

The Brass Band Bridge



Official Journal of the North American Brass Band Association, Inc.

August 1993 Issue 53

Great American Brass Band Festival 1993



The BBC (Paul Droste) on the Main Stage

How would a typical American describe a brass band? The answers would no doubt range from a small New Orleans jazz-band to the **Ohio State University Marching Band**. For the record, the latter consists of 10 soprano cornets, 50 cornets/trumpets, 18 flugelhorns, 28 altos, 28 bari/euphs, 28 trombones, 28 sousaphones, and 28 percussion—224!! Well, the range of groups at The Great American Brass Band Festival this year in Danville, Kentucky, June 11-13, came close to providing that total number of brass musicians and also demonstrated the wide interpretation of just what constitutes a brass band in the United States.

Dr. George Foreman, founder of the festival, allowed the British brass band

tradition a high profile this year, with three bands that fit that category [though RCBB deviates somewhat in instrumentation]: **River City Brass Band** (Bob Bernat), **Brass Band of Columbus** (Paul Droste), and **The Atlanta Temple Band** of The Salvation Army (Richard Holz). Each of these groups played at a very high level, treating the enthusiastic crowds [peak attendance estimated between 15,000 and 20,000] to excellent brass band music and performance.

The GABB offers a smorgasbord of brass in an ideal, family-oriented environment. Street parades, balloon races, food and souvenir vendors, historical exhibits, a band history conference, trolley tours, and even elephant rides provide

the outer framework for the main stage and town band shell performances that run all day Saturday and, on Sunday, after an ecumenical church service, from 11:30 A.M. to 9:00 P.M.

Besides British brass, historically-oriented groups included: 1) **Saxton's Cornet Band** of Lexington, KY, a Civil-War era group playing on either authentic or replica instruments; 2) **Dodworth Saxhorn Band** from Detroit, MI, also a mid-nineteenth century style group [Both groups, by the way, had members play from on top of *Mary the Elephant*, as the photo shows!]; 3) **Gold Rush Cornet Band**, from California, made up of outstanding studio brass musicians from Hollywood; and 4) the host band, **The Danville Advocate Brass Band**, seated in the style of a late-19th century American brass band—cornets, altos, euphoniums, trombones, tubas, percussion, plus several clarinets and a piccolo.

The **Olympia Brass Band** of New Orleans (trumpet, 2 saxes, trombone, tuba, and a side drum) has come every year since the start of the festival in 1990. Their joyful early jazz really gets the crowd going! Another small professional group, the excellent **Dallas Brass** (quintet), also provided an abundance of fine contemporary jazz-style arrangements.

If that wasn't enough, there was even a drum and bugle corps group—**Blue-**

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Moving?

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Editor's Notes

New Features Suggested for *Bridge*

How can *The Bridge* be of more use to our NABBA bands? One suggestion that has come forward calls for a *Band Bulletin Board*, wherein NABBA member bands would list things for sale (used instruments, equipment, music) or request items wanted. This would provide a good exchange of information, at no charge to the member band. Listings would be restricted to non-commercial matters. Advertisements for commercial ventures (CD sales, etc.) would still be handled through our advertising manager.

An *Upcoming Events* calendar will be added, as well, provided bands send their yearly concert schedule well in advance! For instance, when we start this in the November issue, it will list major concert events for the January—May season. Bands should be sure to include date, location, time, any ticket fees, and a telephone number at which further information can be received.

Please let me have your input so that we can implement these two features by our next issue. See reminder later in this issue.

Kudos for Kneeburg

I do not see how it is possible that Don Kneeburg's term as President of NABBA is already coming to a close! We send corporate thanks to Don for his steady, consistent guidance these past few years; we know his involvement with NABBA is not over. His leadership will be missed, but we know he will continue to be a solid supporter and contributor to our organization.

New Board Members

At the annual NABBA Board meeting seven new members will be added to the roster, along with two returning members. Don Stein from **Eastern Iowa** and Milt Hovelson from **Sheldon Theatre** were nominated to serve another two-year term.

New members are: Kenneth G. Bloomquist, director of bands at Michigan State University and conductor of **The Brass Band of Battle Creek**. Stephen Bulla, conductor, composer, and adjudicator; well-known for his many fine works for brass band, conductor of **The National Capitol Band** of The Salvation Army. Frank Hammond, conductor of the **NCSU Brass Band**, and local coordinator for the 1994 Championships. Bob Gray, from Toronto, Canada, principal cornet and assistant conductor of **The Weston Silver Band** [hard at work on the 1995 Championships]. Bary Hartman, long-standing member and associate conductor of the **Southeast Missouri British Brass Band**. Brian Sheehan, founder of the **Branson Brass Band**, Branson, Missouri. Mike Swaffar, not exactly a new member, having previously served as Treasurer, Membership Chair, and founding member of NABBA.

The present Board welcomes these new members, knowing their contributions will make NABBA a stronger and more vital organization.

Composer Profiles

In upcoming issues of *The Bridge* I will begin a series of articles profiling American brass band composers, starting in the November issue with James Curnow, with particular analysis given to Jim's *Trittico*.

In closing—"Hats off" to Tom Myers for his humorous, yet informative, percussion feature this month. I hope you enjoy the issue; please continue to send us concert programs and reports on your band's activities!

R.W. Holz

The Great American Festival continued from page 1

grass Brass, a typical American concert band—Napierville Municipal Band, and a roving brass quartet—Main Street Brass. The weekend was definitely a brass enthusiast's paradise.

The brass band movement should feel justifiably proud of the way the BBC, first winners of the GABB Tape Contest, represented us. While one of their outdoor concerts was rained out, by the time they took the main stage on Sunday, they were ready to let it all go! The same can be said for Atlanta Temple and River City. All three Sunday programs [not to take anything away from Saturday's], plus Atlanta Temple's playing at the well-attended church service, were exemplary in every way.

Because the performances are amplified soloists are especially appreciated. Within our own brass band sphere I should highlight the excellent presentations by Bernie Black (Cornet—River City), Eric Alexander (Trombone—Atlanta Temple), and four soloists with Columbus—Jon Domachowski (cornet), Dan King (cornet), Jeff Keller (trombone), and Joel Pugh (euphonium). Another NABBA member, Vince DiMartino (Lexington Brass Band) was called upon to solo with several groups—BBC, Dallas Brass, and, the host group Advocate Brass Band, for whom he serves as principal cornet.

The sound technicians do an outstanding job amplifying the wide range of groups. One can sit close to the stage and get a more acoustic experience, or one can sit 100 yards away and still have a fine, casual listening experience. The pace of the festival is designed to keep the audience's interest. Each group is allotted a 50-minute program [maximum], with a ten-minute break for set-up between each group.

The Great American Brass Band Festival is gaining national—even international recognition. Professional and amateur groups consider it a privilege to be invited to play. George Foreman's



Danville Advocate (George Foreman) and Vince DiMartino



Mary the Elephant and friends

vision is paying off. His support of NABBA and British-style brass bands this year and in the future is deeply appreciated. He has built an unbelievably rich occasion in which concept "brass band," whatever your definition, can be cherished and enjoyed to the fullest!

Try and get to Danville next year: June 17—19. The price is right! All perfor-

mances are free and open to the public. [The Band History Conference on Friday requires a small registration fee]

R.W. Holz

Photos by Byron R. Holz

The Percussionist

Snare Drum Selection and Tuning for the British Brass Band

By Thomas A. Myers

Former Editor, *The Brass Band Bridge*

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With about two spare hours in Boston during a recent business trip, I decided to visit Jack's Drum Shop to see if anything was new and to research the competition for a new percussion product I have developed.

