumed all of the conducting duties of the orchestra, and continued to be the main conductor of the group through the 1989-90 season. Occasionally substitute conductors were required, and at these times either Dr. David Warner (a professor at Western Montana College and conductor of the Dillon Community Chorus after Beier) or Leonard Ostwalt filled in at the podium. For example, in the spring of 1989 David Beier suffered a heart attack, and was still recuperating when the orchestra gathered for rehearsal the following fall. Ostwalt was then called to conduct the concert held that November.

The Dillon Community Orchestra has always had a

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38David Beier, telephone interview by author, 13 December 1989, tape recording.

39Dillon (Mont.) Tribune-Examiner, 2 December 1986, D-1.

40David Beier, telephone interview by author, 13 December 1989, tape recording.

41Dillon (Mont.) Tribune-Examiner, 2 December 1986, D-1.

connection with the local college, largely because each of its principal conductors has been a music professor from Western Montana College. Additionally, the College facilities have been used for rehearsals and performances.\textsuperscript{43} Although the orchestra has been composed primarily of people from the community, there have also been a few who are students at the College. From its earliest days in 1981, it has been possible to receive college credit for being in the orchestra. It was listed first as a continuing education course,\textsuperscript{44} but by 1985 it had become part of the regular curriculum.\textsuperscript{45}

Admission to the concerts has always been free of charge, but donations have been accepted at concerts, and this has helped to take care of expenses, e.g., the printing of programs. With the money that remained, the orchestra has continued to purchase music to build up its library, some of which had existed since the days of the Western Montana Normal School Little Symphony. The majority of the orchestra's library belongs to the Dillon Community Orchestra proper, but for convenience it has been stored at Western Montana College. Since the orchestra has been a part of the College course

\textsuperscript{43}Dillon (Mont.) Tribune-Examiner, 2 December 1986, D-1.

\textsuperscript{44}Judy (Paul) Sine, telephone interview by author, 25 April 1990.

\textsuperscript{45}David Beier, telephone interview by author, 13 December 1989, tape recording.
offerings, some of the extra-musical duties and expenses of the orchestra have been assumed by the College. For example, in the past Beier used to take care of the orchestra's publicity matters himself, including writing the copy and contacting the local newspapers for coverage. This job then was taken over by the publicity office at the College.

The Dillon Community Orchestra has through the 1989-90 season been entirely volunteer; not even the conductors have gotten paid for their work. The group has functioned without an advisory board, and because of this, practically all administrative matters have fallen on the shoulders of conductors Beier and Warner. The jobs of setting up and tearing down for rehearsals and concerts, as well as overseeing financial matters, have been performed by the conductors in addition to their duties of programming and conducting. There has also been one other person who keeps the checkbook up to date and pays the bills. Because of the volunteer effort, the assistance from Western Montana College, and the encouraging financial support of the community through freewill donations, the Dillon Community Orchestra has remained financially healthy.

The Dillon Community Orchestra has sometimes played an overture or a movement of a symphony from the standard orchestral literature, but in general the pieces selected for programs have been suites, waltzes, marches, medleys of
popular songs, or even simplified arrangements for school orchestras. A typical orchestra concert at Dillon might be comparable to a "pops" concert in a larger Montana community.

When David Beier first began conducting the Dillon Community Orchestra in 1983, the number of concerts in a season remained the same as in the past, with the ensemble performing once in the fall, winter, and spring, and some extra appearances, including commencement exercises at Western Montana College. Over the years, however, it has become increasingly more difficult to find enough string players to play in all the concerts, so in the fall of 1988 the orchestra organized for the fall months only. The orchestra usually numbered from twenty-five to thirty people, of which the strings number about ten.\footnote{David Beier, telephone interview by author, 13 December 1989, tape recording.} Despite this small number, the level of commitment is quite high. The orchestra in Dillon can almost be considered a regional orchestra, counting among its number a few residents of other towns in Beaverhead County, like Twin Bridges and Sheridan.\footnote{Dillon (Mont.) Tribune-Examiner, 2 December 1986, D-1.}

With an orchestra this size, organizing for only one season each year, it was difficult for Beier to project very far into the future. He had considered taking the orchestra to nearby towns once they had prepared a program and had...
performed it in Dillon. However, of prime concern was trying to recruit enough players and find the right kind of music to make a cohesive group for that particular year. Beier nevertheless felt optimistic about achieving this goal, and at the end of the year 1989 was able to report that the general response from the community was that "every year we sound better."^{48}

^{48}David Beier, telephone interview by author, 13 December 1989, tape recording.
CHAPTER 6
KALISPELL AND THE FLATHEAD VALLEY

The musical history of Kalispell and the Flathead Valley would be lacking without the mention of L.L. Goddard, who can be viewed as one of the important early musical influences that set the stage for the musical events in the Flathead Valley during the 1950s. L.L. Goddard was a violinist who had come to the United States from England. Goddard had apparently received some training from the Royal Conservatory of Music, and had received some orchestra experience, first with a group that played on the ship that carried him from England to the U.S., and then with various orchestras in Chicago, Minneapolis, and Spokane. Upon settling in Kalispell around 1902, he organized the 15-member Liberty Theater orchestra. Later on, Goddard directed the Kalispell City Band from 1925 to 1950. During his time in Kalispell, he taught many instruments as a private teacher, but his first love was the violin.¹ Little else is known about Goddard, except that Del Langbell, who was Superintendent of the Kalispell schools

from the 1950s through the 1970s, noted that he was somewhat suspicious of music teachers who taught other subjects, and didn't think too highly of the younger generation of musicians.\(^2\) Because Goddard's Liberty Theater orchestra was both a dance orchestra as well as a theater orchestra, this group is out of the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, it is probably fair to conclude that L.L. Goddard was one of the chief musical influences on the residents of Kalispell and the Flathead Valley that created the favorable climate necessary to produce the Flathead Valley Orchestra.

The beginnings of the Flathead Valley Orchestra were rooted with Nancy Critelli's teaching stint in Kalispell. Critelli came to Kalispell in 1950 to teach in the high school after finishing college at Montana State University in Missoula. One of her main jobs was to build an orchestra program in the school system. As one of the few music teachers in town, she taught not only strings, but other instruments as well. In the high school, she offered a class in recreational instruments, where she taught instruments as diverse as guitar, accordion, and violin. During her second year of teaching (1951), she was made aware of a celebration event that was to take place, and she thought that it would be a good occasion for an ensemble to perform. So, she sought

\(^2\)Del Langbell, telephone interview by author, 19 February 1990, tape recording.
out various people in the community to augment the number of
students that she had in her recreational instruments class.\(^3\) One of the people she contacted was Solveig Grimsrud, wife of Rev. J. Milton Grimsrud.

Mrs. Grimsrud had received violin training at the Minot State Teachers College (where Del Langbell had received his training), St. Olaf College, and then received a degree in music education at the University of Minnesota with a minor in voice. She had studied violin privately in the Minneapolis area with a Lota Mundy, a pupil of Leopold Auer,\(^4\) and had taken some orchestral and choral conducting at the University of Minnesota.\(^5\) The Grimsruds had just moved to Kalispell in 1951, where Rev. Grimsrud was to be minister at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church. When Nancy Critelli called Mrs. Grimsrud and asked if she could attend a rehearsal Critelli had organized that evening, Mrs. Grimsrud was eager to join. The reason for her enthusiasm was because she had started an orchestra in Richland, Washington, where her husband's previous position had been, and she knew from that experience in Washington that

\(^{\text{3}}\)Nancy Critelli, conversation with author, 2 September 1989, Billings, Mont.

\(^{\text{4}}\)Arthur E. Wascher and Thomas Clayton Ingham, Who's Who in Music and Dramatic Art in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis, Minn.: Associated Publicity Bureau, 1925), 146.

\(^{\text{5}}\)Solveig Grimsrud, telephone interview by author, 6 December 1989.
an orchestra could be born in Kalispell as well.

At that first rehearsal that evening, Nancy Critelli provided music from the high school library. The ensemble eventually became a group of ten by the time they played their first performance in the local junior high gym. With that performance sometime in late 1951 or early 1952, the seed for the Flathead Valley Orchestra was planted. Nancy Critelli left later in 1952, and Mrs. Grimsrud took over the leadership. Soon after the performance in the junior high gym, some other people suggested that Grimsrud expand the group to include woodwinds and brass. With suggestions of names from those she knew, Grimsrud called a number of musicians, and soon had a small orchestra that was willing to practice regularly. After searching the school systems to try to find someone to direct the group, Mrs. Grimsrud decided to direct it herself, since she had been a music education major, and had more time to devote to the ensemble than any of the public school teachers. One source quotes the Flathead

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7Nancy Critelli, conversation with author, 2 September 1989, Billings, Mont.


9Solveig Grimsrud, telephone interview by author, 6 December 1989, tape recording.
orchestra's organization date as November, 1952.\textsuperscript{10} According to Grimsrud, the first concert of this new ensemble was a Christmas concert in 1952.\textsuperscript{11} Apparently, Mrs. Grimsrud orchestrated some Christmas pieces in order to accommodate the instrumentation she had for her ensemble.\textsuperscript{12}

Another source indicates that the first concert did not occur until March 28, 1953. This source also noted that Superintendent of Schools Del P. Langbell (who was also concertmaster of the orchestra), was able to convince the local Chamber of Commerce to underwrite the first concert, so that the orchestra could have the necessary funds to buy music for this concert. The tentative name for the orchestra at this time was the Flathead Symphony Orchestra. The needed funds for this orchestra amounted to seventy-five dollars.\textsuperscript{13}

At some point early on, the orchestra joined the American Symphony Orchestra League (ASOL). Mrs. Grimsrud paid the membership dues for the first few years because she "thought it was important." The ASOL was interested in encouraging

\footnotesize{Robert Taylor, "Montana's Community Orchestras: A Survey," Montana Institute of the Arts Quarterly 8 (Spring 1956): 10.}

\footnotesize{Solveig Grimsrud, Richland, Wash., to Rick Torgerson, Missoula, Mont., 7 December 1989.}

\footnotesize{Solveig Grimsrud, telephone interview by author, 6 December 1989, tape recording.}

\footnotesize{Great Falls (Mont.) Tribune, 18 January 1953, 20.
growth of new and small community orchestras, and the membership fee, according to Grimsrud, was only about ten dollars a year. One of the benefits of membership in the American Symphony Orchestra League was being able to take advantage of their lending library of donated music. A stipulation of membership was that the orchestra's programs contain at least one piece in each concert that was from the standard orchestral repertoire. This was often fulfilled by featuring local soloists in operatic arias or concerti. A few of these soloists included Marilynne Korn, soprano, Luella Crum and Norma Happ, piano, Clara Ellen Collins, violin, Maro Butchart, baritone, and Donald Hayes, tenor.

After the orchestra's concert in March, 1953 there was apparently another performance given at a local Spring Folk Festival that featured local talent. Whether rehearsals continued into the summer months is not known. During the academic year, though, rehearsals were held first at the high school. Later, the rehearsal location was changed to the junior high, because it was easier to schedule time to use the building. In general, Mrs. Grimsrud recalled that the public

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14 Solveig Grimsrud, telephone interview by author, 6 December, 1989, tape recording.


schools were very cooperative with this community orchestra venture. Mrs. Grimsrud hoped that Ed Beckstrand, who was Kalispell's high school band director, would consent to conduct the group. Beckstrand refused to conduct, though, because he felt he was too busy. However, he showed his support by attending any and all the orchestra's concerts, and even encouraged some of his band students to join the orchestra. Beckstrand allowed the high school timpani to be loaned out to the orchestra, and concerts were given in the high school auditorium.\textsuperscript{17}

In addition to the music provided by the American Symphony Orchestra League, the new orchestra also obtained music from the high school library with Beckstrand's permission. From the high school, the orchestra gained access to the \textit{Symphony no. 1} of Beethoven. Mrs. Grimsrud recalled programming it in the orchestra's second year and commented that "it went well."\textsuperscript{18} Very little other written information remains of these early concerts, because Mrs. Grimsrud's collection of early programs and news clippings were borrowed from her at one point and never returned.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17}Solveig Grimsrud, telephone interview by author, 6 December 1989, tape recording.

\textsuperscript{18}Solveig Grimsrud, Richland, Wash., to Rick Torgerson, Missoula, Mont., 7 December 1989.

