

# The BRASS BAND Bridge



BRIDGE: a link, a tie, a bond, an alliance,  
a connection, to band together, to unify.

ISSUE 30  
Nov. 1987

Courtesy of Musical Instrument Division, Yamaha Music Corporation, USA

## NORTH AMERICAN BRASS BAND CHAMPIONSHIP VI

ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY: APRIL 8 & 9, 1988

The Showboat Hotel-Casino on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City is the selected contest site for Championship VI. Host Atlantic Brass Band from Millville reports "the facilities are breathtaking."

Rooms at the Showboat are limited to 100 so make your reservations early! Telephone 1-609-343-4000. Suitable backups are the Comfort Inns (within three miles of the contest venue) and may be contacted at 800-334-6514.

NABBA is proud to announce the evening's Gala Concert will be presented by the Brodsworth Colliery Band, a championship section group from the "heart" of English brass band country.

And now . . . the announcement of the

### CHOSEN TEST PIECES

The Youth Section of Championship VI will perform "Appalachian Mountain Folk Song Suite" by James Curnow.

Gordon Langford's "Three Howorth Impressions" is the Challenge Section's

work.

A "first" in NABBA contesting history, this year's Honors Section test-piece is a new composition entitled "Trilogy for Brass Band" by American composer Joseph Turrin.

The Championship Section of the North American contest will have to tackle "Symphony of Marches" by Gilbert Vinter.

With those titles, the Brodsworth Band from England and the spectacular contest venue, the 1988 Championships should prove to be an exciting event!

For information concerning the contest (including entry packets), contact:

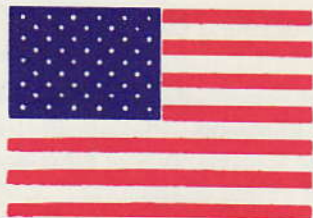
J. Perry Watson  
Box 7311  
NCSU  
Raleigh, NC 27695  
or  
Herb Roselle, Host  
P.O. Box 59  
Millville, NJ 08332

Entry deadline is February 12, 1988.

## NABBA ANNOUNCES NEWLY ELECTED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

At its annual meeting in September, the Board of Directors of the North American Brass Band Association elected a new Executive Committee. The meeting was held in normally "sunny" Tampa, Florida but was greeted with rain the entire weekend. With too much work to do during such a short time anyway, the Board met in a room provided by USF's College of Fine Arts (instead of poolside). After many long hours (and cups of coffee) the Board adjourned with decisions and plans for the future of the organization. Some minor changes in contest rules, a contest site, election procedures and assignment of committees were discussed among many other topics. The Board addressed many issues and a tremendous amount of work was accomplished. The newly elected Executive Committee is:

Paul Droste, President  
Columbus, Ohio  
Karen Kneeburg, Vice President  
Lutz, Florida  
Doug Field, Secretary  
Ontario, Canada  
Mike Swaffar, Treasurer  
Lancaster, Kentucky



Are you a current member of NABBA? If not, this could be your last issue of THE BRASS BAND BRIDGE.





Official publication of the North American Brass Band Association.

For, about and by British-type brass bands throughout North America.

Editor . . . . . Karen D. Kneeburg  
Assistant

Editor . . . . . Don W. Kneeburg

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#### MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Individual	\$ 20.00
Associate	10.00
Member band	50.00
Corporate	100.00
Sustaining	250.00
Patron	500.00
Leadership	1000.00

Mail to:

Mike Swaffar, Treasurer N.A.B.B.A.  
225 W. Maple Ave., Lancaster, KY 40444 USA

The North American Brass Band Association proudly recognizes the following for their support:

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Purdy's Brass Connection  
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

The Brass Band Bridge is sponsored in-part by the University of South Florida's Department of Music Tampa, Florida.

