

The Brass Band Bridge



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

December 1998 Issue 74

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Official Journal of the **NABBA**

NORTH AMERICAN BRASS BAND ASSOCIATION, INC

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The Brass Band Bridge welcomes news, communications, photographs (preferably black and white), new advertisers and scholarly articles on all aspects relating to, and for the benefit of brass bands in North America. Scholarly articles should include footnotes and bibliography where appropriate. Materials may be edited for inclusion, and may be submitted in writing, via e-mail, facsimile or on 3.5" floppy discs (IBM compatible, if possible, please). Publication and advertising deadlines are the 15th of January, April, July and October.

Editor's Notes

As I put this issue to bed after three years of editing the magazine, it's been good to see the publication double in size and maintain that substance throughout the last twelve months. This has come about because bands and their members have become more proactive in the sharing of information, and music companies are more supportive of the role brass bands play in the musical life of North America. Consequently, we have more advertising and more music materials to review. Our readership has increased significantly as the result of NABBA Board leadership, of new brass bands forming (often on the impetus of one of the festivals sponsored by NABBA). This is all well and good for a growing and healthy organization. But I cannot emphasize and reinforce Tom Palmatier's call enough to tell publishers, instrument manufacturers and music retail outlets that you've seen their ad in the *Bridge*. No-one wants to see the cost of membership rise (even though it's a bargain compared to many other professional music organizations and societies) but it will be inevitable if we don't support the *Bridge* advertising revenues from music companies.

Thanks to all of you who have submitted materials for this issue which includes

the regular reviews of music and recordings, the annual pullout feature and reports on festivals and concert tours. Nick Hudson continues his suggestions on basic elements of brass band performance and Ron Holz provides some tips for those of you still pouring over scores making decisions for own choice materials in preparations for NABBA 99. Twenty or more bands will be descending on Chicago in late April to participate in the festivities, and there is a short update on preparations for this event in this issue.

For those of you (probably everyone) in the midst of seasonal music preparations as you receive this issue, I wish you a blessed time of music-making together. I will be off to my homeland for a couple of weeks, probably to listen to some brass bands, but mostly for a holiday and some rest (hopefully!). When I return, NABBA 99 will be staring us all in the face (rather than breathing down my neck as it is at present!). I hope I am able to see you all there!

Happy reading and best wishes for your upcoming brass band activities.

Colin Holman, Editor

My hope for NABBA in 1999 is that we can have the best conference we have ever had, one filled with excellent music, excellent performances, great comraderie, and a contest marked by mutual support and encouragement. I hope our Solo and Ensemble Contest even exceeds the limits of Lexington, especially with the addition of percussion ensembles.

I hope our bands come into Chicago the best prepared and the best educated about the entire competition process - why they are doing it, what they hope to gain from the experience. As co-Controller with Beth Steele, I pledge to you

that we will do our very best to make this an efficient, fair contest, with well-prepared judges who communicate their findings clearly to each band so that NABBA 1999 does what it is intended to do - improve our bands and enhance the brass band movement in North America

I do not have a great deal more to say in this column, other than to point you to the Contest 1999 Update article, which should prove helpful to all our membership. Please abide by the deadlines - both for materials/applications and for band and individual membership renewals.

Also, please note some adjustments in the length of CD reviews due to the overwhelming growth in the number of submissions we have received. Congratulations to all NABBA bands that represent our association on the first *NABBA 98 Highlights* CD, reviewed by Ronald Waiksnoris in this issue.

Have a wonderful Holiday season and I wish you the very best in your music making in 1999. See you in a few months!

Ronald W. Holz, President

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Wally Ost of the **Brass Band of Minot** writes that for the second year the **NABBA Summer Brass Band Camp** was held at the International Peace Gardens located on the US-Canada border near Dunseith ND. Dr Paul Droste returned as guest conductor. The International Music Camp hosted over 2800 musicians from 34 states, 5 Canadian provinces and 15 other countries. The summer camp is divided into 8 sessions with the Brass Band Camp being a part of the adult session during the final week of camp. 53 adults participated in the 1998 brass band. The brass band performed as part of the final concert. In addition to some standard brass band selections, Dr Droste led a double trio of double-bell euphoniums in a special performance of *Echo Waltz* (Goldman). Members of the ensemble included Dr Droste, Dr Daniel Hornstein (director, Brass Band of Minot), Gordon Troxel (chairman, BBM), Bob Ortman (director of bands, Glasgow, Montana), and Daniel Ost (Vanderbilt University). The 1998 Summer Brass Band camp was a success and plans for the 1999 camp include expanding to two brass bands for musicians of different levels, a workshop for organizing and developing a regional brass band program, and a special concert by the Rupert's Land Brass Band of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Just as important, three new brass bands have started as a result of the summer brass band camp, and possibilities exist for new brass bands in Boise Idaho, Rapid City and Sioux Falls SD as well as the plains provinces in Canada. The Camp continues to be sponsored by Yamaha Corporation.

NABBA Board Member Dwight Vaught recently stepped down as Board President from the **Brass Band of Minot** and has been replaced by Gordon Troxel. Their newly appointed music director is Dr. Daniel Hornstein and he will be conducting the band as they enter their fifth season together.

The **Triangle Brass Band** (Michael Votta) is in the process of acquiring a completely new set of instruments (tax-deductible donations gratefully being received!) and consequently will be donating their present instruments to the Triangle Youth Brass Band. A series of small ensembles drawn from their membership played several summer concerts and the band resumed fill rehearsals after Labor Day.

The **Brass Band of the Tri-State** has recently been accredited by three local colleges for meeting the requirements of a college level music class. Registered students at these schools are now eligible for one credit hour per semester for participation in BBTS rehearsals and performances. Colleges presently included in this program are; The University of Kentucky's Ashland Community College, Morehead State University, and Ohio University. It is anticipated that other colleges will soon be added. BBTS members are very excited about this new program. It encourages young students to participate in and learn more about the rapidly growing brass band movement. It also promises to generate a steady supply of talented young musicians for their organization.

Under formation by John Aren (founder of the Motor City Brass Band) along with Mr Ralph Schweigert and Gordon Palmer

of Gaylord, the **Northern Michigan Brass Band** has set the tentative date of January 16, 1999 for its debut clinic under the direction of Dr. Paul Droste of the BBC. The clinic will take place in Gaylord which will also be home base for the band. Aren reports he has once again been overwhelmed by the groundswell of excitement coming from throughout northern (lower) Michigan and hopes to bring that excitement for showing in the Open category of NABBA 1999.

The **Central Ohio Brass Band** started its 98-99 season this October with a number of changes in personnel. We have added several new players as well as lost a few good friends. Most notably, Dr. Paul Droste has decided not to continue in his role as co-director. Those of us who have been around for many years appreciate the plethora of knowledge that Dr. Droste brought to our group, and we will miss his guidance. Along with Les Susi, Tony Zilincik, from the tuba section, will be our associate conductor. Our rehearsals thus far have been spent reading many pieces, including *Isaiah 40* to prepare for upcoming performances and NABBA Competition.

The **Smoky Mountain Brass Band**, well known to audiences throughout North Carolina, recently featured on this concert will be a new work commissioned by Bert Wiley (Bernel Music Ltd.) and composed for the band and for euphonium player, Kenneth Kroesche (Assistant Professor of Music at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC). *Introduction and Allegro* (Alan Fernie) is an exciting work for euphonium and brass band, giving the soloist an opportunity to demonstrate both lyrical playing and high level of technical skill. The work will be published by Bernel Music Ltd and will be available by mid-November. Alan Fernie is one of a very few British compos-

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ers whose work exemplifies lyricism, interesting and exciting harmonies, and music written to challenge the band and to entertain the audience. *Introduction and Allegro* is the second work premiered by SMBB and commissioned by Bernel Music Ltd. The band has enjoyed working with Fernie and performing a number of his works, including *American Variations*.

The **Sunshine Brass Band** achieved a goal of returning to the NABBA Championships in 1998. After an eleven year lapse, they travelled to Lexington and once again competed, deciding at the eleventh hour to attend. They finished eighth out of nine bands in the Championship Section but were encouraged by the new friends made, old friends re-established, and the truly outstanding calibre of the competition and the NABBA organization. Their personnel roster was changing throughout the winter and didn't stabilize until just before they departed for Kentucky. They have continued their rehearsal schedule through the summer this year in order to maintain continuity. Traditionally the band has taken the summer off and rebuilt in the fall. Summer participation was voluntary but they saw about 80% of the old members show up for the whole schedule and even picked up a few new members. A concert was played on the 4th of July and they plan to continue the year-round rehearsal schedule. Plans are being made to attend NABBA 99 and work on the music is underway. Their director Paul Gansemer, is unable to attend at SBB are presently seeking a contest conductor. The Sunshine Brass Band rehearses each Monday evening at the Tampa Salvation Army corps on Sligh Ave. in Tampa. Their rehearsals are open and they extend a warm welcome to any interested NABBA members who find themselves in the area. For more information please call 813-949-6358.

The **Illinois Brass Band** (Colin Holman) have had a musically quieter fall this year but have been kept busy with the planning of NABBA 99. They recently welcomed back cornetist Guy Clark after 13 months of working in California and have further strengthened their playing ranks with new members Carol Cadden (percussion), Michael Raley (trombone), Tom Runte (euphonium) and Mary Estell (tuba). They performed a joint concert with **Manger Musikklag** in October as well as playing a concert of music at the Fox Valley Bible Church in St Charles. Near future plans include new recordings and long term plans include a trip to England in June 2000.

The **Commonwealth Brass Band** (Jerome Amend) brought out the big guns for a park appearance in Jeffersonville on August 21, with a unit of the Kentucky Army National Guard adding extra bang to the band's concert closing with Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*. The Service Battery of the Second Battalion of the 138th Field Artillery Brigade repeatedly fired two 75 mm howitzers during the finale, cued by music director Jerome Amend. The soldiers also let loose a final salvo while band members were taking their bows, making the musicians jump and bringing another round of applause from the audience.

The **Eastern Iowa Brass Band** John W. deSalme) opened its fall concert series with a concert before a large crowd September 26 in Mount Vernon, Iowa. The same program was presented at the Grand Theater in Keokuk, Iowa the following day as a fund raiser for the "Habitat For Humanity." Soloists were Judy Stine, tenor horn (*My Heart Will Go On*), Joan DeHoff, Eb cornet and Dennis Modracek, Bb cornet (*Duet From "Lakme"*). The entire cornet section was featured with *Bugler's Holiday* by Leroy Anderson. On October 15 the program was presented in Marshalltown, Iowa as

part of the Community Concert Series (see Band Programs). A concert for the Centerville Iowa Community Concert Series was presented on November 15 at the Simon Estes Auditorium. The program featured the new *A Disney Spectacular* (Goff Richards); The Nutcracker Suite (Tchaikovsky/Pearce); and Frosty The Snowman (arr. Sandy Smith) featuring soloist Thomas Thrums (Bb bass). During the September 26 subscription concert in Mount Vernon the audience was asked to help select the annual Christmas program by voting on their favorites from years past. "BY POPULAR DEMAND" will be presented December 5 in Mount Vernon and December 6 in Solon, Iowa.

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The large number of recordings that have been received for review in recent months has led me to a policy of reducing the length of some reviews, depending on the content and/or the purpose of the recording. Many publishing firms produce "vanity" discs, albums that profile their writers or their catalogue. Such efforts are of vital interest to our readers but do not require in depth analysis. Similarly, while we review wind band recordings, we know that it is not the priority interest of our readers.

Readers are reminded that we only review material that is sent to us for that purpose, and that we only review productions that meet a high standard. I also hold our very finest groups, those with established reputations (and therefore ethically responsible for maintaining that high standard), to a more rigorous standard than I do groups that are just getting started.

Current Releases Reviewed in Alphabetical Order
Reviews by Ronald W. Holz (unless otherwise noted)

Backbeat. Backbeat Percussion Quartet. Doyen. DOY CD 071. TT 57:19. Program: *Funk Loops I* (Sinclair); *Summertime* (Gershwin/Charles); *Marimba Spiritual* (Miki); *Orixa* (Harron); *Pataflafla* (Bastock); *Children's Songs #6, 4, 7* (Corea/arr. Backbeat); *A Little Prayer* (Glennie); *Rebounds* (Harron); *Blue Rondo a la Turk* (Brubeck/Harron); *Okvango* (Harron).

With percussion ensembles being added to the NABBA 1999 Small Ensemble Contest, this premiere CD by Backbeat Percussion Quartet will definitely supply a very welcome encouragement, model, and literature source for our emerging new groups. Backbeat is led by Simone Rebello, an outstanding percussion soloist who has had close ties to the brass band community, especially as principal

percussionist of Fodens (Courtois) Band. She and her three male colleagues play convincingly throughout a program marked by diversity of styles, instrumentation, and techniques — African, South American, Japanese — even body percussion and globe phonetics (vocal sounds). The group excels in melody percussion, an emphasis in the program. Rebello takes several solo spots on marimba, including a beautiful short work entitled *A Little Prayer*. Each of the other members of the quartet is showcased as either an arranger or as a composer of original music: Richard

Charles, Damien Harron, and Chris Bastock. The whole group collaborates on the three Chick Corea excerpts from *Children's Songs*. Bastock's *Pataflafla* calls for body slaps and globe phonetics in a piece that the group can rehearse (and presumably) perform anywhere. In this regard, their live programming must be of the kind that has made Stomp so popular. The most familiar piece to Americans, other than the Gershwin transcription, is an effective adaptation

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You may notice a small decrease in ads in this issue of *The Bridge*. That's not good news and we need everyone's help. The cost of printing and mailing the ever-expanding *Bridge* is way up and unless we get more advertisers, membership dues will go up as well. *The Bridge* is one of the best buys in advertising and all of us need to recommend it to possible advertisers. Several of our previous advertisers dropped their ads because they said they got no feedback from the ads - remember to mention you saw an ad in *The Bridge* to our current advertisers. Contact me for any more information.

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NOTE: NEW NABBA RENEWAL DATE!!

