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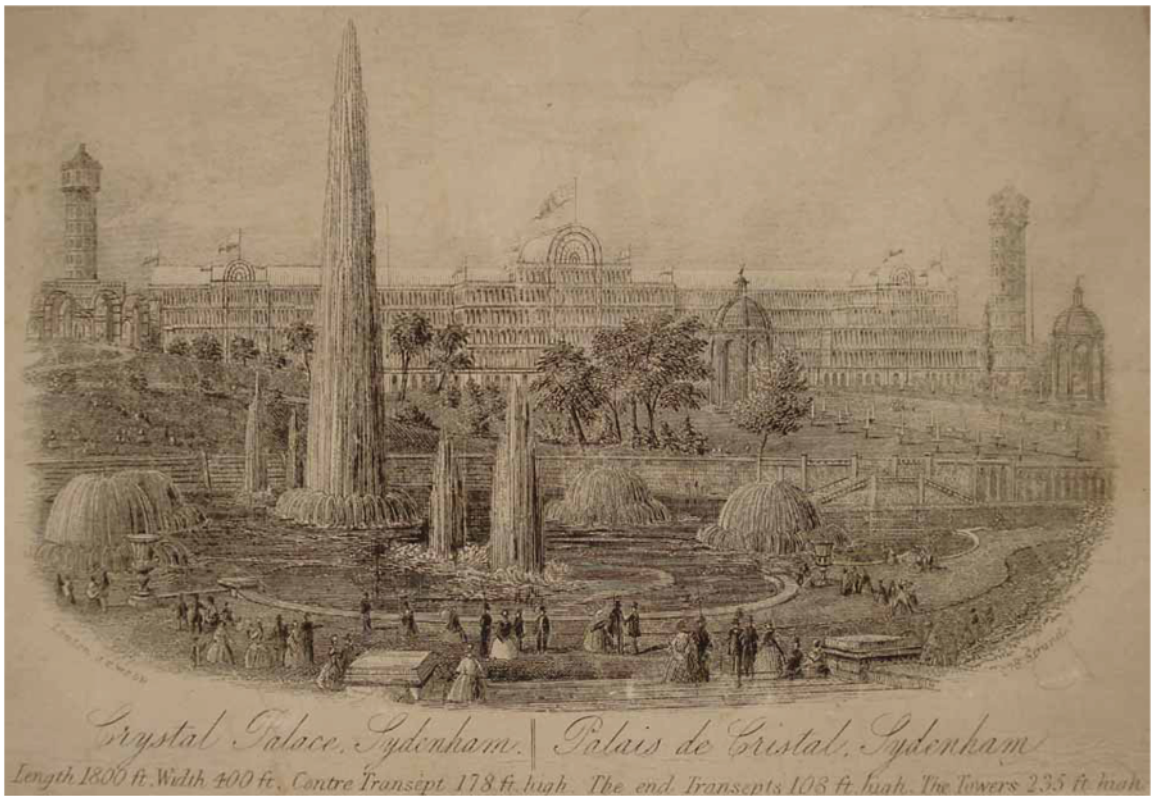
Music for the multitude: accounts of brass bands entering Enderby Jackson's Crystal Palace contests in the 1860s

IN 1854, the enlarged structure of the Crystal Palace was opened at Sydenham in south London (illus.1), having been moved from its original location in Hyde Park at the site of the Great Exhibition of 1851. The Crystal Palace Company wanted to continue the momentum initiated by the Great Exhibition and was particularly keen to develop popular leisure events that matched the spectacular scale of the building. It was also anxious to sustain the status of the Crystal Palace enterprise by emphasizing its role as a provider of events that would appeal to national, rather than purely local, spheres of interest. In 1859, the impresario John Enderby Jackson (1827–1903), who had run a successful bell-ringing contest at the Crystal Palace the previous year, was engaged to organize a summer brass band contest. Jackson's reputation was built in the north of England, where he had achieved stunning success with brass band contests—a form of entertainment that he claimed, with some justification, to have invented.

By this time, brass bands were well established in the United Kingdom as a major leisure activity. Manufacturers were producing cheap piston-valve instruments, and had effective means for promoting and selling them. Hire-purchase schemes were available which enabled groups of working men to buy sets of instruments, provided that reputable people would underwrite and guarantee the loans. Such underwriting was easily available, because this type of relatively sophisticated music-making was perceived by more elevated classes as a 'rational recreation': a means through which participants could

be engaged in a respectable, self-improving activity that might stand as an example for others. Reliable figures as to the number of bands and bandsmen in existence by 1860 are not available, but business was brisk for instrument manufacturers, and accounts of larger contests suggest that by this time brass bands were numerous, particularly in industrialized areas. It is certainly the case that attendance at contests could be measured in thousands. Despite its approval by rational recreationists, there was an element of ambivalence about the status of the brass band as a form of music-making in some quarters, because it was an activity that was associated largely with the working class. But it was also seen as distinctively British: as the *Morning Chronicle* remarked in 1860, the country was 'apt to associate something national with brass bands'.¹

Jackson organized his 1860 Crystal Palace event with a careful regard to detail. There were two contests, which took place on consecutive days. On each day there were six preliminary rounds held in locations around the grounds, with the finals taking place in the concert pavilion. Both days concluded with a spectacular massed brass band concert, performed by almost 1,400 of the contestants. The first day was called the National Contest and was open to any band (or as it was described, 'Amateur, Yeomanry, and Rifle Corps Bands'). The second day—called the Sydenham Amateur Contest—was open only to bands that had not won a prize of more than £20 in competitions during the previous year. The admission price for spectators was 2/6 for the first day, and 1/- for the second day. Forty-four bands



1 The Crystal Palace, Sydenham. 19th-century postcard

entered for the event on the first day and 70 for the second. The audience figures were high even by Crystal Palace standards. The exact number for the first day is not known: the *Morning Chronicle* suggested 7,000. The attendance for the second day was considerably higher: *The Times* estimated that it exceeded 22,000, and *The Era* proclaimed with impressive precision that 22,304 had been there. Winning bands were given trophies, cash prizes of between £5 and £40, sets of music journals and new instruments worth up to £35. The best individual soloists were also given new instruments.² The winners on the first day were the Black Dyke Mills Band from Queensbury, Yorkshire, and on the second day the Cyfarthfa Band from Merthyr Tydfil, south Wales (illus.2).

