

THE TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE ALL STATE HONOR BAND: (1974-) AN INTRODUCTION

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Texas Junior College Teachers Association All State Honor Band*

The Texas Junior College Teachers Association (TJCTA) met annually in February for their professional conference in a pre-selected location at Galveston, Austin, Houston or San Antonio. The program usually consisted of a Wednesday night final planning session with Dr. Charles Burnside, the association's executive secretary, and the elected officers for that particular year. The conference started with a reception for the current and past Presidents of the Association on Thursday evening. A jazz group from one of the junior colleges provided the background entertainment. On Friday morning an Opening General Assembly meeting included a pre-meeting concert performed by the winning competitor of the TJCTA jazz ensemble prepared tape jazz contest. The winning band also performed one to three selections on the assembly program. The day continued with professional meetings, presentations and special clinicians providing their expertise in certain subject areas. Publishers of text books had organized booths. They displayed many of the recently published text books and revised editions by subject matter included in most of the junior college curricula of the day. In addition the publishers had "hospitality rooms" available for complimentary drinks and snacks through-out the day and night - and in some hotel suites into the early hours of the morning! Their locations were, of course, by word- of- mouth and not officially sanctioned by the Association. On Saturday morning there was a Closing General Assembly Meeting. Prior to the meeting a select group of singers known as the Texas Junior College Honor Choir would sing a short concert and again sing a few selections on the program. It was at this final meeting of the 1973 TJCTA Conference that the idea about a TJCTA All State Honor Band was conceived.

The Texas Junior College Teachers Association for the year of 1973 had a great deal of political activity. Prior to this time, administrators of various junior colleges and their department heads held most of the voting power and offices of the association. A few years earlier I'm told there was a time at my college when faculty presence at the conference was mandatory. In fact the only faculty travel funding they received had to be used for this conference. While in 1973 this was no longer the case, I can state that perhaps for the first time the teaching faculty members of the association were supporting several of their own colleagues for association positions. This indeed was called the day (and nights) of the "smoke-filled rooms" and political "deal swapping." On the Saturday morning at the General Assembly meeting, the pre-meeting choir concert had many cigar-smoking and political-minded individuals in attendance. Their intention was not, unfortunately, to be a polite and listening audience but more to continue the political banter that had gone on for the last few days - including their "complimentary attitude" from the night before! For several years running the various directors chosen to conduct the Texas Junior College Honor Choir had bemoaned the behavior of this unruly audience! In 1973 the Choir Director stopped the performance at least three times during the pre-meeting concert to request that the "audience" quiet down. As I remember this was quite a chaotic event!

After the assembly meeting adjourned I happened to overhear the coordinator of the TJCTA Choir speaking to Dr. Burnside, the Executive Director of the conference. The coordinator clearly communicated to Dr. Burnside that the TJCTA Honor Choir would never again perform at this annual meeting. My first thought was that an Honor Band could surely perform louder than this inattentive audience! I knew Dr. Burnside pretty well since over the years I had performed with one of my college ensembles at the Past Presidents reception and also as the winning jazz band to perform on the opening

meeting of the conference. In addition, I had made several contributions to the various meetings as a panel member or curriculum speaker during the conference. I had no reluctance when I stepped up to Dr. Burnside and suggested to him that we have an Honor Concert Band at next year's conference to replace the choir performance. He accepted my offer on the spot, saying "Why don't you do that?" At least at this point I had an unofficial confirmation from the Executive Director of the association!

During the next year, Dr. Burnside's assistance and the TJCTA's financial support would prove to be invaluable in blocking out hotel rooms for the student performers and their directors, providing for the Clinician/ Conductor and soloist fees, and other various expenses. I might add he also "comped" the band coordinator's room. With Dr. Burnside's generous attention in establishing a financial basis for this new performing venue, the Texas Junior College All State Honor Band could become a reality.