March 1

This date holds for all members
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ALL Registrations at NABBA will be based on
Secretary Bert Wiley's Listing

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| Half Page | 55 | 195 |
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| Eighth Page | 25 | 80 |
| Sixteenth Page | 20 | 60 |

Saint Louis Brass Band (Malcolm McDuffee). November 12, 1998; The Sheldon Concert Hall, St. Louis, MO. *Strike Up The Band* (Gershwin/Richards); *Indiana Jones & The Temple of Doom* (Williams/Farr); *Purcell Variations* (Kenneth Downie); *Imperial March from The Empire Strike Back* (Williams/Smith); *Londonderry Air* (Grainger/Weatherall); *Jupiter from The Planets* (Holst/Roberts); *Colonel Bogey* (Alford); *St Louis Blues March* (Handy).

Cuyahoga Valley Brass Band (Keith Wilkinson). July 1, 1998; The Chapel, Akron, OH; July 4, 1998; Trinity Lutheran Church, Akron, OH. *The Star-Spangled Banner, God and Country* (Himes); *Overture to Mack and Mabel* (Herman/Wilkinson); *Duet from Lakme* (Delibes/Curnow), James Betts, cornet, Ronald Losik, flugel horn; *On the King's Highway* (Leidzen), *Armed Forces Salute* (Bulla), *Festive Overture* (Shostakovich/Wilkinson), *God Bless America* (Berlin/Losik), *Amazing Grace* (arr. Himes), *Stars and Stripes Forever* (Sousa).

July 19, 1998; Grace United Methodist Church, North Canton, OH. *Fanfare and Flourishes* (Curnow), *Overture to Mack and Mabel* (Herman/Wilkinson), *Duet from Lakme* (Delibes/Curnow), James Betts, cornet, Ronald Losik, flugel horn, *On the King's Highway* (Leidzen), *Amazing Grace* (arr. Himes), *French Military March* (Saint-Saens/Wilkinson), *Overture (Act 1) from Phantom of the Opera* (Lloyd-Webber/Wilkinson), *All I Ask of You from Phantom of the Opera* (Lloyd-Webber/Graham), *Simple Gifts* (arr. Steadman/Allen), *All Through the Night* (arr. Langford), *Festive Overture* (Shostakovich/Wilkinson).

Illinois Brass Band (Colin Holman). October 24, 1998; Fox Valley Bible Church, St Charles, IL. *Festival Prelude: Ellacombe* (Himes); *Variations on Laudate Dominum* (Gregson); *Victorious* (Goffin), James Sobacki, cornet soloist; *Diadem* (Maunder); *Crimond*

(Richards); *Festival March: Steadily Onward* (Leidzen); *Nicea* (Himes); *Reflections in Nature* (Redhead); *Amazing Grace* (Himes); *Praise* (Heaton); *Festival March: Aberystwyth* (Merritt).

Prairie Brass Band (Dallas Niermeyer). August 2, 1998; First United Methodist Church, Arlington Heights, IL. *Dam Busters March* (Coates); *Hoe Down* (Copland/Snell); *Thoughts of Love* (Pryor), David Guion, trombone soloist; *Carmen Fantasy* (Bizet/Langford); *Let's Face the Music and Dance* (Berlin/Richards); *Poinciana* (Bernier/Richardson & Farr); *Carrickfergus* (Traditional/Roberts), Michael Fath, euphonium soloist; *Jamaican Rumba* (Benjamin); *Li'l Darlin'* (Hefti/Sparke); *Army of the Nile* (Alford).

Lake Wobegon Brass Band (Charles B. Olson). October 12, 1997; Roseville Lutheran Church. *Fanfare Prelude on Kilmarnock* (Graham); *Trittico* (Curnow); *Simple Gifts* (arr. Richards); *Someone to Watch Over Me* (Gershwin/Fernie); *Rolling Along* (Himes); *Softly and Tenderly* (Thompson/Engebretson); *March from A Moorside Suite* (Holst); *Apalachian Mountain Folk Song Suite* (Curnow); *Summertime* (Gershwin/Ashmore); *Liebeslied* (Kreisler); *The Melody Shop* (King/Fernie).

December 7, 1997; Anoka-Ramsey Community College, Anoka MN. *Once In Royal David's City* (arr. Willcocks); *A Christmas Festival* (Anderson/Wood); *Simple Gifts* (arr. Richards); *Fantasy of the Bells* (Pearce); *Rolling Along* (Himes); *O Come to My Heart Lord Jesus* (Himes); *The Spirit of Christmas* (Graham); *Aspects of Praise* (Himes); *Fanfare Prelude on Kilmarnock* (Graham); *Lullaby on Christmas Eve* (Christiansen/Engebretson); *The Bells of Christmas* (Bulla); *Farandole from L'Arlesienne* (Bizet/Rimmer); *Sleigh Ride* (Anderson/Tomlinson); *The Christmas Song* (Torme/Sparke); *Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas* (Himes); *White Christmas*

(Himes); *The Melody Shop* (King/Fernie). February 22, 1998; Staples Centennial Auditorium, Anoka, MN. *Aspects of Praise* (Himes); *My Love Is Like A Red Red Rose* (Langford), Bill Ekstrum, cornet soloist; *Rocky Mountain Centennial* (Bosanko); *Eternal Father, Strong to Save* (de Haan); *Czardas* (Monti/Trevarthen); *Trittico* (Curnow); *Someone to Watch Over Me* (Gershwin/Fernie); *March from A Moorside Suite* (Holst); *Amparito Roca* (Texidor/Winter); *Let's Face the Music and Dance* (Berlin/Richards).

October 11, 1998; Spring Lake Park High School Fine Arts Center, MN. *Invictus* (Himes); *Second Suite in F* (Holst); *Softly As I Leave You* (Vital/Catherall), David Peterson and Eric Anderson, euphonium soloists; *Romans 8* (Steadman-Allen); *Ragtime for Horns* (Joplin/Curnow); *Pines of Rome* (Respighi/Snell); *Annie Laurie* (Trevarthen), Michael Schleicher, cornet soloist; *The Plantagenets* (Gregson); *Moses, Get Down* (Gott); *Washington Grays* (Grafulla/Curnow).

Commonwealth Brass Band (Jerome Amend). August 21, 1998; Warder Park, Jeffersonville, IN. *Fanfare and Flourishes* (Curnow); *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2* (Liszt/Rimmer); *Commonwealth Brass Band March* (Karrick); *Drink to Me Only* (Langford), Jackie Amend, soprano cornet soloist; *Fidgety Feet* (Peberdy), Bob Webb, Brian Cahill, James Recktenwald and Charles Ferris, cornet soloists; *Death or Glory* (Hall); *Colors of the Wind* (Menken/Lavender and Sparke); *Strike Up the Band* (Gershwin/Richards), Dick Lehman, drum soloist; *18th Variation from Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* (Rachmaninov/Snell); *Night Flight to Madrid* (Leslie and Waltz); *Disney Fantasy* (Richards); *Rondo from Concerto No. 4* (Mozart/Jordan), Nikolai Hargreaves, horn soloist; *Blue John*

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(Kneale), Joe Spain, trombone soloist; *Lassus Trombone* (Fillmore); *1812 Overture* (Tchaikovsky/Wright); *Ravenswood* (Rimmer).

September 27, 1998; Madison IN (Associate Conductor John Jones and guest conductor Ken Distler*). **Death or Glory* (Hall); **My Fair Lady* (Lerner/Duthoit); *Moses Get Down* (Gott); *Facilita* (Hartmann), Bob Webb, cornet soloist; *Famous British Marches* (Langford); *William Tell Overture* (Rossini/Grant).

October 11, 1998; Bethany Baptist Church, Louisville, KY (Jerome Amend and Associate Conductor John Jones*).

**Fanfare Prelude: God Of Our Fathers* (Himes); **Wachet Auf* (Bach/Bantock); **Blessed Assurance* (Bulla), Jerome Amend, trumpet soloist; **When Morning Guilds The Sky* (Himes); **Angels Guard Thee* (Godard/Langford), Mildred Kemp, trombone soloist; **Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* (Bach); **Eye of the Sparrow* (Bulla), James Straub, flugelhorn soloist; **Love Divine* (Ord Hume); *Prelude on St Francis* (Burgmayer); *Because* (Richards), Bob Webb, cornet soloist; *Jericho Revisited* (Himes), James Rago, narrator; *Pie Jesu* (Lloyd Webber/Steadman-Allen); *Variations on Terra Beata* (Curnow); *Let Us Break Bread Together* (Jordan).

Westwinds Brass Band (Phil Anthony). December 8, 1998; Cactus Theatre, Lub-

bock TX. *The Standard of St George* (Alford); *Procession of the Nobles* (Rimsky-Korsakov/Curnow); *Laughing Song from Die Fledermaus* (Strauss/Crawley), Ruby Moultrie, soprano cornet soloist; *Auld Lang Syne* (arr. Drover); *Alleluia* (Mozart/Mortimer), Richard Tolley, cornet soloist; *Lord of the Dance* (arr. Drover); *Christmas Rejoicing* (Gordon); *Festive Variations on Adeste Fidelis* (Barry); *O Holy Night* (Adam/Crawley), Ruby Moultrie, soprano cornet soloist; *Mistletoe and Wine* (Strachan/Stewart/Barry); *Huron Carol* (Norbury), Richard Tolley, cornet soloist; *Comin' To Town* (Coots/Freeh); *We Wish You A Merry Christmas* (Rutter/Wilson).

Brass Band of Minot (Daniel Hornstein). October 25, 1998; McFarland Auditorium, Minot State University, ND. *Crugybar* (arr. Ball); *The Thunderer* (Sousa); *Come Back to Sorrento* (Curtris/Phillips), Chris Beeler, soprano cornet soloist; *Egmont Overture* (Beethoven/Ball); *Laudes Domini* (Barnby/Ball); *Misty* (Burke/Garner), Dwight Vaught, flugelhorn soloist; *First Suite in E flat* (Holst/Herbert); *Song of the Volga Boatmen* (Woodfield); *Colonel Bogey March* (Alford).

Festival City Brass (Wayne Becker). March 7, 1998; Glen Hills Middle School, Milwaukee, WI. *On Eagles Wings* (Joncas/Becker); *La Gazza Ladra* (Rossini); *She's Like the Swallow* (Curnow); *Toy Symphony* (Haydn/Becker); *Ornithology* (Parker/Becker); *Hungarian Dance* (Messenger/Owenson); *Little Red Bird* (Richards), Kathe Betz, baritone soloist; *Avian Airs* (arr. Becker); *A Lark in the Clear Air* (Catherwood), Jeff Schaum, euphonium soloist; *Skylark* (Carmichael/Becker); *Under the Double Eagle March* (J.F. Wagner).

June 6, 1998; Salvation Army Community Center, Milwaukee, WI. *Nicea* (Himes); *Henry V* (Vaughan Williams); *Purcell Variations* (Downie); *Death or Glory* (Hall); *Jericho Revisited* (Himes);

Love Changes Everything (Lloyd Webber/Bulla); *A Disney Fantasy* (Richards); *Sinatra in Concert* (Nowak/Becker).

Eastern Iowa Brass Band (John W. deSalme). September 26, 1998; Mount Vernon, IA. *Jubilee Prelude* (Sparke); *Colonel Bogey* (Alford); *Colonial Song* (Grainger/Langford); *Russian Cavalry* (arr. Woodfield); *My Heart Will Go On* (Horner/Barry); *Bugler's Holiday* (Anderson); *Havah Nagilah* (arr. Woodfield); *The Florentine March* (Fucik/Renton); *Esprit* (Curnow); *Duet From "Lakme"* (Delibes/Curnow); *12th Street Rag* (Bowman/Smith); *Cruella De Vil* (Leven/Barry); *Colors Of The Wind* (Menken/Sparke); *Dixieland On Stage* (arr. Lowden); *Riverdance* (Whelan/Farr); *And The Band Played On* (arr. Richards); *Seventy Six Trombones* (Willson/Duthoit).

December 5, 1998; Mount Vernon, IA. Intrada: *Angels from the Realms of Glory* (Downie); *A Christmas Overture* (Golland); *In the Bleak Midwinter* (Holst/Braodbert); *The Kingdom Triumphant* (Ball); *O Holy Night* (Adam/Bulla), Joan DeHoff, soprano cornet soloist; *The Nutcracker Suite* (Tchaikovsky/Pearce); *Disney Spectacular* (Richards); *Frosty the Snowman* (Smith), Thomas Thrums, B flat tuba soloist; *Silent Night* (Gordon); *Caribbean Christmas* (Smith); *White Christmas* (Berlin/Sparke); *Greensleeves* (arr. Davis); *Your Favorite Carols* (arr. Woodfield); *Sleigh Ride* (Anderson).

Buffalo Silver Band (Pim Liebmann). November 15, 1998; Central United Church, Welland, Ontario. *Fanfare for NABBA* (Curnow); *The Vanished Army* (Alford); *Tipperary* (arr. Douglas); *O for the Wings of a Dove* (Mendelssohn/Stokes), Nelson Starr, soprano cornet soloist and K. Kroetch, cornet soloist; *Rondo from 4th Horn Concerto* (Mozart/Wilkinson); *Constant Trust* (Ball); *Even Bravest Heart* (Gounod); *The Thunderer* (Sousa); *Sinfonietta* (Langford); *Crimond* (Irvine/Lancaster).

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Brass Band Bridge

Please send your concert dates for April-June 1999 with starting times and locations to *The Editor* for inclusion in the March 1999 issue

I have had an increasing number of requests to commit the content of my masterclasses and workshops to written format. My views and suggestions are gained from personal experience, listening to ideas and opinions from top brass players in differing fields of performance and reading authoritative publications on the art of brass playing. "Back To Basics" classes, which I use as a keystone in all levels of tuition, often underline the importance of control and awareness of the elements of brass playing. We should never lose sight of the fundamentals of our art. This article covers the foundations of playing. These can easily be segmented into the following categories: breathing; articulation and production; flexibility and range.