Jackson was an organizer of military precision. Representatives from each band had to assemble at the Exeter Hall on the day before the contest to be briefed on the proceedings and to draw lots for

the order in which they were to play. The full extent and nature of his organizational strategy is revealed in the data he collected in the entry forms that each contesting band had to submit in advance. The accumulated information allowed him to organize the musical and non-musical logistics for the entire event. He left nothing to chance: on a single sheet of paper he extracted each band's identity, its recent history, the fine detail of its musical configuration and the means by which it would travel to and from Sydenham.

Of the few hundred forms that would have been submitted to Jackson for the contests held annually from 1860 to 1863, 75 survive in private possession on loan to Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments.³ Taken together, they provide the richest and most intimate insight into this important aspect of amateur music-making and public entertainment in the mid-Victorian period (illus.3a–b).



2 The Cyfarthfa Band from Merthyr Tydfil, south Wales—a winner of the 1860 contest. The picture was taken in the early 1850s, probably by the band's sponsor, the iron magnate Robert Thompson Crawshay (1817–79).

Enderby Jackson and the brass band

Enderby Jackson (illus.4) was born in Mynton-gate, Kingston-upon-Hull, on 14 January 1827, the son of a tallow chandler and soap boiler. He was a talented musician who played several instruments and composed. But his entrepreneurial gifts far exceeded his musical ability. He attended Hull Grammar School, and also took music lessons privately. He became proficient on the flute, French horn and piano, and as a singer, and showed some ability in harmony and composition. He claimed to have been inspired to a musical career when, as a small boy enlisted to assist his father in the administration of footlight candles at the Theatre Royal, Hull, he heard Louis Jullien's orchestra perform.

Jullien's concerts were famously extravagant and exuberant and it was the impression this experience made on him that caused him to desert the family business and set about life as a professional musician, playing in theatre and touring bands in northern towns.

Jackson's claim that he had invented the brass band contest was probably justified. There is evidence of minor forms of brass band contesting, but the modern form of the species can probably be traced to Jackson's imagination and entrepreneurial flare. His approach was holistic: he did not merely organize the contests—he had a refined commercial approach and acute awareness of the need to entertain, so he decorated the contests with other

CRYSTAL PALACE, SYDENHAM.

TABLE OF PARTICULARS to be Filled-up by each Band intending to compete in the Brass Band Contests to be held at the above Palace on Tuesday and Wednesday, July 10th and 11th, 1860.

Name of Band..... *Flush Mills Heckmondwike*
 Name of Contests entered for..... *Cloths Blankets Carpets, Edwin Firth & Sons Sydenham only*
 Title of Music, Composer's name, &c., selected to play on ~~Tuesday~~, July 10th, 1860..... *Grand Operatic selection from "Maritana", Wallace Young England Quadrille, & Jackson*
 Title of Music, Composer's name, &c., selected to play on Wednesday, July 11th, 1860.....
 Name of Companies' Railway, also the Railway Station you wish to start from, and the distance from nearest large Town..... *The Lancashire & Yorkshire Rail Company, from Heckmondwike about the same distance from Halifax, Bradford, Huddersfield, Leeds & Wakefield, 2 miles from Dewsbury*
 Particulars of Prizes won during the years 1858 and 1859..... *This is our first contest we have 20 portable music stands, the bottoms are tapped for the uprights to screw into the tops have 4 blocks with holes to fit on the uprights, we have leather cases to pack them in - one for bottom, 1 for upright and two for the tops, we have uniforms making and put them on for the first time on July 7th*
 Have you portable Music Stand you can bring to Sydenham if required? If so, please describe it; also please state if you can appear in Uniform.

Names of Performers.	Profession or Trade.	Instruments played upon.	Key the Instruments stand in.
<i>J. M. Sykes</i>	<i>Clotts Percher</i>	<i>Conductor</i>	
<i>Peter Mortimer</i>	<i>Assistant do</i>	<i>Coronet</i>	<i>Bb</i>
<i>Saml. Schofield</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Ab</i>
<i>John Crowther</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Ab</i>
<i>Ben Moore</i>	<i>Overlooker</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Ab</i>
<i>W. H. Fearnley</i>	<i>Office Clerk</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Ab</i>
<i>G. F. Mortimer</i>	<i>Spinner</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Ab</i>
<i>Benj. Firth</i>	<i>Office Clerk</i>	<i>Tenore Sax</i>	<i>Eb</i>
<i>Wm. Townend</i>	<i>Loom Turner</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Eb</i>
<i>Abm. Fawthrop</i>	<i>Warehouse man</i>	<i>Euphonium</i>	<i>Ab</i>
<i>John Fearnley</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Ab</i>
<i>Autcliffe Greenwood</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Baritone</i>	<i>Ab</i>
<i>George Charleworth</i>	<i>Machine Senter</i>	<i>Baritone</i>	<i>Eb</i>
<i>John Collett</i>	<i>Spinner</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Eb</i>
<i>John Mortimer</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Eb</i>
<i>Geo. Whiteley</i>	<i>Overlooker</i>	<i>Trombone</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>Geo. Crasley</i>	<i>Washer</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Bb</i>
<i>Wm. Rowe</i>	<i>Machine Fetter</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>G</i>

Bands necessitated by sickness or other causes to make any alteration from the particulars here given must obtain the Referee's sanction before any deviation can be admitted.
N.B.—Any Band not returning this Form properly filled-up to the Managing Secretary, Mr. Enderby Jackson, 21, Prospect-Street, Hull, on or before Thursday, the 21st day of June, 1860, will be considered as declining to compete, and their Entrance-Fee, or Fees, in consequence, be forfeited.

