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THE LEADING INTERNATIONAL BRASS MAGAZINE

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The business of public entertainment

Welcome to the November 2017 edition of British Bandsman. This month we look back at, for many, the climax of the banding year - the Championship Section Final of the National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain at the Royal Albert Hall, and forward to the most entertaining weekend on the calendar, Brass in Concert at Sage Gateshead.

The concept of 'entertainment' in band contests has led to considerable debate since the first events of this type began to appear in the early 1970s. Indeed, the edict, 'one man's meat is another man's poison', is probably used more in this field of banding activity than in any other. It is therefore of little surprise that the results of such contests have caused more arguments over the years than any others as bands, organisers and even the judges themselves have scratched their heads in their efforts to quantify the balance of 'entertainment' against the actual quality of the performances being judged.

It's a conundrum that may not even have a 'correct' solution, but that shouldn't stop the organisers of entertainment contests the world over constantly re-examining the format and inner workings of their events. When it's all said and done, entertainment contests are chiefly about bands communicating with their audiences, and the announcement from the Brass in Concert organisers that they are to involve the paying public in the judgement of this year's event is surely one to be welcomed by us all.

The livestreaming of events on the Internet is becoming more widespread and is undoubtedly a vital tool in raising awareness of bands' activities around the world. If it is carried out at the expense of paying audiences, though, there will eventually be no events left to livestream. It is therefore even more important than ever that brass bands at every level continue to push new boundaries in the name of public entertainment, and never forget that no one knows who might be listening, wherever they happen to be performing!

To those travelling to Gateshead for Brass in Concert, we hope you have an enjoyable weekend in the company of some of the world's finest brass bands. I'll look forward to seeing you there, and to telling everyone all about it in our December edition.

Kenneth Crookston
Managing Editor

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Ivan Meylemans to conduct 2018 European Youth Band in Utrecht

The European Brass Band Association (EBBA) and Zimihc, the Utrecht-based music and theatre arts production company and the local organiser of the 2018 European Brass Band Championships, have announced that the Dutch conductor Ivan Meylemans is confirmed as the conductor of the 2018 European Youth Brass Band (EYBB).

Commenting on the appointment, EBBA President Ulf Rosenberg said: "Ivan is a well-known figure in European banding and brings with him a wealth of experience from symphonic music as well as bands. We are all looking forward very much to hearing EYBB 2018 under his leadership."

EYBB 2018 will give a number of concert appearances during the week, including at the final of the European Soloists Competition (3 May), the official Opening Ceremony (4 May), Saturday evening's Gala Concert and a short final concert before the results of the European Youth Contest are announced.

The EBBA Music Commission has chosen two British works as the set tests for the Development and Premier sections of the youth contest. Bands in the Development Section will include Philip Sparke's *Valerius Variations* (Anglo Music) in their programmes. This work has proved a popular choice for youth and 4th Section contests. Premier Section bands will tackle Michael Ball's colourful *Chaucer's Tunes* (Studio Music).

Chair of the EBBA Music Commission, Paul Hindmarsh, commented: "Michael's piece was originally prepared for the top section of the National Youth Championships of Great Britain 20 years ago and it has been chosen for youth and adult competitions a number of times since. They are both based on traditional tunes with links to a number of European countries. We hope the bands enjoy preparing and playing them."

The 2018 European Youth Brass Band Contest takes place on Sunday 6 May.

Brass in Concert to embrace audience participation

The organisers of the Brass in Concert Festival, which will be held in association with Yamaha, Banks Group and British Bandsman at Sage Gateshead on 18-19 November, have announced that this year's Championship will feature a special prize to be voted for by audience members at the event using their smartphones. The new Audience Award will be given in addition to the existing prizes, but will not form part of the overall result of the Brass in Concert Championship.

Speaking to BB about the initiative, Brass in Concert Chairman John Woods commented: "We are delighted to announce that the Brass in Concert audience will be able to play a tangible role in the outcome of our event for the very first time. The Audience Award will see a new trophy, donated by former Brass in Concert Chairman Trevor Caffull, and £1,000 going to the band that the audience members decide gives them most enjoyment on the day. Full instructions on how to take part in this, as well as other social media activities and a day-long trivia quiz will be unveiled at Sage Gateshead, while we will have a helpdesk there for the duration of the event to help get anyone less familiar with the inner workings of a smartphone to make the right connections. We are sure that this will become an important addition to the Brass in Concert weekend and we look forward to as many of our audience members as possible getting involved."



Edward Gregson among BASCA nominees

Those in the running for Britain's foremost contemporary composers awards have been revealed, with 39 composers nominated, including Edward Gregson for his work for brass band, *Four Études*, for the British Composer Awards, spanning 33 works across 11 categories. From a community project exploring the refugee crisis and featuring Donald Trump quotes, to a work examining societal perceptions of women through the metaphor of birds, to a composition calling on humankind to re-programme its attitude towards the natural world by giving nature a musical voice, the 2017 nominations underline the many ways in which contemporary composers are using music to engage in current affairs.

The 2017 nominations highlight the UK's thriving contemporary music scene, with a record number of entries received this

year (up by 18.5 per cent in 2016). The number of young composers nominated increased by 16 per cent, with 46 per cent of nominees under the age of 40, and the number of women nominated has continued to increase year on year, with women making up 42 per cent of the shortlist. Half of the composers are first-time nominees.

Crispin Hunt, Chairman of the British Association of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA), said: "Britain is home to a flourishing and bold community of enlightened and reformist contemporary composers, whose work continues to accelerate music's role in society. The works nominated here speak to politics, ecology, art and history and somehow manage to distil the disorder about us into form. It's inspiring to note a significant uplift in submissions this

year, especially to see so many first-time nominees and young composers shortlisted - further testimony to the pioneering musical spirit of today."

The works shortlisted in the Wind Band or Brass Band category are *Anemol* by Joseph Davies, *Four Études* by Edward Gregson and *In Ictu Oculi* by Kenneth Hesketh. The winners will be announced at the 15th British Composer Awards at the British Museum, London on Wednesday 6 December.

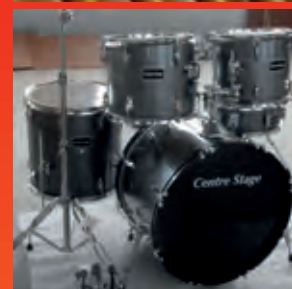
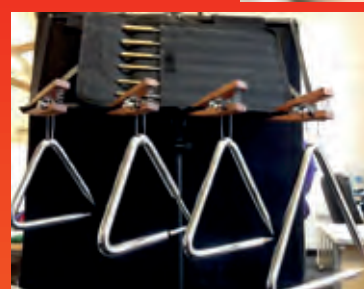


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Brass at the Guild details announced

The organisers of the 2018 Brass at the Guild, which will take place on Sunday 28 January, have announced the adjudication panel who will oversee the five sections. Paul Andrews, John Doyle, Chris King, Helen Varley and Thomas Wyss will make the all-important decisions. Bands are reminded that entries are now welcome for the competition, which also incorporates the British Open Youth contest. Supported by R. Banks & Son (Funerals Ltd) through its proprietor and life-long brass band supporter Brian Halliwell, it is regarded as one of the most important early season events in the UK brass band calendar. The event will take place at Preston's Guild Hall and the

closing date for entry is 2 January 2018. Competing bands in the senior sections will once again be given the choice of which test-piece they wish to play, with the opportunity to showcase either those chosen for the 2018 Butlins Mineworkers Championships or Regional Championships. The test-pieces are:
Championship Section: *Odyssey* (Kevin Norbury), *Contest Music* (Wilfred Heaton), *The Year of the Dragon* (Philip Sparke) or *Concerto No 1 for Brass Band* (Marcus Venables)
1st Section: *Brass Metamorphosis* (James Curnow) or *Renaissance* (Peter Graham)
2nd Section: *Ex Terra Lucem* (Jonathan Bates) or *Variations for Brass Band* (Ralph

Vaughan Williams)

3rd Section: *Napoleon on the Alps* (Philip Harper) or *Overture to Henry V* (Ralph Vaughan Williams)

4th Section: *World Tour* (Rodney Newton) or *Second Suite in F* (Gustav Holst)

British Open Youth Championship:

20-minute own choice programme
 As a further competitive incentive, the appropriate highest placed band in the Championship Section will gain an invitation to compete at the 2018 Senior Trophy at the British Open Spring Festival in Blackpool.

Schedules and entry forms can be downloaded from www.lancashirecontests.com

Spring Festival tests unveiled

The organisers of the British Open have announced the test-pieces for next year's Spring Brass Band Festival, to be held at The Winter Gardens, Blackpool on Saturday 12 May.

As widely predicted, the test-piece for the Grand Shield will be Professor Peter Graham's *The Triumph of Time*, with G. Baileys *Diadem of Gold* for the Senior Cup and *A Kensington Concerto* by Eric Ball for the Senior Trophy.

The Triumph of Time was commissioned by Professor Nicholas Childs for Black Dyke Band to play at the 2014 European Championships in Perth. In his notes to the score, Peter Graham states: "As I began preparations for the commission it occurred to me that 2014 marked the 25th anniversary of the publication of one of my earliest works for brass band, *The Essence of Time*. Listening to the piece for the first time in a number of years, I was struck by its energy, optimism and sheer *joie de vivre*. Reflecting on these impressions I wondered if I might capture something of the spirit of *The Essence of Time* in a new work, and whilst not using any of the existing musical content perhaps draw upon some of the structural elements. Like *The Essence of Time*, *The Triumph of Time* is a set of variations for band which follow roughly the same moods and characteristics of its older relative.'

The Triumph of Time was used at the British Open in 2016 and, as was the case then in agreement with the composer, the

opening chiming bells heard on CD in its original première will not be part of the performances in May.

Diadem of Gold was originally known as *Ouverture Caractéristique* and composed by Guillaume Balay, who was conductor of the famous Garde Républicaine, Paris. Frank Wright, using the name G. Bailey, transcribed the work for the 1953 National Finals and it was also used at the Open in 1977. Whilst it has been performed as an own-choice work by bands over the years, it was last selected as a set test-piece at the Danish National Championships in 2015, with its last competitive appearance in the UK being in 2001 at Pontins.

Eric Ball's *A Kensington Concerto* is in one continuous movement and was first heard in 1972 at the National Brass Band Championships in London. The work is a test of musical lyricism right from the opening melody on solo cornet. The interest from bands wishing to gain entry to the qualifying contests for the British Open remains as high as ever, with the highest placed band not already invited in the Championship Section at the Bolsover Festival of Brass, Wychavon Festival of Brass and the Fife Charities Contest earning them an invitation to compete in the Senior Trophy. Two further qualification places in the Senior Trophy will be made available for the highest placed band in the Championship Section at next year's Brass at the Guild on Sunday 28 January and the Welsh Open

in Porthcawl on Saturday 17 February.

A spokesman for the British Open commented: "Our congratulations go to the bands that have already qualified to compete in the Senior Trophy in the three contests this autumn. We would also like to thank the contests themselves for their enthusiasm and willingness to offer a direct qualification link to the Spring Festival."

Details of the start times, prizes, the competing bands, adjudicators, venues and ticket information will be announced in due course.



De Wâldsang Triumphs

It is eight years since Brassband De Wâldsang last won the Netherlands Brass Band Championships, writes **Features Editor Paul Hindmarsh**. Over that time Brassband Schoonhoven, from the south of the country, as well as fellow Frieslanders De Bazuin (Oenkerk) and Provinciale Brassband Groningen, have regularly out-shone arguably the most famous name in Netherlands banding. De Wâldsang's compelling performance of Kenneth Downie's *Handel in the Band*, which was making its debut as a set test-piece, was the highlight of a strong ten-band Championship Division, and for its musical value, the highlight of the entire weekend, drawing a sustained and vociferous reception from the large audience in Utrecht's compact and lively concert hall.

Conductor Reiks van der Velde, who like many other conductors had a busy weekend, really 'got' the piece. By following the composer's carefully considered speeds, he gave his players enough time and space to deliver the quick-silver detail of the scherzo variations, and, perhaps more importantly, to find the poised elegance in the Handel Sarabande theme. We also felt the relaxed gospel 'feel' in the central slow variation and the humour as well as excitement in the brilliant final fugue-meets-big band final section. The crucial solos for flugel horn and trombone, which caught out a few, were the best of the day and the array of interlocking expressive solos were perfectly matched in phrasing and style.

It proved to be a successful first outing for *Handel in the Band*, which was hard enough to separate the bands but not so challenging that it embarrassed those at the bottom of the final ranking. Those that coped best matched technical efficiency with clarity and style.

Brassband Schoonhoven's assertive and confident display under Ivan Meylemans was marred by some unfortunate slips at key moments. Experienced band conductor Klaas van der Woude brought a lovely lyrical warmth and emotional intensity to the slow music with De Bazuin - just on the tasteful side of over-indulgence! Speaking to BB afterwards, judge Garry Cutt praised these top three performances in particular: "We loved the piece and I'm sure the bands and conductors did

too. The top three and particularly the winning band captured the style. The *Sarabande* was beautiful and they had the widest dynamic range. The quiet music was calm and I loved the detail. There was no doubt between us." The composer listened to all ten performances and had a great day, as he told the audience during the results ceremony: "All composers write their music in a quiet space. I write my music in a little office in the garden. It's one thing having ideas there and quite another when they are made public as on an occasion like today. I want to thank the conductors, the performers and you who have listened. There have been some wonderful performances. It humbles me to realise how much you have poured yourselves into the score. I am also so very thankful to George Frederick Handel who composed the theme on which I would write my variations!" De Wâldsang will now go forward to represent The Netherlands at the 2018 European Brass Band Championships, which will take place next May in Utrecht.

Earlier in the day a four band 1st Division was won by Oefeing en Uitspanning (Anno Appelo) with the stand-out performance of Jan Van der Roost's challenging *Stonehenge*. A fine sounding Excelsior Band (Herman Sibma) took top honours in a thoroughly engaging nine-band 2nd Division. A revised version of Stephen Bulla's recent *Frontier Vision* was the test-piece. It would grace any 2nd Section final!

On Friday evening five 3rd Section bands tackled a new piece by a young Thai composer Pimpanit Karoonyavanich. A former student of Jan Van de Roost, her new piece was *A Journey to the Bermuda Triangle*. It revealed much promise and an assured handling of the medium. Best of the bunch was Looft den Heer. The Championships began with a fascinating 4th Division. Because of the structure of Netherlands banding, lower sections contain players from bands in high divisions, so the 4th Section was very strong, with some fine idiomatic performances of Jan de Haan's new *Purcellian Fantasia* to enjoy. Immanuel Band, one of the country's many Christian brass bands, was outstanding - a clear winner for the judges and the receptive audience.

Pictures: Frank Vergoossen Media Producties



in Utrecht



Full results from Utrecht

Championship Section

Test-piece: *Handel in the Band* (Kenneth Downie)

Adjudicators: Garry Cutt, Florent Didier, Jan Van der Roost

1. De Wâldsang (Rieks van der Velde) 97
2. Brassband Schoonhoven A (Ivan Meylemans) 96
3. De Bazuin (Klaas van der Woude) 95
4. Provinciale Brassband Groningen (Richard Visser) 93
5. Soli Brass (Anne van den Berg) 92
6. Brassband Rijnmond (Erik van de Kolk) 89
7. Altena Brass (Anno Appelo) 87
8. ProClass Brassband Limburg (Renato Meli) 86
9. Amsterdam Brass (Pierre Volders) 85
10. Spijkerpakkenband (Erik Janssen) 84

1st Division

Test-piece: *Stonehenge* (Jan Van der Roost)

Adjudicators: Garry Cutt, Florent Didier, David Thornton

1. Oefening en Uitspanning (Anno Appelo) 94
2. Excelsior (Rieks van der Velde) 91
3. Kunst naar Kracht (Erik Kluin) 89
4. Brassband Breukelen (Syde van der Ploeg) 86

2nd Division

Test-piece: *Frontier Vision* (Stephen Bulla)

Adjudicators: John Doyle, Dirk Lautenbach, David Thornton

1. Excelsior (Herman Sibma) 92
2. Martini Brassband (Rieks van der Velde) 91
3. Constantijn Huygens (Richard Visser) 89
4. Brassband Amersfoort (Vincent Verhage) 88
5. Gloria Dei (Jaap Musschenga) 87
6. Brassband Schoonhoven B (Robbert Vos) 86
7. De Lofklank (Gerk Huisma) 84
8. De Bazuin B (Sietse Hamersma) 83
9. David (Wilbert Zwier) 81

3rd Division

test-piece: *A Journey to the Bermuda Triangle* (Pimpanit Karoonyavanich)

Adjudicators: John Doyle, Dirk Lautenbach, Jan van der Roost

1. Looft den Heer (Gijs Heusinkveld) 92
2. Gereformeerde Brassband (Jan Werkman) 91
3. Greidebrass (Marco Middelberg) 90
4. Blaast de Bazuin (Theun van Leijen) 89
5. Backum Brass (Vincent Verhage) 88

4th Division

Test-piece: *Purcellian Fantasia* (Jan de Haan)

Adjudicators: John Doyle, Dirk Lautenbach, David Thornton

1. Immanuel (Jan Werkman) 93
2. Ere Zij God (Gerben Huizinga) 90
3. Soli Deo Gloria (Sijtze van der Hoek) 88
4. Euphonia (Paulus de Jong) 86
5. Blaast de Bazuin (Paulus de Jong) 85
6. Felison Brass (Patricia Geertse) 84

What's all the palanga

Kenneth Crookston examines the issues surrounding the hosting of future European Brass Band Championships

Ever since the resignation of the 37th President of the United States, we have all become familiar with the suffix 'gate', which seemingly rears its head anytime a political or current affairs scandal reaches a certain point in the public consciousness. Yes, 'Tricky Dicky' (and we certainly don't mean our very own 'national treasure' Richard Evans in this instance!) had a lot to answer for - to which any English language scholar will attest - in relation to the Watergate scandal that brought his career to a sticky end in 1974. The less said these days about 'dodgy' American Presidents the better, although the ramblings on the Twitter account of POTUS No. 45 do manage to keep us royally entertained on a near-daily basis.