BREATHING

A number of players often neglect the importance of the airstream and therefore suffer from consequential problems i.e. poor sound, suspect intonation, a limited range and the inability to phrase efficiently. By developing the ability to control your breathing, basic problems such as these will be reduced and maybe eliminated completely. When we breathe normally we only use about 25-30 per cent of our full breathing capacity. Problems arise when we need to increase the capacity sufficiently to fill our instrument. When we inhale we use two forms of vacuum. One created by the diaphragm, the other by the costal muscles situated around the rib cage. You must be aware of the differences of these forms of inhalation to enable you to gain maximum capacity.

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

John Ridgeon, one of the finest teachers of breathing techniques, explains that to become aware of diaphragmatic breathing you only need to perform one simple exercise. Exhale all the air from your

system, open your throat as if yawning and pant rapidly using the diaphragm muscle only, ensuring the upper part of your body and chest area stays perfectly still. This rapid panting action creates a vacuum that sucks air into the lungs. If this is done correctly you will feel not only your stomach area expand, the top of your hips and back of your trunk will expand also.

COSTAL BREATHING

Now that we are aware of how to control the lower part of our breathing apparatus we need to increase our capacity by using our upper body and chest area. The costal muscles are situated around the ribcage and they too create a vacuum when inhaling. To find out how this costal vacuum works simply exhale all the air in your body and form a slightly stooped position, drooping the shoulders and leaning forward slightly. Pinch your nose with your fingers and keep your mouth closed. Then straighten your body, as if standing to attention. Once you are in a fully upright position, quickly open your mouth. You will feel an immediate suction of air into the chest cavity demonstrating that the costal muscles create a substantial vacuum.

DIAPHRAGMATIC AND COSTAL BREATHING WORKING TOGETHER

An efficient brass player should be able to breathe by using both of these forms of inhalation. A simple way to describe how we can activate these two breathing actions is to imagine you are holding an empty glass in one hand and a jug of water in the other. When you pour the water into the glass it naturally fills from the bottom up. Use this principal when you inhale, filling the lower body first and adding to the chest cavity in one simple movement. Remember that whatever dynamic you are playing you always need the maximum amount of air in your lungs to sustain a good sound through-

out the range. As you can see, your breath control skills can easily be rehearsed anytime and anywhere, without the instrument.

Ben Hall, an eminent American trombone teacher, suggests two types of breathing exercises which will help increase your overall capacity.

1. Continuous breathing: First of all set your metronome to 60 bpm, release all the air from your system like a deflated balloon, then slowly breathe in through your nose to the count of 10 (if you can hear yourself breathing you are inhaling too quickly), exhale through your mouth for a count of 10 then immediately repeat the exercise ensuring an even and smooth inhalation and exhalation of air.

2. Yoga breathing: Again, set your metronome to 60 bpm, inhale to the count of 10, hold the breath for a further count of 10, then exhale for another count of 10. If you do this slowly and evenly, over a period of time you will increase your breathing capacity substantially. You will also find that if you suffer from nerves these exercises will help relax your body and reduce those unwanted tense and stressful performances.

By studying the styles and teachings of some of the world's finest performer's I have learnt that the ability to control your breathing is probably the most important fundamental of playing a wind instrument. Spend at least 10 minutes a day doing simple breathing exercises with and without the instrument and you'll find your control of the basic elements of your playing will improve dramatically. Alternatively, if you lose sight of your fundamentals they will someday come back to haunt you!

continued on page 12

continued from page 11

KEEPING THE TONGUE UNDER CONTROL

I would also like to address differing forms of articulation and note production. This subject is of secondary importance to the control and use of our airstream. It is with this in mind that we should attempt the suggested exercises and examples. I often talk to players who suffer from a lack of control of their articulation and production. Usually they either use too much tongue, creating an explosive start to the tone or, on the opposite end of the scale, suffer from too little tongue, sometimes resulting in a stuttering start to the note. It is these particular problems that I would like to cover in detail and hopefully suggest remedies which may help eliminate these common faults.

What should the Tongue do? It is important that we remember the tongue only acts as a release for the air stored in the lungs. As we previously discussed, the ability to control our breathing and airstream is paramount. The tongue merely acts as a release for the airstream, any special accents required should be controlled by the diaphragm alone. The tongue energises the embouchure causing the lips to vibrate and the tone to be produced. If we over emphasise the use of the tongue it will result in an unpleasant, explosive start to the sound. The tongue action has to be carefully synchronised with the release of the airstream, causing the embouchure to vibrate instantly.

Suggested Practice: If we are unhappy with our production or are experiencing difficulties it is a good idea to practise for a period of time without the use of the tongue. For example, first of all play a middle register Concert F without the use of the tongue. You will probably find that nothing happens or you experience

a stuttering start to the tone. This tells us that we are not giving sufficient air support to produce any sound. If this happens, try again using the vowel "haa" to help produce the correct air supply. Eventually you will find that the tone appears quite freely. When practising this particular form of non-articulation be critical in your approach to rehearsal. Eliminate any "pe-her" or "stuttering" sounds and try to start the tone as cleanly as possible. The reason I suggest this kind of practice is that it is only when we are able to produce the tone by airstream alone can we gradually increase the use of the tongue.

The use of Consonants and Vowels:

Probably one of the first noises we ever uttered to our parents was "Da-Da!" However, this simple form of sound production can be used to great effect in relation to brass playing. We are all aware that when we start a tone we use a mixture of Consonants and Vowels. For example: "Too", "Doo", "Daa", "Dee", "Tee", "Taa", "Roo", "Noo" etc. If implemented correctly the use of these consonants will help in the initial production of the tone, the vowels (i.e. "aah" "eeh" "ooo" etc) are used in the sustaining of the sound.

Consonants: The use of consonants is the application of the tongue in order to separate each tone. Depending on which consonant we use the tongue hits differing parts of the mouth cavity. To be aware of how the production of these consonants work, experiment by saying the following and make a note of where the tongue hits the upper mouth: "T" "D" "N" and "R". You will notice that each of these consonants use differing tongue shapes and placements.

Vowels: Vowels are used to follow up the initial tongue action caused by the above consonants. The vowel part of the release helps us sustain the tone depending on the register in which we are

playing. Again, the tongue has differing positions for each vowel. For example, experiment by saying the following: "aaah...eeeh...ooo and iiih". Note the position of the tongue when forming each of these vowels. You will notice that the tongue is very low in the mouth cavity for "ooo" and positioned close to the roof of the mouth for "iiih". This all may sound rather strange until we take note of what this tongue action does to the airstream. We all know that when we play in the upper register the speed of the air is very quick and in the low register very slow. If we use the relevant vowels in the appropriate register it will strengthen our range and, if rehearsed correctly, lessen any excessive pressure when playing in the upper register.

Mixing Consonants and Vowels together:

The correct combination of consonant and vowel is of utmost importance and should be rehearsed daily. As a rule, I use "Dee and Diih" for playing in the altissimo register (as detailed above, this tongue position helps the air travel faster, thus reducing any excess pressure from the embouchure). "Daa" for the middle register and "Doo" for the lower register (the tongue now positioned at the bottom of the mouth cavity enabling a larger, more constant, column of air). We could discuss the intricacies of articulation and production in far more detail if space allowed but the one important factor that must be remembered is that the tongues' major function is to act as a release for the airstream. With this in mind all the suggestions and examples should form part of your daily practice schedule. Best of luck!

Nick Hudson

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The **International Staff Band** of The Salvation Army, the denomination's premiere brass band, will be touring the southern United States in April 1999. The band is directed by Stephen Cobb and features such superb soloists as cornetist David Daws and Deryck Kane, euphonium. The tentative itinerary is as listed below. For more complete details,

contact the local Salvation Army headquarters in the city where the concert is taking place, or contact the Southern Territorial Music Department, (404) 728-1300:

| | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| April 16: | Charleston, WV |
| April 17-18: | Washington, DC |
| April 19: | Winston-Salem, NC |

| | |
|--------------|------------------|
| April 20: | Atlanta, GA |
| April 21: | Orlando, FL |
| April 22: | Clearwater, FL |
| April 23: | Bartlesville, OK |
| April 24-25: | Dallas, TX |

Planning for NABBA 99

Plans for NABBA 99 hosted by the **Illinois Brass Band** and the Pheasant Run Resort are well underway. The tentative scheduling for the event will follow the sequence from earlier events, including:

Friday:

***Solo and Ensemble Competitions

***NABBA Board Meeting

***Reading Band

***Short musical presentation by the **Illinois Brass Band** (Colin Holman) followed by a light informal reception

Saturday:

***Band competition running simultaneously if necessary in two venues (St Charles Ballroom and New Orleans Ballroom)

***Gala Concert/Awards Ceremony to be presented by the **Chicago Staff Band** (William Himes) followed by formal reception in the Mega Center.

All bands that have initially indicated that they plan to attend will receive some preliminary communication via a newsletter in December.

Please be sure to place a reservation for accommodation space securing the special NABBA 99 hotel rate through the Illinois Brass Band (NOT through Pheasant Run) via e-mail if you have not already done so.

E-mail labarnes@buildskills.com

Any other questions can be initially directed to Colin Holman e-mail colin.w.holman@juno.com

Upcoming Concerts

Brass Band of the Tri-State

December 11, 1998 Paramount Arts Center, Ashland, KY
December 15, 1998 - Huntington Mall (Christmas Concert)
March 15, 1999 - Ashland Community College (Spring Concert)
June 6, 1999 - Charleston WV (Symphony Sunday)
June 19, 1999 - Fourth Annual Ashland Brass Band and Hot Dog Festival

Eastern Iowa Brass Band

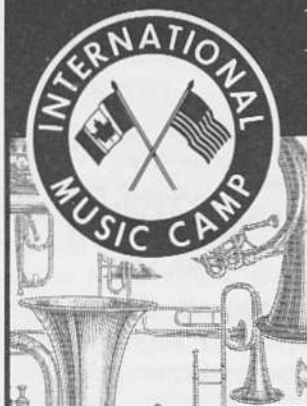
December 5, 1998 7.30 p.m. Mount Vernon High School, Mt Vernon IA

Illinois Brass Band

December 12, 1998 6.30 p.m. Windsor Park Manor, Carol Stream IL

Hannaford Street Silver Band

December 6, 1998 7.30 p.m. Metropolitan United Church, Toronto ON
January 17, 1999 3 p.m. Jane Mallett Theatre, Toronto ON
April 11, 1999 3 p.m. Jane Mallett Theatre, Toronto ON



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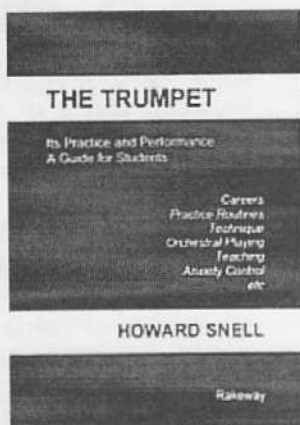
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Ron Holz, Co-Contest Controller, shares some thoughts on "own-choice" selections for NABBA Contests.

When NABBA designed its brass band contest, the philosophy behind the structure that calls for both a set test piece and additional music was shaped in order to encourage the exploration of higher quality literature as well as the planning of imaginative programming. Our short history has proven our founders correct in this decision, making the NABBA contests unfold like a series of short concerts at which a wide range of good music is shared. Having served as NABBA's Contest Controller for at least 50% of its existence, I can testify to the fact that the vast majority of bands do indeed understand the phrase "the best of brass band literature" that accompanies the guidelines for selecting the remaining portion of a band's program. At one time in our past we encouraged at least one solo presentation, but as bands shied away from that, we instituted the now-successful Solo and Ensemble portion of our Contest.

Many new bands, however, may be puzzled by how to go about deciding such literature. My aim in this brief article requested by our Board of Directors is not to get into a discussion of strategies, but merely to share some common sense about the issue, as well as to provide some general examples and guidelines. The Controller always has the right to confront a band on an issue of musical quality - i.e. that some of their music does not meet the broad suggestion - when their application is first received. This provides the band ample opportunity to make a quick adjustment. I have always made myself available in the past, additionally, to serve as an advisor to bands on this exact issue. In all the years I have been Controller only once did I directly ask a band to change its program and in only two other instances did I suggest that a

change be made, as opposed to former - requiring a change. It is not necessary to share specifics in these cases, either in band or pieces, but suffice it to say in each case it was a matter of the band choosing light entertainment arrangements that bordered on kitsch. Most of our NABBA conductors have good taste; however, as the old Latin phrase puts it, *de gustibus non disputandum...* (There's no disputing taste!).

We are probably better off emphasizing what is acceptable literature, rather than starting with negatives. Certainly the decision to feature another fine test piece has proven effective. Excellent short concert works - concert preludes or overtures, suites or excerpted movements from suites, classical transcriptions, well-constructed marches, portions of test pieces (as appropriate) - all of these make perfect sense. Here is a wide sampling from the past three years at NABBA of such choices that particularly fit the definition of the best of brass band literature; the list does not contain other large-scale test pieces - works exceeding 10 minutes - that were chosen to round out programs :

Prelude for an Occasion (Gregson); *Tam O'Shanter's Ride* (Wright); *Come Sweet Death* (Bach/Leidzen); *Polotskian Dances* (Borodin/Snell); *Bridgewater Intrada* (Downie); *Introduction* (Aagaard-Nilsen); *March to the Scaffold* (Berlioz/Snell); *Mvts from Pittsburgh Symphony* (Sparke); *Be Thou My Vision* (arr. Le Reau); *Devon Fantasy* (Ball); *Malvern Suite* (Sparke); *March—Praise* (Heaton); *March—Motivation* (Himes); *Fanfare and Flourishes* (Curnow); *Second Rhapsody on Negro Spirituals* (Ball); *Amazing Grace* (arr. Himes); *Appalachian Mountain Folk Song Suite* (Curnow); *Gaudete* (Norbury); *Finale from Symphony #4* (Tchaikovsky/Gordon); *Circius* (Aagaard-Nilsen); *Gavorkna Fanfare* (Stamp/Gallahue); *Russian Christmas Music* (Reed/Leppla); *Henry V* (Vaughan Williams); *Nimrod*

(Elgar/Wright); *March—Castell Coch* (Powell); *David of the White Rock* (Willcocks); *Dunlap's Creek* (Bernat); *Mvt 3, Cross Patonce* (Richards).

