

The BRASS BAND Bridge



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

ISSUE 34
Nov. 1988

Courtesy of Musical Instrument Division, Yamaha Music Corporation, USA

CONTESTS, CONTESTS, CONTESTS

Interest in NABBA's **PREMIER NABBA VIDEO COMPETITION** is rising. The deadline for entries has been moved to November 1, 1988 to enable those interested groups to produce their video. Selected judges for this event are Paul Droste, President of NABBA and Conductor of the Brass Band of Columbus; Mike Swaffar, NABBA's Treasurer and accomplished musician; and yours truly, K.D. Kneeburg, Vice President of NABBA and former conductor of Sunshine Brass. The Technical Advisor will be Reese Edwards from North Carolina State University. My video player is warmed up and I am ready to be entertained so hurry with those entries!

CHAMPIONSHIPS VII

The seventh annual **NORTH AMERICAN BRASS BAND CHAMPIONSHIPS** will be held in Asheville, North Carolina on the weekend of April 14/15/16 at the Asheville Civic Center. Host hotel, The Quality Inn on the Plaza, will accommodate all participating bands as well as audience members. Entry packets were mailed out to all brass bands early this month. If you need further information concerning entry, contact J. Perry Watson (address on page 4). Deadline for entry is February 13, 1989 and must be submitted to Bert Wiley, Contest Host, (address on page 4).

SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIAL

The band chosen to perform the **GALA CONCERT** at Championships VII is a band we all know and admire. The Brass Band of Columbus, winner of the Championship Division of the 1986, 1987 and 1988 Contests, has been asked to perform the Saturday evening Gala Concert. They are planning to play *Ruslan and Ludmila* (Glinka)

and *Variations on Terra Beata* by James Curnow as well as featuring euphonium soloist Joel Pugh on Gregson's *Symphonic Rhapsody*. As part of the weekend's activities, the BBC will hold an open rehearsal Friday evening with all contest participants invited. I attended an open rehearsal of Black Dyke at the 1985 European Brass Band Championships and found that this type of exercise is valuable for conductors as well as band members.

TEST PIECES CHOSEN

The Championship Division test piece is *Plantagenets* by Edward Gregson. This work was the 1973 Regional Qualifying Test Piece for the National Brass Band Championships (Great Britain). It is published by R. Smith.

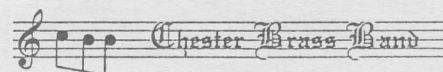
Honors Division bands will be challenged with Gustav Holst's famous *A Moor-side Suite*. This memorable test piece was written in 1928 for the Crystal Palace Contest (Great Britain). It is published by R. Smith.

American composer Stephen Bulla has written a new work entitled *City Scapes* which will be used as the Challenge Division's test piece. Published by Rosehill Music, one of the movements will test the bands' jazz style.

English Country Scenes by Eric Ball is the selection for the Youth Division. Published by Paxton Music, this three movement composition was commissioned specially for the Youth Section of the 1971 National Finals for the National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain.

From the Editors to all entering bands
..... **GOOD LUCK!**

CANADIAN BAND BUILDS THEIR "OWN PLACE"



Early June 1987 saw the sod turned on land leased to us by the Chester Village Church commission. During July and August the main building was erected by Roger Aalders (Bb tuba) and Ron Murphy (solo horn) and a variety of helpers from the band and friends. Work parties were ongoing and we were able to get permission to move in in January (1988). Finishing touches are still to be done, but we hope to have the official opening early this month. The main rehearsal hall is upstairs and features double doors leading to a balcony on which we hope to do some outdoor concerts. Half of the cost for the deck was donated by the widow and relatives of the late Carl Hiltz who was a valued member of the cornet section for many years, and this will be dedicated to his memory. Downstairs will have a recreation area, a library, kitchen facilities and washrooms, and storage room. Many businesses and individuals have donated services, materials, and cash along with some government funding, to enable this dream to come true, and so far we have been able to stay out of debt. Just to have our own facility has proved to be a tremendous asset, and well worth all the work required to achieve our "own place"! In just seven years the band has fully equipped itself with top quality instruments, uniforms, extensive library and now our band hall.

