Hi-Fi, Middle Brow? Frederick Fennell, Mercury Records, and the Eastman Wind Ensemble From 1952 to 1962

Reed Chamberlin

Abstract
Frederick Fennell, founder of the internationally acclaimed Eastman Wind Ensemble (EWE), is considered by many to be the catalyst for the modern wind-band movement, often credited with revolutionizing thought and practice within the discipline. While this perception remains valid, evidence suggests that Fennell was much less serious (or “high-brow”) than many believe. Derived from original research in the Fennell Archive at the Eastman School of Music, this article seeks to highlight tensions between Fennell’s desire to record serious wind-band music and the demands of Mercury Records (EWE record label, 1952–1964) to record populist repertoire. Fennell’s archival material suggests that his philosophy was directly influenced by Mercury’s bottom line with the objective of selling records to the masses. Surprisingly, this synthesized a dynamic approach to programming for Fennell and the EWE—one that remains a tradition to this day. The influence of recorded media’s populist objective fused an approach for Fennell that is much more “middle-brow” than many may have believed.

Keywords
Wind Ensemble, Eastman Wind Ensemble, Frederick Fennell, Reed Chamberlin, Donald Hunsberger, Mark Scatterday, Howard Hanson, Mercury living presence series, middle brow

Fennell as a Visionary
On February 5, 1951, an experimental “Concert of Music for Wind Instruments, Performed By Students of the Orchestral Department” took place in the Eastman School of Music’s Kilbourn Hall. The program consisted of repertoire from the 16th to the 20th centuries in various configurations of ensembles, ranging from brass and woodwind groups to a larger, one-per-part “wind band.” In the fall of 1952, this experiment would come to be known as the Eastman Wind Ensemble (EWE), led by its founder Frederick Fennell (1914–2004). Over the next 60-plus years, Fennell’s wind ensemble concept would profoundly reshape thought and practice in wind-band performance, especially in terms of performance standards, repertoire, and instrumentation. By the late 20th century Fennell’s acclaim as a wind conductor of high repute reached international proportions—in 1962, he departed Eastman to serve as associate conductor of the Minneapolis Symphony (1962–1964), then became conductor in residence at the University of Miami (1965–1980), and finally served as longtime conductor of the Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra (1984–1999).

In his book Time and the Winds, Fennell laid out a manifesto for the wind ensemble concept based on the paradigm of flexible instrumentation. In this concept, the composer determines the instrumentation of the ensemble rather than a fixed “band” instrumentation determining the composer’s orchestration choices, and all works (including large ensemble works) are staffed with mostly one player per-part. To Fennell, this allowed the composer greater freedom to write for the medium and created the conditions for the wind band to transcend its present-day repertoire (opening possibilities for works composed in the spirit of Strauss’s Serenade, or Stravinsky’s Symphonies of Wind Instruments). About this concept he stated that “the programs which the Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble performs . . . consist of one-third music for reeds, one-third for the brass, and one-third for the reed-brass-percussion combination” (Fennell, 1954, p. 53). Over the following decades, the title “wind ensemble” came to be associated with elite university wind bands that employed this concept to varying degrees.

1University of Nevada, Reno, USA

Corresponding Author:
Reed Chamberlin, University of Nevada, 1664 N. Virginia Street, Reno, NV 89557, USA.
Email: rchamberlin@unr.edu
The dissemination of recorded media, the generation of copious conductor training and repertoire articles, frequent guest conducting appearances across the globe, and the proliferation of the wind ensemble concept catapulted Fennell’s status to the de facto leader of the wind-band movement in the second half of the 20th century. An obituary-tribute article in the New York Times described him as a conductor that “raised band performance to an art form” and that “before Mr. Fennell, band music was often considered low brow entertainment with an assembly-line feel.” (Wakin, 2004) Of Fennell’s attendance at the 1985 CBDNA National Conference, H. Robert Reynolds expressed “I want you to know how much it meant to so very many people that you were present. Somehow, things seem to be more important when you are around, and this time was no exception.” Jerry Junkin, conductor of the Dallas Wind Symphony, stated “He was arguably the most famous band conductor since John Philip Sousa” (Wakin, 2004). Of his own work with the EWE, Fennell (1993) expressed, “We were to dedicate our work to the exclusive study and performance of original music for the wind medium . . . our purpose was a clear concern for the artistic elevation of the wind instruments in the ensemble.”

That today’s leaders looked up to Fennell, there is no question. Many regard him as a visionary who advocated for the creation of serious repertoire, thus transitioning the wind-band medium from its pre-1950s reliance on transcriptions and lighter works to medium-specific masterworks. It may be fair to say that along with Edwin Franko Goldman before him, Fennell led the charge toward a new model for wind-band repertoire and performance.

In this study of Fennell and his work within the art form, we will need to frame the discussion in terms of registers of style in art and literature, thus using Rubin’s working definition “high brow” (or serious) as refined, cultivated, avant garde; “low brow” as lacking cultivation, populist driven, lacking a care for taste; and “middle brow” as consumerist outgrowth of the mass marketing of serious or quasi-serious works—or somewhere between the low and high (Rubin, 1992, pp. xii–xv). As the New York Times suggests, it seems that Fennell is perceived as a serious conductor who advocated for works of a high-brow nature, geared toward aesthetics and not necessarily for the layperson. Yet, evidence shows that Fennell was less serious in his approach to programming than perception may indicate. As we will see, despite holding the highest artistic ideals, he made many forays into populist (or middle brow) “classical” music, and many places in between, for that matter.

