



BRASSBANDBRIDGE

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN BRASS BAND ASSOCIATION

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PREVIEWING NABBA 2023

set test piece
previews

LESSONS FROM A PERCUSSIONIST'S FIRST NABBA

thinking back
and planning ahead

GATEWAY BRASS BAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

review of all the action



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thinking back and planning ahead



A MESSAGE from our president

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The 2023 Championships are only about a month away and the NABBA Board is busy with preparations to make it the best one yet. With 37 bands and 150 soloists, this will be the second largest Championships event held to date. With a new format for the 1st and 2nd Sections and the Solo and Ensemble contest, we hope to make the weekend a better experience for all. Most exciting is the launch of our new mobile app. Information about the contest will be in the app, and over time it will be built into the hub for all things brass band in North America, including seamlessly managing your NABBA membership.

The NABBA Championships will be streamed live via the NABBA Youtube page. This is the first time we have live streamed our event ourselves and are making it available to the public 100% free of charge. This year, all of the performances in the Concert Hall will be streamed live, and the Playhouse will be recorded and uploaded the next day.

We will have Professional Development credit available this year. There will be two clinics (Rex Richardson on cornet and TSgt Ryan Spencer on Military Band), a video about adjudication, concert retrospectives and many other activities that you may participate in. You can find out information on the Championships page of the website.

Officer elections will be held at the April board meeting to set up the next executive committee, and NABBA is in the process of updating the bylaws to reflect current times, improve efficiency, and increase transparency. We will have openings on the NABBA Board as well. You can find out info on the board application page of the website after the Championships. If you have any interest in serving, please let me know.

NABBA would also like to put out a call to see if there is anyone that may be interested in taking on a Historian role within the organization. We need to put more of our history and archives in a more user friendly medium, from the website to the mobile app. Much has been lost so there might be some research involved as well. You can reach out to me if you have any interest in this.

The board looks forward to seeing you all at the Championships in Huntsville in April. Until then, happy banding!

Tony Granados, President



NABBA President
Tony Granados

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TICKETS NOW ON SALE FOR NABBA 2023

Tickets are now on sale for the North American Brass Band Championships, which takes place from April 21-22 at the Von Braun Center in Hunstville, Alabama. All tickets are General Admission and will give access to Band and Solo & Ensemble performances, Vendors and clinics. Performers do not need to purchase tickets to see the event, but everyone else will need a ticket. Performers will get a credential for access.

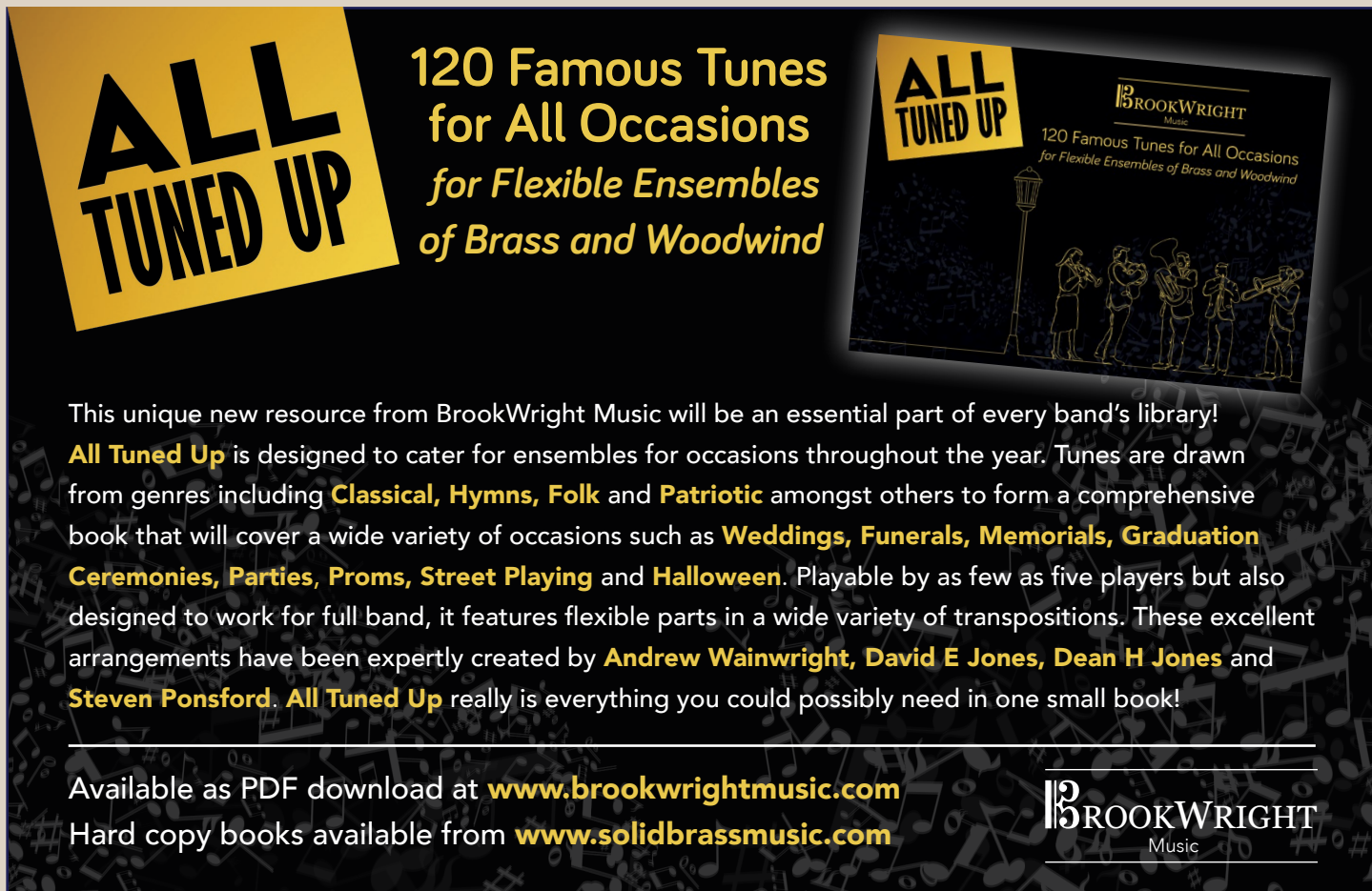
General Public tickets are \$30, although the price is expected to be around \$42 with Ticketmaster fees. Tickets can be purchased at www.ticketmaster.com/event/20005E6A0F2EBE0D

NABBA members can purchase tickets at a discounted price of \$15. This is also the Student and Group ticket. With fees through Ticketmaster online, the price is expected to be around \$27. These are available at www.ticketmaster.com/event/20005E6A0F2EBE0D?did=nabba

Alternatively, the Box Office will be open from 7.30am - 7.30pm on April 21-22, located in the Von Braun Center. With the additional fees, ticket prices at the box office will be \$34 and \$19 respectively.