John Howe, Printer and Bookbinder, Old Corn Exchange Printing Rooms, 50, Market-Place, Hull.

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3a Contest entry form for the Flush Mills Band, Heckmondwike, 1860. Edwin Firth & Sons manufactured blankets and carpets at Flush Mills; probably all the members of the band worked for the firm. © Arnold Myers, photo: Antonia Reeve

CRYSTAL PALACE, SYDENHAM.

TABLE OF PARTICULARS to be Filled up by each Band intending to compete in the Brass Band Contests to be held at the above Palace on TUESDAY and THURSDAY, July 23rd and 25th, 1861.

Name of Band.—State the Name of Volunteer Corps you belong *Ripponden Band near Huddersfield*

Name of Contests entered for *Amateur Thursday July 25th*

Title of Music, Composer's name, &c. selected to play on Tuesday, July 23rd, 1861.

Title of Music, Composer's Name, &c. selected to play on Thursday, July 25, 1861 *Aria — Anna Bolena. — Songeeta*

Particulars of Prizes won during the year 1859 and 1860 *None*

Describe the Uniform you appear in..... *Plain Coat*

Name of Companies' Railway, also the Railway Station you wish to start from, and the distance from nearest large Town *Great Northern line Halifax Station 5 1/2 Miles from Ripponden*

Name of Performers.	Profession or Trade.	Instruments played upon.	Key the Instruments stand in.
<i>John Marshall</i>	<i>Stone Quarrier</i>	<i>Soprano.</i>	<i>D Flat</i>
<i>Uriah Beatchiff</i>	<i>Cotton Twister</i>	<i>Cornet</i>	<i>A Flat</i>
<i>John Atkinson</i>	<i>Cotton Spinner</i>	<i>Cornet</i>	<i>A Flat</i>
<i>James Beatchiff</i>	<i>Smith</i>	<i>Do.</i>	<i>Do.</i>
<i>John Marrow</i>	<i>Piecer</i>	<i>Do.</i>	<i>Do.</i>
<i>Robert Sutcliffe</i>	<i>Joiner</i>	<i>Tenor Sax.</i>	<i>D Flat</i>
<i>William Marshall</i>	<i>Cotton Twister</i>	<i>Tenor Sax</i>	<i>D Flat</i>
<i>George Mitchell</i>	<i>Joiner</i>	<i>Tenor Trombone</i>	<i>C.</i>
<i>Sutcliffe Greenwood</i>	<i>Wool sorter</i>	<i>Euphonium</i>	<i>B Flat</i>
<i>James Cockcroft</i>	<i>Woolen Miller</i>	<i>Bass</i>	<i>A Flat</i>
<i>William Sykes</i>	<i>Cotton Twister</i>	<i>Contra Bass</i>	<i>E Flat</i>
<i>John Cockcroft</i>	<i>Sailor</i>	<i>Contra Bass</i>	<i>E Flat</i>
<i>John Balmforth</i>	<i>Mechanic</i>	<i>Baritone</i>	<i>A Flat</i>
<i>John Stellawell</i>	<i>Wool sorter</i>	<i>Cymbal</i>	
<i>Robert Bottomley</i>	<i>Cotton Twister</i>	<i>Trombone Bass</i>	<i>G.</i>
<i>James Howsfall</i>	<i>Shoe Maker</i>	<i>Do. Do.</i>	<i>G.</i>
<i>Joseph Schofield</i>	<i>Sailor</i>	<i>Drum</i>	
<i>Edward Hershaw</i>	<i>Blind Maker</i>	<i>Tenor</i>	<i>A B</i>

Bands necessitated by sickness or other causes to make any alteration from the particulars here given must obtain the Referee's sanction before any deviation can be permitted.

N.B.—Any Band not returning this Form properly filled up to the Managing Secretary, Mr. Enderby Jackson, 21, Prospect-Street, Hull, on or before TUESDAY, the 2nd of July 1861, will be considered as declining to compete, and their Entrance-Fee, or Fees, in consequence, be forfeited.

William Henry Wood, Mercantile and General Printer, 31, Scale-Lane, Kingston-upon-Hull.

3b Contest entry form for the Ripponden (near Halifax) Band, 1861. This appears to be a village band, with members drawn from various trades. © Arnold Myers, photo: Antonia Reeve



4 John Enderby Jackson (1827–1903), pen-and-ink drawing published in the *British Bandsman* (24 December 1904).

attractions such as sideshows and balloon ascents. He was especially drawn to the relatively new concept of mass entertainment and the devices that could be employed to market it effectively. One such idea was the railway cheap-day excursion. This was one of his key strategies, and Jackson's negotiations with railway companies for preferential terms for his competitors and their supporters may have made a significant contribution to the way that the concept of the 'cheap excursion' was developed.

Jackson said that the idea of brass band contests was inspired by his observation of the public's fascination with competitive agricultural events. As he watched large numbers of the populace try to second-guess expert judges as to which cow, pig or chicken was of the highest merit, it occurred to him that mass audiences could be doubly engaged by the idea of competition being combined with musical entertainment. His 'National Musical Contests' were devised to capitalize on this idea.