A Cordial Tug of War With Mercury Records

Perhaps the most influential tool in launching Fennell’s status was a recording agreement with Mercury Records in 1952, arranged through a larger contract with the Eastman School of Music for the purposes of recording American music. The Mercury Living Presence Series utilized the finest technology available at the time, including imported microphones from Europe and appealed directly to the new Hi-Fi audience of at-home audiophiles, fostered by postwar disposable income and emanating from wartime technological developments. Of the significance of this project, wind historian and conductor Frank Battisti states that “Fennell’s philosophy of programming, high performance standards and superb recordings had a profound influence on many band directors and conductors . . . . Without the Mercury recordings Fennell’s influence on the band world would have been far less.” (Battisti, 2002, pp. 58–59)

However, notoriety and recognition often come at a price. Despite the best of intentions for his wind ensemble concept, it became clear from the beginning of the Mercury/EWE project that David Hall (president of the Mercury Classical Division) sought to release recordings of “band” music in the traditional sense. This was manifest in several aspects of the recording agreement, most notably in branding the EWE, the use of personnel, and the selection of repertoire for recordings. It is evident from Fennell’s archival materials (housed at the Eastman School’s Sibley Music Library) that a gentle tug of war between him and Mercury executives developed through the course of the project. As a result, Fennell was often forced to choose between public acclaim driven by record sales and the preservation of his artistic integrity.

This dialectic came to being at nearly the very beginning of the project, with David Hall referring to the EWE almost exclusively as a “band.” Early on in the recording project (1953), communications from Hall include statements such as “thank you for your letter about the popular band album,” and “thanks for your note . . . confirming the news about the fall band session.” Hall went so far as to suggest that Fennell copy instrumentation used by Morton Gould for a concurrent recording project—this instrumentation was not of the flexible wind ensemble concept, but simply a one-player per part concert band. Remarkably, Fennell responded “ours is identical to the extent of about 99 percent. He used two more B-flat clarinets than we, but we use the alto clarinet, he did not.” Fennell’s agreeable response to the idea of a fixed instrumentation begins to fly in the face of his own Time and the Winds manifesto and the ideals touted in the experimental concert of February 1951. Rather than promoting flexible instrumentation we see from Fennell what could be interpreted as a tacit advocacy of a fixed instrumentation ensemble, or simply a one per part band—hardly the neat division of instrumentation in thirds that he had espoused.

It would seem that Hall promoted a recording project consisting of traditional band music performed by a small symphonic band. In business-speak: an ensemble lean in human resources. Perhaps he was seeking an effective business model for large ensemble recording, one fueled by a mass-market appeal of band music and made economical through
low labor costs (EWE members were paid union scale wages for recording sessions, and the use of a small band would certainly require less capital up front than a large symphonic band).

Fennell’s term “wind ensemble,” either as a proper or common noun, had to endure pressure from Mercury Records, too. In a May 1953 letter to Howard Hanson, director of the Eastman School, Hall requested to brand the EWE as the “Eastman-Rochester Symphonic Wind Ensemble” because it would be “far better from the point of view of sales and prestige.” Hanson, however, squandered this request with the justification that “Eastman-Rochester” was used to denote the mixed professional/student Philharmonic Orchestra in Rochester, and that the Eastman Wind Ensemble was a group comprised solely of students—thus, misleading. As a result Hall himself “designated” the group as the “Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble.”

Although Fennell accepted the imposed title, he recanted to Hall that “I am not dissatisfied with the designation . . . although my preference was Eastman Wind Ensemble. I can understand your desire to clarify the record for the public and the title you have chosen should do that.” Hall made creative decisions for Eastman by modifying the ensemble’s brand—a decision about an Eastman ensemble made by an external entity. Most likely, Fennell was keenly aware of the exposure and prestige that published recordings could bring to the ensemble (and to his own career) and as a result was willing to overlook the imposition. Donald Hunsberger confirms anecdotally that the title “Symphonic” was added by Mercury to help the public understand the nature of the wind ensemble and observes that after gaining traction, the term was dropped.

Mercury’s influence on the development of the EWE was not just limited to personnel and title, it extended into a much more artistic aspect: the selection of repertoire. As the recording project took shape in 1953, Fennell presented to Hall a list of potential pieces to record and release. The list consisted of pieces that many today would consider serious (or high brow) relative to the canon of wind-band music. The initial works proposed by Fennell were Hindemith, Symphony in B-flat; Schoenberg, Theme and Variations, Op. 43a; Persichetti, Divertimento; Jacob, Music for a Festival; Riegger, Music for Brass; and Stravinsky, Symphonies “for” Wind Instruments.

In subsequent communications of 1954 he also recommended Holst’s Hammersmith for recording. Fennell would say of Hammersmith later in his life “Hammersmith is a very serious piece; it is also a very difficult piece. Of the two, it is its [sic] serious quality that prevents conductors—faint of heart—from programming it. It is for me the most difficult piece in band’s repertory—and it’s greatest.”

To understand the gravity of Fennell’s proposal, it is beneficial to cross reference it with Acton Ostling’s landmark study of works “of Serious Artistic Merit” for wind band (1978). This study, which was updated by Jay Gilbert (1997) and Cliff Towner (2011), seeks the wisdom of the masses to discern works of the highest artistic caliber. In Towner’s 2011 update, 1,469 compositions for wind band were evaluated on a Likert-type scale based on specific compositional criteria. 18 well-known wind-band conductors were nominated to evaluate the literature by the memberships of CBDNA and WASBE. (Towner, 2011, pp. 22−45) In the final analysis, Towner et al. consider pieces that scored in the 80th percentile or higher as works of “serious artistic merit.”

According to mass wisdom, Fennell’s repertoire ideas indicate that he had good taste! He aimed to record works that scored mostly above the 80th percentile benchmark—thus, according to Towner, et al., he was selecting serious works (see Table 1). Furthermore, one could argue that Fennell’s intuition was remarkable, considering that many of the works deemed serious in the Towner study had not yet been composed in 1952 (e.g., the music of Benson, Schwantner, and Husa, to name a few). Essentially, his proposal to Mercury selected serious works that have withstood the test of time.