— Gordon McGowan, Conductor

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

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UPCOMING DEADLINES

January 15, 1989

April 15, 1989

July 15, 1989



By Don Kneeburg

JAMES SHEPHERD VERSATILE BRASS (POLYPHONIC) PRL035D

Side One: 1. The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba (Handel/Hopkinson), 2. Moonlight in Vermont (Blackburn & Suessdorf/Charleston), 3. Long John's Hornpipe (Wiggins), 4. Lazybones Blues (Phillips), 5. Three English Dances (Arnold/Walker).

Side Two: 1. Rhythm and Blues (Sparke), 2. The Little White Donkey (Ibert/Hopkinson), 3. Fantasie and Variations (Arban/Hopkinson), 4. Three Miniatures (Barry).

The James Shepherd Versatile Brass is a twelve member ensemble with conductor Garry E. Cutt. The instrumentation includes four players (doubling on cornet/trumpet/piccolo trumpet/flugelhorn), one tenor horn, tenor and bass trombone, euphonium, tuba, a keyboard player, and two percussionists. As the name implies the group performs a wide variety of music from classical to blues. The founder of the ensemble, James Shepherd, was for ten years principal cornet with the Black Dyke Mills band and is a legend in his own right. The tenor hornist is Gordon Higginbottom who will be remembered for his excellent performance at the NABBA Championship in Indianapolis. The other members are also fine instrumentalists. The two soloists featured are bass trombonist David Dransfield on *Lazybones Blues*, and cornetist Steven Ridler with the Arban *Fantasie and Variations*. Mr. Dransfield is an excellent trombonist and performs well in the blues style but plays a little on the sharp side of the pitch. Mr. Ridler, who plays a good deal of flugel on the album, presents a good performance of the Arban work but plays a little on the flat side. The Versatile Brass as a whole performs very well but this reviewer would like to hear a better quality of music. The transcriptions are already established pieces in the repertoire and they work well for the group. It is the newer literature on the album that suffers when compared to the old. Not that the old is better than the new, but that the new is not of the same quality as the old. This is a valuable recording for brass bands who are using smaller ensembles from the band to perform at various functions. It will provide not only good examples of performance, but also ideas on arranging for this size of group.

ON THE BANDSTAND

The Brighthouse and Rastrick Band
Conducted by Adrian Leaper and
Derek Broadbent
(POLYPHONIC) PRL 031D

Side One: 1. The British Bandsman (Broadbent), 2. Romance from *The Gadfly* (Shostakovich/Broadbent), 3. Alpine Samba (Broadbent), 4. Napoli (Bellstedt/Brand), 5. Jubilee Overture (Sparke).

Side Two: 1. Rhythm and Blues (Sparke), 2. Carnival of Venice (Arban/Catherall), 3. March to the Scaffold (Berlioz/Wilkinson), 4. Flower Duet from 'Lakme' (Delibes/Sparke), 5. Overture: Waverley (Berlioz/Snell).

This album, which is also available on compact disc, was recorded in 1986 and 1987 at two different locations. Derek Broadbent conducts side one with great success and a great sound from the Band in that recording site. Side two is conducted by Adrian Leaper in an environment that has little reverberation and gives the band a dull sound. The new march, *The British Bandsman*, by Derek Broadbent is well crafted but breaks no new ground in form or harmony. The *Romance* is a excellent transcription and should be a part of every band's library. Broadbent's *Alpine Samba* is also a popular number which U.S. bands could utilize well in program building. *Napoli* is performed by cornetist Roger Webster and is an excellent example of polished workmanship. This reviewer would like a little more excitement, but it is well played. Philip Sparke's *Jubilee Overture*, is another 'highlight' from this young composer, and it is the type of composition that could serve well as an opening or closing number.