Notice the avoidance of the merely popular - the latest Broadway tune, movie score theme - or the avoidance of what I call, for lack of better term, bandstand boogie - an attempt to make the brass band hip, and not succeeding! Or worse, novelty items with quirky instrumental features, gags, story lines, whatever (Real kitsch). Now, many choices can be deceiving in terms of technical demands. On the surface, a choice like Leidzen's classic setting of Bach's *Come Sweet Death* might seem like a rather easy choice for the Honors or Championship Level (actually used at both levels within the past five years). Playing it well, playing it musically, is a challenge for the very best bands. Remember, our adjudicators do not allow technical level or repertoire choice (aesthetic response) to influence their scoring. They are judging your musicality! The Controller has a sworn duty, of course, to scrutinize each band's program to insure that, if, for example, they are entering the Championship Level, their 'remainder of program choices' reflect very high standards. While NABBA does not legislate such levels, common sense and ensemble pride will usually prevail before any Controller action needs to be taken.

I am proud of the fact that this has so rarely been a problem at our NABBA Contests. There should no reason why that fine tradition should not continue in the future. As the current Controller I am more than willing to help any band with the content of their programs. Conductors are also encouraged to talk to other successful NABBA directors to see what they might suggest. Choose music that challenges your band, engages your audiences, and of which you will be proud years from now!



NORTH AMERICAN BRASS BAND ASSOCIATION

This special pullout section is intended as general information to enlighten those who are completely unaware of the brass band movement in North America, for those who know a little and wish to know a little more, and also for those who would like a good basic overview of what we are, what we do and how we have evolved. I hope that it will make for both fascinating and inspiring reading. Of course, if you wish more information, feel free to contact any of the NABBA board members listed on page 13 of this issue.

WHAT IS A BRASS BAND?

For many musicians in North America the brass band is an unknown phenomenon. The following is a synopsis provided by NABBA Vice President Tom Palmatier of the traditional instrumentation.

One **E flat Soprano Cornet** serves as the piccolo voice. It requires a delicate touch and is used frequently as a soloist or to add brightness to the cornet tutti sound.

Four **B flat Solo Cornets** are the lead voices in the ensemble. The use of four cornets permits players to switch off on parts that are frequently continuous throughout the entire piece. Divisi parts are also frequent. The four solo players should ideally match each other in sound.

Two **B flat Second Cornets** and two **B flat Third Cornets** fill out the cornet choir.

One **B flat Repiano Cornet** is the "roving middle linebacker" of the section. Often used as a solo voice, or doubling the Soprano Cornet in unison or at the octave, the Repiano is also used to add weight to the other Cornet parts.

One **B flat Flugelhorn** serves as a bridge to the horns. It is a frequent solo voice, and is often used as the top voice

in the horn family.

Three **E flat Tenor Horns** (Solo, First and Second) often perform as a choir with flugelhorn and baritones. The solo horn is a frequent solo voice. Also commonly referred to as the alto horn in the U.S., it is an upright three valve instrument with a lighter sound than the french horn.

Two **B flat Baritones** are often doubled with euphoniums but work best as lower extensions of the horn section. As separate voices, their ability to blend and add a middle-low voice without heaviness is a unique feature of the brass band.

Two **B flat Euphoniums** are the predominant solo tenor voices and also function as tutti enforcers with the basses.

Two **B flat Tenor Trombones** provide punch and drive because of their cylindrical construction.

One **Bass Trombone** is both a low support for the trombone section and adds additional weight to the tubas. As the only brass instrument to be reading in concert pitch, I am not sure what the early designers of brass bands were trying to say!

Two **E flat Tubas** and two **B flat Tubas** give composers an extraordinary flexibility in dictating the sound of the bass part. The lighter quality of the E flats can have all the lyricism of the euphoniums while the fatter B flat Tuba sound adds weight. In octaves or fifths, the section can give the brass band an incredible richness of tone.

Three **Percussionists** will cover the entire spectrum of percussion instruments. Timpani, battery and mallets are standard for almost all compositions.

It might be worth stressing here that although brass band literature works most effectively with the appropriate instrumentation, a number of bands function quite successfully with the use of trumpets instead of cornets and french horns instead of tenor horns. The NABBA

annual competition also has a section which permits more flexible instrumentation. And indeed several brass bands in North America perform popular repertoire that includes keyboards and electric bass.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BRASS BANDS

The brass band dates back to the early nineteenth century and England's Industrial Revolution as an outgrowth of the medieval waits. With increasing urbanization, employers began to finance work bands to decrease the political activity with which the working classes seemed preoccupied during their leisure time. Thus, the brass band tradition was founded. Fervent discussion has always ensued as to which band was founded first. Certainly the two bands with the longest traditions are the Bessies O' The Barn Brass Band and the Black Dyke Mills Brass Band.

Taking advantage of improved mechanical skills and the rise of conservatoires and music departments at universities, the standards of instrumental technology and performance quickly improved. By 1860 there were over 750 brass bands in England alone. Although these bands were not fully comprised of brass instruments until the second half of the nineteenth century, the tradition developed to the present day current instrumentation of cornets, flugelhorn, tenor horns, baritones, trombones, euphoniums, B flat and E flat basses and percussion.

Contests are the lifeblood of the brass band world and rivalry has always been strong, cash prizes providing additional incentive. Nineteenth-century politicians hired bands to enliven campaigns and challenges often followed. By the 1840s,

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a thriving local contest circuit had grown. Today two major championship events are held each year in England; the National Championship and the British Open Championship. The National Championship is only open to bands from England, Scotland and Wales. This competition ran sporadically in the nineteenth century from 1856, but was firmly established by Sir Arthur Sullivan in 1900. The Open Championship invites bands from all countries and has been in existence since 1853, the first winners being the Mossley Temperance Saxhorn Band. Both major championships are held in the fall each year, are fiercely competitive, and it is a great honor to win either of these competitions. The time commitment is very extensive with the top bands rehearsing at least three nights a week prior to the championships, and often every night the week before the competition itself. Youth brass band competitions are similarly well established, providing quality players for the adult bands as the young members mature, thereby continuing the tradition.

Brass bands in Great Britain presently number in the thousands with many of the bands having origins prior to 1900. Originally the bands were funded by coal mines, mills, and many today retain corporate sponsorship. To this day, the bands use only non-professional musicians who in former years were usually employed at the sponsoring company. It is a testament to the quality of performance in the brass band tradition that many players are able to secure professional positions as a result of their brass band experience. Indeed, several professional brass musicians in this country began their education in the brass band world, New York trumpeter Phil Smith and Chicago trombonist Michael Mulcahy being two good examples.

English brass bands are also popular in

Japan, Australia and New Zealand; and in recent years a large number of brass bands have started in several European countries. If you plan a trip to England, be sure to find a brass band concert to attend.

What makes the brass band unique? All the brass music (with the exception of the bass trombone) is scored in treble clef, a characteristic that over the years has allowed for remarkable freedom among certain bands, making the transition from one instrument to another somewhat easier. The number of members (instrumentation) is rigid, usually limited to twenty-five brass players plus percussion, but the repertoire is unusually flexible, with concert programs consisting of anything from original works, orchestral transcriptions and featured soloists to novelty items, marches, medleys, and hymn tune arrangements. With the exception of the trombones, all instruments are conical in design, producing a more mellow, richer sound, yet one that has wide dynamic and coloristic variety. The term "brass band" is not entirely accurate, since brass bands also normally include up to three percussion players who are called upon to play as many as twenty different instruments depending on the demands of the music. Standard acceptance of more than one percussionist in the brass band is really a phenomenon of the last forty years, but one that has added immense challenge, interest and variety to the sound.

Although brass bands were an important part of life in nineteenth-century America, they were superseded by larger concert and marching bands. However, many fine historic brass bands are still actively performing today. During the course of this century the Salvation Army were predominantly responsible for maintaining the brass band tradition in America through their music ministry. Only in the last twenty years has a brass band resurgence begun in North America. The formation of the North American

Brass Band Association (NABBA) has been crucial and influential in the renaissance.

Original works from Holst and Elgar to modern-day composers such as Philip Sparke, Edward Gregson and Joseph Horowitz have resulted in a growing and dynamic repertoire. American composers such as James Curnow, Williams Himes, Stephen Bulla and Bruce Broughton all got their start writing for brass bands of the Salvation Army and are currently writing brass band music in addition to their other compositions for band, orchestra and film scores.

There are presently several hundred brass bands in North America, many affiliated with NABBA, and it is not only exciting to see the tradition making a return, but also such a valuable and unique contribution to the rich musical heritage of this country.

WHAT IS NABBA?

The North American Brass Band Association was established in 1983 by J. Perry Watson, based on the over one hundred and fifty year old brass band movement in England, one that has established itself in Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Holland, Denmark, Belgium, Switzerland and Japan. In that same year, Watson also organized and hosted the first North American brass band competition held at North Carolina State University. Since that time, the brass band movement in North America has gone from strength to strength, and comprises both Salvation Army, amateur community and professional brass bands. There are presently nearly one hundred affiliated member bands and individual membership numbers nearly 2000 from Canada and the United States, bringing a whole new

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world of literature, performance, personalities, lore and history to enrich the musical life in North America.

NABBA GOALS

To foster, promote and encourage the establishment, growth and development of amateur and professional British-style brass bands throughout the North America.

To support and help further the music education of its members

To advance the public's appreciation of the British-style brass band

To serve as a resource for musical and organizational assistance to amateur British-style brass bands from across North America

To sponsor competitions and regional music festivals for the purpose of improving performing standards and abilities of member bands

BENEFITS OF NABBA MEMBERSHIP

Access to annual NABBA Competition for bands, small ensembles and soloists. These are held each April in major North American cities. Recent host cities have included Washington DC, Raleigh NC, Toronto ON, Columbus OH and Red Wing MN. Future hosts include Chicago IL, and Lexington KY.

Access to regional festivals sponsored by NABBA. Recent festivals have been hosted in Cedar Rapids IA, Lexington KY, and West Point NY.

Access to the Great American Brass Band Festival competition. Each year NABBA sponsors an audio tape competition and the winners are chosen to

represent NABBA at the prestigious and popular GABBF held annually in Danville KY with a significant cash prize award and national exposure. Winning bands are not permitted to reenter for three years to ensure fair and even representation.

The sharing of ideas and resources within NABBA, its archives and other member bands. Some of the most significant accomplishments in NABBA have occurred with the building of friendships across the continent, the sharing of information, and coming together of members who range from grade schoolers to octogenarians.

The sharing in guest clinicians, touring bands, and soloists sponsored by NABBA. In the past few years NABBA bands and affiliates have treated band members and local audiences to performances by internationally acclaimed soloists and conductors such as Philip McCann, Philip Smith, the Childs brothers, Stephen Mead, Geoffrey Brand, Steve Sykes, Russell Gray, and bands such as Desford Colliery, BNFL, the National Brass Band of New Zealand, and the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain.

Support and advice from the Board of Directors in your development as a brass band. NABBA can assist you with workshops and clinicians. Dr. Paul Droste, clinician for Yamaha, travels throughout North America presenting top quality brass band workshops.

Four issues of *The Brass Band Bridge* and four issues of the *NABBA Bulletin* each year. These provide free advertising for member bands on a rotating basis, many informative articles, reviews of music and recordings of interest, and news on brass banding throughout NABBA and world-wide. It's a platform for telling the story and achievements of your band, a platform for requesting help

in your efforts, for finding instruments and music, and enables you to keep up-to-date in the brass band movement.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BRASS BAND CONTESTS IN NORTH AMERICA

1983--Perry Watson organized the first North American Brass Band Championship, held at North Carolina State University. With the financial help of the Schweppes Company and the music instrument industry, the contest was a great success with two sections and five bands entering. The Championship Section was won by the Smoky Mountain Brass Band, and the NCSU Brass Band won the Second Division.

1984--The Second Division is renamed the Honors Division. NABBA starts reworking the contest rules adjusting to the needs of the North American bands. The competition was hosted by West Chester University School of Music in Westchester PA. Nine bands entered the competition.

1985--Another division was created to allow more levels of bands to participate. It was hosted in Toronto with six bands entering each the Championship and Honors Divisions.

1986--The Contest Controller now administers the draw for play prior to the contest and each band knows the time of their performance in advance of the contest day. Bands that win three years in a row in their division are automatically moved to the next highest division for future competitions. Championship IV was held in Indianapolis IN and was another success with eleven bands entering.

1987--Official NABBA rules were

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amended so that competing bands shall perform with standard brass band instrumentation in order to be eligible for a prize. The Youth Division was added to enable and encourage younger groups to participate. Championship V was held in Columbus with 14 entries.

1988--Championship VI was held in Hammonton NJ with 11 competing bands, and the Brass Band of Columbus winning the Championship Division for the third year in a row.

1989--NABBA opened the videotape competition. Championship VII was held in Asheville NC.

1990--Championship VIII was held in Pittsburgh PA. Thirteen bands entered.

1991--Ten bands entered Championship IX which was held in Cedar Rapids IA.

1992--Championship X was held in Dublin OH with eight bands entering, and the Ohio Collegiate Brass Band became the first band in NABBA history to win all three adult sections.

1993--Championship XI was held in Washington D.C. and for the first time a reception was held at the host hotel so that everyone could greet old friends and make new ones. Performances were held in two separate locations simultaneously.

1994--Championship XII marked a return to the first competition location at NCSU. The Hawthorne City Band from Melbourne Australia were invited to participate as part of their North American tour, and as a result the Australian flag was added to the NABBA collection.