Contest programs this year will be digital, and free to everyone to download. NABBA will also offer a hard copy print version, however. It is recommended to those wishing to take up this option that programs are pre-ordered in advance, as NABBA will only print the required amount from the pre-orders, plus a few more. After the pre-order, supplies will be very limited. Pre-orders are available until April 10. Programs can be ordered at the following link:

<https://nabba.org/contest-program/#!/form/Contestprogram23>



ALL TUNED UP

120 Famous Tunes for All Occasions for Flexible Ensembles of Brass and Woodwind

This unique new resource from BrookWright Music will be an essential part of every band's library! **All Tuned Up** is designed to cater for ensembles for occasions throughout the year. Tunes are drawn from genres including **Classical, Hymns, Folk** and **Patriotic** amongst others to form a comprehensive book that will cover a wide variety of occasions such as **Weddings, Funerals, Memorials, Graduation Ceremonies, Parties, Proms, Street Playing** and **Halloween**. Playable by as few as five players but also designed to work for full band, it features flexible parts in a wide variety of transpositions. These excellent arrangements have been expertly created by **Andrew Wainwright, David E Jones, Dean H Jones** and **Steven Ponsford**. **All Tuned Up** really is everything you could possibly need in one small book!

Available as PDF download at www.brookwrightmusic.com
Hard copy books available from www.solidbrassmusic.com

BROOKWRIGHT
Music

LEADERSHIP CHANGES AT DALLAS

The Dallas Brass Band formally announces and welcomes its new Principal Conductor, Grant Jameson to the podium. Grant has previously served as the band's principal euphonium and assistant conductor, and the band looks forward to continued success under his baton.

The band wishes to thank its former Principal Conductor, David Childs, for his years of service with the band. His leadership and expertise has brought the band great success, including a 1st place finish in First Section at the 2022 North American Brass Band Championships and a featured performance and clinic at the Texas Music Educators Association Conference. The band wishes David all the best in his future endeavors.

The band has also had a change of leadership in its board, welcoming Nathaniel Geiger as its new Band President starting in January 2023. Nathaniel has served as principal trombone and

logistics director since 2019, and he looks forward to the position and the band's future accomplishments. He commented, "We wish to thank Andrew Wainwright for his service as Band President since the group's formation. His dedication to the ensemble over the past six years has been a significant contributing factor to the band's growth." Although taking a step back from board duties, Andrew will continue to perform with the group on baritone.

The Dallas Brass Band recently celebrated its 5th season with an anniversary concert in the fall, featuring international horn Soloist Owen Farr. The band is currently rehearsing for the 2023 North American Brass Band Championships, the inaugural Texas Brass Fest, and is preparing for recording sessions for Debbie Wiseman's *Elizabeth Remembered* arranged by Andrew Wainwright and Glenn Greet, along with *Excursions* (Christopher Cook), the winner of the 2022 Brookwright International Brass Band Composition Contest.



Clockwise from top left: New Dallas Brass Band Principal Conductor Grant Jameson; Outgoing Principal Conductor David Childs; Newly appointed President Nathaniel Geiger; former President Andrew Wainwright

NABBA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

NABBA is excited to announce that we are supporting professional development opportunities for the 2023 North American Brass Band Championships. NABBA has partnered with VanderCooke College of Music to support graduate credit for the upcoming championship on April 20-22, 2023. To receive graduate credit, participants must enroll in 'North American Brass Band Championships: A Retrospective' through VanderCooke College of Music and pay a registration fee of \$175 fee. In addition to 12.5 hours of engagement at the NABBC, participants will be required to submit reflections through VanderCooke's LMS Schoology.

To create a well-rounded experience, certain activities (e.g. listening to competing bands) will have a cap as to how many

minutes (typically one hour and 20 minutes) may be engaged in one single activity. A 'Bingo' sheet of how to obtain the 12.5 hours of activity can be found on the following page:

www.vandercook.edu/course/north-american-brass-band-championships-a-retrospective/

Additionally, if you are not interested in the graduate credit, the 'Bingo' sheet can be used to document your hours for CEUs.

We look forward to this opportunity and if you have any other questions, please contact NABBA Vice President, Dr. Patrick Herak at pherak@nabba.org.

TEXAS BRASS FEST DETAILS ANNOUNCED

Details for the inaugural Texas Brass Fest has been confirmed, with the event taking place on Saturday, May 27th, 2023. The festival will see four of the premier brass bands in Texas come together for the first time at the Round Top Festival Institute, one of the state's finest concert venues. The bands of Austin, Dallas, Houston and San Antonio will each present a 45-minute program, commencing at 1pm, followed by an evening massed concert which will start at 6pm. Guiding the audience through proceedings will be master of ceremonies Michael Garasi.

Amongst the pieces selected for the evening concert will be a new work from the pen of Andrew Wainwright entitled *Fanfare Prelude on 'Richmond'*, based on the hymn *O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*. Also on the program will be Peter Graham's tour de force *Shine as the Light*, Bruce Fraser's arrangement of Meredith Willson's *76 Trombones*, Howard Snell's masterful setting of *Procession to the Minster* and Leslie Condon's classic festival march *Celebration*.

It is hoped the festival will become an annual event. Tickets are now available from <https://TexasBrassFest.eventbrite.com>



FIVE LAKES LOOKING TO UP THE ANTE

Though brass bands are something of a revived national interest in the United States, there are some pockets of the country that have kept the culture alive consistently through the 20th and 21st centuries. One such area is the state of Michigan, which was once built on the labor of English immigrant miners who brought their brass banding habits with them. Different workplaces, communities, and even universities have embraced brass bands in Michigan through history. However, one of the newest among them has emerged from this bastion of brass bands to become a leader among them all. This is the Five Lakes Silver Band.