Donald Hunsberger (Conductor, EWE 1965–2002) believes that Fennell was concerned about standards of repertoire from the very beginning of the EWE—a fact that went hand in hand with his concern about being perceived as a high-level conductor. He purposed to record the early great works, consciously avoided school band repertoire, and even skirted the repertoire generated by the American Wind Symphony. One can see this philosophy manifest in his proposed Mercury repertoire and its validity confirmed through the research of Towner, et al.

Despite Fennell’s highest intentions, David Hall exerted a significant amount of influence on the selection of repertoire, too. Early on, marches entered the conversation and remained at the forefront. For example, early in 1953 (the first year of the Mercury project) Hall proposed recording an all-Sousa album, to which Fennell protested the idea of “recording an album of all one man’s music.” He went on question the artistic direction of the album by asking of Hall “I wonder if it wouldn’t be wise to consider an album of varied march styles?” But by September of 1953 Hall wrote to Fennell that “We are still sticking to our guns for an all-Sousa program for the first of what we hope will be several march collections to be done with the Wind Ensemble in the future.

Table 1. Initial Repertoire Proposed to Mercury Records.

| Composer, title proposed by Fennell | Percentile ranking in Towner (2011) |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Hindemith, Symphony in B-flat       | 98.9%                               |
| Schoenberg, Theme and Variations, Op. 43a | 91.8%                           |
| Persichetti, Divertimento           | 82.2%                               |
| Jacob, Music for a Festival         | 72.9%                               |
| Riegger, Music for Brass Choir      | 77.1%                               |
| Stravinsky, Symphonies for Wind Instruments | 100%                              |
| Holst, Hammersmith                  | 95.6%                               |
perhaps the most striking feature of to do this, besides making an album of Sousa marches. What do I have to do to get you to sew up rights on this piece? and Riegger himself confirms it. Is there any way you could bring up the fact that I have heard there is a battle raging between recording companies over who will do Reigger's work. In an exchange in September of 1953, Fennell solicits “Can I just call your attention to the fact that I have heard there is a battle raging between recording companies over who will do Reigger’s ‘Music for Brass Choir.’ This is the first I have heard of it, and Riegger himself confirms it. Is there any way you could sew up rights on this piece? What do I have to do to get you to do this, besides making an album of Sousa marches?” Perhaps the most striking feature of this correspondence is its final sentence! Fennell seems to understand his compromise by recording lots of marches, and asks for the opportunity to achieve his artistic goal of recording serious repertoire. However, Hall offered nothing short of lip service in response: “Regarding the Riegger Music for Brass, I am thoroughly in sympathy with your anxiety in view of the fact that the various record companies are competing for first recording rights.” Following this, a long chain of correspondences ensued with Wilma Cozart (assistant to David Hall) regarding the purchase of mechanical rights for the piece. Mercury appeared unwilling to outlay the necessary cash for the rights and the extra musicians required by the piece, and there was a half-hearted attempt to secure external funding. Hall and Cozart appeared sympathetic to Fennell’s wishes but failed to demonstrate a desire to follow through. And, reading between the lines, perhaps the brass-laden instrumentation of the Riegger (and the extra musicians required) did not jibe with Mercury’s financial model. As time passed, the conversations shifted to other pieces and Riegger was never recorded. Fennell’s frustrations were not limited to just recording march albums and Hall’s evasion of the Riegger. Despite these setbacks Fennell pushed for repertoire of high artistic ideals well into the second year of the project, 1954. In a February 3, 1954 letter to Wilma Cozart, Fennell wrote, I don’t know what to do about the other proposal . . . I know that David has never been overly enthusiastic about my desire to record back to back Hindemith’s Symphony, Schoenberg’s Variations, Stravinsky’s Symphonies and Riegger’s Music for Brass, but at the same time I am faced with the unalterable facts that these, save for six works on MG 40006 (Schuman, George Washington Bridge; Persichetti Divertimento; Gould, Ballad for Band; Bennett, Suite of Old American Dances; Piston, Tunbridge Fair; Barber, Commando March), are the greatest pieces yet written for the band and for large ensembles of wind instruments.

Cozart responded in kind, giving little assurance to Fennell: “David is still very hesitant about recording the Schoenberg and Hindemith works. I do not know the works myself, and therefore, cannot be of any help in this matter . . . By the way David says that he does not object to the Schoenberg in itself so much as he does to the combination of Hindemith, Schoenberg, and Stravinsky.” These exchanges represent much of the dialogue that transpired—Fennell proposes, Mercury pushes back, Fennell counters, and Mercury gives paltry responses. The conversation of serious repertoire continued into August of 1954, particularly regarding Hindemith’s Symphony in B-flat. In a letter to Fennell, Hall wrote I am in favor of putting the two Holst Suites and the two Vaughan Williams pieces together on a single disc in the general order that you suggest . . . and I do think that all the English repertoire should be issued in one package. The Hindemith Symphony I would be inclined to hold off on for the time being if only because I want to become a lot more familiar with it before I make and commitment on Mercury’s behalf. Hall seems all the more ambitious to package the listener-accessible works of Vaughan Williams and Holst, while holding the more impenetrable Hindemith at bay. To this Fennell responded, “I still have hopes that I can sell you on the Hindemith, I don’t believe that you have ever heard one of our performances of it and I shall persist in interesting you in this work.”