\textsuperscript{19}Solveig Grimsrud, Richland, Wash., to Rick Torgerson, Missoula, Mont., 7 December 1989. More detailed information
Other forms of support existed for the orchestra as well. When its seasons got underway in the beginning years, the orchestra was assisted by "sort of a women's group that followed along with us." Not much else is known about this supporting group, although they may have given support and assistance in the first two or three years of the orchestra's existence. This included helping with ticket sales, and providing receptions for the orchestra. The orchestra's timpanist, Billie Brown, remembered a Kalispell Ladies Club that provided refreshments. By its 1955-1956 season, though, the Flathead Valley Orchestra, as it had come to be called, was being sponsored by the Kalispell Federated Music Club. The orchestra's budget at this time was approximately $300.

At the time of its 1955-1956 season, the Flathead Valley Orchestra had given eight concerts, with programs that included, among other works, movements from Beethoven's Symphony no. 5, Schubert's Symphony no. 8, Brahms' Symphony no. 1, and a movement from a Rubenstein piano concerto. They may possibly be obtained by searching copies of the Daily InterLake from the Fall, 1952 to Fall, 1955.

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20 Solveig Grimsrud, telephone interview by author, 6 December 1989, tape recording.

21 Solveig Grimsrud, telephone interview by author, 6 December 1989, tape recording.

had given a performance of Handel's Messiah, Beethoven's Symphony no. 1, and the entire Schumann Piano Concerto. The skill level of the orchestra is revealed when Mrs. Grimsrud noted that the Schumann work was "a big undertaking" because of the after-beat rhythms involved in the accompaniment. This notwithstanding, in less than five years an ensemble had emerged from the region encompassing Columbia Falls, Bigfork, Eureka, Lakeside, Creston, and Kalispell that was intent on performing works from the standard orchestral repertoire. Under Mrs. Grimsrud's direction a small disparate group of musicians had become a balanced orchestra of approximately thirty pieces that could begin to make its way through some of the easier repertoire for orchestra.

For the 1955-1956 season a new face appeared on the podium: that of James Johnson. Why Grimsrud stepped down is not entirely clear. It is thought that Grimsrud and her husband may have left Kalispell that year on a mission assignment to Riverside, California, and for this reason Johnson was called to take Grimsrud's place. Johnson taught

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24Solveig Grimsrud, telephone interview by author, 6 December 1989, tape recording.

strings in the junior high, and had assisted in training some viola players to a point to where they could contribute musically to the Flathead Valley Orchestra.\(^{26}\) He had received his training at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota.\(^{27}\) Johnson directed for two seasons, continuing even when Mrs. Grimsrud returned to the area. Grimsrud recalled that Johnson "worked real hard on us." Then Johnson either was promoted or took a job elsewhere, because by the 1957-1958 season he had left the directorship of the orchestra.\(^{28}\) The next person appointed to be director was Wilber Anders. Anders, a music teacher in Bigfork, had graduated from St. Olaf College, had taken coursework at the Eastman School of Music, and had taught school in Bozeman, Montana, as well as in South Dakota, and Washington. In addition he had been a music director of "Chapel Hour" for radio stations in Spokane and Seattle, and had experience as a choir director in church and for opera.\(^{29}\) Anders was, according to Paul Lawrence, "dang good . . . one

\(^{26}\)Solveig Grimsrud, telephone interview by author, 6 December 1989, tape recording.


\(^{28}\)Solveig Grimsrud, telephone interview by author, 6 December 1989, tape recording.

\(^{29}\)Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Interlake, article probably from April, 1960.
of the best choral directors I've ever seen in my life." However, according to one report, Anders didn't want to travel the icy roads in the winter, so he resigned on October 29 of that year. Mrs. Grimsrud was again appointed director.

The orchestra season at this time consisted of a two-concert season, with orchestra rehearsals every Tuesday. One concert featured five young ballet students from a local ballet teacher in town who ran a school called the Shawhan Ballet School. These students danced in costume while the orchestra played various movements from Tchaikowsky's Nutcracker Suite.

While this season was still sponsored by the Kalispell Federated Music Club (who had officers and chaired the symphony fund drive), the Flathead Valley Orchestra was also electing their own board members, as well as their own orchestra manager. It was thought by Mrs. Grimsrud that the Kalispell Federated Music Club sponsored the symphony

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30 Paul Lawrence, telephone interview by author, 15 May 1990, tape recording.


32 "Flathead Valley Orchestra Plans Concert for Feb. 13," Kalispell (Mont.) Interlake, November or December, 1957.

33 Kalispell (Mont.) Interlake, 12 February 1958.

34 Solveig Grimsrud, telephone interview by author, 6 December 1989, tape recording.
concerts for three years. After this time the orchestra "elected officers and did the required business ourselves."³⁵ It is not known what the reasons were for discontinuing the partnership between the Music Club and the orchestra, but it might be asserted that although the orchestra had its own board during the time the Music Club sponsored the orchestra, the responsibilities for promoting the orchestra were not assumed by the orchestra board until the Music Club stopped their sponsorship of the concerts. This assertion may be upheld by noting that with the beginning of rehearsals for the 1958-1959 season, a new office was created to add to the existing board officers and directors: that of publicity manager. A new feature of the 1958-1959 season was the expansion of the season to three concerts. For this year there was to be a concert in December, March, and a concert of "popular" music in May.³⁶ Musical highlights of this season included the Beethoven Symphony no. 1, three original songs for soprano composed by the soloist Marilynne Korn and orchestrated by Mrs. Grimsrud, January-February-March by Don Gillis,³⁷ and Concerto in E flat for Trumpet by Haydn (with


³⁶Kalispell (Mont.) Interlake, 5 October 1958, p. 3.

³⁷"Flathead Valley Orchestra," concert program, 2 April 1959.
orchestra member Larry Stallings as soloist). The "pops" concert in May included Strauss waltzes, Brahms' Hungarian Dance no. 5 for marimba solo and orchestra (with orchestra member Billie Brown as soloist), pieces by Leroy Anderson (including Trumpeter's Lullaby, again with Stallings as soloist), selections from Meredith Willson's The Music Man, El Relicario by Jose Padilla, and Sousa's Stars and Stripes Forever.\(^{38}\)

The following season was also a three-concert season, with concerts in December, February, and May. The December concert was a combination of Christmas pieces and traditional orchestra works, including Mozart's Overture to "Il Re Pastore", Schubert's Symphony no. 5, Rimsky-Korsakov's Polonaise from "A Christmas Night", Waldteufel's Skaters' Waltz, and Leroy Anderson's A Christmas Festival. A contralto from Kalispell, Joyce Mow, was featured in two songs: Jesus of Nazareth by Gounod, and O Holy Night by Adam (orchestrated by Mrs. Grimsrud).\(^{39,40}\) Additionally, a guest conductor directed the orchestra in the Schubert symphony. The guest conductor, Herbert Iverson, was a pianist and organist who had

\(^{38}\)Mrs. J. M. Grimsrud, "Orchestra Sets Spring Concert," Kalispell (Mont.) Interlake, late April or early May, 1959.

\(^{39}\)"Valley Orchestra Sets First Event," Kalispell (Mont.) Interlake, Fall, 1959.

\(^{40}\)"Flathead Valley Orchestra," concert program, 10 December 1959.
just received his Masters in music from the University of Redlands in California. Iverson had played with the Flathead Orchestra in high school while it was still very young. He had agreed to be pianist for the group for the Fall, 1959 concert, and since there was no part for the piano in the Schubert, the board members agreed to have Iverson conduct, thus allowing Mrs. Grimsrud to play violin. This attests to the board's creative use of personnel, as well as Mrs. Grimsrud's flexibility and lack of ego in allowing herself to be used in whatever capacity was needed.\textsuperscript{41}

The February, 1960 concert included \textit{Overture to "Titus"} and the \textit{Concerto for Clarinet}, both by Mozart, an orchestral transcription of Handel's \textit{Where E'er You Walk} from "Semele", Jarnefelt's \textit{Praeludium}, Rosse from the South by Strauss, and some contemporary works based on folk-tunes.\textsuperscript{42}

The concert in May was again a "pops" concert, and presented again the Handel transcription \textit{Where E'er You Walk} as preformed in the February concert, an organ concerto of Handel (with Herbert Iverson as soloist), \textit{Serenade d'Amore} by Mantovani, the theme from \textit{Moulin Rouge} by George Auric, and a medley of songs from \textit{South Pacific} by Richard Rodgers. Also included were two pieces that featured the horn player, Donald

\textsuperscript{41}\textit{Kalispell (Mont.) Interlake}, 7 December 1959, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{42}"Flathead Valley Orchestra," concert program, 18 February 1960.
Isbell: Serenade by Titl, and Pavane for a Dead Infant by Ravel. Isbell had taught strings in the local school district, and was the orchestra's business manager as well as its horn player. In the beginnings of the Flathead Valley Orchestra, Isbell had been an important contact for Mrs. Grimsrud while she was combing the area for musicians. Isbell was able to put Mrs. Grimsrud in touch with the wind players necessary to fill out the orchestra's instrumentation. This concert was Isbell's last with the orchestra, and having him featured was probably a way for the orchestra to express their appreciation for his presence and his work in the organization. In between the February and May concerts, the Flathead Valley Orchestra appeared in one additional concert, and that was a presentation of the Handel Messiah, given on April 10 at the Flathead County High School gymnasium. This presentation was directed by Wilber Anders (the music teacher in Bigfork mentioned above). The 130-voice chorus was composed of vocalists from twenty-two church choirs in the

43 Kalispell (Mont.) Interlake, 5 May 1960, p. 2.
44 Don Beller, interview by author, 11 February 1990, Missoula, Mont., tape recording.
45 Kalispell (Mont.) Interlake, 5 May 1960, p. 2.
46 Solveig Grimsrud, telephone interview by author, 6 December 1989, tape recording.
47 Kalispell (Mont.) Interlake, 5 May 1960, p. 2.
towns of Kalispell, Columbia Falls, Whitefish, Evergreen, Somers, Creston, and Stillwater. A key assistant in rehearsing this chorus was Herbert Iverson, and one newspaper article credits his work as being responsible for organizing this choir, which by the Fall of 1960 was called the Flathead Valley Choral Society.

With the beginning of the Flathead Valley Symphony's 1960-1961 season, Messiah was again scheduled for performance, this time on December 4. The first orchestra concert was not scheduled until January 19, 1961, and the second concert was to be in March. It is not known whether a third concert was planned. The Messiah concert in December was conducted again by Wilber Anders, and Mrs. Grimsrud was both the contralto soloist as well as a member of the orchestra. The January concert had O. B. Arestad as the conductor. Arestad was a choral teacher in the public schools, and when Donald Isbell left the area, Arestad took over teaching the school string program. Arestad was a good violinist, and had been

48 Kalispell (Mont.) Interlake, 27 March 1960.

49 "Iverson Will Be Organist for 'Messiah' Production," Kalispell (Mont.) Interlake, Fall 1960.


51 Kalispell (Mont.) Interlake, 2 December 1960.

52 Don Beller, interview by author, 11 February 1990, Missoula, Mont., tape recording.
concertmaster of the Flathead Valley Orchestra for a few years prior to him becoming conductor. Why or how the change was made to have Arestad the conductor of the orchestra is not entirely clear. Mrs. Grimsrud stated that she left in 1961, although when in 1961 she left has not been discovered. Since she was in the area to be a soloist in Messiah in December of 1960, it is possible Mrs. Grimsrud may have been in the area during the first concert of 1961. However, she may have known she was going to be moving (her husband obtained a ministerial position in Richland, Washington), and she may have wanted to relinquish her leadership of the orchestra early, so as to get the group accustomed to a new leader. On the other hand, she may have left the area before the January 1961 concert, at which point the orchestra board may have decided to elect O. B. Arestad to be the conductor. For whatever reason, Arestad assumed leadership of the orchestra in the 1960-1961 season.