The Five Lakes Silver Band has been a serious force in American brass bands since its inception in 2008, but is now upping the ante as it seeks to test its mettle against the top bands in North America. The band sank its teeth into this competition cycle with the US Open Brass Band Championships. Hosted for the first time by the Great Lakes Brass Band Association, the competition made its debut in the Five Lakes Silver Band's home turf of Metro-Detroit. Many bands took part in the competition from across Michigan, and bands came in from out of state and even out of country to play. This was also the inaugural Five Lakes Silver Band entry into this entertainment-style competition, and the band took home the gold in the Championship Division. They also demonstrated that they're not all about winning, they're also about fun. Members of the group donned their lederhosen, and put on a busker performance to remember!

The Five Lakes Silver Band has become a staple of the Detroit area. Outside of the competitions on the docket, the ensemble has lined up several once-in-a-lifetime concert experiences. This past year,

regular fans of the band were treated to a gorgeous performance at Old St Mary's Church, one of the oldest buildings in Michigan. A private audience at the up-and-coming M1 Concourse enjoyed a radiant performance by the band, featuring a piece by local Michigan composer, Andrew David Perkins.

The competition cycle is not over for the band, though. They have big plans for the future. After the upcoming Dublin Festival of Brass, they will be competing in the Championship Section of the North American Brass Band Championships, in Huntsville Alabama. The band is excited for the opportunity to compete against the premier bands in the nation.

When asked his thoughts following the US Open Championships, conductor Christopher Ward shared: "We'll certainly enjoy the moment and this fantastic achievement. But then, it's back to work. There's a real drive and desire to keep improving in this band. We are always striving for the next level. We're on an incredible musical journey together, and I can't thank the band enough for their commitment and their trust in me and to each other."

The Five Lakes Silver Band is proud to adopt a homegrown Detroit mindset. Even when no one is watching, they are hard at work creating something world class.

Be sure to follow the band through their upcoming events, and through the NABBA Championships! For more information about them, visit www.fivelakessilverband.com.



nabba 2023

TIMETABLE OF EVENTS

Thursday, April 20

3:30 PM – Band and Solo Rehearsals Open
 6:00 PM – NABBA Board Meeting
 9:15 PM – Rehearsals closed for Thursday

Friday April 21

8:00 AM – Solo & Ensemble Competition Starts
 9:00 AM – Vendor Area Opens
 10:00 AM – Vandercook Professional Learning Community Meeting (Vendor Area)
 1:00 PM – Solo & Ensemble Competition Concludes
 1:00 PM – 1st Section Test Piece (Concert Hall)
 2:00 PM – 2nd Section Test Piece (Playhouse)
 3:00 PM – Cornet Clinic w/ Rex Richardson (Salon 3B)
 5:30 PM – Vendors Area Closes for Friday
 5:00 PM – Championship Test Piece (Concert Hall)
 9:40 PM – Solo & Ensemble Awards (Concert Hall)

Saturday April 22

9:00 AM – 3rd Section (Playhouse)
 9:00 AM – Vendor Area Opens
 9:05 AM – 2nd Section Own Choice (Concert Hall)
 1:05 PM – 1st Section Own Choice (Concert Hall)
 1:20 PM – Youth Open and Youth 1st Section (Playhouse)
 3:30 PM – Military Bands Clinic w/ TSgt Ryan Spencer (Playhouse)
 5:30 PM – Vendors Area Closes
 5:00 PM – Championship Own Choice (Concert Hall)
 9:30 PM – Youth Championship (Concert Hall)
 10:00 PM – Band Awards (Concert Hall)
 9:45 p.m. – Band Awards Ceremony

COMPETING BANDS

Championship Section Bands

Atlantic Brass Band
 Brass Band of Central Florida
 Brass Band of Northern Virginia
 Chicago Brass Band
 Dallas Brass Band
 Five Lakes Silver Band
 Fountain City Brass Band
 Georgia Brass Band
 James Madison University Brass Band

Championship Section Own Choice Pieces

A Gabrieli Fantasy	Bert Appermont
Dynasty	Peter Graham
Earthrise	Nigel Clarke
Fraternity	Thierry Deleruyelle
Journey of the Lone Wolf	Simon Dobson
On the Shoulders of Giants	Peter Graham
Perihelion: Closer to the Sun	Philip Sparke
Saints Triumphant	Philip Wilby

1st Section Bands

Arkansas Musicworks Brass Band
 Colorado Brass
 Diamond Brass Band
 Dublin Silver Band
 Illinois Brass Band
 Madison Brass Band
 Oakland University Brass Band
 Princeton Brass Band
 Triangle Brass Band

COMPETING BANDS (continued)

1st Section Own Choice Pieces

Chivalry	Martin Ellerby
Coventry Variations	Bramwell Tovey
The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea	Derek Bourgeois
Essay	Edward Gregson
From San Marco Quarter	Joop van Dijk
Heroes	Bruce Broughton
Music of the Spheres	Philip Sparke
Spectrum	Gilbert Vinter
Variations on an Enigma	Philip Sparke

2nd Section Bands

Brass Band of Huntsville
 Cincinnati Brass Band
 Massanutten Brass Band
 Motor City Brass Band
 Natural State Brass Band
 Old Crown Brass Band
 San Francisco Brass Band
 St. Louis Brass Band
 Tampa Brass Band

2nd Section Own Choice Pieces

Brass Triumphant	Gareth Wood
Eternal Home	Dean Jones
Fantasy For Brass Band	Malcolm Arnold
Kingdom of Dragons	Philip Harper
The Patriots	Jan de Haan
The Raid	Oliver Waespi

3rd Section Bands

Crossroads Brass Band
 Dublin Metro Brass
 ECU Brass Band
 Fountain City Youth Brass Academy
 Jacksonville State University Brass Band
 Motor City Academy Brass Band
 Roman Festival Brass

3rd Section Own Choice Pieces

Dark Side of the Moon	Paul Lovatt-Cooper
Dimensions	Peter Graham
Images for Brass	Stephen Bulla
Rise Again	Trent Phillip Taylor
Saint-Saëns Variations	Philip Sparke
Viking Age	Thierry Deleruyelle

Youth Championship Section

Watson Brass Band	
Turris Fortissima	Steven Ponsford

Youth 1st Section

Triangle Youth Brass Band	
Corineus	Christopher Bond

Youth Open Section

Triangle Youth Academy Brass Band	
Anglian Dances	Alan Fernie

THE SET TEST PIECES nabba 2023

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The set test pieces for the 2023 North American Brass Band Championships are certain to provide a stern challenge for every competing band, as well as a highly stimulating listening experience. Here we delve into the details of each work and what to listen out for.

