

WINDS Magazine

Summer 2018



BASBWE

• British Association of Symphonic Bands
• & Wind ensembles

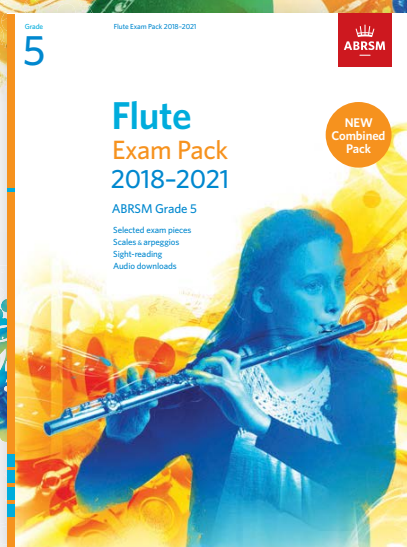


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Thoughts from the Chair

"The object of BASBWE shall be to advance the status of Symphonic Bands and Wind Ensembles in the United Kingdom, and the education of the general public".

Yes... Summer is here... and many bands have been out and about braving the UV to entertain, promote, educate, fund raise, play... because they can.... in parks, band stands (those still standing) promenades, streets, city centres, school fetes, town halls, churches, memorials, celebrations etc etc... across the country... across the world... thousands of bands... bands across borders visiting, country to country sharing, exploring musical, cultural and social possibilities.

A very heartening communal trait being reported is the engagement of bands with their local communities, not just with concerts but creative contact through festivals, schools, collaborative workshops for kids and adults often with support to local music hubs, drama groups, dance groups, choirs and much else besides. One such band is the Sandwich Band... they're here with us in this edition of WINDS.

Take a look at what they're up to... and please let us know what you are doing in your area... send us your stories, pictures, anecdotes, opinions so we can pass them on. We're looking for as many ambassador bands as we can shake a baton at.

It's rare that we hear of opera and wind bands. There are arrangements of some standard operatic repertoire fashioned for wind band but rarely for complete theatrical presentation and original opera written for voices and wind ensemble rarer still.

I was lucky enough to have been present at the RNCM for the first performance of Adam Gorb's Opera "Pathway to Heaven" for voices and wind ensemble, Libretto by Ben Kaye, conducted by Mark Heron. It is a staggering achievement on many levels with the instrumental, vocal and narrative invention hanging in the head for days afterwards. It's a landmark piece, not just in Operatic terms but an opera with wind ensemble accompaniment, again, as Adam has done in the past, he and librettist Ben Kaye take us on a rollercoaster journey via a subject we think we know in a manner that's unexpected, surprising, and very moving the conclusion of which is not dark despair but the exemplification of the strength of the human spirit. Don't take my word for it, have a read of the article and enjoy the performance via the link: vimeo.com/278668161/554864453c (the supportive materials are reproduced here by kind permission of the composer)

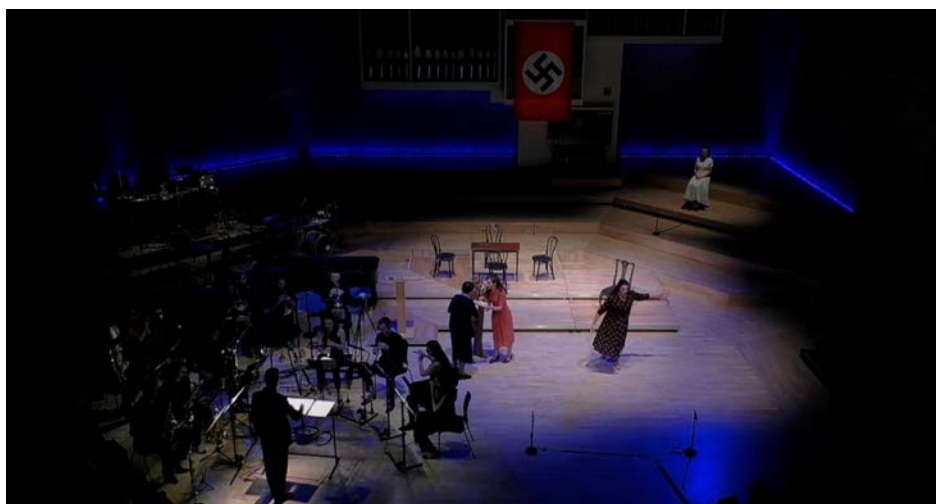
Talking of bands across borders, in June we had the second outing of ECWO (European Competition for Wind Orchestras) this time in Brussels hosted by the Belgium amateur music association VLAMO.

