

The BRASS BAND Bridge



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

ISSUE 32
May 1988

Courtesy of Musical Instrument Division, Yamaha Music Corporation, USA

Brass Band Of Columbus Takes Hat Trick In Sixth NABBA Championship

The sixth North American Brass Band Championship contest drew eleven bands to Hammonton High School, Hammonton, New Jersey, near the resort of Atlantic City.

The triumph of the day was seized by The Brass Band of Columbus (Paul Droste, conductor) with their convincing readings of "Symphony of Marches" (Vinter), "Knight Templar" (Allan), and "The Year of the Dragon" (Sparke). Columbus, having won the hat trick, or three successive Championships, must now sit out the 1989 competition, scheduled for Asheville, North Carolina.

What a varied assortment of bands, several of which had traveled over 1000 miles to attend the contest! Some wore formal tuxes, some looked like a British band in park concert (with their bright uniforms), others wore turn-of-the-century garb. The program started about 9:15 a.m. on a grey April morning and the last band finished just after 5:00 p.m., with sunshine breaking through.

The American contest allows each band to play a 23- to 30-minute program, including the test piece. The judges award 60% of the score for the test piece and 40% for the remainder of the program. Each group may also feature a soloist who can compete for prizes in each section as well as the award for soloist of the day. This year, Robert T. Snyder, Jr., trombonist with the North Carolina State University British Brass Band, won the Challenge Division and the Reynold Schilke

Memorial Award for outstanding soloist of the day. Bill Fisher, Eb cornetist with the Smoky Mountain British Brass Band, won the award for the best soloist in the Championship Division.

Music heard other than the listed contest works included such standard fare as: "Hinemoa" (Wood), "Fanfare and Soliloquy" (Sharp), "Downland Suite" (Ireland), "Prelude for an Occasion" (Gregson), and "The Year of the Dragon" (Sparke). The judges were Gordon McGowan (Nova Scotia), Charles Baker (New Jersey Symphony), and the commissioned composer, Joseph Turrin, of New York City.

The festive day came to a happy conclusion with a meeting of NABBA members (North American Brass Band Association) followed by the Gala Concert, provided by The National Capital Band of The Salvation Army (Washington D.C. area group) under the capable leadership of noted arranger/composer Stephen Bulla. This disciplined ensemble filled in nobly at the last minute when a band from Great Britain had to cancel. Sparkling music from the new generation of American brass composers—Bulla, Cumow, Broughton, and Himes—kept the interest of the brass enthusiasts despite the nearly twelve consecutive hours of band music.

The first NABBA Championship was held in 1983 at North Carolina State University, with five bands divided into two sections. In six years the number of competitors has more than doubled; the greatest change, however, has come

in the quality of the playing. With no tradition of brass banding surviving in America, except in the sacred tradition of The Salvation Army, it has been a vigorous, and hard effort for these American bands to approach the British style and sound. By Championship VI nearly all the anomalies of instrumentation encountered in earlier contests have vanished; the bands look and, for the most part, sound like brass bands.

The two greatest hurdles still not fully overcome in these bands are the cornet and alto/baritone sonorities. Only two bands of the day, Columbus and WRAL (both of whom gave fine programs), seem to have really begun to solve that difficult problem of aural concept—not surprising when you consider that the art of cornet playing, once flourishing in America, has all but been erased in all but the best school bands, having been replaced by the ubiquitous trumpet. Saxhorns, of course, are non-existent, except in some of the large marching bands (Ohio State, for instance) where they are not exactly called upon for their lyric qualities.

One scholar has estimated that in the year 1889 there were at least 10,000 amateur bands in the United States, a very large majority of them all brass in instrumentation. Within a generation the number of American bands did not diminish (they may have increased) but their style changed to the now-familiar mixture of woodwinds-brass-percussion—thanks to the splendid models provided by Sousa, Goldman, et al.

— Continued on page 6



Official publication of the North American Brass Band Association.

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

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UPCOMING DEADLINES

July 15, 1988
October 15, 1988
January 15, 1989



THE SPICE OF LIFE

The William Davis Construction Group Band
Music Director: Keith Wilkinson
(POLYPHONIC) PRL 034D £5.50

Side One: 1. Blenheim Flourishes (Curnow), 2. One Voice (Manillow/Farr), 3. One Fine Day - Cornet Solo (Puccini/Wilkinson), 4. Meridan (Barry), 5. Norwegian Dance (Grieg/Wilkinson), 6. Mack & Mabel (Herman/Wilkinson).