Thankfully, we don't get too many international incidents in our beloved world of brass bands, but the announcement in our October edition that the European Brass Band Association (EBBA) would be taking the 2019 European Brass Band Championships to Montreux in Switzerland instead of following through with the much-heralded Lithuanian bid to take the event to the Baltic resort of Palanga, has probably come as close to being assigned the aforementioned 'gate' extension as any incident in our small world for quite some time.

EBBA's communication to Lithuania (the brevity of which it may come to regret in hindsight), pinpointing acoustic and other noise-related difficulties as central issues in its rejection of the proposed venue, was met by a veritable broadside from Palanga Mayor Šarūnas Vaitkus. He went on to present evidence of technical expertise, favourable reports following performances by leading brass bands and expenditure of €180,000 on improvements to the venue's sound system, supposedly to meet EBBA's requirements. Mr Vaitkus also accused EBBA of '...letting down a partner without significant reason', singling out for criticism in their respective roles in the

process EBBA President Ulf Rosenberg and Music Commission Chairman Paul Hindmarsh. Some may think that, being an experienced politician, Šarūnas Vaitkus might have found a more conciliatory tone more likely to succeed, but this is clearly a subject that has stirred very high emotions on the Baltic coast.

As ever in these quickly evolving times, a social media storm soon ensued, with criticism aimed at specific EBBA members for their lack of engagement with the process, but also highlighting their willingness to take in free trips to Palanga with their own bands and even family members. Conspiracy theorists will no doubt be disappointed to hear that our investigations have concluded that this can all be filed under 'fake news', as the travel bills were indeed picked up by the appropriate people, while members of Stavanger and de Wâldsang bands even paid their own way to the 'test' events staged jointly by EBBA and Palanga. EBBA's ongoing management of Palanga's expectations, however, may have left something to be desired.

While opinion was obviously divided on the core issues surrounding Palanga's rejection, it is also fair to say that there was a lot of sympathy on all sides for the Lithuanian predicament. How could EBBA possibly be so callous as to disappoint an entire banding nation under such circumstances, just because the concert hall there isn't absolutely perfect for the job? In any case, the European Championships have been to other 'imperfect' venues in the past, while some of the halls that we use regularly in the UK are certainly no rivals for Vienna's Musikverein or the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. And another thing; this was to be the brass band culture's first major excursion into the former Eastern Bloc, where the warmest of welcomes is apparently on offer for bands and listeners alike, never mind the possibility of opening up new markets. Yes, there was plenty of force in the argument in favour of Palanga, the officials of which said they

were also in the process of consulting their legal experts on the validity of EBBA's decision.

As far as we understand, that legal argument does Palanga no favours, as the nature of the agreement with EBBA, approved at the organisation's AGM in 2015, was simply to enter into co-operation with a view to presenting the 2019 Championships. No actual contract has ever been signed. We understand, too, that Palanga has fallen behind on a number of pre-determined deadlines for the project. There are also wider issues, not that predominantly amateur musicians would be expected to travel, often at their own cost, from across Europe to a relatively inaccessible venue to perform in a contest hall in which electronic sound enhancement would be required to achieve something approaching the brass band sound as we recognise it.

Now, I'm all for any brass band expansion project, and if it were up to me we would be thriving in every country in the world, not just performing mainly in Europe, North America, Japan and Australasia. But it isn't, and can't, be up to the individual players in bands such as Cory, Fairey and Whitburn, plus the likes of Eikanger-Bjørsvik, Stavanger and De Wâldsang, to finance EBBA's expansion into eastern Europe. Just try to imagine the sales job that both EBBA and Palanga would have to pull off to persuade these national representatives to part with many thousands of hard-earned Euros to travel 2,000 miles or more to perform in a substandard venue. I'm not sure even Lord Sugar could pull that one off. In addition, having had substandard venues on the European Championship circuit in the past is no excuse for going to another one where we already know there are some fairly obvious banana skins.

Events took a twist on 11 October when EBBA sent a letter offering further co-operation on a possible future European Championships in Palanga, with specific reference to assistance in meeting

Over with Palanga?



acoustic requirements in the months and years ahead. This 'olive branch' was received favourably by the Lithuanians, who were no doubt buoyed by the decision made in Wales around the same time to withdraw from hosting the 2020 event in Cardiff.

It appears that little tangible progress has been made in the Principality since it pencilled the 2020 date in three years ago, so surely offering Palanga 12 months in addition to the time it originally had to get its arrangements in order would work for everyone. Wales, in the meantime, mindful that EBBA already has Malmo, Stavanger and Linz in mind for the years from 2021-23, appeared quite happy to shelve its hosting of Europe's biggest banding event until at least 2024, by which time it will be 32 years since it was last there.

Having arrived at what appeared to be a mutually beneficial arrangement, what could possibly go wrong from there? Well, fundamentally, only EBBA can decide where the European Championships are to be held in any particular year, not any single nation. Wales might have been the preference for 2020, but it isn't within its

gift to award the event to whomever it likes in the event of it pulling out. It's also worth remembering that, as it stands, nothing has changed regarding the facilities at Palanga.

Commenting on the matter to BB, Ulf Rosenberg said: "EBBA is a democratic body and the Executive Committee is elected to carry out the wishes of the various national delegates on behalf of the band movements. If it is their will that we should go on a missionary journey to spread the word of our wonderful brass band culture through having the European Championships in a new country, then we are happy to do so, as we have demonstrated previously on many occasions. It will also be necessary to spend bands' and members' money to support any such decision, and in these circumstances it is especially important that the quality of the hall is not compromised. We will continue to work with our partners in Palanga with the ambition to take the European Brass Band Championships there in the near future. There is much work to be done to achieve this goal, but as EBBA outlined in our letter of 11 October, we are committed

to offering assistance and expertise."

As part of EBBA's on-going support for Lithuanian brass bands, Music Commission Chair Paul Hindmarsh will be taking part in a composer study weekend in Palanga at the end of this month. He will be joining Philip Sparke and Tom Brevik to work directly with composers writing for brass band for the first time, hopefully also providing much in the way of positivity for the relationship between EBBA and Palanga.

There are those of us who think that that some root and branch surgery might serve the format of the European Championships well, while a re-evaluation by the entire European brass band community of EBBA's actual role could produce ongoing benefits across the continent in the decades ahead. These issues are for another day, though. For the time being it appears more of 'Palanga-palaver' than 'Palanga-gate' and once it everyone's emotions are back in check we'll no doubt hear before too long how the next few years are going to take shape for the European Championships. Who knows? One of these days we might even get around to discussing music!

WHY DON'T WE LISTEN

Tim Mutum tries to answer the question but is ultimately left baffled!

As autumn eases into winter, my banding thoughts turn to January and I start looking forward in earnest to the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) Brass Band Festival in Manchester. It's unique within the brass band culture and, I would suspect, somewhat unusual in the world of music making. A whole weekend from Friday night to Sunday night of concerts, recitals, talks and sometimes workshops with enough space between each event to have a relaxed coffee or tea or a meal and then, at the end of the day, reminisce in the bar over a drink - or two! For the RNCM it is part of a full diary of excellent musical activities that are in addition to the educational opportunities, and they have a team in place to make it all happen from promotion, to ticket sales and excellent stage presentation. For Artistic Director Paul Hindmarsh it is a labour of love and each year he somehow manages to conjure up a theme for the weekend and weave in new music, old favourites, anniversaries, solo items, visiting bands and guest conductors. I cannot think of anybody in brass banding who could do this as consistently well as Paul. It is an impressive achievement for the featured bands to create such high-quality performances so soon after the Christmas break, and even the best admit it is a real test of stamina. Speaking to Glyn Williams, the principal euphonium of Cory Band, after its epic concert which brought this year's weekend to a triumphant close, he remarked how tired his 'chops' were! There is an element of stamina involved for the audience too, especially those who, like me, go for the whole weekend. Seven concerts plus the recitals and everything else is a challenge, and I would be the first to admit that concentration wavers at times and, of course, few could say they enjoyed every single minute of every performance. I didn't, but two hours or so on a train from Manchester to London and then another hour and a bit to Ipswich gives you plenty of time to reflect. So, what stayed in my mind as memorable moments from this year's event? Richard Marshall excelled in Edward

Gregson's *Cornet Concerto*, the Vaughan Williams *Variations* re-confirmed its status as a brass band classic and the first performance of Philip Wilby's *The Pilgrim's Progress* with Tredegar and the broadcaster Tom Redmond (surely a real 'find' by Paul Hindmarsh) spring to mind; as does Howard Snell's *Gallery*, which we were able to enjoy many more times just a few weeks ago at the Royal Albert Hall, Kenneth Downie's *Handel in the Band*, Philip Wilby's *Paganini Variations* and Martin Ellerby's *Cabaret Concerto* with Benjamin Powell (piano) and Cory Band. A varied feast for sure and there was much more.

A sure sign of the success of this year's event was the overall size of audiences, up on last year, with three concerts - by Black Dyke, Grimethorpe Colliery and Cory - being effectively sold out. That has to be put into context, however, as that equates to around 500 souls, and with the balcony (holding another 200) not opened. Still, in the world of the brass band they are healthy audiences for serious music and the other concerts all attracted good crowds, but such numbers pose equally difficult questions. An encouraging proportion of the audience come from Scandinavia, Switzerland and Holland and a few from as far afield as the USA - this year they were there in abundance in the form of the James Madison University Brass Band. Yet, in the Greater Manchester area, with a population of 2.8 million people and brass bands still being, with Yorkshire, an accepted musical force, why is it that so few people with an active interest or involvement in brass bands actually want to hear 'our' music? Few probably means less than 400 people! Let me break this down a little. Firstly, as Managing Editor Kenny Crookston emphasised in an editorial earlier in the year, this weekend ought to be one that sees the 'movers and shakers' present for all, or at least part, of it. Now I cannot claim to know personally, or even by sight, all major contest promoters, adjudicators, 'big names' and retired personalities. Nor would I claim to spend time 'window

watching' to see who is there. However, I talk to enough people over the weekend, including the band media who are there, to form a view that many banding people of influence are never to be seen at the RNCM Brass Band Festival. One leading light, sadly no longer with us, didn't even see the Festival as a brass band event! At the major contests I do plenty of nodding and handshaking with people who I never see at Manchester.

Equally frustrating is that at the Yorkshire Region, the British Open, the National at the Royal Albert Hall and Brass in Concert there is an audience ranging from over 1,000 to upwards of 3,000. It seems then that, with the exception of the latter, many more people are happy to hear the same piece of music played 10, 15 or may be even 20 times than are interested in a two-hour, or less, concert of 'our' music. There are six concerts performed by arguably the best brass bands in the world, plus the truly excellent RNCM brass band. That to me is incredible. I cannot conceive of my friends and relatives who had an annual opportunity to hear live Neil Diamond, Steve Harley or Ollie Murs turning down the chance, nor a classical music enthusiast who loved Edward Elgar's music not wanting to miss the opportunity to hear a live performance by a major orchestra?

The opportunities to hear more serious repertoire in a concentrated format, pre-RNCM days, developed through the 1970s and '80s. Pioneering this was Elgar Howarth with the first Proms concert for brass bands, but he secured many other prestigious concerts for Grimethorpe Colliery as well, including at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall. Also hugely influential were Geoffrey Brand, Howard Snell and James Watson, whose bands appeared at the Cheltenham, Harrogate, Three Choirs and other prestigious festivals on a regular basis; sporadic would be the word to describe it now. And Michael Webber's South Bank Brass series in London, in the late 1980s, was well worth the travelling effort on a Sunday

N TO OUR OWN MUSIC?



evening to hear the likes of Desford Colliery and Grimethorpe Colliery play *Kenilworth*, *Comedy Overture*, *Tuba Concerto* (Horovitz) and *Blitz*. But these were geared towards music lovers and not just brass band aficionados.

Confirming this are the occasional conversations I have had over the years with those involved in two music festivals in Suffolk - the Bury St. Edmunds Festival and the Snape Proms - which suggest that people with a love of music generally enjoy a brass band concert with some significant elements of serious original music; say most of the first half. It's not very scientific, but also in talking to people at a band concert at a festival some comment that they select several concerts to attend to enrich their musical life. What does that tell you? It suggests to me that people with broad musical minds are prepared to embrace different experiences including brass bands. Generations ago brass bands attracted huge audiences at the seaside and in park bandstands to listen to light music of the times - marches, the air varie and slow melody solos and overtures with

the odd original thrown in. As Gordon Higginbottom, a former tenor horn player of CWS (Manchester), once related that on long tours of 13 weeks the band used to run through the test-pieces for upcoming contests. "I remember we played Erik Leidzen's *Sinfonietta* at Swansea, after only half an hour's rehearsal. Alex Mortimer announced it to the people of Swansea as a new number called *Muldoon's Picnic!*" he said. Bands have retained that style and mix of entertainment, playing in concert halls and parks, but now to ever-dwindling audiences who still enjoy hearing a brass band, but have no real love of any music specifically written for the genre other than marches, light concert works and solo items.

So, what conclusions are to be drawn from this? Well, it appears that, and for want of a better description, 'serious' music lovers will embrace a limited amount of quality brass band music, professionally presented, in the right environment. And secondly, those with a more passing interest in brass bands, and who are keen to be entertained, will attend a more standard concert. However, perplexingly,

it seems that the number of people involved in brass bands or passionate about them, not least the movers and shakers referred to above, who are actually genuinely interested in listening to music written for the genre, presented in a professional and concentrated way is very small - even minute.

Perhaps an adjudicator, or somebody who fits the category of 'contest attendee' living in the Manchester area who is quite happy to listen to a dozen or so performances of a mediocre piece of pastiche like *Reflections of Swan Lake*, deliberately composed in that style at the request of the British Open organisers, but is not interested in supporting any aspect of the RNCM Brass Band Festival would like to put forward their answer to the question? They might say that they want to be entertained, which they can be at a traditional brass band concert with its variety of music, but apart from Brass in Concert and other events of a similar nature can anybody truly say a brass band contest is entertainment? Well, I suppose it is regarded by many as a sport, which is a form of entertainment so perhaps that is the answer? I remain baffled!

Influencing bandi

By Sophie Hart



The concept of the entertainment contest is highly influential across all kinds of bands. It allows us to push ourselves to play music we wouldn't normally and explore different composers and genres. It also means that we get to play pieces of our choosing in a contest setting. As a university band, we take the opportunity, not only in our one contest of the year but in all of our concerts, to play pieces that fit in this category. These include works by younger composers such as Jonny Bates and alternative works by the likes of Simon Dobson, both of which featured in our set in UniBrass 2016. For us this is particularly important; we are always looking to move forward in our repertoire in order to keep our existing players and encourage new ones, both of which processes are most successful when we play exciting repertoire.

With Brass in Concert coming up very soon, we are eager to see what some of the top bands will come up with at Sage Gateshead. Last year, Cory's Roald Dahl set was particularly poignant as we, like many other generations, have been brought up on his stories and were interested by the concept of depicting his life musically.

With limited funds and rehearsal time it is very difficult for us to recreate such a set, but having the chance to hear Cory's set at UniBrass 2017 also gave us some inspiration to try to emulate its values. Having a 'themed' entertainment set is something that we always consider in not only our preparations for UniBrass but also for our concerts, and we have given film music concerts and 'Scottish' themed sets in the past. However, we have found that trying to build a set around an idea is counter-productive for us because we don't have the resources to access a completely original set unless we write it ourselves or organise commissions. Since we don't have easy access to either of these things (most of our composers are completing a degree and not enough money is available for a commission), we have to pick from existing repertoire. That said, we and many other university bands do play brand new music and arrangements, hence the 'Best Student Composition' prize at Unibrass.

Another difficulty in adhering to a theme is that it becomes very easy to get caught up in it and keeping to said theme restricts us with trying to find music

that fits. Therefore, we have now started choosing music that we like and, if we can, choose a theme to fit around that. We find that by doing this we get more out of the band members, because they actually enjoy what they are playing and therefore perform better on stage. Given that we only have one contest a year, it is fair for us to say that often we play music to entertain ourselves and our audiences, not two adjudicators. Therefore, when considering how 'entertaining' something is, we put most consideration into who will actually be at our concert, which for a university band is usually students and, more specifically, our friends who come to support us from other musical societies at the university. So, for us, the more innovative music we play the better because it also keeps our audience interested, plus they are not so keen on the traditional repertoire.