For several years, I've wanted to buy a Noble & Cooley deep concert snare drum, so while at the store I decided to price a new one. They had none in stock but quoted a retail price of more than \$900. With their standard markdown, the price would be about \$610. That was still more than I could justify for my infrequent recreational playing or for my still inactive British brass band.

The Berklee School of Music is about a block from Jack's, so I walked in that direction looking for other music stores. Beyond Berklee I spied Daddy's Junky Music Shop, which I correctly guessed was an earthy store selling guitars, electronics, and drums. In the store's back corner was a counter displaying about a dozen snare drums in various states of decline. On the right end sat a Noble & Cooley Classic 7-inch drum, black with brass and chrome fittings, almost exactly my choice (8 inches was my preference, although I've never heard one).

Being a bit skeptical, I quickly guessed that it probably had been dropped or damaged in some way. The snare head was clear, so I checked inside the shell, which looked good. The drum's serial number indicated it had been made in 1988. I checked the top and bottom beds. They were still flawless! So far, no problems.

After a walk through the store, I returned to the drum, this time checking by sight and feel for rim damage. None. The drum sounded terrible, and I disagreed with the prior owner's choice of heads, snares, and tuning. Nothing seemed faulty other than a couple of missing tension bolts, which are easily replaced, and a layer of grease and accumulated dirt, easily removed.

The manager of the drum department said the drum was in mint condition. The price on the ticket? \$299. He said a student, who wanted the money more than the drum, sold it to him. That morning.

As you have guessed, I bought the drum and took it to my hotel room to disassemble and clean this dirty diamond. It turned out to be in really great condition. But how would it sound?

Why a second snare drum for the band, when I already have a very good Yamaha 5-inch concert snare (as well as a super Yamaha 36-inch bass drum)? The concept is simple. As a conductor, I want to get the most appropriate and colorful sound from my percussion. The shallow snare drum, tuned to be crisp but not too bright or metallic, is perfect for most concert work, including many contest pieces, circus marches, and show tunes. But for martial music, especially certain marches, you need the rich, dark sound that only a deeper drum can provide. You ask, why not select a new 12-inch-deep marching drum? Although I have tried those, I've never been able to tune them to get the exact combination of clarity, responsiveness, and the deep, dark sound I was seeking.

So that's why I tried the Noble & Cooley. And at \$299, I knew I could sell it at a profit if it didn't work.

Head and Snare Selection for a Dark, Rich, Crisp Sound

Now that I owned the 7-inch drum, my search began for the combination of snare head, batter head, snares, and tuning that would give me the dark, rich, and crisp but fairly wet sound I wanted.

When I started this search, I will admit that I was not at all a master drum tuner. Michael C. Hakes, who is (he was the senior percussionist for The Screamers & Lyric Brass Band before he left the region — he holds a master's degree in music and percussion from the University of Cincin-

nati College-Conservatory of Music), had given me two lessons in snare drum tuning a few years ago. Wisely, I kept my notes (included below). Since my testing required changing many drum heads in just a few days, Michael's lessons began to yield good results as my experience increased. And I've gotten much quicker at getting the heads tuned. I recommend two drum keys for faster work. The new Yamaha wide-handle key is great for quickly spinning the tension bolts in and out. For finer tensioning, I prefer the Pro-Mark® Ratch-It™ because its handle is high, leaving lots of room to tap the drum head near the rim to hear the pitch without getting my fingers all tangled up in the drum key wings. For fine tuning after the drum heads have stabilized, I prefer the precision of the Zildjian drum key.

What combination gives the sound closest to my imagined ideal? Actually, the sound is richer, more colorful, and more lively than I had expected — a really great sound. My current combination is a Remo Diplomat uncoated batter head, an Evans Genera 200 snare head, a Grover Pro Percussion Cable snare, and Noble & Cooley Zero Ring™ dampening rings. A Diplomat snare head would be a good alternative.

I should caution you that this set-up is for sensitive, expressive, and dynamic concert playing. The heads may be too thin to survive very long with high school players fresh from the vigorous strokes of marching band. (Of course, in marching band if they'd use thinner heads pitched lower to be richer, more sound and lighter sticking would result. Unfortunately, the extra-dry high-tension corps-style tuning seems to dominate — and lazy stick bouncing is easier than properly lifting the sticks — send those students back to the practice pillow! When tuning, they would be wise to consider the natural harmonics and spirit of the shell.)

The drumsticks used will alter the color of the sound as well. Tom Gauger #17 sticks are recommended for their focused, dark sound. Several models of Zildjian drum sticks also give good dark results.

The environment where you play (especially the floor) will greatly affect your drum's sound, so you may want to adjust your tuning and head selection to accommodate floors of wood, concrete, or carpet, as well as adjust for walls and ceilings

with varying degrees of sound reflection. Dr. Larry D. Snider, professor of percussion at The University of Akron, says "the acoustics where you play make all the difference in the sound you create. Often your rehearsal space will sound dramatically different than your performance location. The best answer is to have different drums with different tunings for each situation. Your objective is the right sound for the work being performed."

OK, if you can't afford that or you're pressed for time as always, you may never bother to change heads to adapt to the performance location, but you certainly should consider retuning to improve your sound in the new location, especially well in advance of the North American Brass Band Championships.

The head selections mentioned above were based on testing in a large room with carpet. If you play in a confined space with hard surfaces, you will find the Diplomat (or Ambassador) snare head and Ambassador (or Emperor) batter head easier on your ears.

Grover recently introduced its Silver Medium wire snare. This model improves considerably the bright crisp sound you'd expect from spiral snares and does so with a wide range in dynamics and responsiveness. The snare can be tightened across a fairly wide range of tension, from fairly loose for a wetter sound to quite tight for a restrained dryness that is just this side of choked. The range of acceptable tension surprisingly is much greater than with other snares where the optimum snare sound is achieved within a half-turn of the tension knob. This feature will give you a little more freedom in selecting exactly the degree of snare responsiveness you want. Grover Pro Percussion's Silver Medium wire snare would be an outstanding choice for your shallow, bright, crisp snare drum.

Grover also makes a Combination snare using both silver and bronze medium wires, which is the standard snare for the Grover Pro Percussion snare drum. Because I was searching for dark sounds, I did not test the Combination model.

With my new tuning skills, I should be able to achieve a nice deep throaty sound on a 12-inch-deep snare drum, so I might need one of those, too, for the day when the rich 7-inch sound just won't do!

