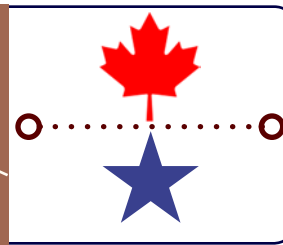




THE BRASS BAND BRIDGE



ISSUE 101

| The Official Publication of the North American Brass Band Association |

OCTOBER, 2006

UNDER THE BRIDGE



Douglas Yeo

Editor

Fall finds our NABBA bands beginning a new season; new music has been ordered, programs are being planned and audiences are enthusiastically enjoying the fruits of our labors. Across the pond, the British Open Championship was claimed once again by Black Dyke Band, continuing their extraordinary run of contest victories. As this issue of *The Bridge* goes to press the Besson National Championships of Great Britain and the Scottish Open are set to crown new champions. The Brass Band of Central Florida, 2005 NABBA and U.S. Open Champions, is preparing to compete in the Brass in Concert Championship in Newcastle, England next month while eight bands are heading to Illinois for November's U.S. Open Entertainment Contest. It is a busy and exciting time for bands around the world and judging from the news we receive from NABBA member bands, North American banding is contributing nicely to the global explosion of brass band events.

This is the fourth issue of *The Bridge* to be published in 2006; we are on track for a record five issues to be published this year (the next issue will be posted on December 15). You will also notice that this issue is the largest we have seen in some time. This is a tribute to the volume and quality of material that I am receiving. Mitch Miller famously said, "A conductor is just an idiot with a stick." Likewise your *Bridge* editor is just, "An idiot with a computer." YOU write *The Bridge* so please keep your news, articles, photos and other materials coming.

Tom Palmatier's feature article has a title that may lead one to assume it should only be read by conductors but nothing could be farther from the truth. His comments, written not

from some "ivory tower" but from "the trenches" of decades of work with bands, should be read by conductors and players alike. Along with Eric Ball's sage words that appear in each issue of *The Bridge* (in this issue they can be found on page 16), Lt. Col. Palmatier's advice is sensible, provocative and helpful.

It is with great pleasure that with this issue we welcome compact disc and music reviews back to *The Bridge*. Ronald Holz (compact discs) and Colin Holman (music) have, for many years, contributed reviews to *The Bridge*. I know that all NABBA members appreciate their keen insight and informed opinions. Please be sure that they receive copies of new discs and music so we can bring new materials before *Bridge* readers.

Since it was mentioned in Issue 100 of *The Bridge*, the NABBA *Silver Bells Capital Campaign* has received several new donations. We appreciate the growing number of donors who are investing in NABBA's future. Please consider helping with the *Silver Bells Campaign* by sending your donation to NABBA Treasurer Jim Grate.

While the NABBA XXV Championship in April 2007 may seem many months away, it is critically important that NABBA bands make their hotel reservations for the competition **NOW**. Louisville is a busy convention city and over 6000 hotel rooms are being booked by other conventions for the NABBA weekend. There is no "official" NABBA hotel in 2007 so bands must make their own hotel reservations. An improved shuttle bus system will ensure that NABBA members at various hotels will be able to get to Indiana University Southeast and to the Gala Concert in a timely manner. Don't miss out on NABBA XXV because you failed to secure hotel rooms for your band. A list of Louisville area hotels may be found on the NABBA website. Don't wait! ☘

Douglas Yeo

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ATOP THE BRIDGE



Anita Cocker Hunt

NABBA President

Dear NABBA Members,

Greetings to everyone. Many of you are starting your new season with new music, new schedules and maybe even new members. I hope that you have a great season and wish you the best.

In this issue's column I'd like to talk about the International Music Camp where I was the conductor of the brass band. Paul Droste had attended this camp for nine years as the brass band conductor and he asked me to continue on in this position after his retirement.

The IMC is held on the grounds of the International Peace Gardens, right on the border of Manitoba and North Dakota. It is beautiful and far away!!! Forget using your cell phone! This is an adult camp with "very friendly" people from all over Canada and the U.S. who look forward to their annual visit for three and a half days filled with music and fellowship. Some campers have been attending for 25 years and for some this was their first camp.

The camp schedule consists of two concert bands, brass band, jazz band, string orchestra, chorus and barbershop chorus. The campers participate in at least two to three groups and are totally absorbed in making music.

We had three brass band rehearsals a day with 45 members in the group. Some of the members play in a brass band back home and for some this is their only brass band experience during the year.

The first evening we had rehearsals in preparation for the Sunday morning worship service. The next evening we were pleasantly entertained by the Westwood Anniversary Band from Winnipeg. Monday evening was the camper recital concert with soloists and ensembles. A lot of fun and a lot of good music. The last evening was the grand finale with all large groups performing 4-5 pieces that they had been rehearsing during the past three days.

These people like to have fun, too. The local hot spot after the concert was Calvin's, small and rustic but full of action and fun. The IMC takes over per tradition, to the delight of the owners. Forget the juke box – some of the campers form a swing band one night and a pep band the next!

For those of you desiring to expand and broaden your musical experiences and scope of musical friends, you may want to consider attending the IMC. Once again, it was made clear to me that the music web goes far and wide and we will always meet friends of friends.

As you may have deduced, I truly enjoyed my time at the IMC and met a lot of wonderful people and musicians.

Enjoy the beginning of your new season, and thanks for being a NABBA member. ☺

Anita Cocker Hunt

Achuntband @ aol . com



NABBA President Anita Cocker Hunt
At the International Music Camp,
North Dakota, USA and Manitoba, Canada
(photos by Bill Harris)



THE NABBA SILVER BELLS CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Silver Bells Capital Campaign has been established to help ensure NABBA's future by creating a fund that will support both the annual NABBA Championship and provide a firm foundation for the expansion of NABBA's activities. The generous contributions of those individuals and corporations listed below are gratefully acknowledged. No donation is too small (or too large!). Contributions to NABBA are tax-deductible and matching contributions from corporations are welcome. Please consider sending your check (payable to NABBA) to: Jim Grate, NABBA Treasurer, Silver Bells Capital Campaign, PO Box 11336, Charleston, WV 25339-1336 USA. [Donors below are current as of October 11, 2006.]

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FEATURE ARTICLE

A BLUE COLLAR GUIDE FOR THE BRASS BAND CONDUCTOR

A LIST OF ORIGINAL (A FEW) AND
STOLEN (MOST OF THEM) IDEAS
FOR BRASS BAND CONDUCTORS

By Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Palmatier

A musician calls to see what time rehearsal is that night. The person on the phone says, "There's no rehearsal, the conductor died." He hangs up, hits re-dial, and asks when rehearsal is. He is told, "There's no rehearsal, the conductor died." He does this four more times and the person on the phone asks why he keeps calling because after all, the conductor is dead. His reply: "I know - I just like hearing you say it."

INTRODUCTION

The most important thing the conductor must always keep in mind is that no conductor has ever made any music; the musicians make the music. The conduc-

tor's job is to empower the musicians, to put them in situations where their very best musicality can be revealed. You cannot cause them to be better than they are – you can only bring out something in them that maybe they didn't know they had. You absolutely can make them worse than they are. The bottom line rule for a conductor is a variation on the Hippocratic Oath: "First, do no harm." If your stick technique is limited, just make sure you don't get in their way or screw them up. If they are playing great, minimize your interference. If they aren't playing great, figure out what they need from you.

BALANCE. The terms balance and blend are used often but without much understanding of what the end state (desired effect) is. When we say "fix the balance," what we really mean is "let me hear what I'm supposed to hear." In that regard, what I think we really mean when we discuss balance is clarity. Brass bands can be a "smear" of somewhat similar sound colors – if described in terms of visual art it would be a glob of mixed colors resulting in – brown. A fine orchestra has a clear "palette" to work with. It has a carpet of homogenous string sound with very distinct soloistic wind colors that contrast easily. In order to achieve that kind of clarity, I find it helpful to use terminology I stole from James Barnes – the musicians should always know who's in the foreground, midground, and background. That easily understood concept will quickly fix most "balance" problems and enable the right things to be heard in the right place and in the right prominence on the musical "canvas." The next step is for a lead voice or lead color to be designated within each of the groups (foreground, midground, background). The lead voice or lead color will be the one that others in the group will try to match in timbre – and that implies they will need to listen for that lead voice, thereby adjusting the balance within that group. Proper balance will result in the real goal – clarity – the ability to clearly hear what needs to be heard by arranging the foreground, midground, and background and additionally by deciding what color(s) should predominate. Designation of the lead voice lets you gain further clarity by either maximizing or minimizing the contrast between the groups. Let's say you want to be able to hear the fluegelhorn/alto horn/baritone "foreground" without them having to play really loudly. Let's assume the background is the "pad" in the low voices, the midground is a

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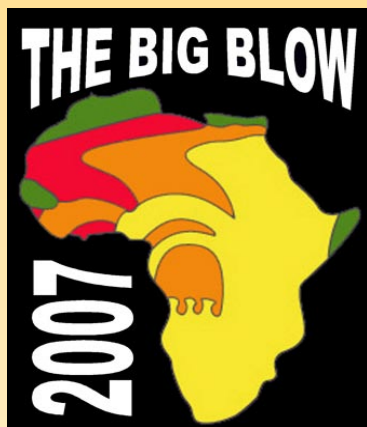
ACROSS THE BRIDGE

NOVEMBER 4, 2006

U.S. Open Brass Band Championships (Entertainment Contest) — Arlington Heights, Illinois (Busker Preview on November 3). For further information, visit www.usopenbrass.org.

NOVEMBER 18, 2006

Brass In Concert Championships, Newcastle, England. Entrants include the Brass Band of Central Florida. For further information, visit www.brassinconcert.com.

JANUARY 19 - 22, 2007

"The Big Blow 2007" to benefit Brass Band Aid. The world's largest brass band (2000 players) will be organized for inclusion in the Guinness Book of World Records. For further information, visit www.thebigblow.co.uk.

APRIL 13–14, 2007

NABBA XXV Championship—Indiana University Southeast/Louisville, Kentucky. Band entries must be submitted by February 1, 2007. For further information, visit www.nabba.org and click on "Contest Info 2007."

countermelody in cornets, with the foreground in the aforementioned middle brass. By making the trombone cylindrical sound the lead color in the background and the E-flat soprano cornet the lead voice in the midground, the foreground is cleared out for the "rounded" conical middle brass to be heard more clearly (but not have to overplay). By designating the foreground, midground, and background, you get the "primary colors" of your canvas into proportion. Properly designating the lead voice for each group can add pastels and help expand the tonal palette of the brass band. In doing this, it's vital the brass band conductor is sensitive to the unique sounds of the various instruments in order to carefully fine-tune the tonal clarity. An all brass ensemble with mostly conical instruments has very fine degrees of timbre differences requiring a more deft approach to coloration than what the wind band conductor can get away with (it doesn't take a genius to differentiate a clarinet sound from a trumpet sound). The savvy brass band conductor can give himself more variations in color to work with by matching players to particular seats. Some examples:

- I always wrote my repiano cornet with a more "trumpety" sound in mind. Designating the repiano as lead voice can shape the cornet sound toward that direction.
- Selecting a soprano player with a crystal-line versus a fat sound will help differentiate the part from the solo cornets and change the character of the tuttil cornet sound if the B-flat cornets balance to the E-flat cornet.
- Pick a fluegelhorn player that sounds more like a horn than a cornet.

RHYTHMIC CLARITY. In case you missed it, clarity is a big thing and nothing muddies the sonic waters more than a lack of rhythmic clarity. "Keeping time" is the musicians' job, not the conductor's. The only way this can be done is by a high level of concentration on what I call the rhythmic stream – the mental "Dr. Beat" of the subdivided beat that must be clicking away in every musician's head. I was blessed to play for Ray Shiner (a former member of the Sauter-Finnegan Orchestra) in college. He ran sectionals by having the section play a slow ballad without tapping their feet, nodding heads, or any other gesture. He'd start the metronome and then turn the metronome sound off and say "begin." At the end of the

chart (rests included), if we weren't still with the blinking light he'd say "again." We quickly learned to subdivide and concentrate like crazy or we'd be there all night. The result was a band that swung effortlessly in every style because the musicians kept time, not the director or the drummer. I will routinely look for opportunities for the band to work without conductor and force them to listen to the ensemble's internal pulse. David Holsinger's wonderful *Hymnsong on a Theme by Philip Bliss* for wind band is a great chart for this. It has eighth notes snaking throughout the entire piece. By making the musicians really lock in on the eighth notes aurally and stressing to the players to make those eighth notes precise, you will force the band to listen and concentrate hard. The effect we want is like the proverbial duck, gliding on the surface and paddling like crazy underwater. The soaring melody can only truly soar if the player has that rhythmic stream clicking away in their head. The result then is the type of vertical rhythmic precision that results in clarity and then liberates you and the musicians to vary the tempo as needed in a cohesive rather than a writhing or disjointed manner. Look for the internal pulse of a piece of music and get the musicians to lock in on that pulse.

ARTICULATIONS. The best way to describe articulations for wind players is by use of string bowings. The beauty of this is the visual aspect of bowings. Everyone has watched an orchestra and knows what these bowings look like and the sound they produce but may not have thought about that sonic effect and its relationship to wind music.

Visualize String Bowings To Achieve Good Wind Articulations



A down or up bow, about 1/2 of the bow length. Defined by string players as *Détaché*.



A down bow with attitude. String players call this *Accented Détaché* and think of this as being in any direction. Wind players should think of this as a strong down bow to get the right image of a full value note with **attitude** at the beginning.



Think "full bow." Same as the regular quarter note in length but using full bow gives the note more "glow." The old definition of "full value" is wrong. The tenuto indicates emphasis and "ring" to the note.



Think pizzicato. If the wind player thinks about a violinist high up on the fingerboard doing a pizzicato (think "plink") they will give it the right length. Wind players normally play staccato too long.



A hammered note. Think of a string player starting with the bow off the string and then hammering it down. This will help the wind player visualize the violent nature of this attack and the marcato style.