#### UPCOMING DEADLINES

January 31, 1988  
April 30, 1988  
July 31, 1988



### FREDONIA BRASS BAND

Conducted by Grant Cooper  
(MARK RECORDS MCBS-2073u)

The Fredonia Brass Band was formed in order to perform at the 1985 New York State School Music Association conference and this recording is the end result of that project. Selections include "Volcano" by Robert Simpson, "Blitz" by Derek Bourgeois, and the "Overture: Le Corsair" by Hector Berlioz. Necessary instruments were supplied by YAMAHA through Gary Marsh, area representative. French horns are used instead of E-flat alto horns. While there is much evidence of excellent individual musicianship, this recording lacks overall precision and balance in sectional work as well as group balance. It is noted on the record jacket that no attempt was made to imitate English brass bands and that the group had to rehearse outside of regular rehearsal schedules at the Fredonia School of Music. In this case the group and its conductor should be complimented for a job well done. It is the hope of this reviewer that 1) the band continue rather than be assembled for special occasions, 2) they reconsider the use of alto horns instead of french horns for better balance and sound, and 3) at least consider the British brass band sound as a model since they have had well over a hundred years to work on it.

### THE GOTHENBURG BRASS BAND

Conducted by Bengt Eklund  
(POLYPHONIC PRL032D)

This brass band formed in 1982 has achieved an excellent rating not only in Sweden but at the European Brass

Editor's note: Reviews for this issue were prepared by Don Kneeburg, Associate Professor of Trombone and Euphonium at the University of South Florida, Tampa.

Band Championships as well. This recording features "The Year of the Dragon" by Philip Sparke, "Prelude for an Occasion" by Edward Gregson, Swedish folk songs, and other popular favorites. The playing is excellent and the fine work of Bengt Eklund is very apparent. This is an excellent sample of brass band sound that is slightly different from the British but still well done and exciting.

### BRASS ROUTES

A Tutor for Trumpet or Cornet  
by Pamela Wedgwood

Studio Music Co. £3.95

This beginning method book is one of the finest I have had the pleasure to review. The layout, language, musical guidance and progress development are excellent. I am sure that it would prove to be interesting and challenging for the young student. Pamela Wedgwood should be congratulated for a fine method book.

### MIX 'N' MATCH

Eight Easy Duets for Wind Instruments  
Selected and arranged by  
Philip Sparke

Book One (Eight Duets) and Book Two (Eight Duets)  
Studio Music Co. £3.00

These intermediate duet books contain popular and folk tunes in various combinations and keys to allow B $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , C and F instruments to play with each other. They are organized so that like instruments or mixed instruments can perform together. An excellent idea and an excellent collection.

### QUICK QUOTES

"It would be safe to wager that a thousand Americans in a new land would organize themselves, establish schools, churches, newspapers and brass bands—in short, provide themselves with all the appliances of civilization — and 'then' go ahead

developing their country."

— Andrew Carnegie

"... successful bands have two things in common—the capacity to work hard for long periods of time, and a hatred of empty chairs."

— Major Peter Parkes



# ■■■■■■■■ BAND BRIEFS ■■■■■■■■

The first of anything is usually exciting, but your brass band's first concert is a real thrill. It also signifies you have reached the first major milestone by: researching brass bands (thanks Paul Droste, Perry Watson, and NABBA); successfully finding good musicians with commitment; financing and collecting a critical mass of brass band music; purchasing or borrowing the needed instruments (beyond those owned by members), like 20-inch Zildjian Symphonic Viennese cymbals; finding appropriate contributed rehearsal facilities (a killer financially if you have to pay — the Plumbers and Steamfitters Union Hall wanted \$60 a rehearsal — you'd think they would have understood); and . . .

We made it!!

The Screamers & Lyric Brass Band performed its first concert on June 14, 1987, Flag Day, in Medina, Ohio. Founded in London, England in January 1986, the band makes its home in Akron. Like most, our members travel

long distances to rehearsal. We are the only brass band in northeast Ohio.

Our concert debut, titled "Around the Brass Band World," included "The Challenge," "All Through The Night," "Knightsbridge March," "The British Grenadiers," "Spanish Gypsy Dance," "Paris Le Soir," "Marching Through Georgia," "The Shadow Of Your Smile," "Circus Days," "Bravura," "Sally In Our Alley," "Fantasy On British Sea Songs," "Cole Porter For Brass," "Old Comrades," "In A Persian Market," "Waltzing Matilda," and "The Big Cage," with encores "The Black Horse Troop," "America The Beautiful," and "The Stars & Stripes Forever." It was a little too long! I will be happy to send the printed program and the director's prepared comments to your band, just phone me at (216) 867-7821 in the evening.

Finding qualified players has been our biggest challenge. Since northeast Ohio has many nonprofit community bands (four in the Akron area alone)

plus numerous brass quintets and union bands, most good musicians who want to play already have a full schedule.