Tom's Test Results Chart for Heads and Snares

Manufacturer	Model	Tom's Comments
Batter Heads		
Evans	Genera Dry	Dry, not much color. Not as dynamic as the Diplomat.
Remo	Diplomat	Clear, no coating. Very responsive, dynamic, good color, ripe peaches.
Remo	Ambassador	Responsive, some color, apricots.
Remo	Emperor	Heavy, a bit ringy, woody, green pears.
Remo	Emperor modified, coated	You carefully cut out the lower ply of the head, leaving a 1-inch dampening ring that extends from the rim toward the center. (This is a good test of your surgical skills. Use an Exacto knife to lift only the lower ply to cut a hole through which you slide in a pair of round-point fine scissors to cut the ply. Perfect circles only, please! Save the cut-out circle, put it on top of the batter head, and play the drum with the snares off to see what it sounds like — thicker is deeper.) Nice responsive dark sound. Ripe pears. Not quite as rich as the uncoated Diplomat.
Remo	Legacy LA	Easily dampened. Not a complex rich sound.
Evans	Hydraulic	Tubby, ringy, hard to dampen, great for tom-toms.
Snare Heads		
Evans	Genera 200	Very responsive snare action.
Remo	Diplomat	Quite responsive snare action.
Remo	Ambassador	Good snare action.
Remo	Emperor	Muted snare sound. Not enough vibration to project a bold snare sound. May work better with fortissimo playing. Slightly loosening (or tightening) the snare head should give you more snare sound.
Snares		
Custom Snare Cables	Blue Snare cable	Muted sound, not well defined, not too sensitive, good loud. This snare sound is mildly similar to the better Hinger snares no longer made.
Custom Snare Cables	Stainless Steel cable	Bright muted sound, not well defined, not too sensitive.
Grover Pro Percussion	Silver Medium wire	Great big bright crisp sound with a wide range of responsiveness available from tension adjustment. A sound superior to spiral snares, with a somewhat similar color. Very responsive, dynamic. If you want a high-quality bright sound, this is it.
Grover Pro Percussion	Bronze Medium wire	Fairly bright, better than most spiral snares, but not the color for this task.
Grover Pro Percussion	Cable	Dark, robust, thunderous, responsive. Without question, the best.
Kaman Gibraltar	20-strand spiral	Bright, metallic, trashy.
Noble & Cooley	Wire spirals with cam action	Interesting concept, but I couldn't get it to sound big, bold, and bright as it should. Current model is unacceptable. I hope they continue the R&D on this one — should be good.
Tama	20-strand spiral	Trashy, poorly finished (dented the snare head).

Tom's Notes on The Michael C. Hakes Method of Concert Snare Drum Tuning

1. Fit the bottom head first.
2. Very carefully smooth (using a cloth or very fine (400) sandpaper) both top and bottom edges of the shell beds if they are rough or uneven.
3. Lubricate bed edges with some light (valve) oil. Leave enough on the edge to have full oil penetration and a thin film of oil available on which the head can slide.
4. Install both heads to the point of light tension (all ripple is gone and a pitch is discernible).
5. Tune top head to desired playing tension. Sequence is — push down center of head (to seat it), tune, push down center of head, retune. (Dr. James L. Moore, retired percussion professor from The Ohio State University, adds a reminder to tune each set of opposing tension bolts [across the head].)
 - a. Tune harmonics. Your finger lightly touching the center of the head (while you tap the head lightly with a finger near the rim at each tension bolt) will help you hear the pitch. E-flat sounds good. (Others suggest G or A — listen to the natural harmonics of the shell to find the most resonant pitch.)
 - b. Tune fundamentals all around (at each tension bolt).
 - c. Last adjustment to the top head (again) after tuning bottom head.
6. Tune bottom a semitone (or anything less than a semitone — D) lower to create harmonic interference with top head. If you are good at this, you can entirely eliminate any ringing (otherwise Noble & Cooley dampening rings are good). Tuning the snare head a semitone higher than the batter head will brighten the drum sound.
7. Be sure to tune both heads separately (not on a stand or other location where both heads are allowed to ring freely).
8. Let the drum sit for a week or two (without playing — the toughest part), then retune. (Dr. Moore wonders whether this long is really necessary.)
9. Repeat the fine tuning after the drum has been played a few times.
10. Tom adds — you'll need to decide on the balance between the sound of the snares and the sound contributed by the drum. You can tune to get lots of snare sound and not much drum sound and vice versa. I prefer to have the sound of the drum and snares nicely balanced for a more interesting complex sound.

Bass Drum Notes

By Tom Myers from a discussion with Dr. James L. Moore, Percussionist with the Brass Band of Columbus and retired Professor of Percussion at The Ohio State University

For brass band, I prefer a bass drum of good quality with a diameter of about 32 inches and a depth of about 16 inches. Normally, a 36-inch by 18-inch bass drum is used for orchestra and concert band. That size also would be acceptable for brass band, especially if you already own that size drum.

I recommend calfskin heads for bass drum. They require more care and are more costly, but the warmth of the sound is well worth the money. Remo Fiberskin II heads are the next best alternative.

The need to regularly moisten calfskin heads is a myth. Just like your hands, the more you wet them, the more they dry out, so you should avoid dampening calfskin heads unless it is absolutely necessary. Moisturizing the heads with cream, oil, or saddle soap will ruin the sound. You do need to maintain the rim collar on the heads, which is best done by tightening the heads a few turns after you have finished playing. When you are ready to play again, you'll need to loosen the heads by the same amount.

Before installing the calfskin heads, you should smooth the drum's bearing edges, if necessary, and lubricate the edges with lanolin or wax to be sure the heads won't stick to the shell. A sharper bearing edge will give you a more resonant sound, a rounded edge a more dampened sound. (It is best not to try bearing edge adjustments unless you really know what you're doing.)

The tension rods should be lubricated so they turn easily and don't squeak when rotated. You'll also need to eliminate any rattles in the drum and stand that may develop while you are playing.

Just like most drums, the tension rods should be tightened equally at all points around the perimeter of the head. That's best done by checking the head pitch at opposing tension rods all around the head.



Temperature, humidity, and aging of the heads and snares will alter the sound of snare and bass drums. Shown are Tom's Noble & Cooley 7-inch snare drum (left) and Yamaha 5-inch drum, in flat and slanted positions.

Bass Drum Notes 2

There is an alternative theory for snare drum tuning that makes some sense — to tighten the four tension rods next to the snares a little more. The idea is to give the snare head under the snare a little more tightness to give a slightly more crisp sound.

Discussing the sound of the bass drum is a little difficult in writing. The heads should be tuned not to a specific pitch but to a rich timbre and resonance. The sound of a bass drum head can range from a dead flap sound, which is too low, to a ringing definite pitch similar to a timpani sound, which is too high. The sound should be as low as possible while maintaining resonance. The sound should have musicality. The vibration can be dampened if appropriate with your hand, which is part of the musical artistry of performance. The pitch should be low enough but not too low, and should not have a definite tenor-drum-like pitch similar to tuned bass drums in corps bands. (A fortissimo roll on a well-tuned bass drum will sound like high-quality thunder.)

Both heads should be tuned to the same sound-pitch for optimal resonance. If they are not the same, I don't think you get the most from the resonating cavity of the drum. With the snare drum, the two heads of differing thicknesses perform two different functions, so they should be pitched differently. But with the bass drum, the heads are the same and both can be played.

The striking spot will affect strongly the sound you create. Usually you play slightly

off center for the best quality, more near the center than you would on timpani. But for staccato notes, playing right in the center is the answer.

You also need to select the right beater for the sound you want. You need a heavy beater to pull out the deep resonant sound. Gauger, Payson, and American Drum are some of the good ones. Take, for example, the Gauger range of bass drum beaters. They offer everything from heavy soft beaters all the way to chamois-covered wood and plain wood. Beater variables are the hardness of the surface, the amount of surface contact, and the core density and weight, all of which combine to create different timbres and articulation.

Just like with snare drum, the environment where you play causes the sound to vary considerably, so you'll need to adjust the bass drum, beaters, and technique to get the right sounds for the works you're performing.