The nationwide proliferation of brass bands started in the late 1840s. Jackson's first contest was held at Hull in the summer of 1851, when he was just 23 years old. He said that most of the bands that took part that day were not constituted as brass bands until the previous December, and that their forma-

tion could be attributed to his itinerant efforts in the area around Hull, where he encouraged the formation of bands. Indeed, he said that many of the performances were inadequate because they hardly knew how to play.⁴

It seems likely that, initially at least, brass bands were formed on the basis of existing groups of amateur music-makers, but from the 1850s there is also abundant evidence of bands being formed by people and in places without a trace of a previous instrumental musical tradition. The speed of development was particularly impressive. Bands were often taught by 'Professors of Music' who knew little about brass instruments but were equipped with a sound musical knowledge and simple instructional primers for the instruments.⁵ By the mid-1850s brass bands of quality were ubiquitous in the north of England, and Jackson held his first 'Open Brass Band Contest' at the Belle Vue Gardens in Manchester in July 1853. Like most of his contests, it was held in the open air, so thousands could be comfortably admitted (uncorroborated reports say that 14,000 people attended the first Manchester event).

His autobiographical writings reveal Jackson as a man of considerable self-confidence and even self-opinion, but he was one of the most effective impresarios of his time. His retrospective claim that his mission had been 'the propagation of music amongst the working classes' probably disguised more mundane, financial motives, but his impact on the musical life of ordinary Victorians is difficult to ignore. After his work on the Crystal Palace contests, which ran for just four years, he moved on to other, mainly international, enterprises. He toured Australia, New Zealand and South Africa with his London Star Company Comique, and became the sole agent for many important foreign bands, including Lumbye's band from Copenhagen and Patrick Gilmore's from the USA. He was also an agent for British and foreign instrument manufacturers, and was for some time associated with conductor Charles Hallé.

The sources

Taken together, the 75 surviving contest application forms contain enough information for broad judgements to be drawn about the nature of brass band contesting, the preferred repertoires,

instrumentations and the social structures from which players were drawn. Each form contains seven categories of information:

1 Identity

Each band had to state its name and (if applicable) the name of any ‘volunteer force’ to which it belonged. This was a reference to the irregular or part-time sector of the British military; many well-established bands enlisted in the volunteer movement in or shortly after 1859, when the force was re-mustered.⁶ The volunteer force attracted a social approval which Jackson was anxious to use as marketing capital in the south where brass banding was less well established; several national newspapers noted the affiliations with volunteering. In fact, the motives that drew bands to the volunteer movement were often more pragmatic than patriotic. Many bands joined *en bloc* to secure the benefit of free uniforms, practice halls and fees for their conductors. These factors, and the abject failure of many bands to accept military discipline, were laid bare in parliamentary commissions of 1862 and 1878/9.⁷

2 Contest preference

Bands had to nominate which of the two contests they wished to enter—many qualified to do so seem to have entered both events. The Cyfarthfa band, which won the Sydenham Contest in 1860, entered both contests, though it appears not to have entered any contests previously. The Cyfarthfa band was relatively unusual in that it was a private band sponsored by an individual, the iron magnate Robert Thompson Crawshay (1817–79). The 1862 and 1863 events consisted of only one contest. The winner of the 1863 contest came not from the industrial north, but from Blandford in the southern rural county of Dorset.⁸

3 Repertory

Here each band had to nominate the repertory it intended to play. For the second day in 1860 (the ‘Sydenham Amateur Contest’) the General Regulations required:

Each band to play two pieces, one of their own selection, and an original Set of Quadrilles, composed and arranged by Mr Enderby Jackson; – the Score of which will be sent to each Band after entry.⁹

For the ‘Grand Prize Quadrille’ composed by Enderby Jackson, see *illus.5*.

A similar combination of set test-piece and own choice was required for the other contests. For the 1863 contest, the test-piece was a ‘Grand Selection from Verdi’s latest Opera, “La Forza del Destino”, expressly arranged for the Contest by J. Smyth, Bandmaster, Royal Artillery, Woolwich’ (*illus.6*).¹⁰ *La Forza del Destino* was first performed in St Petersburg in November the previous year and did not have its first British performance (at Her Majesty’s Theatre) until June 1867. This was not an isolated case: brass bands played an important role in disseminating operatic derivatives, and arrangements of operatic arias, overtures and selections were often in circulation before the works had been performed in full on British soil. Taking all 75 surviving forms as a whole, 121 works are mentioned, and Italian opera derivatives account for 67 of these, with Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini and Verdi being the most popular. The piece most cited is Donizetti’s *Lucretia Borgia*, followed by Verdi’s *Ernani*. Though there were publications for brass band at this time, most were simple, essentially didactic, arrangements published in monthly subscription journals; the parts they contained were provided in a number of different transpositions to accommodate the various collections of instruments that bands had. Most of the best contesting bands played bespoke arrangements usually made by their conductors, and even published music that needed to be adapted for the forces at hand. The ability of a band to progress to the highest levels often depended on the ability of the conductor, who was the artistic director in the broadest sense: he had to know mainstream repertory and be able to arrange it effectively, conduct it sensitively and train the players in technique. The musical sources that survive show that the practice of adapting orchestral music for brass instruments led bands to acquire surprising levels of technical virtuosity.¹¹

The *General Regulations* for the second day of the 1860 event laid out plans for the massed bands concert:

During the afternoon of each day, the whole of the bands will unite in the Handel Orchestra, Central Transept, and play the ‘Hallelujah Chorus’, ‘Mendelssohn’s Wedding

5 *Grand Prize Quadrille* composed and arranged by Enderby Jackson for one of the Crystal Palace Contests, showing the first of six pages. © Arnold Myers, photo: Antonia Reeve