Wind players are generally lazy and a bit indiscriminating with their articulations. Make them overemphasize articulations and don't let your ears accept the natural tendencies of the players. Wind players are generally so casual with articulation they think they are doing it but it doesn't come out. Think of it like public speaking. A great public speaker will almost over-annunciate but to the listener it will be natural sounding. Unless the musicians clearly announce the articulations, they'll sound like they're talking in a monotone with marbles in their mouths. Try it – when you really get the articulations played, the music will seem to jump off the page.

NEWs ABOUT YOUR BAND IS ENJOYED BY ALL NABBA MEMBERS. PLEASE SEND YOUR BAND NEWS TO *BRIDGE* EDITOR DOUGLAS YEO; HIS CONTACT INFORMATION MAY BE FOUND ON PAGE 28.

NOTE AND PHRASE SHAPING. I think phrase shaping is closely related to note shaping and both can generally be determined by answering one question – what's the purpose of this note?

- A beginning of a statement?
- The end of a statement?
- Is it supposed to push the phrase forward or pull it back?
- What else is going on? If it's a "note with a hole in the middle" (half note or longer), is there movement going on in another voice while it's sustaining?

Once you go down this list, it'll be pretty apparent to you what purpose the note serves. You will then very easily be able to determine the shape of the note. The exact same concept is applied to phrases. Know the purpose and the shape will be pretty apparent to you. The result of this is of course not for you to be the expert on the shape of every note and phrase, but to help develop that awareness in the musicians so they know what the note they are play-

ing does for the phrase and what the phrase does for the form. They can then habitually do the "right" thing and you only have to worry about those cases where the composer's intent might call for something else.

TUNING. It doesn't really matter that much what pitch you use as long as the pitch source is 100% consistent every time. Good intonation can't be achieved if you tune to A=440 one time and A=442 the next. There is a school of thought that brass bands should tune a bit sharp to "sweeten" the sound. We play with mallet percussion that are pitched in A=440 so that should end that debate. Most modern horns are built to play best when tuned to A=440 so don't use the "sweetening" as an excuse for what it really is – playing sharp. Some bands tune to the tubas. In a perfect world that makes great theoretical sense. But – when was the last time you heard an orchestra tune to the string bass? Tubas are maddeningly difficult to sustain a perfectly centered precise pitch source on (I'm a tuba player), and we all know that variation of one cent (one hundredth of a semi-tone) can cause

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those tuning to the overtones to have to change up to 8 cents. The richness of the tuba's overtones actually make it harder (in the real, not the theoretical world) to hear the pitch center. The best solution is to use the vibraphone in octaves or if necessary, the pitch rendered from an electronic tuner. A good straight sound from a cornet will work as well but must be calibrated to the tuner. Lock it dead on A=440 every single time and then tune to B-flat – end of discussion. Most important is ensuring the musicians are really hearing and tuning to the correct pitch source, not the person playing the loudest (usually someone playing sharp).

The only way I know to imbue this idea of internalizing the pitch source in each musician's head is by having them sing the pitch (in tune) before trying to tune the horns. As you go through the rehearsal, you may wish to tune the tonic of the piece you're about to start just to help continue "tightening the shot group" (a military weapons term that means getting closer and closer to a "bull's eye") and to help educate less experienced players about their horn's tendencies. You can sound the pitch from your tuning source (locked in with the tuner), have the band sing it to get it into their heads, and then match what they sang. This takes under one minute and will be every bit as effective as going through the sections, playing chord scales, etc. I find it helpful to give separate pitches for low brass, middle brass, and cornets, rather than having the whole band trying to tune at once during the initial tuning. Many times when everyone's honking away on some variation of the true pitch, some of the players just give up.

Regarding playing chord scales (starting a major scale in three staggered groups so that it's a series of triads), do it if you want but I think it's a waste of time and don't ever do it in front of an audience. It may have some utility with a younger band but adult bands should be treated like adults. Again – I've never heard an orchestra play chord scales.

WARM-UPS. Unless dealing with a very young group, don't waste your time with group warm-ups. Each musician should know what they need to do to warm-up – one size does not fit all. Give them some time to warm-up but make it brutally clear that when the tuning starts at "the appointed hour" they must be warmed up. The warm-up time is not smoke break time or a

"cushion" for those arriving late; it is a courtesy given to a professional musician that they are expected to use wisely.

DYNAMICS. The ensemble needs an "anchor" – a dynamic level that they can instinctively feel and go back to for a reference. I think the best one is forte once they know the definition is "strong but not loud." Get a good solid, strong chord that all of them agree is *f*. Then work down from there, getting agreement of what each of the dynamic levels "feels" like. When things get out of control (usually too loud) go back and establish the reference point of *f* again. If they can always say "this is what *f* feels like, it'll quickly let them see that their *mp*, *mf*, *p*, etc. are way too loud. Don't bother practicing *ff*; getting bands to play loud is never a problem.

CRESCENDO. Get them to define it as "start soft" and you'll fix 90% of all crescendos. If they can drop down a dynamic level at the beginning of the crescendo, the growth in volume will take care of itself. Next step is to look at the length of the crescendo. If it goes from *p* to *ff* in 8 bars, I'll often have them write in the "milestones" (*mp*, *mf*, *f*) at specific points throughout the crescendo, otherwise it'll be at *ff* in the second bar.

ACCEL. AND RIT. AND THEIR VARIOUS COUSINS. GRADUAL is all you need to remember. Rit. does not mean subito meno mosso. Accel. does not mean subito piu mosso. Again, look at the time duration and ensure that the rit. or accel. goes from beginning to end and is not just frontloaded at the beginning.

YOUR STANCE. This is a real weakness of mine – I tend to roam too much. Tony Maiello (who was my 5th grade band director, then my college band director, and remains a true mentor today) is the best I've ever seen at establishing a good strong and well balanced stance. Set your feet shoulder width apart and move the feet very sparingly and only when done for a purpose. The difference for the band won't be much but the difference for the audience is huge. Every movement that you make that doesn't enhance the music is a negative one (refer to The Rule – Do No Harm). Conductors are an important part of the visual experience for the audience. We help them see where to listen, however we must always reflect the music. The instant the con-



Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Palmatier

ductor becomes distracting, he's hurting the music. When I watch tapes of myself and see my too-frequent shifting of my feet, I realize how distracting it is to the audience to see me shuffling around. Wish I could nail my shoes to the podium and walk out in my socks.

SET-UP OF THE BAND. The traditional brass band set-up has developed over the years for very good reasons and there really aren't too many sensible variations. I always wanted the Fluegelhorn to sit next to the solo horn and the repiano cornet to sit next to the E-flat soprano cornet. Other than that, just copy the successful bands. There is one thing you must do however, and that is pack the band in tight. An American band will expand to fit as much space as you give them. Each musician will bring a lawn chair, a cooler, a sleeping bag, four instrument cases, and 8 bottles of water to rehearsal (but will forget to bring a mute or their music). I've seen a brass band "cram" themselves into a 45'x35' space. Insist that the band sit almost uncomfortably close together. The really great British brass bands sit with their elbows touching so they can feel each other breathe. I like to set up the band myself or to put out some "limits" at the perimeter to keep them packed in. They can't/won't listen to each other if they're too far away.

CONDUCTING BOOKS. The Elizabeth Green text remains the gold standard. When I start to feel my conducting is getting lame (usually after every rehearsal or concert), I go back and scan it, get embarrassed at how sloppy I've gotten, and spend some mirror time reviewing the patterns and practicing some "wax on, wax off" moves with both hands.

PREPARING THE SCORE. When I was a new Army Band Officer I attended a National Band Association convention at Northwestern University. One of the clinics was on score prep by one of the top university directors. He said we had to: (1) do a complete harmonic and formal analysis of every note in the score, (2) memorize it completely, (3) play it on the piano, (4) and play every part on each of the instruments. I was driving back to the hotel contemplating a career in the insurance industry when I was flagged down for a ride. I pulled over and Francis McBeth jumped in the car. I was trying to not show how flabbergasted I was to get to meet him and he asked what I thought of that class. I told him I couldn't do all of that even if I had the time and maybe I needed to reconsider my career choice. He said, "I usually try to find the meter changes before I get on the podium, and that's for the stuff I wrote." There are lots of theories and books on how to prepare scores but I guess I'd say start with those basics that will enable you to navigate through it without disaster and go as far toward the other extreme as you have time for. However, the best score preparation teacher I ever had was Chief War-rant Officer Five Greg Prudom. When he was my teacher, before a rehearsal he would open the score to a random page and start counting down from ten. By the time he got to one I had to have told him what the rehearsal problems for that page were and how I was going to help the band fix them. That is your goal for score prep. Know what you want it to sound like and why, figure out where you think they will need help, and know how you're going to help them.

MARKING THE SCORE.

• If you don't need it marked, don't mark it. If the score text is very clear and easy to read, just read it.

• Mark cues you're likely to miss if they aren't marked.

• Use "Pn" ("Posaune," German for "trombone") for trombones. It's easier to quickly discriminate it from tubas.

• DO NOT use the line above the E-flat soprano cornet part for your markings like many do. This will result in just reading the markings, not the music.

• Don't use colored pencil. It never erases properly and the next guy will curse you. Also, I find as I learn a score more, I want to reduce the number of markings. If I mark something in Red and later decide it's not that important, that score's ruined forever – the Red will draw your eyes like a moth to the flame.

• For thick places where I think the band might need me to tell them who's in the Foreground, Midground, and Background and who the Lead Voice is, I'll put FG, MG, BG, LV so I don't have to burn podium time remembering what I wanted there.

• Some small brackets with a number at the start at the top of the score can be used to help see the phrases. That can also help free your

eyes from the score. If I've got 8 bars of essentially beating time and see:

[8]

it lets me look up for the eight bars without worrying about getting lost (knowing the phrasal lengths is an even more important benefit but not getting lost is pretty good too).

PRACTICING CONDUCTING. If you can stand in front of a mirror and do a very clear and properly shaped legato 4, 3, and 2 pattern while indicating crescendo and then decrescendo with the left hand, and then adding prepared left hand (and eye) cues on each of those beats consistently, you have 90% of the tools you'll need to be a good conductor. Don't waste time on your 11/8 pattern until you can do those things well; if you can do them, you'll be in the top 10% of conductors anyway. If you have limited hours to do score prep and conducting practice – learn the music. Pretty moves without knowing what you're trying to convey to the musicians are just..... pretty moves. The musicians don't watch us



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that much anyway. Ensure you can consistently do those things listed above – they are the equivalents of the screwdriver, pliers, crescent wrench, and hammer in your conducting toolkit; and then get your head into the music. As a side note, if you've got something in "1", see if it'd be better conducted in supermetrics (stolen from Jim Curnow, by the way). That is, if the measures of "1" are in groups of four, conduct a four pattern. Beating one doesn't let you express much in terms of style – it's really just flogging. It's also easy for the musicians to get lost because they see nothing but lots of downbeats. If something's in groups of 8 and you are conducting in 4 (each beat being a measure) those who are counting measures will thank you (or at least hate you less). Again, it will also help you from getting lost – always a plus for a conductor.

PACING OF THE REHEARSAL.

- You must have a lesson plan! You've absolutely got to have a detailed timeline going in of what you're going to do and for how long. I provide that detailed plan to the musicians at least 24 hours in advance. That does several things: (1) If they aren't going to be there, this will prompt them to let you know before the rehearsal so you can adjust fire if needed. (2) This tells the musicians you're prepared for the rehearsal so they had better be as well. They will have no excuse for being unprepared, not having their music, having the wrong horn, and all of the other hundred things that can ruin the flow of a rehearsal. (3) This forces the conductor to do his job ahead of time. If my boss wants to holler at me for the hour before the rehearsal and that was my scheduled "prep time," the rehearsal's a waste of time for everyone.

- Musicians want to play. Unless stopping them will have value added, let them play. The responsibility to diagnose and fix things is theirs but sometimes they need two times through to do it. Elliott Delborgo, my former teacher and a real inspiration to me, when asked how he works all-state bands said if he has a one hour program and eight hours to rehearse, he plays through the program eight times. Very seldom does a conductor utter an epiphany so mind-blowing that it's more useful than letting the musicians play. Our comments must be surgically placed in the gaps when they are resting.

- Use "post-its." I'll put about 10 little yellow

post-its on the side of my stand. As I hear something I want to fix, I'll stick it on that place in the score. When all 10 are gone, it's really easy and fast to go straight to the spot. Nothing's worse than sitting in a band while the conductor searches for the place he heard something 40 measures ago. Go straight to the post-it, address the issue and put the post-it back on the side of the stand. The beauty of this is if the band's playing pretty well, it'll be longer between stops. If it's a train wreck, you'll stop sooner – the exact pacing you want anyway. This is also a stolen idea but I don't even know who I stole it from – some trombonist said he saw somebody do it and so it became my original idea.

- Develop the habit of always telling them where to start the same way: "Count with me before letter B; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 measures." Too many conductors say "let's start 10, 11, 12, uh, 13 before B." While you're counting measures from a point that they don't know, they're day-dreaming. Then, when you reveal the secret of where you're counting from, they've forgotten how many measures and whether it's before or after. If you use the recommended way, as soon as all of you have counted the measures together you're ready to start without delay (and don't delay, make the band keep up the pace of the rehearsal as well).

- Always strive to keep the rehearsal at a fast pace – work the band hard and fast and with a purpose. Then, between pieces give them a few minutes to relax, stretch, talk, and have some "band time." That couple of minutes of complete "time off" will refresh you and the band and get all of you ready to dive into it again.

KNOW YOURSELF. Be aware of your strengths and your weaknesses.

- Know what your body looks like to others. This only comes from watching a video of yourself (painful) or having your spouse tell you what a spaz you look like on stage. My fingers are pretty long so I'm really careful to keep my left hand fingers together or else it looks like a giant squid.