Back in 2014, Leyland Band took its 'Blue' set to Brass in Concert and during the following year I was lucky enough to play in a joint concert with Leyland and the Northampton County Youth Brass Band. Leyland performed this set on the day and it has undoubtedly influenced

ing entertainment



some of my perceptions of a good entertainment programme. Although it didn't win that year, it was innovative and certainly entertaining. It also helped me understand that a programme doesn't have to fit a formula, and that good sets don't have to have a march, a slow piece and an impressive sounding finale. In terms of current influences on our repertoire choices, it is the local top-level bands that have the biggest effect. Woodfalls, in particular, has become a big influence in what we play and, indeed, how we approach our entertainment sets. Not only do we get to see the band go to the major contests, but we are also fortunate enough to work with some of its principal players on our UniBrass set and general performance technique.

When considering the impact of top level bands, we also have to consider their conductors. Woodfalls is currently led by Dr. Robert Childs, who is without question one of the most successful brass band conductors of recent times. It would therefore be foolish of us not to observe how he chooses sets and prepares the band. This is where getting contact with the members of the band has been vital to

our development as a group, because they are able to experience first-hand what it is like to be led by him and what is expected of them at the very highest level. If we again go back to 2014, when Dr Childs led Grimethorpe to Brass in Concert success, there was a huge difference between their set and that of Leyland, and one was obviously preferred to the other by the adjudicators. As a young and developing band we become much more aware of what the adjudicator wants - Childs seemed to be more traditional in his approach that year, but perhaps this was because it was the centenary of the beginning of World War I. It is this attention to current affairs that also influences what we do.

When it comes to the battle between entertainment and challenging music, the university brass band seems to struggle greatly. Many of our players, although I cannot speak for other universities, are only in this band so do not have much experience of test-pieces and therefore don't like the idea of them. Many test-pieces, though, can be as entertaining as a contest set and so we want to introduce them to such works without scaring them

off. This is where the influence of top-level bands doesn't help us so much, but that of local bands does. This term we are playing Philip Sparke's *The Saga of Haakon the Good*, a piece that our conductor played with a local band and felt would push Southampton University forwards in a difficult but fun and thematic way. In this sense, entertainment does not always stem from what we hear of top level bands, but what we know we enjoy playing ourselves. It is much easier to convey enjoyment when it is actually there!

I ought to mention that, at UniBrass 2016, we were fortunate enough to play Adam D.J. Taylor's *Mad March Hare's March and the Well Crazy Tea Party*, which was taken from Wingates' Brass in Concert set in 2015, so it is an exaggeration to say that we only take ideas from such contests, as we do enjoy the challenge that these pieces actually provide. With all of this in mind I look forward to seeing what 19 November produces in terms of the works and ideas. Brass in Concert has influenced us and many other university bands, so have a look out at UniBrass next February and see what makes a second appearance.



COMING SOON...

ENTERTAINING THE BANDING PUBLIC SINCE



BB Managing Editor and Brass in Concert Board member Kenneth Crookston examines the fare on offer at the forthcoming event at Sage Gateshead

It may have been at the heart of the brass band entertainment contest genre for 40 years, but the Brass in Concert Festival's bright lights are showing no signs of dimming any time soon. It has come a long way from the Darlington factory canteen (glamorously rebranded then as the Beehive Ballroom) that hosted the event in its first six years, but the founders of the inaugural event in 1977 - which was part of celebrations to mark HM The Queen's silver jubilee - could never have imagined that it would have ended up virtually selling out a state-of-the-art concert venue with listeners and visiting bands flying in from all over the banding world. It hasn't always been the easiest of journeys, of course, with various challenges - from loss of support from the original sponsor (Rothmans), changes of venue and the myriad issues that arise when trying to balance the requirements of the leading bands that have taken part over the years - all adding to the organisers' considerable workload and cost. When the contest moved to Darlington's Dolphin Centre in 1983, a move supported by the

Trade Unions Congress and the Musicians Union, any benefits that the facility presented were probably outweighed by the poor acoustics. Spennymoor Leisure Centre was better in that regard, but not perhaps well enough appointed to continue to attract the very best bands on a regular basis. There were some thrilling performances there though, and no brass band event anywhere could have claimed to have done more for the advancement of popular brass band repertoire than Brass in Concert during its Spennymoor years. Sage Gateshead has been the event's home since 2005 and, in the ensuing years, it has developed into much more than a mere band contest. Support from World of Brass, manifested in an annual highlights DVD, also saw the addition of the Saturday gala concert, youth performances, workshops and taster sessions, which have all added considerably to the unique flavour of the weekend. Furthermore, many of the leading competitors that had decided that the Spennymoor event wasn't a leading priority for them soon started to return and by the end of the 'naughties', Brass in Concert had undoubtedly cemented its position at the head of the brass band entertainment genre worldwide.

The passing, in 2011, of Dr. Roy Newsome, Musical Advisor since Brass in Concert's inception, indirectly prompted discussions about the future artistic direction of the Championship, leading to the foundation of an advisory group formed from various

strands of banding. The resulting plan saw a new scoring system designed to iron out some of the inconsistencies that have caused some 'raised eyebrows' in entertainment contest adjudication from time-to-time, as well as renewed focus in attracting the best possible line-up of bands and adjudicators from around the world to the event.

That focus was at the centre of a veritable storm in 2015, when three regular competitors withdrew in protest at arrangements made to accommodate Cory and Grimethorpe Colliery bands following their previous evening's performances at the Royal Albert Hall. The event went ahead regardless, albeit perceived by some on social media as 'Brass in Concert Lite'. The 2016 event was rejuvenated by the appearance of bands from The Netherlands, Norway and USA, but negative comments this time were more related to the type and quality of the 'entertainment' on show rather than the line-up.

Ever keen to keep the product fresh, the Brass in Concert organising team took an opportunity in February this year to meet with representatives of regular competitors to reinforce the importance of entertaining the audience at the Sage. "This is an event with wide appeal, both to regulars at band events and the general public," said Brass in Concert Chairman John Woods, continuing, "While we do not wish to be prescriptive in what the bands present - indeed, freedom of artistic



restriction is a central pillar of our mission statement - we do think that it is vital that the audience gets the musical satisfaction that it craves from this event. It is perhaps the case that some bands have gone too far in their efforts to educate or make certain statements through their themed programmes, but the ones that have been most successful have, thankfully, still managed to put a smile on the audience's faces. We hope that the best brass bands in the world will continue to do so for many years."

The Brass in Concert organising team's determination to provide a higher level of entertainment has been reinforced this year with the addition of a new audience prize. This will be decided via a secure smartphone process, details of which will be provided at the event. John Woods continued: "We are delighted to announce that the Brass in Concert audience will be able to play a tangible role in the outcome of our event for the very first time. The Audience Award will see a new trophy, donated by former Brass in Concert Chairman Trevor Caffull, and £1,000 going to the band that the audience members decide gives them most enjoyment on the day. Full instructions on how to take part in this, as well as other social media activities and a day-long trivia quiz will be unveiled at Sage Gateshead, while we will have a helpdesk there for the duration of

the event to help get anyone less familiar with the inner workings of a smartphone to make the right connections. We are sure that this will become an important addition to the Brass in Concert weekend and we look forward to as many of our audience members as possible getting involved."

So, what else is on the agenda at the Sage on the weekend of 18-19 November? It all begins at 8.15am on the Saturday, when the doors open for the members of the Workshop Band to register before they spend the rest of the morning working with Philip Harper and leading members of Cory Band prior to their performance on the Concourse at 2.30pm. A limited number of spaces are still available for this, while this year's Elementary group is already over 120 strong!

Just before that at 1.30pm we will have heard from the members of the fabulous Wardle Academy Band and conductor Lee Rigg, winners of this year's Action Medical Research Youth Entertainment Championships in Blackpool.

The popular Taster Sessions, presented in association with Yamaha, will take place from 10.30am to 1.15pm, offering anyone wishing to blow a brass instrument for the very first time with the chance to do so. Yamaha is also to present a new feature at Brass in Concert, with a free marimba masterclass from percussion virtuoso Le

Yu in the Northern Rock Foundation Hall. Entry to this is free but early arrival is recommended as space is limited.

One of the most anticipated events at the Sage this year is the performance of European Champion Eikanger-Bjørsvik Musikklag and conductor Reid Gilje on the Concourse at 5.00pm, a precursor to Saturday evening's big event when Cory Band and the popular male vocal group Only Men Aloud present Brass and Voices @ the Movies at 7.00pm. John Woods commented: "The Saturday programme is the most vibrant we have ever presented and we are very excited about the large number of young players, especially from the north east, who have already signed up for the workshops. The Concourse concert line-up is also outstanding this year. It isn't everyday that anyone gets the chance to hear the European Brass Band Champion playing free of charge, while the groundbreaking event with Cory and Only Men Aloud promises to be an absolute cracker!"

Less than 12 hours after Only Men Aloud sing their last note along with Cory, at 9.00am on Sunday, the one and only Frank Renton will introduce the first of 12 bands in the 2017 Brass in Concert Championship. The event has seen some great line-ups during its 40 years, but this year's is arguably the strongest than any entertainment contest has ever boasted.



The full draw is:

1. **Flowers (David Childs)**
2. **Paris Brass Band (Florent Didier)**
3. **Carlton Main Frickley Colliery (Erik Janssen)**
4. **Virtuosi GUS (Adam Cooke)**
5. **Fountain City (Dr. Joseph Parisi)**
6. **Eikanger-Bjørsvik Musikklag (Reid Gilje)**
7. **Cory (Philip Harper) (defending champion)**
8. **Brighouse and Rastrick (Dr. David Thornton)**
9. **Grimethorpe Colliery (Capt. Sam Hairsine)**
10. **Leyland (Thomas Wyss)**
11. **Foden's (Dr. Robert Childs)**
12. **Tredegar (Ian Porthouse)**

Sitting in judgement will be:

Quality of Performance: Jan Van der Roost (Belgium) and Lito Fontana (Italy)
Programme Content: Nick Grace
Entertainment and Presentation: Richard Evans and Peter Francomb
Soloists and Individual Awards: Ian Bousfield

In 2016, Cory carried all before it on its way to a 16-point victory, but could this year be a much closer affair? Well, we will know around 7.00pm on Sunday evening when Frank Renton reveals the identity of the 2017 Brass in Concert champion.

BB will be there to bring the latest news via the website and on our Twitter feed @bb1887. We will also have a special report in our December edition so make sure you order a copy at www.britishbandsman.com or by ringing +44 (0)1506 882985.

The Brass in Concert Festival is presented in association with Yamaha, Banks Group and British Bandsman, with additional funding from Arts Council England's Grants for the Arts scheme, the Sir James Knott Trust, the Joicey Trust, the Barber Foundation, FESA and the William Leech Charity. A limited number of tickets for World of Brass in Concert on Saturday 18 November, featuring Brass and Voices at the Movies with Cory Band and Only Men Aloud (priced £27.00, £18.00 and £10.00) and the Brass in Concert Championship on Sunday 19 November (£30.00, £22.00 and £12.00), are available at www.sagegateshead.com or from the Ticket Office on 0191 443 4661.

Welsh wizards on winning form at Wychavon

Kenneth Crookston reports.

Pictures: David Morris

There was a near-full house and a packed line-up of bands at the Wychavon Festival of Brass (WFB), held at De Montford School in Evesham on Saturday 28 October. With the added bonus of a place at the 2018 British Open Spring Festival up for grabs in the Championship Section, the day-long event saw 18 bands take part in the school's Main Hall, with a total of 56 performances taking place across the five sections.

This was a first visit to Wychavon for this listener, and a glance at the roll of honour in the event programme confirmed that it is an event that has attracted a good line-up of top-line bands over the years, with Tredegar, Flowers and Wingates all on the list of former champions. There were a few years when the event lost some of its lustre, with a drop in the number of entries and financial worries contributing to doubts about its long-term future. With a dedicated organising team led by the indefatigable Dr. Val Trim, however, fortunes have been reversed and the event is both at full capacity and brimming with a vibrant atmosphere both in the contest halls and the public areas for the duration of the event. Having competitors travelling from as far apart as Cornwall and central Scotland now tells its own story.

A truly unique feature of the event this year was the introduction of a set of medals to be awarded to the members of the best baritone sections in all five contests. This might not seem unusual in itself, but with three baritone players on the organising committee (Val Trim, Kevin Whittaker and Ollie Wilson), it seems appropriate to have named the medals in their honour, hence the WFB VKO Medal! The 18 bands in the top division provided a vibrant and varied day of music-making, but each of them had been given advance warning that the acoustic in the main hall would be 'lively'. Many heeded the advice to 'keep the noise down', but adjudicator Bob Childs remarked at the results ceremony that a number of bands, some

of which would have been considered among the favourites, had failed to take sufficient account of the challenging acoustic. Indeed, some over-enthusiastic percussion sections managed to obliterate much of the good work on show, while the usual problems of intonation and loose ensemble had also scuppered the chances of quite a few.

One band that gave an incident free performance (at least from a musical point-of-view - its multimedia presentation suffered from technical problems, however) was Llwydcoed under Chris Turner. The Welsh band's winning programme began with the effervescent *Ride* (Samuel Hazo), continuing with *I'll Walk With God* (Brodsky - euphonium soloist: Darren Morris), *The Melody Shop* (Karl King), *Family Portraits* from *A Lowry Sketchbook* (Philip Wilby) and, finally, *One Small Step* (Andrew Duncan). Llwydcoed has already qualified for the 2018 Spring Festival, but it will be joined there by fellow Welsh outfit Ebbw Valley Brass, which took a well-deserved runner-up spot under Gareth Ritter. Medway (Melvin White) completed the top section podium with an enjoyable programme, the highlight of which was the impressive horn solo, *Finale* from Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, played by Tim de Maeseneer, who was duly awarded the prize for best soloist.

While we have undoubtedly experienced much livelier on our travels, the acoustics in the main hall were indeed challenging, but many of the competing bands compounded the issue by taking a rather 'enthusiastic' approach to sound production. Quite a number also opted for jazz/swing openers, but only the very best managed to capture a style appropriate to this type of music. Similarly, with conductors introducing their own programmes, some took to it like a moth to the flame and really enhanced their bands' presentations. Some others,

though, may have learned the hard way that meticulous preparation really is the key to the success of such an operation. In Section 1, Simon Gresswell's Enderby Band was awarded the top prize by adjudicator Tom Davoren, having given an impressive presentation of a programme comprising *London Town*, *The Girl from Ipanema*, *Smile* (trombone soloist: Andy Gray), *Ocean 3: Karma Naand* and *An American Tale*, taking the title ahead of last year's overall winner Eccles Borough. There was success for Haydock Band and Mark Quinn in the 2nd Section, where David Hirst gave the band the title for its performance of *Don't Rain on My Parade*, *I've Gotta Be Me*, *Tell Me It's Not True*, *Façade* and *This is the Moment*. Anne Crookston officiated in sections 3 and 4, where Wem Jubilee and Roger Thorne impressed with its Christmas-themed programme comprising *The Huron Carol*, *Jingle Bell Fantasy*, *Good King Wenceslas*, *Still, Still Still* and *Christmas Eve Sarajevo*. Despite finishing second to Rode Hall in the 4th Section, Wem managed to capture the Section 3 crown on a day when a good number of bands took the opportunity to compete in their own section and the one above. For Rode Hall, a varied programme including *Prismatic Light*, *Under the Boardwalk*, *Libertango*, *Lisa Lân* and *Caravan* proved to be the winning formula, completing the line-up of Wychavon champions on a long day that provided many musical highlights.

There was deep shock for everyone involved in the event when the sudden death was announced of the popular player, conductor, administrator and photographer David Morris on the Sunday following the Wychavon Festival, at the age of 54. Everyone at BB adds our sincere condolences to those already voiced in the banding press and on social media. The pictures on these pages are among the last that David took and we print them in tribute to a dedicated brass musician whose loss will be felt deeply by all who knew him.