Side two of the album, as mentioned earlier, suffers from a lack of reverberation and as a result gives the band a lifeless color. *Rhythm and Blues* by Sparke is a difficult number for ensemble precision and suffers on the recording from a lack of communication between percussionists and band. A good work but not easy to put together. (A better performance can be heard on the James Shepherd Versatile Brass album.) Robert Childs performs the *Carnival of Venice* with his usual outstanding technique. This performance includes cadenzas which were a part of the duet version performed at the 1984 Great Britain National Championships. Robert continues to be the best example of euphonium performance today. The transcription of the *March to the Scaffold* does not work well in the 'dead' acoustics of this album. In addition, this reviewer feels that the tempo is too fast to portray the seriousness of this march. Sparke's transcription of the *Flower Duet*

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AN AMERICAN IN TOKYO

During a recent business trip to Tokyo, I was pleased to have dinner with Mr. Toshikazu Nagasaka, conductor, and Mr. Hidenori Naraoka, Eb tenor horn player, of The Band of the Black Colt. My company's Tokyo office found Mr. Nagasaka's name in the telephone book and called to arrange the dinner. I learned of the band from *The World of Brass Bands* by Violet and Geoffrey Brand, who visited the Band several years earlier. When Mr. Nagasaka is not conducting, he works as a tax accountant.

Joining us was Mr. Eishu Kosuge, a business associate from Daiwa Securities America in New York, who translated when my very weak Japanese, their good English, and our natural language couldn't communicate our thoughts.

We met for a wonderful Chinese dinner high above Tokyo overlooking the Imperial Palace. We had many questions and comments for each other. The universality of both music and our brass band literature was obvious, even to those dining near us, as we discussed and sang our songs of mutual interest.

The single-tonguing used in the Band is the same as our "ta" attack. They also use the softer "da" attack when appropriate, which they know is the standard attack used in most British bands. Apparently the Japanese find the "ta" articulation very difficult to learn because "ta" is not a frequent sound in their language. Double and triple tonguing therefore also takes considerable work to develop. Both Mr. Nagasaka and Mr. Naraoka were outstanding at tonguing.

The literature used in Japan is identical to that used by British bands. Through recordings, both men were quite familiar with many American songs. For example, we jointly sang the beginning of Fillmore's *Rolling Thunder*. I gave them the Frederick Fennell edited arrangement of this march (published by Carl Fischer with the European brass band set, plus a transposed part for Eb soprano cornet) for the Band. The Band imports their music directly from publishers in the U.K. I suggested that Allegro Music in New Zealand also would be a good source.

To get arrangements of their own Japanese songs, the method is the same as in North America for our songs — the conductor usually arranges the song, with copyright permission, or adapts a concert band arrangement. (Shouldn't we create a new standard position — composer/arranger — in brass bands?) So, I have yet to find a good commercial source for Japanese songs arranged for brass band needed for my Around-The-Brass-Band-World concerts.

The instruments played by the Band are selected and owned by the musicians and are the same brands used in the U.S.A. and the U.K.

How is the Band funded? Simple, by contributions from the members.

I had one question for them about the relationship between the Japanese conductor and the band, which I thought would make conducting in Japan very difficult.

When Seiji Ozawa was much younger and had just returned to Japan from his American conducting education (please see the Sony videotape documentary *Ozawa*, which is quoted below), "his countrymen felt he has picked up too many western ways," especially the directness in correcting faults. "Japanese musicians are accustomed to respect from their conductors, and they especially resent outspoken criticism from one so young as Ozawa. A Japanese conductor is like a Buddha who knows everything but says nothing. Somehow the musician is eventually supposed to derive inspiration without being told anything directly. But Ozawa can't do that. If they're flat, he just tells them they are flat." The orchestra refused to play for Ozawa.

My question was whether this indirect method still exists in Japan and, if so, is the method frustrating and slow for both the conductor and band?

Mr. Nagasaka said that this is a famous story about Ozawa and, of course, occurred many years ago. He said, "Today, flat is flat!" As a conductor and musician, I was relieved.

With numerous concerts and brass band festivals, the British brass band movement is very active in Japan. Additional brass bands include the Conch-Shell Band (a very logical natural name), the Utsunomiya Brass Society, the Koriyama City Band, Tokyo Brass Concord, the Tamagawa University Masters Band, and The Black Colt Youth Band.

It was a great pleasure to talk with Mr. Nagasaka and Mr. Haraoka. When I am next in Tokyo I hope to hear a rehearsal or concert of their fine brass band.

Clearly, British brass bands are flourishing in Japan!

