

# Music Director Tells Why He Doesn't Play

Like asking the mailman how long a walk he takes after delivering the mail is the question we asked Arnold W. Berndt this week. So he tells us, at least.

As we congratulated him on his thirtieth year with Birmingham schools, we asked the schools' music education director what instruments he himself played.

"I used to play several instruments," he said. "But I haven't had time to play for years now."



ARNOLD W. BERNDT

LOOK AT THE status of the public schools' instrumental music program today, and you see why Mr. Berndt has had no time to play himself.

When he joined the local school system in charge of instrumental education, he had 16 students. Today there are 1014 student instrumentalists in the Birmingham schools, about one in every ten pupils. Four additional teachers—Harold Jones, Robert Kutscher, Burton Bronson and Maurice Pelton—work with instrumental music students.

And today Mr. Berndt directs vocal as well as instrumental education.

Fifty talented instrumentalists, members of the Birmingham high school band, are now rehearsing under the Berndt baton for their annual concert, May 9 in the high school gym.

THE 50 TEENAGE BHS musicians again this year topped a first division rating among southeastern Michigan school bands and orchestras. The rating makes the group eligible to enter state competition, but as in previous years, spring vacation conflicts with the date.

The leader of the top-rated band came to Birmingham, where he now lives at 2529 E. Maple, after two "a year or two" of teaching elsewhere after college.

At the University of Michigan he received the teacher's certificate which he says, "You just can't get until you take a test to prove your proficiency in woodwind instruments, percussion, brasses, and even in sight singing."

HIS GREATEST emphasis, back in the days when he played instruments himself, was on the violin and concert.

"It takes many hours of practice a week to play well," he said. "Because I don't have the hours to practice, I just don't play at all."

Whether it allows time to play well or not, music education must have appeared an inviting field to Arnold and Alice Berndt's son, William, Nov. 22. William is completing his first year of teaching at Ortonville, where his subject is instrumental music.

This summer Mr. Berndt plans to direct the Birmingham recreation board's summer music program, which provides classes for hopeful musicians "from the rank beginner to the finished student."

WHEN HE'S NOT directing music and an educational program, he heads an American school band directors' association, committee studying use of additional aids.

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