

IOWA BANDMASTERS ASSOCIATION

MAJOR LANDERS SCHOLARSHIP

BIOGRAPHIES OF MAJOR GEORGE W. LANDERS AND KARL L. KING



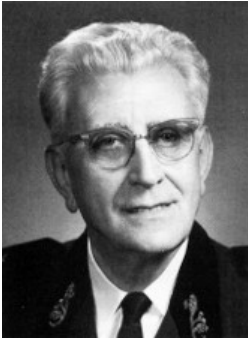
MAJOR GEORGE W. LANDERS 1860-1955

Major George W. Landers is the man the Iowa Bandmasters Association honors with its annual college scholarship. He was born in New York state. His early band experience was that of playing cymbals in the Mexico, New York, village band. At age 21 he became a clarinetist with the John Robinson Circus Band. By 1898 he had moved to Iowa where he commanded an army regimental band during the Spanish-American War. He commanded service bands overseas in the Phillipines and served the Army 33 years. For that service and a testimonial to his musical success, he received many honors from his fellow musicians. To cite a few examples, he was the honored guest of the Navy Band in concert at the KRNT Theater in 1948. He was given high honors by the city of Elkart, Indiana, at the annual American Bandmasters Association convention in 1947 and was the guest conductor of many major massed band concerts throughout the midwest.

In his later life he pioneered the philosophy that the path to world peace and understanding lay in music. Through his efforts The American Bandmasters Association, The National Musicians Union, and the American Federation of Musicians Congress established the overseas touring of American music groups. To quote Major Landers: "Someday the world will realize that the disillusioned common people who have lost all confidence in words will listen to the language of music. It speaks to their hearts and souls."

Major Landers is best remembered by Iowa's musicians as the father of the Iowa Band Law. This law provided tax money for state aid to bands, lifting them out of the charity class, and making them a recognized and accepted part of the American way of life.

Major Landers dies July 4, 1955. He was one of Iowa's finest.



KARL L. KING 1891-1971

Karl King was born in Ohio and received his early formal education in Cleveland. At age eleven Karl became interested in band music. However, Music Education as we know it was far in the future. In those days one bought an instrument, found a teacher, learned to play, and then found a band. His first instrument was a Lyon and Healy trombone; cost, five dollars without a case. In 1903, for ten dollars, Karl became a cornetist.

From early local bands Karl found his way to the circus bands, including the Yankee Robinson, the Sells-Floto, and the Barnum and Bailey. Karl had joined these bands at the height of their popularity and advanced from baritonist-cornetist to the directorship of the Sells-Floto band in 1914. As director he was responsible for hiring new members, training the musicians, and coordination the band with the circus performances. His success with Sells-Floto gave him recognition as a bandmaster and he advanced to the directorship of the Barnum and Bailey band, the pinnacle of circus bands, in 1917.

By this time, Karl had written and published over 100 compositions and in 1920 he was searching for a permanently located band where he could also concentrate on his publishing company. Thus came the marriage of King, Iowa, and Fort Dodge. The Fort Dodge Municipal Band flourished under his direction and played fair circuits, including the Iowa State Fair, until the 1950's, along with a regular concert schedule. Karl ended his fair band era in 1959. His concert work continued.

To the world of bands Karl's contributions were many. He was a prolific composer. His compositions stand as a monument to the band music of the early 20th century. He was Iowa Bandmasters Association president in 1929. He worked with Major George Landers to pass the Iowa Band Law, and he was a charter member of the American Bandmasters Association formed in 1930. Also, he was a leader in the movement to standardize band instrumentation.

His lifetime honors were many; in the 50's and 60's he became a truly national figure. He received the American School Directors of America distinguished service award in 1959, in 1966 the Society of European Stage Authors and Composers Silver Award and in 1967 he became an honorary life president of ABA. During these years he was honored by being the guest conductor of numerous nationally important festivals.

Karl King was a band pioneer of fantastic stature. We have reaped his legacy.