We have planned a classics concert in November, a pre-Christmas full-band concert in a large shopping mall and quintets in other malls for The Salvation Army fund raising — a great cause, good fun, and you can raise four times more money than bell ringing; a spring concert and maybe the NABBA championships; and several summer park concerts in 1988, including our second Flag Day concert in Medina — they invited us back!

Yes, we still have a few trumpets and french horns to switch. We also need a full time E<sup>b</sup> cornet player, a formal structure and nonprofit tax status (soon), major funding and matched instruments, and about twice the members to ensure a full band in the summer, but it's a great start!

— Tom Myers  
Director and Founder



*The first concert on June 14, 1987 in Medina, Ohio.*

## THE SCREAMERS & LYRIC BRASS BAND





## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

□□□□□□□□ *A Family Affair* □□□□□□□□

Ours is a collective, family passion which grew from an innocent first puff on a bugle by our son, then five years old, while on a visit to Fort Rodd on the West coast eight years ago. Thus the seed was planted, and what started as a mere interest in brass band music (part of our cultural bag and baggage as immigrants from Britain) has flourished as an all-encompassing passion involving us and our two children as musicians, as well as our parents and their friends as supporters.

By the time Jamie was seven we had discovered that our own Whitby Brass Band had a learners' section: instruments provided, tuition free! "Why not all start together?" we asked ourselves. Hesitantly, we approached the band's conductor, Roland Hill, after listening to a concert, and we arranged to attend the following Tuesday's rehearsal. Thus, we found ourselves armed with three battered cornets, a tutor book and much determination. (Is it coincidence that our next door neighbor moved away a while after?) Pains-takingly and painfully we began to build up our embouchures. There was no looking back!

While my husband Peter's collection of brass band recordings grew rapidly, we noticed that Jamie would be singing "Colonel Bogey" and "Under the Double Eagle" in the bathtub, unaware that this was rather unusual. Meanwhile we followed the senior band's performances faithfully, wistfully anticipating the time when we would don the blue jackets and be a part of them.

After a few months, Peter was on Eb bass and Jamie on the tenor horn, while I remained on cornet. At last came the great day in April 1984 when we moved up to the "big band." How easily we lost our places in the music, playing as softly as possible in case someone heard us! How grand we felt when we sported uniforms for the first time.

Nothing could match the heady elation we felt as we marched down the streets of Trenton in a Canada Day parade, or the sheer panic at having to march and play at the same time. We had made it!

Steady practice at home continued to improve our skills, and one day we suddenly realized that we weren't getting lost quite as much, or playing quite so shyly. In fact, we were actually playing more right notes than wrong ones.



*L to R: Jacky, Jamie and Peter outside of St. John's Church in Whitby after the annual Strawberry Tea concert.*

Within a few months I found myself roped into becoming librarian (someone vaguely described it as "just a matter of carrying the music bag to the

concert" . . . what an understatement!). It proved to be a time-consuming job and as I filed away the endless sheets of music in the bandroom, my curiosity was aroused by their yellowness and age-worn appearance. It was the same feeling I had when looking at the collection of old photos dating back 130 years. Who were those men who gazed back at me? What did the band sound like then? Before long I volunteered to be Band archivist, searching in local records for any information I could find, gathering photos and memorabilia from local residents, and starting a log of our band's current activities for posterity. Add to this the job of secretary which I took on in 1985 and you will see why I laugh when people ask me what I do in my spare time!

In our home the brass band passion spilled over from the stereo to the walls and shelves as books and photos accumulated. Brass band music fills the air at mealtimes, and part of our basement is the music room. A copper bugle on the mailbox (handmade by Peter) warns callers of what they will encounter when they cross the threshold. Our calendar is filled with band engagements which range from informal concerts in the town's new bandstand, to playing the anthems at the Blue Jays games before a crowd of 46,000, doing parades in rain, shine or snow, as well as the usual sit-down concerts, and many local functions.

Now our passion includes our eight-year-old daughter, Claire, who started last year in the beginners' band and is doing well. We envy her early start and feel that we are constantly making up for lost time in our playing. Still, a fellow who graduated from junior band last year is of retirement age, so I guess it really is never too late!

