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**The band music of Don Gillis: An annotated catalog**

**Fry, William Enrico, D.M.A.**

**The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1991**

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THE BAND MUSIC OF DON GILLIS:  
AN ANNOTATED CATALOG

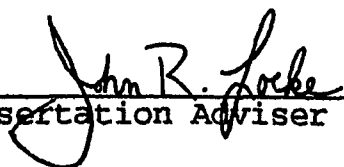
by

William Enrico Fry

A Dissertation Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Musical Arts

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Approved by

  
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APPROVAL PAGE

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FRY, WILLIAM ENRICO, D.M.A. The Band Music of Don Gillis: An Annotated Catalog. (1991) Directed by Dr. John R. Locke. 139 pp.

Don Gillis (1912-1978) was a prolific band composer who combined his compositional efforts in all media with successful careers as an educator, arts administrator, media specialist, and radio producer. Particularly noteworthy was a close professional relationship with Arturo Toscanini while Gillis was employed as the NBC Symphony Program Producer from 1944 to 1954. During his career, Gillis published over sixty original band compositions and transcriptions.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the band compositions of Don Gillis. The goal of the study was twofold: (1) to produce an annotated catalog of Don Gillis's band music and (2) to present a biographical sketch of Don Gillis focusing on his composition of works for band.

This study offers a survey of over sixty band compositions by Don Gillis. Each composition entry is listed alphabetically and consists of the title, date, dedication, publisher, duration, recording, and author's notes. The works are available either through commercial publishers or from the Gillis family. The biographical section examines events in Gillis's life and influences on his compositional style.

In preparing this document, the author obtained the majority of his information through visits to three sources: the Gillis Family Repository, Athens, Georgia; the Don Gillis Special Collection, the University of North Texas, Denton;

and the Music Division of the Library of Congress. Other sources consulted included numerous manuscripts and taped interviews prepared by Don Gillis. Information was also obtained in The School Musician, Director and Teacher and The Instrumentalist, and through journal articles by and about Don Gillis.

This study found that during the 1950s and 1960s Don Gillis was a very prolific and frequently performed band composer. Most evident was his ability as a melodist who assimilated popular American music idioms and experiences in band compositions that reflected American landscapes, events, and history. During the 1950s and 1960s, the growth of the band repertoire was enhanced by Gillis's compositions, several of which continue to be performed by bands today.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A study of this magnitude has been made possible with the help, guidance, and inspiration of many people. Friends, students, and family members have been very supportive, for which I am most appreciative.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Mrs. Barbara Gillis, whose involvement and guidance has made this study feasible. I thank Mr. Morris Martin and his music library staff at the University of North Texas for their interest in and facilitation of my research.

I would also wish to extend my gratitude to my major professor and mentor, Dr. John R. Locke, whose encouragement and willingness to share has been appreciated. Also, his expertise in word processing, patience through several drafts of the manuscript, and advice has been invaluable. To the other members of the committee, Dr. Eddie Bass, Dr. Kelly Burke, and Dr. Randy Kohlenberg, I am grateful for suggestions, comments, and emphasis on excellence.

To my friend for many years, Dr. William Prescott, I offer a special thanks, for my debt to him can never be repaid. Hopefully, I will be the example and inspiration to others as he has been for me.

To my wife, Laura, and our children, Michelle and Eric, I owe particular gratitude for their patience, encouragement,

and love over the recent years. And finally, a special acknowledgment to my parents, William and Mathilde Fry, for their special concern over the years.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
APPROVAL PAGE . . . . .	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS . . . . .	v
ABBREVIATIONS . . . . .	vii
 CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Background Information . . . . .	3
Status of the Related Research . . . . .	5
Purpose . . . . .	6
II. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION . . . . .	8
The Cameron, Missouri Years 1912-1931 . . . . .	8
The Fort Worth, Texas Years 1931-1943 . . . . .	13
The NBC Years 1943-1955 . . . . .	28
Interlochen Arts Academy Years 1956-1961 . . . . .	39
Return to Broadcasting Years 1962-1967. . . . .	42
Return to Academia 1967-78 . . . . .	44
III. ANNOTATED CATALOG OF BAND COMPOSITIONS . . . . .	50
Introduction . . . . .	50
Annotated Catalog . . . . .	53
Index . . . . .	107
IV. SUMMARY . . . . .	109
SOURCES CONSULTED . . . . .	103
APPENDIX A. DEGREES AND SELECTED AWARDS . . . . .	124
APPENDIX B. POLITICIANS' RESPONSES TO GILLIS REGARDING AGE DISCRIMINATION . . . . .	126
APPENDIX C. AUDIO TAPES BY AND ABOUT DON GILLIS: DON GILLIS SPECIAL COLLECTION MUSIC LIBRARY TxDN . . . . .	134

APPENDIX D.	ABA SPECIAL COLLECTION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND: 15" REELS OF THE MUSIC OF DON GILLIS . . . . .	136
APPENDIX E.	PUBLISHER ADDRESSES . . . . .	138

## ABBREVIATIONS

Library name abbreviations are found in *Symbols of American Libraries*, 13th ed., (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1980). Abbreviation of terms are recommended by Kate L. Turabian in *A Manual for Writers*, fifth edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987): 21-24.

ABA	American Bandmaster's Association
DLC	United States Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540
GFR	Gillis Family Repository, Athens, GA 30606
MdU	University of Maryland Library, College Park, Maryland 20742
NER	National Educational Radio
SMU	Southern Methodist University
TCU	Texas Christian University
TD	Typewritten document
TMs	Typewritten manuscript
TxDN	University of North Texas Library, Denton, Texas 76203
USC	University of South Carolina

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Don Gillis (1912-1978)--composer, conductor, NBC Symphony program producer, multi-media specialist, educator, and arts administrator--was a significant personality on the American music scene during his career. Gillis's primary legacy rests with over 200 compositions that have been performed in thirty-five countries,<sup>1</sup> works conducted by such notables as Arturo Toscanini, Arthur Fiedler, Frank Black, Sir John Barbirolli, Leonard Bernstein, Antal Dorati, Alfred Wallenstein, and Howard Hanson, to name but a few.<sup>2</sup> In addition to his compositional productivity, particularly noteworthy was Gillis's eleven-year career, from 1944 to 1955, as production assistant to Arturo Toscanini and the members of the NBC Symphony, who were generally acknowledged to be among the greatest musicians of their time.<sup>3</sup>

Gillis was a success and noted authority in several different careers. ASCAP statements and publisher royalty

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<sup>1</sup>Band Music Notes, rev, ed., s.v. "Gillis, Don."

<sup>2</sup>Don Gillis, Lone Star [Band Score], (San Antonio: Southern Music, 1966): 1.

<sup>3</sup>Andrew Galos, former NBC violinist, reaffirmed the legacy of Toscanini and the NBC orchestra in a telephone interview on 7 June 1991 with the author.

notices reveal an impressive number of orchestras and bands that performed Gillis's music. In addition, Gillis appeared as a guest conductor of groups that included the NBC Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, the New Symphony of London, the Orchestra da Camera of Rome, the major Washington, D.C.-based service bands, and numerous college bands. The author of The Art of Media Instruction and *Creativity in the Media Arts*, Gillis was considered an expert in media production during his years of teaching in the field at Dallas Baptist College and the University of South Carolina. His contributions to education include the innovative teacher training video series, Teaching as a Performing Art, and his work as an educator at Texas Christian University (TCU), Southern Methodist University (SMU), Dallas Baptist College, and the University of South Carolina. Gillis was the recipient of numerous awards by college and professional organizations for his compositional contributions and service to education (see APPENDIX A).

Gillis was particularly noted in the band field, having published over sixty band selections and having been selected to the prestigious American Bandmaster's Association (ABA) in 1955. Over the course of fourteen different years, guest bands at ABA conventions performed a total of sixteen of Gillis's band compositions. His band works also have been

performed at other major band events, including the annual Midwest Band Clinic, and he appeared frequently as a band guest conductor.

#### Background Information

A native of Cameron, Missouri, Gillis attended Texas Christian University on a trombone scholarship and became the student leader of the TCU Horned Frog Band during his junior and senior years. Gillis, receiving both the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Music degrees in 1935, was retained as band director at TCU where his innovative arrangements of swing music performed by the Horned Frog Marching Band earned him a wide reputation.<sup>4</sup> Gillis's other professional activities during his 1931-1943 tenure in Fort Worth included: trombone performer during Fort Worth visits of the Paul Whiteman Band and Billy Rose Orchestra at Casa Manana; trombonist in and assistant conductor of the Fort Worth Symphony; a warrant officer and conductor of the 111th Medical Regiment National Guard Band; program director and conductor of the "The Musical Varieties of Texas;" staff trombonist and arranger at radio station WBAP; and a member of the governing body of the Fort Worth Musician's Union.

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<sup>4</sup>Jim Petty, former Gillis TCU band student, telephone interview by author, 7 June 1991.



In 1941, he completed a two-year Master of Music degree program in composition with Roy T. Willis, Wilfred Bain, and Floyd Graham at North Texas State College at Denton. In December 1943, Gillis concluded his thirteen-year relationship with Fort Worth radio station WBAP and moved to the Chicago NBC affiliate. Nine months later, Gillis transferred to New York to work as production manager to Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony.

Gillis served in this position from 1944 until 1954, the year the NBC Symphony was dissolved. For the following year, he managed the business affairs for the newly formed Symphony of the Air, an orchestra comprised mostly of former NBC Symphony members. After several years of free-lance radio production and composer-in-residence activities, Gillis obtained a full-time position as Executive Vice-President for the Interlochen Summer Music Camp in 1958. In 1962, Gillis returned to New York and continued his university guest lecture/residency programs and free-lance radio activities. A noted expert on the life of Toscanini, Gillis wrote and produced a four and one-half year series "Toscanini: The Man Behind the Legend," a radio program that aired nationwide over National Educational Radio (NER), the forerunner of what currently is known as National Public Radio. Airing concurrently with the Toscanini Series, Gillis also wrote and produced a three-year NER series titled "The Music of Don

Gillis." Four years later, Gillis served one academic term as the music department chairman at Southern Methodist University before moving, in 1968, to head an experimental media instruction program at Dallas Baptist College.

In January of 1973, Gillis moved to the University of South Carolina (USC) to organize and administer the newly-formed USC Media Productions Center. On 10 January 1978, Gillis died of a heart attack at the age of 65.

#### Status of Related Research

Investigation of many sources, including Dissertation Abstracts International, Library of Congress Union Catalog, Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians, The New Grove Dictionary of American Music, Dictionary of American Composers, Journal of Band Research, and an interview with Mrs. Barbara Gillis,<sup>5</sup> has verified that negligible research exists about this noteworthy American musician. Brief biographical accounts with accompanying abbreviated compositional lists comprise the bulk of the information in print.

Numerous resources developed by the composer during his lifetime have been of particular value. Materials about Gillis's influences, life, and events have been obtained

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<sup>5</sup>Barbara Gillis, personal interview by author, Athens, Georgia, 24 September 1988.

through his own manuscripts, the most important of which include: *Autobiographical Contemplation of Music and Events* (1961-62), a thirteen-part cassette tape series; *And Then I Wrote* (1948), a privately published autobiography; and *Music By Don Gillis: Program Notes* (1974) and the *List of Manuscripts Sent to the Library of Congress* (1968), sets of program note compilations prepared for the University of North Texas Music Library and the Library of Congress respectively.

Preliminary study of Gillis's general compositional productivity has led to the discovery of a substantial amount of music that is unpublished and unknown in the United States. This detailed study of Gillis's band compositions will provide a valuable addition to the growing amount of research concerning American band composers.<sup>6</sup>

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to provide a biographical sketch of the life and compositions of Don Gillis with attention focused on his band music and (2) to present an annotated catalog of music for wind bands by Don Gillis. The study is not intended to include a complete biography of the life of Don Gillis, nor is the Annotated

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<sup>6</sup>Jon R. Piersol, "Relating To Research," CBDNA Report (Spring 1990): 13.

Catalog designed to contain small ensemble pieces or compositions for media other than wind band.

The life of Don Gillis will be examined chronologically. Through an assessment of selected compositions written during various stages in his career, the author will attempt to enhance understanding of the composer and his band music. Although the comments concerning selected works in the biographical section of the study are intended to be illuminating, the observations are far from complete. In view of Gillis's total output of approximately sixty published compositions for band, the biographical scope of this study has been limited to a brief review of selected band compositions. Since general descriptions can be inferred from a sampling of representative materials, an examination of Gillis's most important and representative published band works will serve as the basis for the broad stylistic determinations.

## CHAPTER II

## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The Cameron, Missouri Years 1912-1931

Don Eugene Gillis was born on 17 June 1912 in Cameron, Missouri.<sup>1</sup> He was the second of six children born to Earle and Pearl Gillis. As Gillis fondly recalled, his first music teacher was the rich musical environment he experienced as a child in the home where he developed an appreciation for music and music participation.<sup>2</sup> His father was an amateur violinist, and his mother played piano and organ. As Gillis recalled in And Then I Wrote, the family's primary cultural activity centered around music making in the home, since radio was still a relatively new technology during Gillis's childhood.<sup>3</sup> The single most important musical influence during Gillis's childhood was his older brother Carroll. As

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<sup>1</sup>According to Barbara Gillis, Don Gillis's birth certificate indicates that he was born on 16 June 1912. Gillis's mother claimed that the birth actually occurred on 17 June, the date on which Gillis's birthday was celebrated throughout his life. Barbara Gillis, personal interview by author, Athens, Georgia, 17 June 1991.

<sup>2</sup>Don Gillis, "Influence of Teachers," Autobiographical Contemplation of Music and Events (read by Don Gillis), 1961, Cassette Tape 3, Side 1.

<sup>3</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, And Then I Wrote, 1949, TMs [photocopy], p. 116, Gillis Family Repository, Athens, Georgia; original in the Don Gillis Special Collection, TxDN.

Gillis affectionately recalled, Carroll, through his example, provided the musical challenge and served as young Don's role model.<sup>4</sup>

Barn dance and hillbilly music were the first types of popular music that Gillis grew to enjoy.<sup>5</sup> The Gillis family lived on the outskirts of Cameron, close to the Carl Smith farm house. Saturday night barn dances at the Smith residence were a regular feature in the social life of Cameron, and although Gillis was too young to participate in the dances, he cherished and listened to the music.<sup>6</sup>

For musical experiences outside the home, the town of Cameron provided a rich environment and numerous opportunities for the young, musically-talented child. William E. Tracey, a former Army bandsman and accomplished professional dance musician who directed instrumental music activities at nearby Missouri Wesleyan College, taught trumpet lessons to Gillis in 1921.<sup>7</sup> The Cameron Baptist

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<sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "Influence of Teachers," Cassette Tape 3, Side 1.

<sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "Composers and Styles of Influence," Autobiographical Contemplation of Music and Events (read by Don Gillis), 1961, Cassette Tape 4, Side 1.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "Chapter One: The Band Music of Don Gillis," ca. 1961 TD [photocopy] by Don Gillis, p. 3, Gillis Family Repository, Athens, Georgia; original in the Don Gillis Special Collection, TxDN.

Church supported an orchestra in which Gillis participated as a child. While Cameron did not have a high school band, Gillis was exposed to the orchestra at the school. During his junior year, Gillis organized a high school dance band called *The Lucky 13*, which later was renamed *Rhythm Kings*.<sup>8</sup> In 1929, the high school produced the opera *Faust*, in which Gillis performed the role of Valentine.<sup>9</sup>

Gillis's first formal band ensemble experience occurred at the age of ten, when Gillis enrolled as a baritone player in the Cameron Rotary Club Boys Band under the direction of Ray Neff. Concerning this experience, Gillis recalled:

I don't remember too much about the literature with the Rotary Boys Band. I do recall that it never occurred to me to write any music myself to be played by the Band. I was content enough to play the simple marches and waltzes that made up our repertoire.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Concerning his high school experience with this group, Gillis wrote: "Another deterring factor in my hastily-arranged career as conductor came when the principal called me into his office with some well-spoken words of wisdom, not only about my baton technique, but about my lack of gracefulness while leading my *Rhythm Kings* . . . in the eyes of my educator friend, I was not a thing of beauty but a disgusting little mess who ought to have had that stick used more properly on anatomical portions too delicate to discuss in print. And my band was banned for undue misbehavior because I had substituted calisthenics for dignity in appearing in front of a dance band [at a school assembly]." Don Gillis, *And Then I Wrote*, 51.

<sup>9</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "Chapter One," 4.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

Gillis also was exposed to the the local Caldwell County Band during his boyhood. During this time Gillis was impressed particularly by the former Sousa Band trombone soloist and Missouri native, Arthur Pryor, who performed as a guest soloist on several occasions with the Cameron Band.<sup>11</sup> These early experiences with band music prompted Gillis to write about himself as "a child of the band."<sup>12</sup>

From his earliest childhood years, Gillis had been attracted to the hymn tune. The Gillis children regularly attended Sunday school and prayer meetings where hymn tunes comprised an integral role. Hymn tunes, particularly those that emphasized a strong melodic line, also were performed regularly during the family's after-dinner music hour.<sup>13</sup> Of all his numerous boyhood music activities, Gillis felt most comfortable singing hymn tunes with the Cameron Baptist Church and male quartet.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, even with the exhaustive

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<sup>11</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "Composers and Styles of Influence," Cassette Tape 4, Side 1.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 3. Additional evidence of the influence of the band is found in the Gillis's "1973 Biographical Material," where he wrote: "suffice it to say that it was the band, not the orchestra, that nurtured the beginnings of my creativity and continues to influence my creative life even to this day." Don Gillis, "1973 Biographical Material," TD [photocopy], p. 7, Gillis Family Repository, Athens, Georgia; original in the Don Gillis Special Collection, TxDN.

<sup>13</sup>Don Gillis, And Then I Wrote, 118.

<sup>14</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "Composers and Styles of Influence," Cassette Tape 4, Side 1.



schedule maintained during his college undergraduate days, Gillis continued his singing activities for several years in the TCU Glee Club and often directed the music utilized for his brother Carroll's prayer and revival meetings.

Gillis had no post-high school professional music career aspirations; he did, however, attend music classes at nearby Maryville (Missouri) State Teachers College in 1930 and played in the band and orchestra under "Pop" Hicknell. During his year at Maryville, Gillis was quite active as a jazz trombonist, vocalist, and arranger.<sup>15</sup> At Maryville, Gillis enrolled for his first theory lessons and wrote and performed a short composition for baritone and piano.

Childhood influences upon Gillis's compositional style were numerous and varied. Although Gillis was constantly open to new ideas and experiences throughout his life, four specific early influences encountered in Cameron can be identified. In a discussion of his compositional influences, Gillis stated:

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<sup>15</sup>Regarding his playing experience during the year at Maryville, Gillis wrote: "my first year in college was spent at Northwest Teachers College at Maryville, Missouri, or--I should say--it was spent near there, for we played so many dances out of town that it seemed that we just went to school to change our clothes. My scholastic record on that campus was nothing to write home about, however, the college did write home about it, I believe, and we withdrew shortly afterward at our parent's request." Don Gillis, And Then I Wrote, 40.

. . . formulation up through my college years involved the impact of four types of music: 1) Hymn tunes; 2) Concert Band sound; 3) Dance Band sound; and 4) Hillbilly/Square dance music.<sup>16</sup>

While at the University of South Carolina, he wrote:

They tell me that my music has an 'American' sound--if so, it is a by-product of my earliest days in which the band, the square dance, the hymn tune, and early jazz were very much a part of my environment.<sup>17</sup>

The Fort Worth, Texas Years: 1931-1943

With two college-age children to support during the early stages of the depression, Gillis's parents resolved to move to a college town where both boys could obtain scholarships and live at home. At this time, Don was contemplating study toward a medical degree, whereas Carroll was interested in a career in the ministry. The family decided to move to Fort Worth, Texas, the home of Texas Christian University. The only scholarships available there, however, were those for seminary students, football players,

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<sup>16</sup>Don Gillis, "Composers and Styles of Influence," Tape 4, Side 2. These influences are repeated in "The Music of Don Gillis: National Educational Radio Script", Series I, Week 8 [photocopy], 1964, Gillis Family Repository, Athens, Georgia; original in the Don Gillis Special Collection, TxDN.

<sup>17</sup>Don Gillis, "Compositional Philosophies," ca. 1976, TD, p. 9; Gillis Family Repository, Athens, Georgia. A further investigation of Gillis's early influences are found in: William E. Fry, "Hymn Tunes, Concert Band Sound, Dance Band Sound, and Barn Dance Music: Early Influences in the Published Band Works of Don Gillis," unpublished manuscript, UNC-Greensboro (NC) December 1988.

and band members. Since Gillis could not obtain a scholarship to enter the medical program, he decided to pursue actively a music career.<sup>18</sup>

Gillis's compositional style and technique developed late in his early adult life and was largely the product of self-instruction. While he had shown an early desire to compose, Gillis had neither the tools nor the craftsmanship to compose; however, because of the rich musical surroundings in which he lived as a child, Gillis developed a strong sense of what appealed to him and needed only the time and environment with which to experiment and develop his technique.

TCU offered that opportunity. The TCU music department in the early 1930s was small, yet Gillis benefitted greatly from the low student/teacher ratio and from the willingness of the performing ensembles to read his material. While Gillis initially was more interested in script-writing and conducting, the supportive musical atmosphere and interest of the TCU faculty provided the impetus for his compositional career.<sup>19</sup> His most influential teachers included David

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<sup>18</sup>Barbara Gillis, interview by author, Athens, Georgia, 24 September 1988.