Full results from Wychavon**Championship Section****Adjudicator: Dr. Robert Childs**

1. Llwydcoed (Chris Turner) 192
 2. Ebbw Valley Brass (Gareth Ritter) 190*
 3. Medway (Melvin White) 189
 4. City of Cardiff (Melingriffith) (Dewi Griffiths)
 5. Aveley and Newham (Alan Duguid)
 6. Lanner and District (Andrew Berryman)
 7. Eccles Borough (Mareika Gray)
 8. Enderby (Simon Gresswell)
 9. Foresters Brass (John Davis)
 10. Jackfield (Simon Platford)
 11. Yorkshire Imperial DUT (Martin Heartfield)
 12. Johnstone Silver (Martyn Ramsay)
 - 13= Hatfield (Stan Lippeatt)
 - 13= Langley (Cliff Parker)
 15. Bedworth (David Maplestone)
 16. BTM (Jeff Hutchinson)
 17. Brunel Brass (Paul Collis-Smith)
 18. Sandhurst Silver (Paul McLaughlin)
- * denotes invitation to 2018 British Open Spring Festival

Entertainment Prize: Enderby

Best Soloist:

Tim de Maeseneer, horn, Medway

Best Baritones: Ebbw Valley Brass

Best Percussion: Aveley and Newham

1st Section**Adjudicator: Tom Davoren**

1. Enderby (Simon Gresswell) 191
 2. Eccles Borough (Mareika Gray) 190
 3. Johnstone Silver (Martyn Ramsay) 189
 4. Ebbw Valley Brass (Gareth Ritter)
 5. BTM (Jeff Hutchinson)
 6. Langley (Cliff Parker)
 7. Gresley Colliery (Craig Stevens)
 8. Crewe Brass (Jamie Meredith)
 9. Crofton Silver (Dean Jones)
 10. Foresters Brass (John Davis)
 11. Oddfellows Brass (Rob Boulter)
 12. Sandhurst Silver (Paul McLaughlin)
- Entertainment Prize: Enderby
- Best Soloist: Peter McDonagh, euphonium, Eccles Borough
- Best Baritones: Langley
- Best Percussion: Sandhurst Silver

2nd Section**Adjudicator: David Hirst**

1. Haydock Band (Mark Quinn) 190
 2. Milton Keynes Brass (Jonathan Mott) 189
 3. Crofton Silver (Dean Jones) 187
 4. Weston Brass (Bryn James)
 5. Blaenavon Town (David Langley)
 6. Ammanford Town (Glyn Jones)
 7. Stourport-on-Severn (Oliver Wilson)
 8. Crewe Brass (Jamie Meredith)
 9. Avonbank (Richard Dickens)
 10. Downton Brass (Paul Williams)
- Entertainment Prize: Milton Keynes Brass
- Best Soloist: Rob Perham, flugel, Weston Brass
- Best Baritones: Milton Keynes Brass
- Best Percussion: Weston Brass

3rd Section**Adjudicator: Anne Crookston**

1. Wem Jubilee (Roger Thorne) 192
 2. Stourport-on-Severn (Oliver Wilson) 191
 3. Hawk Green (Neil Hewson) 190
 4. Arrow Valley (Andrew Culshaw)
 5. Ynyshir (Gary Davies)
 6. Porthywaen Silver (Dougie Graham)
 7. Cinderford (Chris Howley)
 8. Jubilee Brass (Oxford) (Clifford Sandler)
 9. Crosskeys Silver (Mike Davies)
 10. Oakdale Silver (Kerry Bowden)
- Entertainment Prize: Hawk Green
- Best Soloist: John Roberts, euphonium, Wem Jubilee
- Best Baritones: Ynyshir
- Youngest player: Noah Davies (7) Ynyshir
- Dave Hodgetts Memorial Trophy: Jack Arrowsmith, drum kit, Porthywaen Silver

4th Section**Adjudicator: Anne Crookston**

1. Rode Hall Silver (Nigel Butler) 188
 2. Wem Jubilee (Roger Thorne) 187
 3. Ledbury Community Brass (Colin Herbert) 186
 4. Porthywaen Silver (Dougie Graham)
 5. City of Wolverhampton (George Draycott)
 6. Oakdale Silver (Kerry Bowden)
- Entertainment Prize: Rode Hall Silver
- Best Soloist: Tom Thorne, xylophone, Wem Jubilee
- Best Baritones: Wem Jubilee
- Best Percussion: Rod



Section 4 winner Rode Hall Silver



More success for Haydock

1st Section victory for Enderby and Simon Gresswell



Llwydcoed takes the top title back to Wales



Music for All

Music Education - Social Justice, Well-Being and Identity

Roy Terry examines some of the burning issues facing music education in the UK today

The Musical Gospel according to Sir James MacMillan

By happy coincidence or good cross-channel planning on the BBC, Sir James MacMillan could be heard on successive days, first on *Music Matters* on Radio 3 and then on *Desert Island Discs* on Radio 4. In interviews with Tom Service and Kirsty Young, Sir James spoke in detail about his early musical experiences in the mining community of Cumnock and Dalmellington Band, and how at school he sang Palestrina and listened to Bach. He spoke of the debt he owed to his grandfather who gave him his first cornet. These early musical experiences convinced him of the place of classical music in the contemporary world - that it is not some kind extraneous frippery - and of the urgent need not to allow class barriers to shut people out.

In response to Kirsty Young's questioning on *Desert Island Discs*, Sir James was quick to acknowledge in the clearest possible terms the debt he owes to brass banding. A number of his choices were of music that had a formative effect on the development of his own musical identity. Alongside Gregorian Chant this also included the sound of classic brass band hymn tune playing - the hymn tune *Repton* played by Kettering SA Band. *Music Matters* is a topical programme, so Sir James was also interviewed about his Cumnock Tryst Festival which was taking place that weekend. The festival included a high-profile concert by the Dalmellington Band which, with a brass quintet from The Wallace Collection, gave the première of a work by the young New Cumnock composer Jay Capperault. The concert was conducted by Martyn Brabbins, recently appointed Music Director of English National Opera, who like Sir James and John Wallace began his music-making in the local brass band - in his case on trombone with Towcester Studio Band.

The Music Education Council (MEC) is currently examining the concept of access to music education as a matter of social justice. Sir James Macmillan's Dalmellington story provides a clear exemplar of the importance of an inclusive approach to music education. Many members of the brass band community working in education will have a stake in MEC, since it brings together representatives of organisations such as the Musicians Union, the Incorporated Society of Musicians, Music Mark, the Associated Board and Trinity College, as well as the Royal Scottish Conservatoire and the Royal Northern College. A strength of MEC is that all members have a say in matters of policy, and it brings together members from across the UK.

MEC is the UK national affiliate organisation for the International Society for Music Education, whose last international conference was held in Glasgow in July 2016. Its conferences are held on a bi-annual basis rotating between a European venue and a venue on another continent. Following each conference the host country organisation undertakes a legacy project to take forward the conference theme. In Glasgow, the conference theme was Music Education - social justice, well-being and identity. A working group, of which I am a member, is developing thinking on these issues and to open up involvement in this work a series of open seminars is taking place. The next seminar will be held in London on 27 November.

Social Justice

Sir James MacMillan's grandfather clearly saw involvement in music-making as an essential aspect of living a good life, and like the late Hugh Johnstone, the legendary tutor and conductor of Dalmellington Band, he clearly believed that access should be open to all,

regardless of background.

That inclusive spirit of 'music for all' inspired the creation of local music services during the post-war period, based on the firm principle that access to instrumental teaching should be provided free of charge. Now that tuition has to be paid for by parents, we have seen a widening inequality gap, a gap exacerbated by the fact that the level of music provision in each school is now a matter solely for each individual head teacher to decide.

Towards the end of his Radio 3 interview, Sir James voiced his dismay at what he judges to be the decline of music education in schools, stating quite unequivocally that the whole system is disintegrating.

The state of music in school was, in fact, the focus of the final section of that same edition of *Music Matters*. Kieran O'Donnell, who runs the Birmingham Music Hub, explained how teachers are having to do more and more in less and less time, and how the increased participation of young people at 'beginner' stage via First Access is not translating into an increased participation at more advanced levels. In the words of Lincoln Abbotts of the Associated Board, 'It is easy to *have a go* at learning to play, but not so easy to *make a go* of playing an instrument.'

Diane Widdison of the Musicians' Union said that their members are reporting that they are increasingly working 'on the edge' because of the impact of the EBacc - a list of approved subjects which omits music and the arts the results in which will determine a school's place in the league tables. This led to a 28% fall in the year 2016-17 in the number of GCSE entries for creative subjects - a loss of around 181,000 students. A further survey suggested that music is now no longer a compulsory subject in one in three secondary schools. And music continues to be squeezed out of the primary school curriculum by pressure for ever-improving

SATs results. Diane identified the loss of the power of local authorities to hold schools to account as a root cause of present problems: with each school now free to set its own priorities, the 'joined-up' partnership approach spelt out in the National Plan for Music is severely undermined.

There is widespread concern that, in monitoring the work of Music Education Hubs, Arts Council England (ACE) focuses too much on quantitative measures rather than on quality. ACE does not appear to collect data on the range of fees being charged, or how many young people from disadvantaged families are receiving free tuition.

Without adequate data, it is impossible to get a clear view of the real extent to which access is unequal. The inequality gap appears widest when comparing the differing provision in state and independent schools. We now have an inversion of what would seem to be natural justice: in many areas, the only pupils receiving free or subsidised instrumental lessons are those benefitting from bursaries in independent schools.

Members of the social justice working group represent a range of perspectives, so while some of us agree with the assessment of a leading music education researcher that music in schools, particularly in England, faces 'an existential threat', not everyone agrees. Among issues emerging from our work so far are:

The nature of the music curriculum

Over recent decades the school music curriculum has moved along a continuum from a classical-centred curriculum at one end via a central period where there was a strong movement towards a 'broad and balanced' curriculum through to the opposite end of the continuum in the present day where the curriculum is more often pop and rock orientated and where classical music is increasingly marginalised.

There are, however, tensions emerging in the working group since some members still consider the teaching of western classical music to dominate, seeing the teaching of western classical music is essentially an oppressive imposition. This is in marked contrast to Sir James MacMillan's school experience, where he

found exposure to the music of Palestrina and Bach liberating.

Alongside this is the view of some that there should be no set curriculum: that young people should be free to choose the kind of music they study. This view depends heavily on the archetype of the teenager making up their own music in their own bedroom or garage. This *laissez-faire* approach could be seen to imply that an uninformed choice is better than an informed choice. Furthermore, it seriously undermines music's claim to a place in the school curriculum: if what happens in garages is seen as equivalent or even superior to what happens in schools, then the way is open for evicting music from formal education. In fact, we already have government ministers stating that music can be adequately delivered through out-of-school activities.

Individual music identity

Some of our discussion has centred around the appropriateness or otherwise of teaching young people to play western musical instruments. There are some who argue that to teach these instruments to young people regardless of their ethnic background in a multi-cultural society is in some way oppressive, undermining their identity. At its most extreme form such a position labels this as 'cultural imperialism'.

The contrary view asserts that instruments of themselves are culturally neutral: once you have learned to play the trumpet you are free to play music in any genre. Acquiring basic trumpet technique is as appropriate to the jazz musician as to the principal of the London Symphony Orchestra.

Evidence internationally, for example from programmes based on the Venezuela *El Sistema* programme, refuses to condone such a stance. From my own experience alone, the Congolese playing in the Boulogne-Billancourt Band in Paris, in the 52 brass bands in Kinshasa, or in the Orchestre Symphonique Kimbanguiste de Kinshasa (which has visited London and which recently partnered with the Monaco Philharmonic) would give short shrift to the view they are the victims of western cultural imperialism. Jazz musicians like trumpeter Prince Lengoasa from a Johannesburg township who was hailed as a worthy successor to Miles Davis when he came to play at Ronnie



Scott's was not betraying his African roots.

Brass for Africa similarly sets out to transform the lives of disadvantaged children and young people in Uganda and Liberia. We need seriously to consider whether, by default, we are saying that it's perfectly legitimate to teach African children in Africa to play in a brass band, but not to do the same for children of African or other ethnic minority background in the UK.

Given the neglect or even bias against brass bands in some areas, there is a need for brass banding's representative national and regional bodies to advocate strongly with Music Education Hub leaders for the value of having a strong brass band element in their offer. Cross-cultural fusion projects have their place, but can often be little more than 'tick box' exercises. In the long-term, we need to do more to put the positive case that banding can be highly beneficial for young people, whatever their background. This requires a long-term approach and the besetting sin of politicians in recent decades has been to think in terms of the short-term funding, quick fixes, and bright ideas. In addressing these issues, it is relevant to consider the work of the philosopher John Rawls, who in his book *A Theory of Justice*, proposed that in judging the justice of any public policy we should look at its impact on the least advantaged in society. Taking that perspective should help us to identify ways of achieving an education system where 'music for all' is more than a pious hope.

Leading orchestral composer and conductor Kenneth Young signs with Experianza Music

Leading New Zealand orchestral composer and conductor Kenneth Young will be publishing his entire catalogue of brass band works through Experianza Music.

David Chaulk, Experianza Music Founder and Managing Director, said to British Bandsman: "I can't tell you how thrilled we are to sign someone of the calibre of Kenneth Young. I've been such a fan of his music for years and I'm delighted to have the chance to expose it to band lovers throughout the world. Everyone's in for an enormous treat."

Kenneth Young, when asked why he chose Experianza Music, said "I've known David for a long time and he's always impressed me as being fully committed to everything he does. I'm also thrilled to not be lost in a stable of hundreds of composers. I'm really excited by the potential here."

Initially there will be nine works for band, including works commissioned for the National Band of New Zealand and euphonium virtuoso Riki McDonnell. There's the potential for more, including chamber works, a concerto for brass band and orchestra and a euphonium concerto.

Kenneth Young started his musical life playing euphonium in Christchurch's Woolston Brass. As his orchestral career flourished - first as principal tuba of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and then as one of the Southern Hemisphere's leading orchestral conductors and composers - Kenneth never strayed far from his brass band roots. He has been Musical Director of the National Youth Brass Band of New Zealand and is a regular chief adjudicator at national contests. Recently, he led Wellington Brass to victory on the contest stage and he's very keen to expand on his band

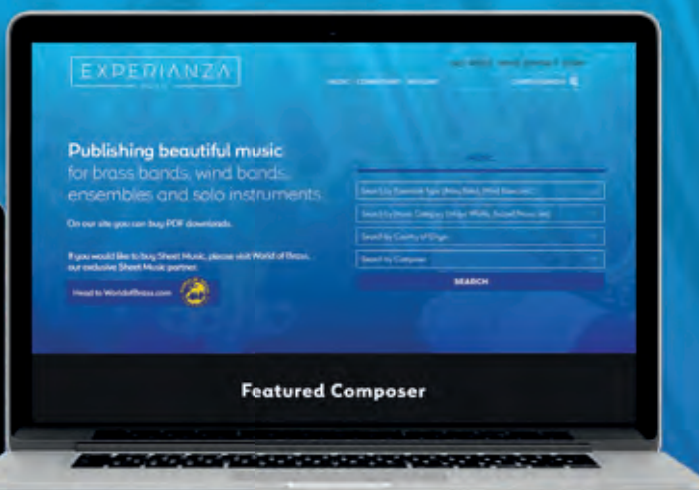


conducting and writing. He told BB: "I'd love the chance to conduct a great band in a major British or European contest. It's definitely part of my musical bucket list!"

After hearing several of the works available through Experianza Music and World of Brass, we can confidently predict that band aficionados will much the better for their exposure to this wonderfully elegant composer who, finally, will get the platform, for his band music, that it so richly deserves.

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A win worth the wait

Paul Hindmarsh is joined by composer Howard Snell to review the performances of *Gallery* and to mark a fine victory by Brighouse and Rastrick Band.

Pictures: John Stirzaker

The lasting memory for many attending the National Championship Finals of 2017, including this writer, will be the musical quality of the test-pieces selected by the Kapitol Music Panel. The virtues of expressive lyricism, musical colour and character were evident in all five section finals, but particularly in the Championship Section Final at the Royal Albert Hall on 14 October. It was a long day, with a substantial *batterie* of percussion and assorted band layouts to be re-set between performances, but it was a compelling listen from start to finish, thanks to a quality test-piece and the evident care with which all 20 bands had prepared their performances. Although it might not sound hard to the uninitiated ear, *Gallery* is formidably difficult to pull off. Howard Snell works through the instruments. He knows to the last detail what each 'voice' in the band is capable of achieving, stemming from his 'insider' knowledge of the 20th century symphonic repertoire in particular - the music he has re-imagined on the brass band so effectively across the decades. So, in *Gallery* we are delighted by sounds inspired by the Gallic grace and refinement of Ravel in *Skater's Waltz*, the precision and rhythm of Stravinsky, Bernstein and the jazz band in the fast movements, the darker energy of Shostakovich and even Wilfred Heaton in the movement that was omitted, and from the band tradition, and the nostalgia of hymn tunes, transformed into a poignant *Love Story*. With his unrivalled 'colourist' skills, brass and percussion instruments become Howard's 'paints' and the conductor's baton becomes the brush, lifting images, emotions and characters off the page. The conductor's job in *Gallery* was more than just fixing the notes and mastering the 'knitting'. Howard was hoping for a winning performance that would find the colours and characterisation defining each piece in the suite, and in the performance by band number 20, Brighouse and Rastrick, conducted by David King, he and his colleagues in the



adjudicator's box - Phillip McCann and Luc Vertommen - found the approach that got most out of this musical picture gallery: "We were united on that," Howard comments, "because David King found such a strong character for each piece. The soprano cornet opening was very calm, which is a very good sign for Dominic Longhurst's future, and when the solo cornet started at the beginning of *Skater's Waltz* there was just that little flexibility in it, a nod towards the instruction 'prettily'. That was the first time I'd heard it shaped nicely and Kathleen Gaspoz seemed to get into the spirit of the music in the way I'd imagined it." From my vantage point, the blend of the solo cornet lines and the generous, heart-warming approach to *Love Story* was also unrivalled on the day. The shaping of the middle section was tenderly expressive. David King's deft reading revelled in the range of colours and styles of a work he admires for its creative imagination and craftsmanship: "There can be no greater sense of musical satisfaction than when the composer considers your account of their music as being *right*," Professor King remarked. "*Gallery* encapsulates a musical journey by a distinguished musician and maestro whose intellect and musical

integrity remain a gift to the brass band community."

Under Ian Porthouse, Tredegar Town Band trod a very different path through the Snell exhibition. This Welsh party took a direct and determined route round the *Gallery*. There were relatively few tender, equivocal steps. There wasn't much time to linger 'in the moment' of *Love Story* or to appreciate the miraculous *Landscape* of The Trossachs from the top of Ben Lomond. The clipped chords here sounded more like a route march, but the definition of detail and forthright style in *Street Market* and particularly *Cut Outs* was compelling and impressive enough for a unanimous second place. During the interval, conversations revolved round the performance just delivered by Cory and Philip Harper. The band sounded fabulous, easily the best we'd heard, but how would the judges react to the slips and bumps along the way, especially the fragility of the opening? "Cory, as I found out afterwards, was superlative at the backend of the piece," said Howard, "once they'd recovered from the initial trauma. Their *Cut Outs* was the best of the day I thought. It bowled along and seemed to have its own momentum. I didn't get the feeling



It's thumbs-up from Milnrow's percussionists as they prepare to play at the Royal Albert Hall



Another impressive show from Whitburn and Michael Fov...