— Thomas A. Myers

Director & Founder of the Screamers & Lyric Brass Band



'87 Brass Band Festival (合同バンド客演指揮 中山富士雄) 於 練馬文化センター

出 The Band of the Black Colt / Conch-Shell Band

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Since this is the last issue of *"The Brass Band Bridge"* before the Christmas holidays, we would like to wish all of you a very safe and Merry Christmas!

—K.D. and Don Kneeburg, Editors



From The Editor's Desk

BRASS BAND TRIVIA

Many years ago, when first starting his business, Bill Lewington sold a piccolo trumpet to David Mason (of the Philharmonia) for the princely sum of £58 (about \$100.00). At the request of the Beatles, David recorded the high piccolo trumpet solo in the hit record *Penny Lane* using the same £58 piccolo trumpet. In August 1987, the trumpet brought a bumper pay off when at the auction sale of Beatle memorabilia, it was sold for an incredible £5,800! (about \$10,000).

(Information courtesy of *The British Bandsman*).



THE PROFESSIONAL'S CORNER

The Hannaford Street Silver Band had a very busy and exciting 87-88 season. The season opened on October 25th, 1987 with our own subscription concert entitled "Classics in Brass". Renowned Canadian composer Malcolm Forsyth came to Toronto to conduct the world premiere of his *Songs from the Qu'Appelle Valley*. This piece was commissioned by the HSSB with help from the Ontario Arts Council.

Our next concert took place four days later as the guests of the Barrie Concert Association. The HSSB has been fortunate in that they are increasingly being asked to be the guests of concert societies that have hitherto catered to orchestras. This was such an appearance. The concert sponsors had requested a program of music from the British Isles and so performed for them our "last night at the Proms" style "Calling All Britons" concert. Well known conductor/composer Howard Cable led the ensemble.

After a break of a few weeks, we started preparations for a six concert tour of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. As with all tours, this one had its problems. Anticipating a strike by Air Canada, we paid more for guaranteed seats on Canadian Airlines. The seats were fine but we found out when we arrived in New Brunswick that we were short five suitcases and all of our percussion equipment! The airlines security kept such a close watch on those items that they did not leave Toronto! Luckily our concert sponsors were happy to have us there - even without tuxedos and helped us borrow enough percussion equipment to allow the show to go on. The rest of our equipment arrived promptly at the hotel shortly after our concert ended. The joys of life on the road!

From Woodstock we traveled to Perth-Andover, St. John, Fredericton, Moncton and finally on to Halifax. In Fredericton students from four different school districts were bused in to an "open rehearsal" which we held the afternoon of our concert in that city. When possible, we try to combine master classes and instrument demonstrations for the local school boards where we tour. Everywhere we performed, we were met by appreciative audiences and helpful concert associations.

This tour resulted from the New Brunswick Arts Council hearing and liking a tape of us at the Ontario Arts Council's Contact '86, which is a sort of musical trade show where various concert organizations get to see what is available and conversely, musical organizations can try to sell themselves

to the prospective buyers. Because of the professional nature of the Hannaford Street Silver Band and the fact that we use twenty-two instrumentalists plus conductor, we find that we are competing with symphony orchestras in terms of our concert fees and the venues that are likely to hire us. The fact that the orchestras are often subsidized and we are not does not help. However in this case, the concert sponsors decided they wanted us and with the assistance of the Touring Office of the Canada Council, the tour was made possible.

Within a week of returning home, we headed to Orangeville Ontario for a guest appearance on their concert series and then back to Toronto for our own Christmas concert with choir on December 13th.

The New Year found the Hannaford Street Silver Band in a rather peculiar position. We have all heard the name of Dimitri Shostakovich as a composer of orchestral music but how many of our members know that he included a brass band in his opera *Lady MacBeth of Mtzensk*? Well - the score calls for Eb soprano cornets, Bb cornets, Eb altohorns, Bb baritones and basses. While on tour in the Maritimes a call came in asking whether we could provide the brass band for this opera in the Canadian Opera Company's January production. The answer was yes, and in fact the ensemble received much acclaim for their performance of the brass band parts.