— Jacky Bramma  
Whitby Brass Band



# Bands across the Sea



Information courtesy of the British Bandsman



## BRITISH OPEN RESULTS

FIRST PLACE, 194 points: **WILLIAMS FAIREY ENGINEERING** (Roy Newsome); SECOND PLACE, 192 points: **BRITANNIA BUILDING SOCIETY FODEN** (Howard Snell); Test-Piece: "Freedom" by Hubert Bath.



Phillip McCann, principal cornet of Black Dyke Mills for the past 14 years, has tendered his resignation and will relinquish the most famous cornet chair in the world of brass bands as soon as a suitable replacement has been found. He has led Dyke through one of their most successful spells, in terms of contest wins, and has acquired an international reputation for his distinctive sound and the incredible security of his playing.



It is with great sadness that we report the death of John Fletcher, doyen of tuba players the world over, who passed away on October 2. John, a member of the London Symphony Orchestra since 1968 had suffered a stroke in March of this year and sadly, did not recover. John was a member of the famous Philip Jones Brass Ensemble and served as an inspiration to tubists around the world.



## BRITISH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

FIRST PLACE, 197 points: **DESFORD COLLIERY DOWTY** (James Watson); SECOND PLACE, 196 points: **BLACK DYKE MILLS** (Major Peter Parkes); Test-Piece: "Harmony Music" by Philip Sparke



## To Perform In Australia

The American Australian Bicentennial Foundation announced the River City Brass Band will perform in Australia during the 1988 Australian bicentennial celebration. The tour is sponsored by Amway of Ada, Michigan, in cooperation with PPG Industries, Inc. of Pittsburgh.

The 27-member brass band, which was founded in 1981 by its Director, Robert Bernat, will perform 14 concerts in 11 Australian cities between March 3-22, 1988. The first Australian concert on March 5 will be performed at the famed Adelaide Festival of the Arts.

"We are thrilled that Amway and PPG Industries have made the band's trip to Australia a reality," said Charles W. Parry, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the American Australian Bicentennial Foundation, a group with a Washington, D.C. office that has been working for three years to encourage American involvement in Australia's bicentennial celebration. "The Australians are really looking forward to the band's visit."

The River City Brass Band is one of five major American organizations

invited to participate in the 1988 bicentennial celebration. The others include the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Texas Boys Choir, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Twyla Tharp Dance Company.

Explaining Amway's decision to be the principle corporate sponsor for the band's tour, Amway President Richard M. DeVos said, "Amway has a thriving business throughout Australia, and we wanted to support the bicentennial celebration by sponsoring a major cultural activity across that country. When Amway of Australia was given the opportunity to select a premier American performing group, they chose the River City Brass Band because they felt it will appeal to an exceptionally large segment of the Australian population."

In addition to performing in Australia, the band will play four concerts in Hawaii and one concert at the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts in Wellington.

Other highlights of the band's 1988 season include trips to the Far West, South and the Eastern Seaboard.



## HONORS BRITISH EDITOR

PETER WILSON, the *British Bandsman* editor, has been presented with a plaque designating him as the first Honorary Life-Time Member of the North American Brass Band Association.

During the recent annual meeting of the board of directors, it was unanimously decided to honor him for his many contributions, support and help in assisting the Association.

Peter visited the USA in 1981 to help set up brass bands, returning the following year to draw up rules for the annual North American Brass Band Championships, and again in 1983 to adjudicate the inaugural event.



Is there any truth to the rumor that another Youth Band—not one located in Ohio—will be competing in Championship VI?



# A QUESTION OF SOUND

by **ARTHUR BUTTERWORTH**

*Editor's note: Due to the controversy in America over the "brass band sound," (whether to allow trumpets and French horns at our contests and whether it really is a brass band if we don't use the instrumentation the composer calls for), I reprint this article from the "British Bandsman" with great respect and support.*

**RECENTLY, the BBC broadcast a discussion on the topic of brass band sound. The broadcast stimulated composer Arthur Butterworth to write to the producer, James Langley, in the following manner:**

I have just listened, fascinated and intrigued, to your Radio 2 discussion on the brass band.

It seems to me that the most elusive quality to define — as each of your contributors pointed out — is that of the sound itself. No doubt we have all tried to analyse in our own minds just what it is that has so captivated us.

Other countries have from time immemorial had their own wind bands: the Viennese wind band of classical times, Italian 'bandas', French 'harmonie'; each of these based on the dissimilar qualities of the woodwind ensemble with whatever brass has been locally the tradition.