Even at the close of the conference I was able to tell a few band directors about my conversation with Dr. Burnside and the possibility of this new band. After returning home I contacted by phone and by letter all the directors I could find about performing in the new band and asked them to identify eight to ten students they could bring to the conference; keeping in mind, of course, a good distribution of instruments. As we did not have a formal organization I decided it would be best for me to centralize all the various administrative functions from my office. I first received written confirmation from Dr. Burnside and TJCTA. I then selected the Guest Conductor/Clinician: James Jacobsen, Director of Bands at Texas Christian University. James selected and furnished some of the music. I was associated with the tuba soloist, Richard Frazier, as he had recently been a soloist with the Lee College Concert Band. Music was also provided by H&H Music Co. of Houston, Texas and Mr. Al Sturchio from the North East ISD in San Antonio provided some percussion instruments. The hotel said they did not have a ballroom but we could use the solarium room for the rehearsals. Not really having time to take a trip to San Antonio I agreed on the hotel's judgment for the rehearsal location. Later on, this decision would grow to haunt me!

Everyone arrived in San Antonio on Wednesday, February 20th. We had 18 schools and directors participating with 114 students in the band. I arrived early that morning with an open truck full of instruments and covered with a tarp. It rained that morning! The band directors assisted in auditioning the seating order of the sections and many other organizational tasks. Larry Campbell, Director of Bands at Blinn College, assisted greatly in this inaugural year and became highly involved in developing the Texas Junior College Band Directors Association in the following years. The first rehearsal was one to remember. The solarium room was not a room with perhaps wallpaper printed in a green plant pattern as I had hurriedly envisioned. Just as the word *solarium* implies, the rehearsal area was an empty room, glass from bottom to top, located in the garden of the hotel. We quickly made arrangements to rehearse across the street at another hotel. I might add that TJCTA generously picked up the rental cost for the new rehearsal room.

The concert of the first Texas Junior College All State Honor Band was performed at 10:30 AM in the Municipal Auditorium, San Antonio, Texas, on February 23, 1974. The concert went very well and was a good bit louder than the audience! The program included the following repertoire:

LESLIE.....Night Flight to Madrid
SHOSTAKOVICH-HUNSBERGER.....Festive Overture, Opus 96
JAGER.....Third Suite
BENCRISCUTTO.....Concertino for Tuba and Band
BERSTEIN-DUTHOIT....."West Side Story" Selections

The Band Directors supporting the first band were as follows:

Mr. Jerry Perkins	Alvin Jr. College
Mr. Larry Campbell	Blinn College
Dr. Charles McAdams	Grayson County College
Mr. Tommy Downing	Henderson County Jr. College
Mr. P. B. Castleberry	Hill Jr. College
Mr. David Corder	Lee College
Mr. David Hooten	McLennan Community College
Mr. Bob Whipkey	Navarro Jr. College
Mr. Peter Figert	Odessa College
Mr. Robert Reid	Panola College
Ms. Julie Ryan	Paris Jr. College
Dr. Bill Auvenshine	Ranger Jr. College
Mr. Joe Silva	Southwest Texas College
Mr. Larry Guess	Temple Jr. College
Mr. Barry Mitchell	Texarkana College
Mr. Robert Hickford	Texas Southmost College
Mr. Wilber Collins	Victoria College
Dr. W. W. Wendtland	Wharton County Jr. College

Now, after so many years have passed, I again extend many thanks for the support extended by the Lee College maintenance department, the LC Media Center, and the LC Fine Arts Division. Thanks are again given for the assistance of Dr. Ada Smith, Ms. Peggy Powers, Mr. Jim Meadows, and especially to Dr. Charles Burnside and the Texas Junior College Teachers Association.

Due to the desire to pursue a more favorable performance venue for the band, it was decided to propose to the Texas Music Educators Association that the band might perform at the TMEA annual conference/clinic. The Texas Community College All State Honor Band now performs a concert each year at TMEA. A few years ago the Texas Community College Honor Choir also started performing at TMEA. I extend many thanks to TMEA and their administration for making this wonderful venue available to these community college organizations. Both community college organizations have developed into state-wide associations for their directors. Over the past twenty-three the years, I have become very proud of their integrity and purpose. The students are in good hands!

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