Since the bass drum sound has a directional characteristic, you need to consider the drum's placement and performing angle. Completely vertical, straight up, like the old criss-cross stands require, is a little awkward to play. Using a tilting stand with the drum tilted to a 30 to 45 degree angle, you can get good projection to the audience and also can see the drum head when you're playing, which I think is important. Some performers rotate the drum into a horizontal position, similar to timpani, which I don't recommend because the sound is driven into the floor and goes nowhere.

So we have covered all the major factors in the system of bass drum sound — the environment, instrument, heads, tuning, beaters, performance techniques, and positioning. Now all that is left is practicing and working for a few years to refine all this.

Tom says — If your local music store can't get the sticks, snares, or heads I've mentioned, try the friendly mail order folks at Lone Star Percussion in Dallas, Texas, at 214.340.0835; Drummers World in New York at 212.840.3057; or Steve Weiss Music in Philadelphia at 215.329.1637.

An Alternative Approach to Bass Drum Tuning. Tom's notes from a discussion with Dr. Larry D. Snider, Percussionist with The Akron Symphony Orchestra and Professor of Percussion at The University of Akron

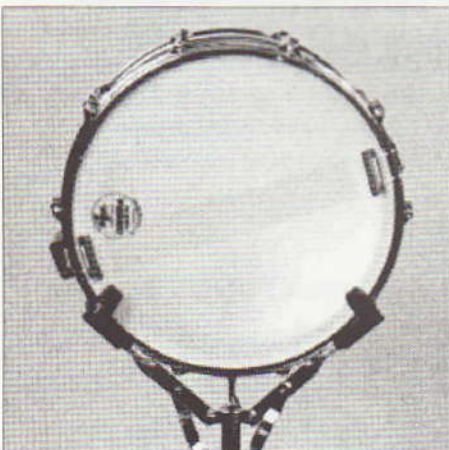
I prefer the traditional approach to concert bass drum tuning. Calfskin is the best sounding material for bass drum heads. Once they are installed, you should choose which side will be your batter head and resonator head. You will play only on the batter head.

The resonator head is tuned to be as loose as possible and still stay on the drum. Of course, it should be snug enough so that no hardware rattles.

The batter head is tuned about a half tone higher than the resonator head and should give a rich robust sound. It should not have a definite pitch (too tight), nor should it be slack (too loose). The tension should be uniform around the edge of the batter (and resonator) heads.

I believe this tuning will give you a better quality sound and better control of the drum's resonance.

I agree with all of Dr. Moore's other fine comments.



Best lowers — Evans Genera 200 snare head and Grover Pro Percussion Cable snares.



Get a percussionist with better technique than mine! — Tom



The Best Play Besson

THE CHILD BROS

"Besson Sovereign Euphoniums are the only instruments for the Childs Brothers. They produce a warm, mellow sound and remain responsive throughout the range. The swift, silent valve action has proved invaluable in both our band work and solo performances and when the pressure is on, it is reassuring to know we play Besson".

Besson Sovereign Euphoniums are completely compatible — Bob plays a 968 with the John Foster Black Dyke Mills Band while Nick plays a 967 with the Britannia Building Society Band.



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This will be my last correspondence with you as President of NABBA. We will elect a new slate of officers at our annual board meeting in Raleigh, NC, August 27—28. It has indeed been a pleasure to serve in this capacity and to work with all of the dedicated individuals that keep our organization strong and moving. Since its beginning in 1983, NABBA has continued to grow in membership size, and the bands participating in the championships have continued to grow in musical stature. Test pieces used in the championship division in the early years are now test pieces in lower divisions, which points to the improved ability of our ensembles. Many new bands have been formed throughout the United States and Canada with the assistance of our Summer Workshops sponsored by Yamaha and expertly directed by Paul Droste. Our organization is financially well in the black, and *The Brass Band Bridge* has increased in size and scope of articles, thanks to the dedicated editors. The brass band movement in North

America continues to grow and prosper!

At our board meeting in August, we will discuss plans for regional events that we hope will encourage more bands to participate in a festival atmosphere. I know that I can speak for **Sunshine Brass** in that our most exciting times were at the championships, and we had the extra bonus of improving our performance. I look forward to seeing many such events.

In closing, I would like to thank the officers of the Board for their excellent work in fulfilling the day to day operation of NABBA: Ron Holz [Vice President, *Bridge* editor, Contest Controller], Bert Wiley [Secretary, Membership Chairman, and liaison with all bands around the world], and Sara North, our faithful Treasurer and keeper of "the books."

Continue your love of performance and your dedication to brass banding.

Don Kneeburg, President

NABBA Championship Programs Available

Did you attend a NABBA Championship and wished you had purchased a souvenir program booklet...but didn't? Are you your band's Historian and need past programs from Championships to make your archives complete? Are you a band member who wants to show off your band's participation to Grandma Jones? Now is your chance! Past NABBA Souvenir Program booklets may be obtained by sending \$1.50 per program (for postage) to The Kneeburgs, 17304 Lynnette Dr., Lutz, FL 33549. Please specify the year(s) requested. Make check payable to Don Kneeburg.

Copies Available

Champ. I (West Chester)	1
Champ. IV (Bloomington)	5
Champ. V (Dublin)	20
Champ. VI (Hammonton)	30
Champ. VII (Asheville)	16

New Bands

NABBA welcomes the following bands, either newly formed or new to NABBA. Addresses are available from NABBA Secretary Bert Wiley:

Concert Brass of Bellville; Bellville, Ontario, Canada

Farragut Brass; Bainbridge, Washington

University of Virginia Brass Band; Charlottesville, VA

West Royalty Brass; West Royalty, Prince Edward Island, Canada

Rumors have reached our Secretary that there is a brass band in the process of formation at **Old Dominion University**. Also, **Imperial Brass**, from New Jersey, are currently under the direction of Brian Bowen, noted composer and former director of **The New York Staff Band**. They recently were featured at The New York Brass Conference.

Brass Band Reports and News Items

The **Mississippi River Brass Band** has been a band divided this summer. They are not having differences over music selection, uniforms, or rehearsal times. The band has been separated by their namesake—The Mississippi River! A concert was in the works for July 29, in conjunction with The Salvation Army, and the members had begun to prepare for it when the levee broke, flooding the last available bridge and route between Missouri and Illinois. In order for the group to rehearse, the Missouri faction would have had to make a four-hour, one-way trip. Two-thirds of the alto horn and trombone sections live in Missouri, as well as one-half of the tuba and percussion sections.

As much as members missed the music making and comradery, their jobs and businesses had to come first. This is

Band Bulletin Board

Nabba Member Bands may list:

Non-commercial items for sale

- Used Instruments & Equipment
- Used Music Sets

What your band is looking for

- "WANTED" Items

NOTE: No commercial sales (tapes, CDs, etc.)

Please be sure to include the address, and telephone number (fax), of the person to be contacted.

Coming Events

NABBA Member Bands

may have their *major* concert events listed in *The Bridge*.
The November issue will cover January – May 1994.

BE SURE TO INCLUDE:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| • Date | • Short description, if appropriate |
| • Location | • Address and telephone (fax) of |
| • Ticket information | contact person for further information |

especially true since so many people in the area have lost their jobs either to the economic impact of the flood or the lack of transportation due to the flood waters. Those members who are teachers may not be able to reach their schools due to the water, or they may be transferred to other area schools until the water recedes.