CHAMPIONSHIP SECTION TITAN'S PROGRESS HERMANN PALLHUBER

Commissioned by Brass Band Oberosterreich for the 2007 European Brass Band Championships at Symphony Hall in Birmingham, Hermann Pallhuber's *Titan's Progress* is 'On A Theme Of Mahler'. The piece has since been used as the test piece for the 2009 British Open and the 2019 Championship Section National Finals held at the Royal Albert Hall.

In Pallhuber's programme note, he describes his inspirations behind the work:

"*Titan* was a novel by the German author Johann Paul Friedrich Richter, who later called himself Jean Paul. It is considered the author's main work and he referred to it as his 'cardinal and capital novel'. It is almost 900 pages in length and tells the story of the transition of its hero, Albano de Cesara, from a passionate youth to a mature man. Jean Paul was one of Gustav Mahler's favourite authors and the latter gave the original five-movement version of his First Symphony the subtitle '*The Titan*' – in deference to Jean Paul's novel."

Pallhuber uses Mahler's *First Symphony* as a point of reference throughout his own work, using fragments of themes. He goes on to say that:

"*Titan's Progress*, which is my first work for the British style brass band, also contains references to the music of Gustav Mahler. Motifs from his *First Symphony* are employed throughout (like trumpet signals, the interval of a falling fourth, and chromatically falling triplets), especially the principal theme of the finale.

I have adapted this heroic martial motif as the basis for the main theme of my own *Titan's Progress* – the chorale melody which is heard three times in all and represents the progress of Albano's 'titanic' experience. My music is programmatic and uses the content of the novel and its hero Albano's evolution for its underlying structure. The stylistic variety of the work (including the *Chorale*, an impudent *Ländler*, a dancing *Farandole*, and a climactic *Fugue*) is Mahler-esque in its influences."

The Music

Opening with an explosion of sound led by a fanfare by the upper band, Pallhuber employs bars of silence to balance out the incredibly loud opening theme. A mournful cornet solo follows, which sees a chamber group come together to play the chorale. The warm sounds are penetrated by gunshot-like interruptions from the cornets and snare drum. As the music begins to build up again a jaunty *Allegro* section begins.

Fragments of the main theme fly around the band. Pallhuber utilises the tuned percussion here to accentuate the main themes. Reminiscent of the opening, the cornets play fragments of the opening fanfare. This section is boisterous in character and also begins to feature some of the iconic parts of Mahler's original symphony.

The *Sostenuto* section sees the famous 'fourth' interval and a creative take on the trumpet fanfare sing through. This section, more than most, is like a snapshot of Mahler. The slow cornet solo, plus the fanfares and bass motif culminate in carbon copy of parts of Mahler's symphony.

The next section, marked *Con fuoco*, is full of energy and drive, after the slower section before it. Led by a trombone motif, Pallhuber begins to build the rich texture back up into quite a chaotic section. Swirling cornets and ominous basses collide creating a terrifying atmosphere, almost adhering to the idea of a nightmare. A *rallentando* pulls the music right back into an epic explosion of three chords.

A solo cornet and euphonium emerge from the muted texture with a jaunty duet in unison. Pallhuber also experiments with time signatures here, fluctuating between 8, 5 and 7. Here the principal players are put to the test with complex rhythmic sections, which are intertwined with fragmented muted accompaniments.

Another calm section unfolds, with a solo cornet initiating the theme. The chorale plays out in a similar fashion to the first, with a chamber group beginning to enter and support the solo cornet. The rich textures paired with the soprano cornet's counter-melody creates a really dynamic section of the piece.

More cornet fanfares are heard and Pallhuber's homage to Mahler becomes apparent again. The use of very short cadenzas

for principal seats also sets the scene within this section. The music pushes on with an angular melody being passed between the euphoniums and cornets. As the music begins to build up tempo, the complexity of Pallhuber's motor rhythms become apparent. These add to the sheer excitement and sparkle as this piece enters the final phase of the piece.

The epic ending sees band unite on big and bold chords after a dramatic timpani and percussion rumble. The band then quickly goes quiet with the middle of the band flying through 16th note patterns before the explosive fanfare is heard in its entirety for the first time. This leads to a short pause before the final, absolutely epic, note.

Final Thoughts

Full of colourful orchestration and complex writing, Hermann Pallhuber has been able to create a really exciting work for the best bands to perform. The inspiration from Mahler is clear and as the music moves along it has the listener hanging on to every changing section, wondering where on earth the music will go next. A truly exciting work to both play and listen to!

Alexandra Burns

FIRST SECTION

THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON

PHILIP SPARKE

The magnificent Cory Band hails from south Wales and they celebrated their centenary in 1984; a highlight of the year's events was a sold-out concert held in the recently completed St. David's Hall in Cardiff. The band, with the aid of funds provided by the Welsh Arts Council, commissioned Philip Sparke to write a work for first performance at this concert. The result was *The Year of the Dragon*, the title referring to both the centenary year and the dragon which appears on the Welsh national flag.

from cornets and trombones preface yet another motive, which is then repeated using dense harmonies. The opening passage comes to a close as a bass *ostinato* is set in motion under a nervous figure from the upper band. This shows signs of developing into something more substantial but is interrupted by a broad and powerful *legato* theme from the middle of the band. Solos for soprano cornet and trombone introduce a delicate dance-like section, but this soon gives way to the return of the previous *legato* theme, which gradually subsides until faint echoes of the opening material fade to a close.

The second movement, *Interlude*, opens with a bold, full-band statement, which quickly dissolves to introduce a languid and bluesy solo for trombone, played out over a delicate and intricate accompaniment. A brief interruption by the band fails to brighten the mood as the soloist brings his soliloquy to a close. A short passage for mixed quartets preludes a hushed and reverent chorale for the whole band, which slowly builds to an emotive climax, melting into a recall of the opening bars. The bluesy melody returns, initially on soprano cornet and flugel horn but the third movement follows without a break.