The program for the January concert included Haydn's Symphony no. 97, El Relicario by Padilla, Selections from "The Music Man" by Willson, and Tales from the Vienna Woods by Johann Strauss. Additionally, one of the soprano soloists from the Messiah presentation in the previous December was featured in this concert: Mrs. Phyllis McCarthy sang The

53Solveig Grimsrud, telephone interview by author, 6 December 1989, tape recording.
Maids of Cadiz by Delibes and With Verdure Clad by Haydn.\textsuperscript{54}

After this concert very little is known about the Flathead Valley Orchestra. The ensemble may have finished the season, but nothing has been found to date to substantiate this claim. Whether it continued into a 1961-1962 season is also unknown. The end of this orchestral venture is rather unclear in the minds of most of the sources consulted. There is, however, some evidence to form a belief that O. B. Arestad lacked leadership skills. According to Del Langbell (superintendent of the Kalispell public schools and previous concertmaster of the Flathead Valley Orchestra), Arestad was a fine musician and could work well with young people, but found it difficult to work with adults. He added that when Mrs. Grimsrud left, "that's when it fell apart."\textsuperscript{55} Don Beller, a high school student at the time in the Flathead Valley, recalled that Arestad was a good musician, but not inspiring.\textsuperscript{56} Clara Ellen Collins Anderson, who was concertmaster when O. B. Arestad was conductor, noted that Arestad's "heart wasn't in it" the way Mrs. Grimsrud's was, and added that she thought Arestad lacked the "physical drive" to keep the orchestra

\textsuperscript{54}Kalispell (Mont.) Interlake, 19 January 1961?

\textsuperscript{55}Del Langbell, telephone interview by author, 19 February 1990, tape recording.

\textsuperscript{56}Don Beller, interview by author, 11 February 1990, Missoula, Mont., tape recording.
Mrs. Grimsrud related that she thought Arestad was the last conductor and that "it was while he was doing it that he just quit." Apparently he was very busy working on the school string program and directing his church choir. Eventually, perhaps in the mid- to late-1960s, Arestad moved to Arizona. Grimsrud also suspected that there weren't enough string players left in the Flathead Valley.58 This point was shared by Billie Brown, who added that the orchestra would lose its high school musicians when they graduated and went to college. Additionally it became more difficult to find a conductor.59 By the time Lindy James arrived in the Kalispell area from Montana State University in Missoula to do her practice teaching in 1964, there was no Flathead Valley Orchestra.60

While the circumstances surrounding the musical end of the Flathead Valley Orchestra are yet to be discovered, some of the final business arrangements seemed slightly more clear. Milo "Bud" Roberts, the last president of the orchestra,


58Solveig Grimsrud, telephone interview by author, 6 December 1989, tape recording.


60Linda Mar (Lindy) James, interview by author, 24 February 1990, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
recalled that there were two- or three-hundred dollars remaining in the orchestra's savings account.® Roberts and the orchestra's last treasurer, Billie Brown, withdrew the money and donated some of the money to the Flathead Valley Community College music department, to be used toward buying a used set of timpani. The remaining money was donated to the local Crimestoppers organization.®® Exactly when this money was donated is not known, though it is possible that the money may have stayed in a Flathead Valley Orchestra savings account for a number of years until a decision was made to donate it.

Although there was no longer an orchestra in the Flathead Valley, a few former members continued to play together in a string quartet or some combination of strings, sometimes with piano. These included, at one time or another, O. B. Arestad, Del Langbell, and Clara Ellen Anderson.®® When Linda and Doug James moved to the Flathead Valley to teach school in 1971, Linda also participated in one of these quartets.®® Apparently these ensembles were mostly for fun, although there were

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® Milo "Bud" Roberts, Jr., interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.


®® Linda Mar (Lindy) James, interview by author, 24 February 1990, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
occasions when these groups were called to play at social events. One of these ensembles performed at the Hockaday Center for the Arts, which was a building that had originally been the public library in Kalispell.

During the early 1970s the only means of bringing live music of the cultivated variety to the Flathead Valley was the Community Concerts series. The Hockaday Center then became an additional venue through which one could hear what is popularly known as "classical music." This came about through the efforts of a number of people, among them being Doug James (husband of Lindy James). When James took a position on the board of the Hockaday Center, he assisted in organizing a Performing Arts Council that would work to bring performing faculty from the University of Montana in Missoula to Kalispell to give a recital at the Hockaday. When this began to result in a number of recitals, it motivated some local musicians to prepare their own concerts to be given in a recital series at the Hockaday. This center also came to be the sponsor for the next community orchestra that sprang up in the region surrounding Kalispell.

The events surrounding the formation of this group began with the hiring of a person around 1972 at the Flathead Valley Community College to add music to the College's curriculum,

and to stimulate the growth of cultivated music in the Valley. The College apparently hired a Dr. Carl Koenig through a phone interview for this position. Not much was known about this person at the time, but his actions quickly revealed to the community that he did not have the ability or desire to do what he was hired to do. Linda (or Lindy) James recalled that he played "pretty good bar piano, but really didn't know anything." Koenig apparently had intentions of starting a community orchestra in the fall after he arrived (perhaps around 1972 or 1973), and he called for a rehearsal of anyone in the area that was interested in playing. According to Lindy James, a lot of people came "out of the woodwork" and showed up to play. However, Koenig's manner left people disappointed. His rather unsophisticated pronunciation of "Mozart" made people suspicious of his musical knowledge. Then it was discovered that Koenig's real agenda was not to play the familiar classics of the orchestral repertoire, but instead to perform Koenig's own compositions. He wanted to put together a Christmas production of his works. According to Lindy, Koenig's music was "awful stuff." At the date of the next rehearsal, almost no one appeared. Apparently Koenig was given money to do whatever he pleased. This included buying music, and having wooden music stands hand-made for the
orchestra. Unfortunately the stands were all made too high.\textsuperscript{66} Paul Lawrence recalled that Koenig was "mostly hot air," and that "you couldn't trust him for anything." It was discovered later that Koenig's music degree had come from a mail-order catalog. Koenig stayed only a couple years,\textsuperscript{67} and ended up with almost no class load at the Community College.

It was while Koenig was still at the College that the College drama teacher wanted to put together a production of Lerner and Loewe's \textit{My Fair Lady}. The drama teacher wanted to have a pit orchestra, yet even though it was to be a College production, Koenig wanted nothing to do with it. So, the drama teacher contacted Doug James and asked if he could put together a pit orchestra. Doug consented, and recruited an orchestra both from those who had performed on the Hockaday recital series (mentioned above) as well as from those who had appeared at Koenig's first rehearsal.\textsuperscript{68} According to Doug James, the conductor of the orchestra, "they were so darn good that we decided we wanted to stay together." Doug then used his connection as board member of the Hockaday Center Board of Directors to ask them if the Hockaday Center would be willing

\textsuperscript{66}Linda Mar (Lindy) James, interview by author, 24 February 1990, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

\textsuperscript{67}Paul Lawrence, telephone interview by author, 15 May 1990, tape recording.

\textsuperscript{68}Linda Mar (Lindy) James, interview by author, 24 February 1990, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
to sponsor the orchestra. The Board agreed\textsuperscript{69} and also agreed
to buy music.\textsuperscript{70} This, then, was the beginning of the Hockaday
Chamber Orchestra.

The Hockaday Chamber Orchestra consisted of younger
people, and only one person, the tuba player Paul Lawrence,
had played in the older Flathead Valley Orchestra (he had been
a double bass player with that organization). Exactly when
this orchestra existed is not known at the time of this
writing. Doug James seemed to recall that the orchestra was
playing during the years 1975 and 1976,\textsuperscript{71} while Lindy James
thought they existed during 1974 and 1975.\textsuperscript{72} Doug James was
the conductor and organizer of the group. The Hockaday
Chamber Orchestra was never incorporated, and it never
belonged to the American Symphony Orchestra League. The
Hockaday Orchestra played seasons of two concerts each, one in
the fall and one in the spring.\textsuperscript{73} Rehearsals were held every

\textsuperscript{69}Doug James, telephone interview by author, 19 February
1990, tape recording.

\textsuperscript{70}Linda Mar (Lindy) James, interview by author, 24
February 1990, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

\textsuperscript{71}Doug James, telephone interview by author, 19 February
1990, tape recording.

\textsuperscript{72}Linda Mar (Lindy) James, interview by author, 24
February 1990, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

\textsuperscript{73}Doug James, telephone interview by author, 19 February
1990, tape recording.
Thursday night at the Hockaday. Performances were generally held at the Hockaday Center. The music played included a Mozart piano concerto at a Fall concert with Linnea Blair (wife of the Community College drama teacher) as piano soloist. The Hockaday performing and seating space was limited, and Lindy James remembers having "crammed the orchestra and grand piano into the Hockaday," but also noted that the soloist and ensemble received a "wonderful response," and that "everyone loved it." Another spring concert consisted of music of Scott Joplin as orchestrated for a New England Conservatory Ensemble conducted by Gunther Schuller for "The Red Back Book," a popular sound recording in the 1970s. This concert was successful enough that it was repeated later in the summer at a local saloon-type opera house, with beer and peanuts served to the audience as the ensemble played. The Summer concert was also successful. Other music played by this orchestra included a late Haydn symphony (Symphony no. 102 it was thought), for which Doug recalled having put together an orchestra of about fifty musicians. The concert programs were filled out with short concert arrangements of music in a more popular vein. Also,

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74Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

75Linda Mar (Lindy) James, interview by author, 24 February 1990, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
it was recalled that the Hockaday Orchestra once put together an evening of music by J. S. Bach.\textsuperscript{76}

For a couple years, then, Kalispell again had an orchestra. Then, in the course of one summer (Lindy James thought it was possibly in 1976), a number of musicians, particularly violinists, had moved away. In addition Doug James had injured his back and was unable to conduct. With these two obstacles, the Hockaday Chamber Orchestra came to an end. However, all the remaining musicians in the area kept in contact with each other. This was facilitated by a new drama teacher at the Flathead Valley Community College, who wanted to perform more musicals. It was desired to have some kind of orchestra for these productions, so for a few years the musicians from the Hockaday Chamber Orchestra kept in touch with each other by playing in the pit orchestras for local productions of musicals, including \textit{Fiddler on the Roof} and \textit{Sound of Music}.\textsuperscript{77}

Whether they knew it or not, Doug and Lindy James were engaged in a campaign to build an audience of listeners interested in hearing "classical" music in the Flathead Valley. The recital series at the Hockaday, the Performing

\textsuperscript{76}Doug James, telephone interview by author, 19 February 1990, tape recording.

\textsuperscript{77}Linda Mar (Lindy) James, interview by author, 24 February 1990, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
Arts Council, and the Hockaday Chamber Orchestra were only a few of the ways the Jameses sought to bring more music to the area. For three or four occasions in the mid 1970s through 1980, the Montana Chamber Orchestra (a summer group from Missoula) was sponsored, either by the Hockaday Center or by the Jameses themselves, to come to Kalispell and give concerts. On another occasion Doug and Lindy arranged for the Utah Symphony to come and give a concert under the sponsorship of the Performing Arts Council. A large portion of the money spent to contract with the orchestra was paid by Doug and Lindy James. In addition there was publicity work involved for these events which fell mostly on the shoulders of Doug and Lindy.

By 1980 Doug and Lindy were fast approaching a "burn-out stage" in their work to bring music to the community of Kalispell and the surrounding area. They were tired, and over-committed in their work and extra activities to the point that they felt they had neither "the time not the . . . expertise" to bring about any organization of a new community orchestra. Fortunately, relief was on the way, coming around

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76 Doug James, telephone interview by author, 19 February 1990, tape recording.
79 Linda Mar (Lindy) James, interview by author, 24 February 1990, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
80 Doug James, telephone interview by author, 19 February 1990, tape recording.
December 1980 or January 1981, when Rebecca (Becky) Johnson moved to Kalispell. ^1

Becky Johnson had just finished the requirements for a masters degree in organ from a university in Iowa. Upon arriving in Kalispell, she began going to various churches, looking for an organ position. When she visited the local Episcopal church (where her fiance' was attending) and spoke to the choir director concerning the possibility of an organ job, the choir director was eager to take her, as the church happened to be in need of a regular organist. The choir director, as it turned out, was none other than Lindy James, and it was through Lindy and Doug James that Becky Johnson made connections with the musicians living in the Flathead Valley.