<sup>19</sup>Don Gillis, "Notes On My Music," chronological compositional retrospective, 1966, TD [photocopy] by Don Gillis, p. 2, Gillis Family Repository, Athens, Georgia; original found in the Don Gillis Special Collection, TxDN.

Scholar, the vocal teacher with whom Gillis studied for several years; Helen Fouts Cahoun, a music appreciation teacher who stimulated Gillis's study of other composers; Catherine Bailey, a musicologist who fostered his composition career by regularly performing Gillis's student works during class sessions; Keith Mixson, a theory professor who served as Gillis's composition teacher; and band director Claude Sammis, who encouraged Gillis to arrange and compose for the band.

In the fall of 1931, the TCU Band included about fifty members. In Gillis's opinion, most of the band members showed outstanding ability.<sup>20</sup> The band was administered by Claude Sammis, a violinist who also conducted the TCU orchestra. Sammis, however, simply supervised the band activities and delegated much of the actual conducting to student leaders. Regarding the emphasis on student leadership, Gillis wrote:

This had great advantage for me because in my Junior and Senior year in the band, I was that student leader and so came into a wealth of experience and opportunity I might never have had under a leader more actively interested in Band music than Sammis was.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "Chapter One," 6.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

During his days as the TCU student leader, Gillis wrote his first selection for band, *She's the Sweetheart of the Band* (1932). The tune was performed in the fall of 1932 at a pep rally night and for the crowning of the Band Sweetheart during the football game half time the following day. The work was not used again even though the selection was accepted enthusiastically by his fellow band members who eagerly performed Gillis's subsequent marching band works.<sup>22</sup>

During his undergraduate years at TCU, Gillis was a member of the 111th Medical Regiment National Guard Band, directed by Captain Cecil Meadows. In contrast to the TCU band approach of Claude Sammis, Meadows was the quintessential military band officer who offered a model of organizational efficiency and whose knowledge of the band profession greatly influenced Gillis.<sup>23</sup> The band library, as Gillis recalled, was as complete as one could expect to find for band in the early 1930s and included most of the entire Belwin and Boosey & Hawkes collection of transcriptions and original band material.<sup>24</sup>

Besides serving as a role model for Gillis, Capt. Meadows provided free euphonium lessons to Gillis on most

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 8.

Thursday afternoons for seven years. During this time, Gillis performed most of the standard trumpet solo literature and the euphonium parts to the existing band transcriptions about which he wrote:

I recall playing movements of standard symphonies, such as Tchaikovsky's *4th Finale*, Haydn's *London*, *The Slow Movement* from Beethoven's *5th* and Dvorak's *New World*, and I was always surprised how much fun it was for me as a performer to play these works on baritone in band transcriptions than it was to play trombone in the original orchestration of the same music with the Fort Worth Symphony.<sup>25</sup>

Capt. Meadows also guided Gillis through the *Arban Studies*, encouraged Gillis to conduct the Guard Band, and provided instruction in music theory, particularly in the area of band score analysis.

Capt. Meadows was important in yet another area. Gillis recounted:

He provided me with all of the manuscript paper I needed. In these affluent times that may not seem like much, but in depression years it was a Godsend. He issued paper to me every time I asked for it--the only requirement was that I show him the written finished product.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 16.

The first work of any consequence written for the National Guard Band was *111th Medical Regiment March*.

Gillis's experience with the 111th Medical Regiment Band was extremely important during his formative college years.

He wrote:

Since the 111th Medical Regiment Band had the cream-of-the-crop of Fort Worth's professional musicians plus the best from TCU, the Guard Band was superb as a functional performance instrument whether it be for Guardmount or Review or a sit-down concert for Col. O'Reilly at the Officer's Club. It was, in every sense, my "college of Bandsmanship," its commanding officer a degreeless dean whose academic short-comings were bolstered with vast success in real, not textbook, experience. My college of "Bandsmanship" offered no degree, but it was at the 111th Medical Regiment Band that I learned the most about how to be a conductor, composer, arranger, and performer.<sup>27</sup>

While a junior at TCU, Gillis was inspired by Sammis to compose two musicals, *Just Us Nuts* (1934) and *The Daze of '29* (1934). An uncompleted third effort, *Mississippi Muddle* (1934), contained one tune, *Old Cotton Patch*, scored for band and soloist and is significant only as being Gillis's first attempt at scoring with narration.<sup>28</sup> Fragments of these stage works were integrated into subsequent stage works.<sup>29</sup> For

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 14.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

example, the excerpt *Campustry* from the musical *Daze of '29* appeared later in *Pep Rally* (1956),

Gillis's first serious original band score was the five-movement *Panhandle Suite* (1935), a work modeled after the programmatic tendencies of Ferde Grofe's *Grand Canyon Suite*.<sup>30</sup> *Panhandle Suite* later was transcribed for both chamber orchestra and full orchestra by Gillis. *The Night Rider*, a movement from the orchestral version of the suite, was employed in the late 1940s as introduction music to NBC radio shows such as "Music for Today," "Music for Tomorrow," and "Music for Tonight."<sup>31</sup>

*Panhandle Suite*, containing the movements *Cattle Gate*, *Dance of the Dry Bones*, *The Night Rider*, *Bronc Bust*, and *Stampede*, revealed Gillis's disposition for utilizing graphic titles. Gillis did not consider his titles to be programmatic in the sense of revealing a story; rather, titles established a mood. Writing in *And Then I Wrote*, Gillis indicated that "if the title does no more than to establish the mood of the piece, it is a good thing to use."<sup>32</sup> His views on the designation of titles were consistent

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 15. On the same page, Gillis elaborated: "I told Ferde about this once and he seemed both amused and complimented that I had used him as a model."

<sup>31</sup>Don Gillis, *And Then I Wrote*, 223.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 252.



throughout his career. In 1973, Gillis wrote one of his more detailed assessments of the subject:

So what we have here is a main title suggesting a series of moods, most of which are related to, but not descriptive of, the music. And this means, I think, that a title may suggest a scenario. And it also means that the listener has to supply much of the imagination himself if it is to work at all. So, programmatic music is not descriptive music, only a series of moods.<sup>33</sup>

In 1931, while an undergraduate at TCU and following brief boyhood musical appearances on radio stations KGBX (St. Joseph, Missouri), KFNF (Shenandoah, Iowa), and KMBC (Kansas City), Gillis was hired by WBAP radio of Fort Worth. Under Gene Baugh, conductor of the staff orchestra and George Cranston, station manager, Gillis earned \$15.85 weekly for a fifteen-hour work schedule that included work as staff trombonist and arranger. One early WBAP-era piece, *The Raven* (1937), was written as background music to the Edgar Allen Poe poem and was narrated by Nelson Olmstead, who later

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<sup>33</sup>Don Gillis, "1973 Biographical Material," p. 17-18. On page 18, Gillis wrote the following concerning titles: "In a very early work I wrote called *The Wooly Worm*, I attempted to satirize the *Les Prelude*, *Mazeppa* type of Franz Liszt symphonic poem--the program itself was ridiculous and when done as a satire the themes illustrated, the piece was broadly funny. Occasionally, however, I would tell the audience that the piece was a struggle of a soul trying to find itself, give the work a hoked-up French title, tell them the composer was the famed contemporary French composer "DeGee" (pronounced "D. Gee")--and in these cases, the audience accepted the piece as a solemn moment and saw no humor in it at all."

became famous on NBC radio and television. In Gillis's first exposure to a national audience, the work was performed in 1939 on NBC radio by the newly-formed NBC Symphony directed by Frank Black with Samuel Chotzinoff as commentator and Ben Grauer, announcer.<sup>34</sup>

Gillis obtained both the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Music degrees in Music in 1935 and was retained at TCU as the band director for the next seven years. Concerning his initial appointment, Gillis revealed,

I even inherited the Band from him [Claude Sammis] at his suggestion in 1935 and then went from recently-Graduated-BA-and-BM degreed-student to TCU Band leader and Music Instructor with hardly a day in between, and it still remains a proud moment in my life.<sup>35</sup>

While serving in his fifty-dollar-a month position as the TCU band director,<sup>36</sup> Gillis concurrently taught at the Fort Worth Conservatory of Music and the Southwestern Baptist Seminary School of Sacred Music.<sup>37</sup> Gillis also played

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<sup>34</sup>Don Gillis and Edward Dunham, "Broadcast Pioneers: Script," 1966 [photocopy], p. 4, Gillis Family Repository, Athens, Georgia; original at the Don Gillis Special Collection, TxDN.

<sup>35</sup>Don Gillis, "Chapter One", 6-7.

<sup>36</sup>John Watson, "Grassroots Composer," New York Journal-American, 24 February 1953, 17.

<sup>37</sup>Don Gillis, "Resume," 1978 [photocopy], p. 1, Gillis Family Repository, Athens, Georgia. Compensation by Southwestern Baptist for Gillis's part-time depression-era

trombone in the Fort Worth Symphony conducted by Brooks Morris. Gillis, however, had an affinity for jazz and did not fully appreciate the Fort Worth Symphony environment.<sup>38</sup>

In 1941, Gillis completed a two-year Master of Music degree program in composition with Roy T. Willis, Wilfred Bain, and Floyd Graham at North Texas State College at Denton. Gillis's *Symphony No. 1*, subtitled *An American Symphony*, was written as his master's thesis and was premiered in 1941 by Floyd Graham and the North Texas State College Orchestra.<sup>39</sup> Gillis's *Symphony No. 1*, *Symphony No. 2: A Symphony of Faith* (1940), and *Symphony No. 3: A Symphony for Free Men* (1940-41), comprised a trilogy written about the American scene. These compositions, Gillis summarized, were "an expression of my eternal faith in our America and into the music went America's greatest strength--the people."<sup>40</sup>

Music for the people, or in Gillis's words "music written with the hand-on-the-pulse-of-the-public",<sup>41</sup> was an

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position was made in grapefruit grown on the Seminary-owned groves. Don Gillis, "Influence of Teachers, Tape 3, Side 1.

<sup>38</sup>Don Gillis, "Early Writing," Autobiographical Contemplations of Life and Events (read by author), 1961, Cassette Tape 2, Side 1.

<sup>39</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "1973 Biographical Material," 10.

<sup>40</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, And Then I Wrote, 73.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 340.

important philosophical concern throughout his career.<sup>42</sup> For Gillis, music for the people was simply a matter of emotion as opposed to intellect. According to Gillis, music based on intellect required a level of preparation of the audience, whereas music performances of a less sophisticated emotional style yielded enjoyment and appeal to a broader audience.<sup>43</sup> Gillis was unequivocal in his preference, writing:

My source materials and influences have more often been rooted in gut emotion, of the basic culture, of the people (emphasis not added) more than having achieved any pinnacle of intellectualism.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, Gillis contended:

One may argue that there is a wide gap between the two levels of music and audience, that one is intellectually high and spiritually beneficial while the

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<sup>42</sup>While in his mid-twenties, Gillis wrote: "the thing I like about *Panhandle* is that it was a prize winner. I guess the 'blue-ribbon' fever bit me like a lot of other composers and I submitted to contests like mad in the vague hope that I would walk off with the prize money and land right in the middle of glorified fame. It didn't happen that way, but the suite did win the American composer's contest sponsored by the Washington Heights YMHA and Maxim Waldo was the conductor who performed the suite for the audience that decided who would win. Yes, it was the audience (not the committee of judges) who voted me into first place. All of which pleased me mightily, for even then I was interested in music for people and even more important than the prize money was this significant fact that enough people liked my music more than the other works." Don Gillis, And Then I Wrote, 221-222.

<sup>43</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, "1973 Biographical Material," 19.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 20.

other is purely mind-surface and gut emotions. . . . The whole thing led to my thinking that if one synthesized the basic elements of jazz, folk music, the hymn tune, spiritual, heart song, etc. and used it symphonically, one might succeed in bridging the gap between coliseum and concert hall.<sup>45</sup>

Much of Gillis's music was an attempt to reach a broad audience by infusing popular idioms and influences into a symphonic context whether or not such a setting was for band or orchestra. Citing influences experienced and enjoyed during his childhood, Gillis revealed,

I see it as I said it--the hymn tune, the hoedown, the march, the basic elements of jazz, the spiritual--all of these things were more a part of me as a youth than symphonies, string quartets, operas, and sonatas.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 19. An experience encountered during his early twenties while in Fort Worth crystalized his concept of 'music for the people.' Gillis wrote: "I was attending a concert of the Fort Worth Symphony at Will Rogers Auditorium. At intermission, I went outside for a breath of fresh air and saw an enormous number of people, several thousand, waiting to get in the Will Rogers Coliseum. I found out that the Barn Dance group from Nashville, the Grand Ole Opery [sic], was playing there. Slipping in, I watched it for awhile and couldn't help comparing the attitude of the crowd there with the one I had just left at the symphony concert. It was, to say the least, responsive--not just at the end of pieces, but during them when some individual performer played an exciting figure or chorus. The audience applauded and cheered--they were on the same wave length with the performer, they were participating vicariously and enthusiastically. When I went back to the symphony concert and heard *Till Eulenspiegel*, no one yelled or applauded when the 1st horn played *Till's* theme to perfection." Don Gillis, "1973 Biographical Material," 18.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 20.

In order to reach a larger audience, Gillis utilized melody as his primary device for arousing emotional responses. Melody, Gillis felt, was the major device for eliciting an emotional response. Rather than write the world's best crafted symphony, Gillis would have settled for just one simple melody or hymn that the whole world could hum or sing. He wrote, "for me, posterity would be a picture of a kid walking down a street in the year 2065 whistling one of my melodies."<sup>47</sup>

Gillis, therefore, determined early in his compositional career that melody was paramount in his work. He argued that people hear tunes, not harmonies, and that melody has the greatest impact upon the mind and emotion.<sup>48</sup> Gillis's predilection for melody was an approach he recognized as being outside the mainstream of twentieth-century composition. He remained, however, committed to his inner feelings and worked throughout his life within traditional structures that emphasized melody.

Summarizing his music during an introduction to the debut broadcast of the 1964 National Educational Radio Network series *The Music of Don Gillis*, Gillis disclosed:

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<sup>47</sup>Don Gillis, "The Music of Don Gillis: NER Script," 1964, Series II, Week 14, 5.

<sup>48</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, "Materials of Composition" Autobiographical Contemplation of Music and Events (read by Don Gillis), 1961, Cassette Tape 1, Side 1.

My music, while contemporary, is not of the contemporary school that deals in twelve-tone writing or electronic devices. If I were to analyze 'me' for a class in musicology, I would say first that my melodies are traditional; secondly, my harmonies tonal; and finally that my rhythms are filled with a vigor and intensity that is representational to no school--except perhaps my own--and my main reason for writing is because I enjoy it. I like humor and you'll find it not only in my titles but also in my music.<sup>49</sup>

In a letter written to the author, Barbara Gillis asserted "Don's sense of humor runs through much of his music." As revealed even in Gillis's earliest undergraduate compositions such as *Daze of '29*, and *Just Us Nuts*, humor in Gillis's music appeared as an important element. Concerning humor, Gillis maintained:

I have had fun in music by writing to get people to laugh. And I've done it because I felt a whole lot more people would enjoy music more if it weren't so much trouble to make the effort. Dignity is too often confused with ritualistic formalism--the fewer obstacles we place in the people's path, the quicker they can meet us in the genuine enjoyment of good music.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "The Music of Don Gillis: NER Script," 1964, Series I, Week 1, 2.

<sup>50</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *And Then I Wrote*, 31. With respect to humor in Gillis's music, Gillis wrote: "did it ever occur to you how much music there is on the sad side? Did you ever stop to wonder why 'Death' is such a popular subject among our music makers? Well, take a long look around you and notice some of the titles: *Death and Transfiguration*, *Ase's Death*, *The Isle of the Dead*, *Death and the Maiden*--just to name a few. Not that 'Death' music isn't good, mind you, but all the time is a long, long time to wear the mourning band. So I think it's about time we filled up our programs with a little more jolly subject and that composers began trying to

Gillis's sense of humor also is revealed in his book, *The Unfinished Symphony Conductor* (1968), where the issues related to conductors and the technique of conducting are described in a tongue-in-cheek style.<sup>51</sup> In reviewing the book, Walter Rodby, book critic for the School Musician, Director and Teacher, wrote:

The Unfinished Symphony Conductor . . . is one of the wildest and funniest pieces of writing about the art of the conductor that you will ever read. In fact, either you will laugh your head off, or will shake it with a tsk, tsk, and a comment that Mr. Gillis' writing is just 'a bit much' on the fascinating and bewildering art of being a conductor.<sup>52</sup>

Gillis never regretted using humorous titles or witticism in his music. He felt, however, very strongly that

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make people laugh with the same energy that heretofore went into sob sessions." Don Gillis, And Then I Wrote, 247.

<sup>51</sup>Thomas Willis, "So You Want to Conduct a Symphony? -Read On" [review of The Unfinished Symphony Conductor], Chicago Tribune, 25 February 1968, 11 (5).

<sup>52</sup>Walter Rodby, "Don Gillis' New Book," [review of The Unfinished Symphony Conductor], School Musician, Director and Teacher (June-July 1968): 38. In a letter to Gillis on 27 February 1968, Lt. Col. Arnauld D. Gabriel wrote: "I simply don't know what to say to my fellow travelers when I suddenly break out into uncontrollable laughter while reading The Unfinished Symphony Conductor." On 13 February 1968, William Revelli wrote a letter to Gillis, stating: "I read it [The Unfinished Symphony Conductor] on the way back from Texas and assure you that I was chuckling most of the way, in fact, two persons sitting next to me must have thought I had gone 'loco' until I let them read bits of it, they they too joined in on the 'laugh fest.'" "



wit caused people to think of him as a musical prankster,<sup>53</sup> one incapable of writing serious or profound music.<sup>54</sup> While his orchestral music was programmed for children's concerts, pops concerts, or summer programs, he resented the critical judgment that prevented his music from becoming a standard component in the repertoire of the major symphonies.<sup>55</sup>

#### THE NBC YEARS: 1944-1955

##### NBC Chicago Affiliate

In December 1943, Gillis concluded his thirteen-year, part-time tenure as a staff musician and arranger at Fort Worth radio station WBAP and moved to Chicago to become production director at WMAQ, the NBC radio affiliate. In Chicago, Gillis was NBC producer for the "Union Pacific Railroad Hour" and assistant director to Edward Dunham for the "Voice of Firestone" Chicago Symphony broadcasts conducted by Albert Wallenstein. Gillis's heavy radio production schedule also included the Omaha-based "Your America," a show which required much weekend travel time.

The year 1944 was neither a musically productive nor happy for Gillis. His workload demanded much of his time,

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<sup>53</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ . "Composers and Styles of Influence,"  
Cassette Tape 4, Side 2.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

and union regulations did not permit Gillis to write radio music for six months. After nine months in Chicago, Gillis contemplated returning to WBAP in Fort Worth; however, Wynn Wright, National Production Chief for NBC, persuaded Gillis to move instead to WNBC, the NBC New York affiliate.<sup>56</sup>

At WNBC, Gillis was employed as a music show staff director, where among other assignments he was responsible for "The Firestone Hour" (one year), "An Evening with Romberg" (three years), "The Shaeffer Parade" with Carman Cavallaro (three years), "NBC University of the Air" with Frank Black (four years) and "The U.S. Steel Hour." Gillis's role as production manager to Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony from 1944 to 1954 ranked as his most significant NBC assignment.

During this ten-year period when he produced an average of fifty annual broadcasts of the NBC Symphony,<sup>57</sup> Gillis was able to establish both a business and musical relationship with Toscanini and many members of the orchestra. His role as the NBC Symphony producer involved limitless behind-the-scenes logistics required to prepare live broadcasts of the NBC Symphony. As Gillis wrote,

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<sup>56</sup>Don Gillis, "Early Writing," Cassette Tape 2, Side 1.

<sup>57</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, And Then I Wrote, 375.

The duties may entail a wide variety of details, related specifically to the type of show being done--even to checking the number of chairs for the studio musicians, fetching some orange juice for a conductor, or rewriting a piece of script.<sup>58</sup>

A stopwatch was very important to Gillis, since every one-hour broadcast of the NBC Symphony was required to contain between fifty-one and fifty-four minutes of music; the remainder of the show was reserved for script, pauses, and applause.<sup>59</sup> Gillis also provided the script for each show; however, his primary responsibility as NBC Symphony producer was to ensure that what the conductor heard live in the studio was equivalent to the sound broadcast over radio. Gillis wrote:

We are equipped with scores which we study before rehearsals, and prepare ourselves to closely observe the details of the orchestration to see that we have definition of instrumentation, clarity of solo sound, and well-balanced ensemble. If there are passages which persist in being 'muddy' or if solo instruments are submerged with too much accompaniment, we call the conductor's attention to this fact and ninety-nine percent of the time he can straighten out our difficulties from the podium. If necessary, readjustment of mikes can be made to solve the problem.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 374.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 375.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 379.

Gillis came to the NBC Symphony seven years after its formation in 1937. When Gillis arrived in 1944, Toscanini had terminated seven previous NBC production managers in as many years.<sup>61</sup> That Gillis's relationship with Toscanini and the NBC Symphony lasted over ten years is certainly a testament to Gillis's musical qualifications and of his ability to work with the often temperamental conductor.

In addition to his working relationship with Toscanini and the members of the orchestra, Gillis came in contact with many guest conductors and composers whose music was programmed by the NBC Symphony. During his first five years, Gillis collaborated with over fifty guest conductors, the most important of whom included Morton Gould, Aaron Copland, Howard Hanson, Deems Taylor, William Schuman, Leonard Bernstein, Fritz Reiner, and Eugene Ormandy.<sup>62</sup> Concerning these experiences, Gillis recounted:

It has been my opportunity to watch them rehearse, to know them backstage, and to be a part of their concerts. It has been an invigorating experience, for from the seasoned trouper to the neophyte, I have seen their techniques and watched their methods. I have been impressed, bewildered, and sympathetic, but I have learned from all of them.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Barbara Gillis, interview by author, Athens, Georgia, 24 September 1988.