Ironically, the agreement between Mercury and the Eastman School was for the recording of American composers, and Hindemith would have already been a naturalized American citizen for eight years prior. Hall deviated from the agreement, probably because he wanted band music accessible to the general public—in this case the English music he mentions. As an aside, Hunsberger suggests that the concept of recording “American music” drew a tepid response from the Eastman faculty, regardless. One could give Hall and Cozart the benefit of the doubt in the matter, seeing as Hindemith’s Symphony would have been only two years old; however, it is clear that they did not go out of their way to learn about the piece, suggesting that they were simply stringing Fennell along on the matter.
There can be no question that Hall was first and foremost an entrepreneur. His serious artistic leanings or principles were mild at best, and this was borne out in much of the selection of repertoire for the early years of the EWE/Mercury project. The early albums were, on the whole, listener friendly and featured music that is generally tonal or consonant. It would be safe to say that most of the works were written at middling levels of sophistication and that the recordings fit a middle-brow model of marketed works with characteristics that flirt with seriousness.

As Table 2 shows, many of the recorded works ranked underneath the 80 percent high-water mark in Towner, et al. For example, works such as Gould’s ‘Ballad for Band’ (74.1%), Piston’s ‘Tunbridge Fair’ (76.7%), and Thomson’s ‘A Solemn Music’ (69.4%) do not achieve the benchmark. The many albums of marches cannot be compared, as marches were not even considered as possible serious works in the study. While the non-march albums suggest that Fennell tried to select quality repertoire, we should note that much of what is today considered core repertoire had not yet been written. Thus, Fennell had limited means with which to work. Although there was no... and the mountains rising nowhere, or Music for Prague, 1968, there did exist Hindemith’s Symphony, Stravinsky’s Symphonies of Wind Instruments, and Holst’s Hammersmith. Works of a higher level of pretension were available, and Hall skirted them as much as possible. His philosophy on repertoire and the financially driven undertones are best be summed up in this statement:

On the more serious side of things, I still have the Riegger Music for Brass on my mind. The problem still is to find music scored for a closely similar combination so that we could devote a whole session to this kind of material without running in to the problem of extra players.23

An Artistic Reprieve

Fennell received a reprieve when Hall exited Mercury Records in September of 1956 and Wilma Cozart assumed leadership of the Classical Division. The final album recorded under Hall’s leadership on May 6, 1956 was titled Ruffles and Flourishes, and it featured music of the U.S. Armed Forces for trumpets and drums. The first album after Cozart’s promotion was recorded on March 24, 1957 and was titled Hindemith—Schoenberg—Stravinsky. Yes, the works referred to in this title are the Symphony, the Theme and Variations, and Symphonies of Wind Instruments, all recorded back to back. With Hall’s departure, Fennell and the EWE entered a new era of artistic freedom in recording.

After this shift in philosophy, listener-accessible recordings continued to dominate the landscape, but the serious recordings seemed more serious. With Cozart’s approval, Fennell was able to record more works that would rank well above the 80th percentile in the Gilbert study. He continued to record less serious albums consisting of marches (and repackaged versions of previous march recordings), a Civil War theme, Wagner, and ballet themes. The works listed in

| Album/composer, title | Percentile ranking in Towner (2011) |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| **American Concert Band Masterpieces (MG40006)** | |
| Schuman, George Washington Bridge | 86.7% |
| Persichetti, Divertimento | 82.2% |
| Gould, Ballad for Band | 74.1% |
| Bennett, Suite of Old American Dances | 83.5% |
| Piston, Tunbridge Fair | 76.7% |
| Barber, Commando March | N/A |
| **Marches by Sousa and Others (MG40007)** | |
| Sousa, Fairest of the Fair | N/A |
| Sousa, Manhattan Beach | N/A |
| Sousa, Black Horse Troop | N/A |
| Sousa, Daughters of Texas | N/A |
| Sousa, Rifle Regiment | N/A |
| Sousa, Corcoran Cadets | N/A |
| Sousa, Hands Across the Sea | N/A |
| Sousa, Semper Fidelis | N/A |
| Jenkins, Pieces of Eight | N/A |
| Goldman, Cheerio | N/A |
| Fillmore, His Honor | N/A |
| Bigelow, Our Director | N/A |
| Alford, Glory of the Gridiron | N/A |
| King, Pride of the Illini | N/A |
| Bagley, National Emblem | N/A |
| **La Fiesta Mexicana (MG400011)** | |
| Reed, La Fiesta Mexicana | 85.6% |
| Mennin, Canzona | 78.9% |
| Persichetti, Psalm for Band | 76.7% |
| Thomson, A Solemn Music | 69.4% |
| Hanson, Chorale and Alleluia | 74.4% |
| **British Band Classics (MG400015)** | |
| Holst, Suite in E-flat for Military Band | 93.3% |
| Holst, Suite in F for Military Band | 86.7% |
| Vaughan Williams, Toccata Marziale | 83.3% |
| Vaughan Williams, English Folksong Suite | 80% |
| **Marching Along (MG 50105)** | |
| Sousa, U.S. Field Artillery | N/A |
| Sousa, The Thunderer | N/A |
| Sousa, The Washington Post | N/A |
| Sousa, King Cotton | N/A |
| Sousa, El Capitain | N/A |
| Meacham, American Patrol | N/A |
| Goldman, On the Mall | N/A |
| McCoy, Lights Out | N/A |
| King, Barnum and Bailey’s Favorite | N/A |
| Alford, Colonel Bogey | N/A |
| Klohr, The Billboard | N/A |
Table 3. Selected “Serious” Repertoire From the 1956–1962 EWE Recordings.

| Composer, Title                        | Percentile Ranking in Towner (2011) |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Hindemith, Symphony in B-flat          | 98.9%                               |
| Schoenberg, Theme and Variations, Op.43a| 91.8%                               |
| Stravinsky, Symphonies ’for’ Wind Instruments | 100%                               |
| Grainger, Lincolnshire Posy            | 95.6%                               |
| Strauss, Serenade in E-flat             | N/A                                 |
| Mozart, Serenade in B-flat (Gran Partita)| 100%                               |
| Holst, Hammersmith                      | 95.6%                               |
| Persichetti, Symphony No. 6 for Band   | 88.9%                               |

Table 3 are selected serious works (by the author) recorded after Hall’s exit. They represent an artistic liberation of sorts for Fennell, but one should consider that they were smattered between other recordings of listener-accessible music.