In preparing for her wedding that would take place in June, 1981, Becky was interested in having some of the music from J. S. Bach's Cantata BWV 140 ("Wachet auf") performed during the wedding ceremony. Both Lindy and Doug James were willing to sing some of the arias, and they told Becky about two members of the music faculty at the University of Montana who might be interested in playing: oboist Roger MacDonald and organist John Ellis. Becky was able to secure their services for the ceremony, and through names given her by

^1Rebecca (Johnson) duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
Lindy James, was also able to find enough local musicians to form a small orchestral ensemble. By this time, Lindy had found enough willing people to form a small choir, so it was decided to perform the entire cantata at the wedding, instead of a few selected numbers. Becky organized the rehearsals, and played the organ and oboe (her secondary instrument) in the absence of Ellis and MacDonald during the rehearsals. Doug James conducted the work, in addition to singing some of the arias. Lindy not only sang some of the arias, but also played viola as well. Lindy recalled that during the ceremony there was a good deal of "running around, playing, then singing," but that the participants in the cantata enjoyed performing it.

The performance of the Bach Cantata BWV 140 generated so much enthusiasm among its performers to continue to play that Becky (now Becky duBois) was motivated to put together a concert of Advent music for the beginning of December, 1981. Knowing that the Lutheran Church tended to support various

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82Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

83Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

84Rebecca Johnson and Frank duBois, marriage order of worship and program, 20 June 1981.

85Linda Mar James, interview by author, 24 February 1990, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
Advent-related activities, duBois contacted Kalispell's Bethlehem Lutheran Church about organizing a concert.

The concert consisted of selections by a Trinity Lutheran Bell Choir, a few vocal solos with instrumental accompaniment, one work for chorus, and a final work for chorus and orchestra, the Gloria by Antonio Vivaldi. The Vivaldi work was conducted by a Lamar Guest, a trumpet player in the area who worked in a nearby lumber mill that was owned by Burlington Northern. DuBois played both organ as well as oboe on this concert, so that although she was the chief organizer of this and other subsequent concerts, she never conducted any of them, but instead played as one of the orchestra members. DuBois' memory of this concert was that the group performing the Vivaldi had three or four rehearsals, once a week, and then "had this miracle happen in the end, and you got it together." The concert apparently drew an "enthusiastic response" from the audience, supporting a desire in the community for live, locally-produced, classical music. A free-will offering at this concert helped to take care of any expenses incurred from putting on the concert.

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86 "An Advent Music Festival," concert program, 6 December 1981, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Kalispell, Mont.

87 Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

88 "Flathead Valley Chamber Orchestra and Chorale," concert program, 17 October 1982, Kalispell, Mont.
After the Advent concert in December, Becky was kept busy with a teaching job at a private school and with getting an organ installed at Christ Church Episcopal, where she was organist. The thought of organizing more orchestra concerts was then set aside. Apparently, when Becky got busy with other activities, all activity concerning an orchestra concert stopped. The next step in the history of community orchestras in the Flathead Valley was not taken, then, until around August of 1982, when Becky began to plan for a full concert to be given in October of that year. One question that posed itself at this time was, who would the ensemble get to conduct them?

At this time the Board of the Hockaday Center for the Arts was trying to schedule the Delphi Quartet (at that time a string quartet component of the Great Falls Symphony) for some appearances in the school system in the Flathead Valley. DuBois was in communication with the Delphi Quartet, acting perhaps as an agent of the Hockaday, and she asked them if they knew of any orchestra conductors willing to travel, and if they had opinions on the new conductor of the Great Falls Symphony. The Quartet gave a positive recommendation of the conductor from Great Falls, and Becky arranged to meet with him while she was in Great Falls attending an organ recital. As a result of this meeting, Becky duBois hired the Great Falls conductor, Gordon Johnson, to conduct a concert of local
musicians in Kalispell in October of 1982.\textsuperscript{89}

Gordon Johnson was trained as a horn player, and received his bachelors degree at Bemidji State College in Minnesota. Then he taught public school music in addition to playing in and conducting community orchestras. He received his masters degree from Northwestern University, and pursued a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Oregon, where he conducted the University Sinfonietta. He was hired by the Great Falls Symphony in late 1981, and was about to begin his second season with that orchestra when Becky duBois approached him about coming to the Flathead Valley to conduct a concert. Johnson accepted, but upon arriving at one of the final rehearsals, was "horrified--it was terrible." He noted that the musicians were from very diverse backgrounds, and that a trumpet player warmed up by playing the television commercial theme, \textit{I Wish I Were an Oscar Meyer Wiener}, before the orchestra's "A" tuning pitch. Some of the musicians didn't have tuxedos. Johnson admitted to wondering what he had gotten himself into, but also was aware that "everybody had a smashing good time," and had sold out the hall as well.\textsuperscript{90}

It was this concert on October 17, 1982 that marked the

\textsuperscript{89}Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

\textsuperscript{90}Gordon Johnson, interview by author, 17 October and 24 October 1989, Great Falls, Mont., tape recording.
beginning of a new orchestra in the region surrounding Kalispell. The organization was called The Flathead Valley Chamber Orchestra and Chorale, drawing on the name for the choral group as established in the concert for Advent, 1981.\textsuperscript{91} While Gordon Johnson was listed as the conductor, Becky duBois was listed as the director of the organization. Becky had taken a calculated risk, hiring Johnson's conducting services without having the fee in hand. She had determined how much she needed to make and had estimated the number of people that would attend, but on the other hand, she could not determine if the concert would in fact produce the required amount of revenue to offset the expenses. She had hoped to pay Johnson, along with the other debts incurred, with the money received from the price of admission to the concert. Fortunately, the money received at the concert was able to cover expenses and Johnson's fee, and left available some funds that were put toward buying music.\textsuperscript{92} In terms of the business aspects of meeting expenses, then, the concert was a success.

The program for this October, 1982 concert included the Overture to "Iphigenia in Aulis" by Gluck, Concerto Grosso in D minor, op. 3, no. 11 by Vivaldi, and the Requiem, op. 48 by

\textsuperscript{91}An Advent Music Festival," concert program, 6 December 1981, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Kalispell, Mont.

\textsuperscript{92}Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
Faure. The works for this program were selected by Becky duBois and Gordon Johnson, with Becky choosing the Faure, and Gordon choosing the Gluck. This mutual responsibility for the selection of programs became the norm while Becky was the director or manager of the orchestra. DuBois would often recommend certain works for a future program, but the final say rested with Johnson. If Johnson had no objections to her program choices, however, Becky would schedule them for performance.

The choir employed for the Faure was rehearsed by Shauneen Garner, a teacher, organist, and choir director in the Kalispell area. This was her first association with the chorale, and Garner continued to direct the group through the 1980s.

During this early period, much of what had to be done for each concert was accomplished by Becky, Lindy James, or Doug James. It was Doug's view that Becky was an energetic person

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93 Flathead Valley Chamber Orchestra and Chorale, concert program, 17 October 1982, Kalispell, Mont.

94 Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

95 Flathead Valley Chamber Orchestra and Chorale, concert program, 17 October 1982, Kalispell, Mont.


with the organizing skills and the free time necessary to bring the musicians of the Flathead Valley together. Doug James recalled that there was a small group that advised duBois about where to go for money, who the supporters would be, and where the musicians might be. Lindy James recalled that she, Doug, and Becky took care of getting programs printed, getting music, unloading and setting up chairs and stands for the concerts, playing the concerts (sometimes having solo work in the concert as well), and then removing the chairs and stands after the concerts.

During the rehearsals for the October, 1982 concert, Becky recalled sitting on the back porch of Christ Church (the concert site) with Gordon Johnson, discussing the orchestra, and what needed to be done in order to turn this group into a permanent organization. Gordon advised her to become a member of the American Symphony Orchestra League (ASOL), appoint a board of directors, and to consult with Mary Agnes (M. A.) Roberts, a woman who had been involved with the Great Falls Symphony for many years. This interaction became a pattern for the partnership that was forming between duBois and Johnson, in that Gordon "told me what I had to go do, and I

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98Doug James, telephone interview by author, 19 February 1990, tape recording.

99Linda Mar (Lindy) James, interview by author, 24 February 1990, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
DuBois called M. A. Roberts, and essentially received advice on "what not to do," based on some experiences that had occurred in the past with the Great Falls Symphony. In becoming a member of ASOL, she received information on what things she should do next. So, armed both with what to do and what not to do, Becky set about the task of organizing the Flathead Valley Chamber Orchestra and Chorale into a non-profit business entity.

In choosing a governing board, Becky had a couple of "ready-made" options available to her. One was to be an entity under the umbrella of the Hockaday Center for the Arts, and the other was to find support through the Flathead Valley Community College. DuBois was not interested in having the board of directors for the Hockaday make all the musical and non-musical decisions for the orchestra. Similarly, duBois had taught a course at the Community College, and she had concluded that the College wasn't equipped to take on the management of a musical organization. So, the only course of action that made the most sense was to have the orchestra become an entity in its own right. Becky sought the help of individuals in the community who were interested in the orchestra. One individual who was particularly helpful was Sue Rolfing, who was serving on the board for the Hockaday

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100Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
Center for the Arts. It may have been through her assistance that Becky found enough contacts in the community to form a "steering committee" that governed the orchestra in its infancy.\textsuperscript{101} Included in this steering committee was Norma Happ, who had been a piano soloist with Mrs. Grimsrud's Flathead Valley Orchestra in the 1950s.\textsuperscript{102,103} She also looked to those respected members of the community who were "dreamers" enough to support a venture that had no previous record of success, except for a single concert that made a profit. The people she found who fit this description turned out to be doctors who liked music. Among them were Hi Gibson, an ophthalmologist, and Gabe Perjessy, a dentist. Perjessy was the orchestra's first board president, according to duBois.\textsuperscript{104} However, he was not included in the list of steering committee members on the program of March 20, 1983. It is possible, then, that the steering committee was not a full-fledged board, but rather an advisory body that evolved

\textsuperscript{101}Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

\textsuperscript{102}"Glacier Orchestra and Chorale," concert program, 20 March 1983, Kalispell, Mont.

\textsuperscript{103}Solveig Grimsrud, Richland, Wash., to Rick Torgerson, Missoula, Mont., 7 December 1989.

\textsuperscript{104}Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
into a governing board of directors later on.\textsuperscript{105}

One person who was on the steering committee was attorney John Gordon, and it was under his guidance and supervision that the legal documents of the incorporation of the organization were drawn. In October, 1983 the orchestra became a non-profit corporation.\textsuperscript{106}

It was with the concert on March 20, 1983, however, that the orchestra presented itself under a new name: the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale (also known as the GOC). The reason behind the name change had to do with the fact that the musicians in the orchestra did not all live in the Flathead Valley. In fact, some musicians who were in the orchestra came from Libby, Eureka, and even as far as Missoula and Great Falls. To acknowledge the orchestra becoming a regional ensemble, then, the name was changed to the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale, so that at least the name of the group would encompass the entire northwest region of Montana.\textsuperscript{107}

The concert on March 20, 1983 was significant because of another change, that being the change in the concert site. Becky duBois was aware that the Glacier Orchestra, at this

\textsuperscript{105}"Glacier Orchestra and Chorale," concert program, 20 March 1983, Kalispell, Mont.

\textsuperscript{106}Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

\textsuperscript{107}"Glacier Orchestra and Chorale," concert program, 20 March 1983, Kalispell, Mont.
point in its life, needed to sound better than it was, and therefore needed a concert site with very live acoustics. The auditorium available in Whitefish was not good acoustically, and the Kalispell high school auditorium was much too large in its seating capacity, in addition to having less-than-desirable acoustics. One day Becky was driving around in a small town outside of Kalispell known as Evergreen, when she found herself lost and in need of directions. She happened upon a Catholic church known as Risen Christ Parish, and stopped there hoping to get redirected to her destination. On entering the church she discovered that the sanctuary was extremely "live" acoustically. In addition it was unlike a church in terms of its seating. The sanctuary looked more like an auditorium than a church. These characteristics suited the orchestra's needs for a live performance site, as well as for maintaining an identity separate from any particular church. The orchestra had already become fixed in some people's minds as a group that was somehow sponsored by a church, simply because the previous concert sites had been traditional church sanctuaries. At least, the Risen Christ Parish had more of the appearance of a concert hall. So, Becky set about renting the space for the March concert.