<sup>62</sup>Don Gillis, And Then I Wrote, 169.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

Gillis's tenure from 1944 to 1954 at NBC had a striking impact upon his creative and professional career. For Gillis, the artistic environment in New York was particularly stimulating, and during this ten-year span, he wrote the first of several compositions considered to be his mature works.<sup>64</sup> Two frequently performed compositions written during this period were *The Man Who Invented Music* (1950) and *Alice In Orchestralia* (1951) conducted by both Frank Black and Milton Katims as part of the NBC Symphony's "The U.S. Steel Hour" radio production.<sup>65</sup>

Another composition from this period, *Symphony No. 5* (1944-45), a work dedicated to three of Gillis's former TCU band students killed during World War II, was premiered by Frank Black and the NBC Symphony in 1945. In And Then I Wrote, Gillis recalled his reaction to Toscanini's favorable impression of the work:

A boy with his first bicycle, the thrill of a child's Christmas morning, the ecstasy of new love--all these things are junior grade sensations compared to the feeling I had when I heard his words. He talked on for ten minutes or so, telling me what he liked very well, what he didn't like about the symphony, and how he thought certain sections could be improved.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "Notes on My Music," 7.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, And Then I Wrote, 192.

The most significant work of his ten-year period at NBC was *Symphony No. 5 1/2* (1947), a work first performed by Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops on 21 June 1947 and played nationwide in revised form on 21 September 1947 by Toscanini and the NBC Symphony. Regarding the impetus for writing *Symphony No. 5 1/2*, "*Symphony for Fun*," Gillis disclosed:

. . . I wanted to write something for symphony orchestra that would make an awful lot of people who didn't customarily enjoy symphonic music perk up their ears."<sup>67</sup>

Other significant works written during this period include Gillis's *Symphony No. 6* (1948) and *Symphony No. 7* (1948), a composition performed as part of his 1948 TCU Honorary Doctoral degree ceremony.

Even though Gillis grew up in a band environment and wrote prolifically for the band medium, band music was not his preferred mode of expression. According to Gillis, the

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 79. The genesis for *Symphony 5 1/2* occurred while Gillis was working with the NBC String Quartet on NBC Radio "Stand-by," a contingency program if a regularly scheduled live NBC radio show ran short of the allotted time. On such occasions, the NBC String Quartet would then play a standard quartet from the repertoire to fill up the time space. The NBC String Quartet practiced in the NBC studio during regularly scheduled broadcasts, ready to play if needed, on a moment's notice. It was during one of these lulls, or practice sessions, that Gillis decided to write some music in a jazz style, rather than the classical style with which the NBC String Quarter was so familiar. In Gillis' words, "something which started out to be a piece of studio clowning got itself written into what is now *Symphony 5 1/2--Music for Fun*." Don Gillis, And Then I Wrote, 81.

majority of all of his compositions written during his NBC years were orchestral for no other reason except that his total environment at NBC was symphonic.<sup>68</sup> He wrote:

I'm afraid that during those years from 1944 to 1949, I took the usual dim view of bands (from my lofty viewpoint in the NBC Symphony control room) and this attitude wasn't helped any by contacts with publishers who urged me to write (or arrange some of my orchestral music) for band.<sup>69</sup>

The band experience was crucial in Gillis's life, yet Gillis was dissuaded from writing band music during the 1940s because of compositional limitations required by publishers of band music. According to Gillis, publishers viewed band music "not as good or bad, but rather as hard or easy."<sup>70</sup> Among a number of reservations, Gillis was opposed specifically to restrictions in instrumentation and instrumental ranges as well as the publisher requirements for unison, homorhythmic block scoring.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "Chapter One," 20.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "Early Writing," Cassette Tape 2, Side 2.

<sup>71</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "1973 Biographical Material," 8. Further discussion of the creative restrictions imposed by band publishers is found on Gillis's taped contemplations, "Early Writing," Cassette Tape 2, Side 2.

Gillis's reluctance to write for school bands also was influenced with what he considered less than acceptable standards exhibited by public school directors, since in Gillis's opinion:

A factor impinging [sic] the creative freedom of the composer is the lack of skills by band directors themselves to do much more than the simplest of conducting techniques. They, therefore, tend to avoid those pieces which are rhythmically complicated and which also present a 'threat' in performance--that is, if there is the remote possibility that the piece will break down--thus causing the embarrassment on the podium--they will avoid it.<sup>72</sup>

Continuing in this regard, he also wrote:

But whatever a composer does to provide the materials, it is still the conductor who must convert his blueprint into actual sound. The business of great bands (whether in balances or in artistic performances in technical achievements) is directly related to the ability and dedication of the man who holds the stick in his hand. It is my great hope that band leaders will take the same pride of podium which orchestral conductors have, and recognize the great artistic values inherent within the instrument which they are privileged to use in music making--the band.<sup>73</sup>

Not until Gillis became familiar with the performance capabilities demonstrated by several outstanding midwestern

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<sup>72</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "1973 Biographical Material," 9.

<sup>73</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "Music for Band," in "The Compositions of Don Gillis: Program Notes and Publisher Availability," ca. 1962, [photocopy] TD of descriptions and publishers of Gillis compositions written for all genres, p. 39-40, Gillis Family Repository, Athens, Georgia; original located in TxDN.



college bands, along with the Washington-based military bands, did he feel comfortable writing band music again.<sup>74</sup>

Given Toscanini's stature in the musical world during the 1940s and 1950s, Gillis was surprised to learn about Toscanini's interest and high regard for bands and band music.<sup>75</sup> As a child, Toscanini listened to town bands in his native Italy. According to Toscanini's son, Walter, the elder Toscanini "used to make transcriptions of operatic music for them [town bands], and probably his first teaching came when he showed those musicians how to play their parts."<sup>76</sup> During his lengthy career, Toscanini conducted bands associated with numerous opera productions and served as an Italian military band conductor of distinction during World War I.<sup>77</sup> Toscanini was also an admirer and acquaintance

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<sup>74</sup>Concerning performances of his compositions by college bands, Gillis wrote: "I have been lucky to have been played by the best--Revelli, Brendler, Loboda, Gabriel, Wilson, and so many others. I can thank the Good Lord that men of this caliber took my music seriously and played it over and over again. Glenn C. Bainum at Northwestern, Hindsley and Kissinger at Illinois, Maddy at National Music Camp." Don Gillis, "1973 Biographical Material," 8.

<sup>75</sup>Don Gillis, "Chapter One," 21. Gillis's account of Toscanini's relationship with bands is discussed further in Don Gillis, "Toscanini and the Band," School Musician, Director and Teacher 37 (December 1965): 48.

<sup>76</sup>Walter Toscanini, interview by Don Gillis, quoted in Don Gillis: "Toscanini and the Band," 48.

<sup>77</sup>Gillis wrote of Toscanini's close call with death when Toscanini conducted a military band on the front during

of Giuseppe Creatore and John Philip Sousa, the latter of whose *Stars and Stripes* and *El Capitan* were orchestrated, performed, and recorded by Toscanini.<sup>78</sup> In addition, through the auspices of Gillis, Toscanini agreed to a rare NBC Symphony rehearsal observation by members of the American Band Association (ABA) during the organization's 1954 Convention at West Point, New York.

Toscanini's favorable viewpoint of bands, along with the performance standards and capabilities Gillis observed in the above-mentioned college and military bands, provided him with the renewed impetus to write for bands.<sup>79</sup> At the suggestion of Mack Stark at Mills Music, Gillis in 1953 signed a five-year contract with Mills Music to produce band transcriptions of several of his established orchestral pieces. Included

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the Battle of Monte Santo. Don Gillis, "Toscanini and the Band," 52-53.

<sup>78</sup>Don Gillis, "Toscanini and the Band," 48.

<sup>79</sup>Gillis explained: "This lofty viewpoint [of writing for other than band] changed somewhat when I found out how much Toscanini likes bands. I saw how hard he worked with the band musicians when we did "Boheme" in 1946 and "Aida" in 1949 and also heard stories from him that indicated he respected bands as musical organizations. However, the "band" on stage in opera was not quite the same as the American concert band, so I wasn't particularly moved to write. Much later I heard more of Maestro's experiences giving band concerts at the front in WW-I and, listening to him talk about Italian bands and band leaders--his brother-in-law was leader of bands at LaScala--I began to realize that his regard for bands was genuine and that he knew a tremendous amount about them." Don Gillis, "Chapter One," 21.

among them were: *Bing-Bang-Bong* (1951; 1956), *The Man Who Invented Music* (1949; 1954) *Peachtree Promenade* (1952; 1955), *Piedmont Park* (1952; 1955), *Stone Mountain* (1952, 1955), and *Twinkletoes* (1956). Mills also published two original band compositions, *The Rompin' Stomp* (1953) and *Abe Lincoln: Gettysburg, 1863*, (1953) along with music for large brass choir, *Streamliner* (1951) and *Sinfonia for Brass* (1951).

Gillis composed his *Symphony No. 1 for Band* (1952), at the request of Bill Sandberg at Educational Music Services.<sup>80</sup> The work was performed in 1953 by the massed bands of the American Legion and the Joliet Township High School Band in Joliet, Illinois. Each movement was performed by a different conductor, two of whom included Forrest McAllister and Bruce Houseknecht.<sup>81</sup>

*Symphony No. 1 for Band* is a composition based on reminiscences of Gillis's childhood experiences in Cameron, Missouri. Comprised of *Cameron Junction--1920*, *The Pleasant Years*, *Uncle Walt's Waltz*, and *Fall Festival*, *Symphony No. 1 for Band* reveals Gillis's predilection for descriptive titles first evident in *Panhandle Suite*.

When the NBC Symphony was dissolved in 1954, Gillis managed the business affairs for the newly formed Symphony of

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<sup>80</sup>Don Gillis, "Chapter One," 23.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

the Air, an orchestra comprised mostly of former NBC Symphony members. As part of the first U.S. Government Goodwill Cultural tours, the Symphony of the Air orchestra toured America and the Orient. After the tour, two major problems prevented the orchestra from continuing operations through 1955: funding shortfalls, and a lack of musical leadership resulting from the musicians' preference to have a series of guest conductors rather than a permanent conductor.

The Interlochen Arts Academy Years: 1957-1961

Beginning in 1955, Gillis worked for a year at NBC radio as a producer on the acclaimed weekend "Monitor" radio series. Working as an associate under Frank Papp, Gillis was responsible specifically for the Sunday portion of "Monitor" which featured various music, entertainment, and talk shows.<sup>82</sup> During the summers of 1956 and 1957, Gillis accepted an invitation by Joseph L. Maddy to work at the National Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan, as a composer-in-residence. The time between his summer appointments was spent writing and guest conducting. Part of this time was spent in London and Rome conducting and recording a number of his works.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Barbara Gillis, telephone interview with author, 21 February 1991.

<sup>83</sup>Concerning his time with the Orchestra da Camera in Rome, Gillis wrote: "one story I remember was the time I recorded in Rome. The rehearsals were fair--but I wasn't getting what I wanted at all. I cajoled and begged--and then

When Interlochen Press was organized during the summer of 1957, Gillis composed several pieces for the Press, including *Band Concert Suite* (1958), a collection of works totaling approximately fifty minutes designed to be played as an entire band concert. With this work, Gillis attempted to create a large-scale form reflective of the programming tendencies of most band concerts. Therefore, *Band Concert Suite* included:<sup>84</sup>

- 1) Overture: *America's Gifted Youth*
- 2) Tone Poem: *Moonmist*
- 3) Novelty: *Variations On a Kitchen Sink*
- 4) Tone Poem: *This Solemn Hour*
- 5) Rhythm Piece: *Footsie*
- 6) Novelty: *Downbeat* (with narrator)
- 7) Solo: *Three Time Blues*
- 8) March: *Junior Hi-Fi*

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suddenly it happened! They were playing like angels--and I finished *Symphony No. 5 1/2* just beaming. The moment I stopped most of the orchestra left the stage and made a beeline for some seats at the back of the room. For there sat Maestro--he had come in during my rehearsal. And I suddenly knew when I saw him that it had been Maestro, not I, who had caused the transformation. But I didn't care--and I was pleased that the men in the orchestra had at last come alive--for maestro." Don Gillis, "1973 Biographical Material," 27.

<sup>84</sup>Don Gillis, "Chapter One," 24-25.

*Band Concert Suite* is an example of Gillis's preference for the suite as a formal structure in his orchestral and band works. For Gillis, flexibility of styles and contrasts of moods were possible within the framework of a suite; movements could be extracted and performed also as individual compositions. Gillis wrote or transcribed a total of six suites for band, the more notable of which are *Land of Wheat* (1959), *Panhandle Suite* (1935), and *Saga of a Pioneer* (1959).

*Pep Rally* (1956), an opera in two acts premiered in 1957 at the National Music Camp in Interlochen, was written for band accompaniment. A work which in Gillis's estimation was one of the first to employ band instrumentation, Gillis wrote *Pep Rally* specifically for band instruments to enhance its availability for school productions.

Gillis obtained a full-time position as Executive Vice-President for the Interlochen Summer Music Camp in 1958 and began a three-year period writing music directed toward student groups.<sup>85</sup> He handled many of the daily business and fund raising affairs for Interlochen,<sup>86</sup> although Gillis also was able to write a number of compositions for the

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<sup>85</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, "Notes On My Music," 9.

<sup>86</sup>Files related to Gillis's position as Vice-President for Interlochen are found in "Records-Interlochen Center for the Arts: Interlochen Arts Academy, Interlochen Arts Camp, 1921-1989," boxes 87 and 88, located in the Michigan Historical Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

outstanding band and orchestra students who were attracted to the camp. While this phase of his compositional career was not necessarily prolific, Gillis did write four of what he considered to be his best scores: *The Land of Wheat*, *The Libretto* (stage work, 1958), *Saga of a Pioneer*, and *Star Valley Junction* (stage work, 1962). Other than scores to the dramas *Orestes* (of Euripides, 1962) and *The Birds* (of Aristophanes, 1962) commissioned by WUOM radio of The University of Michigan, little else was written.<sup>87</sup>

Return to Broadcasting Years: 1962-1967

In 1962, following what Gillis referred to as irreconcilable differences with Maddy over the future direction and philosophy of the Interlochen National Music Camp,<sup>88</sup> Gillis entered yet another phase of his compositional

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<sup>87</sup>Gillis categorized *The Birds* and *Orestes* as incidental music for radio. The scores were written for the WUOM, The University of Michigan, "Ford Foundation Great Classics," produced by Jerry Sandler. Don Gillis, "Incidental Music: *The Birds*; *Orestes*" in "Program Notes and Publisher Availability," 55.

<sup>88</sup>In 1960, the Interlochen National Music Academy made a major decision to operate the camp on a year-round basis, instead of summers only, as had been the tradition since the early 1930s. Maddy insisted on a student body comprised of high school-aged students. For a variety of differing reasons, Gillis preferred the college conservatory approach, affiliated possibly with Northwest Michigan University. These differences were not resolved satisfactorily, precipitating Gillis's departure from Interlochen. Don Gillis, "Change of Life," 1961 (read by Don Gillis), Cassette Tape 13, Side 1.

career.<sup>89</sup> Returning primarily to the medium of stage productions, Gillis wrote a number of compositions based on religious texts. At his residence in Traverse City, Michigan, Gillis composed *Joyful and Triumphant* (1962), a medley for band and chorus based on Christmas themes that was recorded later recorded in London.<sup>90</sup>

In early 1963, Gillis returned to New York and engaged in both university lecture/residency programs and free-lance radio activities. Gillis's four and one-half year NBC radio production of *Toscanini: The Man Behind the Legend* was particularly significant. These weekly radio programs covering the life of Toscanini were produced in collaboration with Walter Toscanini, Arturo Toscanini's son, from Walter's home and Toscanini archive in Riverdale, New York.<sup>91</sup> Also important was Gillis's three-year National Educational Radio

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<sup>89</sup>Gillis, "Notes On My Music," 9.

<sup>90</sup>Don Gillis, *Joyful and Triumphant*, record #CSC 0305, RCA, 1963.

<sup>91</sup>According to Barbara Gillis, Walter Toscanini's home at the time was a four-story mansion, the first floor of which contained recording equipment and numerous Toscanini documents meticulously compiled by Walter. John Corbet, a former NBC Radio engineer who was employed by Walter, assisted in the recording sessions, which were ultimately edited by NBC Radio in New York. Because of Walter's failing health, the entire Toscanini archive was donated to the New York City Public Library. The scripts and recordings for *Toscanini: The Man Behind the Legend* are currently housed at the Music Library of University of North Texas, Denton. Barbara Gillis, telephone interview with author, 21 April 1991.



production of *The Music of Don Gillis* (1964-1967). Works written during this period included: *Great Big Nation* (1965), a score for the Equitable Life Assurance exhibit at the New York World's Fair; *Ceremony and Allegiance* (1964) for narrator and band, an orchestral selection; *Paul Bunyan: An Overture to a Legend* (1964); and three one-act musical stage productions, *The Gift of the Magi* (1966), *The Nazarene* (1966-67), and *World Premiere* (1966-67). In 1964, the Library of Congress received a gift of Gillis's manuscripts and sketches for permanent deposit in the Music Division Archives.

#### Return to Academia: 1967-78

In 1967, Gillis moved to Dallas to serve as the music department chairman at Southern Methodist University (SMU). Because of Gillis's lengthy experience in the business world of radio, he was unprepared to handle the administrative duties of music at the university level and stayed at SMU for only one year.<sup>92</sup> Following his year at SMU, Gillis moved across town to begin a five-year tenure as the head of an experimental media instruction program at Dallas Baptist College. In 1972, Gillis arranged for members of the ABA to

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<sup>92</sup>Barbara Gillis, telephone interview with author, 21 April 1991.

tour the media arts facility at Dallas Baptist College during the organization's annual convention in Dallas.<sup>93</sup>

Gillis's interest and experience in media, especially radio, extended back to his boyhood years.<sup>94</sup> Gillis's specific fascination with tape and tape recording began in 1939, the year his son, Don Jr., was born. Gillis recorded his son's cries and utilized the recording in the *Ahoy Mate-Squalls Ahead* movement of his suite, *Thoughts Provoked On Becoming a Prospective Papa* (1939).<sup>95</sup> According to Gillis, the significance of taped media became apparent to him several years later while on the set of a recording session with pianist Carmen Cavalerri, where Gillis observed that the recording engineer was able to edit out a piano foot pedal

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<sup>93</sup>According to an article in the School Musician, Director and Teacher, the ABA was favorably impressed by this Dallas Baptist College Media Arts Department visit. Forrest McAllister, ed., "A Salute to the Dallas Baptist College for Their Ultra Modern Collins Learning Center," School Musician, Director and Teacher 44 (October 1972): 3. Further information about the Dallas Baptist College Media Arts program of the early 1970s may be found in: Don Gillis, "Dial M for Media," School Musician, Director and Teacher 44 (October 1972): 44-47.

<sup>94</sup>Gillis fondly recalled a game of pretend broadcasting, where he and his brother would play "radio station" by employing a tin can on a broomstick as a "microphone." His first authentic experiences on radio were brief musical experiences as a teenager on KGBX in St. Joseph, Missouri, KFNF in Shenandoah, Iowa, and KMBC, Kansas City. Don Gillis, "1973 Biographical Material," 13.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, 13.

squeak near the end of the recording.<sup>96</sup> Gillis immediately realized the importance of tape recording, writing:

It [tape recording] was a thrilling thing for me to know about--and I bought a tape recorder and in 1949 an Ampex--the 'media' career took on a new dimension and I spent countless hours in my life fooling around with it, editing, mixing, and enjoying it.<sup>97</sup>

In comparison to his discovery of the potentials of tape recording, the advent of television was not as much a revelation to Gillis. After his initial reservations,<sup>98</sup> however, he produced numerous TV projects.

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 15. Concerning this event, Gillis wrote: "we went downstairs and watched him take out a bit of tape--and on the playback, no pedal squeak! That was a revelation to me, a miracle of sorts that I wanted to get in on. Shortly afterwards, we needed to record the NBC Symphony for a delayed broadcast and during the recording of Debussy's *Rhapsody for Clarinet*, Alex Williams, the soloist, squeaked his clarinet on a high note. We went back to the recording area and removed the squeak and I sent the piece of tape containing the 'squeak' to him via special messenger so he should get it before the broadcast along with a note say, 'Here, but for the Grace of God and the NBC recording engineer, is your career.' "

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Regarding his initial experiences with television, Gillis declared: "Thus I missed much opportunity to get in on TV in its infancy--something I regret now. When Firestone decided to simulcast (TV and Radio at the same time), I was directing the show for radio and really I did not enjoy the TV part. I also did audio on a bunch of the old NBC operas that were televised--but didn't like it. So, in view of my present career, that was an error. I have, through the years however, learned much of TV and feel comfortable with it as a creative tool." Don Gillis, "1973 Biographical Material," 16.

Gillis produced very few band works during his Dallas years. *Symphony 'X,' Big "D"* was written in 1968 for orchestra and transcribed for band in 1972. *Rhapsody for Trumpet* (1970) and orchestra, a selection which also appears as a band transcription, was premiered by the Dallas All-City High School Orchestra, Russ Benjamin, conductor, in 1970 with Doc Severinsen as soloist.