The *Finale* is a real tour-de-force and explodes out of the peaceful close of the middle movement with a rush of 16th notes. These introduce the movement's main theme, a heroic and muscular statement featuring frequent changes of meter. Echoes of the opening passage thin the texture until galloping cornets accompany snatches of the main theme. Baritone and euphonium change key with a brighter, but still busy, melody which is echoed by the solo cornet and, eventually, the full band. This melts into a varied repeat of the opening passage, but it is suddenly interrupted by a delicate peel of bells from the three percussionists. This serves as the background to a quiet march-like theme shared by two trombones and two cornets, and then two tubas. Snatches of the opening of the movement successfully lead to a repeat of the main theme, but this is soon dismissed by an assertive coda, which combines the opening rush of notes with a triumphal return of the central march-like theme. A brief allusion to the opening of the first movement brings the piece to a crashing close.

The composer writes:

'At the time I wrote *The Year of the Dragon*, Cory had won two successive National Brass Band Championships and I set out to compose a virtuoso piece to display the talents of this remarkable band to the full. The work is in three movements:

Toccata opens with an arresting snare drum figure and snatches of mainly unison themes from various sections of the band, which try to develop into something more significant. These include an athletic figure from the bass instruments and a *staccato* motive from muted upper cornets. Dissonant chords





SECOND SECTION

PURCELL VARIATIONS

KENNETH DOWNIE

Purcell Variations was written by Kenneth Downie in 1995 to mark the tercentenary of Purcell's death. Henry Purcell, who was only 36 when he died, is regarded by many as the greatest-ever English composer.

The theme in question is taken from an anthem and has become known as a hymn tune in many churches, called *Westminster Abbey*. The work was first performed in 1995 by the Fairey Band, conducted by Major Peter Parkes, who subsequently conducted it on BBC Radio 3 with Grimethorpe Colliery Band. Soon afterwards, in 1998, it was selected as the First Section Regionals test piece for the British National Brass Band Championships.

The composer writes, 'I found Purcell's tune to be a magnificent theme for creating variations. In particular, the rising and falling thirds of the first and third phrases were very influential in my thinking. For example, at the very beginning of the piece (bars 1-6), the instruments not on the pedal are trying to 'prise open' with slurs, the interval of a third. The music should press forward to

the dramatic silent beat at the beginning of bar 7, at which point tension subsides, and the tubas have the first direct reference to the beginning of the theme (9-14). The same idea (1-4) closes the whole piece, except that at the end, the striving is resolved with a full scale tonic chord.

At bar 15 the shape of the theme's second phrase is briefly used as a little *ostinato* before, at bar 24, the 'prising open' recurs. This idea undergoes some colour changes (28-34) and an increase in tempo, before a climax is reached on a *fortissimo* chord (43), which resolves into the appearance of the theme proper at bar 46, marked *cantabile*. The energy drains from the music (46-55), and a little coda finishes with trombones referring quietly to the opening.

Variation 1

The connection with the opening of the theme should be very clear as solo cornets start in a rhythmic style. At bar 96, the shape comes from the penultimate phrase of the theme, which is developed

for some time (96-120). Sharp contrasts in dynamics and scoring should come over as 'whimsical'. The variation closes with the last phrase of the theme in augmentation, underneath busy cornets.

Variation 2

This invariably proves to be one of the most difficult to play, involving as it does the need to pass on a musical line from one group to another in a delicate and if possible seamless way. A reasonable tempo range has been indicated (quarter note = 116-130), and it should not be slower, otherwise the key elements of gracefulness and delicacy would be threatened. The penultimate phrase of the theme is the one developed. It should always be subtle (e.g. 169).

Variation 3

This one is in great contrast and calls for a degree of MUSICAL abandon. The contrapuntal idea, first given to euphoniums and Eb tubas, derives quite obviously from the opening of the theme, although there the similarity ends! Very careful note of the dynamics is necessary to a successful presentation of the idea - likewise accurate articulation throughout is essential. At bar 267, the material developed is from the penultimate phrase again, until

at bar 275, the opening idea returns.

Variation 4

Some welcome moments of repose are provided with the arrival of this variation, and they should be savoured, without allowing the music to become sentimental. The build-up at bars 323-329 should produce a rounded, unforced *fortissimo*, without any accents. At bar 340, the theme should grow naturally, almost imperceptibly from the middle of the band, with warmth and affection. The reprise of the opening (383) should break the spell, and will probably signal to the listener that the end is not too far away. Bars 391-444 are a build-up to the final presentation of the theme, and will call for careful rehearsal and shaping by conductors.

At bar 444 the treatment requires breadth, including from those playing lines of crotchets. The 'pacing out' of the *accelerando* needs thought in order to make the new tempo at bar 504 sound convincing. The intervals of a third, so significant in the beginning, reappear at bar 52, in diminution, before at bar 529, the music of the opening, in a different register, returns to conclude the work triumphantly.'



THIRD SECTION

SINFONIETTA NO. 4

ETIENNE CRAUSAZ

Sinfonietta No. 4 was composed for the 28th Fête Cantonale des Musiques Vaudoises at La Vallée de Joux (Switzerland) in June 2018 as the test piece for the 3rd Section.

The work begins with a fanfare that presents a very simple sequence of five consecutive and ascending notes, constituting the main material of the piece. A more lyrical theme is then heard in contrast. The next *Allegro* treats the sequence first in a very rhythmic way, then in a contrapuntal style close to the style of Renaissance music, but with contemporary harmonies. A transition leads us to a quieter part.

Two cadenzas (cornet and euphonium) open the central section, which continues with a theme based on the sequence that grows to reach the climax of the piece. The last part deals with the sequence in a $\frac{3}{4}$ *alla breve*. The music of the central part is re-exposed just before a very festive conclusion.

YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP SECTION
SAGA OF TYRFING
 JACOB VILHELM LARSEN

Commissioned by conductor Clive Zwanswiniski and the Tysvær Brass from Akedal, Norway for the Norwegian National Brass Band Championships 2012, *Saga of Tyrting* is freely based upon sagas involving the magic sword *Tyrting*.