Again Becky duBois hired Gordon Johnson to conduct the
March 20, 1983 concert. The program for the March concert included two Coronation Anthems by Handel, Brandenburg Concerto no. 5 by Bach, Mass in G minor by Vaughan Williams, Symphony no. 8 (Unfinished) by Schubert, and Quiet City by Copland. According to duBois, the hall was filled for this concert. Having the concert in a live hall apparently was the right move, because "people were convinced that we sounded twice as big as we were . . . and because of the enormous big sound they could overlook a few of the frailties that a musician might pick out." The success of that March concert was a great help in getting the public to support the future efforts of the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale.

Meanwhile, in addition to playing and teaching, Becky duBois was keeping busy, taking care of the administrative end of the orchestra. Using a small building behind Christ Church Episcopal as her office, Becky took care of whatever business needs the new organization had. At this stage, the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale could not afford to place a lot of advertising in the local papers. However, she put as many ads as she could in the paper, and then tried to look for ways to

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110 Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
put free news articles or photos about the GOC in the news. The other tasks of ordering, distributing, and collecting music, taking care of printing, telephone work, and doing mailings were performed by Becky in her one-person office. Occasionally she employed a person to help out once in a while, and she used people from the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (R.S.V.P.) to help take care of mass mailouts (e.g., stuffing envelopes, folding, sorting, and stapling). In addition many of the musicians in the orchestra assisted by selling tickets and putting up posters at various places all over the Flathead Valley.

Even when the Board of Directors was finally in place later in 1983, it was Becky who was the motivator for the group. In those days the Board presidents were basically figureheads, with Becky duBois virtually running the meetings. The early Boards had very little training in how to act as Board members, and lacked the understanding of what needed to be done. The only person who knew what actions needed to be taken was Becky. To a great extent the purpose of the early Board meetings was so that duBois could keep the board informed on things she was doing, and for the Board to give their approval of what she had done and what she was about to do. There apparently was a certain amount of frustration among the Board members in not knowing what to do to help Becky accomplish the "mammoth amount of work that needed to be
done." In addition, many of the Board were uncomfortable with the task of going into the community and asking for money. Nevertheless, the Board was a group that was so interested in seeing the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale become a viable part of the community that they were willing to meet weekly. Since everyone had busy schedules, the only common time to meet was 7:00 a.m. on Fridays. The Board was willing to meet at this time, and continued meeting at this time for years. It may have been the Board's zeal rather than their skill that assisted the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale to become a successful organization in its early years.¹¹¹

DuBois would try to keep the Board informed of everything that was going on. It was also Becky's view that she asked a lot from the Board. If there were tasks that individual Board members were designated to perform, Becky would often have to continually prod them into performing the tasks. DuBois even confessed to creating imaginary deadlines to allow time for the Board to be late in acting, so that she wouldn't have to continually remind them that something needed doing. According to Becky, ". . . I never thought of whether I was asking too much of these people. I just knew what had to be done, and I'd keep pestering them until they got it done. I'm just surprised that nobody told me off or something. But they

¹¹¹Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
knew that I was willing to give that much time." In an effort to keep the Board members apprised of details, Becky would often have to resort to calling Board members during their evening meal at home, sometimes even calling two or three times at that hour.113

During the 1982-1983 season the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale incurred expenses of $3373.53, while generating an income of $3480.40. For the 1983-1984 season the Board hired Gordon Johnson as conductor for the season, and abandoned their past practice of hiring him for each concert. They also hired Becky duBois under the title of Director/Manager, designating her as the organization's chief decision-maker. During this season the GOC had a budget, but duBois recalled that "by the time we had done the budget we had outgrown it." The income generated that season jumped dramatically from the previous season to $16,282.79. The expenses jumped also, to $18,988.41. However, it was Becky's claim that money was later raised to cover the deficit of a little over $2700.114

Both the October and March concerts of the 1983-1984 season were given at the Risen Christ Parish. The March

112Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

113Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

114Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
concert saw the use of a guest artist brought in to play with the orchestra. The soloist was Andres Cardenes, then concertmaster with the Utah Symphony Orchestra, and he played the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto.

During the first few years of the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale, there was a social aspect that was present in the organization. Becky duBois felt that the atmosphere then was like a musical family, and that it was a "musician-started orchestra." There was a sense of personal ownership of the ensemble among the musicians, and they were allowed to read minutes of the board during orchestra breaks and give their input if they had something to express. Weekly rehearsals were held on Thursdays, but were often attended poorly, possibly because of the lack of a conductor as well as lack of various parts that would be played by imports. However, the weekend of the concert brought the conductor and all musicians together, with rehearsals on Friday night, Saturday morning and afternoon, and finally the concert on Sunday night. On Saturday afternoon a break was taken to enjoy a pot luck lunch together. Getting the concert into shape in the span of a few weekend rehearsals was not always easy. At that time

115Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Interlake, 19 October 1983, C-2.

conductor Gordon Johnson could only come the weekend of the concert. With so much time devoted to rehearsing that weekend, it was observed by Becky duBois that it was "basically a marathon weekend." Nevertheless, "miracles happened then; it was amazing. When people knew that that was all the time they had, they really went for it," and the "concentration would be there."\textsuperscript{117}

One of the early fundraising efforts of the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale was an event called "Norm's Day." Bill Shiell, the owner of a local book and magazine store known as "Norm's News," was an important person for Becky duBois, not only for being the first donor of $1000 to the GOC, but also for being a sounding board for Becky to try out her ideas and regroup her energies concerning the Orchestra. Upon being asked for a donation, Shiell decided that he would donate all of one day's sales (after paying overhead and help) to the Orchestra. This day, called "Norm's Day," occurred two years in a row (March 14, 1984 and March 25, 1985\textsuperscript{118}), and one year netted $1200 for the GOC. Becky felt indebted to Shiell for his generosity at a time when the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale needed some solid community support. Shiell's only

\textsuperscript{117}Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

\textsuperscript{118}Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Interlake, 11 March 1984, B-1, and 10 March 1985, D-2.
request was that the Orchestra might someday play Tchaikowsky. Although the GOC did finally honor this request in the 1988-1989 season, Bill Shiell was not around to hear it, as he had died of cancer about two years earlier.\textsuperscript{119}

The 1984-1985 season contained a number of changes. The most obvious change was a move to having pairs of concerts, one in Kalispell (at Risen Christ Parish), the other in the nearby town of Whitefish (at Whitefish Junior High auditorium). The GOC expanded their concert programs to three instead of the two that had been planned in earlier seasons. The season included two additional concerts by non-local groups (Montana Baroque Ensemble and Music from Oberlin Chamber Ensemble) as fundraising concerts. The guest artist that year was flutist Julia Bogorad, who played Mozart's \textit{Concerto in G major for Flute and Orchestra} in the concert pair on October 27-28.\textsuperscript{120} Finally, the 1984-1985 budget had increased to $31,500 from the nearly $20,000 the previous season. This increase from a budget of about $4000 in 1982-1983 clearly shows that the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale was on a fast track in their growth.

The 1984-1985 season was also one where the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale found support through various corporate

\textsuperscript{119}Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

\textsuperscript{120}"Glacier Orchestra & Chorale," season brochure, 1984.
sponsorships. First, the GOC received a grant from Burlington Northern. Then, Becky duBois, on discovering that the Great Falls Symphony had begun a corporate sponsorship program, inquired of Gordon Johnson as to its success, and decided that the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale should pursue this type of sponsorship. Her strategy was to approach businesses that had owners or managers who were music-lovers.\textsuperscript{121} For the concerts in Whitefish, the Whitefish Credit Union sponsored the first, while the First National Bank of Whitefish sponsored three other concerts.\textsuperscript{122} Semitool, Inc. was also a corporate sponsor that season.\textsuperscript{123}

In the 1984-1985 season a concert was scheduled in December, and the GOC programmed Handel's \textit{Messiah}. This was viewed as being helpful in stimulating attendance in future concerts in the season.\textsuperscript{124} Another fundraiser that following spring, in addition to the "Norm's Day" mentioned above, was an all-Bach marathon concert in celebration of J. S. Bach's 300th birthday. This was given on March 21 that began at 6:00

\textsuperscript{121} Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
\textsuperscript{122}Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Interlake, 24 October 1984, B-2.
\textsuperscript{123}Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Interlake, 27 March 1985, B-2.
\textsuperscript{124} Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
a.m. and lasted at least through midnight.\textsuperscript{125}

An additional event was beneficial for the Orchestra from a musical standpoint. Members of the Spokane Symphony gave a concert in Kalispell that was to be a fundraiser for the Flathead County High School Choral Department. Members of the Glacier Orchestra were able to participate in a training session that same concert weekend, where the section leaders of the Spokane Symphony would coach various sections of the Glacier Orchestra.\textsuperscript{126}

By the end of the 1984-1985 season, Becky duBois was five and one-half months pregnant, and was becoming less and less interested in being an administrator. She was more interested in playing the music and making the musical decisions than she was approaching people for money and cracking the whip at GOC Board meetings. It is possible she was just exhausted from the work she had been doing for the GOC as evidenced by the following remark: "... people were just really astounded that it would be growing so fast, and I'd just say, 'gad, there's just so much to do.'" Also, her management style may have become more unsuitable for the GOC as it grew as an organization. For example, she had her own way of working with volunteers: "... the best way to keep happy volunteers

\textsuperscript{125}\textit{Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Interlake}, 20 March 1985, B-3.

\textsuperscript{126}\textit{Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Interlake}, 24 April 1985, A-12.
is to do it with them . . . you end up doing a little of everything . . . then build to the point where the volunteers say, 'You don't have to show up. We got it.'" Becky may not have gotten to the point where she felt her volunteers could operate independent of her. In any case, Becky duBois resigned from the manager position on July 26, 1985. The Board was interested in hiring a woman named Robin Bailey as a replacement, but the Board was at that time without a Board president, and Robin didn't want to start until a Board president had been elected. Becky was willing to stay in the manager position through the first concert of the 1985-1986 season.127

By the first concert, though, much of the year's work had to be accomplished, so Becky took care of most of that year's work, including work on the brochure, ticket printing, the program contents, and advertising. In addition, she coordinated with a number of school districts and private schools in the Flathead Valley to have children bussed to Kalispell to attend a children's concert that featured the guest soloist for the October concert, Robin McCabe. Although Gordon Johnson had done some outreach work with music students from the Flathead High School in the past,128 the children's

127Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

concert with Robin McCabe was the first concert offered by the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale to a large group of young people.\textsuperscript{129}

When Becky duBois handed over the job of business manager to Robin Bailey after the first concert of the 1985-1986 season, it signified that the character and style of the orchestra management was going to change. Bailey had worked in a number of public relations firms and newspapers, and had also been involved in two important non-profit organizations: 1) the Junior League, and 2) the YMCA. Having served in local officer positions as well as higher board positions in both organizations, Robin cited these experiences that taught her how a well-run non-profit organization should operate. Part of the knowledge she gained was that non-profit businesses are still businesses that need good decision-making, strategic planning, aggressive marketing, good financial resources, and good board leadership. As a member of the Great Falls Symphony Board, she had chaired the sustaining fund drive and had assisted in the development of the Great Falls Symphony's corporate sponsorship program. During the 1983-1984 season of the Great Falls Symphony, she served as its manager, and aided in both the continuation of the corporate sponsorship program as well as the reworking of the Symphony's funding mix, so

\textsuperscript{129}Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
that the organization was not relying solely on one kind of financial support. In addition, she received management training from the American Symphony Orchestra League, and through this was made aware of the fact that orchestra managers must work to meet the needs of a variety of people, including the music director, musicians, board members, volunteers, and the audience. When her husband was transferred to Kalispell, he, Robin, and their family moved to the Flathead Valley.\textsuperscript{130}

Robin Bailey had already had a relationship with the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale, because the GOC Board had consulted with her a couple times when the GOC was first getting started. In a way, then, the transition to a new business manager was eased, since the Board could easily trust someone who had worked in their interest in the past. However, the Board was beginning a transition time within their own ranks as well. There were some Board members who were content to perform the tasks they had performed since the beginning, such as moving chairs or putting up posters throughout town. The attitude of the Board at that time concerning money was that the Board felt it had to know where every cent was being spent, and that it had to grant approval of every expenditure. This attitude may have been fostered in

\textsuperscript{130}Robin Bailey, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
part by Becky duBois, who made great efforts to keep all the Board members informed of every business transaction. This may have worked to the organization's advantage by keeping the lines of communication open among the Board in working with a tight budget. However, it may have worked to the organization's disadvantage by drawing the Board's attention toward how to spend what little money they had, and away from dealing with the ever-present problem of how to effectively raise more money. In any case, Robin Bailey was faced with many challenges: 1) to help the leadership of the GOC Board to grow, 2) to establish committees to be responsible for particular business aspects of the organization, 3) to expand the corporate sponsorship to include more businesses, and 4) to expand the season to include more concerts.