So, when your band has a rehearsal scheduled and you say, "Oh, I can't get there," don't say it—it may come true! [Debra Priest, Band correspondent]

Smoky Mountain News. After more than ten years as the **Smoky Mountain British Brass Band**, the board and band voted unanimously to drop "British" from their name and are now known as **The Smoky Mountain Brass Band**. This was done to avoid confusion on the part of new patrons of the band, as well as to more accurately identify the band as an American brass band. The band will always maintain the British instrumentation.

The band enjoyed being the official band for The Grandfather Mountain Highlands Games. This is the fourth year the band has opened the games in Linville, NC. Earlier in the summer the band was part of the Monday night series at The University of North Carolina in Asheville. The band is looking forward to an extremely busy year and are officially committed to attend the 1994 Championships in Raleigh. [Bert Wiley]

The Brass Band of Columbus' summer season has included a featured concert at The International Trumpet Guild's Conference at the University of Akron, where the group was joined by soloists Phil McCann (cornet) and Brian Bowman (euphonium) and guest conductor Ronald Holz. Later in June the band played at the resort auditorium in Lakeside, OH and was featured at the annual conference of The American School Band Director's Association [in addition to the GABB Festival reported earlier]. During July the band held several recording sessions, to be continued

in the Fall, leading to a new CD release sometime in 1994. [Paul Droste]

The Eastern Iowa Brass Band (John W. de Salme, Sr.) presented the third concert in their 1992-93 subscription series on April 24, 1993. Their 1993 NABBA contest selections opened the program while the second half of the concert featured Jerry Bilik's *Civil War Fantasy* (arr. Bill Himes).

The "Eastern Iowans" began their busy summer performance itinerary on May 29 at Cedar Rapids' 13th Annual Celebration of the Peoples of America Ethnic Fest '93, performing selections representing the Irish, Spanish, German, Czech, Russian, and English, with the addition of Czech polka dancers in authentic dress. A special guest performance on June 5th at the North Iowa Band Festival in Mason City (home of Meredith Willson) included Karl King's *The Home Town Boy* and Willson's own *Seventy Six Trombones*. On June 25 the band opened the week long Freedom Festival in Cedar Rapids with a variety of patriotic selections and on June 26 they were the featured band in the Vinton, Iowa "Popcorn Days" celebration.

Other concerts in the 1993 summer schedule included a performance on July 10 at the Buzzard's Glory Quarry (outdoors along the Cedar Valley Nature Trail); for the West Branch, Iowa (birthplace of Herbert Hoover) concert series on July 23; at the Johnson County Fair, in Iowa City, on July 29; a special fund raiser and outing for the band members and families at historic Galena, Illinois on September 4; and for "Victorian Day" at the Brucemore Historic Mansion in Cedar Rapids on September 5.

A special emphasis featuring the talent within the band highlighted the 1993 summer programs. Works programmed included *Stars and Stripes* (Sousa/Bernat), *Two of the Tops* (Cornet duet—Carr), *Trumpet Blues and Cantabile* (Harry James/Geldard), *His Eye Is On the Sparrow* (Bulla), *The Lark In the Clear*

Air (Langford), *Shoutin' Liza Trombone* (Fillmore), *Tuba Tiger Rag* (Marshall), and *Alpine Samba* (Percussion feature—Broadbent).

The Eastern Iowa Brass Band accepts all interested brass players as potential members and their summer roster has grown to 45. [John W. de Salme].

Triangle Brass appeared in the Triangle area three times over the course of the summer. Two concerts were given in the Sarah B. Duke Gardens on the campus of Duke University, Durham, NC. The theme of the first concert was "Great Showtunes" and featured Denis Wright's arrangement of selections from *Carousel* (Rodgers), Eric Ball's arrangement of familiar tunes from *The Wizard of Oz* (Arlen), and *Summertime* (Gershwin), showcasing E Flat Cornet soloist Richard House. The second concert was entitled "A Sousa Concert" and embodied the spirit of concerts given by the Sousa Band earlier in this century by presenting a mixture of serious and popular music. The serious program entries included *Elsa's Procession* (Wagner/Himes), and *Nimrod* (Elgar/Wright). The lighter side of the program consisted of *Seventy-Six Trombones* (Willson), *Doyen* (Richards), *British Eighth* (Elliott), and two Sousa marches—*The Black Horse Troop* and *Stars and Stripes Forever*. As a diversion from the usual, the Trevarthen arrangement of Goedicke's popular *Concert Etude*, usually presented by a solo trumpet or cornet, was presented by euphonium soloist Randy Guptill. The Band's third major performance of the summer was a concert at the Fourth of July Celebration held by the towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro, NC at Kenan Stadium on the campus of The University of North Carolina. As with any traditional July 4th, patriotic music was the order of the day, as the band performed for a crowd of 20,000+ prior to an impressive display of fireworks. [Connie Verner]

New Brass Band Music Review

The Weston Silver Band (Toronto) presented two "Early Bird Special" concerts this summer. The first, on June 5th, consisted of a joint concert with the fine **London Citadel Band** (Bram Gregson) of The Salvation Army. The second saw the band join hands with **The Young Ambassadors Brass Band** (Frank Wolff) from Great Britain. The band's regular concert series for 1993-94 includes three programs, as follows: October 24—Anniversary Concert, with guest trumpeter Johnny Cowell; December 5th—Christmas Concert, with **The Earl Haig Collegiate Concert Choir**; and April 3—Spring Concert, featuring band soloists and sectional features. For further information contact **The Weston Silver Band**, P.O. Box 513, Station A, Weston, Ontario, Canada. [Bob Gray]

River City Brass Band, in addition to their highly successful regional subscription series [reported in last issue of the *Bridge*] will be starting two more "second homes"—Jamestown, NY and Parkersburg, WV. During 1993-94 **The American Brass Ensemble**, made up of **RCBB** personnel, will make its debut; the group consists of a 12-piece brass and percussion chamber group. Contracted performances outside the subscription series include: November 20-21: Middletown and Worthington, Oh; December 18: Aurora, IL; January 13-22: Florida/South Carolina Tour; February 27: Pasadena, CA at the Ambassador Auditorium (Return engagement). For further information on the band, call 412-322-7222. [Bob Bernat]

The Lexington Brass Band, now incorporated and granted tax exempt "non-profit" status, has projected its 1993-94 concert season: Sunday, November 21 (Central Christian Church, Lexington); Sunday, February 13, at The University of Kentucky, featuring Philip Smith of The New York Philharmonic, guest artist; Sunday, March 27, location to be announced. For further information, please call 606-858-3511 Ext 2246 [R.W. Holz]

By Dr. Paul Droste

David Willcocks/Transcribed Ray Steadman-Allen; and John Rutter/Peter Graham. *Carols for Christmas*. Rosehill Music, 1993.

Carols for Christmas, a series of Christmas carols for choir as arranged by David Willcocks, has been available since 1961. Over thirty years later, Rosehill Music has published a brass band version of five of these carols. Four of these transcriptions are by Ray Steadman-Allen, a very talented and prolific brass band composer and arranger. The four carols are: *O Come All Ye Faithful*, *Once In Royal David's City*, *The First Nowell*, and *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*.

Each carol can be played by brass band alone, or in conjunction with the original choir arrangement, as published by Oxford University Press. These arrangements are published separately so that they can be used as a set or individually. *O Come All Ye Faithful* is close to eight minutes in length (with seven verses), while the other carols are each around four to five minutes in length. Using the arrangements for festive accompaniment to congregational singing is also an added feature bands could make use of during the holiday season.