That Mercury put business first can be confirmed by looking at sales of the EWE/Mercury Albums. Of the entire 26-album project, the top six selling albums were march based (see Table 4). Albums consisting of marches or popular themes outsold those that were serious. The sales figures suggest that Hall knew his audience and that the record buying public was simply more interested in marches and patriotic themes than bon a fide, serious wind literature. Wilma Cozart expressed this best:

I believe you will recall, Fred . . . that both David and I told you that we did not aim any of our catalog primarily at the educational level; that all our records were aimed for record stores to be sold to the average record buyer. When you were talking about the tremendous untapped market of band directors, students playing in bands, etc., we both told you that what we were able to pull in of that we would consider “gravy”; that we would place our real hopes on selling the disc in the stores (emphasis hers).24

Cozart confirmed that Mercury’s aim was to offer listener friendly wind-band music to the “average record buyer.” It is not surprising that Mercury would aim to make a profit; after all they were in business, but questions of artistic purity come to the fore—especially given Fennell’s desires to propagate the wind ensemble concept and to elevate the repertoire. There was not enough demand for the serious works, and Mercury was unwilling to devote the capital to creating that demand. All of this may suggest that Fennell ended up in a position that was much more middle brow than high brow—he was participating in the mass marketing of quasi serious works.

The Sacred Concert Hall?

Thus far, this article has examined works recorded by the EWE and the forces from Mercury Records that kept Fennell from recording serious repertoire. Another aspect for consideration is Fennell’s concert programming with the EWE—in the revered venue of the concert hall, often seen as a sacrosanct venue for artistic expression (especially within academia, where ticket sales are less of a concern). Given the roadblocks with Mercury, one might suppose that concerts would offer Fennell the freedom to achieve his goals. But after examining the pieces performed in Eastman Theater and Kilbourn Hall during Fennell’s tenure (1952–1962), one may be surprised to see that many parallels exist between the recordings and the performances. To understand this better, it can be insightful to examine works repeatedly programmed over a long time span. Patterns can emerge that may suggest a conductor’s preference for certain works. When examining Fennell’s repeated works (Table 5), a pattern appears which mimics the Mercury project: serious works smattered between many listener-accessible works.

Of Fennell’s concert programs with the EWE (259 pieces, repeated performances included), 38% of the works performed were marches—nearly paralleling the Mercury recording project, which consisted of approximately 40% marches or march-like pieces. Most of the works programmed were for large ensemble (scored for large symphonic band but performed with mostly one player per part). Only 10% of the works performed were for a reduced or flexible instrumentation. The much-contested Hindemith Symphony was programmed only twice, while L’Inglesina (a tuneful concert march) was programmed three times as much. This begs the question: if Fennell cared about serious works like the Symphony and the implementation of his wind ensemble concept, why was this not apparent in the academic concert, a supposed place of artistic expression that is free from capitalistic pressures?

Battisti suggests that was a result of logistics in support of the Mercury recordings. He expresses that “I heard almost all of Fred’s Eastman Wind Ensemble programs. They were all basically band music; they were kind of like preparations to make the recordings.”25 This viewpoint is supported by the fact that all performers in the EWE were required to join the American Federation of Musicians, paid union scale for recordings, and required to abide by the rules of local chapter. The Rochester organization required that all works recorded must also be performed live. When asked specifically about connection between Mercury and concert programming, Battisti adds,

That’s exactly what it was. Because Fred could have done anything. I mean, the first concert they played which was 1/3, woodwind, etc. He could have done that. There’s no reason why he could not have done it . . . It was only because of the recordings that, what he was doing, he was playing band music with orchestrally trained players—so it was a new sound. That was the thing that the recordings did. You heard this music for the first time, played by orchestrally trained musicians. (Note 25)

Of Fennell’s proposed flexible instrumentation concept, Battisti says “Where the confusion comes is that after Fred
Chamberlin

made the manifesto, he made all those recordings of band music. That’s why people said ‘all a wind ensemble is, is a band in tuxedos.’” (Note 25)

To present day, this representation continues to lead to confusion surrounding the wind ensemble concept as Fennell intended it. Many ensembles are named “wind ensemble” but simply play one (or more) per part band music, or “wind ensemble” has become a name used to describe an elite concert band that does not utilize flexible instrumentation. Other groups use the term “Symphonic Wind Ensemble,” which was a title devised only for the purposes of marketing. Those who applied these aspects are the direct benefactors of the recording project and Mercury’s manipulation of Fennell’s intent for the wind ensemble concept.

Fennell as a Combination of Experiences

Fennell was unable to fully implement his vision for the wind ensemble due to the Mercury recording agreement as he was clearly engaged to meet the obligations and the pressures of Mercury management and the Accounting and Financial Management (AFM) requirements. One might assume that this would lead to frustration on his part, a dissonance between artistic vision and reality; however, the outcome seems quite the opposite: public acceptance, acclaim, and notoriety energized him. Of his first record with the EWE, Fennell exclaimed, “My copies came today, and now I can really believe again that I have made a record.”26 As the recordings and public visibility grew it seems that Fennell enjoyed being a star. So much so, that in his Musician’s Diary (an annual date book), he added himself as a notable conductor (see Figure 1)!

As his recognition grew, so did increased opportunities for guest conducting and recordings external to his duties at Eastman. In May of 1953, he made a guest conducting appearance with the Boston Pops and in 1956 was offered a “pops” recording contract with Unicorn Records (Adler, 2007, p. 69). His business acumen must have grown while working with the record industry for 2 years, as he leveraged this offer to his advantage with Mercury.

