

Appendix F. Charles Owen

5600 N. 23rd Street,
Arlington, Va.
April 26, 1953

Mr. Henry Schmidt,
Personnel Manager,
Philadelphia Orchestra,
Phila., Pa.

Dear Sir:

As you suggested when I spoke to you here in Washington regarding the vacancy in the orchestra for a percussionist and 2nd tympanist, I am writing you about my qualifications and training.

I have a Bachelor of Music degree and studied percussion with Malcolm Gerlach, formerly of the Pittsburgh Symphony, and tympani with Saul Goodman, of the N.Y. Philharmonic. I am 40 years old and have been a member of the U. S. Marine Band and Symphony Orchestra for 18½ years. During this time I have played tympani and percussion in the Symphony Orchestra and Band, and in all of the smaller combinations, and am the head of the section. I am the principal Marimba and Xylophone soloist and have been featured as a soloist on all of the annual tours of the Band since I became a member.

Typical solos used in Orchestra and Band are Ziguenerweisen, Les Ronde Des Lutins, Witches' Dance (MacDowell). Hora Staccato, Fiddle-Faddle, etc.

The position which you have open is one I would like very much to fill, and for which I feel well qualified. My work is familiar to Mason Jones, and I would be very happy to have you contact him.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Owen

Letter by Charles Owen to Henry Schmidt dated 26 April 1953.
Courtesy of the Philadelphia Orchestra Association Archives.



Your Neighbors



◀ The New Bang Bang Man

THE Philadelphia Orchestra's new percussionist, Charles E. Owen, comes here after 20 years with the U. S. Marine Band. Practically every high school band player is familiar with a popular xylophone solo that he wrote based on the "chopsticks" theme.

"That solo is my one published piece of music," says Owen, an athletic-looking six-foot-two. "It's one of those things everybody plays and brings me in all of \$8 in royalties some years." He also transcribed and arranged all the music for his marimba and xylophone solos with the Marine Band—which must be quite a few since the band billed him as its only soloist to play in all 48 states.

A musician at 10, he played bassoon and trombone in high school in his native Youngstown, O. After graduation in 1930 he played in dance bands, studied drums and xylophone. He was playing the Ohio State Fair when he heard of a percussion vacancy in the Marine Band, hurried to Washington, D. C., and got the job. When war anchored the band in the capital he studied for his B. S. in music. The Marines sent him to Camp Lejeune to organize a woman's band. The most capable woman musician there was an ex-high school band leader, Charlotte Plummer from Oregon. He put her in charge and two years later married her.

They have fun playing marimba and clarinet duets, taking their two children, Susie, 6½, and Johnny, 4½, on trips. He has a woodworking shop where he makes articles for their home.

Philadelphia Free Music Library, 29 August 1954.
 Courtesy of the Philadelphia Orchestra Association Archives.