At the invitation of Thomas Jones, then President of the University of South Carolina (USC), Gillis moved to Columbia, South Carolina in January of 1973 to organize and administer the newly formed USC Media Productions Center. In addition to collaborations with the USC music department on several multi-media productions, Gillis also wrote the text The Art of Media Instruction (1973) and manuscript *Creativity in the Media Arts*, and co-produced the innovative educational video series, *Teaching As Performing Art* (1976).<sup>99</sup>

During the 1970s, Gillis produced no original band scores. While Gillis's pioneering media production work at Dallas Baptist and USC occupied much of his time, he did find time to compose mostly stage works, a genre that appealed most to him in his later life. These works were based primarily on religious texts, reflecting a change in his

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<sup>99</sup>Additional comments and information about this teacher education series is provided in Don Gillis and Leon Lessinger, "Teaching As A Performing Art," School Musician, Director and Teacher 49 (August/September 1977): 60-61.

outlook on life caused by family, business, and health problems encountered in 1961. Works for orchestra and narrator included: *Let Us Pray* (1970), *The Other Thief* (1976), *The Answer* (1976), *His Name Was John* (1976), *And It Came To Pass* (1976), *The Good Samaritan* (1976), and *The Barley Loaves* (1976). His stage works included: *The Nazarene* (1967-68), *Behold the Man* (1972), and his *Gift of the Magi* (1966), a version of which received seventy-two broadcasts from 1973 to 1976 on South Carolina Educational Television.<sup>100</sup>

In 1976, USC dictated Gillis's retirement at age sixty-five for the forthcoming year. Gillis resisted such a mandate, arguing from a legal standpoint that the South Carolina law permitted people to work until seventy years of age. From another perspective, Gillis debated that the USC age requirement was morally wrong, contending that those who are productive and who have been of service for most of their lives should not be dismissed categorically.

With the assistance of the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission, Gillis entered into a legal dispute with USC.<sup>101</sup> During this time, Gillis wrote *The Throwaway Generation*, an editorial critical of a society's disregard for its senior

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<sup>100</sup>Don Gillis, "New Compositions," ca. 1976, TM [photocopy] of late works by Don Gillis, p. 3; original found in the Gillis Family Repository, Athens, Georgia.

<sup>101</sup>South Carolina Human Affairs Commission 2-77-3A Gillis v. University of South Carolina.

citizens. In an effort to enlist assistance for his cause, Gillis sent copies of *The Throwaway Generation* to several politicians, including Senators Strom Thurmond and Edward Kennedy (see APPENDIX B). Additionally, *The Throwaway Generation* was set to band accompaniment and Gillis entered into negotiations for a Washington, D.C. premiere by the U.S. Air Force Band with First Lady Rosalynn Carter as narrator.

Two other USC professors affected by the USC mandate, Wade T. Batson and Paul Blackstock, opted for private legal assistance. A ruling on their particular court action was offered on 14 August 1978 by the South Carolina Supreme Court, which ruled that USC had no legal authority to lower the state limit from seventy to sixty-five.<sup>102</sup> Gillis did not benefit from this court action, since eight months earlier, on 10 January 1978, while his case against USC was in litigation and before the band score of *The Throwaway Generation* was completed, he died of a heart attack at the age of sixty-five. Although Gillis did not live to see a satisfactory resolution of the case, financial benefits resulting from the decision were awarded to his family.

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<sup>102</sup>Anne Marshall and Marilyn Thompson, "Court: USC Retirement Policy Invalid," Columbia Record, 15 August 1978, 1 (A). Other accounts of the South Carolina Supreme Court ruling are found in: Holly Gatling, "Forced Retirement at 65 Ruled Out," The State, 16 August 1978, 1 (A); and, Jim Phillips and Lisa Frucht, "S.C. Court Extends USC Retirement Age," USC Gamecock, 30 August 1978, 2 (A).

CHAPTER III  
ANNOTATED CATALOG OF BAND COMPOSITION

Introduction

The Annotated Catalog of Band Compositions by Don Gillis lists original band works and band transcriptions of orchestral compositions. The Annotated Catalog does not contain small ensemble works for winds, nor numerous manuscripts withdrawn or destroyed by Gillis. The works included in this compilation either are or were published by music companies, or are currently available through the Gillis family.

Gillis's philosophy of band as an instrument for composition is significant. Numerous original and transcribed band works were written by Gillis during the 1950s. While he continued to write for orchestra during this time, Gillis considered the medium of band music as challenging as that of orchestra because of the sonority combinations possible with band instrumentation.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Gillis wrote for the specific instrumentation of the band, and did not conceptualize certain band instruments

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<sup>1</sup>Don Gillis, "Program Notes and Publisher Availability," 38.

simply as substitutes for orchestral instruments.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning this view of band scoring, Gillis wrote:

And it was a new sound. My band scoring was not a re-make of the orchestra, it was band [emphasis not added]. Not the old band sound of the Sousa March, but something different in acoustical achievement.<sup>3</sup>

A writer reviewing Gillis's *Symphony No. 1 for Band* concentrated on the element of band scoring:

*Symphony No. 1 for Band* is a serious, well written work which embodies all the characteristics of a major work written for symphony orchestras. The composer has brought out the full potential of the band's true sound which up until this time has lain dormant in most arrangements for band. Full valued sounds of the brass, wood-wind [sic], and percussion sections are richly woven into this original score.<sup>4</sup>

Gillis's utilization of band scoring applied to settings of pieces written for other than for band instruments only. His stage work *Pep Rally* is unique in its scoring for band instruments only, and his *Concerto for Organ and Band* is one of the few works written for the combination. In addition, several works, including *Downbeat*, *Abe Lincoln-Gettysburg, 1863*, and *Tomorrow is Today*, were written for narrator and

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Don Gillis, "1973 Biographical Material," 6.

<sup>4</sup>"Don Gillis *Symphony No. 1 for Band* to be Premiered at Joliet, Ill. Jan. 18," School Musician, Director and Teacher 24 (January 1953): 36.



band, while others, such as *This is Our America* and *Seven Golden Texts*, combined choral and band parts.

In general, Gillis's choice of band instrumentation was as follows: Piccolo; 1st and 2nd Flute; 1st and 2nd Oboe; English horn; Eb Clarinet; 1st 2nd, and 3rd Bb Clarinet; Eb Alto Clarinet; Bb Bass Clarinet; Eb Contra Bass Clarinet; 1st and 2nd Bassoon; 1st and 2nd Eb Alto Saxophone; 1st and 2nd Tenor Saxophone; Eb Baritone Saxophone; 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Horn in F; 1st, 2nd and 3rd Cornet; 1st and 2nd Trumpets; 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Trombone; Baritone B.C. or T.C; String Bass; Tuba; Percussion. Unusual exceptions to this list are noted where applicable.

For band transcriptions of orchestral originals, Gillis is the arranger unless otherwise identified. Under the band transcriptions, two dates of composition are found: the first applies to the orchestral version; the second reflects the year of the transcription. For those selections bearing a specific copyright number, the information was obtained from official imprints found on the score covers of those works currently cataloged at the Music Division of the Library of Congress.

Numerous recordings of Don Gillis's works are available in select libraries; however, the Music Library of the University of North Texas at Denton has the most comprehensive and accessible collection of Gillis works for

band and other genres. Additional audio tapes by and about Don Gillis are listed in APPENDIX C and APPENDIX D. Inquiries about the current availability of compositions may be made with with the publishers listed in APPENDIX E.

### Catalog

**Title:** *Abe Lincoln-Gettysburg, 1863*

**Date:** 1953; Copyright: 10 December 1953 (EP 78308)

**Dedication:** None

**Publisher:** Mills; available through Theodore Presser

**Duration:** 4:30

**Recording:** U.S. Army Band conducted by Col. Samuel R. Loboda with Capt. Allen Crowell as narrator; Reel 16 (A), TxDN

**Notes:** Originally titled *Four Score and Seven Years*, this composition features Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address narrated to solemn music. The work appeared in performance as part of the Third Annual University of Illinois Festival of Concert Band Music, 11 January 1957, Mark Hindsley, conducting.

*Abe Lincoln-Gettysburg, 1863* sold ninety-five copies in 1954 and averaged just under fifty copies each year through the 1950s and mid-1960s. Annual sales from 1968 to 1975 averaged approximately twenty-five.<sup>5</sup> The holograph of the band version of *Four Score and Seven Years*, written in ink and pencil, is located at the Music Division of the Library of Congress, ML96 .G4953 no. 36 Case.

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<sup>5</sup>Mills Music, *Abe Lincoln-Gettysburg, 1863*, Royalty Statements, 1954-1975.

**Title:** *America's Gifted Youth*

**Date:** 1958; Copyright 24 October 1958 (EP 124016)

**Dedication:** None

**Publisher:** Gillis Family

**Duration:** 8:00

**Recording:** U.S. Army Band conducted by Samuel R. Loboda, Reel 28 (A), TxDN

**Notes:** The work was originally published by Interlochen Press and released to the Gillis family on 2 April 1962. An original component of the manuscript version of *Band Concert Suite* and eventually published separately, this overture for band was composed while Gillis was serving as an administrator at the Interlochen Music Camp in Michigan. A manuscript score is located at GFR.

**Title:** *Atlanta: A Choreographic Impression of a Southern City*

I. *Our Fair City--A Brochure* (5:10)  
 II. *Stone Mountain--A Memory* (3:35)  
 III. *Piedmont Park--A Fantasy* (3:25)  
 IV. *Plantation Song--A Spiritual* (3:50)  
 V. *Peachtree Promenade--A Holiday* (2:35)  
 VI. *City of Atlanta--A Forward March* (3:00)

**Date:** 1952; *Peachtree Promenade*, band version: 1955, copyright 16 March 1955 (EP92541); *Plantation Song*, band version: 1955, copyright 16 March 1955 (EP88244)

**Dedication:** Commissioned by Atlanta Music Club and presented to the Atlanta Symphony

**Publisher:** *Plantation Song* and *Peachtree Promenade* available for band through Kalmus and Theodore Presser

**Recording:** Rome Orchestra da Camera conducted by Don Gillis; Reel 10 (B), TxDN

**Duration:** 21:35

Notes: First appearing in full form as an orchestral original, the composition was the idea of Mrs. James O'Hear, a past president of the Atlanta Music Club. The six-movement suite was then commissioned by the Atlanta Federation of Music Clubs and premiered by Henry Sopkin and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra on 1 April 1952 in Atlanta's Municipal Auditorium. Reporting in the Atlanta Constitution, writer Paul Jones headlined his review "Gillis' Work Gets Inspired Performance."<sup>6</sup>

In an Atlanta Journal interview with Celeste Sibley, Gillis indicated that the portrait of Atlanta was an attempt to write "a set of six impressions to which the listener may supply his own choreography for whatever his imagination supplies in way of ballet."<sup>7</sup> Of the six movements, only two, *Plantation Song* (1952; 1955) and *Peachtree Promenade* (1952; 1955), were scored for band.<sup>8</sup> From program notes supplied for the premiere performance, Gillis wrote the following concerning *Plantation Song* and *Peachtree Promenade*:

[*Plantation Song--A Memory*] There was an age (long since gone) when there was a gentleness of living which was elegant and kinglike. And

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<sup>6</sup>Paul Jones, "Gillis' Work Gets Inspired Performance," Atlanta Constitution, 2 April 1952, 32.

<sup>7</sup>Celestine Sibley, "Soul of Atlanta in Six Movements," Atlanta Constitution, 14 March 1952, 29. Sibley's article concludes with the following quote by Gillis: "And this is Atlanta, no backward steps from the time of a crossroads village to the limitless boundaries of tomorrow, surging with potentials and powered by vision, the city moves onward, unified in a family of cities with a spirit of leadership."

<sup>8</sup>According to the Mills Music Royalty records, both *Plantation Song* and *Peachtree Promenade* sold consistently through the 1950s and early 1960s. The purchases for both selections peaked in 1955, with *Plantation Song* recording 313 sales and *Peachtree Promenade* 353 sales.

although it was for only a few, the moment of loveliness in which they lived is remembered fondly as a golden age of crinoline, lace, and faint perfume of hycacinthe. There was also romance, and, in the quiet of a summer's night, a serenade. And perhaps, when the song was ended, a kiss as two figures in the night listened to the music of love."

[*Peachtree Parade*] "Best bib and tucker, shoes shined, and nothing to do but spend all day doing it. Up one side of the street and down the other, a girl on each arm and a pocketful of ready-to-spend money. Holiday? Or every day? Anyway, doing the town in carefree lightheartedness is best accomplished in a *Peachtree Promenade*.<sup>9</sup>

Both of the movements were performed by The Ohio University Symphonic Band under the guest direction of William F. Santelmann, U.S. Marine Band, on 29 April 1956 in the Alumni Memorial Auditorium, Athens, Ohio. *Peachtree Promenade* was performed on 8 March 1956 by the University of New Mexico Concert Band conducted by Edwin C. Kruth as part of the ABA Convention.

Title: *Ballet for Band*

Date: 1955

Dedication: None

Publisher: Southern Music

Duration: 10:00

Recording: University of Illinois Concert Band conducted by Mark Hindsley, Fine Arts Ref. Record 1086, v. 13, MdU

Notes: First published in 1965 and currently out of print, *Ballet for Band* was first performed in manuscript in 1955 by the University of Illinois

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<sup>9</sup>Don Gillis, *Atlanta Suite*, in "Program Notes," Atlanta Symphony Concert, 1 April 1952.

Band. The composition was also performed as part of the 1965-1966 season repertoire for the University of Michigan Symphony Band, William D. Revelli, conductor. A manuscript score is located at GFR.

In a letter to Gillis, Henry Clifton Shaw, Band Director at Webster High School of Minden, Louisiana, indicated:

After two weeks of rehearsal on the work, I find it most interesting in contrasting rhythms, tonal patterns and colors. Though our instrumentation is not ideal, the band members think that it is a wonderful composition.<sup>10</sup>

Writing in the School Musician, Director and Teacher, Howard E. Akers stated:

. . . a work of larger proportion . . .  
 Incorporates many percussion such as piano, chimes, triangle, sock cymbal, snare drum, pair of cymbals, timpani, cowbell, tambourine, bass drum, and gong. Composition of many moods. Shifting tonality, numerous time signature changes, use of mutes in brass, English horn solos. Very tuneful. Carefully constructed. Good dynamic contrast. Ranges not excessive. Twentieth century harmonic treatment. Outstanding tonal color contrast. Rhythmically interesting . . .<sup>11</sup>

Title: ***Band Concert Suite***

Date: 1958; copyright 1958

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<sup>10</sup>Henry Clifton Shaw, letter to Don Gillis, 17 February 1967.

<sup>11</sup>Howard E. Akers, "Ballet for Band," a review found in the School Musician, Director and Teacher 37 (February 1966): 34.

Dedication: None

Publisher: FEMA Music Publications

Duration: 23:15

Recording: *Downbeat*--U.S. Army Band conducted by Col. Samuel R. Loboda with Capt. Allen Crowell narrator, Reel 16(C), TxDN; *Footsie*--U.S. Army Band conducted by Col. Samuel R. Loboda, Reel 28 (E), TxDN; *Variations on a Kitchen Sink*, Interlochen Junior High Band conducted by Jack McKenzie

Notes: In an effort to develop a setting other than 'symphony' for an extended work for band, Gillis selected 'band concert' and created a work exemplifying the type of music most frequently heard on a normal band concert.<sup>12</sup> The concept was dropped after his first attempt with *Band Concert Suite* because Gillis came to realize that "conductors do not usually want to devote a complete concert to the work of one composer."<sup>13</sup>

First appearing as an eight-movement work in manuscript, only the following were initially published by Interlochen Press:

- I. *Moonmist* (3:30)
- II. *This Solemn Hour* (2:50)
- III. *Variations on a Kitchen Sink* (4:00)
- IV. *Footsie* (3:06)
- V. *Downbeat* (with narrator) (14:05)

*Moonmist*<sup>14</sup> and *Footsie* are available separately. *This Solemn Hour*,<sup>15</sup> first performed at

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<sup>12</sup>Don Gillis, *Band Concert*, "Don Gillis: Program Notes and Publisher Availability," 40.

<sup>13</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, *America's Gifted Youth*, Music by Don Gillis, 1974, TMs of program notes and taped performances, p. 21; original is located at TxDN.

<sup>14</sup>A review of *Moonmist* in the *School Musician*, *Director and Teacher* described the work as: "a lovely little mood piece that uses solo colors within a normal band instrumentation to fine advantage. The harmonies are highly

Interlochen in 1958, was written during 1953-1954 for Mills Music.

*Variations on a Kitchen Sink* is temporarily out of print; however, the movement will be available by August 1991. A novelty number in which the percussion section utilizes numerous kitchen utensils, *Variations on a Kitchen Sink* is especially popular with middle school bands. According to FEMA Publications, total sales of *Variations on a Kitchen Sink* have reached approximately five thousand.<sup>16</sup>

*Downbeat--A Fable for Band*, is a movement which features narration. Reflective of Gillis's proclivity for humor, this unusual selection features a witty script and score which pokes fun at conductors and conducting. Relatively easy to perform, the composition is designed to feature various soloists and sections.

In a 1961 letter, Al G. Wright, Director of the Purdue University Bands, wrote:

I did your *Downbeat* with my symphonic band at the Western State College Summer Music Camp in Gunnison, Colorado, a week or so ago . . . it went over very big.<sup>17</sup>

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chromatic in a very palatable style, and the independence of the various parts is refreshing. . . . John P. Paynter et al., eds., review of *Moonmist*, by Don Gillis, in the School Musician, and Teacher 14 (December 1959): 55.

<sup>15</sup>A review of *This Solemn Hour* found in the School Musician, Director and Teacher stated: "an unpretentious tone poem . . . Musical meaning is expressed in the simplest of terms with the lovely colors of the band exploited without fanfare . . . Lovely, quiet music that helps to further establish this composer as a musician of more than normal ability." John P. Paynter et al., eds., review of *This Solemn Hour*, by Don Gillis, in the School Musician, Director and Teacher 14 (February 1960): 50.

<sup>16</sup>Ed Adams, letter to author, 1 April 1991.

<sup>17</sup>Al G. Wright, letter to Don Gillis, 29 August 1961.



A holograph of *Moonmist* is located at the Music Division of the Library of Congress, ML96 .G4953 no. 18 Case.

**Title:** **Bayou Song**

**Date:** 1958; copyright 10 October 1958 (EP 124014)

**Dedication:** None

**Publisher:** Gillis Family

**Duration:** 5:00

**Recording:** Reel 47 (C), TxDN

**Notes:** Bayou Song was originally published by Interlochen Press and released to the Gillis family on 2 April 1962. A manuscript score is located at GFR. In the words of the composer, the selection is:

. . . easy to play, easy to listen to tone poem for band, scored most effectively in the Gillis style of deep colors for low woodwinds and brass, with a haunting melodic line.<sup>18</sup>

**Title:** **Bing-Bang-Bong** (Variations on the NBC Chimes)

**Date:** 1951; 1956, copyright 1955 (EP 100480)

**Dedication:** None

**Publisher:** Kalmus (B3538) and Theodore Presser

**Duration:** 5:25

**Recording:** U.S. Army Band, Reel 17 (B), TxDN

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<sup>18</sup>Don Gillis, *Bayou Song*, "Program Notes and Publisher Availability," 40.

**Notes:** *Bing-Bang-Bong* was initially published by Mills as an orchestral selection and rescored for band. Commissioned in 1951 for NBC's 25th anniversary while Gillis was employed at NBC in New York, *Bing-Bang-Bong* is a set of variations based on the three-note NBC Chime Theme.

The band transcription was performed by the Joliet Township High School Band under the composer's direction at the 10th Annual National Midwest Band Clinic in Chicago, on December 8, 1956. In addition to basic percussion instruments, the band transcription requirements include: hi hat, three cowbells, three temple blocks, wind whistle, iron plate, gong, bells, sleigh bells, slap stick, chimes, xylophone, and vibraphone.

**Title:** ***Bronc Bust***

*See Panhandle Suite, The*

**Title:** ***Cameron Junction--1920***

*See Symphony No. I for Band*

**Title:** ***Centennial Celebration***

*See Saga of a Pioneer, The*

**Title:** ***Ceremony of Allegiance***

**Date:** 1964; copyright 1965

**Dedication:** None

**Publisher:** Kjos Music Company

**Duration:** 3:45

**Recording:** U.S. Army Band conducted by Col. Samuel R. Loboda with narration by Capt. Allen Crowell

**Notes:** The composition is written for band and narrator with text adapted from the Preamble to the Constitution and the Pledge of Allegiance.

*Ceremony of Allegiance* premiered at Kansas State Teachers College (Emporia, Kansas) on Band Day, 24 October 1964 with the composer conducting a massed band of five thousand.<sup>19</sup> The work was performed on 4 March 1965 at an ABA Concert by the U.S. Army Field Band conducted by Don Gillis at Ritchie Auditorium on the campus of the University of Maryland.

Regarding a 1967 performance of the selection, James W. Dunlap, Director of the Penn State Blue Band, wrote:

Your *Ceremony of Allegiance* was very well accepted, as was the whole show. As a matter of fact, we have had more favorable comments on this than on anything we have done in recent years.<sup>20</sup>

In 1967, Jack C. Mahan, Music Section Chairman for the Arlington State College (Texas), wrote:

It was most effective there [on tour] as well as on our final Spring Concert. Many people have asked about it from Cub Scout Den Mothers to Civic leaders and Band Directors . . . We, at this time, are planning to use it as a part of our National Television appearance in the Cotton Bowl on November 7 at half-time for the Dallas Cowboy-San Francisco game.<sup>21</sup>

In 1966, William D. Revelli, Director of Bands at the University of Michigan, wrote:

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<sup>19</sup>Gillis's conducting gestures for such a large group caused an arm injury that required surgery. Barbara Gillis, telephone interview with author, 30 May 1991.