- Know what your face looks like when you're conducting. Tony Maiello's terrific at using facial expressions to engage the band. My eyes are kind of "hooded" so I work on opening my eyes really large before going on stage, something my wife nagged (I mean lovingly

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- ORDER FORM FOR RECORDINGS OF ALL NABBA BAND CONTEST PERFORMANCES FROM 1998–2006.
- INFORMATION ABOUT NABBA XXV, LOUISVILLE KY AND INDIANA UNIVERSITY SOUTHEAST, APRIL 13–14, 2007.
- CONTACT INFORMATION FOR NABBA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS.
- LINKS TO ALL NABBA MEMBER BANDS.

suggested) me into doing. Make sure your wife tells you (like you can stop her) about any other distractions, like “panty-lines.” I want the audience watching the band, not noticing that my boxers are bunched up. While on the topic of distractions, take your wristwatch off.

- Don't be embarrassed to use a metronome. If you have a tendency to get “wound up,” use a metronome to help you establish the correct tempo. This is especially important when conducting for a soloist. If the soloist tells me they want it at 144, I owe it to them to deliver 144, not 152 or 136. I'd rather be criticized for having a metronome as a crutch for a starting tempo than screw up the music or embarrass a soloist.

WORK ON SENSING THE BAND'S STATE OF MIND This does not mean worrying about always pleasing them or making them happy. However, the effective musical leader will be able to sense when they can be pushed hard and will respond positively and when you need to apply a lighter touch. Sometimes it just

“isn't happening.” That's when the conductor's leadership skills are most needed to intuitively know how to get it to start “happening.” There are several ways of getting at this and only your knowledge of yourself and your band can guide you through this minefield.

- Sometimes the best thing for a rehearsal with a “bad vibe” is to call it a day. This depends on how much rehearsal time you have available and must be used very sparingly. A band can't be led to believe that if they play with poor effort or results that you'll give up and give them time off.

- A band with a good work ethic and a good rapport with the conductor will usually respond to an honest appraisal and an appeal to their artistic integrity. “Band, we're off to a pretty bad start today, how about if all of us take a ten minute break and come back ready and refocused to play up to our potential?” A good band will appreciate the honesty and will usually snap out of it.

- Try doing some unusual tempo changes, forcing them to watch more closely and by extension to listen to each other. The effect of this

can be to get them playing better together and be more actively engaged in the rehearsal. This idea was stolen from one of my officer conducting students and is now therefore claimed as “mine.”

- The same aforementioned officer used the technique of having the band start a note together with their eyes closed to focus them on each other and the ensemble's “impulse of will.” This worked great at (once again) reinforcing the musicians' importance in (and responsibility for) musical performance and good ensemble.

KNOW HOW TO BOW AND PRACTICE IT! Colonel (Retired) Eugene W. Allen was the most masterful on-stage presence I've ever seen. When in his prime as Commander of The Army Band he looked commanding and yet relaxed and he spent many hours drilling me on how to bow, gesture, walk, and talk on stage. I don't know which one of us it was more painful for but it sure helped.

- Bowing. Bend slowly from the waist, head down, arms hanging freely, and say “look at my shoes, 2, 3, 4, and up.” Avoid the most frequent variations (sorry for the use of stereotypes, no offense intended):

- * The Japanese businessman – half bow from the waist looking up at the audience.

- * The French waiter. One arm horizontal across the waist.

- * The dunking bird. Arms tight by the side, bobbing up and down.

- When gesturing to the band, swing your arm from the shoulder, fingers together, thumb parallel to the fingers and say “swing the gate slowly.”

- When speaking, speak slowly and look at the audience. If there's a podium, I like to stand behind it and grip the sides – if I'm having an adrenaline rush I don't want that excitement to come across to the audience as nervousness and holding on to something helps me steady myself.

- Smile. If you look like you're happy to be there, the musicians and the audience might be as well.

- Practice the curtain calls, bows, etc. with the

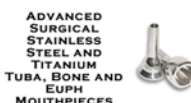


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band. Nothing ruins a terrific concert more than when it looks like a bunch of amateurs or Keystone Cops at the end.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO GO BACK AND RE-READ THE INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH AT THE TOP OF THIS RAMBLING.

A conductor must first, foremost and always be a musician. However, the conductor is a musician who cannot make music and relies on others to make the music for him/her. If you keep that in mind, you will treat the musicians with dignity and they will reward you with music. This does not mean babying them. The music comes first and if they don't put it first, they deserve an appropriate reminder of why we are there. But – they are not there for us, so when you start to think you make beautiful music, just get over yourself. The best example of this I've ever seen is one of the great giants of band music, Dr. Harry Began. Whether it's a beginning band or one of the top bands in the world, Dr. Began's approach is always exactly the same. He'll wade right in and try to make it better. Unlike some of the "old school"

bandmasters, he is not a tyrant and does not abuse or degrade musicians. However..... if anyone shows a lack of respect and dedication for the music, for the ensemble, for the audience, or for him – watch out. Without being cruel he can forcefully and unforgettably ensure the offender gets on track or makes the "walk of shame" out of the room. Few directors are as beloved by their protégés as Harry and few can get any band, regardless of ability, to sound better as quickly as him. That's all any of us can hope for. ✪

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Palmatier is currently Commandant of the U.S. Army School of Music, responsible for the training of Army musicians and leaders worldwide. He served as President and Vice-President of NABBA and was Director of The United States Army Brass Band. Colonel Palmatier led the Dominion Brass Band to First Place in Honors Division in the 1996 NABBA Championship competition.

BUILDING BRIDGES: NEWS FROM NABBA BANDS

GEORGIA BRASS BAND

The Georgia Brass Band is thrilled to announce that it has been named a resident ensemble of the brand new Dozier Centre for the Performing Arts in Kennesaw, Georgia. As part of this residency, the GBB holds all weekly rehearsals there and performs three to five subscription concerts throughout the year.

A particularly exciting facet of the band's residency at Dozier Centre is to serve as a mentoring partner to the newly-formed Georgia Youth Symphony Orchestra Brass Band. This new band, which is funded by the Dozier Foundation, is under the leadership of GBB trombonist Dr. Tom Gibson. The GBB will conduct clinics and coaching for GYSOBB members and will share a concert program with them every year. GYSOBB has big plans for its inaugural year, including participating in NABBA XXV.

The Dozier Centre held its grand opening on August 19. Georgia Brass Band featured prominently in the festivities, presenting its first concert in its new home. The program featured mostly lighter works, including *Old English Dances* (arr. Alan Fernie), *Amparito Roca* (Jaime Texidor, arr. Winter), *Death or Glory* (R.B. Hall), *Russian Circus Music* (Ray Woodfield), *The Canadian* (James Merritt), *Soul Bossa Nova* (Quincy Jones, arr. Duncan), *Minnie the Moocher* (Cab Calloway, arr. Casey – Brian Talley, bass trombone solo), *Radetzky March* (Strauss, arr. Ryan), and others.

The Dozier Centre for the Performing Arts is an 85,000-square foot facility that contains a 600-seat concert hall with a custom-designed concert shell, a black box theater, three dance studios, rehearsal facilities and state of the art audio and video recording studios. This venue was designed to host multidisciplinary arts programs for all ages, including programs in vocal and choral music, theatre, digital recording and editing technology, dance and instrumental music. The Dozier Centre also serves as home to the Cobb Symphony Orchestra, the Georgia Regional Girls

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Chorus, the new Georgia Youth Symphony Orchestra and the new GYSO Brass Band. (Submitted by Joe Johnson.)

COMMONWEALTH BRASS BAND

The Commonwealth Brass Band (New Albany, Indiana) has a new Associate Director. Anita Cocker Hunt, Music Director of the Cincinnati Brass Band and Athena Brass Band and President of the Board of Directors of NABBA, began rehearsals with the CBB this fall. In addition, Hunt has joined the Music Faculty at Indiana University Southeast where the band is an Ensemble-in-Residence. (IUS is also the site for the annual NABBA Championships.)

CBB Music Director J. Jerome Amend is "very pleased and excited" to have Hunt on board as Associate Director. He feels that NABBA member bands should have more interaction. At Amend's instigation, CBB has given joint concerts with the Brass Band of the Tri-State and the Cincinnati Brass Band.

"Interchange of ideas can strengthen all bands," remarked Amend during the meeting at IUS in August where he, Hunt, CBB President Andrew Scott and IUS Music Department Chair, Dr. Joanna Goldstein agreed on Hunt's new association with the band and the university.

Goldstein noted that all the university's ensembles have associate directors and that "having different ways of saying the same musical things speeds learning."

Hunt had conducted the band for a few rehearsals in 2005 and 2006 when Amend, who is also Principal Trumpet of the Louisville Orchestra, had to perform with the orchestra and could not rehearse the band. The players enjoyed working with Hunt and Amend and Goldstein decided to invite her to be an official member of the group.

Hunt, voicing the new musical team strategy for CBB told Scott that "I'm here to help you play better in whatever way I can. I'll draw on my strengths and Jerry will give you his strengths."

Scott said the band is very much looking forward to working with Hunt and that, "We are constantly entertained by Anita's Post-It Notes," referring to the conductor's well-known rehearsal technique of marking scores with annotated sticky notes and tossing them aside when a passage has been played to her



Anita Cocker Hunt joins Commonwealth Brass Band as Associate Conductor (photo by Susan Reigler)

Anita Cocker Hunt, far left, is given her new band shirt at a Commonwealth Brass Band concert in Brownstown, Ind. on August 27th. Next to Hunt, from left to right, are CBB Music Director J. Jerome Amend, band president and repiano cornet Andrew Scott, and IUS Music Dept. chair (and CBB cornetist) Joanna Goldstein.

satisfaction.

Hunt will conduct at least one work on the band's concert in the Stem Concert Hall at IUS on November 5 at 3 p.m. She will also conduct one of Commonwealth's test pieces at NABBA on April 14, 2007. (Submitted by Susan Reigler.)

PRAIRIE BRASS BAND

The Prairie Brass Band awarded the second annual Prairie Brassperson of the Year (PBOY) Award to Paul Eakley at the close of its summer season at the *Unplugged Thursday Concert Series* in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

The award was in recognition of Paul's dedication, devotion, attendance, performance and

continued service to the Prairie Brass Band. The entire band joined Musical Director Dallas Niermeyer and the Board of Directors in a heartfelt expression of appreciation for Paul's many years of service to the band.

"Besides his high level of musical contribution, Paul continues to volunteer a helping hand at every conceivable opportunity and exemplifies every trait you could ever hope for in a band mate." Said Band President, Clark Niermeyer. "We are proud to have Paul as a band member."

In a personal note from Paul to the band he included the statement, "I learned a long time ago that many hands make the burden easier."

Paul was awarded a plaque of recognition and two gift cards of a value that were subsequently liquefied at Peggy Kinnane's pub across the street that many readers will remember as the venue for the "Busker Preview" during the U.S. Open Brass Band Championships. (Submitted by Clark Niermeyer.) ☺

BAND CONCERT

PROGRAMS

BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS, TIM JAMESON, CONDUCTOR

July 15, 2006. Infirmary Mound State Park, Granville, OH. *National Anthem* (arr. Susi), *Americans We* (Fillmore), *Pops for Brass* (Richards), *Barnum & Bailey's Favorite* (King, arr. Roberts), *Amazing Grace* (arr. Himes), *National Emblem* (Bagley), *New York, New York* (arr. Richards), *Music of the Night* (arr. Himes), *My Fair Lady* (arr. Fernie), *Schindler's List* (arr. Bernaerts), *Fanfare and Flying Theme from E.T.* (arr. Sykes), *Goldcrest* (Anderson), *America the Beautiful* (Ward/ Dragon, arr. Dougherty), *Cossack Fire Dance* (Graham).

July 8, 2006. Faith Memorial Church, Lancaster, OH. *National Anthem* (arr. Susi), *Americans We* (Fillmore), *Pops for Brass* (Richards), *Clear Skies* (E. Ball – Dan King, cornet solo), *Amazing Grace* (arr. Himes), *American Civil War Fantasy* (Bilik, arr. Himes), *New York, New York* (arr. Richards), *Barnum & Bailey's Favorite* (King, arr. Roberts), *Valdres* (arr. Møller), *Carrickfergus* (arr. Roberts, Diana Herak, baritone solo), *My Fair Lady* (arr. Fernie), *Armed Forces Salute* (arr. Heine), *Schindler's List* (arr. Bernaerts), *Fanfare and Flying Theme from E.T.* (arr. Sykes), *America the Beautiful* (Ward/ Dragon, arr. Dougherty), *Stars and Stripes Forever* (Sousa).

July 2, 2006. Scioto Park, Dublin, OH. *National Anthem* (arr. Susi), *Americans We* (Fillmore), *Pops for Brass* (Richards), *Carrickfergus* (arr. Roberts, Diana Herak, baritone solo), *American Civil War Fantasy* (Bilik, arr. Himes), *New York, New York* (arr. Richards), *Jericho - revisited* (Himes – Joe Galvin, narrator), *Melody Shop* (King, arr. Fernie), *Armed Forces Salute* (arr. Heine), *Bring Him Home* (arr. K. Wilkinson, Brian Stevens, vocalist), *Amazing*



Paul Eakley, Prairie Bandperson Of The Year, 2006..

Grace (arr. Himes), *God Bless America* (Berlin, Brian Stevens, vocalist), *Fanfare and Flying Theme from E.T.* (arr. Sykes), *America the Beautiful* (Ward/ Dragon, arr. Dougherty), *Stars and Stripes Forever* (Sousa), *Cossack Fire Dance* (Graham, Jeff Keller, trombone, Dan King, cornet, Lori Cohen, euphonium, Jon Merritt,

percussion).

FOUNTAIN CITY BRASS BAND, LEE HARRELSON, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR; JASON RINEHART, PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR

Red, White & Brass. April 29 (Moberly, Mis-



Fountain City Brass Band in concert, April 2006 with Jason Rinehart, Principal Conductor.

souri) and 30 (Kansas City, Missouri), 2006.