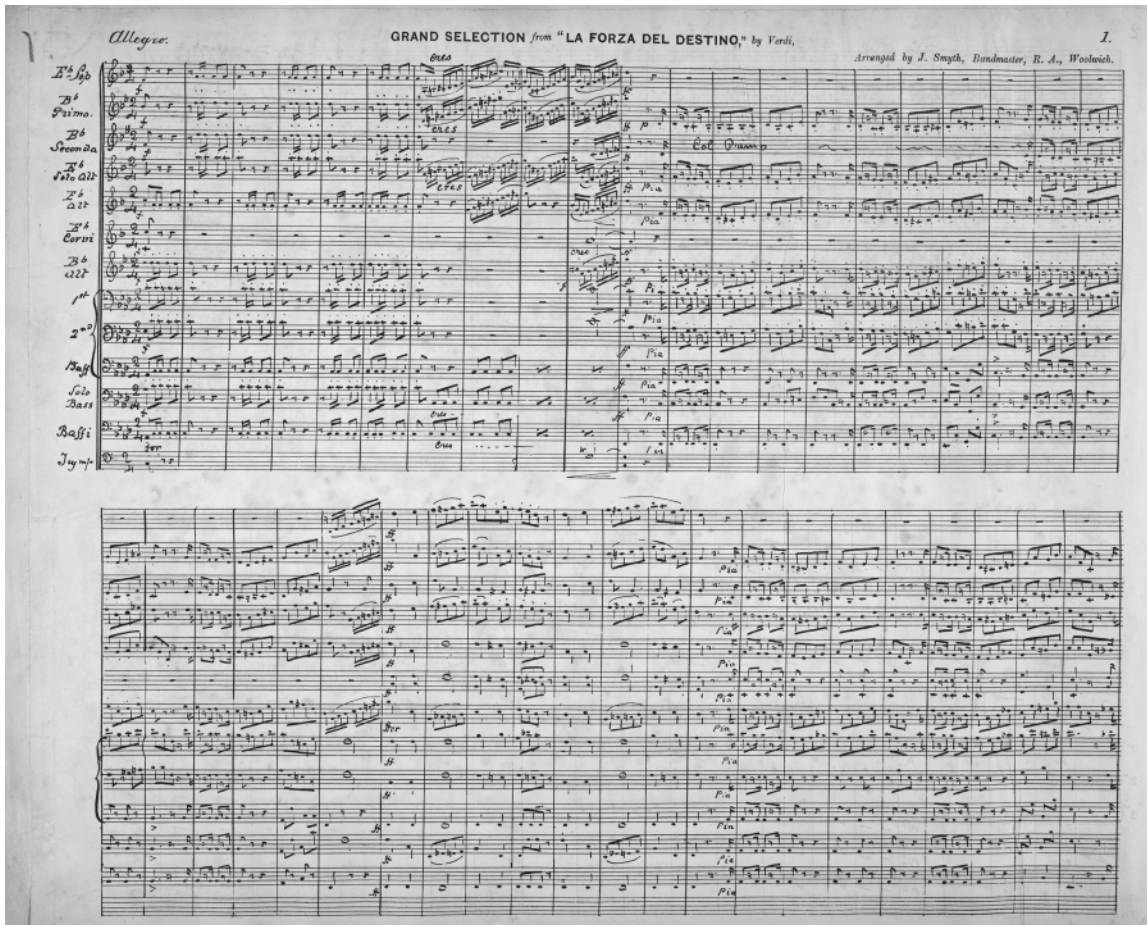
March', Haydn's Grand Chorus—"The Heavens are Telling", 'Rule Britannia', and 'God save the Queen';—the Scores of which will be sent free to all the Bands after Entry, together with Pitchpipe to attune the Band, and thus, when all meet, ensure equal pitch; also a Metronome, with a description of use, to ensure the correct time of each piece of Music during the Rehearsals.

In 1861, 1862 and 1863 the massed band was similarly organized but different programmes were performed. For the 1863 contest, bands were offered a tuning fork (A) tuned to the Crystal Palace organ.

4 Railway and station

The development of brass band contests led to common understandings of the brass band idiom,

eventually to the standardization of instrumentation and a general elevation of playing standards, but Jackson's motives in the 1860s were largely commercial. He quickly realized the potential of railways to serve the entertainment business and negotiated special arrangements directly with the railway companies. He elicited the necessary details from the bands and paid the railway companies directly for transporting the bands, covering his costs with the fees they paid to enter the contests.¹² Thus, all bands paid the same regardless of their distance from Sydenham. The bands' supporters could travel on the same special excursion trains at a cheap fare.



6 Grand Selection from 'La Forza del destino', by Verdi arranged for the National Brass Band Contest, 1863, by James Smyth (Bandmaster of the Royal Artillery Band), showing the first of 12 pages. © Arnold Myers, photo: Antonia Reeve

5 Previous successes

Here bands had to declare their immediately previous contest results. This information was used to determine a band's qualification to enter for the Sydenham Contest, and it also (presumably) enabled Jackson to make an assessment of the quality of players who would take part in the massed bands concert.

6 Uniforms

At a purely practical level, uniforms allowed audiences to identify each individual band easily. Also, the array of different uniforms added to the spec-

tacle of the occasion. In fact, uniforms also had an important role in defining and exhibiting the status and ambition of a band. Not all bands who entered the Crystal Palace contests wore uniforms, but many did: either the uniforms of volunteer units or specially created uniforms based on military dress. Some bands indicated their intention to appear in 'concert dress', while many wore civilian clothes. Several simply wore their best suits along with matching 'caps' with gold decorations. The wearing of such caps was a frequent feature of ambitious but financially fragile bands, but it was seen as the first step towards a full uniform.