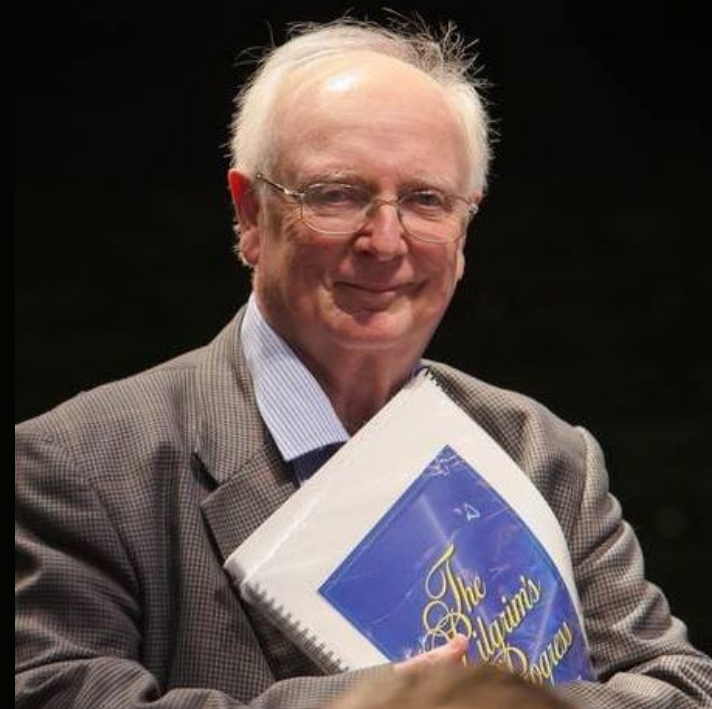
Svafrlami was the king of Gardariki and the grandson of Odin. He managed to trap the dwarves Dvalinn and Durin when they had left the rock where they dwelt. He forced them to forge him a sword with a golden hilt that would never miss a stroke, would never rust and would cut through stone and iron as easily as through clothes.

The Dwarves made the sword, and it shone and gleamed like fire. However, in revenge they cursed it so that it would kill a man every time it was drawn and that it would be the cause of great evil.

YOUTH FIRST SECTION
THE SEASONS
 PHILIP WILBY

Composer Philip Wilby writes... 'The music of this little suite of pieces traces the year's change; from a cold, late autumn to an indoor winter; though a spring waltz to a final open-air march. My aim was to provide music which is both enjoyable to rehearse and perform but not forbiddingly difficult to play.'

The work's popularity among brass bands the world over suggests that he hit the nail on the head - audiences love it, too!



GATEWAY BRASS BAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Dr. Jennifer A. Moder-Bell, President, St. Louis Brass Band

The Gateway Brass Band Championships took place on Saturday, March 18, 2023 at Ritenour High School in St Louis, MO. Hosted by the St Louis Brass Band, the event included performances by nine brass bands and one brass ensemble. The audience and three adjudicators (Tony Granados, Dr. John Korak, and Professor James Jackson) were impressed by the high level of music making displayed in all of the performances.

Dr. John Bell, St. Louis Brass Band Music Director, commented, "The ultimate goal of the Gateway Brass Band Championships is to cast a wide net to be able to service all of the participating ensembles. For some bands, this was their capstone contest for the year. For others, it was preparation for the North American Brass Band Association Championships which will be held in Alabama this April. With ten ensembles participating this year, it was a great day of brass banding!"

Meanwhile, Dr Joseph Parisi, Music Director for the Fountain City Brass Band had this to say: "Fountain City Brass Band was delighted to take part in such a well organized event that was held in a beautiful venue. The members of the St Louis Brass Band and all who helped with the event went far beyond anyone's expectations, and I am hopeful the festival will continue to grow (now with ten bands!). So many times, we play music for an audience and adjudication panel that will never be performed again. It will be fabulous to have a chance to incorporate the feedback when the band performs the music again at the NABBA Championships. The St Louis Brass Band has certainly provided a wonderful event that will hopefully attract bands that strive to continue their musical growth."

Dr Mark Taylor, Music Director of the Chicago Brass Band said: "It's fantastic to see this event grow, not only to include more bands, but bands at many different stages in their exploration of these types of events. We had first-time groups, together with long-time

competitive bands, along with bands returning to the contest stage after a long hiatus. We also had youth bands and adult bands, and like so many other brass banding events in North America, everyone supported and encouraged one another. It was a great day!"

Dr Ryan Sharp, Artistic Director of the Frontier Brass Band (FBB), enthused: "I think the competition was a great success! Every detail ran as smooth as clockwork. The hall is a wonderful place to play and listen, and FBB is excited to make this a yearly tradition!"

Alex Schnautz, Solo Horn for River Brass, commented: "The St Louis Brass Band put together a well-run regional event with a place for bands at all levels to compete. For our band, it was an exciting first outing since COVID, and we thoroughly enjoyed watching the other bands compete, especially the Championship Section. I also enjoyed that there were opportunities to network with other bands in our region - I hope to develop some partnerships with them in the future."

After the contest, approximately 100 members from these bands gathered together at Ferguson Brewing Company for celebratory social time. The St Louis Brass Band hopes to draw even more adult and youth brass bands and brass ensembles to the 2024 Gateway Brass Band Championships, which will be held on Saturday, March 16, as it looks forward to hosting this annual day of excellent brass banding.





Full Results

Championship Section

- 1. Fountain City Brass Band - Joseph Parisi, MD
- 2. Chicago Brass Band - Mark Taylor, MD
- 3. Frontier Brass Band - Douglas Henderson, MD Douglas Henderson
- 4. Iowa Brass - Alexander Beamer, MD

Open Section - Traditional Brass Band Instrumentation

- 1. River Brass - Pat Stuckemeyer, MD
- 2. Free State Brass Band - Tom Davoren, MD

Open Section - Non-Traditional Instrumentation

- 1. Fountain City Youth Brass Academy - Lee Harrelson, MD
- 2. St. Louis Academy Brass Band - Matthew Kuebler and Ryan Goetter, MDs

Brass Choir Section

- 1. Fort Zumwalt South Brass Choir, Paul Ahlemeyer, MD



OLIVERIO



FREE LIVESTREAM OF THE NORTH AMERICAN BRASS BAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

INCLUDES:

LIVE INTERVIEWS WITH CONDUCTORS/PLAYERS

ALL SECTION PERFORMANCES

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY NIGHT AWARDS CEREMONIES

FRIDAY APRIL 21

- 1:00 PM – 1ST SECTION TEST PIECE (CONCERT HALL)
- 2:00 PM – 2ND SECTION TEST PIECE (PLAYHOUSE)
- 5:00 PM – CHAMPIONSHIP TEST PIECE (CONCERT HALL)
- 9:40 PM – SOLO & ENSEMBLE AWARDS (CONCERT HALL)