Table 4. Record Sales, Eastman Wind Ensemble, 1953–1964.

| Album                                      | Records Sold | Total Sales 1953–1964 (US$) |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Marching Along (MG50105)                   | 58,151       | 14,468.77                    |
| Ruffles and Flourishes (MG50112)           | 49,356       | 12,332.91                    |
| Marches by Sousa and Others (MG40007)      | 36,650       | 9,887.10                     |
| The Spirit of ’76 (MG50111)               | 35,227       | 8,567.91                     |
| Marches for Twirling (MG50113)             | 25,121       | 16,043.33                    |
| British Band Classics (MG40015)            | 25,092       | 5,898.40                     |
| Sound Off (Sousa) (MG50264)                | 20,089       | 4,905.53                     |
| March Time (MG50170)                       | 18,778       | 5,569.42                     |
| American Concert Band Masterpieces (MG40006) | 14,290       | 4,022.16                     |
| La Fiesta Mexicana (MG40011)               | 12,935       | 3,493.70                     |
| Sousa on Review (MG50284)                  | 11,200       | 4,008.29                     |
| British Band Classics, Vol. II (MG50197)   | 9,310        | 2,736.46                     |
| Hindemith, Schoenberg, Stravinsky (MG50143)| 8,547        | 2,267.96                     |
| The Civil War, Vol. I (LPS 2-501/LPS 2-901)| 8,361        | 4,769.73                     |
| Curtain Up! Sousa Favorites (MG50291)      | 8,304        | 1,801.30                     |
| Screamers! (MG50314)                       | 6,385        | 1,725.97                     |
| Hands Across the Sea (MG50207)             | 6,101        | 1,759.63                     |
| Mozart Serenade No. 10 in B-flat (MG50176) | 5,710        | 1,702.30                     |
| Winds in Hi-Fi (MG50173)                   | 4,778        | 1,233.14                     |
| Wagner for Band (MG50276)                  | 4,748        | 1,519.14                     |
| American Masterpieces for Concert Band (MG50220) | 4,029       | 1,285.74                     |
| Music of Gabrieli (MG50245)                | 3,921        | 1,204.58                     |
| Ballet for Band (MG50256)                  | 3,908        | 1,146.19                     |
| The Civil War, Vol. II (LPS 2-502/LPS 2-902)| 3,225        | 1,860.94                     |
| Diverse Winds (MG50221)                    | 3,115        | 973.51                       |
| Curtain Up! Bravos in Brass (MG50360)      | 2,869        | 814.89                       |

Mercury Sales Statement, April 13, 1967. Eastman School of Music Conducting and Ensembles Library, Donald Hunsberger Collection.
should want to reserve for myself only the recording of those works in the ‘in between’ category in which I am particularly interested.”

Per Hanson’s urging Mercury offered Fennell an exclusive recording contract for popular orchestra albums to be recorded with the Eastman-Rochester Pops Orchestra (ERPO). This agreement blossomed into a total of 13 pops albums, recorded with ERPO and other pickup groups, all conducted by Fennell. In the initial agreement, Fennell negotiated to have exclusivity through Eastman waived, in case he became “engaged by an orchestra as its permanent conductor.” One may find it ironic that during the height of his great successes with the EWE that he frequently applied to professional orchestral conducting posts. It seems that he became less concerned about advocating for “serious” music and more interested in furthering his career through the clearest channel as a conductor of “pops” music.

When one considers the stature of the Eastman School as an elite east coast orchestral training school, the gulf in registers of style programmed by Fennell seems at odds with the institution that birthed him. While some of this disparity was created by the possibilities of the Mercury agreement and the strings attached, it is worth noting that part of it probably came from Fennell himself. He left few specific writings

Table 5. Eastman Wind Ensemble, Pieces Performed More Than Once 1952–1962.

| Times performed | Composer       | Title                             |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1952–1962       | 7              | Grainger, Percy                    | Lincolnshire Posy                       |
|                 | 6              | Delle Cese, D.                     | Symphonic March: Inglesina              |
|                 | 6              | Jacob, Gordon                      | William Byrd Suite                      |
|                 | 6              | Sousa, John Philip                 | Black Horse Troop March                 |
|                 | 5              | Hanssen, Johannes                  | Valdres March                           |
|                 | 5              | Prokofieff, Serge                  | March, Opus 99                          |
|                 | 4              | Bagley, E. E.                      | National Emblem March                   |
|                 | 4              | Hanson, Howard                     | Chorale and Alleluia                    |
|                 | 4              | Holst, Gustav                      | Suite No. 1 in E-flat, Opus 28a         |
|                 | 4              | Persichetti, Vincent               | Symphony No. 6, Opus 69                 |
|                 | 4              | Strauss, Richard                   | Suite in E-flat, Opus 4                 |
|                 | 4              | Goldman, Edwin Franko              | March Illinois                          |
|                 | 4              | Mennin, Peter                      | Canzona                                |
|                 | 3              | Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus           | Serenade No. 10 in B-flat (K. 361)      |
|                 | 3              | Schoenberg, Arnold                 | Theme and Variations, Opus 43a          |
|                 | 3              | Stravinsky, Igor                   | Symphonies of Wind Instruments          |
|                 | 3              | Vaughn Williams, Ralph             | Folk Song Suite                         |
|                 | 3              | Vaughn Williams, Ralph             | Toccata Marziale                        |
|                 | 2              | Bennett, Robert Russell            | Suite of Old American Dances            |
|                 | 2              | Bennett, Robert Russell            | Symphonic Songs                         |
|                 | 2              | Coates, Eric                       | Knightsbridge March                     |
|                 | 2              | Creston, Paul                      | Celebration Overture, Opus 61           |
|                 | 2              | Gould, Morton                      | Ballad for Band                         |
|                 | 2              | Hartley, Walter                    | Concerto for Twenty-Three Winds         |
|                 | 2              | Heed, J. C.                        | In Storm and Sunshine                   |
|                 | 2              | Hindemith, Paul                    | Symphony in B-flat                      |
|                 | 2              | Holst, Gustav                      | Suite No. 2 in F major, Opus 28         |
|                 | 2              | Milhaud, Darius                    | Suite Francaise                         |
|                 | 2              | Persichetti, Vincent               | Psalm                                  |
|                 | 2              | Riegger, Wallingford               | Introduction and Fugue                   |
|                 | 2              | Seitz, Roland F.                   | March, Grandioso                        |
|                 | 2              | Seitz, Rollin F.                   | University of Pennsylvania Band March   |
|                 | 2              | Sousa, John Philip                 | Hands Across the Sea                    |
|                 | 2              | Sousa, John Philip                 | Liberty Bell March                      |
|                 | 2              | Sousa, John Philip                 | Manhattan Beach                         |
|                 | 2              | Strauss, Richard                   | Serenade in E-flat, Opus 7              |
|                 | 2              | Teike, Carl                        | Old Comrades                            |
|                 | 2              | White, John                        | Symphony No. 2                          |
|                 | 2              | Williams, Clifton                  | Fanfare and Allegro                     |
Peter Grimes (Horowitz, n.d.). An expression of his ideals