7 Occupations of contestants

The occupation of each performer had to be declared in order to establish that (with the exception of the leader or conductor) all were genuinely amateur. This information is fascinating, but generalizations can be made only in the most tentative terms. *The Times* perceptively reported that the constituents of the brass band movement were ‘mechanics, artisans, petty tradesmen, manufacturers, and labourers of the northern and midland counties’.¹³ In fact, most of the players fall into the categories of skilled and unskilled workers, but their numbers also contained school teachers, publicans and others who might in modern times be termed white-collar workers. One of the more surprising generalizations that can be drawn is that the mix of occupations in most bands makes it far from certain that every player in a particular band was drawn from a single place of employment, and this calls into question the popular assumption that most brass bands were ‘works bands’ or ‘factory bands’.¹⁴

Jackson’s regulations for the contests stated that ‘Each Band will be allowed one Professional Man to Play or Conduct, but he will not be permitted to Play with more than one Band in this Contest’.¹⁵ Not all bands declared the occupation of their leader or conductor, but of the half who did in the surviving documents, 15 said that they were conducted by men who apparently claimed to be making their living solely from music, being listed as ‘conductor’, ‘bandmaster’, ‘professor of music’ or ‘musician’. This tends to reflect a general pattern of well-organized bands being led by a professional. However, the pattern is not entirely consistent: some were conducted by skilled workers, and an ‘Actuary of a Savings Bank’ conducted the Second Shropshire Rifle Volunteers. Each conductor had to sign and return to Jackson a ‘Bandmaster’s Certificate of Band’s Efficiency’ confirming that the band had duly practised the music for the massed bands concert, and that it could perform each piece ‘in a creditable manner, due attention being given to the Pitch, Tone, Pianos, Fortes, Smartness, and Crispness’.¹⁶

Later brass band contests allowed a professional conductor to conduct more than one band, and it became the practice for the most successful band trainers to be engaged to rehearse and conduct

several different bands in a single contest (a practice that prevails in modern times). The most successful band conductor-trainers of the later 19th century were John Gladney, Alexander Owen and Edwin Swift—all based in the north of England; their preferred instrumentations almost certainly contributed to the standardization of the instrumentation of the British brass band.

8 Instrumentation

The name of the instrument that each player was to play was a further test of the *bona fides* of the band (players were, in effect, registering as players of a particular instrument). Also, Jackson needed this information for the preparation of music for the evening massed bands concert. This is why the nominal pitch for each instrument was required. At this time, most of the valve instruments played from parts transposed into the key of their nominal pitch, and trombones and basses generally played from parts notated at concert pitch.

The 1840s and 1850s had been a period of rapid change in the instrumentation of brass bands in Britain, with cornets becoming more common and replacing keyed bugles, saxhorns and similar intermediate-bore valve instruments replacing French horns and trumpets, and euphoniums and bombardons replacing serpents and partially replacing ophicleides.¹⁷ The 1830s and 1840s had been a fertile period for the development of new models of brass instrument, with many French instruments and inventions (such as those of Adolphe Sax) being imported and copied in Britain.¹⁸ By the 1870s the instrumentation of British brass bands was more rational and balanced than it had previously been and showed early signs of standardization under the influence of stricter contest rules and the increasing use of published music. The entry forms show that this transition was in progress in the early 1860s. Bands entering such national contests would have been confident that they were up to strength and well equipped. The instrumentations documented in the entry forms will have included those representative of the best-equipped and most proficient bands, but will not necessarily reflect the make-up of the numerous community brass bands being formed throughout Britain at that time: rather, they show

the instrumentation poorer bands will have sought to aspire towards.

An example of an instrumentation which, even at that time, was rapidly becoming old-fashioned is provided by the Brighouse Band from near Huddersfield, Yorkshire, which played a selection from *Lucretia Borgia* (Donizetti) in the 1860 contests with the line-up shown in Table 1. Here 'Sax' means saxhorn, not saxophone: reed instruments were expressly prohibited by the contest rules. From the evidence of surviving instruments of the period, it is clear that instruments were rarely built in the keys of $A\flat$ or $D\flat$. Instruments such as cornets were built in $E\flat$ or $B\flat$ and provided with crooks for lower tonalities; instruments such as tenor horns and baritones were similarly built in $E\flat$ or $B\flat$ and provided with extended tuning-slides for lower tonalities.

In the earlier period of brass bands there had been a common preference for crooking the smaller instruments into lower tonalities, exemplified here by the soprano cornet (or saxhorn) in $D\flat$, the cornets

in $A\flat$, one tenor saxhorn in $D\flat$, and the bass saxhorn (euphonium) in $A\flat$. The ophicleide had filled two important roles in early bands: playing the bass line and providing a melodic voice in the tenor range. These functions were gradually being taken over by the contrabass saxhorns (bombardons) and the bass saxhorn (euphonium) respectively. The valve instruments shared the same fingering and notation, but the ophicleide fingering was unlike that of any other instrument. It seems probable that the numerous ophicleides in use in the early 1860s were replaced by valve basses and contrabasses when bands bought new instruments or when their players retired.

Tenor trombones in C and bass trombones in G were used far more in the bands entering the Crystal Palace contests than trombones in $B\flat$. Overall, about one in ten of the trombones listed in the forms are valve trombones: the actual proportion of valve trombones may have been higher since none is listed specifically as a slide trombone and the use of valve trombones at this time was prevalent.

An example of an instrumentation with few vestiges of the earlier era is provided by Dewsbury Old Brass Band, which played a selection from *William Tell* (Rossini) in the 1863 contest with the line-up shown in Table 2.

As with present-day brass bands, the principal voice was provided by the $B\flat$ cornet rather than the smaller $E\flat$ soprano cornet, whose role is to add brilliance in tutti sections and occasionally to play a solo line: a single soprano cornet is now part of the standard instrumentation. The flugelhorn (alto saxhorn) was used to double the lower cornet parts, a practice which continued for a couple of decades after the 1860s: again, a single flugelhorn is now used. It is not clear whether the last-mentioned bass in $B\flat$ was a euphonium at 9' pitch or a contrabass in 18' $B\flat$. The latter size was known at the time, but very little used.