Side Two: 1. Pop Looks Bach (Fonteyn/Wilkinson), 2. Bacchanale (Saint-Seans/Wilkinson), 3. Deep Inside The Sacred Temple - Euphonium Duo (Bizet/Wilkinson), 4. Tritsch Tratsch Polka (Strauss/Richards), 5. Greensleeves (Trad./Snell), 6. Orient Express (Sparke).

This is an excellent recording from every aspect. The band, with music director Keith Wilkinson, produces a warm rich sound with superior intonation, ensemble, and musical expression. In addition to this, there is a varied program to delight all listeners. The band's cornet and euphonium soloists perform with beautiful control in outstanding arrangements by the conductor. The other works arranged by Wilkinson are equally as impressive and worthy of consideration on any program. Of particular merit are the performances of the "Blenheim Flourishes" and the "Orient Express". The latter new work by Philip Sparke is very challenging but capable of pleasing players and audience alike. On the "pop" side "Pop Looks Bach" and "Trisch Tratsch Polka" are excellent program numbers for a change of pace and guaranteed delight from the listeners.

To summarize, this is a recording to be treasured for the playing and the compositions. Congratulations to the William Davis Construction Group Band and Keith Wilkinson.

LEWINGTON YAMAHA BRASS

Music Director: David Hirst
Guest Soloists: Ian Bousfield and James Shepherd
(POLYPHONIC) PRL 033D £5.50

Side One: 1. Flourish For A Birthday (Arnold/Sparke), 2. A Sullivan Fantasy (Sullivan/Langford), 3. One Day In Your Life - Horn Solo (Brown & Armand), 4. Labour and Love (Fletcher).

Side Two: 1. Oklahoma (Rodgers), 2. Autumn Leaves - Trombone Solo (Kosma & Prevert), 4. Rocky (Conti), 5. Rule Britannia - Cornet Solo (Hartman/Hopkinson), 6. Centenary March (Winter).

Two things make this another excellent choice for the brass band record library: the superior sound of the band, and its guest soloists. Lewington Yamaha Brass has a more aggressive and brilliant sound than the previous record and music director David Hirst should be congratulated for his good work.

Ian Bousfield, trombonist, plays a stunning arrangement of "Autumn Leaves" and displays more variety of sound and style than anyone this reviewer can remember. This number alone is worth purchasing the record. James Shepherd's rendition of "Rule Britannia" is another example of the epitome of cornet performance. "Flourish For A Birthday" and "Labour And Love" are well played and deserve attention from American brass bands. "One Day In Your Life" is an excellent example of tenor horn performance that more North American players should emulate. All in all, another fine record for the brass band.

NORTH COUNTRY PASTORALE

by Ray Steadman-Allen

Rosehill Music

Looking for a change of pace selection with lyric quality is sometimes a challenge. If your program has a few difficult numbers which require most of the rehearsal time and embouchure strength, it is important to find good quality contrasting pieces which can complete the concert selections. The "North Country Pastorale" can fill these requirements. It is a beautiful melodious piece which is well scored and without extreme register difficulties. Although it is only two-and-a-half minutes in length, it is well worth looking at and considering. Youth bands could also utilize this work for producing singing lines and legato style. The highest note for B^b cornets is the upper A and then it is used in a moving line without being held for longer than a sixteenth note. Percussion is limited to snare drum played with brushes and triangle.

ORIENT EXPRESS by Philip Sparke

Studio Music Company

This new work by the famous Philip Sparke is just what it says it is: a ride on the Orient Express. Complete with train sounds scored for snare drum, bass drum, sandpaper blocks, and muted brass with half-step clusters, this composition is a delight for the band member as well as the audience. This is a challenging piece and requires strong players with nimble tongues and fingers on all parts. Solo tenor horn has numerous high B's and an occasional high C. Three percussion players are needed to cover all the instruments. The style of the piece is in a light commercial vein with flowing melodies and exciting sixteenth rhythms. If you would like to hear a fine performance of the "Orient Express", please refer to the record review earlier in this section. Rosehill Music has done a fine job with the parts, however this reviewer would prefer a full score to the short score that is provided.