Star Spangled Banner (arr. Himes), *America the Beautiful* (Ward/Dragon, arr. Harrelson), *Brilliant* (Graham – Lee Harrelson & Will Hess, euphonium), *Shenandoah* (Ballantine), *Bride of the Waves* (Clarke – arr. Harrelson; Alan Wenger, cornet solo), *A Disney Fantasy* (arr. Richards), *Ol' Man River* (Kern, arr. Freeh), *Liberty Fanfare* (Williams, arr. Sykes), *Concerto de Aranjuez* (Rodrigo, arr. Bolton – Doug Reneau, flugelhorn solo), *76 Trombones* (Wilson, arr. Duthoit), *Bugler's Holiday* (Anderson, arr. Harrelson), *A Touch of Gershwin* (Gershwin, arr. Broadbent), *Amazing Grace* (arr. Himes), *Armed Forces Salute* (Lowden, arr. Harrelson), *God Bless the USA* (Greenwood, arr. Helm).

Brass Band Live! September 10, 2006, Blue Springs, Missouri. *Liberty Fanfare* (Williams, arr. Sykes), *Bride of the Waves* (Clarke – arr. Harrelson; Alan Wenger, cornet solo), *Canterbury Chorale* (van der Roost), *A Moorside Suite* (Holst), *Introduction to Act III of 'Lohengrin'* (Wagner, arr. Wright), *Land of Make Believe* (Mangione, arr. Harrelson), *Carrickfergus* (Roberts – Lee Harrelson, solo), *Bugler's Holiday* (Anderson, arr. Harrelson), *Hymn of the Highlands: Ardross Castle, Flowerdale* (Steve Molloy, solo), *Dundonnell* (Sparke), *Amazing Grace* (arr. Himes). ★

U.S. OPEN

PREVIEW

4TH ANNUAL U.S. OPEN BRASS BAND CHAMPIONSHIPS: ANOTHER YEAR OF GROWTH FOR AMERICA'S LEADING BRASS BAND ENTERTAINMENT CONTEST

The fourth annual US Open Brass Band Championships, hosted by the Prairie Brass Band, produced by the newly-formed Brass



Bands International Corp. and in partnership with sponsor Buffet Crampon (manufacturers of Besson & Courtois), are pleased to announce that due to a sold out house last year, the contest will be returning to St. Viator High School in Arlington Heights, Illinois, which will seat about 55% more audience than last year's venue. The contest will be held on November 4, 2006 and will include the following eight bands:

Two-time defending Champions, Brass Band of Central Florida, Eastern Iowa Brass Band, Fountain City Brass Band, Milwaukee Festival Brass, Motor City Brass Band, Sheldon Theatre Brass Band, Jaguar-Coventry Brass Band (in their US Open debut) and the host group, Prairie Brass Band.

The bands will be competing for the following awards and cash prizes:

Championship Trophy and \$1,000.00, sponsored by Buffet Crampon, a Partnership

Sponsor.

Most Entertaining Band Award and \$500.00, sponsored by Sam Ash Music, a Gold Level Sponsor.

Second Place Trophy and \$250.00.

Best Featured Soloist Award and \$250.00, sponsored by Smith-Watkins, a Silver Level Sponsor.

Best Performance of a March and \$500.00.

Best New Arrangement or Composition for Brass Band, \$250.00.

Unique to the contest is the Buskers Award, a trophy for the best small ensemble of the day, judged by a "mystery adjudicator." This has proven to be a hotly contested portion of the contest and hugely popular with musicians and audience alike. Additionally, the Buskers' Preview is held Friday night at a local Irish pub and is free and open to the public.

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The contest sponsors are excited and pleased to announce a new award this year to be sponsored by Buffet Crampon: the award for the Best Cornet Performer of the Day. The recipient will be presented with a special, custom built Courtois cornet, which will be engraved with "U.S. Open - Best Cornet - 2006." This award will be presented immediately following the performance by the last band.

In addition, Buffet Crampon is also the sponsor of Frank Renton, "The Voice of the U.S. Open," as well as judges John Bell of St. Louis and Curtis Metcalf from Toronto, Ontario. Completing the judging panel will be veteran U.S. Open judge and acclaimed British adjudicator, Alan Morrison, sponsored by Gig Bags.

"We are extremely pleased by the growth of the U.S. Open this year, both in terms of the number of bands competing and in terms of the ongoing generous support from our sponsors," said Clark Niermeyer, president of the U.S. Open board. "We believe that this will be the largest U.S. Open yet, and that is all due to the enthusiasm shown for the event by the competing bands, by our audience, and by our sponsors."

Those who want to attend or become a sponsor or advertiser are urged to check out the website at www.usopenbrass.org for further information. ★

BOOK REVIEW

By Ronald Holz

Court, W.L. (Wally). **In the Firing Line: A Biography of Colonel Branwell Coles.** Credo Press: Toronto, 2006. 387 pages; Features accompanying CD with 'Sampler' of selected works by Coles, endnotes, multiple appendices including works list, and photos.

Bramwell Coles (1887 – 1960) ranks as one of the major figures in the history of Salvation Army music, especially its brass band music. Heralded as "The Army Sousa" or "March King," labels he personally disliked, Coles saw 45 of his stirring marches published in SA journals. Coles served as Editor-in-Chief of the SA's International Music Editorial Department from 1936 to 1952, a pivotal time in the development of SA brass literature, a time when SA music entered the modern era. Under

his encouragement, a group of new writers emerged or were reengaged in SA music: Heaton, Goffin, Leidzén, and Steadman-Allen, to name but four of the most famous. Wally Court's engaging biography of this fascinating, yet quiet, humble man tells the complete story of Coles' life, from the days as a young saxophonist (!) in the famous SA Chalk Farm Band (London) under Bandmaster Alfred Punchard (1875 – 1950), to his retirement days in Canada, where he wrote theme music for a dynamic TV series launched by the SA of Canada, "The Living Word."

While this is not a musical study, and I must stress that in this review, Court does provide descriptions of a wide range of Coles' music, and he places that output in the appropriate cultural and religious context. The author has greatly enhanced and aided the reader's understanding of the subject by providing an accompanying compact disc containing 11 compositions by Coles and a recent meditation on a Coles' hymn, *Here At the Cross* (James Curnow). A majority of the recordings are 'historic', from the 78-rpm era, and therefore align neatly with the book's setting. Among the fine Coles' marches included are *In the Firing Line*, *Departed Heroes*, *The King's Musicians*, and *Victors Acclaimed*. Also on the disc are his tone poem *The Divine Pursuit* and *Suite: Portrait from St Paul's Epistles*. Both works are still active in SA repertoire.

You will find that Coles did not seek positions in SA music, but rather felt he would be of more service with his literary skills once he dedicated his life to full time service as an SA clergyman, or officer. Indeed, he served the SA as a writer and journalist for extended periods in both England and Canada. He was self-motivated as a young composer, however, being encouraged by Bandmaster Punchard, who took young Coles to hear the Sousa Band when it toured in the UK early in the 20th century, including the 1905 tour. This was an experience Coles never forgot, Sousa's marches and march style and the excellence of the band's performance dear to his heart. Soon Coles was placing in the annual SA International March competitions, winning third place in 1907, and first place in 1908.

While Coles was initially self-taught, Court relates how Coles' real musical education took place when he began to work at International Headquarters, eventually being appointed a

young member of the music editorial department under Frederick Hawkes, and for a brief time out of retirement, Richard Slater. His co-workers were to include Eric Ball and Albert Jakeway in the early 1920s. Sent to Canada during the period 1925 – 1936, he played a major role in maintaining the excellence of SA music there and served as an unassuming but successful corps bandmaster while working as a journalist for the SA.

Court heads each chapter with a brief description of a Coles composition, choosing it also as the appropriate title for that part of the story. A works list is included among the appendices, and there are some interesting photos and illustrations – the modern reader always wanting more! While Court's writing style would not be called scholarly – it just wouldn't work in this kind of book – Court does document his findings (endnotes) and he does provide good primary source material along the way, making for a very valuable contribution to SA music history. There are far too few books on brass band composers, and so I am delighted to recommend this compact (158 pages) but informative biography of a major SA composer.

Order directly from W.L. Court, 1 Ashmill Court, Toronto, ON, M9A 4T7. Book and CD by mail: Canada \$28 Cdn; US \$30 (Exchange covers mailing). Overseas \$37 (Cdn); Author's email: wlcmcp@pathcom.com ★

NEW MUSIC REVIEWS

By Colin Holman

NEW MUSIC FOR BRASS BAND

Published by Studio Music:

Club Europe (Tour for Band), Martin Ellerby, 2002. Moderately difficult, 7'30", three percussion.

This is a lively newer work from the pen of Martin Ellerby and cast in the form ABA, with a fast outer section (slightly abbreviated in its return) and a lovely slow sustained middle section. It was commissioned by Club Europe Concert Tours for the 2002 Belgium Young

Bands Festival. Two things stand out in this composition; the first is that it is full of catchy ideas clearly geared toward younger bands (despite the difficulty rating), and secondly, it's a work that places the vast majority of its technical and range challenge in the upper third of the band. As the score visually descends, one notices that the trombones, tubas and even euphoniums have parts that are relatively straightforward—quite in contrast to the upper parts which lie at the upper Honors section and Championship section levels for NABBA bands. Percussion are active but not overly challenged either. The work could be useful as a brilliant overture-type work or one to open the second half of a concert, and will keep the cornet section especially busy.

Dance to thi' Daddy, arr. Darrol Barry, 2005. Moderately easy, 4'00", three percussion.

This is one of the best-loved of all Northumbrian (Geordie) folk songs effectively arranged for brass band. It is also known in England as "When the Boat Comes In" and is a song about a fisherman/father's return from the sea, heavily laced with references to alcohol. The song was first printed in a collection of ballads from Northern England by William Watson (died 1840) as *Dance ti' thy Daddy* and later appears in a Cecil Sharp collection (1909). It has been a popular tune in England, used for TV series and commercials, and this arrangement has been recorded by the Foden's Band on "Sunburst" Polyphonic QPRL 221D. The melody itself is set in a lively 3/4 meter throughout most of the arrangement with the theme shared around the band with some contrasting mood interludes and the verse and chorus themes being heard together at the conclusion of the arrangement. A most enjoyable new setting.

Ave Verum Corpus, Mozart/Philip Sparke, 2005. Moderately easy, 3'15", no percussion.

Many people have declared *Ave verum corpus* to be their favourite of all Mozart's choral works so performances of this arrangement set by Philip Sparke for four euphoniums and brass band are likely to produce similar emotional response from listeners due to the glorious combination of melody and harmony. This beautiful Eucharistic hymn was composed in June 1791 and was dedicated to Mozart's friend, Anton Stoll, who was chorus master of the parish church in Baden where the first performance was given. Mozart wrote the work in

Eric Ball's Point of View...

“To second-part players: You are an integral part of the whole and should not underestimate your importance.

This positive attitude should colour all you do. For example, if you are in the third cornet section, do not imagine that you can sit at ease, tucked safely away out of sight and sound. I often ask such players to mentally project their playing to an imagined point in the *centre* of the band, just in front of me. If I can thus hear every part coming straight at me, I can in turn control a *known* quantity from each player, and help to blend and unify the whole.

Another thing you should remember is that you must *fill* your instrument. Even in the very quiet playing, you should think of the tone as vibrating *within* the instrument, and not being strangled somewhere in the mouthpiece. As singers are so often told – keep the tone *forward*.”

—Reprinted from “*Eric Ball: His Words and His Wisdom*” compiled by Peter Cooke. 1992, Egon Publishers. Used with permission.

an attempt to succeed Leopold Hofmann, who was Kapellmeister at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, and who had fallen gravely ill. Mozart's setting of the text is remarkable for its compact simplicity (“too simple for children and too difficult for adults”) and therein lies the challenge for the soloists in the transcription. The other issue lies around the fact that most brass bands don't carry four euphoniums, so this work is most likely to be effective in a massed band setting.

A Christmas Lullaby, arr. Darrol Barry, 2005. Easy. 3'00", one percussion.

Caveat emptor!! The title page of this selection and the Studio Music website lists this item as for Flugel Horn and Brass Band, but it is in fact for Tenor Horn solo and Brass Band. Even the Flugel part is printed as the solo. Let's hope Studio Music get this sorted out. That being said, the Tenor Horn simply plays the melody one time with an interlude and then the soloist takes an obbligato idea to conclude the short

arrangement, based upon the Rocking Carol. The music remains in concert Bb throughout and is dedicated to the arranger's wife, Rachel.

Evening Hymn and Sunset, arr. Rob Wiffin, 2005. Easy. 3'00", three percussion.

Rob Wiffin's setting of *St. Clement* (*The Day Thou Gavest Lord is Ended*) and the bugle call *Sunset* are combined in a fashion that might make for an effective conclusion to a performance in the manner of a musical benediction. The hymn tune is presented twice in concert Ab and scored differently for each presentation, followed by the band accompanying the bugle call.

Trombone Concerto, Martin Ellerby, 2002. Difficult. 14'30", four percussion.

I had the pleasure of conducting this work with the St. Louis Brass Band three years ago, and the challenge for both soloist and band (and conductor!) is at an exceptionally high level. The composer provides the following helpful

notes for the concerto which is cast in three movements. 1. Panache – declamatory figures in both solo and band parts are contrasted with a more lyrical theme, initially for solo trombone alone but reappearing later with the cornets to form a duet and later and trio. These two ideas are worked out culminating in an accompanied cadenza that builds toward a dramatic conclusion. The title refers to a kind of arrogance that the solo part adopts whilst pitted against the larger ensemble – there will be no doubting who the winner is! 2. Chaconne—a ritornello idea forms the basis of the movement which borrows from traditional chaconne features rather than following them pedantically. The lyrical side of the solo instrument is allowed full rein and indulgence, though there is often an unexpected edge to the harmony that salutes the trombone's stately reputation. 3. Mosaic – as the title suggests is a tapestry of a number of ideas that return in various orders. With the exception of one, which always returns in the same guise, the subjects are varied. All the themes and undercurrents owe much to dance forms. As may be expected, the soloist has many opportunities to display both technical and lyrical prowess before the frenetic conclu-

sion. The solo part is published in both bass and treble clef versions if you wish to encourage soloists not familiar with traditional brass band notation, and the Black Dyke Band have recorded this work on a Polyphonic CD *The Eternal Quest* QPRL 211D with Brett Baker as soloist. It's a great addition to the concerto repertoire but be prepared for technical challenge and find a fourth percussionist if you want the full picture for your soloist.