SATURDAY APRIL 22

- 9:00 AM – 3RD SECTION (PLAYHOUSE)
- 9:05 AM – 2ND SECTION OWN CHOICE (CONCERT HALL)
- 1:05 PM – 1ST SECTION OWN CHOICE (CONCERT HALL)
- 1:20 PM – YOUTH OPEN AND YOUTH 1ST SECTION (PLAYHOUSE)
- 5:00 PM – CHAMPIONSHIP OWN CHOICE (CONCERT HALL)
- 9:30 PM – YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP (CONCERT HALL)
- 10:00 PM – BAND AWARDS (CONCERT HALL)

*TIMES ARE LISTED IN CENTRAL TIME

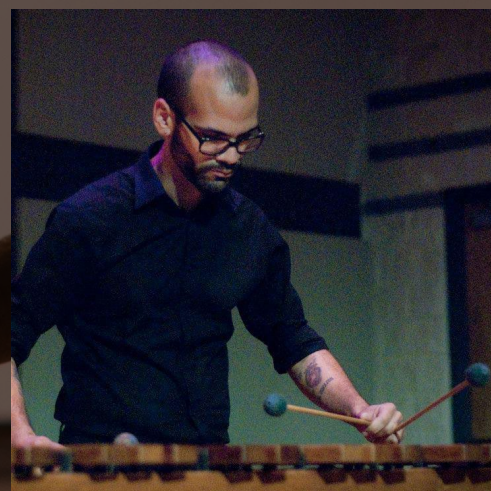
FOLLOW FOR STREAM:



Iowa Brass performs at the Gateway Championships under its conductor Alexander Beamer

LESSONS FROM A PERCUSSIONIST'S FIRST NABBA CHAMPIONSHIPS: Thinking Back and Planning Ahead

The North American Brass Band Association (NABBA) holds its highly anticipated Championships each year, attracting the most talented brass and percussion players in North America. As a founding member and principal percussionist of the Tampa Brass Band (TBB), **Daniel Melendez** had the opportunity to explore this world for the first time in TBB's inaugural performance at the 2022 NABBA Championships.



Before joining TBB, I had years of orchestral and wind band experience, but never with a brass band and I wasn't entirely sure what I was getting myself into. When we met for our first rehearsal, I was floored by the diverse and powerful literature available to us. As a percussionist, we are constantly worrying about how our instruments might affect other sections. Most of the time, anything above a *mezzo-forte* with a pair of crash cymbals could have you on the receiving end of a death glare from the maestro. It is a percussionist's dream to play alongside a strong, talented brass section and not need to hold back.

As percussionists prepare for the NABBA Championships, we face a range of logistical tasks, from choosing the right instruments and sounds to transportation and storage. I've organized a summary of what NABBA Championships was like for me, a first-time participant, which could help other first-time brass band percussionists and seasoned percussionists alike. Even brass players, conductors, band leadership, and event organizers could benefit from learning more about the complicated percussion logistics in a brass band competition. Reflecting on the unexpected challenges the first time, and with TBB's second Championships only a few weeks away, I've also compiled several ideas from a percussionist's perspective about planning ahead for a successful NABBA Championships experience.

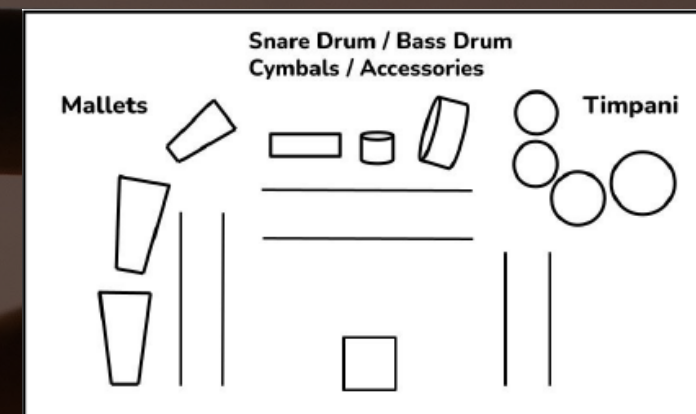
A Percussionist's First Championships- From before the first rehearsal to after the last note

Assigning parts

Most brass band literature requires three percussionists and a timpanist. For a typical TBB performance, the percussionists rotate on different instruments, giving each member a chance to play interesting parts. In preparation for NABBA Championships, the section used the same part assignment strategy.

Choosing Sounds

Guided by reference recordings, the TBB percussionists spent the months leading up to the contest choosing which sounds best compliment the brass band in our usual rehearsal space and performance venues. Small changes in mallet choice, drum tuning, and accessory colors were needed in the weeks leading up to the performance. As a newer ensemble, we had limited resources and used what our members already owned or could easily borrow and transport.



Set-up

Because of prior experience in other ensembles, the TBB percussion section chose a standard wind band layout: snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, and accessories in the center; mallets stage right; and timpani stage left. This formation was used for the duration of the season in rehearsals, performances, and on stage for competition.

Packing List

With a few weeks left, a packing list for the competition was created. NABBA was providing the largest instruments, and the percussionists were expected to supply small instruments, such as snare drum, cymbals, tambourines, and other accessories. TBB had a modified packing list to accommodate our Championships repertoire, including bulkier instruments like congas, bongos, and floor toms, which made transportation difficult.

Transportation and Storage

Each driving percussionist took their own instruments in personal vehicles on the way to NABBA Championships. Those traveling by plane needed someone to transport instruments, so I drove up with my packed car filled with mallet bags and instruments. After arriving at the performance venue, there were no clear instructions on where to drop off and securely store our equipment, so it all remained in our cars until our first rehearsal.

Rehearsals

Set-up and breakdown at each NABBA Championships weekend rehearsal site was tedious and ate into rehearsal time because of all the small percussion equipment we had to carry in and out of rehearsal sites. That first night of rehearsal was the first time the band practiced the set-up and breakdown procedure. Another

challenge was the many different sets of timpani that were used over the course of the weekend. At our Tampa rehearsals, two of the timpani we used had a clutch mechanism and the other two were balance action, demanding specific pitch-changing techniques. Every other set we played on that weekend were all different makes and models, and the ranges on each drum varied slightly, so the tuning techniques from previous rehearsals were adjusted on the fly.

Unloading

When arriving on competition day with all of our gear, security allowed us to pull up to the loading dock of the performance hall, because the only available parking was very far away. Once the vehicles were parked, we had a difficult time figuring out where to store everything, but staff and volunteers were extremely helpful directing us to the percussion equipment area. After organizing our gear, we quickly labeled everything with 'TBB' and met the band at the waiting area.