<sup>20</sup>James W. Dunlap, letter to Don Gillis, 13 November 1967.

<sup>21</sup>Jack H. Mahan, letter to Don Gillis, 30 September 1965.

You will be interested to know that we are doing the *Ceremony* at Band Day with 13,500 kids this coming Saturday. We will go directly from the *Ceremony to America the Beautiful* and hope it will be effective. We plan to do the *Ceremony* for every game at home and I commend you on the beautiful way you have scored it and the fine thought behind it all.<sup>22</sup>

Writing in 1965, Walter Beeler, Assistant Dean of the School of Music at Ithaca College stated:

I have seen and heard played your *Ceremony of Allegiance* and you may be sure that I will use it sooner or later in one of my programs here or around the country.<sup>23</sup>

In 1966, the second year of publication, *Ceremony of Allegiance* sold 650 copies and averaged over 400 copies sold for each of the years between 1967 to 1970. The selection averaged over 200 copies sold from 1971 to 1974.<sup>24</sup> A manuscript score is located at GFR.

Title: ***Cracker Barrel March***  
 Date: 1960; 1965; copyright 1965 (EP 238004)  
 Dedication: None  
 Publisher: Belwin-Mills; available through Theodore Presser

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<sup>22</sup>William D. Revelli, letter to Don Gillis, 30 September 1966.

<sup>23</sup>Walter Beeler, letter to Don Gillis, 14 September 1965.

<sup>24</sup>Kjos Music Company, *Ceremony of Allegiance*, Royalty Statements 1966-1974.

Duration: 4:00

Recording: 47 (A), TxDN

Notes: Formerly written as *Dance of the Jugglers*, the premiere of *Cracker Barrel* in its renamed form was given on 6 November 1965 at the Grand Concert of the Tri-State Music Festival by the Dickinson State College Band (North Dakota), the composer conducting.<sup>25</sup> The work was also performed by the Kansas City All-Suburban Conference High School Band at the 1966 Music Educators National Conference Convention on 19 March 1966 in the Kansas City Municipal Auditorium.

The title derived from a country store located near the Interlochen campus.<sup>26</sup> *Cracker Barrel* sold 419 copies in 1965 and 221 copies in 1966.<sup>27</sup>

Title: ***Cyclometrics Overture***

Date: 1966

Dedication: None

Publisher: Kjos Music Company

Duration: 3:30

Recording: 47 (G), TxDN

Notes: Formerly written as *Razzle Dazzle* for a first movement of an incomplete *Symphony No. 2 for Band*, *Cyclometrics Overture* was intended by the composer to be a rousing finale or an encore selection. The composition was read in February 1968 at the New Band Music Reading Session by

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<sup>25</sup>*Cracker Barrel March*, "Concert Program," Dickinson State College Band, Grand Concert of the 1965 Tri-State Music Festival (ND).

<sup>26</sup>Don Gillis, *Cracker Barrel March*, "The Music of Don Gillis: Program Notes for NTSU," 30.

<sup>27</sup>Mills Music Company, *Cracker Barrel March*, Royalty Statements, 1965-1980.

the University of Southern Mississippi Concert Band in conjunction with the 12th Annual Instrumental Conductors Conference held at Southern Mississippi.

In 1967, the first year of its publication, *Cyclometrics Overture* sold 489 copies. Sales over the next seven years were stable, reaching 88 copies sold in 1974.<sup>28</sup>

**Title:** *Dialogue for Trombone and Band*

**Date:** 1956; copyright 1958 (EP 240330)

**Dedication:** None

**Publisher:** Belwin-Mills; available through Theodore Presser

**Duration:** 7:00

**Recording:** TCU Horned Frog Band with Lewis Gillis, Don's younger brother, as soloist, Reel 42 (B), TxDN

**Notes:** Completed in New York City in February of 1956, *Dialogue for Band* premiered at the Texas Bandmasters Association in August of that year. The piece was then revised and performed in its final form with the composer conducting the United States Army Field Band at the Ninth Annual Bandmasters' Clinic, Moorhead, Minnesota, in 1958.

In notes provided by Gillis for the 1958 revised premiere, he wrote:

The form of the work is a broad three part form--the first section fast, a lyrical slow section, and recapitulation of the thematic material of the first section. The piece generally avoids the cliches normally attributed to "trombone solos," that is--the triple tongue passages, variations,

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<sup>28</sup>Kjos Music Company, *Cyclometrics Overture*, Royalty Statements 1967-1974.

etc. . . . instead, it has as its main purpose to entertain and amuse, and at the same time, display the trombone's capabilities in several styles.<sup>29</sup>

The entertainment feature of *Dialogue for Trombone and Band* caused a reviewer to write skeptically:

There is really little point in spending much time criticizing a piece for not being something it is not intended to be. Suffice it to say that Don Gillis' *Dialogue for trombone and band* might be a dandy piece for a pops concert. It is a slick, superficial, overly repetitious work in a rather listless blues idiom, with just about every harmonic, melodic and scoring cliché in the book. It will probably sell well. . . .<sup>30</sup>

In 1969, eleven years after its initial publication, the composition sold fifty-three copies and averaged approximately twenty-five sales during the mid-1970s.<sup>31</sup> A manuscript score is located at GFR.

Title: **Downbeat**

See *Band Concert Suite*

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<sup>29</sup>*Dialogue for Trombone*, "Concert Program," U.S. Army Field Band, May 1958 Nels Vogel Bandmasters; Clinic, Moorhead Minnesota.

<sup>30</sup>Mary Rasmussen, ed., review of *Dialogue for Trombone and Band*, by Don Gillis, in Brass Quarterly 2 (September 1958): 37.

<sup>31</sup>Mills Music, *Dialogue for Trombone and Band*, Royalty Statements 1969-1975.

Title: **Fall Festival**

See *Symphony No. I for Band*

Title: **Fields in Summer, The**

See *Land of Wheat*

Title: **Footsie**

See *Band Concert Suite*

Title: **Harvest Celebration**

See *Land of Wheat*

Title: **Hymn Song for Sunday**

Date: 1963; copyright 1963

Dedication: None

Publisher: Bourne Company

Duration: 3:30

Recording: Reel 47 (E), TxDN

Notes: The work is a setting of an original hymn tune originally written for an incomplete and withdrawn *Symphony No. 2 for Band*. In 1967, the first year that *Hymn Song for Sunday* was available for sale, the selection sold forty-five copies. The most sales were generated the following year with fifty-eight copies sold. Through the 1970s, the average annual sales of *Hymn Song for Sunday* was under ten.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Bourne Music Company, *Hymn Song for Sunday*, Royalty Statements, 1967-1980.



Title: *Instant Music*

Date: 1966

Dedication: None

Publisher: Frank Music Corp.

Duration: Indefinite Duration

Notes: First performed at Interlochen, *Instant Music* is an exercise in "chance" music. The written parts provide only basic musical instructions. On cue, the students have complete freedom in playing pitches from the pre-determined I, IV, V<sup>7</sup> and I chords. The measures are arranged into basic rhythmic patterns; however, there is no indication of rhythmic lengths or tempos. The ensemble members are expected to listen to each other while watching hand signals from the conductor.

The premiere of the published version of *Instant Music* occurred with the Setauket Junior High Band at the Contemporary Art and Music Festival on 18 March 1966. The 'music' basically is a general written outline of the verbal instructions first utilized at Interlochen.

In extensive program notes and lesson plans printed in the conductor's score, the following notes by Don Gillis are provided:

*Instant Music* is neither a game nor a musical joke. It is a form of music making in which the players themselves improvise the music they play, limited only by the prescribed rhythm patterns set forth on their instruction page.

The idea for *Instant Music* came several summers ago as a special feature for the Composer's Club of National Music Camp in Interlochen. Each week the students presented their new compositions, and one day as a joke I decided to present a new work by the non-existent composer I.M. Niente. Now 'niente' means 'nothing' in Italian and the joke was

that my musicians were going to have 'nothing' on their music stands except blank manuscript paper.<sup>33</sup>

A review of *Instant Music* written in the Instrumentalist revealed:

. . . it is a noble and potentially exciting "Experience in Group Creativity," which really is what the composer said in the first place. . . . To say that great music will result would be highly optimistic. To say that originality, excitement, challenge, fresh interest, and program variety might be the result is inevitable.<sup>34</sup>

Howard E. Akers, writing in the School Musician, Director and Teacher, summarized:

You improvise your own parts. *It's no joke* [emphasis not added]--not at all! It's fun for performers and develops a sense of freedom in playing through creativity. . . . It has been used and found workable, profitable, and easier than you imagine.<sup>35</sup>

According to initial royalty statements, *Instant Music* sold 117 copies in the first year of its release and peak sales reached 134 copies in 1967. The selection sold under one hundred for the following four years; but since 1972, the

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<sup>33</sup>Don Gillis, *Instant Music*, "Lesson Plan Notes," Frank Music Corp., 1966.

<sup>34</sup>John P. Paynter et al., eds., review of *Instant Music*, by Don Gillis, in the Instrumentalist 21, (August 1966): 73.

<sup>35</sup>Howard E. Akers, review of *Instant Music*, by Don Gillis, in the School Musician, Director and Teacher 38 (August-September 1966): 72.

selection has had an average annual sale of under ten.<sup>36</sup>

**Title:** *January February March*

**Date:** 1945; 1959

**Dedication:** None

**Publisher:** Boosey & Hawkes

**Duration:** 3:30

**Recording:** Reel 28 (I), TxDN; North Texas State Concert Band conducted by Maurice McAdow, "A New Generation of Musicians," Austin Recording Company (CS-33-6015), MdU Fine Arts Ref. Record 703 v. 4, side 2

**Notes:** The orchestral version of *January February March* was premiered in 1945 on NBC's "Music For Tonight," Milton Katims, conducting. In Gillis's words, the composition is "the composer's *Prelude in C Sharp Minor*, judging from the frequency of it's performances by both symphony orchestras and school groups."<sup>37</sup>

A review in the School Musician, Director and Teacher revealed:

Another flashy "tongue-in-cheek" march from Gillis, as clever as its title and suitable for playing in the remaining months of the year as well. The scoring is brilliantly colored and has typical rhythmic vitality and drive. Severe demands in range, endurance and technical speed are made on the trumpets,

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<sup>36</sup>Frank Music Corp., *Instant Music*, Royalty Statements, 1966-1975.

<sup>37</sup>Don Gillis, *January February March*, "Program Notes and Publisher Availability," 13.

horns, and trombones. . . . Certainly an exciting program number for better bands.<sup>38</sup>

A performance of *January February March* was given by the U.S. Army Band, Lt. Col. Samuel R. Loboda, conducting, at Carnegie Hall for the WNYC 27th Annual American Music Festival on February 22, 1966. The band transcription sold 425 copies in 1959 and 288 copies in 1960.<sup>39</sup>

**Title:** *Joyful and Triumphant--Music for Christmas*

**Date:** 1962

**Dedication:** None

**Publisher:** Belwin-Mills; available by rental only through the Gillis Family

**Duration:** 42:00

**Recording:** Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with the Beecham Choral Society and the Ambrosian Singers conducted by Peter Knight, RCA Victor CSC-0305; Reel 49, TxDN

**Notes:** Written for band and chorus (no soloists), *Joyful and Triumphant* is divided into two equal sections, each or both of which may be performed. This forty-two minute medley utilizes numerous Christmas carols as the basic thematic material. Composed as a special project for members of the RCA Victor Readers Digest Record Club, the record was recorded with members of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Beecham Choral Society, and the Ambrosian Singers under the direction of Peter Knight, conductor, and John McCarty, chorus master.

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<sup>38</sup>John P. Paynter et al., eds., review of *January February March*, by Don Gillis, in the *School Musician Director and Teacher* 14 (October 1959): 76.

<sup>39</sup>Boosey & Hawkes, *January February March*, Royalty Statements, 1959-1960.

The first American performance was given at Indiana University on 15 December 1965 by the Indiana University Singing Hoosiers, Robert E. Stoll, conductor, with the accompaniment of the Indiana University Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Ronald D. Gregory, conductor.

- Title:** *Junior Hi-Fi March*
- Date:** 1958; copyright 24 November 1958 (EP 124021)
- Dedication:** None
- Publisher:** Gillis Family
- Duration:** 4:10
- Recording:** U.S. Army Band conducted by Col. Samuel R. Loboda, Reel 28 (A), TxDN
- Notes:** Originally published by Interlochen Press and released to the Gillis family on 2 April 1962, this concert march was originally utilized in *Band Concert Suite*. A holograph of *Junior Hi-Fi March*, written in ink and on transparent paper, is located at the Music Division of the Library of Congress, ML96 .G4953, no. 43 Case.
- Title:** *Land Beyond, The*  
*See Saga of a Pioneer*
- Title:** *Land and the People, The*  
*See Land of Wheat*
- Title:** *Land of Wheat (Suite for Band)*  
I. *The Land and the People* (5:15)  
II. *The Planting* (3:55)  
III. *The Fields in Summer* (5:10)  
IV. *Lazy Days* (3:15)  
V. *Threshin' Bee* (3:10)  
VI. *Harvest Celebration* (5:15)
- Date:** 1959

Dedication: Commissioned and dedicated to Nels Vogel  
 Publisher: Kjos Music Company  
 Duration: 25:55  
 Recording: Premiere Performance--U.S. Army Field Band  
 conducted by Col. Chester Whiting, Reel 27, TxDN

Notes: The first performance of the suite occurred at the 1959 Vogel Clinic in Moorhead, Minnesota, with the U.S. Army Field Band conducted by Major Chester Whiting. The composition features a programmatic content as indicated by the titles. Unusual performance considerations include percussion instruments played by wind players in the *Threshin' Bee* movement, many trombone glissandos, and trumpet range to high D7. A prepared piano is required to simulate a bar-room piano in *Harvest Celebration*. Harp and piano are employed throughout the suite. Although the work is currently out of print, all movements are available separately from Kjos as photocopies upon request.

In a 1959 letter written to Major Chester Whiting, conductor of the U.S. Army Field Band, Gillis wrote:

*Land of Wheat* is a significant piece as far as I am concerned, for it represents, in my estimation, the best I have been able to write for band . . . I have named the third movement *The Fields in Summer* and say without hesitation, that it is the most beautiful single movement that I have ever written for band.<sup>40</sup>

In the 1959 summer tour by Major Chester Whiting and the Army Field Band, *Land of Wheat* was heard in numerous performances.<sup>41</sup> Within one year of

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<sup>40</sup>Don Gillis, letter to Major Chester Whiting, 6 January 1959.

<sup>41</sup>Chester E. Whiting, letter to Don Gillis, 4 June 1959.

its inception, *Land of Wheat* was conducted by Whiting in Massachusetts and at the New York Music Educators Convention, and was selected for performance by the 1960 Texas High School All-State Band conducted by Clarence Sawhill.<sup>42</sup>

Copies of individual movements sold over a two-year period from 1959-1960 were as follows: *The Land and the People* 642; *The Planting* 493; *The Fields in Summer* 581; *Threshin' Bee* 456; *Harvest Celebration* 656. Manuscript sketches to *Land of Wheat* are located in the Music Division of the Library of Congress, ML96 .G4953, no. 19 Case.

Title: **Lazy Days**

*See Land of Wheat*

Title: **Lone Star**

Date: 1956 (as *San Jacinto*); revised version 1966

Dedication: None

Publisher: Southern Music

Duration: 7:00

Recording: U.S. Army Band conducted by Don Gillis, Reel 19 (D), TxDN

Notes: Concerning *Lone Star*, Gillis wrote: "I think of all the works I have written for band, this is one of the most completely satisfying to me."<sup>43</sup> The work, however, is currently out of print.

A review in the Instrumentalist included:

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<sup>42</sup>Joe Frank, letter to Don Gillis, 26 May 1959.

<sup>43</sup>Don Gillis, *Lone Star*, "The Music of Don Gillis: Program Notes for North Texas State University (NSTU)," 15. In another reference to *Lone Star*, Gillis wrote that the work was "one of the best of all Gillis scores for band . . ." Don Gillis, *Lone Star*, "Program Notes and Publisher Availability," 43.

Gillis is always 'American' and often exciting. In this work he is both, for the *Lone Star* is a nicely balanced composition that freely mixes 3/4 and 4/4 measures to produce exciting rhythm, clever melodic fragments, and a well-contoured form. It makes excellent program music . . .<sup>44</sup>

A performance of the work as *San Jacinto* in manuscript was given at the 1961 ABA Convention in March 1961 by the U.S. Women's Air Force Band Bell Ringers conducted by George Reynolds. An ink holograph of *Lone Star* (1956 version) is located in the Music Division of the Library of Congress, ML 96 .G4953, no. 44 Case.

Title: ***Man Who Invented Music, The***

Date: 1949; 1954, copyright 29 March 1954 (EP79249)

Dedication: None

Publisher: Kalmus (B3458)

Duration: 12:00

Recording: New Symphony of London conducted by Don Gillis, London Records LLP-176; Reel 3 (A), TxDN

Notes: Originally published by Mills Music, the composition first appeared as orchestral music with narrator. The premiere was given on 28 August 1949 by the NBC Symphony on the "U.S. Steel Hour," Nelson Olmstead, narrator, Antal Dorati, conductor. Based on a story by the composer, with a script prepared by Claris Ross and the composer, the story line involves the invention of music. The composition has been an especially effective selection for Children's Concerts.

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<sup>44</sup>John Paynter et al., eds., review of *Lone Star*, by Don Gillis, in the Instrumentalist 20 (May 1966): 109.



Writing to Don Gillis in 1970, Lt. Col. Hal Gibson, conductor of the U.S. Army Field Band, wrote:

We just wound up a very successful season at the new Merriweather Post Pavilion in the suburbs of Washington and *The Man Who Invented Music* was a big hit.<sup>45</sup>

A performance by the U.S. Air Force Band at the Wolf Trap (Virginia) on 4 July 1977 featured Hollywood actor George Kennedy with Arnald Gabriel conducting.

The band version of *The Man Who Invented Music* sold 151 copies in 1954 and 104 copies in 1955.<sup>46</sup> Pencil holograph sketches of the work are located in the Music Division of the Library of Congress, ML96 .G4953, no. 8 Case.

**Title:** *Men of Music, The*

**Date:** 1961; second version for band: 1966; copyright August 1966

**Dedication:** Dale C. Harris

**Publisher:** Volkwein; available through the Gillis family

**Duration:** 8:30

**Recording:** U.S. Army Band conducted by Col. Samuel R. Loboda; Reel 16 (B), TxDN

**Notes:** *The Men of Music*, written on 21-24 May 1961 at Ann Arbor, Michigan, was premiered as *The New Frontier*. The first performance occurred as part of the Ninth Annual Convention of the American School Band Directors Association in

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<sup>45</sup>Hal J. Gibson, letter to Don Gillis, 4 September 1970.

<sup>46</sup>Mills Music, *The Man Who Invented Music*, Royalty Statements, 1954-1955.

Cleveland, Ohio during December 1961 with the Ohio State University Band conducted by Donald McGinnis.

The renamed version premiered on 5 August 1966 at The Watergate, Washington, D.C. with the U.S. Air Force Band, Major Arnald D. Gabriel, conducting. The piece was performed the next night by the Air Force Band, the composer conducting, at the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for the American School Band Directors Association Convention. *Men of Music* also received a performance as part of the annual ABA Convention on 3 March 1967 in the Miami Senior High School Auditorium by the Sarasota Concert Band conducted by Don Gillis.

In the School Musician, Director and Teacher, Howard E. Akers noted:

Good variety. Tuneful. Playable by a good high school band. . . . No overly tricky rhythm passages or excessive instrumental ranges. Lots of block brass and the blues tune is a beauty.<sup>47</sup>

The *Men of Music* was dedicated to Dale C. Harris, a veteran music educator and the first president of American School Band Directors Association. In 1966, the year of its renamed publication, *The Men of Music* sold 295 copies.<sup>48</sup>

Title: ***Mighty Mac, The***

Date: 1958

Dedication: None

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<sup>47</sup>Howard E. Akers, review of *The Men of Music*, by Don Gillis, found in the School Musician, Director and Teacher 38 (November 1966): 51.

<sup>48</sup>Volkwein Publishing Company, *The Men of Music*, 1966 Royalty Statement.

Publisher: Gillis Family  
 Duration: 4:30  
 Recording: U.S. Army Band conducted by Samuel R. Loboda,  
 Reel 28 (F), TxDN  
 Notes: The work was originally published by Interlochen  
 Press and released to the Gillis family on  
 2 April 1962. A march in extended form, *Mighty  
 Mac* is intended as a satire on the standard band  
 march. The march was written for the dedication  
 of the Mackinac (Michigan) Bridge. A manuscript  
 score is located at GFR.

Title: ***Minuet-cetera***  
 Date: 1953  
 Dedication: None  
 Publisher: Gillis Family  
 Duration: 4:00  
 Recording: U.S. Army Band, Reel 47 (F), TxDN.  
 Notes: This composition was originally written as a  
 movement for an incomplete and withdrawn  
*Symphony No. II for Band*. In the words of the  
 composer, the composition is:

. . . a minuet that doesn't always--a sort of  
 scherzo which combines the haunting melody of  
 a sad tune with the gay and rambunctious  
 skittering of another set of personalities.<sup>49</sup>

Title: ***Mister Big March***  
 Date: 1958

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<sup>49</sup>Don Gillis, *Minuet-cetera*, Program Notes and  
 Publisher Availability," p. 44, Gillis Family Repository,  
 Athens, Georgia; original located in the Don Gillis Special  
 Collection, TxDN.