O Divine Redeemer, Gounod/Philip Sparke, 2006. Moderately easy. 4'00", two percussion.

Here is one of the great Victorian melodies, originally from the pen of Charles Gounod, and his first three-act opera *Sappho* (1851). *O Divine Redeemer* was the only melody to outlive the opera, which has a plot that leads to the death of Sappho, who leaps from the cliffs of Lesbos into the sea after singing this aria. Her lover Phaon deserts her, and much of the tragedy revolves around the intrigues of Glycère, a courtesan who is in love with Phaon. The lyrical aria is set here as a tenor horn solo with band accompaniment by Philip Sparke, and it's

a good tune with distinctive leaps. Sensitivity will be required of the accompaniment and the euphoniums have to negotiate an extended passage of 16th note arpeggios, but in the right setting with a good soloist this would be a great operatic addition to your concert program.

Baby It's Cold Outside, Loesser/Barrie Gott, n.d. Moderately easy. 3'00", two percussionists.

Baby, It's Cold Outside is a pop standard, composed by Frank Loesser with lyrics by Johnny Mercer and published in 1948. The song, originally performed by Betty Garrett and Red Skelton in the film *Neptune's Daughter*, won the Academy Award for Best Song in 1949. Many popular versions were recorded in 1949 and the song had a popular revival in 2004 by James Taylor and Natalie Cole. Due to the wintertime lyrics, the song is often played during the Christmas season. Barrie Gott's version is immediately accessible and published in versions for vocal duet (male/female) or two solo instruments, (Bb/Eb). Either way, the scoring is judicious and would be a great way to feature two vocalists or two instrumentalists on a concert, though it has to be said that a large part of the charm of this song is the brilliant interplay of lyrics between the voices. Scored in concert Db so that the two voice parts fall into the mezzo-soprano and baritone ranges.

The Lord's Prayer from *African Sanctus*, David Fanshawe/Liz Lane, 1974. Moderate. 4'00", three percussion.

African Sanctus is an unorthodox setting of the Latin Mass harmonized with traditional African music recorded by the composer on his legendary journeys up the river Nile (1969-73). This work is universal and has received international acclaim. It is a celebration with a simple message of praise and faith – an "Afro-Latin, tribal –choral masterpiece" (*The Observer*). *The Lord's Prayer* was notated in 1969 on the shores of Lake Kyoga when the composer recorded a heart-rending lamentation for a fisherman who had died suddenly during the night. The published arrangement was made for brass band with the option of using voices and it works well in either version.

Holiday Samba, Barrie Gott, 2006. Moderately easy. 3'30", three percussionists.

Although not clear on the title page, Barrie Gott's *Holiday Samba* is a feature for the cornet

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section who play largely in unison throughout the piece, accompanied by the rest of the band. Gott follows the fairly typical harmonic and rhythmic movement for a samba, making effective use of percussion, and using the remainder of the band for accompaniment figures except for where the tutti band lays out a unison theme, used in the introduction, the "shout" chorus, and at the conclusion. This is an entertaining selection which might additionally benefit from the cornets being up front and memorized. It keeps the back row as busy as the front, and it would be appropriate at any time of the year. Scored in concert F.

Published by Winwood Music:

I Believe My Heart from *The Woman in White*, Andrew Lloyd Webber/Tony Rickard, 2004. Moderately easy. 4'00", two percussion.

The *Woman in White* is "a compelling tale of love, betrayal and greed" and a 2004 stage adaptation of a Victorian thriller, featuring Andrew Lloyd Webber's "greatest and most romantic score since *The Phantom of the Opera*." The expansive melody *I Believe My Heart* sung in the production by characters Walter Hartright and Laura Fairlie, is shared around the band and while Tony Rickard's scoring and arranging is most effective, it is still somewhat constrained but the limitations of an eight measure melody that can only be repeated over and over again. With the seeming continuing popularity of Lloyd Webber's music, this is sure to be a hit with the audiences in a concert of musical melodies. It is written to be able to be played by virtually all brass bands to great effect.

Published by Solid Brass Music:

God Bless the USA, Lee Greenwood/Troy Helm, 2005. Moderate. 4'30." Three percussion.

Lee Greenwood won the Country Music Association Song of the Year competition in 1985 with this song. With historical events turning to the Persian Gulf War and 9/11, the stirring popular song has received many performances over the past twenty years, earning Greenwood a Congressional Medal of Honor. It has even been considered the top patriotic American song in recent years. Troy Helm's arrangement

captures all the sentiment and majesty of the melody and lyrics, effectively scored in concert Eb (and concluding in F), with short solos for cornet and euphonium. I had the pleasure of giving one of the first public performances of this arrangement – perhaps the first public performance in July 2005. This is an item that should probably be in every American brass band library, and a piece that will have wide popular appeal without compromising the integrity of the ensemble. Highly recommended. ★



COMPACT DISC REVIEWS

Ronald Holz, Compact Disc Reviews Editor.

Reviewed in alphabetical order by title. Reviews in this issue are by Ronald Holz (RH) and Stephen Bulla (SB).

Brass Band Classics, Volume IV. Buy As You View Brass Band (Robert Childs). Doyen. DOY CD201. TT 67:00. Program: *Pageantry* (Howells); *Rhapsody in Brass* (Goffin); *Belmont Variations* (Bliss); *Freedom: Brass Band Symphony #1* (Bath); *The Frogs of Aristophanes* (Bantock); *Symphonic Suite* (Lucas).

Buy As You View has been the ideal band for this series that renews interest in classic concert works and test pieces from the history of brass band literature. Of the great bands of the pres-



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ent, they may be considered to be maintaining the most traditional sound of the British brass band, despite changing playing styles, even changes in the size of instruments. In Volume IV of this series we are given what must be considered among the definitive studio recordings of these works that have transcended their time. Of the six works included, the least well known is Sir Arthur Bliss' *Belmont Variations*, the 1963 test for the British Nationals, a work with American connections (Massachusetts); his *Kenilworth* is better known. The final three minutes of tutti playing on the 11-minute *Variations* is a highlight of the disc, though the abrupt ending may be one thing that holds this work from getting more performances. Hopefully this outstanding reading will lead to a resurrection of an unduly ignored piece. *Symphonic Suite* was been used to good effect at NABBA as the Challenge Section test piece in 2000.

Most bands will be familiar with Goffin's excellent *Rhapsody* (the Challenge Section test piece in 2001), Bath's *Freedom*, and the masterpiece in this collection, Herbert Howells' *Pageantry*. Robert Childs provides a wonderful, accurate interpretation of *Pageantry*, tempos just right in my estimation, and wonderful balances in the exposed soli playing. The opening movement, *King's Herald*, is indeed noble, and scintillating at the same time. Of particular note and meaning to me was the second movement, *Cortège*, during which Childs maintained the cortège movement, not allowing sentiment to ruin the music, the forward movement. The opening trio for two baritones and tenor horn is exquisite and reminded me of why I fell in love with this kind of brass band lyricism. The final movement, *Jousts*, starts with a brilliant fanfare by principal cornet Ian Williams, and the band continues in top form. The development section comes off particularly well, so clear and energized. My first encounter with a serious piece of music came via Sir Granville Bantock's Overture: *The Frogs of Aristophanes*, as played by Fairey Aviation Band under Harry Mortimer on a 78 rpm recording (3 sides!), the discs dating from 1952, when they won the National Championship. It has been a favorite of mine ever since. Of all the major British composers of the 20th century Bantock kept the closest ties with the brass band community throughout his distinguished career. This particular work, however, was originally for orchestra, the arrangement being made for contesting bands by Frank Wright. The work unfolds like

a modern-day Lisztian tone poem, much thematic transformation of the primary motives, the band particularly challenged by some major chromatic and enharmonic pitfalls. Childs and band navigate through these easily, and shape an engaging musical portrait marked with some splendid playing. I enjoyed hearing the original, concert percussion parts, something that was missing from older recordings of which I am familiar. The ending of this work can be problematical. Yet only in the Allegro ma non troppo codetta does the energy lag for just a moment on the famous repeated tonic octaves as the allargando begins. Forward momentum is shortly regained, however, for a satisfying close, so that is a very small complaint! My only other criticism is that for such a significant collection the booklet notes by conductor Robert Childs are a bare minimum, the works deserving in this aspect of the production the same care as they received in performance. I highly recommend this disc. (RH)

Chatham Dances: The Music of Elgar Howarth, Volume III. Eikanger-Bjorsvik Band (Elgar Howarth). Doyen. DOY CD203. TT 68:41. Program: *Euphonium Concerto – Stories for Saroyan*, Soloist Robert Childs; *Concerto for E Flat Tenor Horn*, Soloist Lesley Howie; *Chatham Dances*.

Two concerti and a large concert suite make up

!!! NABBA XXV HOTEL REMINDER !!!

★ NABBA Bands planning to attend the NABBA XXV Championship, to be held at Indiana University Southeast (New Albany, Indiana) and Louisville Kentucky on April 13-14, 2007, are urged to make hotel reservations for the weekend **IMMEDIATELY**. The Louisville Convention Center has informed NABBA that there are other conventions in town the weekend of the NABBA Championship; these other conventions will book 6000 rooms. NABBA does **NOT** have an official hotel for NABBA XXV and will **NOT** be reserving a block of rooms for NABBA bands. Bands must make their own reservations. See the list of Louisville hotels at www.nabba.org/Hotels.htm and **MAKE YOUR RESERVATION NOW!**

this significant volume in the project to record all of Elgar Howarth's music for brass band. The composer is in total charge of the effort, providing excellent musical direction and, in the accompanying booklet, highly informative notes on his music. The band and soloists are first rate, so is the overall production and presentation. The recording presence on band and soloists must also be given high praise. These sophisticated, modern but accessible works will appeal to a wide audience. I provide here just a few highlights or aspects of each major work so that the reader may get a general introduction to these pieces. *Stories for Saroyan* is a concerto for euphonium and brass band of over 23 minutes in length. It was written for and dedicated to Robert Childs. Howarth shares that the piece pays homage to the American-Armenian writer-playwright William Saroyan, and is divided into 10 sections, or parts, 9 of which are named after short stories by Saroyan, and the short, brilliant coda, *Hello Out There*, is a title from a Saroyan play. In his notes Howarth also discusses other personal connections. The narrative in the musical work, of course, is primarily a musical one, of remarkable variety and eclectic mix of expressive styles and instrumental technique. The *Tenor Horn Concerto* dates from just a few years later, completed in 2004. The work unfolds in the traditional three movement frame: 1) Molto moderato (4/4) – cadenza – Vivo scherzo (6/8 – cadenza

– tempo primo; 2) Adagio (6/8), leading into 3) Allegro (2/4 – rondo with cadenza, a lento recapping movement 2, molto vivo – toccata, and a broadening coda. Lesley Howie currently serves as principal tenor horn of Black Dyke Band. On this recording she demonstrates why she is considered among the finest exponents of this difficult instrument. Howarth's humorous, almost 'quirky' work allows her much expressive range and also allows this instrument to shine in all its glory. Howarth shifts the center of gravity in the concerto form, saving the most intense writing, and time length, for the finale, which is nearly equal in length to the first movements combined. With the second movement flowing into the third, this may be a daunting job for the audience, but the composer provides enough mental breathing space, and variety, to allow us to stay focused throughout the demanding 23:40 minute tour-de-force. The harmonic language blends serial constructs with neo-tonal dissonance, so you are duly warned – the final sonority of movement 3 is not a tertian triad! The title work, *Chatham Dances* is, according to the composer, a deliberate pastiche in the style of neoclassic Stravinsky (1920s – 30s). Initially intended as a ballet for young dancers, the ballet never materialized though this music from the 1980s has survived and, like the other two works recorded, receives a fine recording premiere. The original ballet scenario concerned a "factory floor and a bullying foreman who comes to no good." The suite is in nine parts or movements, and lasts 21:28; knowing the ballet story is not essential, though Howarth provides titles to each part. Some listeners might find this style of music a bit dry, or detached, but

given time and concentration, I find much to admire in this score, a score that may or may not be able to be excerpted. Among many effects in the score are several 'off-stage' effects for various soloists and soli groupings, another attractive feature. Again, this dynamic, modern music is given an excellent performance by band, soloists, and composer-conductor, allowing us to further study and assess Elgar Howarth's major contributions to brass band literature of significant artistic merit. (RH)

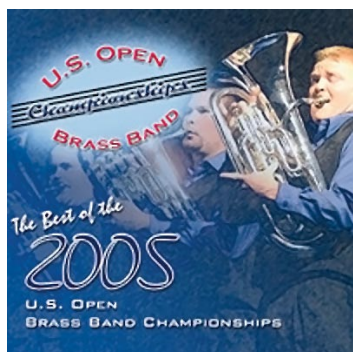
Concert Classics. Foden's Richardson Band (Conductor not identified). Egon SPZ 127. TT 69:41. Program: *The President* (German); *Carnival Overture* (Dvorak/Brand); *Cornet Solo – The Paragon* (Sutton), Soloist Mark Wilkinson; *The Flower Duet* (Delibes/Sparke), Cornetists Richard Poole, Anna Hughes); *Fanfare and Flying Theme from E. T.* (Williams); Euphonium Solo – *Rule Britannia* (Hartmann), Soloist Glyn Williams); Euphonium Solo – *The Holy Well* (Graham); Grand March from *Aida* (Verdi/Wright); Flugel Solo – *I've Got You Under My Skin* (Porter/Smith), Soloist Helen Fox; Euphonium Solo – *Myfanwy* (Parry/Stephens); Cornet Solo – *Born on the Fourth of July* (Williams); *Elegy* (Vinter); *Toccata* (Widor/Sparke).