Black Dyke was one of the bands that had the cornets stan...

that the conductor or the players were pulling or pushing and it was poised right on the top of fast with a clear tempo. I could hear that they were the best band there. Blemishes come in all shapes and sizes but there comes a point when there are too many."

Straight after the interval Foden's took to the stage with Bramwell Tovey once again at the helm. I was expecting an individual approach to the reading and was not disappointed. There were moments that really sparkled, leaping off the page with

colour and panache. By recessing the chords, big band style, Maestro Tovey let the 'top lines' shine, especially in *Cut Outs*, which had so much vitality. The moment when Howard imitates saxophones in the jazz section had something of the smoky Glen Miller sound about it, where others went for a more dramatic, contemporary feel. However, the performance was not without technical blemish, occasional loose ensemble and tuning issues, which no doubt mounted up in the judges' minds mitigating against a pre-

qualification placing.

That fourth place went to the Fairey Band for an account notable for conductor Garry Cutt's trademark clarity combined with a depth of bass sonority. There is never anything forced or contrived about a Garry Cutt reading. "I like what he does," commented Howard, "and Fairey had such a clear texture. Garry trusts the composer and gets what is required." The performance lost a bit of 'oomph' towards the end, but, like Brighouse and Rastrick, there were many beautiful moments to



wles



nding throughout the performance



Hammonds Saltaire returned to the RAH for the first time since 2007

enjoy. The day began in somewhat 'modest' fashion, to quote the composer. Virtuosi GUS (Adam Cooke) gave us a bright if, at times, nervous start. Reg Vardy, under Russell Gray, sounded uncharacteristically cautious and lacking in energy. Their neighbours NASUWT Riverside (David Roberts) got through the piece without revealing its full range of colours and characters. Conversely Tongwynlais Temperance was much more creative under Ian Holmes, but was compromised

by some loose rhythm and ensemble. "It's funny how the draw works out sometimes," says Howard, "starting off with some rather modest performances. But then the fifth band came on and it went from there!" Band number five was 'in form' Whitburn conducted by Michael Fowles. Much was expected following the West Lothian band's fine second place at September's Open Championships, and theirs was the first *Gallery* that made us sit up and take notice, from the relaxed delivery of Scott

Forrest's opening soprano cornet solo to the sonorous broadening out of the final bars. As in Birmingham a few weeks ago, principal cornet Chris Bradley impressed with his stylish contribution, especially his finessed delivery of *Skater's Waltz*. Precise details and crisply delineated images were balanced by moments of touching lyricism. Nothing was exaggerated but the journey was clear and purposeful. In this respect, the performance brought back memories of Howard Snell's time with Desford and Britannia Building Society



Howard Snell introduces the the Friday Regent Hall audience to Gallery

bands, in which Michael Fowles played 2nd trombone in the 1990s. Whitburn's strong account stayed with us all day. One of the post-contest talking points of the day was the reaction of Black Dyke Band following its performance. The manner in which the players 'high-fived' and hugged would not have been out of place after one of Manchester United's 'last gasp' winning goals, while the reaction of the conductor reminded me of the occasion when Sir Alex Ferguson danced onto the pitch arms aloft. There was no doubt great relief in the

Queensbury camp that the performance had gone pretty well. "Anyone who writes Black Dyke out of the top six wonders if they've done the right thing," Howard reflected. There was energy and commitment in abundance. Some of the solo playing was tasteful and elegant. *Love Story* was gorgeous, but overall the account lacked the refinement in execution of those ahead of it. The biggest surprise for this writer was the return to form of Redbridge, re-united on the Royal Albert Hall stage with Jeremy Wise. It was encouraging to appreciate the



Alwyn Powell collects yet another trophy for 2nd-placed Tr



Kapitol directors Philip Morris and Nicola Bland, and National silverware to Brighthouse and Rastrick President Lyndon Sta

stylistic insight that Jeremy Wise brought to the stage. He really 'got' the piece and the band really 'went for it', especially in an effervescent *Cut Outs* movement. Another satisfying performance was delivered by 'first timer' City of Bradford, whose excellent top-ten finish owes so much to the commitment and creative skills of conductor Lee Skipsey. He nurtured his players through the work - a nod here, an encouraging gesture there, nothing over-emphatic, everything under control. Rounding off the top ten was an efficient sounding Milnrow under Mark



redegar Town



Winning soloist Kathleen Gaspoz of Brighouse and Rastrick



onal Honorary President Alan Hope present the
acey

Bentham. Woodfalls (Robert Childs) was the only band to sit in conventional formation and not to adhere to Howard Snell's layout, with cornets to the left and right, and horns with bells facing forwards. We could hear the difference. There were moments of balance during the day that delighted the composer: "In *Skater's Waltz*, for instance, one band really brought out the *hemiola* quavers, twos set against the threes. I liked that. There was also another band that clarified the fugato section in *Cut Outs*, in a counterintuitive way



Total focus but only third place for the defending champion

by pointing up each of the entries with accents and a shorter note." Of the remaining performances, Friary Guildford (Chris King) should be pleased with 12th place for its robust account. Hammonds Saltire (Morgan Griffiths) was commendably energetic, but lacked some of the technical quality of others. Thoresby Colliery (Ian McElligott) didn't really spring to life until the final bars, while Filton (Tom Davoren) was full of bravura but lacked precision and contrast, despite a fine opening from soprano cornet Martin Britt. Co-operative

Funeralcare and Allan Ramsay found themselves at the bottom of the ranking. Too much went wrong for their *Gallery* to trouble the adjudicators. Howard came out of the judges' tent impressed at the level of commitment from all the bands: "I got the feeling that everyone had worked on it and I am really grateful for that," he said. After such a successful day at the Royal Albert Hall, I wonder if we will have the chance to hear another Howard Snell test in the future. I hope so!



That winning feeling for Brighouse and Rastrick!



The Welsh Guards Fanfare Trumpeters herald the announcement of the National results



A reflective moment for Thoresby Coliery



Full results from London

Test-piece: *Gallery* (Howard Snell)

Adjudicators: Howard Snell, Phillip McCann and Luc Vertommen

1. Brighouse and Rastrick (Professor David King)** * (drawn 20)

2. Tredegar (Ian Porthouse)* (16)

3. Cory (Philip Harper)* (10)

4. Fairey (Garry Cutt)* (15)

5. Foden's (Bramwell Tovey) (11)

6. Whitburn (Michael Fowles) (5)

7. Black Dyke (Professor Nicholas Childs) (18)

8. Redbridge (Jeremy Wise) (6)

9. City of Bradford (Lee Skipsey) (19)

10. Milnrow (Mark Benthams) (14)

11. Woodfalls (Dr Robert Childs) (7)

12. Friary Guildford (Chris King) (17)

13. Virtuosi GUS (Adam Cooke) (1)

14. Reg Vardy (Russell Gray) (2)

15. Hammonds Saltaire (Morgan Griffiths) (8)

16. NASUWT Riverside (David Roberts) (3)

17. Thoresby Colliery (Ian McElligott) (9)

18. Tongwynlais Temperance (Ian Holmes) (4)

19. Filton Concert Brass (Tom Davoren) (12)

20. Co-operative Funeralcare (Allan Ramsay) (13)

Best Instrumentalist: Kathleen Gaspoz, cornet, Brighouse and Rastrick

** denotes qualification for the 2019 European Brass Band Championships

* denotes qualification for 2018 National Final



The winning performance takes shape

Restoring lost works of art in the Gallery

Kenneth Crookston takes a sideways look at the music for this year's National Final

There is no question that Howard Snell's *Gallery* provided an apposite test for the 20 bands at this year's National Final. The various movements (only six of the seven were used) are based on iconic pictures, some of which hung in Glasgow's Kelvingrove Gallery during the composer's formative years - *The Barras*, *The Rev. Robert Walker skating on Duddingston Loch*, *Old Couple*, *Jazz* and *Two Views from Ben Lomond* - and you probably didn't need to have viewed them in advance to visualise them if you closed your eyes during some of the best performances.

For many, however, the gallery's *Entrance* may as well have been perched at the top of Ben Lomond on an icy winter's day. By the standards of today, top F sharp on soprano cornet isn't high by any means, but it is difficult to recall, in a lifetime of attending and performing in band contests, any single note causing problems for so many bands, most of which never really got the short first movement back on track as a result. That the F sharp was the first sound the audience heard in each performance only served to add to the feeling of at least half of the bands being 'on the back foot' as they encountered the hustle and bustle of *The Barras*. Situated in the east end of Glasgow it's a nicer part of town these days, but there was a time that visitors had as much chance of losing their wallets as they did picking up an honest bargain at this world-renowned street market. Alas, quite a few had their pockets picked on the stage of the Royal Albert Hall, only this time it was courtesy of Howard Snell's devilishly tricky portrayal of some of the 'interesting' Glaswegians who frequented *The Barras* in bygone years.

As for the Reverend Walker, there have been few more delightful movements written in a brass band test-piece than the one dedicated to this skating minister. It was, indeed, a delight to be

able to spend a few minutes listening to artists like Kathleen Gaspoz, Dewi Griffiths, Tom Hutchinson, Ben Godfrey, Mark Wilkinson and Chris Bradley, all of whom contributed so much to their bands' top-six placings. For some others, unseasonably warm October temperatures leading to thin ice meant that the poor old Rev. Walker took one or two more tumbles than the music suggested. Even more frustrating were the conductors who took a straightforward approach to tempo. I'm no ice skating aficionado, but I'm pretty sure that Torvill and Dean, Robin Cousins and John Curry achieved a lot more by being expressive back in the day than if they had 'gone for safety' and simply skated around in circles for five minutes. As ever, slow music is the hardest to play and Howard Snell's *Old Couple* was no exception to this 'unwritten' rule. Performing music of such delicacy under pressure has clearly become something of a lost art for far too many today, but the ones that really 'got it' could have brought a tear to a glass eye. Not all the best musical intentions were matched in execution, and vice versa, but when the two came together there really were some breathtaking moments, all marked during the break between movements by the RAH audience's mezzo piano 'sigh' of utter contentment.

Jazz always provides brass bands with a real challenge. We need to learn to be more 'be-bop' and less 'tum-de-tum', but thanks to the insight that our leading conductors are bringing, the best bands are getting better at it, with Brighouse and Rastrick, Tredegar and Cory all producing spellbinding accounts this time. Bizarrely, some of the less successful ones opted to make an already extremely difficult movement nigh on impossible by lifting the tempo a bit. Speed over substance rarely works, but quite how anyone expected it to do so in a 'musician's piece' like *Gallery* is hard to fathom.



There was probably a great sense of relief for most involved at the RAH when they finally saw the view from the top of Ben Lomond at the start of the final movement. Surely nothing could go wrong from here? Well, in the main it didn't, but the final sting in *Gallery's* tail came in the short 'bridal song' section just before the end. As a founder member of the Worshipful Company of Repiano Players (a secret society formed in the 1980s by cornet players who preferred not to be heard playing above a top G in public) I used to love the inclusion of an 'easy but potentially nice' repiano solo in test-pieces. Recently, they have all become a bit 'high-wire' in that department, so what a thrill it was for those of us from the generation that thrived on *Ballet for Band* and *Cloudcatcher Fells* to see our modern-day successors given the chance to do something really creative with a handful of apparently easy notes within the stave. Some of these young guns were excellent, of course, but as we learned with *Pageantry* earlier in the year, things ain't what they used to be in that respect. While we bemoan our diminishing skills in the lyrical department, we cannot complain about the Kapitol Music Panel's efforts to keep this particular art form alive through its choices for this year's Finals. Bands from 4th Section to Championship have been tested appropriately on the basics of good playing, but (in general) they have also been provided with platforms to express themselves as musicians, which is surely what it's all about in the first place. Now, if we can just get some of those pesky repiano players to play in tune...

Friday's single course menu serves up a few treats

Roy Terry reports from Regent Hall

A period of rapid social change has seen a movement of musicians outwards to the suburbs which made it increasingly difficult to sustain historic central London bands at full strength. These social and cultural changes have also affected the SA tradition of pre-contest concerts on the eve of the National Championships. Where once there were as many as four such concerts flourishing in prestigious venues, this year saw one surviving event at Regent Hall as Enfield Citadel Band (celebrating its 125th anniversary) gave the final concert in Philip Biggs' Brass Arts Festival. Philip Biggs is to be congratulated on consistently sustaining this festival to reach its 21st birthday.

During the interim period following Jonathan Corry's move to the USA, the band's concerts are being conducted by Ian Parkhouse, the bandmaster of Croydon Citadel Band. Working in collaboration with Ian, much of the preparatory work for concerts has been undertaken by the doyen of SA bandmasters, Don Jenkins. It is good to see his exemplary musicianship and depth of experience being put to such good use. The strengths of the band were evident in the quality of the cornet and trombone sections and a well-integrated team of basses and bass trombone. Only the horn section sounded under-strength. Enfield's programme consisted of three clear elements: classic SA cornet solos, the heritage of SA symphonic repertoire and recent arrangements of hymn melodies. The cornet solos Richard Martin chose to play constituted a retrospective of the genre of SA cornet solos as developed by Eric Ball (*Glory to His Name*), Erik Leidzen (*Songs in the Heart*), and Dean Goffin (*Victorious*). In assessing the contribution of SA composers to brass band repertoire, the transformation of the variation solo by Eric Ball and Erik Leidzen is perhaps insufficiently acknowledged. Ian Parkhouse reminded us that Eric Ball described *Glory to His Name* as a composition for cornet solo

and full band - in much the same way at Erik Leidzen described his *Concertino* as 'for band and trombone', with an implied emphasis in the band as equal partner. Equally significant, these solos have serious musical content - they are not just exercises in virtuoso display. Leidzen's *Songs in the Heart* was written specifically for Derek Smith (of Household Cavalry, Rosehill and New York Staff Band fame) who was a welcome member of the audience. The theme is drawn from a vocal solo by Ernest Rance, an unjustly neglected but gifted melodist. Completing this triptych of solos, Goffin's *Victorious* takes the form of a homage to Leidzen.

When Richard Martin left his native Yeovil to come to London to study at the Royal College, more than one London band was keeping its fingers crossed that he would make his home with it. Their loss was very much Tottenham/Enfield's gain. Now the highly-respected principal trumpet with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, he gave an infallible virtuoso demonstration of what one might describe as the classic SA cornet sound, which was for so long quite distinctive from the vibrato-laden style of the contesting band. One might speculate that this may have been connected to the 'straighter' sound required for choral singing as opposed to the more operatic style stemming from early brass band repertoire. After three demanding display pieces, Richard concluded with the simplicity of John Larsson's song *Someone Cares*, its impact shown in the quality of the silence that followed it. Alongside Richard's solos, the playing of Ray Steadman-Allen's *Daystar* was the high point of the evening. *Daystar* presents certain challenges for the conductor as well as for the band. In the wrong hands it can sound somewhat episodic, but here Ian Parkhouse and band negotiated the changing moods of the work without sudden 'gear changes' so that the varying tempi were coherently integrated. There was a welcome



lightness of touch in the scherzo-like episodes and a richness of sound in the appearances of the hymn tune *Ascalon* which call for the quality of good choral singing.

The second representative work of a symphonic nature was Leslie Condon's *Song of the Eternal*. For those of us who were young musicians in the 1960s, Leslie Condon, alongside Ray Steadman-Allen and Ray Bowes, wrote music which bridged the gap between our banding and our growing knowledge of contemporary classical music. Their compositional style took account of the twentieth century strands of classical music, with elements in their compositions showing a debt ranging from Mahler through Vaughan Williams and Delius to Charles Ives. In playing Condon's music, the players rather unfairly had to cope with its technical demands at the end of what proved to be an overlong programme.

For the long-standing members of the band this would have been a particularly poignant occasion as their first pre-contest festival following the passing of Bandmaster James Williams. The programme included a tribute that covered every aspect of his service in banding written by Philip Biggs. And for a moment of reflection there could have been no better choice than the consolatory music of Eric Ball's *Songs in Exile*.

Sunday 29 October saw **Foden's Band** welcome over 100 entries from all over the world to its 7th solo, duet and quartet competition. Once again, the adjudicators had the difficult task of placing the competitors and providing them with constructive written feedback. Professor John Wallace CBE, Dewi Griffiths and Brian Kingsley were this year's adjudicators, and were chosen for their experience, knowledge and reputation as fine musicians and educators.

Many of the entrants were familiar faces, some of whom have returned each year, though there were equally as many players entering for the first time. Many friendships have been forged between competitors over the years and the relaxed and friendly atmosphere has helped cement the competition as one of the best of its kind.

Although unavoidable clashes with The Dutch National and Rochdale Band competitions meant that some players could not attend this year, the number and standard of entries was impressive. 13 classes of solos, duets and quartets meant that there were always three sections running simultaneously, with some players taking part in no less than four solo and ensemble classes.

The youngest competitor this year was only five years old: Archie Pannell impressed the adjudicator and audience with his confident performance of his slow melody, earning him not only the youngest player award, but also third place against much older children. The video of Archie's 'repeat performance' in front of an enchanted audience quickly went 'viral' on the internet!