Years ago I chanced to hear an exchange programme between a British brass band and the nearest Norwegian counterpart, broadcast in what was then the BBC North Regional service. The Norwegian band, it has to be said, was puny by comparison (though it has to be admitted nowadays that Norwegian bands are, as your contributors stressed, as good as, and play in the same style as British brass bands).

So what is it, this elusive, almost indefinable quality which so marks

out British brass band sound from all others?

Other musicians have long appreciated the string orchestra — a universally stylised ensemble — and I believe the brass band as we have come to evolve it, has some quality in common with the purity of the string orchestra.

Now the full orchestra is a marvellously satisfying musical force; but it is held together primarily by a basic string orchestra to which the multifarious wind instruments add individual timbres.

Without the strings, the orchestra would be — and in modern terms certainly is, a wind orchestra no less. It has always had a popularity and world-wide following especially in the realms of outdoor and military music. Today it has become newly popular on account of the spectacular development and interest in woodwind instruments. However, the wind orchestra, concert band, wind band, or military band, no matter what it is termed, does seem to lack a certain purely basic timbre which, in the case of the full orchestra is provided by the huge string band.

The brass band on the other hand does indeed possess this — perhaps prime essential — a purity of ensemble.

If the string orchestra is so satisfying it is because the instruments are of the same tonal family and have a perfect balance of parts. This cannot be said of the heterogeneous collection of wood wind instruments, but it is the essential feature of the British brass band: they are all, save for the self-sufficient trio of trombones, saxhorns. I believe this is the reason for the brass band's unique sound.

Before the British tradition came, to influence other countries they had a somewhat motley collection

of styles of instruments, some in the German tradition, so unlike saxhorns. I think this is probably why the Norwegian band I heard in the late 1930s sounded unsatisfying; it had some saxhorns perhaps, but also some Wagner tubas, trumpets, saxophones and other unidentifiable types.

## Trial and error

But the British brass band with its saxhorns does not seem to me to have been just an accidental thing: its evolution has obviously been arrived at with a good deal of trial and error in the distant past, so that our present and perhaps stable establishment, really is the best.

A few years ago, I was one of those who believed that the brass band ought to 'come up to date' and employ a section of trumpets, perhaps a section of orchestral F-horns, and maybe Wagner tubas, but I have changed my mind. I believe the present, and long-established balance is absolutely right. Other countries obviously think so too, hence the enormous growth of the British style in recent years.

Organists will know that a good cathedral organ is cunningly designed by the builder to have a balance of stops, families of diapasons and reeds which match and are represented at the various pitch levels: 8ft, 16ft, 4ft, 2ft and the necessary 'mixtures'. A good organ is not just an ad hoc collection of stops with engaging names or labels.

The brass band has, like the string orchestra, and the organ, this ideal quality of tonal balance too, and this is why we find it so satisfying. One of your contributors stressed that the Japanese were attracted not so much by the music brass bands play (that is a different

consideration!) but by the actual quality of the sound, and this I do believe is explained by the unique style of the instruments we use.

## Trombones

There are only two facets of brass band tone which appear to have undergone a little change in recent years: the trombones now follow their orchestral counterparts, the older French narrow bore instruments, so appropriate in Berlioz and other French music, have given way to the larger bore German style (as orchestral horns have done almost universally). Some of us occasionally feel the loss of the older fashioned trombone is a distinct lack; its romantic fiery French sound is replaced by a suave, (no matter how round and fulsome) thick quality not distinguishable enough from the saxhorn sounds of the rest of the band.

The other change is perhaps more welcome: the decline of vibrato. Mention was made in your discussion about the overall lyrical quality of the brass band; this is all right so far as it goes, but is the one quality which perhaps can be overdone at the expense of real dramatic impact which the trumpet family can do so much better than ever cornets can. Cornets do this as best they can, and herein is my only remaining reservation about cornet-playing and vibrato. Much as overdone vibrato has declined, it is still a factor in many principal cornet players when they have a real solo to play; it is as if they are unable to turn it off when necessary. This is one of the few occasions when I would prefer to have a solo trumpet, not always of course, but on the occasion when the music calls for a more masculine interpretation.

## THE BRASS BAND BRIDGE

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Tampa, Florida 33620

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