

Composers don't need to be reminded of the effort, the man-hours, or the enormous number of notes required for composing a ten minute, fully-scored work for wind band, but advice on how to make all this labour bear fruit, and some helpful hints on how to secure second and subsequent performances still need airing from time to time.

I remember reading some wise words by the American composer, Francis McBeth, a while ago, who said that one of the great joys of writing for wind bands, for him, was the distinct possibility that the world première would be followed up, in that country at least, by many more performances, which was not always the case with music he wrote for the symphony orchestra! Mind you, there are about 68,000 wind bands in the USA, and McBeth is a fine and respected composer

I have had two major commissions in the States: the latest, *Bohemian Dances*, is due for a first performance in May and is currently on schedule to be delivered in time for rehearsals at the beginning of March; the first, *French Impressions*, was commissioned in 1998 by Metropolitan Wind Symphony, an excellent band in Boston and it was warmly received by the audience at its première. There was not, however, a great deal of interest in the piece until maestro Eugene Migliaro Corporon recorded it commercially with the North Texas Wind Symphony, and, from the moment the CD hit the streets, orders from bands and music shops all over the States arrived. A good CD is a powerful marketing tool. Even a live

recording of the first performance of your masterpiece is invaluable, but do obtain permission from the conductor and players. However if, instead of being a composer, you are a band director looking for new repertoire, it is advisable before switching on your mini disc or cassette recorder in the dark at a concert to obtain copyright clearance, permission from the publisher and band director, etc. At WASBE Conferences every note seems to be professionally recorded, edited into a 'Highlight Compilations' disc, and sold, no doubt at a handsome profit. The Royal Northern College of Music, however, which used to record all the gala concerts at the BASBWE Conference, have, after legal advice, been much more wary of late.

If you have a publisher, do make sure that he/she is armed with several copies of your score at the first performance to hand out to interested parties. In Manchester last year I heard the first performance of an excellent piece by Stephen McNeff called *The Winged Lion*, played by Southwark Concert Band, conducted by Robert Bridges. After the performance I congratulated Stephen on his piece and said I would like to include it in my next concert with the Birmingham Conservatoire Wind Orchestra. Giles Easterbrook from Maecenas Music thrust a score into my hand then and there, and the piece was duly scheduled. Job done! Even if you haven't got a publisher, do try to provide some perusal scores or 'give aways'. In Europe, and occasionally in the UK, 'mini scores', usually and

intentionally incomplete, are sometimes requested, but I find them so difficult to read that I question their value (and so do a lot of other conductors)

Another way of advancing your cause as a composer is to try to spread the load of the original commission fee. BASBWE Chairman Charles Hine has long experience of ingenious schemes like the College Commission Consortium initiative, whereby the major academies and conservatoires each contribute a portion of the commission fee, and take it in turns to choose the composer and give the first performance. Thereafter the work usually, unless it is a complete stinker, gets several more performances from excellent bands. This 'shared load' system can work on a more modest scale financially, which is, at the same time, more extravagant in the number of participants. There is surely a lot to be said for, say, a dozen schools each contributing an agreed amount, and having the right to perform the piece or even collaborating to perform it. A little imagination could make the idea of a choral/wind orchestra piece a perfect vehicle for this type of initiative. Even the big boys indulge in multiple commissions. Frank Ticheli and his publisher Manhattan Beach Music - and they don't come much bigger than that - proudly list thirty 'Consortium Participants' in the front of the score of his exciting 1997 piece *Blue Shades*.

Finally, don't forget to let band directors know about your premières, and send details to the local press and, of course, to *Winds* magazine!

How to get a 2nd Performance