1995--Championship XIII went to Toronto for the second time and was attended by fifteen bands. A solo competition was

held for the first time and the Championship Division was won by the Brass Band of Columbus for a record seventh time with Peter Graham's *The Essence of Time*. The Eastern Iowa Brass Band distinguish themselves in the Honors Division with another win.

1996--Championship XIV was held in Dublin OH. The solo competition was extended to distinguish between Youth and Adult, Slow and Technical selections. The Junior Varsity All-Star Band continued to distinguish itself as the leading competing youth brass band, and other winners included first time entries from the Cincinnati Brass Band, the Old Dominion Brass Band.

1997 Championship XV was held in Red Wing MN. A new feature was the inclusion of a small ensemble contest, won by the Ozark Mountain Sextet, and an Exhibition Section (for comments only).

1998 Championship XVI was the best supported NABBA competition hosted by the Lexington Brass Band at the University of Kentucky. The Illinois Brass Band became only the second band to win the Championship Division three years in a row. A record nine bands competed in the Challenge Division, won by first time entrants Prairie Brass Band. [excerpted from NABBA Competition Brochures]

1999 Championship XVII will be hosted in Chicago by the Illinois Brass Band and will include a new percussion ensemble competition.

If you want to play in a brass band
NABBA can refer you!

If you want to form a brass band
NABBA can advise you!

If you want to know more about brass
bands NABBA can enlighten you!

Your involvement in NABBA both as a band and as an individual member empowers NABBA to be a strong organization, one that can take an aggressive, advocate role on behalf of, and in promoting brass bands and their achievements

So why not join?

MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

| | |
|------------|--------|
| Individual | \$25 |
| Retiree | \$15 |
| Student | \$10 |
| Family | \$40 |
| Band | \$60 |
| Corporate | \$100 |
| Patron | \$500 |
| Leadership | \$1000 |

[application form--please complete as fully as possible]

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Country: _____

Telephone Number: _____

() _____

Membership Category: _____

Instrument Played: _____

Band Name: _____

E-mail (where applicable): _____

Please mail checks payable to the
North American Brass Band Association to:

Bert Wiley
NABBA Membership Chair
P.O. BOX 2438
Cullowhee, NC 28792

Further details of member bands are
available upon membership to NABBA

I. Adjudicators for NABBA 1999 Set: An outstanding panel of judges has been set for our next contest. Six judges are being hired, not only because of the number of bands expected, but also to insure that the judges are not pressed for time in their important task. There will be two panels with three judges on each panel. Specific assignments will not be made until the results of February 1st application deadline allow us to see the alignment of bands in various categories. The six judges are: **Brian Burditt** (Canadian Staff Band), **Stephen Bulla** (US Marine Band), **Bramwell Gregson** (Intrada Brass), **William Himes** (Chicago Staff Band), **Stephen Sykes** (UK), and **Ronald Waiksnoris** (New York Staff Band). NABBA bands are asked not to contact these judges as clinicians or guest conductors in the period preceding the Contest.

II. Adjudicators' Guidelines: At our last Board Meeting, the Board requested that, in addition to the Contest Rules that have already been distributed to all bands, that the Controller share with all NABBA bands the set of general guidelines which are shared with the NABBA judges prior to our Contests. What follows is a summary report listing these guidelines as well as observations about the entire judging process.

(a) Preparation: Judges receive the following materials at least 2 months prior to the Contest:

1) Musical scores for test pieces within the sections they are judging; 2) Copies of the Contest Regulations; 3) Copies of all forms used in the Contest, including scoring sheets they will be using; 4) Guidelines for judges. Judges are reminded that they will be using a tape recorder during the judging process. While most judges have experience in this system, those to whom it is new are requested to practice making quick verbal responses during a musical performance.

(b) Judges' Meeting: Judges meet on the Thursday evening prior to the Contest in order to be more thoroughly oriented to what is expected of them. As it is nearly impossible to receive all non-test-piece scores from publishers until just before the Contest, the Controller does not distribute those scores until Thursday evening prior to the Contest.

Among other concerns that the Controller brings to their attention, the following Guidelines were emphasized at the most recent meeting of the NABBA Board of Directors:

1. At the beginning of each band tape, the judges must identify themselves, state the number of the band in that section (for example - Honors Band #4), and then list the repertoire in the order of play provided. The tape is run continuously (must not be stopped!) from the time the announcer first draws attention to that band until the applause is received following their final item, and till the judge has made his or her final summary comments.

2. Judges must make detailed musical observations the primary basis of their judging, bearing in mind the following:

A. Large, silent gaps in commentary - letting the tape run - is unacceptable. Observations must be continuous, accurate, intelligible, and delivered quickly. B. Judges are asked to be positive and instructive as they make their observations. The tape should be a means for improving the quality of the band's performance via the suggestions received from each judge.

C. Judges are asked to refrain from sharing their own aesthetic evaluation of a band's chosen program.

D. Judges are asked to evaluate the performance only. Choice of literature and level of difficulty are to have no bearing on a judge's evaluation. The Controller will screen all unacceptable

items prior to the Contest.

E. Judges are especially asked to provide balance in their attention to the various sections of the band. The percussion section, for example, can frequently be overlooked. Judges are to make written and spoken comments on this section's performance when appropriate.

F. Judgments about interpretation should not affect point totals unless that interpretation is objectively incorrect. For example, if tempos chosen are blatantly out of line with score marks. The same would hold true for dynamics and other musical parameters. Judges are not to base their point scale on how well they agree with a given interpretation. Judgments must be kept, as much as is humanly possible, to concrete, objective, musical observations: technique, articulation, balance, blend, intonation, phrasing, stylistic considerations required by the score.

G. Final placement into the categories of Excellent, Good, Fair, etc., must be justified by the detailed comments on the tape, and reinforced on the written sheets. Whether musical excellence is achieved, however, is, of course, much more than the result of who made but a few technical mistakes!

3. Judges are to use the tape as the primary means for sharing their judgments. The judge's written summary on the scoring sheet, however, should reflect their basic assessment.

4. Judges do not rank bands against each other, but by the standard scale provided in the Contest Guidelines. The judge provides point totals only. For example, it is possible for a judge to have two bands with equal scores. The judge does not make the final percentage calculations (60% test piece - 40% remainder of the program) for placement, but

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The **Manger Musikklag** began their tour of the United States with a concert on Sunday afternoon October 4th at the beautiful and distinctive theater of the Chicago Historical Society hosted by the **Illinois Brass Band**. IBB President Rick Nelson took care of the many preliminary details and band founder George Foster headed a welcoming group as the band landed at O'Hare Airport on Saturday October 3rd.

Essentially the Illinois Brass Band acted as a warm-up act for the stunning two-hour concert which followed by the top Norwegian brass band. Guest conducted by Kim Lofthouse, the band played an exciting program of varied music that was an object lesson in style, panache and entertainment, balancing original works from Norway with some more traditional brass band fare. The band was certainly notable for their distinctive sound, and the skill and flair with which they delivered their selections. They also brought forth an impressive line up of soloists from within the band. There was a strong youthful element in this multi-lingual ensemble--only two members were not college students.

Conductor Kim Lofthouse is now based in Preston, Lancashire having spent a number of years living and working in Norway as a conductor, teacher and orchestral trombonist. He imparted a rapport to the band and audience alike. Perhaps the most significant relationship with the band is that of composer Torstein Aagaard-Nilsen. He is the band's local composer (essentially "in-residence") and both he and his wife have played in the band in its earlier history. His concert offerings were given definitive performances by the band, and brilliantly evoked the atmosphere of Norwegian life to the Chicago audience.

Opening with an American tribute to Bernstein by flying through his *Candide Overture*, the band also featured major

works by Philip Sparke (breathtaking control in the slow movement of *Year of the Dragon*), a touching tribute to George Lloyd with the middle movement of his *Royal Parks* (memories of NABBA 93 in Washington!) and an inspired *Symphony of Thanksgiving*. Built around that were solo cornet, euphonium and trombone principal features and the program was filled in with some lighter numbers, the most memorable being Nilsen's *Norwegian Dance*.

I was left feeling that here was an enormous national body of wonderful brass band music of which most of us are probably unaware. One hopes that more of it will be played on this continent in the future.

Following the traditional massed band finale, the groups retired to socialize together in Chicago for the evening, to participate in a cultural exchange that was enjoyed by everyone present before the band left the following day for Minneapolis.

Program: **Illinois Brass Band** (Colin Holman). *Fanfare* (Sparke); *Jousts from Pageantry* (Howells); *I'm Gettin Sentimental Over You* (Bassman/Geldard), Brian Byrne, trombone soloist; *Ravenswood* (Rimmer). **Manger Musikklag** (Kim Lofthouse). *Candide Overture* (Bernstein/Snell); *Autumn Leaves* (arr. Geldard), Hildegunn Sture Sylta, trombone soloist; *Scaramouche* (Milhaud/Snell); *I Himmelen* (arr. Brevik), Camilla Sjøvold, flugelhorn soloist; *Symphony of Thanksgiving* (Goffin); *Hanen* (arr. Aagaard-Nilsen); *Stille Stund* (arr. Aagaard-Nilsen), Are Mangersnes, euphonium soloist; *Norwegian Dance* (arr. Aagaard-Nilsen); *Carnival of Venice* (Del Staigers), Rune Gundersen, cornet soloist; *In Memoriam from Royal Parks* (Lloyd); *Year of the Dragon* (Sparke). **Massed Bands:** *Procession to the Minster* (Wagner/Snell); *Stars and Stripes Forever* (Sousa/Bernat).


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merely turns in two scores based on the standard 100 point scale for each portion of the program.

5. Judges do not confer on their scores.


6. At the end of each tape the judge must first provide a summary analysis of their overall judgment prior to making written comments and marking of scores.

III. **Deadlines:** Bands, and Solo/Ensemble contestants entering NABBA 1999 are reminded of the following deadlines: 1) Entry Forms for Bands, Soloist, and Ensembles are due FEBRUARY 1st; this includes entry fees and scores for solos and ensembles - Send to Ronald Holz. 2) All band scores must be received by MARCH 1st - send to Ronald Holz. 3) All membership renewals and new memberships for both bands, band members, soloists, and ensembles must be received by MARCH 1st - send to Bert Wiley.


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of David Brubeck's *Blue Rondo a la Turk*. The remainder of the program will take the average listener into several new and enchanting soundscapes. The recording is well-balanced, clear, and supplies excellent dynamic range. This is not a recording just for percussionists - these are gifted, lyrical musicians with much to share with those who will give them the their ears and some quiet time. Very enjoyable!

Brass Night: The Music and Arrangements of Alan Fernie. Fodens Band (Nicholas Childs and Alan Fernie). Obrasso Records CD 866. TT 70:54. Program: *Strike Up the Band; Spiritual Contrasts; I Wish You Love; Be a Clown; Moon River; Spain; Send in the Clowns; Hard Day's Night; Big Band Explosion; Satin Doll; Brass Night; Alto Horn Feature—Cracked Ice Rag; Trouble in the Air; Singin' in the Rain; Intrada Festiva.*

Alan Fernie is profiled in 12 arrangements and 3 original compositions on this well-prepared and performed 'vanity' CD - the product is intended as a promotional tool by Broadbent's publishers, Obrasso. Such efforts do not always get the care and attention this disc seems to have received. Fodens' sound is rich, and lovely! Flugelhornist Shelley Ball is the solo star of the disc in her fine performance of *Send in the Clowns*. Other pop tunes that Broadbent handles with care, imagination, proper style, and wit (meaning, those are pieces I would enjoy featuring!) include a stylistically correct *Singin' in the Rain*, an unfussy treatment of *Satin Doll*, and a surprisingly straight-forward version of *Hard Day's Night*. His clever treatment of *Be a Clown* takes this short arrangement beyond mere novelty. Some of his longer pieces, while well-scored for brass band, seem a bit protracted - the 15-minute rhapsodic *Spain* being a case in point. The work is more like a British (or

is it Swiss?) tourist's nostalgic evocation of a week in the Iberian peninsula - littered with clichés. Fernie has the knack of getting your attention, however, even when you might not agree with how he treats a tune, or whether you agree with his choice of style. Obviously the emphasis here is on lighter entertainment, from the youth-oriented rock piece that titles the album - *Brass Night* - to the three-movement suite on African-American songs, *Spiritual Contrasts*. The levels required also cover a wide spectrum - from the easily learned, repetitive *Trouble in the Air* to the very taxing, fast-paced feature for the horn section, *Cracked Ice Rag*. The wonderful thing is that the listener gets first-rate playing, which allows him or her to make a very fair decision when considering whether to buy the music. Of course, you can just buy the album for the sheer pleasure of hearing an outstanding band play some wide-ranging, light music written or arranged by one of the solid craftsmen in the brass band world.

Championship XVI: NABBA '98 Highlights. Live Recording, April 17-18, 1998, The University of Kentucky Singletary Center for the Arts. Bernel CD 1004. TT 72:41. Program: *Death or Glory* (Hall) **All Star Brass** (Eric Aho); *Jazz* (Wilby) **Illinois Brass** (Colin Holman); *Fanfare and Flourishes* (Curnow) **Cuyahoga Valley** (Keith Wilkinson); *Concerto for Tuba, Mvt 1* (Gregson), Soloist James Willett with **Lexington Brass** (Skip Gray); *Glendeme* (Carr) **Eastern Iowa** (John deSalme); *Gaudete* (Norbury) **Brass Band of Columbus** (Paul Droste); *Hinemoa* (Wood) **Prairie Brass** (Dallas Niermeyer); *Mvt 4 from The Journeyman* (Steadman-Allen) **Junior-Varsity All Stars** (Ken McCoy); *Finale from Variations on an Enigma* (Sparke) **Sheldon Theatre** (Larry Brentzel); *The Champions* (Willcocks) **Motor City** (Craig Strain); *Excerpts from Ellington Fantasy* (arr. Domek) **Lexington Brass** (Skip Gray); *Images in Brass*

(Bulla) **Lexington Brass** (Ronald Holz).