Dedication: None

Publisher: Gillis Family

Duration: 4:15

Recording: U.S. Army Band conducted by Samuel R. Loboda,  
Reel 28 (D), TxDN

Notes: Originally published by Interlochen Press and  
released to the Gillis family on 2 April 1962.  
A manuscript score is located at GFR.

Title: ***Moonmist***  
  
*See Band Concert Suite*

Title: ***Organ Concerto Blues Section***

Date: 1960; copyright 21 October 1961 (EP 158223)

Dedication: The premiere performance was in honor of the  
memory of C.D. Greenleaf and the Conn Memorial  
Organ Building at the Interlochen National Music  
Camp. The work was commissioned by and  
dedicated to Mr. Richard Ellsasser.

Publisher: FEMA

Duration: 8:00

Recording: Interlochen Band conducted by George C. Wilson,  
with Richard Ellsasser, organ, Tape 942, Music  
Library, TxDN; Interlochen Band conducted by  
George C. Wilson with original cadenza, ABA  
record, MdU

Notes: Originally published by Interlochen Press, the  
concerto premiered on 30 July 1960 at  
Interlochen Music Camp with Richard Ellsasser as  
soloist, with accompaniment provided by the  
Interlochen National High School Band conducted  
by George C. Wilson.

The composition was originally comprised of  
three movements: I. *Brightly--with enthusiasm*;  
II. *Slowly--with feeling of the blues*;

and III. *Brightly--in a gay manner.* Movements I and III have been withdrawn; the *Blues Section* is the only movement available. A manuscript score of the *Blues Section* is located at GFR.

Title: ***Panhandle Suite, The***  
 I. *Cattle Gate*  
 II. *Dance of the Dry Bones*  
 III. *The Night Rider*  
 IV. *Bronc Bust*  
 V. *Stampede*

Date: 1935

Dedication: None

Publisher: Gillis Family

Duration: 20:00

Recording: TCU Band with Don Gillis conducting and Nelson Olmstead announcing; Reel 14 (C), TxDN

Notes: An insert attached to the cover of an orchestral holograph score reads "completed in the summer of 1935 and performed on recital for the first time in partial fulfillment of the BM degree at TCU".<sup>50</sup> *Panhandle Suite* was written as a band composition and was rescored within the same year for orchestra.

The orchestral version won first prize in the 1942 Young Men's and Women's Hebrew Association (Y.M. & W.H.A.) of Washington Heights, New York Contemporary American Music Contest. Gillis was declared winner by the audience. According to Maxim Waldo, Y.M. & W.H.A orchestra conductor, "the audience selected your *Panhandle Suite* by

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<sup>50</sup>Don Gillis, holograph of the orchestral version of *The Panhandle Suite*, in Box No. 10, Don Gillis Special Collection, TxDN. The autographed handwritten manuscript of a four-movement band score (the attached score of *Night Rider* is a manuscript piano score) is located in the Music Library at TCU, Fort Worth, TX, Ref. M 2.8 G54 P27.

an overwhelming majority at the regular monthly concert of our orchestra last Sunday night."<sup>51</sup>

The band version of the work was performed on 2 February 1940 by the TCU Horned Frog Band at the Texas Music Educators Association Clinic in Mineral Wells, Texas, Gillis conducting. *Cattle Gate*, *Dance of the Dry Bones*, and *The Night Rider* have been withdrawn; *Bronc Bust* and *Stampede* are available separately.

**Title:** *Paul Bunyan: An Overture to a Legend*

**Date:** 1964

**Dedication:** State of Michigan

**Publisher:** Crescendo Music (rental only)

**Duration:** 7:00

**Recording:** Orchestral version by Orchestra on Wheels conducted by William Yarborough, Reel 18 (D), TxDN; Band version by U.S. Navy Band conducted by Cmdr. Donald W. Stauffer, Reel No. 18 (D), TxDN

**Notes:** The overture was commissioned and premiered as an orchestral original by the Northern Michigan Symphony Society in 1964 by William Yarborough conducting the Festival-On-Wheels Orchestra. The group performed the composition on 4 August 1964 at the Wequetonsing Casino, Harbor Springs, Michigan. The work was commissioned with the express purpose of describing northern Michigan and its place in the historical scenario of American folklore.

*Paul Bunyan: An Overture to a Legend* was performed on 28 February 1970 in transcribed form at the 1970 ABA Convention by the United States Navy Band, conducted by Cmdr. Donald W. Stauffer, at Mershon Auditorium on the Ohio State University Campus. A manuscript score is located at GFR.

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<sup>51</sup>Maxim Waldo, letter to Don Gillis, 6 April 1942.

Title: ***Peachtree Promenade***

*See Atlanta: A Choreographic Impression of a Southern City*

Title: ***Pep Rally--an Opera in Two Acts***

Date: 1956

Dedication: None

Publisher: Belwin-Mills (rental only)

Duration: 1 hour, 45 minutes

Recording: Premiere Performance--Interlochen National Music Camp Cast, Chorus, and Band conducted by George C. Wilson

Notes: The work is a musical stage production with band accompaniment, with music and lyrics written by the composer. The premiere occurred on 15 August 1957 in the Kresge Assembly Hall at the National Music Camp, Interlochen, Michigan. The work was produced by Barre Hill and conducted by George C. Wilson with accompaniment provided by members of the National Music Camp Honors Band.

This production, a humorous caricature of American college life, revolves around the campus activities the night preceding the championship football game, and is set at a local student fast food gathering place.<sup>52</sup> Various students, faculty, and around-campus personalities comprise the stage characters.

Casting:

Terry Brown, lyric soprano

Johnny Meer, baritone

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<sup>52</sup>Don Gillis, *Pep Rally*, "Program Notes and Publisher Availability," 24.

Billy Buster, high baritone or tenor

Sally Sue Simpson, soprano

Jack Stark, baritone

Coach Riley, baritone

Sandra Mae La Farge, contralto

Dean Zehr, bass baritone

Scoop Tracy, high baritone, and

Assorted students, cheerleaders, drum majors, policeman, and band students costumed in contemporary college-style clothes.

An excerpt, *Here's To Good Old Football*, is available for band and chorus.<sup>53</sup> Originally published by Belwin-Mills, the excerpt is currently available from Theodore Presser.<sup>54</sup> Another excerpt, *Boogie in Brass* (1954), a ballet section from *Pep Rally*, was published separately by Belwin-Mills and is currently available through Theodore Presser.

Title:           ***Pioneers, The***

*See Saga of a Pioneer*

Title:           ***Plantation Song***

*See Atlanta Suite*

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<sup>53</sup>A review describes *Here's to Good Old Football* as "an almost completely traditional old style waltz . . . The chords, except for a few added sixths, belongs to the era of *Take Me Out to the Ball Game* or *Daisy, Daisy*. . . . John P. Paynter et al., eds., review of *Here's to Good Old Football*, by Don Gillis, in the *Instrumentalist* 14 (September 1959): 80.

<sup>54</sup>According to the Mills Music Company Royalty records, *Here's to Good Old Football* sold 349 copies in 1959.



Title: **Planting, The**  
*See Land of Wheat*

Title: **Pleasant Years**  
*See Symphony No. I for Band*

Title: **Portrait of a City Made of Steel**

Date: 1967

Dedication: North Hills High School (Pennsylvania)

Publisher: Gillis Family

Duration: 13:40

Recording: Premiere performance--North Hills High School Band conducted by Don Gillis, Reel 19 (B), TxDN

Notes: The premiere was given on 14 March 1967 by the North Hills (PA) High School Band, the composer conducting. According to Warren S. Mercer, Jr., director of the North Hills High School Band, the commission was part of a series intended to acquaint students with contemporary composers, and to expand the repertoire of works written for band.<sup>55</sup>

Gillis's guest visit and conducting appearance at North Hills High School was favorable and well received by the students and those in attendance at the premiere performance. According to Warren Mercer, Gillis's encounter with the students was the highlight of the year for the North Hills Band.<sup>56</sup> The manuscript score

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<sup>55</sup>Warren S. Mercer, Jr., "Our High School Band and Contemporary Composer Commissioning," School Musician, Director and Teacher 39 (December 1967): 54-55.

<sup>56</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, telephone interview with author, 4 June 1991.

of the work is located at North Hills High School (PA).

**Title:** *Portrait of a Frontier Town*  
 I. *Chamber of Commerce*  
 II. *Where the West Begins*  
 III. *Ranch House Party*  
 IV. *Prairie Sunset*  
 V. *Main Street-Saturday Night*

**Date:** 1942; orchestra revision: 1948; band transcription: unknown

**Dedication:** To the People of Fort Worth, Texas

**Publisher:** Boosey & Hawkes (rental)

**Duration:** 16:00

**Recording:** New Symphony of London conducted by Don Gillis; Reel 15 (C), TxDN

**Notes:** The suite first appeared as an orchestral selection under the title of *Cowtown Suite*, with the following movement designations: I. *Where the West Begins*; II. *Chamber of Commerce*, 3-2491; III. *University Church*; IV. *Mr. Amon G.*; V. *Rose Garden*; VI. *7th and Houston, 12 o'clock noon*. The work in this form was premiered on 10 May 1942 by the Dallas WPA Museum Sinfonietta, assisted by students from SMU and TCU, conducted by Gillis. The NBC radio national premiere of the *Cowtown Suite* was given on 1 September 1946 by Frank Black and the NBC Symphony. Concerning the *Ranch House Party* movement, Arthur Fiedler wrote,

I recently played *Ranch House Party* by Don Gillis, and it was a big hit. I know that it is going to go very well for the [Boston] POPS and that it is the kind of piece that will be played very often.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Arthur Fiedler, letter to James Dolan, 9 January 1947.

In 1948, the first three movements of the five-movement work were revised and the composition was retitled *Portrait of a Frontier Town*. The premiere of the work in revised form was given in May of that year with Milton Katims conducting the NBC Symphony.

Responding to an early performance of the Glenn C. Bainum transcription of *Portrait of a Frontier Town*, Charles Brendler, Lieutenant Commander of the U.S. Navy Band, wrote:

At the 16th Annual Convention of the American Bandmaster's Association, of which I am a member, at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, March 1950, I had the good fortune of hearing your *Portrait of a Frontier Town*, conducted by Mr. Glenn C. Bainum, Director of Bands, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. This composition intrigued and delighted me.<sup>58</sup>

This particular ABA performance occurred on 10 March 1950 at Hill Auditorium with Bainum conducting the University of Michigan Symphony Band. During a five-year period, from 1955 to 1960, Glenn C. Bainum programmed *Portrait of a Frontier Town* thirty-two times.<sup>59</sup>

Title: ***Procession and Finale (Celebration Scene)***

*See Twinkletoes: Suite for Band*

Title: ***Recipe in Rhythm***

Date: 1953

Dedication: None

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<sup>58</sup>Charles Brendler, letter to Don Gillis, 6 September 1950.

<sup>59</sup>Glenn C. Bainum, letter to Don Gillis, 24 September 1960.

Publisher: Gillis Family  
Duration: 4:00  
Recording: U.S. Army Band conducted by Don Gillis, Reel 47  
(D), TxDN -

Notes: *Recipe in Rhythm* is a movement from an incomplete and withdrawn *Symphony No. II for Band*. A manuscript score is located at GFR.

Title: ***Rhapsody for Trumpet***

Date: 1970

Dedication: None

Publisher: Crescendo Music Sales

Duration: 18:15

Recording: Premiere Performance--Dallas Public Schools All-City Orchestra conducted by Russ Benjamin, with Doc Severinsen, soloist, Reel 42 (C), TxDN

Notes: This concerto was originally written with orchestral accompaniment. The first performance occurred in May 1970 in Dallas, Texas, with Doc Severinsen as soloist, accompanied by the Dallas All-City Orchestra conducted by Russ Benjamin. A manuscript score is located at GFR.

Title: ***Rompin' Stomp, The***

Date: 1953; copyright 14 July 1954 (EP 81941)

Dedication: None

Publisher: Kalmus B3540; available also through Theodore Presser.

Duration: 3:30

Recording: U.S. Army Band conducted by Samuel R. Loboda, Reel 28 (G), TxDN

Notes: Initially published by Mills, the selection attempts to simulate a dance band sound from the traditional instrumentation of the standard school ensemble.

Concerning the publication of *Rompin' Stomp*, Mills Music advertised the composition as: "a gay musical melange with strong and emphatic rhythms. Interesting instrumental effects in both the woodwinds and brass spiced by novel rhythmic patterns."<sup>60</sup> *Rompin' Stomp* sold 242 copies in 1954 and 98 copies in 1955.<sup>61</sup>

Title: ***Saga of a Pioneer, The (Suite)***  
 I. *The Land Beyond* (4:50)  
 II. *The Pioneers* (3:45)  
 III. *Song of Memory* (4:00)  
 IV. *Centennial Celebration* (4:00)

Date: 1959; copyright 1965

Dedication: State of Colorado Centennial

Publisher: Southern Music

Duration: 17:20

Recording: University of Illinois Band, Reel 43 (B), TxDN

Notes: *Saga of a Pioneer* was commissioned by the Gunnison Band Camp for the Centennial of the State of Colorado. The four-movement work was first performed on 15 August 1959 at the Camp on the campus of Western State College, Gunnison, Colorado, with Robert Hawkins conducting. Movement IV, *Centennial Celebration*, was performed on 7 March 1969 by the Purdue University Band conducted by Keith Wilson as part of the ABA Convention.

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<sup>60</sup>Mills Music, *The Rompin' Stomp*, 1954 single-page promotional advertisement.

<sup>61</sup>Mills Music, *The Rompin' Stomp*, Royalty Statements, 1954-1955.

The *Saga of the Pioneer* was programmed by the University of Illinois Concert Band, Mark Hindsley, conductor, on 9 January 1960 as part of the Sixth Annual Festival of Concert Band Music held at the University of Illinois Auditorium. In requesting permission to include the work as part of the Festival, Hindsley wrote:

After hearing the premiere of the *Saga of the Pioneer* at Gunnison, Colorado last month, it is my desire to perform this number at our Concert Band Festival of Music next January . . . This implies of course, that I liked the number unusually well, and the implication is true. My heartiest congratulations to you on this suite which was most successful and appropriate for its purpose. It will add greatly to our January program . . .<sup>62</sup>

In 1966, the initial year of publication, Southern Music released 111 copies of each movement.<sup>63</sup> The separate movements are permanently out of print. Pencil and ink manuscript sketches of *Saga of a Pioneer* are located at the Music Division of the Library of Congress, ML 96 .G4953, no. 16 Case.

Title:           ***Seven Golden Texts and a Hymn of Praise  
from the Psalms of David***

I. Psalm 122:1	<i>Let Us Go Into The House of The Lord</i>
II. Psalm 119:105	<i>The Word Is A Lamp</i>
III. Psalm 67:1	<i>God Be Merciful</i>
IV. Psalm 103:1	<i>Bless Ye The Lord</i>
V. Psalm 130:1	<i>Hear Thou My Prayer</i>

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<sup>62</sup>Mark H. Hindsley, letter to Don Gillis, 28 September 1959.

<sup>63</sup>Southern Music Company, "New Music Release," 20 December 1966 Royalty Statement: *Land Beyond* (S-371); *The Pioneers* (S-372); *Song of Memory* (S-373); *Centennial Celebration* (S-374).

- VI. Psalm 46:1      *God Is Our Refuge And  
Strength*
- VII. Psalm 19:14    *Let The Words of My Mouth  
And The Meditations  
Of My Heart*
- VIII. Psalm 148:150 *A Song Of Praise*

Date: 1965; copyright 8 December 1965 (EP 211289)

Dedication: "The score and its meaningfulness is sincerely and respectfully dedicated to Dwaine Nelson and George Reynolds whose urging brought the work into being for the benefit of men and the glory of God."<sup>64</sup> The work was commissioned by Dickinson State College (ND).

Publisher: Gillis Family

Duration: 14:05

Recording: Premiere performance, Dickinson State College Choral Union and Symphonic Band conducted by Don Gillis; Reel 11 (A) & (B), TxDN

Notes: The composition premiered at the 8th Annual Tri-State Festival of Music on 6 November 1965 by the Dickinson State College Choral Union and Symphonic Band, with the composer conducting and narration by Osborne T. Belsheim. Originally published by Pride Music Publications, the composition features mixed voices and narrator with band accompaniment and may be performed either in whole or in part.

Title: *So They May Also Learn*

Date: 1968

Dedication: Dr. Lloyd C. Oakland

Publisher: Gillis Family

Duration: 15:00

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<sup>64</sup>Seven Golden Texts and a Hymn of Praise from David, "Concert Program," 6 November 1965, Tri-State Music Festival, Dickinson State College.

Recording: Premiere performance--Great Falls High School Band with Don Gillis Conducting, Reel 20 (F), TxDN

Notes: *So They May Also Learn* is a composition for narrator, chorus, and band commissioned in 1968 by Montana Music Educators Association. The work was premiered at the Montana Music Educators Association Convention on 25 October 1968 by the East Junior High School Band, Don Gillis, guest conductor. Dedicated to Lloyd C. Oakland, Professor Emeritus, University of Montana, the script is a tribute to all teachers.

Title: ***Song of Memory***  
*See Saga of a Pioneer, The*

Title: ***Spiritual?***  
*See Symphony No. 5 1/2*

Title: ***Stampede***  
*See Panhandle Suite, The*

Title: ***Symphony No. I for Band***  
I. *Cameron Junction--1920*  
II. *The Pleasant Years*  
III. *Uncle Walt's Waltz*  
IV. *Fall Festival*

Date: 1952; copyright 4 May 1953 (EU314987)

Dedication: Commissioned by William Sandberg

Publisher: FEMA Music Publications

Duration: 23:30

Recording: U.S. Army Band conducted by Don Gillis, Reel 50, TxDN



Notes: Originally published by Educational Music Service, the composition premiered on 18 January 1953 at Joliet, Illinois with the combined American Legion Band, conducted by Forrest McAllister, and Joliet Township High School Band, conducted by Bruce Houseknecht.

An article in the School Musician, Director and Teacher promoted the premiere of *Symphony No. 1* with high anticipation. Writing of the event as a possible "history making concert," the story stressed the massed band comprised of two nationally known ensembles performing a full-length work written for band at a point in history when such works were rare.<sup>65</sup> The writer concluded the article by claiming "it is a beautiful, melodic work which will delight all listeners."<sup>66</sup>

The work is based on retrospective scenes from the composer's childhood in Cameron, Missouri. *The Pleasant Years* and *Uncle Walt's Waltz* are available from FEMA on a limited basis. *Cameron Junction--1920* and *Fall Festival* are available through the Gillis Family. Manuscript scores for *Cameron Junction* and *Fall Festival* are located at GFR.

Title: ***Symphony No. 5 1/2 ("A Symphony for Fun")***  
 I. *Perpetual Emotion*  
 II. *Spiritual?*  
 III. *Scherzofrenia*  
 IV. *Conclusion!*

Date: 1947; band transcription by Maurice Ford: 1967;  
*Spiritual* arr. Glenn C. Bainum: 1954, copyright  
 24 November 1954 (EP 86534)

Dedication: None

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<sup>65</sup>Forrest McAllister, ed., "Don Gillis *Symphony No. 1* for Band to be premiered at Joliet, Ill. Jan. 18," School Musician, Director and Teacher 24 (January 1953): 21-22.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*

Publisher: Boosey & Hawkes

Duration: 15:00

Recording: NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Arturo Toscanini, Reel Number 2 (A), TxDN; Sam Houston State College Symphonic Band conducted by Ralph L. Mills, Educational Record Reference Library Band Program 14, Ref. Fine Arts Record M 957 .N 44S8, item 4, MdU

Notes: Originally an orchestral composition premiered by Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops on 21 June 1947, the work was slightly revised by Gillis and performed on 21 September 1947 by Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony over nationwide radio.<sup>67</sup> A holograph score used for the NBC radio premiere is located at GFR. The score, autographed by both Gillis and Toscanini, contains pencil markings and revisions by both men.

Critical reaction to the radio premiere was favorable. Miles Kastendieck wrote:

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<sup>67</sup>The radio premiere was originally scheduled for performance with Toscanini and the NBC Symphony on 31 August 1947. Toscanini developed a severe case of hay fever and the radio premiere was rescheduled for 21 September 1947. At the beginning of the originally scheduled performance on 31 August 1947, broadcaster Ben Grauer announced: "today's broadcast by the NBC Symphony Orchestra was to have featured the eminent Maestro, Arturo Toscanini, conducting a program of music by Rossini and Beethoven and featuring the radio premiere of the Symphony No. 5 1/2 by the young American composer, Don Gillis; but an acute attack of hay fever has made it impossible for the Maestro to appear, and we are sure you will join us in wishing him a speedy recovery." Opening Announcement, "Script," NBC Symphony Orchestra radio concert, 31 August 1947. On 21 September 1947, NBC radio listeners heard Ben Grauer announce: "following the music of Smetana's *The Moldau*, Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony Orchestra offer the first radio performance of a contemporary American score, the *Symphony Number Five and a Half* by Don Gillis. Final Announcement, "Script," NBC Symphony Orchestra radio concert, 21 September 1947.