Don Kneeburg

We want to know about
YOUR BAND'S activities!!
Send your story to
The Brass Band Bridge

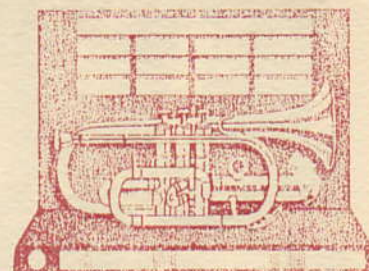
1988 Championship VI Winners



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VARSITY ALL-STAR BRASS BAND - ERIC AHO, CONDUCTOR
YOUTH DIVISION



Scenes from Championship VI



Contest Tapes Available

Recordings of Championship VI may be obtained from Bert Wiley. Tapes are \$5.00 each (two bands per tape) and shipping is included. Make checks payable to:

Bert Wiley
P.O. Box 1447
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RESULTS

CHAMPIONSHIP

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Brass Band of Columbus | 276 |
| Atlantic Brass Band | 235 |
| Smoky Mountain British Brass Band | 211 |
| Danbury Brass Band (comments only) | |

HONORS

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| WRAL British Brass Band | 261 |
|-------------------------|-----|

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Allegheny Brass Band | 193 |
| Whitby Brass Band | 150 |

CHALLENGE

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| NCSU British Brass Band | 248 |
| Eastern Iowa Brass Band | 246 |
| Rockville Brass Band | 226 |

YOUTH

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Varsity All-Star Brass Band | 235 |
|-----------------------------|-----|

ENTERTAINMENT VIDEO COMPETITION

SPONSORED BY NABBA

The purpose of this competition is to give an opportunity for North American amateur brass bands to compete in an Entertainment Contest format without incurring the expense of traveling to a single location.

There will be only one class, with rules which will allow bands to be adjudicated equally, even though they may not be equal in ability. (A band with modest ability which plays its chosen program very well will have the advantage of a much more advanced band which plays a more difficult program less successfully.)

Deadline for entries is October 12, 1988. For more information contact J. Perry Watson, NCSU Music Dept., Box 7311, Raleigh, N.C. 27695.



**Rocky
Mountain
Brassworks**

The Rocky Mountain Brassworks presented a benefit concert in mid-March for the Denver area Food Bank Coalition, a group organized to assist with low cost food distribution for the needy. The well attended concert was held in historic St. Elizabeth Church on the Auraria Campus of the University of Colorado.

Brassworks director, Dr. John Bell, chose literature that would showcase the brass band sound for an audience comprised primarily of first-time listeners. Among works programmed were Holst's "First Suite in Eb" Himes' arrangements of "NICAEA" and "Amazing Grace", Gregson's "Music for Greenwich", and Barraclough's march "Simoraine".

The benefit will become an annual event in what we hope will be successful for the Coalition and for the Rocky Mountain Brassworks in spreading the musical brass word.

Rehearsals are now pointing to the final concert of the season on June 5, 1988, at the beautiful Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, Colorado, where the Brassworks will kick-off the Stanley's summer concert series.

Roy H. Hess
Chairman



**THE
PROFESSIONAL'S
CORNER**



**EARN'S RAVE REVIEWS
FROM CRITICS "DOWN UNDER"**

Three years' worth of planning—a price-tag in excess of \$500,000—\$300,000 in corporate sponsorships provided by Amway and PPG Industries through the American Australian Bicentennial Foundation—five different programs—four concerts on three Hawaiian islands—fifteen concerts in four different states in Australia, frequently sharing top billing with the likes of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Wynton Marsalis, Pierre Boulez, and Sarah Vaughn at the Adelaide Festival, Melbourne's Moomba Festival, the \$200 million Queensland Performing Arts Center in Brisbane, and the Sydney Opera House—one concert at the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts—several tons of equipment—several thousand miles of bus travel—twenty-six landings and takeoffs on six different airlines concluding with a 38-hr. flight home from Wellington, New Zealand to Pittsburgh: Put it all together and you begin to get some idea of why the members of the River City Brass Band were exhilarated as well as exhausted when they returned at the end of March from their 28-day whirlwind tour "down under."