In seeking to strengthen its leadership role, the Board made a number of changes. It was recognized that a few past Board members could no longer be as effective a Board member as they once might have been, simply because the needs of the board and the organization as a whole had changed. A few Board members needed to be thanked for their efforts on behalf of the organization, but also had to be asked to end their service to the Board and the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale. At the same time the Board began to increase its membership, and thereby increase the kinds of business contacts the Board could approach. The Board needed to add people to its
membership that could work effectively to expand the marketing and fundraising efforts of the organization. In satisfying this need the Board was careful to ask people who came from all over the Flathead Valley, and not just from Kalispell. Since the name, Glacier Orchestra and Chorale, connoted an ensemble whose members came from all over the northwest part of Montana, the Board was afforded an opportunity to allow the towns of Bigfork, Whitefish, and Columbia Falls to take on a sense of ownership and responsibility for the organization, just as Kalispell had. Regarding committees, it was imperative that a committee structure be set up, and an understanding of how committees work needed to be fostered, so that Board meetings were not focused on matters that could be easily addressed in a committee. In dealing with corporate sponsors, it was determined that a number of teams needed to be put together that could each go into the business community and successfully obtain corporate underwriting. Concerning the expansion of concerts, a prime target was expansion of the children's concert idea. Robin Bailey took her cue from Becky duBois' work with the school districts in the area on the initial concert with Robin McCabe, and continued to use guest artists that could work well with children at the fifth or sixth grade level. The contacted school districts, which expanded to about twenty-three in the late 1980s, could only afford to take care of the bussing of the students. The
Glacier Orchestra and Chorale, however, felt that these concert experiences were so important to the education of the children in the Flathead Valley that they chose to absorb all other costs connected with the additional concerts.\footnote{Robin Bailey, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.}

The music performed during the 1985-1986 season included the following: Overture to Los Esclavos Felices by J. C. Arriaga, The Household Muse by Milhaud, Piano Concerto no. 1 in G minor by Mendelssohn, Concerto Grosso op. 6 n. 8 (Christmas Concerto) by Corelli, Canon in D by Pachelbel, Gloria by Vivaldi, Toy Symphony by Leopold Mozart, Overture in the Italian Style by Schubert, and Symphony no. 102 (London) by Haydn. In addition to three pairs of concerts given at similar times as the previous year (October 12-13, December 14-15, and March 8-9), a fourth pair was added in the 1985-1986 season: a "pops" concert, given April 19-20, 1986. The music for this included a variety of show tunes, movie themes, waltzes, and marches. The corporate sponsors for this pair of concerts were the First National Bank for Whitefish and the First Interstate Bank for Kalispell.\footnote{"Glacier Orchestra & Chorale," season brochure, 1985.}

An additional fundraising event that brought the 1985-1986 season to a close was an ice cream social, which took place in mid-May. Held in Bigfork, the event provided food...
and games, with chamber music played by members of the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale. This event was repeated the following year.

The October 12-13 pair of concerts was a foretaste of things to come from the standpoint of concert sites. The concert in Whitefish (October 12) was at the Central School Auditorium, while the concert in Kalispell (October 13) was at the Flathead High School Auditorium. These would be the main concert sites for future concert seasons in the late 1980s. In April, 1987, there was held a Handel's Messiah sing along benefit concert by the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale for the renovation of Whitefish's Central School Auditorium. The renovation was to include an acoustical shell, as well as new lighting, remodeling of the stage area, and upgrading the auditorium's appearance. The renovation was completed by June, 1989. But meanwhile, the remainder of the 1985-1986 season's concerts still took place at churches: St.Charles Church in Whitefish, and Risen Christ Parish in Kalispell.

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134Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Interlake, 31 May 1986, E-11.
136Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Interlake, 19 April 1987, D-11.
The 1986-87 season saw the obtaining of a grant from the Montana Arts Council, in addition to more corporate sponsors helping with the funding of the GOC. The Montana Arts council grant made possible the appearance of trumpet soloist David Hickman, who was brought in to play the difficult trumpet part to J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto no. 2. This concert pair took place on February 28 and March 1 of 1987. Additionally, Hickman played one of the solo trumpet parts in Vivaldi's Concerto in C major for Two Trumpets, while Paul Davis, band director of Flathead High School, played the other solo trumpet part.139

Probably the most notable event of the 1986-1987 season was its appearance on the NBC Christmas television special, Amy Grant: Christmas in Montana. This opportunity for national exposure virtually appeared before Gordon Johnson with no prior contact. Johnson received a call sometime in 1986 from a person from a Los Angeles-based production company, who described an idea of a Christmas special that starred pop vocalist Amy Grant, as well as Art Garfunkel and Dennis Weaver, with music arranged by Jim Webb. Grant was to play a character travelling in Montana with her husband, when suddenly their car breaks down near Kalispell. While waiting for the repairs, they meet Gordon Johnson, who invites Grant

139Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Interlake, 22 February 1987, D-10.
to perform in the Kalispell Christmas concert. The production company asked Johnson if this idea would be feasible, making use of local musicians. Gordon responded that he would bet back to the producer in a week with a budget figure. In less than a week Gordon called back with a figure of $7500. The producer seemed to be annoyed with having to approve such a small budget figure, but he told Johnson to go ahead with the plans. Johnson, after this conversation, realized he should have asked for more money (although he had built a certain amount of cushion into the budget). Nevertheless, Johnson went to work petting the orchestra together, including some musicians from the Great Falls and Spokane (Washington) symphonies. A children's choir was also organized. The special aired on NBC on December 21, 1986, and was seen by an estimated twenty-two percent of the television viewers in the United States. One NBC spokesperson's comment on this figure was, "It's not great, but it's not awful." Becky duBois recalled the experience of the taping session: "... the crazy thing was how much effort we put into it, and how much we actually played on the air ... it was a lot of time commitment ... we kept playing the same music over and over and over and over ... the thing that made it fun

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140 Gordon Johnson, interview by author, 24 October 1989, Great Falls, Mont., tape recording.

141 Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Interlake, 24 December 1986, 1.
was the fact that we did it together." Although Gordon Johnson, after viewing the special, "thought it was a terrible show," he acknowledged that the exposure "really did have some tangible positive effect," adding that people "bought in" to the notion that "if you're on TV you must be important." The musicians in the Glacier Orchestra were not entirely pleased with the experience, however. Becky duBois remembered, "... we got fifty dollars for doing it ... and then there was a very untactful note that went with it, 'if you want to donate it to the orchestra ...'" Apparently there was some disappointment over the pay for the job.

Disappointment among the local musicians over the Amy Grant special was not the only source of ill feelings that were emerging in the GOC. When the management and administrative aspects of the organization changed, the social, political, and musical aspects of the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale changed as well. With the advent of concerts being presented in pairs in the 1984-1985 season, the Saturday afternoon rehearsal was eliminated, and with that the Saturday afternoon pot-luck lunch. Later, when Becky duBois

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142 Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

143 Gordon Johnson, interview by author, 24 October 1989, Great Falls, Mont., tape recording.

144 Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
had resigned from the manager position and the GOC Board assumed a more active role in its business affairs, an orchestra representative was elected, that would serve as the communication channel between the Board and the orchestra. So, while in the past the orchestra membership had perhaps more direct "input into things," by the later 1980s duBois observed that "everything's in higher brackets and they're being told what to do," adding that the members of the orchestra "have to work on the relationship" between themselves and a Board that was growing somewhat more detached from the orchestra's input.\textsuperscript{145}

It was also during the 1984-1985 season that Johnson began to commute more regularly to Kalispell than just the weekend of the concert.\textsuperscript{146} Over the years Johnson demonstrated his commitment to the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale by increasing the number of rehearsals he attended, and by building the orchestra with imported players from places other than the Flathead Valley. It has been Gordon's view that in Montana, the use of imported musicians is "an absolute necessity."\textsuperscript{147} But while Johnson noted that the Glacier

\textsuperscript{145}Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

\textsuperscript{146}Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Interlake, 9 December 1984, C-2.

\textsuperscript{147}Gordon Johnson, interview by author, 17 October 1989, Great Falls, Mont., tape recording.
Orchestra has artistically grown by leaps and bounds," apparently this growth came by paying a price of discouraging some Flathead Valley musicians from participating. When the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale started, the attitude of Becky duBois in finding musicians to play was that she looked "closest to home." Hence, in the beginning the "imports" were those people from Libby, Eureka, and Troy. DuBois felt that "musicians are a crazy bunch of people," and somewhat "ornery sometimes," but added that she "was willing to maybe work around personality a little bit." Later on, it was felt that "patience wasn't where it might have been," referring to the more current practice of importing players who could play the parts a little better than the local musicians.\(^{149}\)

By the latter concert seasons in the 1980s the Glacier Orchestra had hired Marcia Henry, a violinist from Missoula, as the Orchestra's concertmaster, as well as occasional guest soloist. Since Marcia was at that time married to Joseph Henry, conductor of the Missoula Symphony, hiring her also provided the GOC with a connection to the musician resources from the University of Montana and the Missoula Symphony that might be of use in the Glacier Orchestra. This connection

\(^{148}\)Gordon Johnson, interview by author, 24 October 1989, Great Falls, Mont., tape recording.

\(^{149}\)Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
provided a good, steady source of imports, who were paid an honorarium to cover travel and food, and who then stayed with people in the Kalispell and Whitefish area who were willing to open their homes to out-of-town musicians.

In addition Marcia Henry would go to Kalispell regularly to rehearse with the orchestra. As an added incentive for the local musicians, Ms. Henry also gave private instruction to symphony members, with the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale reimbursing the local musician for one half the cost of a lesson (for a limited number of lessons). This was a demonstration of the GOC organization's commitment to the musicians' artistic growth as well as to the Orchestra's artistic growth as a whole.\(^{150}\)

However, when the imports from Missoula began to join the orchestra, the musicians from Libby stopped attending. It is possible that the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale may have changed its identity somewhat, and that there may have been confusion on the part of the local musicians concerning whether the GOC truly represented people of the region of northwest Montana any longer. Becky duBois touched on this point in her unfinished comment, "... the whole thing we are selling is that we are local, and if we are importing half."

\(^{150}\)Robin Bailey, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
It must have seemed to the local orchestra member that with the loss of a social flavor, changed relations with the GOC board, and an increased portion of the orchestra derived from better-playing imports from outside the Flathead Valley, things were not like they used to be. Probably the most keenly aware of this change was Becky duBois, who remarked that after she left her post as manager, "it was very hard to keep my mouth shut so people could do what they needed to do... I even stopped going to Board meetings... that was a hard period of time as far as I was concerned, to just sit back and go to rehearsal and keep my mouth shut. A lot of people thought I was being very cruel, or uncaring... but I just said, 'hey, ... there's somebody else in charge. It's not fair to them to undermine what they're trying to do.'" The growing pains of an organization making a transition into a new era of its life cycle were clearly being felt at all levels.

While there may be question whether the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale truly represented the communities of the Flathead Valley in its roster of orchestra musicians, the Board felt

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151 Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

152 Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
that in order to see the artistic growth they wanted to see, the practice of importing players from other areas was imperative, especially to bring the ensemble in balance. Although it was hoped that the Glacier Orchestra's growing reputation in the Valley would bring other musicians "out of the woodwork," this did not bring the numbers needed (especially in the strings), and the more aggressive act of importing musicians proved to be the more reliable alternative to that of waiting for more local musicians to join. From Gordon Johnson's perspective, importing musicians into the Flathead Valley has been easy. As Johnson has said, "That area of the country is so gorgeous, it's not even work to get people to come up there." Johnson has even cited cases where musicians would be willing to fly to Kalispell from Billings at their own expense just for an excuse to spend a weekend in the Flathead Valley. The use of the same imports (particularly from Missoula and Great Falls) for each concert has added to the stability of the ensemble, and has contributed, in some measure at least, to the ability of the orchestra to perform some more challenging works in the


154 Gordon Johnson, interview by author, 24 October 1989, Great Falls, Mont., tape recording.

orchestral repertoire.