This 70-minute disc falls into a category I call 'car listening,' a concert for the road. Most of the items are short, within the 4 – 5 minute range, and there is good variety in this program of traditional brass band music. Oddly enough, we are not told who conducts the band on this recording. The band, 2004 British Open champions, displays on this recording a fine group of soloists, including the star-

ranked Glyn Williams on euphonium and Mark Wilkinson on cornet, each giving two fine solos here. My favorite cut is an elegant, subdued, but rubato laden version of *The Holy Well* (Graham) in which we hear this fine band and Williams at their most musical – truly a superb reading. Wilkinson and flugelhornist Helen Fox are also in good form. There's lots of brass band energy here including a driven version of Brand excellent Dvorak transcription and an accurate, controlled Widor *Toccata* that ends the program in splendid style. Here band and conductor do not try for the speed record, something that so often spoils performances of such technical showcases. The sound on the recording is good, the presentation a bit sparing, though Peter Bale provides helpful notes within the limited space provided. There is just a sense of a rushed production here, Peter Bale writing about John Ireland's *Elegy* from *A London Overture* in the disc notes, while the actual piece on the recording is Gilbert Vinter's *Elegy* – certainly not the best recording I have heard of this famous excerpt, but adequate. Not a profound recording, but solid brass band concert material played well. (RH)

Eden: Highlights of the National Brass Band Championships Gala Concert. +Leyland Band (Russell Gray); *Black Dyke Band (Nick Childs); #Mnozil Brass; Euphonium Soloists Glyn and Aled Williams with Aveley & Newham Band (Nigel Taken) and others. Doyen—SP&S; DOYCD 202; TT 67:49. Program: *Fanfare for a Dignified Occasion* (Bliss); **Jubilee Overture* (Sparke); **Finale* from *Cornet Concerto* (Howarth), Soloist Roger Webster; #*Overture of the Trojan Boat*; #*Die leichte Kavallerie* (Suppe/Mnozil); **Hora Staccato* (Dinicu/Richards); +Winning performance of test piece *Eden* (Pickard); **Heritage Fanfare* (Wilby); **Nimrod* (Elgar/Ball); #*Green Hornet*; Euphonium Duet *Calon Lan* (Ball); Euphonium Solo – *Soloist Showcase* (Fernie); **The Great Gate of Kiev* (Mussorgsky/Howarth); **Toccata and Fugue in D Minor* (Bach/Farr).

I counted it a joy and privilege to attend the 2005 National Brass Band Championships and Gala Concert at London's Royal Albert Hall. Having been at these events I can heartily endorse this musical chronicle of great day of brass music. The disc opens with a brief fanfare by Sir Arthur Bliss played by Black Dyke and the herald fanfare trumpets of the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Fanfare Team—a festive start, if the herald trumpets not always



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'spot on' in pitch, treacherous as these 'beasts' can be! Black Dyke's contributions are stellar, especially Roger Webster in the *Finale* from Howarth's *Cornet Concerto*—one of the last performances by this master of the cornet as Black Dyke as principal cornet. The wonderful interplay between soloist and tom-tom percussion in the final cadenza is as exciting on disc as it was that night at the RAH. The recording captures the band's massive sound particularly well on *Great Gate of Kiev* and the encore, Ray Farr's adaptation of J.S. Bach's *Toccatina and Fugue in D Minor*. Some aspects of the evening were visual in nature, some action scenes from Black Dyke's Heritage program being accompanied by music by Philip Wilby (a short fanfare included here). Be advised that the *Nimrod* performance sounds as back up to an emotional reflection by a World War I soldier while in the trenches. But the showstoppers of the evening were Mnozil Brass, a seven-piece brass ensemble [Four trumpets, various types, two trombones, and tuba] of indescribable energy, humor, and technical assurance. These seven players pushed out almost as much sound in the vast hall as Black Dyke! And they are so very entertaining. Their antics can only be hinted at in the recording. Amazing, zany, fabulous – what great sets they delivered. These guys have to be heard – and yes – seen – to be believed! Wait till you hear their version of *The Light Cavalry Overture* – and you will not believe *The Green Hornet*. The audience, it can be said, went nuts over these guys. Earlier in the day, during the judge's interval, virtuoso brass player Glyn Williams, ably accompanied by Aveley & Newham Band, entertained the expectant crowd. On his *Virtuoso Showcase*, an Alan Fernie arrangement containing the widest range of short excerpts from familiar brass band solos, Glyn picks up nearly all the instruments of the brass band in succession, starting and ending with his native euphonium: euphonium, cornet, trombone, tenor horn, flugelhorn, baritone, soprano cornet, etc. etc, returning to euphonium. His brother then joined him for Ball's lyric duet, *Calon Lan*. The real surprise of the day was the prize-winning and accurate performance by Leyland Band (Russell Gray) of John Pickard's difficult test piece, *Eden*. My choice for the day was a more emotionally committed and engaging performance by Buy As You View (Black Dyke a close second). The judges decided differently! Russell Gray skillfully guided his band in very able fashion, his key end players providing some splendid chamber-like playing, so very accurate, so careful. I

believe it was their principal trombone, Runar Vallheim Vaernes who won the day for them, as the score calls for two fiendish solos, one marked 'jazzy and manic.' Runar nailed both, and was judged the best 'Satan' of the day, or rather, Best Instrumentalist! Pickard's excellent score held up well on multiple hearings—both with me, and the enthusiastic audience. In *Eden* Pickard continues his interest in man's relationship with the creative order, which he explores so well in his massive *Gaia Symphony* for Brass Band. Lines from John Milton's score head the score though the work is equally a symphonic movement as it is an impressionistic tone poem. The work must already be considered a major contribution brass band literature. The disc packaging, sound, and presentation are all first rate. Having been at this event I heartily endorse this highlights CD as an ac-

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curate, exciting sound document of a great day in the brass band world. (RH)

Essential Dyke, Volume VI, Deep Harmony. Black Dyke Band (Nicholas Childs), with guest conductors Roy Newsome, Geoffrey Whitham, Peter Parkes. Doyen DOY CD208. TT 64:43. Program: *Viva Birkenshaw* (Rimmer); *Two Mvts from Peer Gynt* (Grieg/Loriman); Cornet Solo – *Charivari* (Iveson), Soloist Richard Marshall; *Trumpet Blues and Cantabile* (James/Geldard); Sounds of Brass (Ackford); *Ashokan Farewell* (Ungar/Fernie); Soprano Cornet Solo – *The Lord's Prayer* (Malotte/Wilby), Soloist Peter Roberts; *Jupiter* (Holst/Roberts); *Queensbury* (Kaye); Trombone Feature—*Blades of Toledo* (Sharpe), featuring 10 Dyke trombonists; *Famous Brit-*

ish Marches (Langford); Euphonium Feature – *Swedish Folksong* (Graham), featuring eight Solo Euphonium players; *Deep Harmony* (Parkes); *Procession to the Minster* (Wagner/Snell).

The impressive, centerfold photo of this disc's booklet shows the Black Dyke Band and famous alumni seated on the stage of the Huddersfield Town Hall, December 18, 2005, taken on the occasion of the band's 150th Anniversary Concert. The final six items (Tracks 10 – 15) in the program listed above are recorded live with this Massed Reunion Band, led by several notable conductors of the band past and present. The initial nine items are studio produced and in line with the kind of programming that has made previous Essential Dyke discs so popular—mostly lighter, Pops-style items. Among these the most impressive is the Roberts' arrangement of Holst's *Jupiter* from *The Planets*. What is particularly interesting about this disc is that the live portion features Roger Webster as principal cornet, while the studio cuts include Richard Marshall as principal. Marshall is heard to good effect on the Iveson solo, as are several other excellent Dyke soloists throughout the first portion of the program. While I do not normally like massed band recordings, this is an amazingly good recording of an incredible pool of talent. The sound is huge, rich, and, for the most part, uplifting. While you may have quite a few of these tunes on other recordings, this *Essential Dyke* is an historic one which you may wish to put in your collection. (RH)

Euphonium Virtuoso. Steven Mead, Euphonium Soloist, with Brass Band Buizingen (Luc Vertommen). Bocchino. BOCC107. TT 76:05. Harlequin (Sparke); *Concerto per Flicorno Basso* (Ponchielli/Howey); *The Playful Pachyderm* (Vinter/Vertommen); *Euphonium Concerto* (Horovitz); *Pokarekare Ana* (Tomoaana/Vertommen); *Concerto for Cello and Wind Orchestra* (Guylde/Vertommen); *Introduction and Tarantella* (Sarasate/Vertommen).

You can't have any argument with the title of this disc, because it is true – Steven Mead is at this moment in history the world's leading euphonium soloist and virtuoso. Mead does things on the horn most brass players only dream about – in their wildest dreams. He has done a great deal to expand the repertoire for and technique of the euphonium, an instrument no longer just heard in solo on the brass band or wind band gazebo concert. This program contains both familiar euphonium

solos and some lesser-known treasures, ones rarely heard with brass band accompaniment. The Ponchielli *Concerto*, really a series of variations on an operatic aria-like theme, is a case in point, a work made all the more interesting in this setting. The disc opens with a real charmer, Sparke's *Harlequin*; the title indicates its capricious nature, a work to stand side-by-side with *Party Piece* and *Pantomime*. Conductor Luc Vertommen provided several new transcriptions, including the Gilbert Vinter bassoon piece, the *Playful Pachyderm*, fair game for the euphonium, indeed. The meat of the album comes with solid performances by the band in the Horovitz *Concerto* and the Gulda *Cello Concerto* transcription. It goes without saying that Mead's contribution is among the most definitive recordings available. These two modern works balance the other more accessible material, lending an even, varied flow to the program, should the whole album be played at one sitting. Recently Steven has launched a new company named Bocchino Music, three discs of which are reviewed in this issue of *The Bridge*. The presentations on all three are excellent – handsome, substantial tri- or quarter-fold disc cases that provide detailed notes on the music and the musicians. The recorded sound on all three is excellent, with especially fine, not over-done presence for any soloists, especially for Mead. Providing just the right presence for a euphonium solo is no easy task. Mead and his engineer succeed well in both solo albums reviewed. I highly recommend this compact disc not just to euphonium players, but also to all brass musicians. To order this disc, contact by email: bocchinomusic@euphonium.net or at the website, www.euphonium.net (RH)

Festive Impressions. YBS Band (David King). Egon. SFZ 129. TT 63:41. Program: *Festive Impressions* (Waespi); Samum (Robrecht/Dawson); Cornet Solo—*The Lark in the Clear Air* (Arr. Banks), Soloist Stuart Lingard; *Keighley Moor* (Cook); Flugelhorn Solo—*Ave Maria* (Caccini/Wys), Soloist Iwan Williams; Trombone Solo—*Blues Bells of Scotland* (Pryor/Broadbent) Soloist Andrew King; Tenor Horn Solo—*The Piper of Dundee* (Downie), Soloist Sheona White; *I'll Walk With God* (Brotsky/Richards); *Hedwig's Theme* (Williams/Duncan); Cornet Solo—*Homecoming* (Richards), Soloist Stuart Lingard; *The Flight of the Wild Geese* (Dewhurst); *The Irish Blessing* (Bacak/Bradnum).

In August 2005 Australian-born Dr. David King took his superb YBS Band back to his homeland for what proved to be a highly successful, 11-day musical tour. This disc profiles a good portion of their tour repertoire, including two new works, the title track by Oliver Waespi, *Festive Impressions*, and Robin Dewhurst's *The Flight of Wild Geese*. Both of these works last the ideal concert length of just on seven minutes. Dr. King had asked that each composer attempt to highlight the strengths of this wonderful band, which are many. Waespi's *Festive Impressions* is a brilliant concert opener, which role it plays here. I found the work a bit derivative of recent film music styles, yet then again King had asked for a cinematic score – the composer delivered an engaging, joyful piece. Dewhurst's *Flight* makes a slightly more original statement – not in form, but in inner

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substance – but one in the YBS tradition of such works as *Cry of the Celts* and *Hymn of the Highlands*. Meant to pay tribute to Australia's pioneers of Irish descent, it does so with dash and aplomb. Soloists in the band play at the top of their game, including Dr. King's accomplished son, principal trombonist Andrew King, whose performance of Pryor's *The Blue Bells of Scotland* is a highlight of the disc. Not a profound program, but what wonderful playing throughout the varied program. This band has such a wonderfully rich, controlled sound, one that King can bring to the most magnificent fortissimo climax or down to a hush, whispered pianissimo. This is also one of the most tuneful bands I have ever heard – they are a model for brass band blend and accurate intonation. The recording's sound is spacious and clear throughout the band's impressive dynamic and tonal range. You may have heard some of these tunes on other discs,

both by this band and others, but I recommend this as an excellent concert of entertaining brass band music. (RH)

Gifted Leadership: An Anthology of March Masterpieces. Brass Band of Columbus (Tim Jameson, plus Paul Droste and Tony Zilincik). Upbeat Recordings and BBC. TT 65:12.

Program: *Grandioso* (Seitz); *Gifted Leadership* (Fillmore); *King Cotton* (Sousa); *Joyce's 71st* (Boyer); *God and Country* (Himes); *Melody Shop* (King); *El Capitan* (Sousa); *The Cossack* (Rimmer); *Americans We* (Fillmore); *Power and Glory* (Sousa); *Through Bolts and Bars* (Urbach); *Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company* (Sousa); *'Neath the Flag* (Marshall); *Solid Men to the Front* (Sousa); *The Champions* (Willcocks); *Library of Congress* (Sousa); *The Victors Return* (Rimmer); *Marching Onward* (Bosanko); *Hail to the Spirit of Liberty* (Sousa); *The Waltonian* (Richards); *Washington Post* (Sousa); *Robinson's Grand Entry* (King); *National Emblem* (Bagley).