Sixteen years ago, the New York Staff Band took a very long bus ride to Raleigh, NC, to present a Gala Festival for the first NABBA Championships organized by Perry Watson. It was an event filled with promise. The bands were not playing at a particularly high level at that time, but enthusiasm and confidence for the future were evident at every turn. Having attended a number of NABBA Championships since that first event, I have marveled at the ever increasing level of competency and imagination shown by our North American bands. Throughout our short history there has always been a band at the front of the pack setting the pace and pushing the competitive bar even higher. In the early years it was the Gramercy Brass Band from New York who were far and away the best and quickly became a professional band which is still in existence and recently won a prestigious grant to perform at Lincoln Center in New York. Next, Paul Droste got the Columbus band ball rolling, and became a major force in the development of many brass bands in Ohio and beyond. His Brass Band of Columbus won numerous titles setting a high standard of excellence. Now the Illinois Brass Band is at the top of the heap with a host of challengers along side. With the recent tour of England by the Brass Band of Battle Creek, even the homeland of brass bands knows first hand of the rise of brass bands in North America. The recording starts with a very spirited rendition of the march *Death or Glory* which will be known to most readers as the theme music from the movie *Brassed Off*. Next up is an idiomatic reading of Philip Wilby's *Jazz* by the Illinois Brass Band, the reigning champions. This is music that challenges the players technically, but al-

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lows for wonderful freedom of expression and the band comes through with energy and style. This is a piece that I would like to hear often. The Brass Band of Columbus is in fine form as demonstrated by their performance of Kevin Norbury's *Gaudete*, which is destined to become a classic. While this is primarily a Christmas piece, it will work to great advantage any time of the year. The Sheldon Theatre Band also impress with the finale to Philip Sparke's *Variations on an Enigma*. Two new bands show their potential on this recording. The Prairie Brass Band is featured in the test piece *Hinemoa* by Gareth Wood, and the Cuyahoga Valley Brass play James Curnow's popular *Fanfare and Flourishes*. The Lexington Brass Band presented the Gala Festival in their home court this year and they put the final stamp of progress on the ever developing North American Brass Band movement. Both the *Ellington Fantasy* and Stephen Bulla's *Images for Brass* are well suited to the American approach to brass banding. The Ellington suite shows an inherent feel for jazz, and while not without the occasional split note, is a real crowd pleaser. Bulla's *Images for Brass* was written to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima, and the references to the Navy Hymn and the Star Spangled Banner make this an ideal conclusion to a recording full of American pioneering spirit. This is a bench-mark recording highly recommended to NABBA members.

Guest review by Ronald Waiksnoris, Bandmaster of the New York Staff Band.

Christmas Songs. Fodens Band (Nicholas Childs), Halifax Choral Society (John Pryce-Jones), Organist Darius Battiwalla. Doyen. DOY CD 074. TT 65:05. Program: *Christmas Fantasy* (Langford); *O Holy Night* (Adam/Rutter); Flugel Horn Solo—*Away in a Manger*

(Graham), soloist Shelley Ball; *O Come All Ye Faithful* (Willcocks); *Merry Christmas Everybody* (Broadbent); *When a Child is Born* (Golland); *A Maiden Most Gentle* (Carter); *Jingle Bells* (Ashmore); *Carol Medley* (arr. Battiwalla); *Stop the Cavalry* (Broadbent); *Whilst Shepherds Watched* (Anon.); *White Christmas* (Berlin/Sparke); *Hark the Herald* (Willcocks); *Little Drummer Boy* (Simeone/Sparke); *Christmas Song* (Torme/Sutherland).

This disc arrived just as the deadline hit for this issue of the Bridge, but I thought it best to include mention of it now, even though I have not had time to fully study it. Of the two ensembles, Fodens Band is the more polished, though the Halifax Choral Society sings with commendable energy and style. While many of the arrangements, both those for brass alone and those which combine choir and band, will be familiar to most of our readers, several new arrangers appear, including NABBA friend Steve Sykes and the gifted organist on the album, Darius Battiwalla. The sound and balance are very fine, the program a delightful mix of the sacred and secular, and the overall level of performance very good. This would prove to be another good source for NABBA bands considering similar collaborative efforts with choirs in their area. A good addition to your holiday collection that features brass band music!

Christmas Rejoicings. New York Staff Band (Ronald Waiksnoris). Triumphant Recordings. TRCD 1050. TT 46:06. Program: *Christmas Rejoicings* (Gordon); *Shepherd's Surprise* (Downie); Cornet Solo—*Huron Carol* (Norbury), Soloist Michael Baker; *Trepak* (Tchaikovsky/Wilkinson); *On Christmas Day* (Bulla); Euphonium Solo—*Infant Holy* (Redhead), Soloist Aaron Vanderweele; *A Christmas Reverie* (Downie); *Season's Greetings* (Anderson); *Variations on a German Carol* (Curnow); Trombone Solo—

Angels on High (Bulla), Soloist Vanda Knickerbocker; *Go Tell It* (Ballantine); *I Wonder as I Wander* (Bowes); *Fanfare Jubiloso* (Curnow); *The First Noel* (Bearcroft); *Christmas Joy* (Leidzen).

In 1998 the Salvation Army's Music Department of the Eastern Territory is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the American Band Journal, a brass series calling for 9 or more players, founded by my father, the late Commissioner Richard E. Holz, and Erik Leidzen. Two new CDs herald this event, *Christmas Rejoicings*, containing 15 seasonal arrangements, most them written and published within the past three years, and *Heralds of Victory*, a recently-released recording by Fairey Band featuring both sacred and concert music from the general catalogue. The New York Staff Band performs very well, and with just the right amount of festive sparkle - even bravura! Julliard undergraduate Michael Baker joins a long line of outstanding cornet soloists in this band and shows himself equal to the task in his elegant, graceful playing on Norbury's arrangement of *Huron Carol*. Stephen Bulla's neo-baroque setting of *Angels We Have Heard on High* allows Vanda Knickerbocker to really shine as a symphonic-style trombonist. Aaron Vanderweele gives a glowing account of Redhead's setting of the Polish carol, *Infant Holy*. The entire band seems energized - and they lay down excellent readings of a repertoire of holiday music I highly recommend to our NABBA bands. No piece exceeds six minutes, most ideally suited to either concert or church use. Most of the arrangers are very well-known - front-rankers like Leidzen, Curnow, Bulla, Downie, Redhead, or Ballantine. Lesser known to NABBA audiences but effective writers like James Anderson, Ray Bowes, William Gordon, and Norman Bearcroft fill out the stable. Even new

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NABBA Board member Keith Wilkinson makes an appearance in a Tchaikovsky transcription that is rather difficult, though one so wisely scored as to rely primarily on the principal players of the band. Within the past three years (1996-98) this band journal has contained a wealth of effective Christmas music. So, once again, let me emphasize that I strongly recommend you investigate both this literature and this wonderful new recording of that music played so well by the New York Staff Band under capable baton of Ronald Waiksnois.

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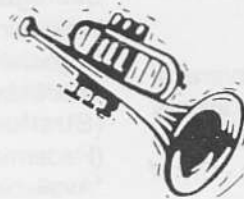
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Crazy Little Things.
Oberaargauer
Brass Band
(Manfred Obrecht).
Obrasso Records.
CD 865. TT 57:50.
Program: *Crazy Little Thing Called Love* (Mercury/Oud); *At the Sign of the Swinging Cymbal* (Fahey/Fraser); *Euphonium/Bari-tone Duet—To All the Girls I've Loved Before* (Hammond/Broadbent); *The Best of Bond* (Barry); *12th Street Rag* (Bowman/Peberdy); *Trouble in the Air* (Fernie); *Autumn Leaves* (Cosma/Fernie); *Oklahoma* (Rodgers/Catherall); *Joy, Peace, and Happiness* (Phillips); *Cervo a Primavera* (Coccianta/Oud); *Euphonium Solo—As Long As He Needs Me* (Bart/Barry); *St. Louis Blues March* (Handy/Fernie); *Oregon* (deHaan); *A-Team* (Carpenter/Bennett); *Exploding Brass!* (Richards).

The album title puts it very well - crazy little things - or light

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entertainment music played in a joyously exuberant style by this Swiss brass band. There are no notes on the music nor on the band, just a list of the 1997-98 band membership, a play list, and some color photos. It is a no frills release that must be designed as a fun way of attracting the average listener. A quick reading of the program above will give you a fair idea of what is involved. Most of the items do not exceed three minutes in length. The band plays with real verve - very aggressive at times! It is a well-balanced ensemble, with generally solid tone and intonation, and good rhythmic vitality. The suite *The Best of Bond* (Barry), which was read at our NABBA Reading Band 1998, comes off quite well in this reading. There is much that is attractive here, a good resource album for some popular arrangements, like Fernie's *St Louis Blues* (Handy) arrangement. The playing is usually stylistically consistent, though one cannot always say that about the arrangements. There is one large-scale work, Jacob de Haan's 10-minute *Fantasy for Brass Band: Oregon*, a work it would have been nice to more about, especially here in America. Not everything here is a knock-out, yet there is much that is attractive and useful.

Crossover. Royal Norwegian Navy Band (Nigel Boddice) with Roger Webster, Cornet Soloist. Doyen CD 083. TT 70:33. Program: *Bruremarsj* (Forde); *I Himmelen* (Trad./Brevik); *Cry of the Celts* (Hardiman/Graham); Cornet Solo—*Cartoon* (Wilson/Boddice); Cornet Solo—*Andante from Concertino Brillante* (Westby); *Symphony for Wind Orchestra* (Graham); *Arctic Landscape* (Aagaard-Nilsen).

The title 'crossover' refers to several of the pieces on this disc that were initially written for brass band, including two popular works by Peter Graham - *Cry of*

the Celts, and *Montage*, the latter entitled *Symphony for Wind Orchestra*. The other work of this nature is the cornet solo *Cartoon* (Thomas Wilson), originally written for Roger Webster and the Scottish CWS Brass Band. (The other sense of 'crossover' relates to the number British musicians who have "crossed over" and become involved in the Norwegian band scene.) I found Graham's scoring of *Montage* for winds to be very intriguing, even if the performance does not quite sparkle as I would have hoped on the third and final section. Several pieces on this disc were mentioned in a review in a recent past issue, that by a wind band from Bergen, Norway but they are heard to good advantage hear as well (arrangements by Forde and Brevik). This is a disc that will be of interest to those of our membership that are actively involved in wind band music (many of them are!) or who are interesting in collecting the fine performances one comes to expect from Roger Webster. He is equally at home in Wilson's quirky, dissonant *Cartoon* as he is in the lovely lyric lines of Westby's more consonant *Andante*. For me, another attraction is a compelling work by Aagaard-Nilsen, *Arctic Landscape*. Nothing 'predictable' from this composer! The production and recording are all that one expects from Doyen - good sound quality, good notes in English, tight musical ensemble.

Diogenes. J.W. F. Military Band (Alex Shillings). DeHaske DHM 2-019-3. TT 78:33. Program: *Voices* (Vangelis/Sebregts)*; *Prestige* (Riedermann); *Latin Mood* (Kernen); *Fanfare Prelude* (Schwarz); *Once Upon a Time in the West* (Morricone/Waignein)*; *Diogenes* (de Haan)*; *Earth Song* (Jackson/Sebregts)*; *Pocahontas* (Schwartz/Waignein)*; *Caro Mio Ben* (Giordani/Hogestein)*; *The Final Countdown* (Tempest/Sebregts)*; *Three Little Pop Tunes* (Stratford)*; *Erasmus Tales* (Hadermann)*; *Apocalypse II* (Swerts).

*Available in brass band versions

Our Youth Section test piece for NABBA 1999 serves as the title piece on this diverse wind band recording of music primarily from the DeHaske catalogue. This is the same ensemble that is mentioned in the Stephen Mead solo album reviewed below in this issue. The playing is accurate, as one would hope in a CD designed to introduce new music, in this case the music of DeHaske's 1996 Festival Series. One added dimension, though the recording group is a wind band, is that many of these pieces are also released in brass band versions - marked with an * above in the program list. The album carries helpful advice about the grade level of each piece, as well as notes on the music in English, Dutch, and French. A very handy reference tool played by a fine ensemble! Order from Curnow Music: 1-800-CURNOW (1-800-278-2669).

Essential Dyke, Volume 2. Black Dyke Band (James Watson). Doyen DOY CD 081. TT 66:32. Program: *The Contestor* (Powell); *The Force of Destiny* (Verdi/Wright); Cornet Solo—*Cleopatra* (Damare), Soloist Matthew Baker; *Dear Lord and Father* (Graham); *Samum* (Robrecht); *Elegy fr. Downland Suite* (Ireland); *Dance of the Tumblers* (Rimsky-Korsakov/Heaton); *The Elephant* (Hume); *Le Domino Noir* (Auber); Cornet Solo—*Bells Across the Meadow* (Ketelby/Graham), Soloist Lee Rigg; Euphonium Solo—*Largo Al Factotum* (Rossini/Langford), Soloist Robert Childs; *David of the White Rock* (arr. Willcocks); *Slavonic Rhapsody #2* (Friedmann/Wright).