Another improvement in business operations was in the area of advertising. When Becky duBois was managing the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale, the job of finding businesses to advertise in the program fell on her, with assistance lent her by two or three other people. When Robin Bailey took over as Executive Director, and the Board became strong enough to bear more responsibility, each of the board members then became responsible to contact a number of businesses. The result has been that the advertising work has spread out considerably.156 Support for the GOC has since come from a number of business arenas, including financial institutions, the medical community, the lumber industry, construction and manufacturing businesses, and car dealerships.157

In 1986 another arts organization formed that was viewed by some at its beginning as being in competition with the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale. The Festival of the Rockies was begun through a collaboration of two groups: the Montana Chorale, a professional-quality choir led by Kenyard Smith that toured the state giving concerts, and the locally-

156Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

organized Flathead Valley Jazz Society.\textsuperscript{158} The aim of the organizers was to develop the festival into a series of concerts and arts events that would continue throughout the summer. However, at some point early on, the Montana Chorale was unable to continue to help sponsor the Festival. The Festival Board, many of whom also served on the GOC Board, began looking to Gordon Johnson as someone who might be able to assist in developing the Flathead Festival, as it later came to be called.\textsuperscript{159} Johnson formed a professional orchestra for the week-long Festival, and as later seasons went by it became composed of musicians from all over the United States, and not just musicians from the Flathead Valley or from the state of Montana.\textsuperscript{160} While it was thought originally that the Flathead Festival might compete with the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale for fundraising dollars, experience proved that the two organizations actually complemented each other, with the Flathead Festival operating during the summer, and the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale operating the other three seasons of the year. Having board members who have served on both of these organizations' boards simultaneously helped foster good

\textsuperscript{158}Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Interlake, 31 May 1987, E-10.

\textsuperscript{159}Robin Bailey, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

\textsuperscript{160}Gordon Johnson, interview by author, 24 October 1989, Great Falls, Mont., tape recording.
relations between the organizations, as well as facilitate communication regarding each organization's future goals.

The Glacier Orchestra and Chorale worked together with other arts organizations as well. In January 1987 a joint concert was given at a local hotel, called "Classics to Jazz," which featured chamber music by members of the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale, as well as jazz presented by the local Don Lawrence Orchestra. In December, 1988, the GOC, the Hockaday Center for the Arts, and the Whitefish Theatre Co. combined their efforts and shared expenses, volunteers, and profits to bring the Minneapolis Children's Theatre to perform at the Flathead High School in Kalispell. In February, 1990, a similar collaboration was made to bring a drama group, known as the Dell 'Arte Players, to perform a Moliere play in the area. While none of the above three organizations were able by themselves to sponsor these events, by banding together the organizations could produce a performance that could benefit each group individually as well as benefit the Flathead Valley region as a whole with a quality cultural event. Robin Bailey noted that the collaboration among arts

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163 Kalispell (Mont.) Daily Interlake, 11 December 1988, E-3.
groups was appreciated by patrons of the arts in the Flathead area, and that this goodwill "has helped in our other fundraising."\textsuperscript{164}

One group that has been of great help to the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale is the women's organization, known as the League of the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale (also known as "the League"). The formation of this group was envisioned as early as the time of the concert of March 20, 1983.\textsuperscript{165} However, its first few years were, according to Becky duBois, "not a very good effort." During the time duBois was the manager of the orchestra, the women's group, when it existed, was headed by a member of the GOC Board who was heavily committed with several other activities. As a result, the group "floundered for a few years."\textsuperscript{166} Robin Bailey recalled that there were attempts "to get a group going a couple times with only moderate success." Around 1987 or 1988, the GOC Board committed itself to making the women's organization a strong, supportive arm of the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale. The Board agreed to fund a speaker from the American Symphony Orchestra League to conduct a workshop and to help inspire the

\textsuperscript{164}Robin Bailey, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

\textsuperscript{165}"Glacier Orchestra and Chorale," concert program, 20 March 1983, Kalispell, Mont.

\textsuperscript{166}Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
volunteers in the Flathead Valley. One strategic move facilitated getting new members into the League, and that was including the next year's dues as part of the registration fee for the workshop. This automatically made the participants in the workshop members of the League of the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale. They were put on the mailing list and received all the notices and invitations to various events. The hope was to have around seventy-five women in the League that year, and the workshop would have been considered a success if it had produced fifty good volunteers in addition to the members of the Board. The results far exceeded these expectations, because by the end of the 1988-1989 season the membership in the League numbered one hundred ninety-four.

The activities of the League include working on season tickets, lending aid at concerts and children's concerts, and working on fundraising activities. According to Robin Bailey, the Manager of the GOC used to take care of these activities, because there wasn't anyone else to do them. So, the work done by the League has been especially appreciated by Bailey, and she has attributed its success to both the above-mentioned workshop, as well as to the strong leadership of Anne Collins, who was president of the League in both the 1988-1989 and 1989-1990 seasons. The membership of the League has been diverse in age, ranging from those in their 20s to those in their 60s. The group has been a vehicle for women meeting
other women in the Flathead Valley and for making strong friendships across generations. Critical to the success of the League has been the attitude of not only doing a good job, but also having a good time and not getting "burned out." Thus, the women in the League have opportunities to become involved in their community, as well as "to feel needed, and successful, and not used."  

In her time as conductor of the Glacier Chorale, Shauneen Garner had seen the Chorale grow from about twenty voices to an ensemble of sixty members by 1989. She had not only conducted the Chorale, but had also formed two smaller vocal ensembles from the Chorale. One was the Trillium Women's Choir, a group of about twenty women's voices. The other was the Montanaires, a mixed-voice chamber choir of about twenty-five select voices. These smaller groups had performances outside the season concert schedule, including performances at parties, conventions, and civic functions. In these performances, the smaller groups had done a form of advertising for the Glacier Orchestra & Chorale by spreading the organization's name in various public circles. Because of

\[^{167}\text{Robin Bailey, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.}\]

\[^{168}\text{"Glacier Orchestra & Chorale," fact sheet, 1989-1990 season.}\]

\[^{169}\text{"Glacier Orchestra & Chorale," concert program, 24-25 February 1990, Kalispell and Whitefish, Mont.}\]
this, and because of her work with the Chorale, the GOC Board took under discussion the matter of whether or not Shauneen Garner should be recompensed in some form.\textsuperscript{170} By the end of 1989 the Board had decided that Garner would become a paid performer of the organization.

As of 1989 the only employee of the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale was the executive director, Robin Bailey. The music director, Gordon Johnson, the Chorale conductor, Shauneen Garner, and the concertmaster, Marcia Henry, were paid as independent contractors. The personnel manager received a small honorarium to cover the costs of postage, telephone calls, mailings, and other incidental expenses. Those musicians who were imported from outside the Flathead Valley were also given an honorarium and food allowance, and they received lodging from people in the area who take them into their homes. The stage manager and lighting technicians were contracted.

In looking ahead from the year 1989, Robin Bailey cited a number of goals that she and the GOC Board wanted to achieve in the future. One was a sold-out house from season ticket purchases. With the auditoriums at Central School in Whitefish and Flathead High School in Kalispell providing a combined total of over thirteen-hundred seats for a weekend of

\textsuperscript{170}Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.
concerts, the board was looking to eventually sell more than nine-hundred season tickets, an increase of about three-hundred tickets from the approximately six-hundred season tickets that were sold in 1989. Another goal was to continue to monitor the board and keep the Board leadership strong. To decide to add an endowment fund campaign to the funding mix was a third goal. Fourth, in the long term the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale wanted to have its own resident conductor. Although by 1989 Gordon Johnson was flying to Kalispell every weekend to rehearse the Glacier Orchestra, that arrangement was seen as one that may not always be feasible in the future. The Board was also looking to have the orchestra's concertmaster also be in residence, possibly in collaboration with the needs of the public school system in terms of teaching as well as playing. Another goal was to program more "run-out" concerts at nearby communities. A future concert that was a step toward this goal was a Chorale concert that was to be given in the spring of 1990 at St. Ignatius, Montana. Finally growth in the children's concerts was another goal. Although it was desirable to have the orchestra perform at the children's concerts, this was viewed as a very long term goal, as it has been difficult for many, if not most, of the orchestra to take time off from their jobs.

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to perform during the day. The GOC Board set as a shorter-term goal that of continuing to seek guest artists who could do children's concerts.  

During the 1989-1990 season the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale was operating on a budget of $62,935, almost double the $31,500 budget of the 1984-1985 season five years' previous. While many in the Flathead Valley have credited Becky duBois as being the reason why the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale exists, Becky has also been quick to point out the hard work of a large number of individuals who played a part in making the organization grow. She has also added, "...I really feel like it was meant to happen, and I just came along at the right time and did what needed to be done to facilitate it to happen on its own." Robin Bailey has observed that the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale had from the beginning tried to make use of as many outside resources as were available in order to avoid mistakes that other Montana orchestras had made. In addition the Glacier Orchestra and Chorale was flexible enough to be able to learn from the

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mistakes that would inevitably be made. Both Bailey and duBois also have taken note of the support from the general public in the Flathead Valley "that wanted classical music... that wanted a different kind of entertainment other than skiing, snowmobiling, hunting, fishing, etc." Although this was a group started by musicians, it has taken the support and enthusiasm of many non-musician music-lovers who have used skills in other areas to help keep the organization and its leadership strong.

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176 Rebecca duBois, interview by author, 19 December 1989, Kalispell, Mont., tape recording.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It has been the aim of this thesis to present in narrative form a history of the community orchestras in Montana in towns having less than 20,000 people through the year 1989, Montana's centennial year as a state. Up to this point, each town's orchestral history has been treated in an individual manner, independent of the orchestral histories of other Montana communities. In this chapter an attempt will be made to draw these individual histories together by highlighting a few of the similarities, as well as the differences, of some of the musical groups mentioned in the previous chapters. It is the writer's opinion that a person who knows the history of the orchestra in one of Montana's larger towns would, upon reading this work, find some interesting similarities between that orchestra's past history and the history of one or many of the groups found within these pages. It is in the similarities and parallels with the orchestras in Montana's larger communities that this writer proposes that the history of the orchestras in Montana's smaller communities is a representation in miniature of what
many of the orchestras in Montana's larger communities have already experienced.

One general (and perhaps obvious) comment pertains to all the orchestral ventures in Montana, whether they emanate from small or large towns, and that is that an orchestra, like any organization, has a life cycle. As one observes the histories of the musical groups that have come into being and have either continued or died out, the various stages of an orchestral organization's existence begin to reveal themselves. There is an initial excitement stage, with one person, or perhaps a small group of persons, generating the excitement of a new musical venture. If the group is organized for more than a single performance or group of performances and it continues, it will attain a comfortable stage, where the rehearsals and concert schedule tend become a part of a community musician's routine, and the group is able and willing to perform a concert on a budget that is easily obtained. In this stage the group most likely reaches a plateau, musically speaking, and it may remain in this stage unless some other forces are set in motion. These forces include, but are not limited to: 1) a change in administrative structure, 2) a change in conductor, 3) a change in personnel policy, or 4) a change in the way the group obtains funding. The introduction of these or other forces of change serves to usher in the growth stage of an
orchestra, where change is essential to bring about an improvement in the quality of the organization, be it from a musical or a business standpoint. There is usually some kind of cost associated with this change, usually in the type of relationships that exist in the ensemble. A group that is managed carefully can weather through this growth stage, though, and can emerge better, both financially and musically. If, however, at any point in this cycle, interest in the organization decreases sharply, or the organization has lost sight of its reason for being, the organization is in danger of dying out.