This attractive production takes the form of a salute to Dr. Paul Droste, the man responsible for the Brass Band of Columbus' great success. The BBC has always excelled at march performance, and this disc is no exception. Right from the downbeat of march *Grandioso* the march aficionado will be in band heaven! About the only thing I might disagree with is the label 'March Masterpiece' for every one of these 23 marches. I do agree that they are all good marches, worthy of preserving on record so they may be enjoyed time and time again. Some are truly masterpieces that have transcended their time, others still need to age a bit, others are just solid, but not spectacular works. The repertoire ranges from the golden age of American wind band music to British contest and SA marches, both recent and historic. Among the standouts in the latter on this disc would be those by Rimmer, Willcocks, and Marshall, while in the former, how can you fault the choice of *Americans We*, *El Capitan*, or *National Emblem*! Lots of fun tunes here, like *The Melody Shop*—fun to hear the euphoniums and baritones display their pyro-techniques! There is, to my knowledge, at least one premiere brass band recording—that of Steve Bulla's reconstruction of one of Sousa's last marches, *The Library of Congress*. It is fitting that our national march king bears the highest number of cuts on a disc of great marches. I highly commend to you the total package, the presentation. The large insert booklet provides concise program notes on each march—this

alone makes the recording valuable. Special thanks and credit is due BBC members Eric Aho, Tim Jameson, George Zanders, and director emeritus Paul Droste for supplying these notes. While recorded in three different locations, and with three different conductors, the overall program plays as a unified whole, well edited and mixed. The band is rhythmically tight, lyrical and aggressive by turns, as demanded by the music. Congratulations BBC for this excellent musical tribute to a great man who has indeed provided both the BBC and NABBA with gifted leadership. (RH)

A Golden Year. Black Dyke Band (Nicholas Childs). Doyen. DOY CD 205. TT 75:45. Program: *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (Graham); *Extreme Make-over* (de Meij); *Northern Lights* (Wilby); Live winning performance at British Open 2005--*The Night to Sing* (Tovey); *Eden* (Pickard).

2005 was indeed a golden one for Black Dyke, a year in which they celebrated their 150th anniversary, and won both the European and British Open Brass Band Championships. This excellent disc contains five recent, major works for brass band, all connected with the band's stellar year, either in contest or in concert. Four of the works receive studio recordings, while *The Night to Sing* is the winning, 'live' performance at the 2005 British Open. With each composer providing his own program note or short listening strategy for his work, and with outstanding playing and reproduction, this may be easily considered a 'must have' disc for serious students of the British brass band. Hearing Graham's *Journey* in studio recording allows for much more detail to come through, including the whispering in Latin midway through the work. The cadenzas within the section called "July 19: Day of Rest" are very assured and musical, while the dynamic range shared throughout the piece, including an incredible pppp, is marvelous. I find with multiple listenings I can agree with Graham's designation of the work as "Symphonic Sketches," loosely based on Jules Verne's book, but not relying on it for success. *Extreme Makeover* takes the form of a series of variations—or "musical metamorphoses," according to the composer, of a famous theme by Tchaikovsky. It is a compelling work in places, though the use of ten tuned bottles for the cornet section in variation #3 is not convincing to me. Likewise, some of the contrapuntal writing in the final variation leads to just a bit

ragged treatment by Black Dyke, my only criticism in the group's playing on the disc. Wilby wrote *Northern Lights* for a multi-media performance that included lights and dancers, an attempt, he declares to "expand the brass band's traditional boundaries." In this studio performance, the playing of the hymn tune *Deep Harmony* comes right after the work's climax, at the 2/3rds point in the work, here a recording of Black from the 1930s. This may not be Wilby's greatest work, but it is one filled with fascinating new sounds. NABBA members will find Tovey's *A Night to Sing* to contain elements reminiscent of his Coventry Variations, especially the driving allegro in 6/8 and 9/8. However, the work is a complex mixture of styles, collage and quotation technique used to good advantage in a work evoking VE Day – Victory in Europe" in May 1945. Dyke shows in this live performance their mastery of the various styles required, an impressive performance worthy of an Open championship. The disc closes with a dynamics reading of Pickard's difficult, fascinating new work, *Eden*. While Black Dyke did not win the Nationals in October 2005, their playing here allows us to savor a convincing, secure interpretation of an excellent new work, especially in a studio recording setting. Highly recommended. (RH)

Hymns of Praise. Leyland Band (Russell Gray) with The Manchester Chorale and Saint Michael's Singers. Egon SFZ 131. TT 59:48. Program: Twenty hymn arrangements, mostly for mixed choir, organ, and brass band, all arranged by Goff Richards.

This collection of hymn arrangements by Goff Richards will provide a resource for any director or band called upon to perform in churches and to perform with church choirs in a variety of settings. The performances offer solid examples, both band and choristers equal to the task assigned to them. There are several arrangements for band alone, like Crimond, a particularly attractive version published by Studio Music. The hymns tunes chosen favor English worship and taste, of course. The opening arrangement, *O for a Thousand Tongues*, for instance, is not to the tune *Azmon*, but to the lesser-known (in America) *Lyngham* by Thomas Jarman. Many of the arrangements take the mold similar to the more familiar Willcocks carol arrangements – a short introduction followed by multiple, contrasting verse settings, sometimes separated by short episodes for the band. Many of these pieces have been

featured on the famous BBC TV show "Songs of Praise", including the final medley, *Hymns of Praise*, for band alone. The nearly five-minute arrangement contains reference to many familiar hymns, including *To God be the Glory*, *And Can It be* (Tune – *Sagina*), *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*, *Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven*, and several contemporary praise songs like *Shine, Jesus Shine*, and *Make Me a Channel of Thy Peace*. The CD presentation is excellent, with well-written, extensive and informative notes on each hymn and text by Rodney Newton. Leyland Band, the 2005 National Champions, and combined choirs are generally excellent, with only occasional problems in intonation, but not enough to mar what is a very fine production and what should prove to be an excellent resource. The sound is excellent with good balance between choir, band, and when involved, organ. Fortunately the CD case contains publisher information for each of the arrangements contained in this collection. (RH)

Locomotion: A Tribute to My Childhood.

Steven Mead, Euphonium Soloist, with Boscombe Band (Howard J. Evans). Bocchino. TT 65:04. Program: *Locomotion* (Bearcroft); *The Holy Well* (Graham); *Slavische Fantasie* (Hohne/Graham); *When He Cometh* (Evans); *Variants on St. Francis* (Chaulk); *There will Be God* (Webb/Phillips); *Banjo and Fiddle* (Kroll/Ruedi); *Deep Inside the Sacred Temple* (Bizet/Wilkinson); *We'll All Shout Hallelujah* (Audoire); *My Unchanging Friend* (Bosanko); *A Quiet Place* (Robertson); *Journey Into Peace* (Himes).

Steven Mead's early musical training and experience came within The Salvation Army in Boscombe, Bournemouth region. This came both in brass and vocal, a great combination that stood him in good stead when he decided to pursue a professional musical career. On this charming recording he returns to his roots, playing the fine Boscombe SA Corps Band conducted by Howard J. Evans. Stephen gave a recital at the Great American Brass Band Festival's History Conference in 2005 that proved a parallel to this more extensive retrospective. The literature ranges throughout the whole gamut of SA euphonium solos—from the old chestnut *We'll All Shout Hallelujah* to Bill Himes' reflective masterpiece, *Journey Into Peace*. I must admit at this stage a minor contribution to this disc, sending Steven some information for his excellent sleeve notes, which

are insightfully informative about the music and, especially, his musical pilgrimage. The title tune, by the inimitable Norman Bearcroft, is in the mold of NB's great series of ABA-form solos, this one based on the spiritual *This Train Is Bound for Glory* and written for Derek Kane back in 1995. Not all the tunes are SA, however, as a quick review of the program will show. One would not expect anything less than excellence from one of the world's finest brass soloists, but I also nod my hat to this corps band and Bandmaster Evans, who provide solid, workman-like accompaniments. Perhaps the highlight of the recording is the final work, *Journey Into Peace*, which provides a suitable close to Mead's evocation of his own pilgrimage out of Boscombe. Here Steven's soliloquy has a special poignant meaning and carries emotional depth – it stays with you long after the program has ended, the mark of a gripping performance. He really sings through the horn. As with *Euphonium Virtuoso* reviewed above, this recording is available through Steven's new company, Bocchino Music. Email: bocchinomusic@euphonium.net or on the website, www.euphonium.net (RH)

London Brass: Surprise. London Brass. Program: *Caravan* (Ellington/Bissill); *Hungarian Rhapsody* (Liszt/Bissill); *Blackbird* (Lennon—McCartney/Edwards); *Norwegian Wood* (Lennon—McCartney/Bissill); *Spain* (Coreal/Bissill); *Lush Life* (Strayhorn/Smith); *Surprise Variations* (Hart).

Those readers that attended NABBA last April heard a chart from this CD performed at the adult brass ensemble contest. Chicago Brass Band players won with their performance of Ellington's *Caravan* (arranged by Richard Bissill). I knew of the CD at the time and made a special effort to catch that performance. If you heard that arrangement, you will know why I am so enthusiastic about the rest of the music on this recording by London Brass. Every brass player needs to hear this CD. Be forewarned, it's not your father's Philip Jones Brass Ensemble – even though some of the PJBE were founding members of this ensemble back in the 1980's. London Brass is 4 trumpets, 1 horn, 4 trombones, 1 tuba, and a percussionist. According to their web site (www.londonbrass.net) they take the classical brass ensemble to 'fresh musical marketplaces... while at the same time retaining their classical roots.' And that is an understatement. The program here has remarkable variety, reaching back for a total

makeover of Haydn's *Surprise Symphony* and then forward in time to Chick Corea and The Beatles. From within the group come most of the arrangements, and they are all amazing works for brass. Virtuoso playing is called for and if you can imagine bringing a jazz mentality to your instrument while at the same time executing with orchestral quality note production, you'll start to get the idea. This is one very hip group. Remember 'Tower Of Power'? Drummer Mike Smith brings that same tight groove to many of these charts. You will hear screaming jazz trumpet solos, technically brilliant ensemble passages, and arrangements (which I think steal the show) that are filled with twists and turns that will indeed surprise you. During one of the "Surprise Variations" we even get treated to a section of mouthpiece buzzing, all well articulated in counterpoint and on pitch. Don't miss out on that. One minor quibble is with the Liszt *Hungarian Rhapsody*. If you are listening with ears that are used to hearing Black Dyke ripping through virtuoso violin passages that are transcribed practically verbatim, you may find this track

- specifically the arrangement - a little easy on the fingers. Still, it is not for the faint of heart - these fellows are serious. The group went into the studio for this set, and so the miking is close and some might find it a bit dry. I think they got it right, and the clarity of the voicings really are impressive with every part balanced to compliment the whole. The program and the performance: a virtual knockout. Go online and buy it. (SB)

Origins. The International Staff Band (Stephen Cobb). SP&S. Double CD TT #1 56:38; #2 63:41. Program: CD#1 *The Eternal Presence* (Ball); *My Strength, My Tower* (Goffin); *None Other Name* (Leidzén); *Variations on Laudate Dominum* (Gregson); *Canadian Folk Song Suite* (Calvert); *Celestial Prospect* (Heaton); CD#2 *Victorian Snapshots: On Ratcliff Highway* (Steadman-Allen); *The Great Salvation War* (Curnow); *Renaissance* (Graham); *Corpus Christi* (Redhead); *Rhapsody On a Theme By Purcell* (Norbury); *Rejoice the Lord Is King* (Downie).

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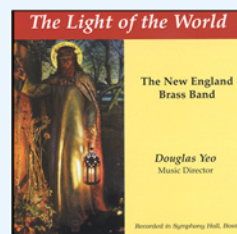
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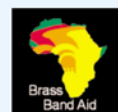


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recording, where the connection between SA composers and their “outside” work for the contest community is brought into the spotlight. In other words, it is a recording of works written for the SA by men who also were commissioned to write test pieces for at least one of the four major UK brass band contests. Unfortunately, in that context, there are some ‘exclusions’ to quibble over, at least two of which would include Bruce Broughton’s *Masters Of Space And Time*, commissioned jointly by NABBA and the British Open in 2001 (but then replaced by Bram Gay at the Opoen with his own Liszt transcription) and my own *Cityscapes* commissioned for the National Championships (Section 1) in 1985. In any case, on to the music contained in these two excellent discs.

There is much to enjoy in this ambitious collection. The standard of performance is superb and must certainly be the result of a taxing series of recording sessions. Indeed, three tracks were drawn from previous ISB recordings in order to complete this set.

As I have written before, Stephen Cobb finds a way to breath new life into these time-honored works at every turn. His gift of interpretive insight lets the music speak with space, unhurried tempi, and sensible phrasing. There is no show boating or self serving displays of speed far above metronome markings here. Rather, in an understated manner, Cobb finds wonderful morsels of new ideas in oft performed music, then sheds revealing light on all of it. His work with detail of balance and clarity of texture truly leave a mark on these performances.

NABBA members new to this music will find a wealth of challenging, well scored, exciting concert material. To wit; look to Ray Steadman-Allen for a modern Ives-like pastiche of multi-layered, pandiatonic textures. Go to Heaton for a somewhat early work from his pen, a set of variations that hint at his masterworks to come. Go to Eric Ball for a mostly pastoral and highly melodic tone poem based on deeply spiritual ideas.

If you have not heard the music of Sir Dean Goffin you are missing out on an experience that is challenging to bands and remarkably attractive to audiences. Arguably his masterpiece, *My Strength My Tower* combines his unmistakable harmonic language with some of the best contrapuntal writing found in a brass

band work. A further highlight in this piece is the slow section duet between principal cornet and euphonium. The ISB’s Ashman and Kane sing through their instruments here with effective expression. Finally, yet another large-scale work from Ken Downie demonstrates perhaps some of his most adventurous writing to date. (Take note of the last four minutes of his piece to see what I mean.)

The above-mentioned pieces represent some of the heavier, more technically demanding pieces on this CD. For the lighter side, relatively speaking, one will be attracted to Morley Calvert’s inventive suite and certainly Erik Leidzén’s engaging work weaving together a ‘themed’ collection of well loved gospel songs. In every case the ISB acquits itself well, bringing a believable depth to their performances.

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There is plenty of technique on hand, but I think the main attraction is the big round sound that Cobb draws from his ensemble. The heavy vibrato of the older recordings is long gone, and a rich ‘orchestral’ tone quality seems to match well across this entire program - spanning many years of stylistic differences in the music. If I must find blemish, it would be in the occasional intonation anomalies between horns and cornets. But these are insignificant moments that may have slipped past the digital editor’s microscope.