The Open Solo section is the class that

many enter, with the potential to win a unique and much sought-after, Besson-sponsored prize. Previous winners have performed with River City Brass in the USA, had solos specially written by eminent composers and performed at the Festival of Brass at the RNCM. This year saw a previous winner regain his title against a very talented field of soloists: Paul Bennett competed in four sections, but still had the stamina and skill to perform the fiendishly difficult finale to Haydn's Cello Concerto. Paul impressed Professor Wallace with his virtuosity, tone and style to make him the first competitor to win this coveted prize for a second time. Paul now has the opportunity to travel abroad again, courtesy of Besson Musical Instruments.

The results were:

11 and Under Slow Melody

1. Aidan Grant
2. Annie Stuart
3. Archie Pannell

12 and 13 Slow Melody

1. Isaac Bousfield
2. Lewis Barton
3. Frederik Engelson

14-16 Slow Melody

1. Grace Hancock
2. Alfie Bousfield
3. Martijn Binon

17-19 Slow Melody

1. Margot Binon
2. Megan Bousfield
3. Jack Lythaby

Vintage Slow Melody

1. Paul Bennett
2. Tim Galloway
3. Iain Fleming

Open Slow Melody

1. Tim Pannell

2. Paul Bennett
3. Lorenz Havermans

Under 16 Air Varie

1. Lewis Barton
2. Isaac Bousfield
3. Oliver Marshall

16-21 Air Varie

1. Jack Lythaby
2. Megan Bousfield
3. Catherine Flanders

Vintage Air Varie

1. Iain Fleming
2. Paul Bennett
3. Patricia Woodings

Open Air Varie

1. Paul Bennett
2. Tim Pannell
3. Lorenz Havermans

12-16 Duet

1. Simon and Martijn Binon
2. Oliver and Toby Marshall
3. Hannah Taylor and Bethany Harby

Open Duet

1. Martijn Binon and Ilse Degeest
2. Jo Ainsworth and Jack Lythaby
3. Stephen Lomas and Daniel Brook

Open Quartet

1. In Slide Out

Overall Most Outstanding Performance: Isaac Bousfield

Most Promising Local Player: Catherine Flanders

Most Promising Player 11 and Under: Aidan Grant

Most Outstanding Cornet: Tim Pannell

Most Outstanding Horn: Jack Lythaby

Most Outstanding Euphonium or

Baritone: Lorenz Havermans

Most Outstanding Trombone:

Isaac Bousfield

Most Outstanding Bass: James Hawkins

Youngest Player: Archie Pannell



The Northern Ireland Bands Association (NIBA) Championship took place in Armagh on the weekend of 14-15 October, with 1st Old Boys Silver (Stephen Cairns) grabbing the top title and an invitation to the 2019 European Championship in Montreux.

Drogheda Brass successfully defended its 2nd Grade title under Michael Maher, with Wellington Memorial Silver taking the 3rd Grade title under Gary Proctor. The results were:

Championship Section

Adjudicator: Derek Broadbent

Test-piece: *Salamander* (John McCabe)

1. 1st Old Boys Silver (Stephen Cairns) 193
 2. Downshire Brass (Michael Alcorn) 190
 3. Third Carrickfergus (Brian Connolly) 187
 4. Laganvale Metal Technology (Stephen Crooks) 186
 5. Three Rivers Brass (Noel Barr) 184
 6. Murley Silver Band (William Hill) 183
- Best Instrumentalist: Alan Haworth, euphonium, 1st Old Boys Silver

2nd Grade

Test-piece: *Chaucer's Tunes* (Michael Ball)

1. Drogheda Brass (Michael Maher) 185
 2. Roughan Silver (Gary Proctor) 183
 3. Lourdes Brass Band (Michael Hannan) 182
 4. Comber Silver (Wesley Thompson) 181
 5. CWA Brass (Ernest Ruddock) 180
- Best Cornet Section: Drogheda Brass
Best Bass Section: Drogheda Brass

3rd Grade

Test-piece: *The Journal of Phileas Fogg* (Peter Graham)

1. Wellington Memorial Silver (Gary Proctor) 179
2. Dynamic Brass (Harold Whan) 177
3. Navan Silver (Steven Murray) 176
4. Dungannon Silver (Boris Pinto) 174

4th Grade

Test-piece: *A Ravenhill Suite* (Dorothy Gates)

1. Poyntzpass Silver (Robert Davidson) 171

5th Grade/Unaffiliated Own-Choice

1. Stedfast Shoes Brass (Shane Smith) 168

Youth

Own Choice

1. 1st Old Boys Silver Junior (Jacklin Bingham) 180
2. Downshire Youth Band (Michael Alcorn) 178

Former European 'B' Section champion, Brass Band Fröschl Hall, conducted by Corsin Tuor, took the title and a place at the 2018 European Brass Band Championships at the recent **Austrian National Brass Band Championships** in Linz on Saturday 28 October.

Adjudicators Philip Sparke, Luc Vertommen and Isabelle Ruf-Weber deliberated on their decision for around an hour, following the performances of the three competing bands. The results were:

1. Brass Band Fröschl Hall (Corsin Tuor) 91.66
2. Austrian Brass Band (Professor Uwe Koller) 90.33
3. Brass Band Oberösterreich (Ian Porthouse) 90.00

Elland Silver Youth Band has been awarded a grant of £2,000 from the Community Foundation for Calderdale. The grant has been funded through the Kathleen Mary Denham Legacy to contribute towards the costs of financing the youth band's trip to the European Youth Brass Band Championships in Utrecht, Netherlands next May. This news comes just in time as the band has received its formal invitation to compete in the 2018 European Youth Brass Contest, being held in Utrecht on Sunday 6 May. To fund the trip, the 45-strong band and their chaperones are currently in the process of raising some £27,000 to subsidise the travel and accommodation costs. "We are delighted to receive this sum, it will really help ensure all our young musicians are able to take part in the trip", commented Secretary, Kathleen Harrison.



Richard Scott, once again the man tasked with recording every National Final performance of Howard Snell's *Gallery* at the Royal Albert Hall, spent his birthday weekend on 7-8 October with son Stephen recording the new **Eagley Band** CD in Bolton.

Richard has recorded and produced all of conductor Chris Wormald's CDs stretching back to 1999 with Smithills, Hoover, Eagley and others and once again recorded 15 new arrangements made especially by him.

The Eagley CD follows hard on the heels of the band's new 16-page glossy brochure and includes tracks ranging from Toto IV, Genesis, Sinatra and I've Dreamed of You to A Hero Comes Home and Highlights from Wicked. The CD is to be released at the end of November.





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As momentum gathers for **UniBrass 2018**, the committee has announced further details for the event, including details for the Gala Concert and information for registering bands. In the last few years, the Gala Concert has become a key part of the UniBrass atmosphere, with the intention of bringing a top brass band to inspire future generations of brass players. This year's Gala Concert - also held on 17 February 2018 at the York Barbican - will feature nationally renowned group, Tubular Brass. With the familiar form of a traditional brass band, Tubular Brass sets out to bring brass band music to the masses, through new arrangements of modern and popular music - most notably Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells*.

Tickets for both the contest and gala concert are now on sale! Visit the Barbican's website on www.yorkbarbican.co.uk/whats-on/unibrass/ to pick up your tickets, where there are special rates for those wanting to attend both the contest and gala concert. Keep an eye on the UniBrass website and social media for upcoming announcements about the day.



Pictured in rehearsal are the 140-strong brass, percussion, harp and grand organ, with Director Masanori Fukuda, Takeo Yamamoto and Nicholas Childs. **Senzoku Gakuen College** has just completed the latest concert in its series of 'British Brass' to a capacity audience at the magnificent Maeda Concert Hall in Tokyo.

This year's concert was the 46th in this highly-successful series, with the Intermediate Band being led by Distinguished Professor Takeo Yamamoto, performing works by Masanori Fukuda - *A Day on September* - and Satoshi Yagisawa's *Primavera - Beautiful Mountain Winds*. The Elite and Massed bands were directed by Visiting Professor Nicholas Childs. The Elite performing Johan de Meij's *Extreme Makeover*, the composer himself sending a personal message acknowledging a

spectacular and special performance! The massed bands performed *Four Scottish Dances* and *Fire in The Blood*, with the grand finale being two movements from Respighi's *Pines of Rome*, the *Villa Borghese* and *The Appian Way*, arranged by Howard Snell.



Black Dyke Band has announced the signing of Jon Hammond on assistant principal cornet and Adam Finch on 3rd cornet. "It is an honour and a privilege to be appointed assistant principal cornet of the world famous Black Dyke Band," said Jon. "It has been a lifelong goal of mine to be a part of this amazing band and to do this and to sit between my brother, Tim, and Richard Marshall makes it even more special. I am really looking forward to working with Professor Childs and this magnificent band. I would like to thank David Roberts and Rothwell Band for their support and friendship over the last 18 years."

Adam Finch is a postgraduate student at Salford University. He has been a regular deputy in the cornet section over the past year, and was an obvious choice for the cornet section when a vacancy became available. Richard Marshall commented "For the last few years I have taught Adam at the University of Salford and I have been impressed with his commitment and attitude. I personally wish both Jon and Adam many happy years with the band."

On Sunday 24 September the **East Anglian Brass Band Association** held its Annual Brass Training Day at the Hewett Academy, Norwich. Delegates from age nine upwards had enrolled for the course. The section tutors, who were from Foden's Band, were Anna Hughes-Williams (2nd and 3rd cornets), Melanie Whyte (flugels and tenor horns), Shaun Farrington (trombones), Gary Curtin (euphoniums)

and Stuart Baglin (basses). Mark Wilkinson was course leader and soprano and solo cornets tutor.

The music studied was *All in the April Evening* (Hugh S. Robertson), *Variations on Laudate Dominum* (Edward Gregson), *Prismatic Light* (Alan Fernie) and *The Standard of St. George* (Kenneth J. Alford). The delegates accompanied Gary Curtin in *Grandfather's Clock* (G. Doughty). Association Secretary, Christine Wade said, "Delegates were really looking forward to the day and it was hugely successful. All the delegates found the day enjoyable and beneficial. Delegates have emailed about the excellent choice of music. We had some young cornet players attend the event for the first time. They found it challenging but very enjoyable." The Association wishes to thank Mark, Anna, Melanie, Gary, Stuart and Shaun for an excellent day, and is grateful to Town House Close Estate Charity for a grant towards the cost of this event. The 2018 Brass Training Day will take place on Sunday 30 September when the tutors will be from Cory Band.



Putney and Wimbledon Brass Band, a new, not-for-profit community band, was due to perform in public for the first time at Wimbledon Park Fireworks night on Saturday 4 November. It may be unusual for a brass band to start its life in 2017 - especially in London - but Putney and Wimbledon Brass Band hopes to start with a bang at this wonderful community event. The band brings together local players of a wide range of ages from across Putney and Wimbledon to create a new community group for the local area. The band's Musical Director, Sam Topp, said: "South west London may not have the same history and tradition of brass banding as the north of England, but the




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desire to create something that is focused on the idea of community is just as strong here in Putney and Wimbledon. I can't wait to show everyone what the band can do, and to encourage others to dust off their cornets, trombones and tubas to come and join us."

He added: "Some might be pessimistic about the future of brass banding in Britain, but I like to take a 'brass half full' approach. We're going to start off on a high note and blow away any doubts." It is hoped that the band will become a

regular sight throughout the boroughs of Wandsworth and Merton at local events, as well as competing against other bands in competitions.

Speaking about the birth of this new band, Wimbledon MP Stephen Hammond said: "I think it is fantastic that a brass band is being set up in Wimbledon. We are lucky to have a thriving range of community groups in our area, to which this will be a welcome addition. I am sure its first performance at the Wimbledon Park fireworks on 4

November will be a huge success and the first of many locally."

Rushen Silver Band in the Isle of Man held a concert on 21 October with guest conductor Richard Evans and soloist Bobby Corkish from Fairey Band, which raised a total of £1,364. The money will be split between The Salvation Army and The Chris Lucas Trust.

Tom Sinden, Chairman of the band, commented: "We are very grateful to Richard, Bobby, the Friends of Rushen Silver Band and everyone who attended the concert for making it such a memorable evening. The event was funded by the Alistair Drinkwater Memorial Fund, so every penny of the total will be split between the two charities. The Salvation Army does a lot of work on the island to help the more vulnerable in our community, while The Chris Lucas Trust funds research in to defeating the cancer that afflicted Alistair, so it is terrific to be able to help both causes through Alistair's Fund."

DAVID MORRIS

It is with great sadness that we announce the sudden death on Sunday 29 October of David Morris, the very well-known and popular musician who was actively involved in the brass band scene in the Midlands and Yorkshire. Dave was Musical Director of the Woodhouse Prize Silver Band, cornet player with Chapeltown Silver Prize Band and a very talented photographer and recording engineer who worked tirelessly as a key member of the volunteer team for Bolsover Festival of Brass and Bolsover International Brass Band Summer School for nine years. He also worked on other projects with Carole Crompton including projects with the Hallé Orchestra, Foden's Band and Black Dyke Band. More recently Dave also took on photography with Black Dyke Band and Wychavon Festival of Brass.

Dave was a founder member of the Bolsover International Brass Band Summer School and from day one was heavily involved in its planning and organisation and led on social activities on the course including taking delegates on the narrow boat trip along the Chesterfield Canal, which he organised each year. Dave worked tirelessly on the development of the Summer School and had recently created its new website. Dave was always quick to admit that, having worked with brass bands for many years, photography and recording was his way of expanding his interests and giving something back to the community he got so much enjoyment from over the years. He was a very popular figure as photographer within the local band contest scene and his photos, through his website 'Brass Snaps', were shared throughout Facebook by thousands of banding musicians.

He played a variety of instruments to one level or another: violin, recorder, cornet



but he was most proud of achieving grade 8 on piano having started lessons again in his late 40s.

Dave was very well known in the Yorkshire and Midland brass band scene for his support to the banding movement and spent most of his weekends banding in one shape or another with his son, Daniel, a very talented euphonium player with Chapeltown Band, who he took pride in supporting throughout Dan's musical development. In addition to his musical activities he was also a Trustee of the Chesterfield Canal Trust and a RYA certified training instructor. It may come as a surprise to many people that he also had time for a full time job as an IT Manager.

Commenting on behalf of Bolsover Festival of Brass and Bolsover International Brass Band Summer School, Carole Crompton said, "We are totally shocked and saddened at the news of Dave's passing. He will be sorely missed and irreplaceable to us in his various roles within our team. He was the most enthusiastic supporter of the banding movement and his talents and personality will be greatly missed by everyone. As a personal friend you could not ask for anyone more loyal or supporting than Dave and I will personally miss him on so many levels." Another announcement will be made shortly once we know his funeral arrangements. Dave is survived by his wife Caroline and son Daniel, his mother Doreen and sister Allison.

Carole Crompton



December

Manger Musikklag conducted by Allan Withington, with Lydia Hoen Tjore (soprano) Doyen DOY CD378

How refreshing to listen to a Christmas album that is creatively structured. There is nothing *ad hoc* about Allan Withington's repertoire choices or their placing within the sequence. The sense of musical contrast and shape within and between items satisfies the 'inner programme planner' in this reviewer. Drawing on traditional sources from across Europe, *December* is an engaging 'listen', not least for the fine singing as well as playing from the members, or should that be choir, of Manger Musikklag. A lot of work has clearly been undertaken in the preparation of the vocal parts.

Three of the tracks, including the haunting Danish - Norwegian carol setting with which the album opens and a substantial setting of the German carol *Es ist ein Ros entsprungen*, featuring 22 year-old soprano Lydia Hoen Tjore, one of the rising stars on the European opera scene. what a lovely voice she has. Here and elsewhere, the atmosphere created by the blend of spacious brass sonorities, simple folk style vocal lines and more complex harmonies is strongly evocative of a crisp Scandinavian winter's morning.

The sequence of keys and contrasting moods and characters well-considered, like the way William Gordon's arrangement of *Silent Night* seems to flow naturally from the opening track. Similarly, the juxtaposition of Tina Kvamme's jazz-folk treatment of the Faroese carol *Gota* and her touching vocal and band arrangement of *O Vos Omnes*, by the great Spanish cellist Pablo Casals, works a treat. Phillip Littlemore's popular transcription of American Morten Lauridsen's choral gem *O Magnum Mysterium* also follows naturally on from Orjan Matre's setting of *Es ist ein Ros*. Both are performed with sensitivity.

In Norway, the last verse of the Danish carol *In this Sweet Christmas Season* (setting a poem of 1732 by Hans Adolph Brorson) is often sung at funerals when the coffin is laid to rest. We are told in the excellent, but unattributed, programme notes that this connection between life and death, Christmas and Salvation is a central theme in Brorson's poems. It also provides an appropriate link to the central work on the album, Eric Ball's Tone Poem *The Kingdom Triumphant* (1963), which journeys from *Advent* ('O Come, O Come Emmanuel') to *Whitsun* ('Low He comes with Clouds Descending') in eight masterly minutes. While Manger's performance doesn't exhibit the authentic resonance or style of the classic performance from the 1960s by the International Staff Band, it's a welcome inclusion in the album.

To lighten the mood, *December* also includes a seasonal favourite, the *Troika* from *Lieutenant Kije* (Prokofiev) and a less familiar but equally extrovert Russian 'pot-boiler' *Dance of the Buffoons* from Tchaikovsky's opera *The Snow Maiden*.