In regard to the beginning stage of an orchestra's life cycle, nearly all the ensembles addressed in this thesis were begun because of one person or a small group of persons acting as the catalyst to generate the excitement of participating in an orchestra. It is interesting to note that in Sidney, Scobey, Miles City, and Kalispell the persons that were the motivating forces were not always the conductors of the group. In Sidney, the Reverend Ed Cunningham, a double bass player, was the motivating personality. The musicians in the Prairie Symphontette in Scobey were originally a group without a conductor, and have looked to cellist Jack Reiner as a central force in organizing its orchestra. The Miles City Community Orchestra tended to be a product of the small group that included pianist Vicki Bergerson, violist Lisa Durkee, and
violinist Noelle Rice, which soon grew larger, than it was the effort of one personality. Dillon's orchestras appeared to be the result of one person's effort, with Lynn Gregory starting the adult orchestra around 1930, and Judy Paul expanding on the quartet that she began in 1980. The orchestras in Kalispell and the Flathead Valley were largely due to the work and energies of conductor/violinist Solveig Grimsrud in the 1950s, Doug and Lindy James in the 1970s, and oboist Rebecca duBois in the 1980s.

In some instances the excitement of the new ensemble evaporated quickly, which caused the created ensemble to be what this writer would term an "ad hoc" orchestra, i.e., one that is created, knowingly or unknowingly, for a specific performance or group of performances. The orchestral groups in Glendive and Sidney, apparently fall into this category, where, after the scheduled performances were played, there was not enough interest or musicians available to keep the groups together on a permanent basis. Although it lasted for approximately two years, Kalispell's Hockaday Chamber Orchestra, which discontinued when a number of people moved away from the area, may possibly be placed in this category as well.

In a few cases, the organizer or organizers of the group would soon after pass the leadership on to another person who was in some fashion more suited to the task of leading the
group than the original leader was. The Miles City Community Orchestra was a group of musicians needing a conductor until they obtained the services of Allan Eve, who, having experience teaching his high school musical groups, was able to apply his organizational skills to the orchestra. In Dillon's orchestra of the 1930s, Lynn Gregory, who found himself too busy, soon gave the leadership of the group over to Miss Frances Robinson, who then affiliated the orchestra with the Montana State Normal College and remained as leader until 1935. Later, during the period 1981-1983, Judy Paul (Sine) and then Dr. James Hearon each led the Dillon Community Orchestra for a year before it passed into the hands of David Beier, who then provided stability for the ensemble by leading it during the rest of the 1980s.

The Prairie Symphonette and the Dillon Community Orchestra appeared to have reached a plateau early on, and were functioning in much the same way as they had in years past. These groups appeared to have remained in the second "comfortable" stage that was identified in the beginning of this chapter. The group from Miles City, being only about two years old by the end of 1989, was probably too young for this writer to observe whether it was still in the initial excitement stage, whether it had reached a comfortable "leveling off" period, or whether it was moving on to the third growth stage. Meanwhile, the Glacier Orchestra &
Chorale in northwest Montana seemed to have never experienced a comfortable plateau, but instead moved into a growth stage almost immediately after its organization, as its rapid budget growth from 1983-1989 can testify.

The programming for these orchestras has generally been on the lighter side of orchestral literature, with some heavier or more difficult works played on occasion. In Scobey's Prairie Symphonette concerts, one might hear selections like Allegro in C by Mozart, Aria with Variation by Handel, Russian Sailors' Dance by Gliere, On a Clear Day by Burton Lane, and Sounds of the Carpenters, arranged by Lowden. The Miles City Community Orchestra's programs have tended to lean more toward music that is in the mainstream of orchestral literature, including Mozart's Eine kleine Nacht musik and a movement from Vivaldi's Four Seasons. However these are balanced with those arrangements like Handel's March from "Scipio" (arranged by Woodhouse) and relatively light works like Rhosymedre by Vaughan Williams. Dillon's Montana State Normal College Little Symphony of the 1930s not only played the Schubert Unfinished Symphony, a Vivaldi Concerto in D minor,¹ and Beethoven's Symphony no. 1,² but also works like A Day in Venice by Nevin, The Little Clock on the Mantel by

¹Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 22 February 1933.
²Dillon (Mont.) Examiner, 2 March 1938, 1.
The later Dillon Community Orchestra played Beethoven's *Egmont Overture* along with a medley of Irving Berlin tunes. Concerts of this group were sometimes combined with the local jazz ensemble, and this was also the case with the Prairie Symphonette. Only in the orchestras in the Kalispell area was the programming more in the style of standard orchestral programs of larger orchestras. Here too, though, one would find the Flathead Valley Orchestra playing an arrangement of Brahms' *Hungarian Dance no. 5*, selections by Leroy Anderson, or perhaps Waldteufel's *Skaters' Waltz*. One of the Hockaday Chamber Orchestra's concerts was centered around the Joshua Rifkin arrangements of some Scott Joplin rags. The Glacier Orchestra & Chorale's programs have been the most like those of an orchestra from a larger community in that they tended to reserve lighter works for a specific "pops" concert, which became a part of the regular season in the mid-1980s.

Many of the orchestras in this thesis have been examples to show the important part played by women in the formation and sustaining of community orchestras in Montana. The orchestra performance in Sidney in 1967 was directed by Mrs. Wayne Cumming, who had rehearsed the choir for their part in the performance of Vivaldi's *Gloria*. In the Prairie

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3*Dillon (Mont.) Examiner*, 14 March 1934, 1.
Symphonette, Marlys Farver has been the person to contact if someone wants the orchestra to play. She has also handled some of the business aspects of the organization, as well as being the concertmaster of the orchestra. In the Miles City Community Orchestra, the beginnings of the ensemble were rooted with a group of women that included Vicki Bergerson, Lisa Durkee, and Noelle Rice. The Montana State Normal College Little Symphony in Dillon existed in the early 1930s largely through the efforts of Miss Frances Robinson, who assumed the conducting responsibilities of the orchestra soon after Mr. Lynn Gregory started the group. It was while Miss Robinson was conductor that the group played its innovative "Symphony Under the Stars" summer concerts, as well as performing on numerous occasions over the radio. In the Dillon Community Orchestra of the 1980s, it was Judy (Paul) Sine who had started a quartet in 1980 that eventually grew into the orchestra that she conducted in 1981-1982. The orchestras in the area surrounding Kalispell and northwest Montana are indebted to many women for their work. Nancy Critelli had begun the class in recreational instruments that was to be the seed for the Flathead Valley Orchestra. This orchestra thrived in the 1950s due to the efforts of Mrs. Solveig Grimsrud, who was a veteran of starting a community orchestra in Richland, Washington. Mrs. Grimsrud conducted the group at various times and played violin in the group at
other times. The Glacier Orchestra and Chorale was begun by Rebecca duBois, who worked tirelessly for the first few seasons on the business aspects of the organization, including its incorporation, funding, and publicity, as well as serving as principal oboe in the orchestra and assisting in the choosing of music for the concerts. The GOC became a strong organization with a strong board in the 1980s partially because of the business expertise of Robin Bailey in making non-profit organizations run successfully.

Two of the orchestras in this study showed some concern about furthering the musical education of the musicians. Scobey's Prairie Symphonette has at times received funds from the Scobey Women's Club for a scholarship to help send local students to a summer music camp. Members of the Flathead Valley's Glacier Orchestra & Chorale violin section have been offered the chance to take a limited number of private music lessons from the concertmaster, with the GOC reimbursing the orchestra member for one-half the cost of the lesson.

Although the orchestras in this study are based and rehearse in one town, the tendency of these groups is toward becoming more regional in terms of the residences of the members that comprise each ensemble. Sidney's orchestra of 1967 included not only people from Sidney, but also people from Fairview. The Prairie Symphonette of Scobey was named so partially because it has included people from the "nearby"
towns like Flaxville, Outlook, and Westby. The Dillon Community Orchestra also has included members who live in the towns of Twin Bridges, Horse Prairie, and Sheridan. The members of orchestras in Kalispell have been spread over the area of western Montana that is generally between the north end of Flathead Lake and Glacier Park. The Flathead Valley Orchestra of the 1950s included at least one resident of Columbia Falls as well as residents from Kalispell. The Glacier Orchestra & Chorale has always encompassed a larger area than just Kalispell in its membership, including towns like Eureka, Troy, and Libby, as well as Columbia Falls, Whitefish, and Somers. Musicians from as far as Great Falls and Missoula have been employed in the GOC as well.

Despite the long distances one encounters between towns in Montana, there have been opportunities for some of the groups to interact with other musical groups. The Prairie Symphonette as early as 1978 had combined with the musicians from the community orchestra in Crosby, North Dakota at least twice for performances of Handel's Messiah. The Dillon Community Orchestra shared a concert with the Butte Symphony Orchestra in 1982, and actually combined for the performance of the concert's final number, which may well have been the first time two Montana orchestras played together. The

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4Ann Swanson, telephone interview by author, 20 February 1990, tape recording.
various sections of the Glacier Orchestra received coaching from members of the Spokane Symphony in 1985, and later on members of the Spokane Symphony, as well as members of the Great Falls Symphony, participated with the Glacier Orchestra & Chorale in the taping for the Amy Grant Christmas television special.

In terms of organizational matters, the current orchestras exhibit somewhat diverse philosophies. The Glacier Orchestra & Chorale had become an orchestra that has a strong internal organization and a funding base that over the years had become increasingly more stable. The GOC belongs to the American Symphony Orchestra League (ASOL), as did its predecessor, the Flathead Valley Orchestra. In addition, the GOC had become a member of the Montana Association of Symphony Orchestras (MASO), an organization formed in 1981 for various reasons, among them being the sharing of music among the orchestras in Montana, as well as sharing in the booking and expenses of guest artists that would play in more than one town's orchestra concert. The Miles City Community Orchestra seemed to be aspiring to the solid and fast growth exhibited by the Glacier Orchestra & Chorale, having joined both ASOL and MASO by the spring of 1990. At that time, however, the Miles City orchestra was still in the process of setting up its internal administrative structure. The Dillon Community Orchestra tended in the latter 1980s to operate when people
were available, and by the end of 1989 was only presenting a concert in the fall. The Dillon orchestra's organization and decision-making rested generally with the conductors Dave Beier and Dave Warner. After it became part of the curriculum of Western Montana College, the orchestra has since had some of its operating expenses paid with funds from the College. By the end of the 1980s, then, the ensemble had been enjoying the benefits of under the umbrella of an academic institution. They had not as of 1989 explored the possibility of joining either the American Symphony Orchestra League or the Montana Association of Symphony Orchestras. Scobey's Prairie Symphonette at the end of the 1980s had almost prided itself in not having an organized board of directors or charter. The orchestra for many years tended to rehearse itself, and then would find someone to conduct when they were ready. Because of this, the decision-making seemed to rest not with a conductor, but with Marlys Farver and Jack Reiner, with Reiner also assuming the role of a quasi spiritual or motivational executive director. The Prairie Symphonette was not a member of ASOL, and was so remote that it had not even heard of MASO. There seemed to be a desire on the part of this ensemble to avoid as much unnecessary red tape as possible and concentrate on their chief reason for their existence, i.e., to play music together. At their stage in the life cycle of an orchestra, their leadership structure, or lack of it, was adequate for
their needs.

The interviewees in the towns of Scobey and Sidney touched on one aspect in their orchestras that perhaps resonates through the other ensembles treated in this thesis (and even those Montana ensembles not treated in this work), and that was that these organizations exist (or existed) because of the presence of a "do-it-yourself" attitude among their members. If these people want something, they can't always go and buy what they need; they find ways to make what they need themselves. In the past, if people wanted music, they made it, because they couldn't buy it. In more recent times, when sound recordings have made music widely available, people have been motivated to form ensembles because of a desire to actually experience playing the music they enjoy, rather than to be content to sit back and passively enjoy music reproduced second-hand from a recording. This desire to actively participate in the creative process of revealing a piece of music to a listener may lie at the core of the reason why so many orchestras have sprung up in the large and small towns of a state like Montana, where the acres are many and the people are few. The fact that one can purchase a recording and in this way hear a piece of music rendered by world class artists better than it would be performed live by a group in Montana is not the point. The orchestras in Montana's smaller communities don't just want the music; they
want the experience and intellectual stimulation of reproducing the music. Perhaps for nonmusicians in a Montana community, what is wanted is not just a good recording of music; what is wanted is the experience of attending a live performance. In smaller communities and remote locations this need is probably more easily filled by having local people perform rather than by bringing a group in from another location. Amateur performers should therefore not be condemned merely because their playing is not at a professional level; they have a right to experience the reproduction of music just as much as the world-class artists, and their audiences have a right to enjoy the experience of live music as much as the audiences in more populous metropolitan areas. The history and existence of the community orchestras of Montana, and those especially of Montana's smaller communities, serve to validate those rights.
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