There are two booklets of printed material providing a wealth of background information, further enhancing the value of this package. Book One includes a four page ‘Introduction’ written by Stephen Cobb. A brief history of the ISB is also included here, along with the

personnel list and Cobb’s bio. Most importantly there are comprehensive program notes written by Dr. Ronald Holz for every title on the recording. Book Two provides a profile with photo of every composer represented, again authored by Holz and providing insightful life details and illuminating a number of notable achievements. There is also a list of each composer’s “outside” test pieces, arranged by title and contest venue with year of commission. Eric Ball’s name tops that list with a staggering thirteen test pieces.

A final word about the Program. There are nearly two hours of intense, highly programmatic music here. To state the obvious, it is far too heavy for one continuous listen. I suggest you dip into this box set in small portions, savoring one or two courses at a time. There is much to enjoy in this substantial collection, performed by a brilliant band. (SB)

St Magnus: The Music of Kenneth Downie.
International Staff Band (Stephen Cobb).
SP&S. SPS 200 CD. TT 68:50. Program: *The Joybringer; He Can Break Every Fetter; Music for a Joyful Occasion [Revisited]; Lord of All Hopefulness; The Father’s Blessing; Concerto for Euphonium*, Soloist Derick Kane; *St. Magnus; Take Time; Praise Tribute; Peace; The King of Heaven.*

From the Salvation Army’s flagship ensemble in London comes their most recent recording, profiling composer Kenneth Downie. Through the assured leadership of Stephen Cobb every track here is well conceived and executed with inspiring performances. A familiar name to SA bandmen, the wider brass banding field has more recently embraced Downie for his imaginative and sonorous scoring technique, certainly leading up to him accepting the commission to write the 2004 European Championship test piece (the title track of this CD). There is something in this program for everyone, by character of the music alone. Although most of this composer’s ‘inspirational’ thematic material will not be known outside of the SA, what he does with it in the context of the brass band score is indeed worth a listen. It is often virtuosic, fun to play (ie: challenging), and rewarding for its depth. The program includes several premiere recordings, including a euphonium *Concerto* originally written for Robert Childs and the Black Dyke Band. Derick Kane rises to the occasion with a full-bodied performance here. Cobb’s attention to detail from the front is evident everywhere,

with beautiful shading and a generous dynamic range providing needed color. This well trained ensemble has become as ambitious as many of the contesting bands, adding major test pieces to their repertoire (ie *Isaiah 40*, *Journey Into Freedom*, etc) as with *St. Magnus* here. By the nature of this type of piece the band is put to a stiff test, and perhaps now we can hear a few slips in ensemble with the occasional intonation gremlin sneaking in as well. The band's technique is stretched here, but a well-shaped ensemble works its way through some very busy passages within the music. All told, this CD is a winner that needs to be in your collection. As a listening experience, perhaps a few cuts at a time will provide the best balance. There are no fluffy entertainment pieces here for casual background listening. The CD demonstrates the clarity of recording from the B&H crew that we have come to expect. An 18-page booklet of comprehensive program notes by Ronald Holz completes this excellent package. (SB)

This is Christmas. New England Brass Band (Douglas Yeo). NEBBCD 104. TT 60:01. Program: *The Spirit of Christmas* (Graham); *Christmas Bells Are Ringing* (Alfred Burt/Bulla); *What Sweeter Music* (Rutter/Yeo); Cornet Solo — *Huron Carol* (Norbury), Soloist Terry Everson; *Christmas Rejoicing* (Gordon); Flugel-horn Solo — *Away in a Manger* (Graham), Soloist Kevin Maloney; *Gaudete!* (Norbury); *Three Kings Swing* (Himes); *Russian Christmas Music* (Reed/de Salme); Bass Trombone Solo — *Once in Royal David's City* (Everson), Soloist Douglas Yeo; *Mid-Winter* (Holst/Bulla); *Feliz Navidad* (Feliciano/Gates); *The Kingdom Triumphant* (Ball)

In this, their second Christmas CD, the New England Brass Band delivers an engaging, entertaining, and at times highly moving program on seasonal music. Once again the musical gifts of their director, Douglas Yeo, and their principal cornet, Terry Everson, provide inspired leadership, whether in conducting, up-front solo playing, or, in Everson's case, laying down the style from the end chair. I had the privilege of having Terry as principal with Lexington Brass for a number of years. He has a real gift at leading the band while working closely with the conductor. Yeo and he are in solid communication throughout this varied, and at times challenging program. There are some magical moments on this disc when Terry 'lays it down,' so to speak, and the band

gets it! Both men provide excellent solos, and they are ably joined by the band's flugel, Kevin Maloney, in essentially lyric works sensitively accompanied by the band. Everson even gives us a good, short jazz solo on Himes' *Three Kings Swing* that takes us beyond the ordinary offering one hears in this popular item. Two major works are set as the pillars of the disc: 1) The complete *Russian Christmas Music* by Alfred Reed, transcribed by John deSalme; 2) Eric Ball's advent classic tone poem, *The Kingdom Triumphant*. The band offers inspired playing on both. My only gentle criticism of the band's playing is that in a few spots intonation falters, though this is not omnipresent — the band having made great strides in this area with each succeeding contest and recording. What musical strides this band has and is making! They wrestle with and succeed on a wide range of styles — represented, for example by Dorothy Gates' delightful *Feliz Navidad* and Norbury's demanding *Gaudete!* The last named comes off with real pizzazz and flare — the resonance of Boston's Symphony Hall an added blessing here, and throughout the album! This is my favorite concert work in what is a great program. For musically sensitive playing I go with Terry's elegant interpretation of *Huron Carol* — my, can he play softly, and he really tests the band to follow him there. Let me end by highlighting two arrangements by Terry and Doug. First, Doug's fine adaptation on a Rutter choral work, *What Sweeter Music*, on which Terry shines again — this is a lovely addition to great Christmas music arranged for brass. Then Terry's intriguing, effective setting for Doug as bass trombone soloist on the traditional *Once In David's Royal City* must receive kudos as well—and, of course, Doug is terrific on the solo line. The presentation and sound of the album are excellent, with Doug providing short, but highly informative notes on each selection. Congratulations, New England, for another outstanding holiday disc! (RH)

Twenty Supreme Years. Eikanger-Bjorsvik (Howard Snell). Bocchino. BOCC106. TT 79:20. Program: *Bank Holiday* (Snell); *Concerto* (Bellini/Snell), Cornet Soloist Martin Winter; *Adagio* (Beethoven/Snell); *Cossack Dance* (Tchaikovsky/Snell); Irving Berlin Suite (Berlin/Snell); *Finale to Act I, Lohengrin* (Wagner/Snell); *The Flower Song* (Bizet/Snell), Soloist Tormod Flaten; *The Clock With Dresden Figures* (Ketelby/Snell); *Adagio* (Albinoni/Snell); *Tango* (Albeniz/Snell); *Londonderry Air* (Snell); *Finale from Suite #2, Daphnis and*

Chloe (Ravel/Snell); *Scaramouche Brasileira* (Milhaud/Snell); *Russian Dance* (Khatchaturian/Snell); *Passacaglia in C Minor* (Bach/Snell).

This exciting, well-played program celebrates Howard Snell's twenty-year connection with the outstanding Norwegian brass band, Eikanger-Bjorsvik. It is also a showcase of Snell's considerable talents as an arranger, transcriber, and composer for British-style brass band. Almost eighty minutes of solid brass arrangements makes this a highly desirable product, one to savor, and study. Here are some of the more famous Snell arrangements—the excerpts from Ravel's *Daphnis*, Wagner's *Lohengrin*, Russian dances by Tchaikovsky and Khachaturian, lovely, emotion-laden adagios by Beethoven and Albinoni, and Snell's well-known version of *Londonderry Air*. Not as well known are the amusing Ketelby *Dresden Figures*, the Albeniz *Tango*, and now a favorite of mine, a splendid resetting of Darius Milhaud's *Scaramouche Brasileira*, each showing Snell's love of sheer musical fun. The program ends with the monumental J.S. Bach *Passacaglia in C Minor*, quite the weighty work for brass band, but captivating throughout its 12:30 length. Fortunately the compact disc package contains Snell's personal insight into his career as a performer and arranger, making this a treasured disc for anyone interested in a fascinating phase of English symphonic and brass band history. Let me conclude by saying that Martin Winter delivers an admirable performance of the Bellini *Concerto*, I assume on E Flat Cornet or Trumpet, though this is not listed. He certainly demonstrates his excellence as a professional trumpeter. The whole series of Irving Berlin tunes Snell has also been famous for scoring are here collected in a four movement suite, though we usually hear these separately, especially the popular *Puttin' on the Ritz*. I rate this excellent disc as a collector's item! What a fine package of great arrangements, and a disc filled with program ideas played so very well by this excellent band. Outstanding sound and presentation. Highly recommended. (RH) ★

ANITA COCKER HUNT AT THE INTERNATIONAL MUSIC CAMP

By Bill Harris

The first downbeat for the 2006 brass band at the International Music Camp was at 9:10 PM on Saturday July 29. This was my first year in the Brass Band and my second time at the camp, after a hiatus of 44 years! I was impressed that the brass Band was meeting for the first time at the end of the first day at the camp and that we were also meeting at 9:00 Sunday morning. It all made sense when I realized that we were the music for the Sunday Worship service.

The International Music Camp was founded in 1955 in the International Peace Gardens, on the border of the province of Manitoba and the state of North Dakota. It employs 250 staff who support students and adults from as many as 70 nations including every state and province in North America and capitalize on a truly life-enriching educational experience. Eight one-week sessions are offered; each filled with information and inspiration through masterclasses, theory, artist performances, private lessons, chamber music, large group rehearsals and recreation activities. The four day community band session falls at the end of the IMC season and in 2006 222 adults attended. The Community Band period supports intermediate, advanced and brass bands, a jazz band, string orchestra, mixed and ladies' barbershop choirs. A number of 'campers' were involved in multiple playing groups. The 2006 brass band had 42 members, many of whom played in the advanced concert band as well.

The Saturday rehearsal started with six pieces for the Worship Service. Anita had brought a great selection of music that not only showed the strength of a brass band, but provided a great foundation for singers. When the band met again later on Sunday to prep for our final concert, Anita again provided a challenging group of pieces. The brass band was expected to play the National Anthems of both the United States and Canada at the start of the final concert and show the rest of the campers how a brass band sounded. Given Anita's background, three of the pieces were published by the Salvation Army (*Redwood*, *Joy Divine* and

God and Country). One of the selections, *Midnight Sun Salute* was composed by a long term IMC camper, Wally Ost, who played tuba in the group. All the band members were there to work, and Anita certainly made sure we got the maximum impact from our time together. She focused on dynamics, timing, musicality, listening and FUN. I found that I really never had time to put my flugelhorn down when she was providing direction: it was stop, correct and downbeat. Hard work, YES; worthwhile YES!

This was my first experience playing in a brass band, and hopefully it will not be my last. To be introduced to the brass band with an excellent conductor who selected great music, to play with a committed group of adult musicians, and to play in such a beautiful location

helped us all to understand the joy of music.

The camp runs every year; check out www.internationalmusiccamp.com for information. The key things to remember:

- It is a **GREAT** musical experience
- You play with a group of dedicated adult musicians
- It is **CHEAP**, \$165US if you register early, \$175 otherwise and that covers room, board and instruction!

Will I be there again? Certainly! And I personally hope that Anita can turn this into an annual event. ☺



Anita Cocker Hunt leading the brass band at the International Music Camp, July/August 2006
(photo by Bill Harris)

EXIT RAMP



Douglas Yeo, Editor

www.nabba.org www.nabbabridge.org www.nabbamusic.org

The views expressed by writers whose work appears in *The Brass Band Bridge* are not necessarily those of the North American Brass Band Association.

The Brass Band Bridge welcomes news, materials for review, communications, photographs, advertising, and scholarly articles on all aspects relating to and for the benefit of North American brass bands and their members. *The Brass Band Bridge* will print small ads (such as found on page 20), gratis, from NABBA member bands on a space available basis. Only one gratis ad per band per year will be printed.

Materials for inclusion in *The Brass Band Bridge* must be submitted as Microsoft Word documents and photos must be submitted as JPEG files (300 ppi [pixels per inch] resolution). Materials may be edited for content. A style sheet for *Bridge* submissions may be found at nabbabridge.org. Address all materials for publication (including queries about advertising rates and sizes) to: Douglas Yeo (email: bridge@yeodoug.com), 9 Freemont Street, Lexington, MA 02421.

Recordings and books for review should be sent to: Ronald Holz, Music Department, Asbury College, 1 Macklem Drive, Wilmore, KY 40390.

New music for review should be sent to: Colin Holman, 31 Joseph Lane, Glendale Heights, IL 60139.

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IN FOCUS

FOOT BRIDGE

TRAIL TO VIRGINIA FALLS,
GLACIER NATIONAL PARK,
MONTANA

Issue 101 of *The Brass Band Bridge* features a foot bridge on the trail to Virginia Falls in Glacier National Park, Montana.

Glacier National Park became the United States' 10th National Park in 1910. With its mountain peaks, year round glaciers and deep turquoise lakes (given their unusual color from "glacial flour," runoff of water from glaciers that contains small particles of rock), Glacier National Park sits at the northern border of the United States, adjacent to Canada. The Great Northern Railroad built a rail line across the northern United States which stopped at Glacier National Park; the railroad also built several lodges in the Park which are still in use today. The construction of the "Going-to-the-Sun Road" in 1932 (it took 11 years to complete and is an engineering marvel) connected the park's east and west sides. Also in 1932, the governments of the United States and Canada designated the combined area of Glacier National Park and Waterton National Park in Canada as "Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park"; the Park was designated a World Heritage Site in 1995.

With hundreds of miles of hiking trails, Glacier National Park amply rewards the adventurous explorer. The trail to Virginia Falls finds its trail head near St. Mary's Lake and passes first by St. Mary's Falls before crossing the pictured foot bridge to Virginia Falls. ♣