So many of the tunes on this album make me recall the old Black Dyke Mills Band under Geoffrey Brand that captured so many titles in the late 1960s and whose recordings captured my heart

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Brass Band Recordings

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and showed me that contesting brass bands could indeed make great music that would communicate beyond the narrow confines of the contest scene. Thirty years later, the band is a much superior band technically, as well as in terms of intonation and overall sound. They remind me of Charles Burney's image of the court orchestra at Mannheim in the eighteenth century: 'An army of generals.' They are a young, gifted lot, and they seem inspired by their competent leader, James Watson. Whether they are as consistently musical in their playing is open to question when you listen carefully to this generally excellent recording. The problem is one of consistency. We expect Black Dyke to be at the very top - and most of the time they are in this well-conceived program (good play order) of traditional brass band repertoire. The blemishes occur most frequently in very loud, aggressively played passages for the full band, or in occasional soli passages for individual players. In the former, their loudest fortissimos just go beyond good taste; in the latter, their excellent soprano player, who in some lines plays in a simply gorgeous manner, can really let it rip, bordering on the coarse. Now this player has received some bad press in recent times, but let me say that there is no doubt that he is an excellent player. Many times the fault lies with the way the part is written, so that an aggressive player can sound silly in parts that suddenly pop up an octave in the most inartistic way (in terms of the scoring - very common in early band pieces). Restraint is the key. This is the same Black Dyke that demonstrates the most amazing rhythmic ensemble and precision, astounding control in the softest dynamics and who provide wonderful drive and energy in their playing. I still think this is a winner of an album, for the good playing, yes, the great playing, overcomes the lapses in taste. Their vibrant version of the opening march *Contestor* really makes you sit up and listen - great style and dynamics. They nail the Verdi overture that follows, with much elegant playing by the flugel, principal cornet, and soprano cornet. The amazing, straight tone on the opening unisons ('fate motive') will knock you out of your chair! On another opera overture, *Le Domino Noir*, Dyke's delicate playing at the pianissimo level is fabulous. Throughout their boisterous finale, *Slavonic Rhapsody #2*, they take you for a rollicking good ride. What a dynamic range! Perhaps their finest playing

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comes on the "Elegy" from Ireland's *Downland Suite*. Here we have the quintessential Dyke, Dyke at its most musical. The playing is so soft, so controlled, I wondered if it was electronically adjusted? I doubt it, for I have heard James Watson conduct the band in this excerpt in their small, hallowed band room and the control was the same! They are indeed among the very finest wind or brass groups I have ever heard. There is so much more to commend here - young Matthew Baker in a more complete version of *Cleopatra*, Peter Graham's new version of the old Ketelby chesnut, a great reading of the old "exotic" piece *Samum*, Bob Childs giving it all the 'gusto' on *Largo al factotum*. Several other nice touches come in providing arrangements by past conductors, like the miniature gem *David of the White Rock* by Major G.H Willcocks (so beautifully played) and a manuscript transcription of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Dance of the Tumblers* by Wilfred Heaton, a more satisfactory version than the reduced version you usually hear of this short classic. I highly recommend this fine new recording. Bear my caveats in mind, and copy from the very best playing this wonderful band offers - that is what will be essential.

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The U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own"
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Flourish. Double CD: CD #1 Virtuoso Solo Performances by **Principals of the New York Staff Band**; CD #2 Solo Accompaniments performed by **Kevin Norbury**. A - Aaron VanderWeele, Euphonium; B - Gordon Ward, Cornet; C - Vanda Knickerbocker, Trombone. Triumphonic Recordings TRCD 1058. TT 54:15. Program: A - *The Amazing Mr. Leidzen* (Graham); B - *When I Remember* (Catherwood); A - *Melody of the Heart* (Camsey); B - *Grateful Praise* (Hogg); C - *Little David* (Krinjak); B - *This Little Light* (Thomas); A - *Tell the World* (Mack); A - *I'm Glad I'm a Salvation Soldier* (Jones); B - *Blessed Assurance* (Bulla); B - *At Thy Feet* (Jones); A - *The Secret* (Camsey); C - *Flourish for the New-Born Babe* (Norbury). *American Soloists Album #5: 12 Virtuoso Solos for B Flat Treble Clef and C Bass Clef Instruments with Piano Accompaniment*. New York: The Salvation Army, 1998.

These two products are intended to compliment one another. The music publication is the fifth in the American Soloist Album series published by The Salvation Army's Eastern Territorial Music Department. The Double CD provides complete performances with piano accompaniment as well as a CD with just the piano accompaniment. NABBA members will find each to be a rich resource for both performing material and performance models. Three outstanding members of the New York Staff Band are profiled and accompanied by the new music editor for the SA in New York, Kevin Norbury, an excellent pianist as well as composer/arranger. You hear more of the cornet and euphonium soloists because the majority of the solos were conceived for valved instruments, though several do work very well for trombone, as ably demonstrated by Vanda Spence Knickerbocker. The performers provide, in each case, carefully conceived readings that accurately follow the printed page. These are seasoned performers who provide quality tone, phrasing, and interpretation. The technical level ranges from several of moderate demands - *Grateful Praise*, *Little David* - to those requiring true virtuosic ability - *The Amazing Mr. Leidzen*, *Melody of the Heart*, *Flourish for a New-Born Babe*. Those of you that know Phil Smith's recording of *Blessed Assurance* will be pleased to see this now available with piano, as well as in the brass band version just released by Bill Himes in the new American Festival Series. There are even a couple of short moto-perpetuo encore-type solos, like *When I Remember!* The soloist, the brass student, has available a real wide range of choices here. I would like to make particular note of Norbury's Christmas solo, the title work of the CD, *Flourish for the New-Born Babe*. Using an old Lutheran chorale that J.S. Bach

also admired, Norbury crafts something out of the ordinary, a piece with symphonic stylings that would prove to be of value in college recital programs. Though several of the pieces are strictly denominational in nature - *At Thy Feet*, for instance - the majority can be used in many contexts, not just sacred settings. The writers hail from all over the world: from Australia - Brian Hogg and Noel Jones; from the United Kingdom - David Catherwood, Peter Graham, and Martyn Thomas; from the USA - Karen Krinjak, Terry Camsey, Thomas Mack, Stephen Bulla, and now Kevin Norbury. Quite a diverse and talented group! The production level of both products is very good. Even awkward aspects of performing with prerecorded accompaniment - like what to do at cadenzas - are handled in an efficient manner that should not present major difficulties. The music typescript is clear, well-spaced, and as far as I can tell, highly accurate. These products - solo album or Double CD - should see wide use and be of real benefit to all brass players. An added attraction for the brass band enthusiast is that nearly all these solos have or will have full brass band accompaniment, either already in print or soon to be released by the SA music department in New York. Special congratulations to triple-threat Kevin Norbury, who served as editor for the project, who plays so well on the piano accompaniments, and who composed one of the better pieces in the collection.

Lake Wobegon Brass Band Christmas. **Lake Wobegon Brass Band** (Charles B. Olson). Westmark WCD 29634. TT 49:21. Program: *Christmas Festival* (Anderson/Wood); *In the Bleak Midwinter* (Holst/Bulla); *Fantasy of the Bells* (Pearce); *I Bring You a Branch on May* (Strain/Trevarthen); *Little Drummer Boy* (arr. Sparke); *The Lost Chord* (Sullivan/Langford); *The Bells of Christmas* (Bulla); *Shepherd's Pipe Carol* (Rutter/Graham); *The Christmas Song* (Wells/Sparke); *Lullaby on Christmas Eve* (Christiansen/Engerbretson); *White Christmas* (arr. Himes); *Esprit* (Curnow); *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas* (arr. Himes).

I find great joy in hearing how well our NABBA bands are developing. Having never listened to the Lake Wobegon Brass before (Yes, they actually have permission from Garrison Keillor for the name...), I was pleasantly surprised with their overall tone, sound, and ensemble. I hope they can make a NABBA appearance in the near future! The band appears to be at about Honors level (or higher?), but that is a difficult judgement to make on this limited, but effective program. While many of the items will be familiar to most our bands, several new arrangements deserve mention, espe-

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cially James Wood's adaptation of the Leroy Anderson *Christmas Festival*, an evergreen medley that school orchestras and bands have recently be rediscovering. I also enjoyed hearing Jim Engerbretson's scoring of F.M. Christiansen's *Lullaby on Christmas Eve*, a piece reminding me of the superb choral tradition in this part of the country. The recording was made in a resonant, reverberant hall that flatters the band most of the time, though percussion is occasionally heavy. The band plays musically and will no doubt continue to conquer the usual challenges the emerging brass band faces - achieving the right blend consistently and managing all intonational pitfalls. Congratulations to Lake Wobegon Brass for a Christmas album reflecting good musical style and containing good seasonal repertoire! Note: The recording may be ordered from Lake Wobegon Brass Band, C/O Anoka Brass Band Association, 1156 5th Ave So., Anoka, MN 55303.

Le Trombone Francais. Ronald Barron, Trombone, and Fredrik Wanger, Piano. Boston Brass Series BB-1001 CD. TT 46:15. Program: *Morceau symphonique* (Guilmant); *Cavatine, Op. 144* (Saint-Saens); *Piece Concertante, Op. 27* (Salzedo); *Piece en Mi Bemol Mineur* (Ropartz); *Capriccio* (Boutry); *La Femme a Barbe du Tableaux Forains* (Berghmans); *Deux Dances* (Defaye).

In the year that Ronald Barron was appointed Principal Trombone of the Boston Symphony - 1975 - he released this pace-setting solo recital album of twentieth-century trombone solos from the repertoire of the Paris Conservatory of Music. The remastering of that vinyl album into a compact disc should be a blessing to all aspiring trombonists and their teachers. The disc unfolds in basic chronological and stylistic order, from turn-of-the-century favorites to more neo-

classic, witty, and urbane work of the 1950s. The performances are among the most definitive available. Barron's playing on the end of the Ropartz will knock you off your feet. What more can I say? If you never heard this one before and you are trombonist, you better get it! Trombonist or not, if you are interested in solo brass playing marked by solid tech-

nique and highly expressive, lyrical melodies, you will love this program.

New Frontiers. United States Continental Army Band (Thomas Palmatier). Government release - not for sale.

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Music Sojourn

a multiple format broadcaster on the internet at <http://musicsojourn.com/> announces the holiday season special *Holiday For Brass, Volume 1* on the program series **Brass Band Spectrum**. The program will be broadcast on demand in real audio starting on Saturday November 21. Listeners can access and play the program from the URL above, or from the **Brass Band Spectrum** playlist index page at: http://musicsojourn.com/Playlists/Brass_Band/MS_BB_Playlist_Index.htm

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TT 71:15. Program: *Hail to the Spirit of Liberty* (Sousa); *Sinfonietta* (Sparke); *Concerto for Clarinet* (Kurpinski/Szulla), Soloist Russel Shipley; *Gum-Suckers March* (Grainger); Trumpet Solo—*Man With the Horn* (arr. Nestico), Soloist Erich Krumich; *On the Edge* (Fedchock); *Mood Indigo* (Ellington/Taylor); *The Way You Look Tonight* (Kern/Nowak); Vocal Solo—*God Bless the Child* (Herzog & Holliday), guest soloist Laura Martier; *The Long Gray Line* (Barnes); Vocal Solo—*Pace, Pace Mio Dio* (Verdi), Soloist Agnes Mobley Fuller; *America the Brave* (arr. Melillo).

Military band recordings are produced as a public service, so technically a review of such efforts is not appropriate under our Bridge guidelines. Yet, it is nice to see what our NABBA Vice President had been doing the last few years after his promotion from the US Army Brass Band to the position of Commander and Conductor of the US Continental Army Band. He is currently at Fort Leavenworth (not prison...) in the Army's version of postgraduate training, but before he got there he and his charges were making some good music in the Virginia Tidewater area. The program features not only the wind band, but the Jazz Band as well. The program is quite varied and is anchored by the premiere recording of Philip Sparke's *Sinfonietta* #1. Several fine instrumental and vocal soloists are profiled as well. To get further information on the band, the jazz band, or to request a copy for educational use, your public library, or local stations, contact the band on their website: <http://www-tradoc.army.mil/tuscab/> Or contact them by Phone/Fax: 757-727-4052.

Northern Delights. Hannaford Street Silver Band (Howard Cable). Opening Day Recordings ODR 9308. TT 65:52. Program: *Fanfare* (Ridout); Overture—

The Bridal Rose (Lavalee/Cable); Suite—*The Lays of the Maple Leaf* (Clarke); *Anniversary Overture* (Irvine); *Ontario Pictures* (Cable); *In the Land of the Spirits* (Bell); *Jubilant* (Curnow); *Saturday's Game* (Cable); Cornet Solo—*Carnival of Venice* (arr. Cowell), Soloist Johnny Cowell; *Selections from Anne of Green Gables* (Moore); *O Canada* (Lavalee/Cable).

Here is a top-flight recording, in every regard: performance, sound, booklet production, literature. Congratulations to all involved, especially producer Keith Horner, whose excellent program notes really connect us to a superb program of Canadian music. If we formed a "fantasy brass band league" these symphonic-style professionals would be a fine pool from which to begin your draft! Imagine taking the very best of Hannaford and Battle Creek, with some Black Dyke, Fairey, YBS, Fodens, or Brighthouse thrown in? HSSB has developed into a marvelous musical group with a style and sound to be emulated by our NABBA bands. They seem to take the best of the British brass band - beautiful blend, technical brilliance, rhythmic precision, lyrical expression - without also embracing some of the negatives - excessive vibrato both in solo passages and tutti sections, overblowing by both the full ensemble and individual players. Their cornet sound might still be a bit bright for some purists, but in all areas of sound and blend this band gets better with every recording. Howard Cable, a major figure in his country's musical culture, takes the baton this time in an album that features 13 of the professional ensemble's excellent personnel. Cable is not only a skilled conductor, but he also arranges with equal skill, as demonstrated by his suite, *Ontario Pictures*, first written for wind band but ably rescored for brass (great performance here!). His transcription of a nineteenth-century overture, *The Bridal Rose* (Lavalee) comes off very well, especially

in the fine individual soli passages. Even more interesting is Cable's adaptation of several nineteenth-century solo songs and choral part-songs by the Canadian James P. Clarke, *Lays of the Maple Leaf*. The four-movement suite features different sections or soloists as follows: 1) Emblem of Canada - Trombone Trio; 2) Home Flowers - Duet for Cornet and Euphonium; 3) Come to the Woods - Soprano Cornet Solo; 4) The Chopper's Song - Alto Horn Trio. All the solo playing is excellent, but Robert Venables is simply outstanding on Soprano, both on this item and throughout the album. The horn trio shows these guys don't allow any sentimental wallowing in old peck-horn styles - I bet they are all reformed french hornists! Cable contributes a fine arrangement from the musical *Anne of Green Gables*, which might prove popular with American audiences familiar with the spin-off TV show. He even takes them through his famous old hockey-show theme music, *Saturday's Game*, reminding us that Cable has had a remarkable career in such diverse areas as TV and Broadway, in addition to his work as a conductor and arranger. Scott Irvine's arrangement of the ballet score *In the Land of Spirits* (the joint

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effort of John Kim Bell and Miklos Massey) serves as the centerpiece for the disc. Described as a 'native contemporary ballet,' the music evokes in five distinct movements such First Nations images as Creation Scene, Ceremonial Dance, and Wedding Scene. The playing is wonderful! Towards the end of the album you meet Johnny Cowell, a Canadian musical legend (formerly of the trumpet section, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, among other things) who plays flugel horn in HSSB. On one 'take' he lays down his own exciting version of *Carnival of Venice*, one that is absolutely under control, and in a style reminiscent of a by-gone era. He then shows himself a good arranger in a sparkling trio first commissioned by Ozawa for a TSO tour, *Rollercoaster* - on which principal cornet Stuart Laughton, HSSB Musical Director Ray Tizzard, and Norman Engel really shine. The title of this album does not lie - this is indeed an excellent recording of musical delights played by outstanding musicians from the True North.