Other instruments less frequently mentioned in the entry forms included alto trombones, trumpets and French horns. One band still sported a keyed bugle. Although some gave the name of a percussion player, it is clear that percussion was not included in the contest instrumentation, the cymbals, side and bass drums being used for street playing only. The Darwen Temperance Band, Lancashire, form listed

Table 1 Information provided by the Brighouse band from near Huddersfield, Yorkshire. The spellings are those used in the application form

Name	Occupation	Instrument
George Pratt, Leader	Turner	Soperano in $D\flat$
William Whitaker Abraham Thornton	Cotton Twister Stone Pitcher	Soperano 2nd in $D\flat$ Solo Cornett in $A\flat$
John Whitaker Benjamin Tifany	Dyer Wire Drawer	Cornett 2nd in $A\flat$ Cornett 3rd in $A\flat$
Joseph Blakey Edward Roberts	Dyer Cotton Twister	Cornett 3rd in $A\flat$ Tenor Sax in $E\flat$
Joseph Jackman James Shaw	Stone Mason Shoe Maker	Tenor Sax in $D\flat$ Trombone 1st in C
Syrus Broomhead Joseph Sutcliffe	Stone Pitcher Wever	Trombone 2nd in C Trombone Bass in G
Dyson Walker David Womersly	Stone Pitcher Wire Drawer	Sax Horn Bass in $A\flat$ Ophicleide Primo in C
John Schofield George Green	Dyer Wire Drawer	Ophicleide 2nd in C Ophicleide 2nd in C
Thos Shaw Samuel Hirst	Wever Currier	Ophicleide Bass in C Contra Bass in $E\flat$
Charles Sheard	Wever	Contra Bass in $E\flat$

Table 2 The instrumentation indicated by the Dewsbury Old Brass Band from Yorkshire (original spellings)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Instrument</i>
John Peel	Innkeeper	Cornet in B♭
W. Blackburn	Spinner	Soprano in E♭
John Lumb	Mechanic	Soprano in E♭
James Blackburn	Shoe Maker	Cornet in B♭
E. Newsom	Clothier	Flugal Horn in B♭
R. Thornes	Clothier	Flugal Horn in B♭
J. Lee	Dyer	Tenor Sax in E♭
M. Dearnley	Shopkeeper	Tenor Sax in E♭
J. Knowles	Innkeeper	Tenor Sax in E♭
M. Johnson	Spinner	Barriton in B♭
J. Peel	Cloth Fuller	Euphonion in B♭
T. Wood	Cloth Fuller	Trombone in B♭
W. Whithead	Joiner	Trombone in C
J. Newsom	Clothier	Trombone in G
J. Howgate	Spinner	Contra Bass in E♭
Luke Wilson	Clothier (?)	Contra Bass in E♭
A. Newsom	Clothier	Contra Bass in E♭
John Colbeck	Cloth Fuller	Bass in B♭

‘Drummer, but will not bring his drum of course’. As was to be the case for over a hundred years, percussion instruments were not allowed to be used in contest playing. The general regulations, however, required bands to parade down to the railway station on the morning of their departure, giving the percussion a role in the event.

Bands entering the contests were limited to 18 players. An impression of the average constitution of the bands in the 1860 contest can be gained from the proportions of the massed band, which consisted of:

- 144 soprano cornets
- 184 cornets primo
- 210 cornets secondo
- 83 E♭ alto horns
- 71 D♭ alto horns primo
- 51 D♭ alto horns secondo
- 100 baritones
- 74 tenor trombones
- 75 bass trombones
- 80 euphonions
- 133 ophicleides
- 155 E♭ contrabasses
- 2 B♭ double contrabasses
- 26 side drums
- 1 monster gong drum
- 1 organ

Reception

Both days’ events in 1860 were reported in detail by several London and national newspapers. The scale of the contest ensured that it registered as something of an occasion, and one newspaper noted that:

As early as Saturday last hundreds of brass instrument players began to arrive [in London] who were engaged to perform in the contest, and on Sunday and Monday every train that arrived, especially from the north, poured forth its anxious passengers, and increased the number of those already arrived to be present at the eventful contest.¹⁹

Not all commentary was supportive of the event; the popular *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, which could be relied on to supply notes of sarcastic humour, claimed that ‘never were the pleasant woods of Penge so frightened out of their propriety’.²⁰ But other journals were favourable. *The Times* mentioned the players’ ‘surprising brilliancy and precision’ in the massed bands concert, and described the playing as worthy of ‘unqualified praise’.²¹ *The Era* reported the ‘unexampled interest which [had] been manifested by all classes, musical and otherwise, towards this magnificent musical meeting’. It went on to say that the ‘torrent of sound’ in the massed bands contest had ‘the most extraordinary character, and it may be safely predicted that nothing equal to it for grandeur and sublimity in music has as yet ever been heard’.²²

The Morning Chronicle felt the need to dispel any idea held by its readers that a brass band contest was one in which the band ‘that played the loudest or the longest’ received the prize:

On the contrary, it is a perfectly business-like and skilfully contrived plan, whereby every band in succession goes through a severely critical ordeal, and has its pretensions decided on by a thoroughly competent tribunal.²³

The tribunal in question was made up almost entirely of musical directors of military bands (18 in all), with Jackson himself as the referee. The formation of the adjudicating panel was of critical importance to the musical legitimacy of the occasion, as the military was perceived as the best organized and most efficient music-making institution in the country. Among those assembled for the task in 1860 were Dan and Charles Godfrey of the Grenadier Guards, Charles Boosé of the Royal Horse Guards, Jacob Kappey of the Royal Marines (a noted contributor to *Grove’s Dictionary*), Smyth

of the Royal Artillery and Hartman of the 10th Hussars. *The Era's* declaration that 'No military brass band in Her Majesty's service could at all compete with some of the bands that played' was a bold and even reckless claim to have made at that time.²⁴