Brass, Stravinsky’s Symphony of Psalms, and Britten’s Orchestra Konzertmusik for Strings and, Hindemith’s Concerto for generated esteemed works such as Bartók’s contemporary art music, and his commissioning project no question about this. He was known as a champion of Koussevitzky seems apparent. During his tenure at Eastman. That Fennell “latched-on” to Tanglewood but also he worked hard to develop and maintain a relationship that lasted until Koussevitzky’s death in 1951. Fennell’s archival material contains frequent correspondences to Koussevitzky, typically focused on scheduling visits in Boston and seeking Koussevitzky’s reference for 1951. Fennell’s archival material contains frequent correspondences to Koussevitzky, typically focused on scheduling visits in Boston and seeking Koussevitzky’s reference for applications to professional orchestral conducting positions during his tenure at Eastman. That Fennell “latched-on” to Koussevitzky seems apparent.

Koussevitzky was a “serious” musician, and there can be no question about this. He was known as a champion of contemporary art music, and his commissioning project generated esteemed works such as Bartók’s Concerto for Orchestra, Hindemith’s Konzertmusik for Strings and Brass, Stravinsky’s Symphony of Psalms, and Britten’s Peter Grimes (Horowitz, n.d.). An expression of his ideals is exhibited in an undated 1940s address to the Berkshire Music Center (approximately during Fennell’s 1942 study). He railed against the devaluation of art music through populism, expressing that “This spreading of music in the masses, at too rapid a pace, resulted in a profound misconception of music as a means of ‘entertainment’ and ‘enjoyment’ to be passively consumed by the listener.”

One may wonder if Koussevitzky ever struggled with record company executives over music selection, or if Fennell possibly heard this speech at Tanglewood, and if he considered it as his career unfolded. Based on his work and words, it is apparent that Koussevitzky clearly maintained a standard of seriousness; he was high brow to the maximum.

Perhaps also influential to Fennell was Koussevitzky’s foil, Arthur Fiedler (the widely known conductor of the Boston Pops, 1930–1979) who invited Fennell to conduct the orchestra in 1953. (Rogers, 1953) Fiedler best summarizes his philosophy: “I have consistently tried to present music of wide entertainment value, but always with the thought in mind that the music must be tops of its kind regardless of the category to which it belongs . . . I have tried to make certain that no one shuns our concerts because the programs are either too classical or too popular.”

As Ayden Adler aptly summarizes, these statements represent “Fiedler’s lifelong attempt to develop a niche between ‘popular’ tastes of some and the ‘classical’ tastes of others” (see Note 30). Fiedler’s work was aimed at marketing concerts to the public, but with a certain set of standards—he was operating from a platform of middling sophistication. That is, the essence of high-brow literature repackaged for mass consumption, thus fitting a working definition of middle brow.

The evidence of Fennell’s work with Mercury, his concert programming, and interactions with conductors who appealed to varying audiences suggest that he was hardly an elitist, but instead a synthesis of the influential figures he had known and worked with (I suggest Harding, Howard Hanson, Koussevitzky, and Fiedler, nonexclusively). He was hardly the tortured artist type but instead one who sought notoriety and recognition, built a brand for the Eastman Wind Ensemble, and inspired generations of wind conductors to forge new frontiers in the commissioning and performing of high-quality music. He was willing to advocate fiercely for the highest standards of repertoire and performance while engaging with works that were listener friendly. Perhaps a good term to define Fennell’s approach is versatile.

A Refined Paradigm for the Wind Ensemble Concept

We should consider all of this within the context of the wind ensemble concept as Fennell defined it. The wind ensemble (at full implementation) is conceived as a player pool in which the instrumentation of the composition determines the size of the ensemble (8 players or 45, matters not). This could be thought of as a horizontal aspect of flexibility, one...
of moving with agility from work to work, pulling performers from the pool as needed. But Fennell’s programming choices with the Eastman Wind Ensemble suggest an additional aspect of flexibility: one of verticality. Meaning that the wind ensemble could be so flexible as to perform works that appeal to the masses (a middle-brow approach), yet handle the most elite works written for the medium (a high-brow approach), and do all of it in a stunning fashion. I believe Fennell demonstrated this as best he could at Eastman given his constraints.