Paul Hindmarsh

Destination Moon

Cory Band conducted by Philip Harper De Haske Records DHR 03-065-3

The highlight of Cory's latest release of De Haske Publications is the first studio recording of the test-piece that the band premièred at the European Brass Band Championships in Ostend earlier this year. The authorship of *Destination Moon* provided one of the talking points in the run-up to the European weekend. Who was its composer Paul Raphael? Some not so extensive research prior to the event indicated that this was a perhaps tall tale intended to disguise the identity of its tall composer. As soon as the scintillating first notes were heard in Ostend, this reviewer was in no doubt that Philip Harper's creative voice and method was behind this impressive score, from the impeccably voiced scoring and the provision of bespoke solos revealing his soloists in their best light, to the surprise fade-out ending. Inspired by the 16th volume of Hergé's *Adventures of Tintin*, *Destination Moon* finds composer Philip Harper and his Cory players on top of their form.

The other tracks are less consistent in delivery but valuable nonetheless for showcasing the latest contest pieces and concert items. *Purcellian Fantasia* was composed by Jan de Haan for the 4th Section of the Netherlands National Championships, held in Utrecht last month. The march form Purcell's *Funeral Music for Queen Mary* provides Jan de Haan with his theme, from which he crafts a series of contrasting variants that take 4th Section players to the limit of their capabilities but not beyond. It's done with great skill. Cory's sonorous and stylish performance gives its intended players much to aim for.

Bert Appermont's *A Brussels Requiem*, published by Beriato, was the own-choice test performed in Ostend by Brass Band Oberösterreich conducted by Erik Janssen. It's a virtuoso *tour-de-force* reacting with great intensity to the terrorist atrocities that occurred in Brussels last year. Appermont's surface gestures demand the strongest techniques. Thierry Deleruyelle has been in great demand for new test-pieces following the success of *Fraternity*. He has composed two more tests for bands below the Championship Section, one of which, *Viking Age*, is fresh to the market. Those who know *Fraternity* will appreciate the connection, in that *Viking Age* also ends with a chorale, but the language and technical demands are much more straightforward.

The release opens in heraldic style with John Williams' *A Hymn to New England*, in Stephen Bulla's authoritative transcription. Principal euphonium Glyn Williams is at his mellifluous best in Philip Sparke's *Dreamsong*. Solo horn Ailsa Russell plays *Moon River* with a good deal more style and singing line than Audrey Hepburn achieves on the film soundtrack of *Breakfast at Tiffanys*, but with less of her character's vulnerability perhaps. Also included is Marc Jeanbourquin's jazz band treatment of *Fever* as performed by Michael Bublé. The publisher Mitropia has published versions for wind and brass band (Grade 3). The line-up of new concert works is completed by Swiss composer Etienne Crausaz, whose *Balkan Dance* sets the feet tapping *Take Five* style.

Paul Hindmarsh



Grimethorpe Colliery Band Centenary Celebration

Before an invited audience, Grimethorpe Colliery Band presented an evening of music celebrating its first 100 years on Friday 20 October. The historic surroundings of Elsecar Heritage Centre, with its range of craft workshops and artists' studios on the site of a former deep coal mine, was indeed an excellent choice for the concert.

The Guest Conductor for the evening was the irrepressible Frank Renton, who led the band to success at the National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain at the Royal Albert Hall in 1992, four days after the announcement that the Grimethorpe pit was to be closed. The concert was attended by many previous members of the band including Fred Partlett and Alec Garbutt, members of the Grimethorpe Schools Band that won the

National Schools Championship in 1949. A first-class exhibition illustrating the band's achievements was on display, recording not only the success in the contest field but the several tours undertaken in all corners of the world. Memories flowed of past years and the friendships that had been made, in several instances renewed on the evening. Before the interval, the Mayor of Barnsley, Councillor Geoff Ennis, paid tribute to three legends of the band - George Thompson (conductor), Ken Hirst (secretary for 40 years) and Peter Haigh (Chairman), who together had contributed significantly to not only to the success of the band but in sustaining its future. Peter Haigh duly responded to acknowledge the words of the Mayor and the hopes and aspirations in the years ahead. The future too was an integral

part of the evening, with former principal euphonium, Michael Dodd, leading a youth band feature by the Birkwood Primary School, whose members gave a charming and entertaining mini concert to the delight of those present.

The occasion would not have been complete without reference to *Brassed Off* and the involvement of a number of the band members as Grimley Colliery Band in the film. Amongst the audience, to whom a standing ovation was given, was Mark Herman, who wrote the screenplay and directed the soundtrack of the movie. The concert closed with the *William Tell* overture, a fitting climax to a marvellous evening of entertainment with a well-deserved standing ovation from the audience.

David Bennett





This month in history...

10 Years Ago

November 2007

Karl Jenkins' CD album, *This Land of Ours*, which includes British Open Champion, Cory Band, and the Welsh choir, Cantorion, is topping the classical album charts across the country. In just one week of sales, the CD is no. 2 in WH Smith's classical album chart and no. 4 in the corresponding HMV chart. In commercial recording terms, this represents arguably the biggest exposure of a brass band since the success of Derek Broadbent's *The Floral Dance* arrangement with Brighouse and Rastrick Band exactly 30 years ago. Speaking exclusively to BB, Karl Jenkins commented: "This is my first recording with a brass band and it's been a privilege to work with the very best in Cory. I was 'blown away' by the sound and virtuosity and it was a thrill to be able to work with such an ensemble."



25 Years Ago

7 November 1992

David King of University College Salford, former Musical Director of John Foster Black Dyke Mills and current British Open Solo Champion, has won the sixth International Brass Musician of the Year title, at Auckland, New Zealand last Saturday evening. Accompanied by Michael Ward, David played *Venetian Fantasy*, in what has been described as the best competition in the series promoted by the Errol Mason Memorial Trust.

The runner-up was Riki McDonnell, last year's winner, and in third place came Trevor Bremner (cornet) of New Plymouth, runner-up in the 1991 British Open Solo Championship.

14 November 1992

Chris Thomas, of Bedwas Trethomas and Machen, won the British Open Solo Championship on Saturday 7 November. Chris, on trombone, reached the final at Wigan in the face of fierce competition, and added a personal triumph to his recent achievements with his band. A Junior Championship was held for the first time, and the new David Brunsdon Memorial Trophy was presented to R. Marshall (Wallace Arnold Rothwell), by the Mayor.

Results:

Senior: 1. C. Thomas (BTM), 2. R. McDonnell (New Zealand), 3. M. Borthwick (Desford), 4. M. Walters (Grimethorpe), 5. D. King (defending champion).

Junior: R. Marshall (Wallace Arnold Rothwell), 2. Samuel (Christie Tyler Cory), 3. B. Godfrey (Rigid Containers Group), 4. P. Leary (British Steel Stainless - Dodworth), 5. J. Lewis (Yorkley Onward).

Adjudicators: Alan Lawton, Denis Carr, James Scott, James Watson.

50 Years Ago

November 1967

The Challenging Brass series for 1968 is now getting underway, and of the 16 bands invited, five have declined the invitation to appear in this series. They are: Fairey, Fodens Motor Works, CWS (Manchester), GUS (Footwear) and BMC Concert. However, five other bands have been invited to take their places and they are: Woodfalls Silver, St. Dennis, Luton, City of Coventry and Wingates Temperance. I look forward to this competition being one of high standard playing with plenty of entertainment value for the listener, be he of the brass band world or not. I wish all the contestants the best of luck, as all their contributions will be recorded as if it were a live performance and will be judged by three judges (who are well-known and respected in the brass band world) in anonymity. Recordings will be taking place within the next few weeks. For those bands who have not been invited this year, please do not be discouraged as your turn may come sooner than you think.

Andrew Gold

BBC Head of Light Music Entertainment.



In the Spotlight

Paul Bennett

In the BB Spotlight is Besson Artist and winner yet again at the Foden's Solo Contest Paul Bennett.

1. How did you get started in music?

I was nine and was watching a procession with my parents in Derbyshire when I saw a brass band marching up the street. In the band was a young lad playing the cornet; it was the coolest thing I'd seen and I nagged my Mum for two years until my local band lent us a cornet. I had lessons with Joyce Allen on Thursday evenings. I was dreadful, but got the banding bug...

2. At which school/college/university did you study music?

I went to Lady Manners School, Bakewell, but they wouldn't teach me because they said my lips were too big! My Mum was amazing, she used all her spare money to pay for weekly lessons - I owe everything to my Mum for the efforts she made. Latterly, I attended Salford University and then onto the RNCM.

3. What was your first senior brass band?

I grew up in the Peak District and started on bottom 3rd cornet with Tideswell Band. They soon moved me onto tenor horn and I progressed. The band is still very close to my heart.

4. Who is your favourite brass band conductor?

I've played for some wonderful musicians, such as Roy Newsome, James Gourlay and James Watson, but my favourite is Howard Snell. Howard conducted Britannia Band during the 1990s and had a knack of getting the very best out of us. His incredible musicianship continues to inspire.

5. What motivates you to stay at the top level as a player.

I love being part of this incredible movement. Playing in a top band is something that is difficult to match. As a youngster, I idolised the top players from Black Dyke, Grimethorpe, etc. Now I'm one

of the 'older' generation, it's reassuring to see some incredible younger players emerging who keep you on your toes.

6. Who has been the biggest influence on your career?

I've had some amazing teachers such as Gordon Higginbottom, Sandy Smith and Howard Snell, while the person who has influenced my career generally has been Gerhard Meinel (whom I worked for while living in Germany). He was a father figure for me and I'm still guided by his advice.

7. What is the most memorable brass band performance you have been involved in?

I've been fortunate to be part of some special performances, including the Swiss Open with Britannia (we were awarded perfect marks for our own-choice), but the most memorable was the 1991 National with Desford Colliery, performing Robert Simpson's *Energy* from a number three draw. By chance, the band was booked to appear in the Gala Concert that evening and walking onto the Royal Albert Hall stage as newly-crowned Champions was incredible.

8. Name someone outside music who inspires you.

Jessica Cox. If you don't know of her, Google her. She was born without arms, but overcame this adversity to become the first licenced armless pilot. She's also the first armless black belt in the American Taekwondo Association and so much more. She is amazing...

9. What is your favourite test-piece?

I love listening to *Montage*, *Paganini Variations* and *Fraternity*, but I'm a traditionalist and Percy Fletcher's *An Epic Symphony* gets my vote.

10. What one piece of advice would you give to a young, aspiring player?

Focus on perfecting the art of music making and producing the best sound they



can, rather than just mastering technique. If you can't produce a good sound or carry a tune, no one will want to hear you.

11. If you were not involved in music, what would you be doing?

My music is a hobby and I work fulltime in a sales role. That said, if I had my time again I'd more than likely have gone into property development.

12. Who is your favourite brass band player of all time?

My top three (which wasn't your question), in no particular order, are Sandy Smith (tenor horn), James Shepherd (cornet) and Brian Evans (soprano).

13. If you could change one thing about the brass band scene, what would it be?

As a movement we have some amazing people with the skill, determination and ability to achieve wonderful things, but we too often tend to fall short of the mark. If we had the ability to all pool our skills and resources, I think we could take brass banding (and it's perception) to a whole new level.

14. What motivates you to keep putting your reputation on the line in the solo contest arena?

Solo contests drive the continued development of a brass player's skillsets - they put you under pressure, make you work on aspects of your playing you might otherwise not get around to improving, such as slow melody playing. This not only benefits the player, but also the band they play in.

Saturday 18 November
 Brass and Percussion Workshops with leading players of Cory Band 9.00am (registration from 8.15am)

Taster Sessions (11.00am)
 Sponsored by Yamaha

Youth Brass in Concert (1.30pm)
 Wardle Academy Band
 Conducted by Lee Rigg

Performance by Workshop Band (2.30pm)
 Conducted by Philip Harper

Yamaha Percussion Masterclass (3.45pm)
 Le Yu on Marimba
 Northern Rock Foundation Hall
 Admission Free

International Showcase (5.00pm)
 Featuring Eikanger-Bjørsvik Musikklag
 Admission Free

Brass and Voices @ the Movies (7.00pm)
 Featuring Cory Band (conductor Philip Harper) and male vocal ensemble Only Men Aloud
 Tickets £27, £18, £10

Sunday 19 November
Brass in Concert Championship (9.00am)
 Compered by Radio 2's Frank Renton The world's leading entertainment-based brass band championship

Featuring leading international bands:
 Brighthouse and Rastrick
 Carlton Main Frickley Colliery
 Cory
 Eikanger-Bjørsvik Musikklag
 Flowers
 Foden's
 Fountain City
 Grimethorpe Colliery
 Leyland
 Paris Brass Band
 Tredegar
 Virtuosi GUS

Tickets: £30, £22 & £12
 All tickets available from Sage Gateshead Ticket Office
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You're Always There (Tenor Horn Solo)



NEW FROM 

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 A spectacular new three-movement work for brass band featuring a majestic treatment of *Unto Us is Born a Son* and an ethereal setting of *Infant Holy*. This will be an ideal finisher for your band's Christmas programme.

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 A beautiful arrangement of John Rutter's lullaby, made famous by the Choir of King's College (Cambridge) in *Carols from Kings*. This arrangement features on Virtuosi GUS Band's CD recording *Christmas Fantasia*.

Sussex Mummers' Christmas Carol
 Commissioned by The Illinois Brass Band, this is a beautiful arrangement of Percy Grainger's beloved work.

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World of Brass Chart



World of Brass Tunes, the Top 10 album downloads

1. The Nationals 2017 Championship Section Test-Piece
2. Endeavour... A weekend with the ISB – The International Staff Band of The Salvation Army
3. Regionals 2018
4. Black Dyke Gold Volume VI
5. December – Manger Musikklag
6. Through the Flames – The Music of Paul Lovatt-Cooper Volume III – Black Dyke Band
7. Of Gods and Kings – Foden's Band
8. Grimethorpe 100
9. Favourite Hymn Tunes of The Salvation Army Vol. I – Kettering Citadel Band
10. Over the Horizon – Steve Stewart with Cory Band

World of Brass Tunes, the Top 10 track downloads

1. Gallery (Howard Snell) – Brighthouse & Rastrick Band
from the album The Nationals 2017 Championship Section Test-Piece
2. Gallery (Howard Snell) – Cory Band
from the album The Nationals 2017 Championship Section Test-Piece
3. Gallery (Howard Snell) – Tredegar Town Band
from the album The Nationals 2017 Championship Section Test-Piece
4. Gallery (Howard Snell) – Black Dyke Band
from the album The Nationals 2017 Championship Section Test-Piece
5. Gallery (Howard Snell) – Foden's Band
from the album The Nationals 2017 Championship Section Test-Piece
6. Ex Terra Lucem (Jonathan Bates) – Foden's Band
from the album Regionals 2018
7. Gallery (Howard Snell) – NASUWT Riverside Band
from the album The Nationals 2017 Championship Section Test-Piece
8. Gallery (Howard Snell) – Virtuosi GUS Band
from the album The Nationals 2017 Championship Section Test-Piece
9. Gallery (Howard Snell) – Whitburn Band
from the album The Nationals 2017 Championship Section Test-Piece
10. Gallery (Howard Snell) – Fairey Band
from the album The Nationals 2017 Championship Section Test-Piece





Wireless Brass

We take every possible precaution to ensure the accuracy of the details given below. However, we cannot be responsible for changes to stated times or running order. Details of subsequent weeks' programmes will be available on www.britishbandsman.com when available.

Tuesday 14 November, 2330-0000. BBC Radio 2

Listen to the Band: Grimethorpe Colliery Band's centenary celebrations include this concert at Elsecar Heritage Centre. Frank Renton presents the second of 2 highlights programmes which feature the music that has made the band famous on the concert stage, in the competition arena, in the recording studio and to film lovers the world over.

Listen to the Band is available all week via Radio 2's website at www.bbc.co.uk/radio2. Click on the playback section to hear the show, on demand, for a week following transmission. Also available on the BBC iPlayer by selecting Radio 2.

World of Brass Radio. John Maines introduces a weekly one-hour programme of the best of international banding. Commencing on Fridays, the rolling programme of the most recent two shows can be accessed 24 hours a day on www.worldofbrass.com (then click on the WOB Radio link) or www.worldofbrass.com/wobradio. This week's programme details were unavailable at the time of going to press.

Local Radio for next week

Sounds of Brass. BBC Radio Cornwall, Devon, Guernsey and Jersey every Sunday evening at 7.00pm and on Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset Sound, Swindon and Wiltshire on Sunday from 12.00am to 1.00am. Available live and Listen Again every week through the BBC Radio iPlayer.

Phillip Hunt presents a programme of brass band recordings and news. Sunday 12 November's programme includes: Massed Bands of Brighouse and Rastrick, City of Coventry, Grimethorpe Colliery, GUS (Footwear), Hanwell (Sir Arthur Bliss); Crown Imperial (Sir William Walton arr. Frank Wright); Massed Bands of Brighouse and Rastrick, City of Coventry, Grimethorpe Colliery, GUS (Footwear), Hanwell (Eric Ball); Waltz Memories of Schubert (Schubert arr. Eric Ball); Derek Garside (cornet with piano accompaniment): Facilita (John Hartman arr. Fred Mortimer); Massed Bands of Brighouse and Rastrick, City of Coventry, Grimethorpe Colliery, GUS (Footwear), Hanwell (Frank Wright): Prelude to La Traviata (Verdi arr. Drake Rimmer), Bandology (Eric Osterling arr. Frank Wright); Central Band of the Royal Air Force (Wing Commander Barrie Hingley): Battle of Britain Suite (Wilfred Josephs); Camborne Youth Band (Alan Pope): In Flanders Field (Gavin Somerset): Tredegar Town (Ian Porthouse): Voices (In Memoriam) (Lucy Pankhurst); Massed Bands of the Royal Air Force (Wing Commander R.E. Wilkinson): Evening Hymn and Sunset.