A printed form was used to collect the judges' remarks. One surviving example shows that the critical analysis expected of modern contest adjudicators was not then the practice. The terse remarks included 'Bad Cornet—Good Euphonium' for one band, 'Remarks None to Make', 'Rascally Bad', 'All excellent', and 'in charity I will say nothing' for others.²⁵

It is not entirely clear why the event lasted for only four years, but while the 1861 contest sustained the momentum of the 1860 success, the number of bands that entered was fewer and attendances were lower. Though they did not drop below about 12,000, they did not reach the dizzy heights attained in the first year. In 1863 only 21 bands competed,

compared with 115 in 1860. Jackson had negotiated the contest arrangements with Robert Bowley, the first general manager of the Crystal Palace, who died in 1863. This may have caused some fracturing of the relationship with the Crystal Palace management, but also the proliferation of contests elsewhere, especially the growing success of the Belle Vue Contest in Manchester as the focus for national excellence, might have led to some falling away of interest among the best northern bands. In 1863, Jackson was planning a contest to be held in London in the summer of 1864 'between the musical artisans of France and those of England'.²⁶ This plan did not come to fruition. After 1863, brass band contests were not to return to the Crystal Palace until 1900 under the organization of the publisher and entertainment entrepreneur John Henry Iles (1871–1951), at which time the contest was termed 'The National Brass Band Championship'.

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1 'Great brass band contest at the Crystal Palace', *The Morning Chronicle* (11 July 1860).

2 For a list of the prizes and other general information about the event, see M. Musgrave, *The musical life of the Crystal Palace* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.194–8.

3 Thirty-four forms survive from 1860, 23 from 1861, 13 from 1862 and five from 1863; the collection also holds seven from the 1863 Order of Druids' Brass Band Contest at the Royal Park Garden, Leeds, 1863.

4 For Jackson's own, somewhat inflated, account of how he conceived and introduced the brass band contest, see Enderby Jackson, 'Origin and promotion of brass band contests', *Musical Opinion and Music Trade Review* (1896) (serialized).

5 Many of these primers were supplied by the instrument manufacturers, but publications such as E. A. Lodge's *The brass band at a glance*, published privately by Lodge in Huddersfield in 1895, provided the basics about brass

instruments that local teachers could utilize with *ab initio* players.

6 The British volunteer force had existed under various titles since the 18th century, but in the 1850s the threat of invasion from France was perceived as imminent and serious. In 1859, Jonathan Peel, Secretary of State for War, issued letters to all county lieutenants instructing them to form a force of volunteers using the terms of the Militia Act of 1852. The origins of the 1859 Volunteers are explained in greater detail in T. Herbert (ed.), *The*

British brass band: a musical and social history (Oxford, 2000), pp.36–43.

7 Report of the Royal Commission of the Condition of the Volunteer Force (1862); Report of the Bury Departmental Committee (1878/9).

8 The entry forms of the Cyfarthfa and the Blandford bands are among those that have not survived.

9 'Regulations' for the Crystal Palace contest, second day, 1860. Document on loan to Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments (EUCHMI).

10 'Regulations' for the Crystal Palace contest, 1863. Document on loan to EUCHMI.

11 Among the surviving hand-written arrangements of this time are fragments of the Black Dyke Mills Band books and those of the Besses O' th' Barn Band; also those of the Cyfarthfa Band, which competed in the 1860 contest, playing Verdi's *Nabucco*—while the band's entry form has not survived, the music which it played has. This piece is included in a period instrument recording of music from the Cyfarthfa repertory by the Wallace Collection under the title *The origin of the species* (The Wallace Collection wc2013, 1996).

12 Manuscript minutes of a meeting between Jackson and representatives of several railway companies, 19 May 1860. Document on loan to EUCHMI.

13 'Contest of brass bands at the Crystal Palace', *The Times* (11 July 1860).

14 Allied to this is the fact that most of the surviving evidence relating to the finances of brass bands in this period shows that they were self-governed and self-financing, even though a person of high social standing would initially have acted as the guarantor for loans to buy instruments.

15 'Regulations' for the Crystal Palace contest, 1863. Document on loan to EUCHMI.

16 Examples of Bandmasters' certificates, on loan to EUCHMI.

17 A. Myers, 'Instruments and instrumentation of British brass bands', in Herbert, *The British brass band*, pp.155–86.

18 Examples of British makers copying French inventions are given in

E. Mitroulia and A. Myers, 'Adolphe Sax: visionary or plagiarist?' *Historic Brass Society Journal*, xx (2008), pp.93–142.

19 'The great national brass band contest at the Crystal Palace', *The Era* (15 July 1860).

20 'The brass band contest', *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* (15 July 1860).

21 'Contest of brass bands at the Crystal Palace', *The Times* (12 July 1860).

22 'The great national brass band contest at the Crystal Palace', *The Era* (15 July 1860).

23 'The great brass band contest at the Crystal Palace', *The Morning Chronicle* (11 July 1860).

24 'The great national brass band contest at the Crystal Palace', *The Era* (15 July 1860).

25 Copy of a sheet of 'Judges' remarks' for the Crystal Palace contest, 1860. Document on loan to EUCHMI.

26 Manuscript of a draft letter from Jackson, 1863. Document on loan to EUCHMI.

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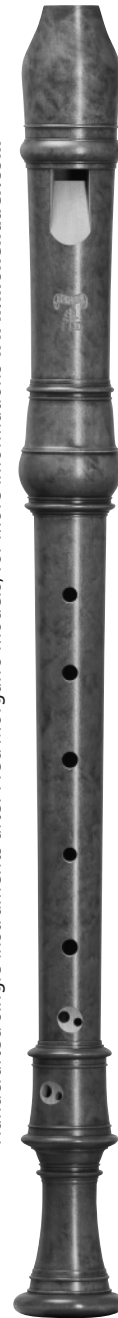
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