Toscanini let his hair down yesterday. . . it was a field day for everyone. The work is fun to hear and will probably find much favor in the out-of-door concerts next summer. Toscanini whipped up a kind of smash-bang performance. His rhythmic drive and the skill of the players put over the conglomerate style of the music successfully if not definitely. It was another demonstration of the wonder that is Toscanini.<sup>68</sup>

A day after Toscanini's broadcast, a review in the Chicago Daily News conveyed:

Don Gillis' *Symphony 5 1/2*, which Toscanini radio premiered on NBC Sunday, is delightful in its jazzy coat under which beats a thoroughly musical heart. It can stand alone as a musical work, but it also has the gorgeous lines that turn ballet dancers into birds. Bet it will be danced next season.<sup>69</sup>

In Gillis's hometown newspaper, E. Clyde Whitlock reported:

A significant and memorable event was the playing last Sunday on a program by Arturo Toscanini and his NBC Symphony Orchestra of Don Gillis' *Symphony No. 5 1/2*, its first radio performance . . . Even discounting local predispositions, seldom does such an impression of spontaneous excitement pervade a radio performance, and the veritable ovation that followed the Gillis work, which was the last number on the program, was unusual. While it was inspired also by Toscanini, who was making his first appearance of the season, it was evident that Gillis was the chief

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<sup>68</sup>Miles Kastendieck, "Satire Offered By Toscanini," New York Journal-American, 22 September 1947.

<sup>69</sup>Review of *Symphony No. 5 1/2*, by Don Gillis, Chicago Daily News, 23 September 1947, 27.

reason, an opinion corroborated by letters which have been received. There were whistles and stomping of the feet, and the uproar was going on when the program was changed.<sup>70</sup>

The reaction to Toscanini's performance of *Symphony 5 1/2* was not universal. Irving Kolodin proclaimed:

It was a gesture of fellowship for Toscanini to interrupt his summer vacation to perform this *Symphony No. 5 1/2*, thus making Gillis somewhat more 'widely performed' than he'd been before. For the Maestro to put himself out on behalf of a score so fragile was a notable tribute to his human fragility; but the good humor of the piece is hardly enough for twenty minutes of intense performance, nor are its technical devices of the sort to withstand such penetration. Considering the number of representative American scores Toscanini has by-passed or ignored, this was a gross perversion of values.<sup>71</sup>

Since its 1947 radio premiere, *Symphony No. 5 1/2* has been among the most known works by Don Gillis. Movement I, *Perpetual Emotion*, was first performed separately on 12 May 1946 by the Carnegie "Pops" Orchestra, an organization comprised of New York Philharmonic-Symphony members, at Carnegie Hall.

In addition to the Boston Symphony and NBC Symphony performances, Boosey & Hawkes royalty statements indicate that the work was also performed in 1947 by the San Antonio Symphony, the Buffalo Symphony, and the Detroit Symphony. In 1968, the San Francisco Symphony and the New

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<sup>70</sup>E. Clyde Whitlock, "Toscanini Had a Grand Time with Gillis 5 1/2," Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 28 September 1947, 12 (2).

<sup>71</sup>Irving Kolodin, "Toscanini Leads Score By Gillis," New York Sun, 22 September 1947.

Orleans Symphony performances of *Symphony 5 1/2* ranked as the most significant. In 1978, several orchestras which programmed the compositions included the Fort Worth Symphony, the Honolulu Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony, and the Charlotte (NC) Symphony.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to the musical merit of the work, the relatively unusual title has consistently been a source of interest among listeners. Gillis wrote the following concerning the title to his *Symphony No. 5 1/2*:

I am often asked the question: Why the fraction--why 5 1/2 instead of six? The explanation is simple, actually. When I was writing the sixth symphony, I wrote what I felt to be an appropriate finale, but after I finished it I felt it didn't fit at all. I tried another one and the same thing happened. Neither the mood nor the attitude of these movements I had written, however, intrigued me--and so I decided to go ahead and finish writing a new symphony, altogether different from the mood I had established in No. 6. I wrote a scherzo and a slow movement and thus completed the new work. Having already three movements of the 6th Symphony finished, I didn't want to disturb their numbering system and so it just seemed natural to call the new one 5 1/2, especially since it had been written halfway in between five and six.<sup>73</sup>

The orchestral version of *Symphony 5 1/2* has been adapted and choreographed by the London Festival Ballet, Toledo Ballet, and the Louisville Ballet, to name but a few.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Boosey & Hawkes, *Symphony 5 1/2*, Royalty Statements 1947-1980.

<sup>73</sup>Don Gillis, *Symphony No. 5 1/2*, in "The Music of Don Gillis: Program Notes for NTSU," 1.

<sup>74</sup>London Festival Ballet, 1960 season, choreography by Michael Charnley, "Ballet Program," 18th, 19th, and 20th August, 1960; Toledo Ballet, 1965 season, choreography by

While the band score to the full symphony was not transcribed by Maurice Ford until 1967, performances of movements I, II, and IV of *Symphony No. 5 1/2* in band manuscript occurred on 16-17 March 1948 by the University of Illinois Concert Band, Albert Austin Harding, conductor.<sup>75</sup> On 7 March 1952, *Symphony No. 5 1/2* was performed by the U.S. Navy Band under the direction of Richard E. Townsend, Assistant Conductor.

In the School Musician, Director and Teacher, Howard E. Akers claimed:

This is very worthy music--alive, good instrumental color, harmonic variety, interesting rhythms, mature melodic content, and interest for both player and listener. Arranging is both scholarly and musical. This reviewer could not find the time to actually laboratory the music in time to make this magazine deadline, but a through examination and previous knowledge leads me to unhesitatingly recommend this music and arrangement highly. It isn't easy, but worth any effort needed for a good performance.<sup>76</sup>

Among numerous testimonials reporting favorable responses to the band version of *Symphony No. 5 1/2*, William D. Revelli noted:

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Marie Bollinger Vogt, "Ballet Program," 14 March 1965; Louisville Ballet, 1988 season, choreography by Alan Jones, Sylvia Goldstein [Boosey & Hawkes], letter to Barbara Gillis, 2 July 1987.

<sup>75</sup>*Symphony 5 1/2*, "Concert Program," Fifty-eighth Anniversary Concert, University of Illinois Concert Band, Albert Austin Harding, Conductor, 16-17 March 1948.

<sup>76</sup>Howard E. Akers, review of *Symphony No. 5 1/2* for band, transcribed by Maurice Ford, found in the School Musician, Director and Teacher 39 (April 1968): 50.

You will be interested to know that I am doing your *Symphony No. 5 1/2* which, as you know, has been published by Boosey and Hawkes in my engagement at Ogden, Utah. I do hope it will come off for I like the piece very much.<sup>77</sup>

In 1977, Al G. Wright wrote:

We did your *Symphony No. 5 1/2* last week with the Purdue Symphony Band. The audience loved it and the band enjoyed playing it very much. It's a great piece!<sup>78</sup>

Movement II, *Spiritual*, was arranged for band by Glenn C. Bainum and received a performance as part of the 1952 ABA Convention held at Ohio State University. This presentation of *Spiritual* was given on 7 March 1952 at Mees Hall on the campus of Capitol University with Al G. Wright conducting the Oberlin Conservatory Symphony Band. *Spiritual* was conducted twice by Glenn C. Bainum on programs for the 1953 ABA Convention: the first on 3 March 1953 with the University of Florida Band at Florida Gym, and the second on 7 March 1953 with the University of Miami Band.

*Spiritual* was programmed for the 10th Annual Midwest National Band Clinic on 6 December 1956 by the Jordan High School Band (Columbus, GA), conducted by Robert M. Barr. Published by Boosey & Hawkes in 1954, *Spiritual* sold 1,828 copies in 1955, 653 copies in 1956, 557 copies in 1957, and 456 copies in 1959. *Spiritual* sold strongly through the 1960s, selling 177 copies in 1969.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>William D. Revelli, letter to Don Gillis, 29 May 1968.

<sup>78</sup>Al G. Wright, letter to Don Gillis, 2 March 1977.

<sup>79</sup>Boosey & Hawkes, *Spiritual*, Royalty Statements 1995-1969.

Title: ***Symphony 'X,' Big "D"***  
 I. *Big "D"*  
 II. *Requiem for a Hero*  
 III. *Conventioneer*  
 IV. *Cotton Bowl*

Date: 1968; 1972

Dedication: Walter Toscanini

Publisher: Boosey & Hawkes

Duration: 13:40

Recording: Northern Virginia Youth Orchestra conducted by James Christian Pfohl, Reel 46, TxDN; U.S. Army Band conducted by Don Gillis, Reel 46, TxDN

Notes: The symphony was originally an orchestral composition premiered in 1968 with the composer conducting a 70-member Institute for Musically Talented High School Students Orchestra of East Alabama at Auburn High School Auditorium.

Writing in the School Musician, Director and Teacher, Howard E. Akers asserted:

Altho [sic] short, this symphony expresses many musical ideas and shows strong compositional skills. As in other Gillis works, there are patches of musical humor. This short symphony is highly recommended for medium to advanced high school, and college level bands.<sup>80</sup>

Movement III, *Conventioneers*, was originally written as *Waltz in Waltz Time* in 1958 (copyright 24 November 1958, EP124019) and published as such by Interlochen Press. The work was returned to the Gillis family by

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<sup>80</sup>Howard E. Akers, review of *Symphony 'X,' Big "D,"* found in the School Musician, Director and Teacher 48 (November 1976): 28.



Interlochen on 2 April 1962 and was revised as the *Conventioneers*.

The band transcription was performed first on 4 March 1972 by the U.S. Army Band with the composer conducting at an ABA Concert at Texas Hall on the University of Texas at Arlington campus. The band version of *Symphony 'X,' Big "D"* sold consistently through the 1970s, selling ninety-five copies in 1978.<sup>81</sup> A holograph copy of the band score is located at GFR.

Title: ***Tango Lullaby***

*See Twinkletoes: Suite for Band*

Title: ***This is Our America***

Date: 1941; 1950; second revision: 1956; copyright 1950

Dedication: None

Publisher: Belwin-Mills; available through Theodore Presser

Duration: 12:00

Recording: U.S. Army Band conducted by Col. Samuel R. Loboda with Capt. Allen Crowell as the vocal soloist, Reel 12 (B), TxDN

Notes: *This Is Our America* was written on 8 December 1941 as Gillis's response to the attack on Pearl Harbor and was performed on 10 December 1941 at TCU in the University Christian Church. Originally a five-minute composition, the solo vocal part was sung by Melvin Ducas who later programmed the selection in its first public performance in May 1942.<sup>82</sup> In 1950, Gillis arranged the solo into a full-length work and in

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<sup>81</sup>Boosey & Hawkes, *Symphony 'X,' Big "D"* 1978 Royalty Statement.

<sup>82</sup>"Recital Today by Melvin Dacus, TCU Baritone," Star-Telegram (Fort Worth, Texas) 24 May 1942.

1956 revised it into a cantata which, in its present form, features baritone soloist with choir and band. The text is based on patriotic subjects.

The 1956 version was premiered on 8 March 1957 at the ABA Convention in the Carnegie Music Hall, Carnegie Institute of Technology, by the U.S. Army Field Band conducted by Capt. Robert L. Bierly.

Title: ***This Solemn Hour***  
*See Band Concert Suite*

Title: ***Three Time Blues***  
Date: 1958; copyright 24 October 1958 (EP 124015)  
Dedication: None  
Publisher: Gillis Family  
Duration: 4:30  
Recording: Interlochen National High School Honors Band with Don Gillis Conducting, Reel 47 (B), TxDN  
Notes: The work was originally published by Interlochen Press and released to the Gillis family on 2 April 1962. Written as a solo for trumpet and band with easy and limited ranges, the work is based on the blues. A manuscript score is located at GFR.

Title: ***Threshin' Bee***  
*See Land of Wheat*

Title: ***Tomorrow is Today***  
Date: 1974  
Dedication: None  
Publisher: Gillis Family

Duration: 14:10

Recording: Copy at GFR, performance unknown

Notes: *Tomorrow Is Today*, a work featuring narrator with band accompaniment, was commissioned for the Missoula (Montana) Grade School Band for performance at Expo 1974 in Spokane, Washington. Reflecting the environmental theme of Expo 1974, the text was adapted from Montana Governor Tom Judge's pronouncements on the environment.<sup>83</sup>

The premiere performance took place on 20 June 1974 at the University of Montana Theater with Dean of Fine Arts Robert Kiley narrating, Roy G. Lyman, conducting. The Expo performance took place on Montana Day, 22 June 1974, in Spokane at the International Amphitheater with Governor Tom Judge narrating. A manuscript score is located at GFR.

Title: ***Touchtone Concerto, The***

Date: 1970

Dedication: None

Publisher: Gillis Family

Duration: 9:00

Recording: Premiere performance--Dallas Baptist College (Tx) Studio Group conducted by Steve Bayless, Reel 21 (D), TxDN

Notes: This unique work premiered in 1970 by the Dallas Baptist College Studio Group conducted by Steve Bayless for the 1970 Media Arts Festival held on the campus of Dallas Baptist College. The work features taped telemetric signals and telephonic sounds produced by four touchtone telephones.

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<sup>83</sup>"Tomorrow is Today," The Missoulian, 27 February 1974, 4 (A).

**Title:** *Tulsa--A Symphonic Portrait in Oil*

**Date:** 1950; band transcription by Maurice Ford: 1957; copyright 1957 (EP 243038)

**Dedication:** Commissioned by the First National Bank of Tulsa for H. Arthur Brown and the Tulsa Philharmonic.

**Publisher:** Belwin-Mills; available through Theodore Presser

**Duration:** 10:30

**Recording:** Chicago Symphony, Reel 17 (B), TxDN; University of Michigan Band conducted by William Revelli, Reel 17 (B), TxDN; North Texas State University Concert Band conducted by Maurice McAdow, Austin Records WAM-33-6328, Ref. Fine Arts Record 1167 v. 7, MdU

**Notes:** The composition was commissioned by the First National Bank and Trust Company of Tulsa as part of their 1950 building dedication. The premiere was given on 29 July 1950 with H. Arthur Brown conducting the Tulsa Symphony Orchestra. The band version was scored by Maurice Ford in 1956 and was introduced in manuscript form by the Air Force Band in March 1956 at the American Bandmasters Convention in Santa Fe, New Mexico.<sup>84</sup>

Concerning *Tulsa*, William Revelli wrote:

It is a very good piece and I have always enjoyed programming it. Musicians like to play it, audiences respond to it and I like it--so what better reasons are there for performing it.

I expect to present it several times during 1976. It fits very effectively in my concept of excellent Bi-Centennial [*sic*] repertory; however I have played it for years. Also your Symphony and Jan-Feb-March.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>Maurice Ford, letter to Don Gillis, 11 April 1956.

<sup>85</sup>William Revelli, letter to Don Gillis, 10 September 1975.

*Tulsa* was programmed for three different ABA Conventions. *Tulsa* was performed from manuscript for the 1956 ABA convention in Santa Fe, New Mexico on 9 March 1956 by the U.S. Air Force Band conducted by Lt. Commander John D. McDonald. The work was programmed at the University of Illinois in March 1958 as part of a joint ABA and University of Illinois Band Building Dedication Convocation. This performance featured the First Regiment Band conducted by Leonard Haug. Finally, *Tulsa* was performed for the 1962 ABA Convention on March 9th of that year by the Indiana University Symphonic Band conducted by Ronald D. Gregory.

The U.S. Marine Band performed *Tulsa* sixty-six times in 1957 and sixty-seven times in 1959.<sup>86</sup> During a four-year period, *Tulsa* was performed 229 times by the U.S. Army Field Band in the United States and abroad.<sup>87</sup>

Regarding a performance of *Tulsa* conducted by Gillis for the 1968 Alabama All-State Band, Orland Thomas, President of the Alabama Bandmasters Association, wrote:

. . . many directors and students have expressed complimentary opinions of your work with the All-State Band and your stirring performance of *Tulsa*.<sup>88</sup>

From 1959 to 1975, *Tulsa* sold consistently for Belwin-Mills, with forty-seven sold in 1959 to a peak of 135 in 1970.

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<sup>86</sup>Col. A. F. Schoepper, Commander, letter to Don Gillis, 1960.

<sup>87</sup>Capt. Robert L. Bierly, AGC Commanding, letter to Don Gillis, 16 November 1960.

<sup>88</sup>Orland Thomas, letter to Don Gillis, 21 March 1968.

Title: **Twinkletoes**

*See Twinkletoes: Suite for Band*

Title: **Twinkletoes: Suite for Band**

- I. *Twinkletoes* (3:25)
- II. *Tango Lullaby* (3:50)
- III. *Two Exotic Dances--Temple Dance and  
Vim, Vigor, and Velocity* (8:00)
- IV. *Procession and Finale  
(Celebration Scene)* (4:30)

Date: 1957

Dedication: None

Publisher: *Celebration Scene* (B3625), *Two Exotic Dances*, and *Twinkletoes* available separately from Kalmus and Theodore Presser. *Tango Lullaby* and *Temple Dance* available from Theodore Presser.

Duration: 19:45

Recording: Rome Orchestra de Camara conducted by Don Gillis, Reel 30 (A), TxDN

Notes: Originally published by Belwin-Mills, the suite was derived from a non-completed ballet. *Procession and Finale* is a revised version of *City of Atlanta--A Forward March*, a work originally utilized in *Atlanta Suite*.

*Twinkletoes*, received the following review:

A really cute novelty that has the potential of "tapping toes" as well as "twinkling." Although many of this composer's ideas have been heard before, they still have wonderful listening appeal, and the melodies are catchy and bright. An abundance of grace notes, glissandos, rapid arpeggios, and

tricky syncopation . . . but therein lies the clever style of the composition. . . .<sup>89</sup>

Tango Lullaby and Twinkletoes were programmed in 1958 by the Greensboro High School Band (NC) for the Canadian Bandmasters Convention. *Tango Lullaby* sold 172 copies in 1957 and averaged twenty-five copies in the 1960s.

- Title: **Two Exotic Dances--Temple Dance and Vim, Vigor, and Velocity** See *Twinkletoes Suite*
- Title: **Uncle Walt's Waltz**  
See *Symphony No. I for Band*
- Title: **Unistrut**
- Date: 1958; copyright 21 May 1958 (EP 120146)
- Dedication: Charles Attwood, founder of Unistrut Corporation of Wayne, Michigan.
- Publisher: FEMA
- Duration: 4:00
- Recording: U.S. Army Band conducted by Samuel R. Loboda, Reel 28 (H), TxDN
- Notes: *Unistrut* was originally published by Interlochen Press for the inception of the Press. Interlochen Press was initiated in 1958 in large part through a grant underwritten by Charles Attwood, President of Unistrut Corporation.
- Title: **Variations on a Kitchen Sink**  
See *Band Concert Suite*

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<sup>89</sup>John P. Paynter et al., eds., review of *Twinkletoes*, by Don Gillis, in the School Musician, Director and Teacher 12 (October 1957): 56.

INDEX

TITLE	PAGE
Abe Lincoln-Gettysburg, 1863 . . . . .	53
America's Gifted Youth . . . . .	54
Atlanta: A Choreographic Impression of a Southern City . .	54
Ballet for Band . . . . .	56
Band Concert Suite . . . . .	57
Bayou Song . . . . .	60
Bing-Bang-Bong . . . . .	60
Bronc Bust See Panhandle Suite	
Cameron Junction--1920 See Symphony No. 1 for Band	
Centennial Celebration See Saga of a Pioneer, The	
Ceremony of Allegiance . . . . .	61
Cracker Barrel March . . . . .	63
Cyclometrics Overture . . . . .	64
Dialogue for Trombone and Band . . . . .	65
Downbeat See Band Concert Suite	
Fall Festival See Symphony No. 1 for Band	
Fields in Summer, The See Land of Wheat	
Footsie See Band Concert Suite	
Harvest Celebration See Land of Wheat	
Hymn Song for Sunday . . . . .	67
Instant Music . . . . .	68
January February March . . . . .	70
Joyful and Triumphant--Music for Christmas . . . . .	71
Junior Hi-Fi March . . . . .	72
Land and the People, The See Land of Wheat	
Land Beyond, The See Saga of a Pioneer	
Land of Wheat . . . . .	72
Lazy Days . . . . .	74
Lone Star . . . . .	74
Man Who Invented Music, The . . . . .	75
Men of Music, The . . . . .	76
Mighty Mac, The . . . . .	77
Minuet-cetera . . . . .	78
Mister Big March . . . . .	79
Moonmist See Band Concert Suite	
Organ Concerto Blues Section . . . . .	79
Panhandle Suite, The . . . . .	80
Paul Bunyan: An Overture to a Legend . . . . .	81
Peachtree Promenade See Atlanta: A Choreographic Impression of a Southern City	
Pep Rally . . . . .	82
Pioneers, The See Saga of a Pioneer	



Plantation Song See Atlanta: A Choreographic Impression of a Southern City	
Planting, The See Land of Wheat	
Pleasant Years See Symphony No. 1 for Band	
Portrait of a City Made of Steel . . . . .	84
Portrait of a Frontier Town . . . . .	85
Procession and Finale (Celebration Scene) See Twinkletoes: Suite for Band	
Recipe in Rhythm . . . . .	86
Rhapsody for Trumpet . . . . .	87
Rompin' Stomp, The . . . . .	82
Saga of a Pioneer, The . . . . .	88
Seven Golden Texts and a Hymn of Praise from the Psalms of David . . . . .	89
So They May Also Learn . . . . .	90
Song of Memory See Saga of a Pioneer	
Spiritual? See Symphony No. 5 1/2	
Stampede See Panhandle Suite, The	
Symphony No. 1 for Band . . . . .	91
Symphony No. 5 1/2 ("A Symphony for Fun") . . . . .	92
Symphony "X," Big 'D' . . . . .	99
Tango Lullaby See Twinkletoes: Suite for Band	
This is Our America . . . . .	100
This Solemn Hour See Band Concert Suite	
Three Time Blues . . . . .	101
Threshin' Bee See Land of Wheat	
Tomorrow is Today . . . . .	101
Touchtone Concerto, The . . . . .	102
Tulsa--A Symphonic Portrait in Oil . . . . .	103
Twinkletoes See Twinkletoes: Suite for Band	
Twinkletoes: Suite for Band . . . . .	105
Unistrut . . . . .	106
Variations on a Kitchen Sink See Band Concert Suite	

## CHAPTER IV

## SUMMARY

Don Gillis was a prolific composer who made significant contributions to the band repertoire. Gillis was not recognized as an innovative or influential composer; yet, a large number of his published band pieces have been frequently performed by school bands, as well as college and military bands. Additionally, Gillis has had highly successful careers in several different fields. Without question, Gillis ranks as a significant personality on the twentieth-century American musical scene.