Requests and comments are welcome at e-mail: brassmanpgh@uwclub.net

Monday 6 November, 2100-2200. Manx Radio

Time for Brass. Frequencies 97.2, 89 and 103.7 FM and 1368 AM and worldwide on www.manxradio.com

Click on Listen FM or Listen AM for the programme at the time of broadcast or Listen Again for a week following transmission.

Ian Cottier presents a programme of brass band music and comment. 6 November's programme includes: Massed Bands (Harry Mortimer): Nightfall in Camp (Dudley Pope); Black Dyke (Nicholas Childs): Hymn to the Fallen (John Williams arr. Klaas van der Woude), The Flying Dutchman (Wagner arr. Howard Lorrimer); Sun Life (Roy Newsome): From the Shores of the Mighty Pacific (Herbert L. Clarke); Boobs and Brass (Martin Dawson). Black Magic Woman (Peter Green arr. Eric Banks); River City (Robert Bernstein): The Stars and Stripes Forever (Sousa arr. Bernat); Sellers International (Phillip McCann): Marching to Glory (Stephen Bulla); De Bazuin Oenkerk (Klaas van der Woude): Sweet Georgia Brown (Pinkard arr. Sykes - tuba soloist: Steve Sykes); Leyland (Russell Gray): Donegal Bay (Paul Lovatt-Cooper - baritone soloist: Katrina Marzella); Yorkshire Building Society (David King): Concert Etude (Goedicke arr. Pullin - tenor horn soloist: Sheona White); Cory (Philip Harper): The Witch of the Westmerlands (Fisher arr. Harper).

Sunday afternoons - weekly. Live show at 1300-1500 BBC Radio Leeds and BBC Radio York.

Yorkshire Brass. David Hoyle presents a programme of brass band recordings and listeners' requests. Listen live online at www.bbc.co.uk/radioleeds or BBC Radio Leeds FM frequencies 92.4 or 103.9. BBC Radio York FM frequencies 95.5, 103.7 or 104.3. Also available on the BBC iPlayer for 7 days after broadcast at www.bbc.co.uk/leeds

Sunday Bandstand. www.phoenixfm.co.uk 2.00pm-4.00pm; Halifax local Frequency: 96.7FM; www.wiganfm.com 11.00am-1.00pm (Internet only); www.drystoneradio.com 8.00am-10.00am Colne / Keighley / Skipton local Frequency: 106.9FM; www.worldfm.co.nz 2.00pm-4.00pm (Thursday - Internet only). Chris Helme presents a wide and diverse choice of music from the world of brass bands. The weekly playlist can be found on his website www.chrishelme-brighouse.org.uk





Listening Post

November 2017

Compiled and written by Tim Mutum

No.148

FEATURED RECORDING

PATRON'S CHOICE X – FODEN'S BAND (CAT. NO CD SKU 22169)

This is a rather special CD as it not only brings to a culmination a series but, more significantly, is dedicated to all who supported Foden's Band in the aftermath of the fire which devastated its band room on 17 April 2016.

There's a real flow to the programme, at no point does it get stuck in a rut and nor is the listener left feeling they have just bounced from one piece to another. It's a collection of 14 shortish pieces with a wide range of styles and moods. Much of it successfully brings new music to CD including the exciting opener, *Grand Fanfare* by Giancarlo Castro D'Addona, *When Sparks Fly*, the last movement from a large-scale work from Tom Davoren featuring Sarah Lenton on baritone and *Supremacy*, arranged by Simon Kerwin from music performed by English rock band, Muse.

Seven solo items show the depth of talent in the band. Mark Wilkinson performs a clever take on *The Harmonious Blacksmith*, a popular name for Handel's *Aria Con Variazioni*; this is a reminder of a talent that has not diminished with time, Mark having been auditioned in the early 1990s! More recent recruits are well represented, but the most intriguing contribution is *Gypsy Earrings*, originally composed for two guitars by the Iranian musician and guitarist, Ardeshir Farah. This euphonium duet featuring David Thornton and Mark Bousie finds solo trombone, John Barber, on piano, Andy Cattanch on BBb bass and the percussion

team in support for a Latin style dazzling showcase.

And then, as the programme reaches its final quarter there is a nod to the past with two contributions from the master arranger, Howard Snell, and Wilfred Heaton's *Just As I Am* played with such finesse and shape that only bands of this standing can deliver.

RAISING THE EUPHONIUM BAR

Over the years I have been writing this column some stunning euphonium players have emerged and here is another. Robbert Vos has been the solo euphonium of Brass Band Schoonhoven since 2007 and already recorded one solo disc. His second one, VOX, (Cat. No CD SKU 22195) enters new territory with four of the five tracks being specially commissioned for the disc.

The accompaniment is from his own band, Fanfare 'Psalm 150' Dinxperlo and Koninklijke Harmonie 'Oefening and Uitspanning', Beef En Donk, both wind bands who provide highly successful changes of colour to the normal brass band accompaniment. None overpower the soloist who displays astonishing technical prowess yet without loss of detail nor warmth of sound. The music is fascinating, the opening programmatic *Underground Concerto* by Christian Overhead is over 20 minutes long in three movements, with plenty of musical styles on display, all inspired by the writings of Emil Zola. The programmatic theme continues as *The Hell of '63* depicts the 200-kilometre skating event of 1963 which took in eleven cities in appalling conditions. You can almost feel the cold! *Les Ruses Du Renard* is more of a conversation between the wind band and soloist which is followed by the one established piece. *The Concertino for Euphonium* (Marco Putz) was a Steven

Mead commission in 2003 and is more conventional in style with the soloist afforded the chance to demonstrate all his skills which he undoubtedly does. Concluding this fine product in every sense is *Spinning Gears* by Geert Jan Kroon. The clue is in the title as the music portrays the lone cyclist on a steep climb, struggling, and finding the strength to reach the apex. The view is absorbed and then its downhill all the way - at speed. A riveting finale to a masterclass in euphonium playing.

CHOICE CUTS NO 2: THE HEATON COLLECTION - BLACK DYKE BAND AND THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF BAND

An inspired double CD set originally released in September 2002, it includes all of Wilfred Heaton's published music at that time. The contents are thoughtfully explained in two lavish booklets and performed by two distinguished bands - all-in-all something rather special.

Arguably, the two most challenging works are played by Dyke on CD1. *Partita* is a 25-minute, four-movement work of symphonic proportions written in 1947. On the other hand, *Contest Music* is more easily accessible, but it has had time to become familiar, but not so in 1973 when it was completed for the National Finals but not used as it was, amongst other reasons, regarded as too groundbreaking.

Another reject at its inception, this time by the Salvation Army, was *Celestial Prospect*. Written in the 1940s and reworked by Heaton in the 1960s, this is a set of variations on the Salvationist song *Come, Comrades Dear*. The balance is a collection of shorter, but no less significant works that show Heaton as innovative, playful, humorous and seriously at the 'cutting edge'. Still available at the bargain price of £1.99 (Cat. No. SKU 21163).

To order any of the recordings featured and still available please telephone R Smith and Co on 01933 445440 and Mark Coull will be delighted to help you.

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Band Supplies

WORLD RANKINGS

BRITISH Bandsman

the leading international brass magazine

Despite a third consecutive bronze medal this year, Cory remains at the top of the Band Supplies - British Bandsman Rankings after the recent National Final, with Brighouse and Rastrick now its closest suitor following its tenth victory at the Royal Albert Hall since 1946. Tredegar's impressive runner-up position takes the Welsh band back into the top five, while City of Bradford and Redbridge also make significant leaps up the rankings following their excellent performances in London. The other ranking contests taking place since the last update were: Austrian

National - won by Fröschl Hall, Northern Ireland Championships - won by 1st Old Boys, Dutch National - won by de Wâldsang, West Wales BBA - won by Goodwick, Queensland State Championships - won by Brisbane Excelsior, Pogson Bray - won by East Riding of Yorkshire and Wychavon Festival - won by Llwydcoed.

The next update will include the results from Brass in Concert plus national events in Belgium, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland amongst others, so look out for a few changes throughout the top 100.

Pos 1 November 2017

1	Cory	Wales	1,901.79	-	51	Rainford	North West	27.97	-8
2	Brighouse and Rastrick	Yorkshire	1,196.11	+1	52	Kirkintilloch	Scotland	27.94	-6
3	Valaisia Brass Band	Switzerland	842.97	-1	53	Filton Concert Brass	West	26.55	-3
4	Black Dyke	Yorkshire	701.54	-	54	Bjørsvik Brass	Norway	26.34	-2
5	Tredegar	Wales	612.88	+4	55	Goodwick Brass	Wales	25.88	+12
6	Whitburn	Scotland	586.13	-1	56	Ensemble de Cuivres Valaisan A	Switzerland	25.74	-2
7	Eikanger-Bjørsvik	Norway	561.46	-1	57	Fountain City	USA	25.74	-2
8	Grimethorpe Colliery	Yorkshire	460.45	-1	58	Hauts-de-France Brass Band	France	23.92	-2
9	Foden's	North West	392.91	+1	59	Noord Limburgse	Belgium	22.33	-
10	Fairey	North West	386.51	+2	60	Bon Accord	Scotland	22.18	-2
11	Brass Band Willebroek	Belgium	384.05	-3	61	Brass Band Berneroblerland	Switzerland	22.04	-1
12	Flowers	West	249.48	-1	62	Pemberton Old Wigan DW	North West	21.46	-1
13	Carlton Main Frickley Colliery	Yorkshire	215.70	-	63	1st Old Boys Association Silver	N. Ireland	19.95	+18
14	Virtuosi GUS	Midlands	174.67	-	64	Brass Band Oberösterreich	Austria	19.45	+1
15	Burgermusik Luzern	Switzerland	153.50	-	65	Central Coast Brass	Australia	19.19	-1
16	Co-operative Funeralcare	Scotland	139.26	-	66	Ebbw Valley Brass	Wales	18.89	+31
17	Reg Vardy	North	118.18	-	67	Jaren Hornmusikforening	Norway	18.64	-5
18	Leyland	North West	108.78	+1	68	Kingdom Brass	Scotland	18.49	-5
19	Stavanger	Norway	106.15	-1	69	Provinciale Brassband Groningen	Netherlands	17.66	+6
20	Buizingen	Belgium	104.28	-	70	St. Dennis	West	17.38	-4
21	Woodfalls	West	96.48	+1	71	Ashton-under-Lyne	North West	17.24	-2
22	Desford Colliery	Midlands	95.90	-1	72	Atlantic Brass Band	USA	16.92	-4
23	Paris Brass Band	France	95.05	-	73	Woolston Brass	New Zealand	15.73	-1
24	Wingates	North West	85.05	-	74	Zone One Brass	London & SC	15.41	-1
25	Brass Band Schoonhoven	Netherlands	84.18	-	75	Tylorstown	Wales	15.28	+5
26	Tongwynlais Temperance	Wales	77.84	+1	76	UNITE the Union (City of Sheffield)	Yorkshire	15.22	-2
27	Manger Musikklag	Norway	74.13	-1	77	Brass Band de Wâldsang	Netherlands	15.05	+57
28	Hammonds Saltaire	Yorkshire	70.58	+2	78	Marsden Silver	Yorkshire	15.05	-7
29	Milnrow	North West	67.46	+4	79	Ratby Co-operative	Yorkshire	14.57	-9
30	Brass Band Treize Etoiles	Switzerland	67.19	-2	80	Lyngby Taarbaek	Denmark	14.20	-4
31	Friary Guildford	London & SC	64.94	-2	81	Bayerische Brassband Akademie (3BA)	Germany	13.90	-3
32	Rothwell Temperance	Yorkshire	64.32	-1	82	Yorkshire Imperial Urquhart Travel	Yorkshire	13.46	-
33	Concord	Denmark	61.23	-1	83	Brass Band Fribourg	Switzerland	13.31	-4
34	City of Bradford	Yorkshire	55.58	+5	84	Oslo Brass Band	Norway	13.07	-7
35	Hepworth	Yorkshire	48.75	-	85	Aeolus	France	12.69	-2
36	Llwydcoed	Wales	48.14	+4	86	Bathgate	Scotland	12.43	-1
37	Dalmellington	Scotland	45.84	-3	87	Co-operative Funeralcare North West	North West	12.42	+1
38	Redbridge Brass	London & SC	45.21	+19	88	Bo'ness and Carriden	Scotland	11.99	-2
39	National Band of New Zealand	New Zealand	44.05	-3	89	Ensemble de Cuivres Mélodia	Switzerland	11.95	-5
40	Brisbane Excelsior	Australia	37.55	+8	90	Kirkintilloch Kelvin Brass	Scotland	11.72	-3
41	NASUWT Riverside	North	37.42	-3	91	Footscray-Yarraville City	Australia	11.31	-2
42	Jaguar Land Rover	Midlands	36.74	-5	92	BTM	Wales	11.19	+8
43	City of Cardiff (Melingriffith)	Wales	36.62	-1	93	Kidlington Concert	London & SC	11.07	-2
44	Northop	Wales	35.68	-3	94	Verwood Concert Brass	West	10.45	-4
45	Camborne Town	West	29.93	+2	95	Dublin Silver	USA	10.43	-
46	Burry Port Town	Wales	29.69	+7	96	James Madison University	USA	10.27	-3
47	Aldbourne	West	28.68	-2	97	Italian Brass Band	Italy	10.24	-1
48	EYMS	North	28.55	-4	98	East London Brass	London & SC	10.10	-
49	Wellington Brass	New Zealand	28.23	+2	99	Soli Brass	Netherlands	10.01	+14
50	Thoresby Colliery	Midlands	28.06	-1	100	Brass Band Heist	Belgium	9.96	-6

Diary Dates

Forthcoming events that have been advertised in British Bandsman.

November

4 - St. Charles, IL, USA. US Open Brass Band Championships.

4 - Salford. National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain Auditions, University of Salford.

11 - St. Dennis. National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain Auditions, St. Dennis Bandroom.

11 - Sunderland. National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain Auditions, University of Sunderland.

18 - Gateshead. Brass in Concert Focus on Youth and Education, 9.00am, Sage Gateshead.

18 - Gateshead. Cory Band and Only Men Aloud, 7.00pm, Sage Gateshead.

18 - Morley. Foden's Band, 7.30pm, Town Hall.

18 - Perth. Band Supplies Scottish Challenge, 10.00am, Perth Concert Hall.

19 - Gateshead. Brass in Concert Championship, 9.00am, Sage Gateshead.

25 - Perth. Scottish Open Championships, 10.00am, Perth Concert Hall.

25-26 - Perth. Scottish Youth Brass Band Championships, 10.00am, Perth Concert Hall.

December

9 - Morley. Flowers Band, 7.30pm, Town Hall.

January 2018

12-15 - Skegness. Butlin's Mineworkers Open National Brass Band Festival, Skyline Resort.

20 - Morley. Black Dyke Band, 7.30pm, Town Hall.

February

10 - Morley. Grimethorpe Colliery Band, 7.30pm, Town Hall.

March

10 - Morley. Leyland Band, 7.30pm, Town Hall.

April

7 - Morley. Brighouse and Rastrick Band, 7.30pm, Town Hall.

14 - Durham. Grimethorpe Colliery Band, 7.30pm Durham Cathedral.

28 - Morley. Rothwell Temperance Band, 7.30pm, Town Hall.

May

3-6 - Utrecht. European Brass Band Championships.

July

29-4 August - Swansea. International Brass Band Summer School, University.



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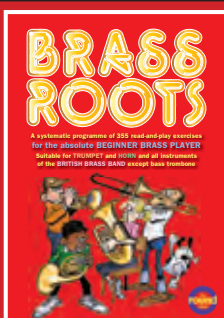
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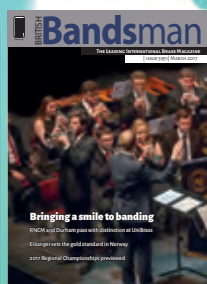
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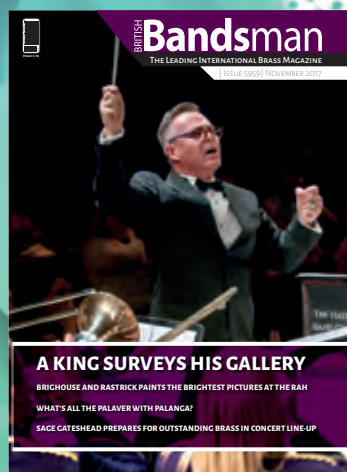


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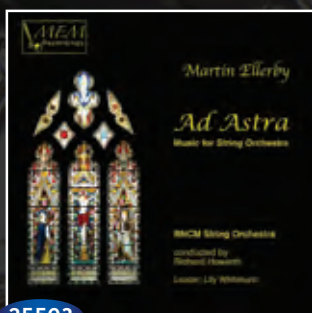
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