The vocal parts are included at the bottom of the full brass band score. Within the several verses of text the choir sings in unison, four-part harmony, and melody with descant. The harmonizations are traditional, and the keys remain unchanged throughout each carol. In the brass band parts there is variety in the scoring/instrumentation from verse to verse. Two of the carols, *O Come*, and *Hark! The Herald*, have fanfare introductions.

Here is a nearly ready-made Christmas concert. Accompany the local choir, congregation, or play the carols with just the brass band. They are familiar and well-loved carols that audiences look forward to hearing during the Christmas season. The brass band parts

are simple and straight-forward.

The fifth carol in this set is *The Shepherd's Pipe Carol* by John Rutter. It is arranged for brass band (with the choir parts) by Peter Graham. This is a contemporary setting with meter changes and increased technical demands. For the brass band this will be the most interesting and challenging carol of the set.

Brian Bowen. *Folk Heroes*. Rosehill Music, 1993.

This rhapsody for brass band contains several familiar melodies, such as *Lavender Blue*, *Johnny Todd*, *O Soldier, Soldier, Won't You Marry Me?*, *An Eriskow Lilt*, and an extensive finale based on *For He's A Jolly Good Fellow*.

Brian Bowen is a well-known composer and conductor, formerly of England, and now residing in New Jersey where he directs **Imperial Brass**, having led **The New York Staff Band** from 1986 to 1992. *Folk Heroes* is a miniature gem, and should be a delight for both players and audiences. For the players there is melodic interest and technical challenge in all parts. There are solos for the E Flat soprano cornet, euphonium, and flugelhorn, plus a melody for the tubas. There is enough range and technical demand to make this a piece for an adult band at the NABBA Challenge or Honors Section level. The scoring has variety, and there are enough meter and key changes, plus exposed passages, to keep all the players involved. Musically it would have appeal for audiences all ages.

The length is around six and a half minutes. The printing is large and clear, and there is a full score. Give this piece a place on your next concert. The band will enjoy rehearsing it, and the audience will enjoy hearing it.

Brass Band Recording Reviews

While most of the material received by *The Bridge* for review were brass band discs, I have included some fine chamber brass releases. All of the reviews are by myself (R.W. Holz), except as noted. Special thanks to Paul Droste (**Kingdom Brass Quintet** review) and Skip Gray (**British Tuba Quartet** review) for sharing the load. Skip Gray shares the leadership of **The Lexington Brass Band** with me and, as Professor of Low Brass at The University of Kentucky, is one of the leading tuba players in America. I placed the Christmas re-

cordings at the conclusion of this section and have grouped them together in a slightly different fashion. When the total time [TT] of a recording is not listed, that is because the disc does not provide that information.

Elite Syncopations. The British Tuba Quartet. (Stephen Mead, Michael Howard—Euphonium; Ken Ferguson, Stuart Birnie—Tuba). Polyphonic QPRZ 012D. TT 64:55. Program: *Ruslan and Ludmilla Overture* (Glinka/Ferguson/Smalley), *La Danza* (Rossini/

Smalley), *Minute Waltz* (Chopin/Mead), *Fantasy* (Martino), *The King's Hunt* (Byrd/Howard), *Canzona—La Spiritata* (Gabrieli/Rauch), *Trepak* (Tchaikovsky/Smalley), *Chit Chat Polka* (Strauss/Smalley), *Fascinatin' Gershwin* (arr. Ferguson), *A Nightingale Sang in Berkley Square* (Sherwin/Smalley), *42nd Street* (Dubin & Warren/Minerd), *On My Own* from *Les Miserables* (Schoenberg/Mead), *Elite Syncopations* (Joplin/Picher), *Rumpole of the Bailey* (Horovitz), *Puttin' On the Ritz* (Berlin/Gout), *Three Movements* from *Quatre Chansons* (arr. Dempsey), *Grand Slam* (Niehaus), *Tuba Blues* (Wolking).

Flawless technique, perfect blend of sound, and unyielding artistic taste. These paramount goals are realized consistently in this fine recording by **The British Tuba Quartet**. From the opening strains of Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmilla Overture* and *La Danza* by Rossini, followed by Chopin's *Minute Waltz*, the listener experiences undaunted artistry of which most musicians only dream. *Elite Syncopations*, the third release by this quartet in as many years, not only places these players at the top of the low brass ensembles, but as a major chamber group on today's international performing scene.

Transcriptions and arrangements comprise the bulk of the recording, as there are so few original tuba-euphonium quartet compositions of merit, especially at the "artist" level. Of special note is the *Fantasy* by Ralph Martino, originally written for the **United States Navy Band Tuba Quartet**. The work's light, popular flavor serves as a nice breath of air between the classical *tour de force* arrangements which round out the disc's first half.

Fascinatin' Gershwin takes the group squarely into the popular realm and although the nice addition of percussion produces a new sound dimension, the style is somewhat dated in this medley of Gershwin favorites. The performance of *A Nightingale Sang* is as beautiful a rendition as can be heard of this standard ballad. *On My Own*, from

EUPHONIUM

This Conn double-bell Euphonium (a Greek word meaning 'good sound') was built in 1907 and had a gold wash finish. It was given by the Conn Company to Oscar Hart, who may have played in John Philip Sousa's band. After Sousa retired Mr. Hart supposedly took over the leadership of Sousa band members who continued playing in St. Petersburg, FL. A.E. Maugans of St. Petersburg played baritone in a band Oscar Hart led and later either inherited or bought the euphonium from Hart. Mr. Maugans played this horn until his death in 1974. After his death Mrs. Eleanor Maugans gave the horn to Don Thompson, a family friend and fellow baritone player.

Don Thompson had the euphonium overhauled and replated with bright nickel and with gold bells. Don has been playing this euphonium in **The Northwinds British Brass Band** for seven years and in the **Communiversi** (community

+ university) **Band** for fourteen years, both of which rehearse at The University of Wisconsin, Center-Barron County in Rice Lake, Wisconsin.

Don, now 71 years old, has played



Conn Double-Bell Euph, 1907

the baritone for about 60 years. He has been with **Northwinds British Brass** ever since its first rehearsal, in late 1986, and its premier concert, in March 1987. His home in Amery, Wisconsin, is 50 miles from Rice Lake, making for two 100-mile round trips per week in order for him to participate! [Bert Wiley]

the Broadway hit *Les Miserables*, is a true highlight of the popular selections and is a very nice arrangement by Stephen Mead.

In their three recordings **The British Tuba Quartet** have established themselves as the foremost group of its kind in the world today. Because of the limited literature available, their repertoire has been mostly arrangements and transcriptions. Let us hope that, in addition to their artistic leadership, the group will also seek and inspire new works specifically for tuba-euphonium quartet.

If you are a tuba or euphonium player, or would like to hear the ultimate low brass section, this recording is a must!

Skip Gray [In 1992 Professor Gray served as conference director and host for T.U.B.A.'s International Conference]

The Music of Goff Richards. The BNFL Band (Richard Evans). Polyphonic QPRL 055D. TT 62:14. Program: *Trailblaze*, *Hock* (Bill Carter, soloist), *The Golden Lady*, *Cross Patonce*, *Barnard Castle*, *Confection For Brass*, *Justice With Courage*, *Pasadena* (arr. Richards), *One Day* (Russell Gray, Soloist), *Bishops's Blaize*, *A Saddleworth Festival Overture*, *The Jaguar*, *Continental Caprice*.