Norwegian Wind Band Championships 1998. Live Double CD featuring eleven wind bands. Doyen DOY CD 076. TT 2:11:29. Program CD 1: *Piece of Mind* (Wilson); *Fantasy Variations* (Barnes); *Symphonic Rhapsody* (Baker); *Incantation and Dance* (Chance); *Ilyrian Dances* (Woolfenden); *Morning Alleluias* (Nelson). Program CD 2: *Roman Carnival* (Berlioz); *Postcard* (Ticheli); *Third Suite* (Reed); *Intermezzo from Symphony in C Minor* (Grieg/Petterson); *Sea Songs* (Vaughan Williams); *Arctic Dreams* (Colgrass).

In our last issue I reviewed Doyen's double CD from the Norwegian Brass Band Championships of 1998. This current double CD from the Wind Band Championships 1998 is exactly the same in concept, layout, and production. The album would be of particular interest to

our many band directors who are NABBA members - a not insignificant group. Yet the album would also be of general interest to anyone wanting to sample recent trends in twentieth-century music, for the repertoire is mostly drawn from works written within the past 15 years. Most of that music is of the accessible kind, for many post-modern writers have made a serious attempt to reconnect with their audiences. This holds true for talented writers like Ron Nelson, Michael Colgrass, Frank Ticheli, and Dana Wilson, to name four of the emerging and more significant men. Older, more established figures include Alfred Reed and the late John Barnes Chance. Twelve bands in five sections are represented: Elite (top) through Section Four. Much of the playing is exemplary, particularly in the higher levels. The album carefully documents the health and vitality of the parallel wind band scene in Norway via some fine music.

Symphonic Variants. **Stephen Mead**, Euphonium Soloist, and **J.W.F. Military Band** (Alex Schillings). DeHaske DHR 4.008. TT 59:53. Program: *Raise of the Sun* (Galante); *Rhapsody for Euphonium and Concert Band* (Curnow); *Spirit of Independence* (Van der Roost); *Concerto for Euphonium* (Curnow); *To Fly Without Wings* (Curnow); *Symphonic Variants for Euphonium and Band* (Curnow).

For years euphonium players have delighted in Curnow's extremely challenging *Symphonic Variants for Euphonium and Wind Band*, a work commissioned by the University of Illinois (Harry Began) and premiered by Philip Franke (currently US Marine Band). Over fifty recordings have been made of the work - here's one of the best ever made, by the inimitable Stephen Mead, backed up by an excellent Dutch military wind band. Two other Curnow euphonium pieces - the *Rhapsody* and the new *Concerto* -

allow Mead to prove again why he is at the top of the euphonium world. The *Rhapsody* is well known to brass band folk, but the *Concerto* is a new work written for Roger Behrend and premiered at the 1997 TUBA Conference in Italy by Behrend and the Orchestra Philharmonia Veneta di Triviso (Curnow conducting). James Curnow was a euphonium virtuoso himself, a student of Leonard Falcone, and is a gifted studio teacher of low brass (whenever he has time to do such coaching!). In knowing the instrument so well, Curnow can shape compellingly idiomatic lines that also serve equally well for symphonic treatment. While the three euphonium pieces take up the bulk of the program, three other wind band works provide good contrast for the ear, should the album be listened to at one sitting. *To Fly Without Wings* is one of those good mid-level pieces of moderate length that Curnow writes so well for developing bands. Two other DeHaske writers also are represented in what is essentially a DeHaske profile disc. Euphonium players have to get this one - all brass players will want to explore this fine playing - and students of good wind band music will also want to explore this new release. Order from Curnow Music: 1-800-CURNOW (1-800-728-2669).

Stonehenge. **Brass Band Soli Deo Gloria** (Jan de Haan). DeHaske DHM 3.015-3. TT 65:48. Program: *Majestic Prelude* (de Haan); *Chorale and Toccata* (Bulla); *Duet—T(w)o the Limit* (Waignein), with Wiebe Buis, cornet, and Kerst Buis, E flat bass; *Inspiration* (de Haan); *Stonehenge* (Van der Roost); *Flugelhorn Solo—Camille* (Waignein), Soloist Mariska Postma; *Cambridge Variations* (Sparke).

I received this 1994 release courtesy of Jeff Curnow, of Curnow Music Press,

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when considering Van der Roost's test piece *Stonehenge* for NABBA 1998. While it was not chosen this past year, this dramatic work will be one that will be given serious consideration for future contests. Written for the Brass Band Concert Section of the 12th World Music Contest, July 1993, the piece, in the words of its composer, attempts to put atmospheric pictures and images in to music. Post-modern impressionism might be an apt label for this demanding, well-scored work filled with intriguing soundscapes (indeterminate sections, band singing/humming, etc.). *Soli Deo Gloria* plays with a very rich tone, one

enhanced by the recording location, a church. This softens the edge of the bright choir and the overall tone is therefore well balanced. In addition to the title test piece, the band delivers solid readings of Bulla's *Chorale and Toccata*, and Sparke's more challenging *Cambridge Variations*. The unusual Cornet—E flat Bass duet for two brothers, *Two the Limit*, is purposefully theatrical-pop in style. The opening *Majestic Prelude* of Jacob de Haan and the 10-minute *Inspiration* by his brother, Jan de Haan, are two more fine mid-level concert works from the DeHaske catalog. While it is not a new release, *Stonehenge* still has much fresh music and playing to delight the brass band aficionado. The produc-

tion is excellent, with good program notes provided in both Dutch and English. Order from Curnow Music; 1-800-CURNOW (1-800-278-2669).

That's Entertainment: The Music and Arrangements of Derek Broadbent. Besses o'th Barn Band (Derek Broadbent). Obrasso Records. CD 864. TT 57:15. Program: *That's Entertainment; On Stage; The Beatles; The African Waltz; Soprano Solo: You Needed Me; Trouble Shooters; Imagine; Bass Trombone Solo—Somebody's Tune; Woman In Love; Goofin' Around; It's a*

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"The golden cleanness of the cornets' melodic lines is quite exceptional. Indeed the whole band's style is so versatile that it can sound like a first-rate light wind orchestra."

Vernon Briggs, *Brass Band World Magazine*



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Heartache; Trombone Feature—Variations in Blue; Y.M.C.A.; 6-7-8-9-10 - Disco Fever; Toccata in Rock.

In this composer/arranger profile recording from Obrasso 8 arrangements and 7 original compositions of a light nature by Derek Broadbent are provided exuberant readings by Besses o'th Barn Band. All the titles are published by Obrasso; unfortunately, no notes are provided on this repertoire. I have respect for what Broadbent has achieved in the brass band scene, both as a band conductor and as a composer/arranger. However, in all honesty I cannot find much on this album that attracts me, either in terms of the music or the performance. Unlike the Fernie album also released by Obrasso, this production comes off as being played in a careless manner - too exuberant, problems in balance, tuning problems - especially when considering the high standard one would hope from such a band. I should provide a cautious warning that my criticism may be biased by a strong aesthetic aversion to much of the music and/or the style of the arrangements. Broadbent is at his best when he does not overarrange, when he allows the tune to speak, as he does quite effectively in *It's a Heartache*. (So, I could be over reacting, and I admit it.) There will be some among our readership for whom this CD will be just the ticket.


Tim Souster: Electric Brass. Desford Colliery Band (John Wallace); Wallace Collection; Robin Haggart, Tuba Soloist; Live Electronics by Andrew Powell. Doyen DOY CD 073. TT 64:43. Program: *Equalization for Brass Quintet and Live Electronics; Rabbit Heaven for Brass Quintet and Percussion; Echoes for Brass Band and Live Electronics; Heavy Reductions for Tuba, Voice, and Tape; La Marche for Brass Quintet.*



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Now here is a different kind of brass album! It contains the first composition, to my knowledge, for brass band and live electronics. In fact, three of the five of the compositions by the late British writer Tim Souster (1943-1994) that are recorded here involve some kind of electronic instrumentation in the performance of the music. *Echoes*, for brass band and live electronics, was written for the Besses O'th Barn Band back in 1990 and receives a terrific performance on this disc by Desford Colliery Band. A fascinating work with some minimalist leanings, *Echoes* is built on a series of repeated chord gestures by the band which are then 'echoed' around the hall via electronic means. The title refers to more than an acoustical principle, because Souster is also evoking aspects of Great Britain's political and social past, allusions which will escape us, but are not essential to the enjoyment or understanding of the work. In *Equaliza-*

tion, an earlier work (1983), Souster first explored using digital delay that provided live echoes, as well as sound manipulation, like pitch transposers and repetitive loopings. The other pieces feature the excellent players associated with John Wallace, the Wallace Collection, mostly as a brass quintet. Two of Souster's brass quintets are 'traditional', meaning here not with electronics, for they are far from traditional in the normal sense of that word. *Rabbit Heaven*, for quintet and percussion, is a witty tribute to Bugs Bunny, of all people! The three-movement work is very difficult to play, written in a modernist style, but with a decidedly 'cartoonist' spirit: 1) Hare Today; 2) Cold Cross Bunny; 3) Hare to Eternity. If Souster sounds unconventional, you've got him pegged correctly. In *La marche*, his homage to Ravel's *La Valse*, he provides an absolutely wild, 17-minute work in which members of the quintet play foot-pedal percussion instruments, wear various hats, and read political excerpts from figures like Stalin, Hitler, and Margaret Thatcher. He unites the work via both subtle and extremely obvious quotations from at least five well-known marches, including more lengthy quotes from tunes like the Soviet national anthem and *It's a long way to Tipperary*. Tuba players will be fascinated with *Heavy Reductions*, a piece for tuba, the tubist's voice, and tape. Excerpts from Wagner's *Prelude to Das Rheingold* - both melodic fragments and readings from the stage descriptions in the score - are united via acoustic and electronic means, along with a tape with water sounds and other sound images. For something complete different, but very challenging and rewarding, try this disc. The playing, reproduction, and the fine notes by both Simon Emmerson (on Souster) and Souster (on his own music) combine to make this a first-rate adventure!

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The Wind Music of James Curnow, Volume 1. (1) Royal Netherlands Air Force Band; (2) Shobi Wind Orchestra; (3) University of Iowa Symphonic Band; (4) J.W.F. Military Band; (5) Belgian Navy Symphonic Band; (6) Belgian Guides Symphonic Band. *Fanfare and Flourishes* (1); *Praetorius Variations* (2); *Prelude and Celebration* (2); *Fanfare for Spartacus* (2); *Four Colonial Dances* (3); *Prelude on a Hymn of Praise* (4); *Olympic Fanfare and Theme* (4); *Northwest Passage* (5); *Lochinvar* (6).

I thought I knew most of Jim Curnow's music, even his new stuff! How wrong I was. Through an exceptional collection of fine wind bands and performances, DeHaske has allowed the listener to get an overview of some of the best Curnow pieces that they publish. Four of the works are available in brass band versions, most of which are well-known in NABBA: *Fanfare and Flourishes*, *Prelude and Celebration*, *Prelude on a Hymn of Praise*, and *Olympic Fanfare and Theme*. *Lochinvar*, after the Sir Walter Scott story, won first prize in the Coup de Vents (Le Havre, France) composition contest of 1994, and has proved to be a very popular work indeed. *Praetorius Variations*, *Northwest Passage*, and *Four Colonial Dances* were new to me - I enjoyed each one of them, both for the craftsmanship in the writing and in the style of the playing by these fine bands. The well-known Christmas chorale *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* serves as the basis of *Praetorius Variations* (after Michael Praetorius). *Colonial Dances* features "country dance tunes that were indigenous to New England and particularly the Boston area" (CD notes). This charming suite is arranged as



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follows: 1) Introduction and the Humor of Boston; 2) Lord Mayor's Delight; 3) Colonial Jig; 4) Devil's Dream. In *Northwest Passage* Curnow reflects musically on the Canadian Northwest (British Columbia) and the attempts of the explorer, James Cook, Circumnavigator, to investigate whether indeed a secret northwest passage did exist. The music ranges from the most demanding grade 6-plus test-piece to works of more modest scope. In each, Curnow's masterful handling of the wind band is fully evident, particularly because they are given near ideal performances by some outstanding groups. This is a handsome, well-produced disc, good sound, fine notes on the music (in several languages!), as well as performance level advice. Order this disc from Curnow Music: 1-800-CURNOW (1-800-728-2669).

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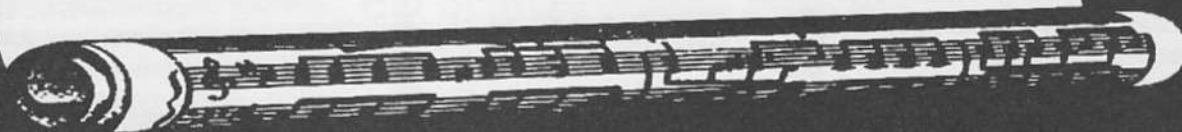
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