In this study of Don Gillis's band music, several observations have been made by the author. Gillis's compositions grew from a desire to write about the experiences that he had absorbed subconsciously and enjoyed through musical participation and music study as a child and adolescent. Gillis consistently emphasized his philosophical conviction of "music for the people" through numerous compositions which assimilated popular idioms and which reflected American landscapes, events, and history. In order to reach a broad cross-section of listeners, Gillis wrote in a conservative style that emphasized melody often accompanied by a highly rhythmic and sometimes syncopated harmonic

background, techniques best exhibited in his *Symphony No. 5 1/2*. Also important was his concept of musical humor, reflected in his utilization of clever titles (e.g., *January February March*), programmatic elements (e.g., *The Man Who Invented Music*), and writings (e.g., *The Unfinished Symphony Conductor*).

Gillis is particularly noteworthy to the band field because of his contributions to the band literature during the 1950s when the original American band repertoire was relatively small. Gillis's *Symphony No. 1 for Band* and his band works written during the Interlochen years, along with numerous band transcriptions of his orchestral works, rate as his most notable works of the 1950s. These band works, along with his prior distinguished record of work with bands, led to his 1955 election to the American Bandmaster's Association, an organization to which Gillis contributed to through educational activities, guest conducting appearances, and compositional efforts.

Several unanswered questions concerning Gillis remain for further study. First, Gillis wrote a large body of orchestral works and stage works of which little is known. These works have not been examined and cataloged. Secondly, Gillis's ten-year association with Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony lacks systematic documentation. An investigation of Gillis's relationship with such a dominant

musical personality and orchestral organization would offer a new and important perspective of Toscanini and the NBC Symphony. Finally, while Gillis's utilization of melody as his primary compositional device was an approach he recognized as being apart from the mainstream of music during the middle of the twentieth century, his music found a large audience during the 1940s through the 1960s; however, much of Gillis's music was less popular during the years that followed. Sociological and musical conditions contributing to this occurrence warrant future investigation.

This study of Gillis's band works is intended to provide an increased awareness and provide access to the compositions of this noteworthy composer. While a number of his band works were performed by a large number of outstanding college and military groups during the 1950s and 1960s, his music is within the ability levels of above average ability high school ensembles. It is hoped that this study will generate a renewed interest in the band works of Gillis and that a number of these compositions will be considered for reinstatement in the band repertoire.

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- Shaw, Henry Clifton. Letter to Don Gillis informing of the success of the Webster High School (LA) performance of *Ballet for Band*, 17 February 1967.

Thomas, Orland. Letter to Don Gillis complimenting Gillis's work with the Alabama All-State Band, 21 March 1968.

Waldo, Maxim. Letter to Don Gillis offering congratulations to Gillis for winning first prize with *Panhandle Suite* in the Y.M. & W.H.A. of Washington Heights, New York Contemporary American Music Contest, 6 April 1942.

Whiting, Chester E. Letter to Don Gillis indicating the number of performances of *Land of Wheat*, 4 June 1959.

Wright, Al G. Letter to Don Gillis regarding Wright's performance of *Downbeat* at the Western State College Summer Music Camp, 29 August 1961.

Wright, Al G. Letter to Don Gillis indicating that *Symphony No. 5 1/2* was well received by both the Purdue Band and the audience, 2 March 1977.

Royalty Statements located at the Don Gillis  
Special Collection, Music Library,  
University in North Texas, Denton

Boosey & Hawkes, *January February March*, Royalty Statements, 1959-1960.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Spiritual*, Royalty Statements, 1955-1969.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Symphony No. 5 1/2*, Royalty Statements, 1947-1980.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Symphony 'X,' Big "D,"* Royalty Statement, 1978.

Bourne Music, *Hymn Song for Sunday*, Royalty Statements, 1967-1980.

Frank Music, *Instant Music*, Royalty Statements, 1966-1975.

Kjos Music, *Ceremony of Allegiance*, Royalty Statements, 1966-1974.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Cyclometrics Overture*, Royalty Statements, 1967-1974.

Mills Music, *Abe Lincoln-Gettysburg, 1863*, Royalty Statements, 1954-1975.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Cracker Barrel*, Royalty Statements, 1965-1980.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Dialogue for Trombone and Band*, Royalty Statements  
1969-1975.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Here's to Good Old Football*, Royalty Statement,  
1959.

\_\_\_\_\_, *The Man Who Invented Music*, Royalty Statements,  
1954-1955.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Peachtree Promenade*, Royalty Statements, 1955-1965.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Plantation Song*, Royalty Statements, 1955-1965.

\_\_\_\_\_, *The Rompin Stomp*, Royalty Statements, 1954-1955.

Southern Music, "New Music Release," *Saga of a Pioneer*, five  
movements, Royalty Statement, 1966.

Volkwein Music, *The Men of Music*, Royalty Statement, 1966.

#### Journal Reviews of Gillis's Music

Akers, Howard E. "Ballet for Band." A review in the School  
Musician, Director and Teacher 37 (February 1966): 34.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Instant Music." A review in the School Musician,  
Director and Teacher 38 (August-September 1966): 72.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Symphony No. 5 1/2 for Band," transcribed by  
Maurice Ford. A review in the School Musician, Director  
and Teacher 39 (April 1968): 50.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Men of Music." A review in the School  
Musician, Director, and Teacher 38 (November 1966): 51.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Symphony 'X,' Big 'D.'" A review in the School  
Musician, Director and Teacher 48 (November 1976): 28.

Paynter, John P. et al., eds. "Here's to Good Old Football."  
A review in the Instrumentalist 14 (September 1959):  
80.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Instant Music." A review in the Instrumentalist  
21 (August 1966): 73.

\_\_\_\_\_. "January February March." A review in the  
Instrumentalist 14 (October 1959): 76.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Lone Star." A review in Instrumentalist 20 (May 1966): 109.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Moon Mist." A review in the Instrumentalist 14 (December 1959): 55.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "This Solemn Hour." A review in the Instrumentalist 14 (February 1960): 50.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Twinkletoes." A review in the Instrumentalist 12 (October 1957): 56.
- Rasmussen, Mary, ed. "Dialogue for Trombone and Band." A review in Brass Quarterly 2 (September 1958): 37.

#### Miscellaneous

- "Ballet Program." London Festival Ballet, *Symphony No. 5 1/2*, 18-20 August 1960.
- "Ballet Program." Toledo Ballet, *Symphony No. 5 1/2*, 14 March 1965.
- "Concert Program." Cracker Barrel March, Dickinson State College Band (ND), 1965 Tri-State Music Festival.
- "Concert Program." *Dialogue for Trombone and Band*, U.S. Army Field Band, May 1958 Nels Vogel Bandmasters Clinic, Moorhead Minnesota.
- "Concert Program." *Seven Golden Texts and a Hymn of Praise from David*, Dickinson State College Band (ND), 1965 Tri-State Music Festival.
- "Concert Program." *Symphony No. 5 1/2 for Band*, University of Illinois Concert Band, March 16-17, 1948.
- Mills Music. *The Rompin Stomp*, 1954 single-page promotional advertisement.
- Piersol, Jon R. "Relating to Research." College Band Directors National Association Report (Spring 1990): 13-14.



APPENDIX A

DEGREES AND SELECTED AWARDS

(on deposit at the University of North Texas)

Bachelor of Arts Degree, 1935, Texas Christian University  
Bachelor of Music Degree, 1935, Texas Christian University  
Master of Music Degree, 1942, North Texas State University  
Honorary Doctor of Music, 1948, Texas Christian University  
Alpha Delta Pi Sorority Honorary Award  
American Legion Award  
ASCAP Certificate  
Distinguished Alumnus Award, 1974, North Texas State  
University  
Greater Southwest Arts Project  
Kappa Kappa Psi--Beta Mu Chapter  
Kappa Kappa Psi--Gamma Sigma Chapter  
National Educational Radio Award  
Ohio State Award--Gift of the Magi  
Sinfonia Fraternity of America, Honorary Member

Plaques:

1958 Sinfonia National Honorary Member  
1962 Amarillo, Texas, Key to the City  
1964 Kansas State Teachers College  
1967 State College of Iowa  
1967 Music in May, Forest Grove, Oregon  
1968 Alabama Music Institute  
1971 Texas A & I, Fine Arts Festival  
1973 T C U Centennial Award  
1976 York, Pennsylvania Medallion

APPENDIX B

POLITICIANS' RESPONSES TO GILLIS REGARDING AGE DISCRIMINATION

JAMES G. EASTLAND, MISS., CHAIRMAN  
 JOHN L. MCCLELLAN, ARK. STROM THURMOND, S.C.  
 EDWARD M. KENNEDY, MASS. CHARLES MCC. MATHIAS, JR., MD.  
 BIRCH BAYN, IND. WILLIAM L. SCOTT, VA.  
 ROBERT C. BYRD, W. VA. PAUL LASKY, NEV.  
 JAMES ABRAHAM, S. CAR. OMRI G. HATCH, UTAH  
 JAMES B. ALLEN, ALA. MALCOLM WALLOP, WYO.  
 JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR., DEL.  
 JOHN C. CALVER, IOWA  
 HOWARD M. METZENBAUM, OHIO  
 DENNIS DECONCINI, ARIZ.

FRANCIS C. ROSENBERGER  
 CHIEF COUNSEL AND STAFF DIRECTOR

## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

November 17, 1977

Mr. Don Gillis  
 6715 Lake Arcadia Lane  
 Columbia, South Carolina 29206

Dear Mr. Gillis:

Thank you for your kind letter of recent date. It was good to hear from you, and I appreciate your comments concerning legislation on mandatory retirement.

Under the current Age Discrimination in Employment Act, it is unlawful for an employer to "... fail or refuse to hire, discharge, or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of employment because of age." Coverage extends to members of the civilian labor force between the age of 40 to 64.

H.R. 5333, as it passed the Senate, changed the age limit from the 65th to the 70th birthday. I supported H.R. 5333. A number of groups complained about the added costs which will be required to adjust employee work and health benefit programs and pension benefit accruals. In light of these concerns, the Committee recommended exemptions from the bill, which I believe met these concerns.

Ideally, however, we should abolish mandatory retirement altogether, with a phase-in provision to allow for any necessary adjustments in pension, health or other benefit plans. The option for voluntary retirement at age 65 should be retained, and social security recipients should not be penalized if they decide to work after age 65. The question of retirement should be an individual matter based on factors other than age alone. It should be an individual matter between employer and employee. After considering the amendment which would have allowed for exemptions for certain businessmen and tenured professors, I felt that no exemptions should be included in the bill to sanction mandatory retirement at an age earlier than 70.

Mr. Don Gillis  
page 2  
November 17, 1977

I strongly believe that if an individual wants to continue working and is able to do a good job, he should not be forced to retire. Age alone is a poor indicator of ability to perform on the job. Improved health techniques, longer life expectancy, the desire of people to maintain previous gains in the standard of living, and the detrimental effect on society and the individual of enforced idleness, make mandatory retirement a practice of questionable value.

I have been in touch with the White House regarding your request to have Mrs. Carter narrate "The Throwaway Generation." I read through the script with great interest and feel that it is outstanding. Hopefully, our efforts will be successful in having Mrs. Carter accept your invitation.

Please let me know if I can be of additional assistance to you or your family in any way. I hope you are doing nicely, and with kindest regards and best wishes,

Sincerely,

*Strom Thurmond*  
Strom Thurmond

ST/o

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

January 17, 1978

Mr. Don Gillis  
6715 Lake Arcadia Lane  
Columbia, South Carolina 29206

Dear Mr. Gillis:

Thank you for your letter and the enclosed script entitled "The Throwaway Generation". I read your thoughts with interest and appreciate having your comments.

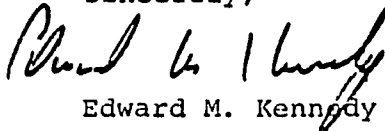
In particular I appreciated having your views on the exemption for tenured faculty members from the increased protection mandated under the Age Discrimination in Employment amendments.

As you know, under the Senate bill, the protection for tenured faculty members would remain at age 65. The House of Representatives did not include an exemption for tenured faculty in its Age Discrimination amendments. It is my hope that a satisfactory resolution of this issue will come out of the conference between the House and the Senate, which is to iron out differences in the two bills. During these future deliberations, knowledge of your views will continue to be most helpful.

Again, I appreciate having your comments.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Edward M. Kennedy".

Edward M. Kennedy

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STAFF DIRECTOR  
JAMES A. BRENNAN  
ASST. TO THE CHAIRMAN  
ROBETTA BRETSCH  
MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

U.S. House of Representatives  
Select Committee on Aging  
Washington, D.C. 20515

TELEPHONE: (202) 225-9378

October 17, 1977

Dear Mr. Gillis:

You were kind and thoughtful to forward to me the copy of script you prepared titled "The Throwaway Generation." I am pleased to have it.

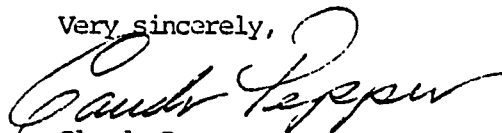
You have expressed so eloquently the sentiments of many older Americans who understand that advancing years should not necessarily diminish one's ability or desire to continue learning, growing, and contributing.

I thank you for writing and bringing this work to my attention. I want you to know I have taken the liberty of sharing it with the Select Committee on Aging's staff, as I am sure your personal reflections will be valuable to them as they continue to investigate ways of improving the quality of life for the elderly.

Kindest regards, and

Believe me,

Very sincerely,



Claude Pepper  
Chairman

Mr. Don Gillis  
6715 Lake Arcadia Lane  
Columbia, South Carolina 29206

CP:ktg

RUSSELL S. LONG, LA., CHAIRMAN

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FLOYD K. HASKELL, COLO.	
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DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN, N.Y.	

MICHAEL STERN, STAFF DIRECTOR  
GORDON S. GILMAN, CHIEF MINORITY COUNSEL

United States Senate  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

December 21, 1977

Mr. Don Gillis  
6715 Lake Arcadia Lane  
Columbia, South Carolina 29206

Dear Mr. Gillis:

This is to acknowledge and thank you for your recent letter expressing your concern regarding the Senate version of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

I appreciate your kindness and courtesy in taking the time to give me the benefit of your views, and it was thoughtful of you to enclose, for my benefit, your recently completed script entitled "The Throwaway Generation".

As you know, the House of Representatives and the United States Senate have both approved H.R. 5383, the bill to raise from 65 to 70 years the age limit for mandatory retirement. Excluded, however, from the provisions of the Senate version are tenured college and university professors and executives whose pensions are \$20,000.

I supported a floor amendment offered by Senator Cranston to H.R. 5383 which would have deleted the "tenured professors and executives" exemption from the bill. This amendment was narrowly defeated by a vote of 45 yeas to 48 nays.

The joint House-Senate conference committee will meet early next year to resolve differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. You may be assured that I have carefully noted your concern regarding the "tenured professors and executives" exemption, and when the conference report is submitted to the full Senate for approval, I will certainly be mindful of your concern.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

*Herman E. Talmadge*



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 DONALD W. RIEGLE, JR., MICH.

JACOB R. JAVITS, N.Y.  
 RICHARD S. SCHWEIKER, PA.  
 ROBERT T. STAFFORD, VT.  
 ORRIN G. HATCH, UTAH  
 JOHN H. CHAFFET, N.H.  
 S. I. NATARAWA, CALIF.

## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

May 31, 1978

Mr. Don Gillis  
 6715 Lake Arcadia Lane  
 Columbia, South Carolina 29206

Dear Mr. Gillis,

Many thanks for your letter in which you enclosed a copy of your script: "The Throwaway Generation". I am fascinated that this will be the basis for one of your musical compositions.

I delayed responding so that I could provide you with timely information on the issue of mandatory retirement. The status of legislation dealing with this issue has changed quite rapidly in recent months.

On October 19, by a vote of 88 to 7, the Senate passed legislation (H.R. 5383) to extend coverage of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA) to most workers between the ages of 40 and 70, effective January 1, 1979. The ADEA previously covered workers aged 40 to 65.

I voted in favor of the bill. I am opposed to mandatory retirement because I believe that individuals should be considered for work on the basis of their ability to do the job, not on the basis of arbitrary factors such as age, race, or sex. Because of my strong belief in this principle, I led the fight, during Senate floor consideration of the mandatory retirement legislation, to delete from the bill provisions which had been added in Committee -- over my opposition -- to deny the extended coverage to tenured teachers, college professors, and employees who would receive a pension of \$20,000 or more. These exemptions were not in the House-passed bill. Unfortunately, my amendment was narrowly defeated (by a vote of 48 to 45), although the exception for teachers was dropped.

The following are among the agreements reached on the mandatory retirement legislation during the House-Senate conference:

-2-

(1) to retain the Senate exemption for tenured college professors, but only until July 1, 1982;

(2) to retain the Senate exemption for high level employees, but to raise the pension income test from \$20,000 to \$27,000 per year; and

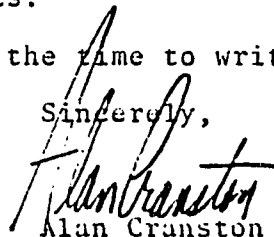
(3) to eliminate the upper age limit for most Federal employees, effective September 30, 1978. There was no comparable provision in the Senate-passed bill.

Although I oppose the exemptions included in P.L. 93-256, I voted to accept the conference report. I view it as a significant step in the eventual elimination of all mandatory retirement requirements.

Enclosed is a copy of the statement I made during the Senate debate on this legislation. I hope this information is helpful in further explaining my position on this issue, and in answering some of the questions which have been raised about its possible effects.

I appreciate your taking the time to write.

Sincerely,



Alan Cranston

Enclosure

APPENDIX C

AUDIO TAPES BY AND ABOUT DON GILLIS:  
DON GILLIS SPECIAL COLLECTION  
MUSIC LIBRARY TXDN

Six 10-inch reels of Gillis talking about his experiences with conductors, critics, composers, teachers compiled during the winter of 1961-62.

Two 10-inch reels of Gillis interviewing Bandmasters at the 1965 ABA Convention. Included are Ferde Grofe, Paul Yoder, Karl King, etc.

One 10-inch reel of Ben Grauer interviewing Gillis at NBC in 1963 or 1964.

Twenty-one 7-inch reels containing Gillis's Contemplations of Life and Events as read by Don Gillis and conversations between Don Gillis and Walter Toscanini, which include recollections and research about Arturo Toscanini.

Twelve 10-inch reels containing the NPR radio show "The Music of Don Gillis."

171 10-inch reels of the NBC radio show "Toscanini, The Man Behind the Legend," together with typed scripts of the series, Tapes 1561-1731.

Music by Don Gillis, fifty-seven inch reels, G1-G49.

Adventures in Art series, 20 audio tapes, 5 video tapes, and scripts taped at Dallas Baptist College.

Composer's Series audio tapes and scripts completed in 1976 at the University of South Carolina.

APPENDIX D

ABA SPECIAL COLLECTION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND:  
15" REELS OF THE MUSIC OF DON GILLIS

- Reel: Concerto for Organ and Band conducted by George C. Wilson, three movements, with original cadenza
- Reel: NMC [National Music Camp] Symphonic Band, 1960  
1. The Land of Wheat
- Reel: U.S. Army Band, Music by Don Gillis, conducted by Col. Samuel Loboda  
1. January February March  
2. Footsie  
3. Bing Bang Bong  
4. Unistrut  
5. Rompin' Stomp  
6. Plantation Song  
7. Pleasant Years  
8. Peachtree Promenade  
9. Downbeat  
10. Ceremony of Allegiance  
11. Ballet for Band
- Reel: Gillis--U.S. Army Band  
1. Cameron Junction (from Symphony No. 1)  
2. Bayou Song  
3. Waltz in Waltz Time (from Symphony No. 1)  
4. Fall Festival (from Symphony No. 1)  
5. America's Gifted Youth  
6. Junior Hi-Fi March  
7. Mr. Big  
8. Mighty Mac  
9. Downbeat  
10. Ceremony of Allegiance  
11. Ballet for Band  
12. January February March
- Reel: U.S. Army Band, Col. Samuel R. Loboda  
1. Men of Music  
2. Here's to Good Old Football  
3. Paul Bunyan: Overture  
4. Junior Hi-Fi  
5. Mr. Big  
6. Unistrut  
7. Romp and Stomp  
8. Plantation Song  
9. The Pleasant Years (from Symphony No. 1)

APPENDIX E  
PUBLISHER ADDRESSES

Boosey & Hawkes, 24 East 21 Street, New York, NY 10010-7200

Bourne, 5 West 37th Street, New York, NY 10018

FEMA, P.O. Box 395, Naperville, IL 60566

Gillis Family, 165 Valley Wood, Athens, GA 30606

Kalmus and Co., P.O. Box 5011, Boca Raton, FL 33431-0811

Kjos Music Co., P.O. Box 178270, San Diego, CA 92177-0894

Mills: Contact Theodore Presser

Theodore Presser Co., Presser Place, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Southern Music Co., P.O. Box 329, San Antonio, TX 78292-0300