I first encountered the fine arranging skills of Goff Richards in his settings for that superb British vocal ensemble, **The King's Singers**, and, in particular, his lovely five-song set *Songs of the Auvergne*. What a delight to see some of that fine music reshaped into an excellent test-piece-like work, *Cross Patonce*, a twelve-minute work that is the serious anchor for this finely played disc by **British Nuclear Fuels Band**.

A great deal of Richards' music is unabashedly popular and, for lack of better description, "light." One should not, however, fall into the trap of denigrating such production. His craftsmanship is first rate and he always places music first, effect second. As Richards says in the liner notes: "I try to write music that is accessible to most people—



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music that musicians will want to play and that audiences will want to hear again." The selections on this disc provide ample justification for his focus and philosophy, showing him to be at ease in a wide range of contemporary styles, as well as traditional marches and novelty features. I found this program to be delightfully relaxing and engaging. The band plays in the solid, steady way that one would expect from such a top level group. My only disappointment came in wanting more information on Richards and the music in the notes provided, but I am sure he would say that his music speaks for itself. It certainly does on this disc.

European Brass Band Championship 1993—Plymouth, England. Featuring various bands of the contest and Gala Concert, including **Brass Band Berner Berland** (James Gourlay), **Brass Band Willebroek** (Frans Violet), **Williams Fairey Engineering** (Peter Parkes), **Britannia Building** (Howard Snell), and **Massed Bands* of Bodmin Town, Bri-**

tannia Building, and Sweb Camborne Town. Polyphonic QPRL 059D. TT 76:02. Program: *West Country Fantasy* (Langford)*, *Sounds* (Golland), *I Hear You Calling Me* (Marshall; Mark Wilkinson, soloist), *Variations on an Enigma* (Sparke), *I Got Rhythm* (Gershwin/Fernie), *The Old Chalet* (arr. Snell), *Endearing Young Charms* (arr. Boddington; Nicholas Childs, soloist)*, *Greensleeves* (arr. Snell)*, *Cambridge Variations* (Sparke).

Of the eleven bands competing in this year's European, two continental bands came away with three of the prestigious awards. This live recording provides us with the winning performance of the set test-piece *Sounds* (Golland), **Brass Band Berner Oberland**, from Switzerland, the winning "choice" performance of *Cambridge Variations* (Sparke) by **Williams Fairey Engineering**, and one selection from the overall winner in points, **Brass Band Willebroek**, a Dutch band, with *Variations on an Enigma* (Sparke). While the fact that two continental bands did so well has

surprised some folk, it was not a surprise to those who have been following the tremendous rise in musicality and technique among these bands. Listening to the disc, however, without the benefit of all the performances, I am struck by the slightly superior playing, at least with this sample, of **Williams Fairey**. That is not to take anything away from the other two bands! I especially appreciated getting another fine reading of John Golland's *Sounds*. I met Golland several years ago, finding him to be a most articulate composer/musician. His death, just at the time of the European, is a great loss to brass banding. While dating back quite a few years, the work finally saw the light of day with David King and **Black Dyke Mills** for the 1991 BBC Festival of Brass. Philip Sparke must be setting something of a record with the number of his pieces that place tops in these contests! Both works get treated with respect here! The remainder of the disc comes from the Gala Concert, with competent Massed Band* items, including the delightful Langford work (with drunken trombone, et al.). **Britannia** gets a few short solo spots, which they pull off as expected—class act! The two soloists, Wilkinson on cornet, and Childs on euphonium, provide beautiful readings—Wilkinson, a subdued, lyrical charm; Childs, a technical showcase. Polyphonic seems to have really mastered the live recording process! They are to be congratulated for giving so many of us who can not get to these events an excellent portion of what was surely an outstanding day of brass music.

Spectrum: The Music of Gilbert Vinter, Volume 1. Williams Fairey Engineering Band (Peter Parkes). Polyphonic QPRL 058D. TT 75:03. Program: *Spectrum*, *Vizcaya*, *Mattheson's Air* (Bryan Taylor, cornet soloist), *Salute To Youth*, *Centenary March*, *Entertainments*, *Lisbon Carnival*, *Challenging Brass*, *James Cook—Circumnavigator*.

The production in the past few years of a number of discs dedicated to indi-

vidual brass band composers—Eric Ball, Robert Simpson, Edward Gregson, Goff Richards, Gilbert Vinter—underscores the health and the artistic merit of the brass band subculture. This particular effort has achieved excellent results, with producer Philip Sparke, engineer Michael Moor, and the musicians under Parkes' secure baton providing a veritable Vinter feast, over seventy-five minutes worth! Why, this band takes the "Relaxation" [!!] movement of *Salute To Youth* at the break-neck pace marked in the score, no mean achievement.

In recent revisionist history of the brass band movement Vinter is frequently recognized as one who "dragged brass bands, kicking and screaming," into the twentieth century. In reality, the story is much more complex than that. Certainly Vinter provided new rhythmic and harmonic intensities that had not been consistently heard in brass band music until his appearance in the early 1960's. I find, however, as I reflect upon his influence and position in the movement while listening to this disc, that he is a natural successor to Eric Ball, Denis Wright, and Henry Geehl, to name but a few men who majored in brass writing, to say nothing of Holst, Ireland, Howells, and other major figures of 20th-century British music who wrote for brass band. His formal

achievements, whether in programmatic or variation-based works, clearly continues and expands their general style and formal schemes, while exploring new instrumental effects. One is astounded to consider how *Spectrum* was considered so radical in 1969 when it seems such a logical tonal brother of works like *Journey Into Freedom* and *High Peak* by Eric Ball from the same decade. It is the surface material that made it seem more modern; but then, that is frequently the case! The only large work unfamiliar to me was *Vizcaya*, a rhapsodic work based on Basque folk music. Vinter's lyricism, the lyricism of the middle movement of *Salute To Youth*, or *Elegy* from *Entertainments*, is what will keep his name honored in our movement when all the fireworks are forgotten. He is a composer who speaks to us from his heart as well as his mind. I highly recommend this recording to all serious students of brass music and I can not wait for *Volume II*. One final note: unlike the Richards CD reviewed above, this disc contains ample and edifying notes on the composer and music, presumably supplied by the producer, Philip Sparke.

Spiritual To The Bone (Arrangements for **Trombone Ensemble** by Stephen Bulla and William Broughton). Eric Alexander, William Broughton, Herb Bruce, Stephen Bulla, Willis Howell, Christopher Priest—**Trombone Ensemble**; Rhythm Section from "The President's Own", **The U.S. Marine Band**. The Salvation Army/Atlanta. CRD018. TT 40:43. Program: Broughton arrangements—*Swing Low, Go Down Moses*, *Heaven Bound*, *Little David-Play*, *Deep River*, *Nobody Knows the Trouble*; Bulla arrangements—*Dry Bones*, *Motherless Child*, *Spiritual to the Bone*, *Jericho*, *Michael*—*Row the Boat*.