Pre-performance

Before we were led to our warm-up room, the percussion section brought sticks and mallets in preparation to work with the band. Upon arriving, we realized there were no percussion instruments in that location, so we headed back to the percussion equipment area to prepare to move on stage while the brass were able to warm up together.

On Stage

With an opportunity to walk onto the stage before the brass finished warming up, we had the first chance to see the large instruments provided. Although TBB brought bongos and congas, the set already on stage saved us valuable setup and breakdown time. While high quality, the equipment provided differed from the equipment used for typical TBB rehearsals and performances, so some minor adjustments were needed. For example, the congas, bongos, and timpani provided were re-tuned to fit the sounds required for our repertoire. Fortunately, there was a chance to test the instruments and hear them in the performance space. The venue was very dry, unlike the rehearsal halls the day before, and completely different from our usual rehearsal and performance venues. That information allowed us to make small accommodations right before the performance, such as mallet choices and instrument locations. Being unable to test this with

the band, we didn't know how these changes would affect the overall ensemble sonority.

Exiting the Stage

After the last note, everything was quickly moved off the stage with the help of some non-percussionist members. The rest of the brass had directly exited the performance area and were already gone, so the instruments were placed in the hallway and wings of the stage. We quickly ran back to join the band, heading into the expo hall for individual and group portraits. Because of the quick exit and drop-off location of the gear, we were unable to retrieve it all until the next band was finished with their performance, delaying our instrument loading later that day. As we caught up with the brass and arrived for the photo, we looked around and realized everyone had a brass instrument in their hand, but we had no instruments or mallets for the picture. Luckily, someone happened to have a spare triangle, and we all posed with the triangle to commemorate our first NABBA Championships experience.

A Percussionist's plan for the next Championships - Asking for help and counting on experience



Assigning Parts: Stations

Assigning the parts based on creating small stations of instruments for each percussionist could minimize the amount of moving around in a new venue with new instruments especially while under the pressure of competition. Setting up and breaking down during rehearsals the day before and day of the contest can be a hassle, so considering those logistics while part assignments might save the section some stress.

Choosing Sounds: Not just from Recordings

Experiencing other ensembles live during the Championships

inspired a new concept for the types of sounds that are appropriate and effective in a brass band context. The clarity of the percussion instruments are greatly affected by the venue, but the more seasoned ensembles accounted for the sound change and chose instruments and mallets that allowed sounds to cut through the dense brass band and add an important texture to the ensemble. To prepare, ensembles should take advantage of sitting in the audience of their own band or support other local brass bands by attending open rehearsals and performances, noting which choices bring out the best sounds for competition. Additionally, asking the venue or organizers for information like the make and model of each instrument could allow percussionists to prepare on those specific instruments before contest for sound consistency.

Set-up: think outside the box

Many ensembles at NABBA Championships maximized set-up to accommodate the specific demands of the brass band competition. One featured the timpani centered directly behind

the basses, emphasizing the connection between their parts. Another ensemble placed their mallet instruments in a second row behind the timpani and snare drum to avoid covering up brass instruments that carry the melody. Considering an unconventional set-up could benefit the ensemble sound by connecting the percussion parts that best match with the rest of the brass and adjusting the balance of each voice.

Packing list: the true essentials

Double checking what instruments will be provided with the percussion coordinator could prevent percussionists from forgetting something that will not be provided, or from unnecessarily bringing instruments that are already provided. Consider packing gear like trap tables to avoid resorting to chairs and music stands with towels to hold instruments, and bring foldable carts to make traveling with lots of small or heavy gear simpler. Most importantly, every percussionist should bring a tool kit that includes essentials like: snare drum and timpani tuning



“Experiencing other ensembles live during the Championships inspired a new concept for the types of sounds that are appropriate and effective in a brass band context.”



keys, extra drum heads, lugs, parachute cord, extra cymbal felts, scissors, lighters, rosin/wax, clamps, wrenches, screw drivers, fishing wire, glue, tape, and markers. Remember to label everything before departing in case of a mix-up.

Transportation and Storage: Find Space

Coordinating with non-percussionists to travel with gear will make packing and transportation easier. If the budget allows, a large van would be even better. Planning to bring equipment to a hotel room or a locked and secured vehicle could save time later if there is not a secure place available to store gear near the performance venue.

Rehearsals: On the go

Using extra carts to move gear will save so much time and energy the weekend of the Championships, since rehearsals, warm-up times, and the competition will be in so many different locations. Be prepared to be flexible when approaching different makes and models of large instruments from the rehearsals to the competition.

Unloading: Plan Ahead

A map of the venue and a planning meeting with members moving gear can help determine the simplest routes around the venue to avoid carrying items long distances. Asking ahead to know the exact location for unloading and instrument storage before setting up on stage will save time.



The Tampa Brass Band percussion team

Pre-performance: The Actual Warm-up Time

Because percussion warm-up might be different than the brass due to logistics and equipment, take advantage of the time waiting around by bringing some drum pads to keep warm and ready to perform once the band sets up.

On Stage: not your first time on stage

Taking the time to enter the venue and hear other ensembles perform can be very helpful when making decisions about ensemble sound. Perhaps the high pitched instruments might speak very clearly in the venue while the lows are lost, or instrument location could have the sound bouncing off a wall, causing unwanted resonance. Extra equipment can modify these sounds including towels, moongel, tambourine dampeners, and extra mallets.

Exiting the Stage: A Photo Finish

Assigning roles and practicing getting on and off the stage before arriving will help the final rehearsals and performance run smoothly. By rehearsing how to exit the stage before the contest, everyone can learn which instruments and gear they have to move. Asking the percussion coordinator or the venue stage crew where to move the instruments after the performance can help to plan an optimal path from the stage to the loading zone to your vehicles. And remember, unless you want to risk an action shot with a spare triangle, take something with you for pictures with your band mates at the end.

The NABBA Championships provide a truly exhilarating and rewarding experience for percussionists, with unique demands and opportunities to perform alongside incredibly talented musicians. While I shared my personal experiences partly to provide brass players, band leaders, and organizers a valuable perspective on this busy and exciting weekend, I especially hope that my insights will be useful for first-time percussionists participating in the NABBA Championships. As TBB prepares for our second Championships, I am eager to continue growing with this vibrant community of musicians, and I am looking forward to learning and sharing new solutions and strategies to make the experience smoother and more enjoyable for all of us. Together, we can celebrate the power and artistry that inspire the next generation of talented musicians to continue to develop the tradition of brass band music.

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