The performances of *Lady MacBeth* were a good warm up for our next series concert which was entitled "Twentieth Century Brass". For this concert we were pleased to have composer Edward Gregson come over from England and conduct a program which included his own *Prelude for an Occasion* and *Dances and Arias*, Calvert's *Introduction, Elegy and Caprice*, McCabe's *Cloud-catcher Fells*, Sparke's *Jubilee Overture*, Howarth's *Parade*, Satie's *Gymnopedies* and Ravel's *Pavane*. It was an ambitious program, but an exciting one and Gregson was wonderful to work with. An added bonus was noted Canadian composer and student of McCabe, Gary Kulesha at the organ during the conclusion of *Cloud-catcher Fells*.

We concluded our series with a Victoria Day concert entitled "Fireworks". Wayne Jeffrey returned to the podium to conduct this program of "fireworks" for brass. Scott Irvine's new composition *Concertino for Euphonium* received its world premiere. The commissioning of this work was made

possible through a grant from the Laidlaw Foundation and featured Curtis Metcalf as soloist. We were also fortunate to premiere Gary Kulesha's arrangement of his *Romance* which was originally written for string orchestra. It works very well for brass and is superbly orchestrated.

We appeared as guests of the Guelph Spring Festival the following evening and played a variation of this concert for an estimated outdoor audience of fifteen hundred. Shortly after the final chords of the *1812 Overture* there was an hour long fireworks display. It was quite an event and a great end to the Victoria Day weekend.

July 10th found us once again performing at the Music At Sharon festival. Sharon Ontario was the home of the once famous Sharon Band; an ensemble that during their heyday won competitions as far away as Philadelphia. As with our previous appearance there, we performed a "turn of the century" program which included works by Mozart, Strauss, von Suppe, Sousa, various period solos and some arrangements by John Beckwith of early Canadian music. We concluded the concert with a sing-a-long of music of the era. Howard Cable was the very able conductor on this occasion.

Since then we have been gearing up for what appears to be an equally busy season this year. In a few weeks we will be showcasing at Ontario Arts Council's Contact '88 from which we hope to book some new tours. Our own series opens at the end of this month with a program of British and Canadian music. We head into the recording studios two days later to record the program for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's SM5000 label. This label has previously been the domain of the major symphony orchestras, and so we are very flattered to have been asked to record for it. Much as we would like it to be released immediately, it may take some time once it's in the "can". We are recording a CD's worth of music and hope to see it in that form on the shelves.

— Robert Sutherland



Critics Review continued from page 2

for soprano and Bb cornet is a must for all bands who wish to feature these instruments. This is an excellent work suitable for all programs. The Berlioz' *Waverley Overture* presents the same problems as the other classical transcriptions. The acoustics of the recording site and the doubtful quality of this work leave it lacking. As mentioned earlier, this recording is available on compact disc and is part of a growing number of brass band performances available in this format. Even though the discs are slightly more expensive, they make up for it in the quality and clarity of sound.

Contests continued from page 1

RULES CHANGED

The rule concerning substitution for performing bands has been changed to allow substitution as long as the maximum number of players does not exceed 30 on the stage at one time.

FUTURE VENUES

Championships VIII - April 7, 1990 -
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

May I congratulate Perry Watson for the article "What is the Tenor of Your Horn Section?" As a tenor horn player myself, living (unfortunately) in England, I am firmly of the opinion that the sentiments and beliefs expressed in the article are absolutely correct. In England, there was even an attempt to replace the tenor horns by using tenor cors-this was with my old band-Bessess O'th' Barn (though I was not playing with them, I took an active interest). However, the whole sound structure changed for, I believe, the worse and after awhile tenor horns came back in.

Maybe one reason some bands in the USA and Canada are anti-tenor horn is because they do not understand its potential, let alone realize it. You only have to hear the word 'peckhorn' to immediately downgrade mentally this underrated instrument.

Though carrying the unfair stigma of a second rate instrument, the tenor horn status can be elevated to its rightful place if the players who are now passive started to exploit its (and their own) potential.

- Gordon Higginbottom

Editor's Note: Gordon Higginbottom, virtuoso tenor hornist, has appeared with most top British Brass Bands as well as in Europe, Asia and North America. He is currently a member of the James Shepherd Versatile Brass.

THE BRASS BAND BRIDGE

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