This tradition has continued with the EWE since Fennell’s tenure. In fact, Donald Hunsberger touts his recording Live in Osaka (1992) as an exceptional mix of registers of style. Selections range from Shostakovich’s tonal and energetic Festive Overture to Schwanter’s elusive . . . and the mountains rising nowhere.31 Through the years, Hunsberger’s recordings spanned less penetrable works like Persichetti’s Masquerade, to spirituals and turn of the 20th century bandstand tunes on the Grammy-nominated album Carnaval (featuring Wynton Marsalis). We continue to see this approach into the present day under the direction of Mark Scatterday (Conductor, EWE 2002–present). His recordings include repertoire that ranges from the jazz influenced Suite from Bernstein’s Mass with the Canadian Brass, to Stravinsky’s Octet. In 2015, the EWE commissioned Andre Previn’s exotic No String’s Attached and then in 2016 performed transcriptions with Belá Fleck to a sold out house in Eastman Theater.

Most recognize Fennell as an innovator and bulwark of performance quality—one who set the standard for the wind-bend medium in the second half of the 20th century. However, along with this might come the assumption that Fennell was mostly a high-brow promulgator. To the contrary, the evidence suggests that Fennell was willing to perform the finest music he could access, regardless of its seriousness, entertainment value or otherwise, and do it at a standard-setting level of quality. He did advocate for serious music but also participated in the mass marketing of quasi-serious music. I believe this lands him much more in the middle than anything else. I argue that Fennell’s work with the Eastman Wind Ensemble (and the continued execution by his heirs) has lead to a refined ideal for the wind ensemble concept, one that implements a focus on flexible instrumentation, but adds the capacity to handle any level of demand and any register of style. I suggest that the mantra enacted by Fennell and carried out by his successors could be summed up as follows: The Eastman Wind Ensemble (and the wind ensemble concept) is for everyone.

Acknowledgments
The author wishes to acknowledge Donald Hunsberger, Conductor Emeritus of the Eastman Wind Ensemble; Mark Scatterday, Conductor of the Eastman Wind Ensemble; and David Peter Coppen, Special Collections Librarian and Archivist of the Sibley Music Library for their contributions to this article.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests
The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding
The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Partial funding for this project was provided by Scholarly and Creative Activity Grants Program/College of Liberal Arts, University of Nevada, Reno.

Notes
1. Concert program. Orchestral Department of the Eastman School of Music. Frederick Fennell. Rochester: Kilbourn Hall, February 5, 1951.
2. H. Robert Reynolds. H. Robert Reynolds to Frederick Fennell, March 12, 1985. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
3. David Hall. David Hall to Frederick Fennell, July 7, 1953. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
4. Hall to Fennell, August 2, 1954.
5. Frederick Fennell. Frederick Fennell to David Hall, April 27, 1953. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
6. Hall to Fennell, May 18, 1953.
7. Howard Hanson. Howard Hanson to David Hall, May 20, 1953. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
8. Hall to Hanson, June 17, 1953.
9. Fennell to Hall, June 23, 1953.
10. Fennell to Hall, March 28, 1952.
11. Fennell to Hall, August 5, 1954.
12. Frederick Fennell. Hammersmith. Score annotation, December 1, 1985. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
13. Donald Hunsberger, e-mail message to author, November 11, 2015.
14. Frederick Fennell. Frederick Fennell to David Hall, July 3, 1953. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
15. David Hall. David Hall to Frederick Fennell, September 15, 1953. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
16. Frederick Fennell. Frederick Fennell to David Hall, September 24, 1953. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
17. David Hall. David Hall to Frederick Fennell, September 28, 1953. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
18. Frederick Fennell. Frederick Fennell to Wilma Cozart, February 3, 1954. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
19. Wilma Cozart. Wilma Cozart to Frederick Fennell, February 5, 1954. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
20. David Hall. David Hall to Frederick Fennell, August 2, 1954. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
21. Frederick Fennell. Frederick Fennell to David Hall, August 5, 1954. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
22. Donald Hunsberger, interview by Reed Chamberlin, February 16, 2015.
23. David Hall. David Hall to Frederick Fennell, November 17, 1954. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
24. Wilma Cozart. Wilma Cozart to Frederick Fennell, December 18, 1953. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
25. Frank Battisti, interview by Reed Chamberlin, February 16, 2015.
26. Frederick Fennell. Frederick Fennell to David Hall, October 6, 1954. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
27. Howard Hanson. Howard Hanson to Wilma Cozart, May 29, 1956. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
28. Frederick Fennell. Frederick Fennell Wilma Cozart, July 18, 1956. Letter. Sibley Music Library, Frederick Fennell Collection.
29. Serge Koussevitzky, Dr. Koussevitzky Addresses the Berkshire Music Center (undated), quoted in Adler, 2007, p. 135.
30. Arthur Fiedler, About Musical Snobs—and How Not to Be One, (unpublished typescript), quoted in Adler, 2007, p. 1
31. Hunsberger Donald, phone conversation with author, October 28, 2016.

References
Adler, A. (2007). ‘Classical music for people who hate classical music’: Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops, 1930-1950 [PhD thesis, Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester].
Battisti, F. (2002). The winds of change. Meredith Music Publications.
Fennell, F. (1954). Time and the winds; A short history of the use of wind instruments in the orchestra, band and the wind ensemble. LeBlanc.
Fennell, F. (1993). . . . From long distilled thoughts: How it all began. In R. Rickson (Ed.), FFortissimo: A bio-discography of Frederick Fennell (p. 38). Ludwig Music Company.
Horowitz, J. (n.d.). Koussevitzky, Serge. Oxford Music Online. http://oxforemusiconline.com
Rogers, H. (1953, May 18). Fennell on podium at the pops. Christian Science Monitor.
Rubin, J. S. (1992). The making of middlebrow culture. University of North Carolina Press.
Towner, C. (2011). An evaluation of compositions for wind band according to specific criteria of serious artistic merit: A second update. Digital Commons@University of Nebraska—Lincoln.
Wakin, D. J. (2004, December 9). Frederick Fennell, 90, Innovative Band Conductor, Dies. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/09/arts/music/frederick-fennell-90-innovative-band-conductor-dies.html