

IN THE MUSICAL MERCHANDISE FIELD—(Continued from page 144)

Widespread Enthusiasm in the Harmonica Being Manifested in a Concrete Manner

Forty Thousand Harmonica Players in Philadelphia Typical of Interest in This Instrument Throughout the Country—Interesting Report of Fred Sonnen, Hohner Virtuoso

That the popularity of the harmonica throughout the country is growing by leaps and bounds is an undisputed fact to those in a position to know. Constantly one hears of the formation of harmonica bands and orchestras and enthusiastic comment of dealers handling these small instruments regarding the satisfactory volume of sales.

Hohner harmonicas are in the van of popularity, according to reports of retailers, and there is a sound reason for this. The national campaign which the firm of M. Hohner has carried on now for many months is bearing fruit, and dealers everywhere are cashing in on this publicity.

Thousands of Harmonica Enthusiasts

Forty thousand boys have enrolled for harmonica orchestras in Philadelphia, according to Albert N. Hoxie, Jr., head of the Music Division of Philadelphia's Boy Council, who has organ-

ized the Civic Junior Symphony Orchestra in that city, an outgrowth of the city harmonica contests and the organization of harmonica bands. While children are by far in the lead as harmonica enthusiasts, according to Mr. Hoxie, there is a fair representation of adults and even some entire families.

Interesting Harmonica Facts

The widespread interest in the harmonica in Philadelphia is typical of what is taking place throughout the country. In this connection a report of Fred Sonnen, harmonica virtuoso, who was sent to Philadelphia to help in its musical activities, largely through the efforts of William J. Haussler, of M. Hohner, is of considerable interest. This report reads in part as follows:

"A great amount of interest in the harmonica was aroused during the recent Boys' Week in Philadelphia. Never before have I seen such a vast amount of enthusiasm as that manifested

by the people of this city in their harmonica contest.

"Through the courtesy of the Boy Council of Philadelphia, arrangements were made for me to call at the various schools, and requests from more than 165 principals were received for me to appear at their schools in order to demonstrate the playing of the harmonica. A most hearty reception was accorded to me at each school where I appeared and keen interest was shown in the playing of the harmonica.

"Due to the closing of the school term, I was able to call at only sixty-five schools, and out of this number fourteen have made arrangements to form harmonica orchestras. They were very eager to start and did not care to wait until the Fall. The rest of these schools will organize their harmonica orchestras at the beginning of the next school term.

"It was gratifying to me to observe the large number of boys who joined the harmonica orchestras in the various schools. There were as many as 200 boys in the orchestras of some of the schools, and the greatest amount of interest was displayed not only by the boys who are eager to learn, but their teachers and principals as well. In most of the schools many of the teachers also made an effort to learn how to play the harmonica.

"The harmonica orchestras meet after the school session and more than an hour is devoted to practicing. The interest of the members is so intense that the time seems altogether too short for them and they are always looking forward eagerly to the following meeting.

"I was called upon to give recitals, not only in the schools in Philadelphia but in churches, clubs, institutions and at various affairs. At every place I met with the same hearty response and the greatest amount of interest and enthusiasm was shown in the harmonica.

"From the many contestants in the recent Philadelphia harmonica contest fifty of the best players were chosen and an orchestra formed. These boys met every week at the mayor's office in City Hall, and I arranged the orchestra in four different parts in order to teach them perfect harmony. This is the best harmonica orchestra in Philadelphia and consists of expert amateurs.

"In one of the churches where I performed my program was broadcast. I played five classical selections and a few sacred songs. Here, as well as at all other places where I appeared, I was earnestly requested to play again in the near future. In fact, they liked the music of the harmonica so well that it was planned to organize a harmonica orchestra in this church in the Fall.

"A feature of particular note is a small band that I organized, consisting of six colored boys—five brothers and their father, who is seventy-five years old. One of these boys won the third prize in the harmonica contest in Philadelphia last year, and when I learned that he had several brothers and a father who could play the harmonica I immediately made arrangements for the formation of this band. These six colored boys are doing some very fine work, indeed."

How the Euclid Music Co. Is Pushing Buescher Line

CLEVELAND, O., August 8.—One of the most effective direct mail campaigns devoted to musical instruments which has appeared here is being sent to prospects by the Euclid Music Co., which operates five stores here and in Detroit.

This is in the form of a large folder tying up with the Nite Caps on Lake Erie, who are a group of artists broadcasting from radio station WJAX, commencing midnight on the first Saturday of each month. These artists include some of the leading instrumentalists and best-known orchestras in the Middle West, all of whom either play or are accompanied by Buescher instruments.

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