Holy slushpump! What a fun album! Six outstanding Salvationist musicians from the Southern U.S., including the two arrangers, were brought together to read down these double-quintet charts over previously-recorded rhyth-

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mic tracks. The result is a remarkably "live" and engaging session, with some fine jazz solos, especially by Alexander and Bruce. Bulla and Broughton are not exactly "slouches," either, and are heard to excellent effect on solo features. Willis Howell is monstrous on bass trombone, too, while Chris Priest balances him on the low end as a solid ensemble member. Even the notes on the music were provided by a Salvationist who is also a jazz trombonist, Professor Tom Walker, Oklahoma State University, who could not make the recording session. Of course, most of these players have training and experience in contemporary studio playing. The arrangers are no strangers to the brass band field, both having enriched considerably both SA and contesting repertoires. While the basic focus is on jazz arrangements of familiar spirituals, the two arrangers each give an original tune: the title tune, *Spiritual To The Bone*, a whimsical bossa nova by Bulla; *Heaven Bound*, a Broughton "ballad." This should be a best seller! My only regret is the relatively short length—I wanted more!! The listener does not tire of the trombone timbre too easily as the arrangers have skillfully used a host of mute combinations and also exploit the absolute outward limits of the trombone and bass trombone range. The recording mix is outstanding and the package, with good graphics and informative notes on all aspects of the project, is handsome. I want Volume II of this one, too.

NABBA

Championships XII
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Three Christmas Brass Recordings

For Unto Us. **The Kingdom Brass Quintet.** CD \$15.95/Cassette \$9.95, available from Ludwig Music, Cleveland, or from the quintet, P.O. Box 10619, Cleveland, OH 44110.

Do you want some variety in your Christmas listening, yet want to stay within the brass family? If so, there is a "new recording of old seasonal favorites" by **The Kingdom Brass Quintet** that is enjoyable, creative, and still traditional in scope.

The musical arrangements are mostly by members of the quintet. They are fresh sounding, imaginative, and easy on the ear. The recording starts with a majestic *O Come All Ye Faithful*; then goes right into a jazzy *It's Beginning To Look A Lot...*, followed by a spritely medley of *Jingle Bells/Sleigh Ride*. A cute medley of Santa tunes features the tuba, and a tasteful version of *Silent Night* leads to an interesting mixed-meter romp through *Santa Claus Is Coming To Town*. Percussion parts are included in a few of the arrangements.

The quintet is based in northeast Ohio and this is the first in a projected series of recordings. The quintet avoids the traps of other brass groups by not overplaying the loud dynamics, al-

though there is an occasional pitch problem and some borderline (heavy) articulation. The sound, overall, is clean, balanced, and lyrical. This is a versatile group, comfortable in many musical styles.

Paul Droste

Christmas With the Sovereign Brass. **The Sovereign Brass Sextet.** The Salvation Army/Toronto. WRC8-6558.

This group's first album, *Toccata*, was reviewed favorably in the February '93 *Bridge*. Twenty-Nine carol arrangements, sixteen of them arranged by William Himes, make for cheerful holiday listening. Besides Bill Himes's *Christmas Short and Suite*-style tunes, David Chaulk, euphonium player in the group, provides two, and Barrie Gott, one, carol arrangements. The familiar Bill Holcombe adaptation of *The Twelve Days of Christmas* serves as the center piece. Additional items are drawn from Salvation Army brassband carol books: *Carolers' Favorites*, and *Christmas Praise*. Ted Marshall, the highly rated recording engineer, has given the group an excellent presence. Competently played and recorded—an entertaining package!

Christmas Presence. National Capital Band (Stephen Bulla). The Salvation Army/Atlanta. CRD 017. Program: *Christmas Presence* (Sound montage), *Overture—Proclamation of Christmas* (Bulla), *Suite—The Festive Season* (Calvert), *How Far To Bethlehem?* (Bulla), *A Carol Medley—from Noel* (Osgood), *Christmas Comes But Once A Year* (Bowen), *Lo, How A Rose* (arr. Bulla), *March On A Traditional French Air* (P. Ditmer), *Coventry Carol* (Schramm), *O Holy Night—Noel Morris*, Soprano cornet (Adam/Bulla), *Two Canadian Carols* (Calvert), *Midwinter* (arr. Bulla), *Silent Night* (arr. Erik Leidzen, with scripture narration added), *Crusaders* (Goffin), *The Bells of Christmas* (Bulla).

Salvation Army bands and Christmas go hand-in-hand for many folk who only experience a brass band at holiday times. This particular disc was recorded in 1992 just after the Army's celebration of 100 hundred years of Red Kettle Christmas fund raising. At the national kick-off to this centennial the **National Capital Band** assisted then First Lady Barbara Bush in launching the nationwide PR campaign. Stephen Bulla composed a march for the occasion, the closing item on the album, fittingly called *The Bells of Christmas*. This CD should provide brass bandsmen not familiar with the wealth of excellent Christmas music published by The Salvation Army which is now available to the public. Very fine arrangements by craftsman like Leidzen, Goffin, Calvert, Osgood, Bowen—and from two excellent writers in this band, Bulla and Schramm—make this a fine overview of that repertoire suitable for any brass band's concerts or participation in worship services. Most of the playing is at the good level one has come to expect from this band, although the performances are not without flaws. Taken as a whole, however, this is a very pleasing and satisfactory endeavor that should give much pleasure during "the festive season." Should we forgive them, however, for that title pun?

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Press Release:

New Boosey & Hawkes Instruments

New Besson Sovereign Trombone. Boosey & Hawkes is pleased to announce the arrival of three new Besson Sovereign Trombones. Making their North American appearance at the International Trombone Workshop in Cleveland, the new trombones found immediate acceptance by professionals and educators alike.

Heading the list is a new .500 bore professional tenor trombone which is the culmination of years of testing and research to find the proper balance of tone and projection. Available in yellow brass (model 940), rose brass (model 941), or silver plate, the new tenors feature an eight inch bell and light weight slide. The new Besson Sovereign Symphony Tenor (Model 945) is a dual bore (.547-.562) professional trombone with an 8 1/2" gold lacquered

brass bell, F attachment, and light weight slide. Designed for volume and power, the model 945 is perfect for any professional who needs a full, rich sound to balance a large ensemble, or for the soloist searching for authoritative command of the instrument

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For further information on either the trombones or french horns, call 708-816-2500; or write Boosey & Hawkes, Box 130, Libertyville, IL 60048.



NABBA

'94 Gala Concert

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Brass Band Tours Set For 1993-94

The Bridge has received the following basic information about some outstanding brass bands that will be touring in North America this coming year:

Black Dyke Mills: Rumor reaches us that this fine band will be in the States this October, starting around the 17th in New York. As *The Bridge* has no further details, I recommend interested parties call Boosey & Hawkes [Brent Taylor] at 800-426-7068.

Sellers Engineering will be featured at the Gala Concert of NABBA next April in Raleigh. A tour is in the works; those wishing to check on possibly sponsoring a visit should contact Bert Wiley at 704-293-9312.

Hawthorne City (Australia) will definitely be coming to NABBA '94. Further details of their extended visit should be available in our November

issue. Contact Bert Wiley for further details.

BNFL—British Nuclear Fuels Brass Band is projecting a USA and Far East Tour, July 15—August 1, 1994. They are tentatively scheduling the dates of July 16—23 for their American portion, on the following, but by no means fixed, itinerary:

July 16—Washington DC; 18—Pittsburgh; 19—Raleigh; 20—Wilmington; 20—New York; 21—Denver; 22—Seattle; 23—San Francisco. Anyone wishing further information about the band's plans or interest in hosting the group please contact:

Andrew Blackledge, British Nuclear Fuels, Springfield Works, Salwick/Preston, Lancs, PR4 OXJ England. FAX: 0772-764450.

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