"Was it worth doing? "Definitely," said RCB B music director Bob Bernat. "We played to capacity audiences everywhere, and we were extremely well received by critics and audiences alike, especially by the amateur brass bandsmen we met. They couldn't have been more generous or hospitable. The feeling the Australian and New Zealand bandsmen expressed to us was that the success of our performances somehow rubbed off on them and gave them increased visibility and credibility in their respective communities."

Australian and New Zealand music critics were unanimous in their praise of the RCB B. Reviewing the band's performance at the world-famous Adelaide Festival, the *Adelaide Advertiser's* music critic applauded the RCB B's program and praised the band for its

"astonishing discipline and dynamic and tonal control," while the *Adelaide News* described the RCB B concert as "a heart-stomping, goose-bumping performance."

Reviewing the RCB B performance at the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts, the music critic of the *Wellington Dominion* wrote in an article headlined, "Band's Expertise Stuns"—"The standard, as to be expected, is phenomenally high...this band uses french horns instead of tenor horns—a recommendable substitution as they have much more expressive power and a cutting edge, when necessary, that takes the stodge out of the middle harmony....A concert of variety and stunning expertise."

The "reviews" that the RCB B members, staff and board probably cherish the most, though, came from U.S. Ambassador Bill Lane and Bruce Shankland, managing director of Amway of Australia:

Ambassador Lane wrote: "The reports from everywhere you performed are glowing. Australians want you back and soon. And so do we."

Mr. Shankland wrote: "The feedback from our distributors, staff and guests, and the public at large has been absolutely tremendous. All of those who attended one or more of the Band's concerts are now asking 'when will the Band return?'"

Indeed, when? That's a question the RCB B is now considering.

NABBA
NORTH AMERICAN BRASS BAND ASSOCIATION, INC.

BULLETIN



Any materials or motions to be presented to the NABBA Board should be submitted by August 1, 1988 to:

Douglas Field, Secretary
4156 Fieldgate Drive #35
Mississauga, Ontario
Canada L4W 2N1

Olive Gifford And An Old Friend

Sharing is a vitally important function of the British-type brass band movement throughout North America and the world. This writer would like to share with readers of the *Bridge* one of the beautiful people who make up the brass band scene in Colorado. Olive Gifford has played in the British brass band workshops held by John Kincaid at Colorado's Western State College since they were started in 1974. She is a tubist of long standing and an inspiration to us all. Starting with an E \flat tuba when a high-school freshman in a small Ohio town, Olive "graduated" to BB \flat when she purchased her York recording tuba as a one-year-old horn in 1929. It still looks one-year-old, though Olive has really worked it over the past 59 years. She was graduated from the Dana Musical Institute in Warren, Ohio, and also holds a B.S. in Education from Ohio's Kent State University. Music, and her York, have been a life-long avocation for Olive, as twenty-five of her working years were as a professional librarian. She is retired from the library staff of Western State College. Her playing experience includes the Dana Band, Kent State Band, Western State's Band and brass ensembles, the Great Western Rocky Mountain Brass Band, the WSC British brass band workshops and many, many pick-up groups.



I met Olive at the WSC workshop in the summer of 1987, when we shared BB \flat responsibilities for John Kincaid. When hefted to playing position, Olive's York almost makes her disappear, though the sure, mellow notes are always there.

Olive lives in Gunnison, Colorado, with her son, still practices and plays regularly and helps out the College when they need her. Though I know many women who are fine tubists, I only know one who started as a teenager and has continued with the same tuba for years past retirement age. Olive and her York have matured together; may they continue to be a part of the brass band world.

Roy H. Hess
Rocky Mountain Brassworks

NABBA CHAMPIONSHIP

Continued from page 1

Nearly a century later there is a true renewed interest in British brass banding here in North America. Several professional brass bands are maintaining full seasons and amateur groups are forming all the time. The great expense of travel is a real stumbling block for the annual contest; one is amazed that such amateur activity is thriving. The vision and enthusiasm of the NABBA leadership is contagious. They have wrought much in a very short time. The Championship seems to be doing the job intended for it—to improve the standard of playing and to promote further involvement in brass banding. I was personally delighted to be a part of the Program (serving as Controller); I was amazed and pleased by all the bands, their dedication, their spirit, and the excitement of their music-making. Next year in North Carolina should be a banner contest.

Ronald W. Holz, Ph.D.
Asbury College

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