This competition goes from strength to strength building relationships with bands and banding organisations across Europe. The participating bands are by invitation (Birmingham Symphonic Winds under their conductor Keith Allen were our UK representatives). This is not just a competition but a sharing of musical experiences and opinion with round table discussions and opportunities for individuals and representatives of participating countries to share and develop ideas together.

My question continues to be "Who Benefits from these competitions?" We have bands coming together who perform, bow, wait till the end of the day to get there adjudication and go home, till the next time. The time and efforts put in are enclosed in the competition hall. With ECWO we have ostensibly the very best bands from the participating countries. Performances, as expected, have been phenomenal.

However, their expertise could be shared with local community bands in rehearsal workshops shared while they await the delivery of adjudication. It would only take two bands out of the ten/twelve bands to take that on. A big rehearsal with a local band would do so much for the esteem of all concerned. These and other ideas are being developed for future ECWO events.

There are performances in the streets and surrounding areas at both Utrecht (1st ECWO 2016) and Brussels (2nd ECWO 2018).



Summer 2018



The next gathering will be in Lille 2020. The French are promising creative interactive events as well as the competition. It promises to be a fabulous festival. We at BASBWE are aiming at having ECWO in UK 2022. International bands playing in UK in one place with the competition being only a part of a large scale celebratory festival... three days?... ambitious?... YES?... but why not?... we have the skills and the folk to do it and the evolution of the experience from our family of participating countries across Europe... just need to raise the funds!... fancy joining us for that?... get in touch!



New music has always been a central pursuit at BASBWE and we continue to commission. Tom Harrold's new piece "Evil Eye" specifically for community band was premiered by the Maghull Wind Orchestra at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall in June; very enthusiastically received by the audience and orchestra alike. Alongside Adam Robert's "Voyage of Valour" we commissioned in 2016. As well as "Rumble in the Sky" (an on-going creative community project now in its 2nd year written with kids from Our Lady Of Lourdes Primary School Southport) with children's voices / percussion and the NHS choir. Bravo to Phil Shotton and the band! I make no apologies for having mentioned them yet again; they are a very active and enthusiastic community ensemble.

In This edition of WINDS we have words of wisdom from American Band Clinician Craig V. Hamilton who has been to UK to mentor and tutor bands on several occasions. We continue to publish these supportive articles and would value your response and indeed input should you wish to.

We continue to support the summer school at Sherborne. If you're a conducting student looking to benefit from the interaction with Mark Heron and the team we might be able to help get you there. Get in touch for next year.

Please visit our website for updates and contact info... watch out for Shea Lolin's Wind Orchestra Workshops in London next February. We'll bring further information about that as we receive it.

I trust the summer continues to shine and shower us with energy and optimism, have a good one.

As ever, a huge thank you to our team of volunteers and to our editor Bruce Hicks!

Many thanks and best wishes.

Bill Connor



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MAGHULL WIND ORCHESTRA



On Sunday 17th June, the Maghull Wind Orchestra celebrated their 40th anniversary with a fabulous concert at Liverpool's Philharmonic Hall.

The concert featured world premiere performances of three new compositions, all commissioned by BASBWE (British Association of Symphonic Bands and Wind Ensembles). The first of these was a bass clarinet concerto composed by Bill Connor, featuring soloist Andrew Roberts.

Bill Connor has made his living as a composer since the 1970's working across many

genres and media from rock and jazz to the symphony orchestra. He has written music for over 300 film and television projects and spent 6 years as composer-in-residence for Granada Television in Manchester UK.

Alongside a solo career that has included performances of many of the most taxing clarinet concertos throughout Europe, Andrew Roberts has developed his work as a specialist in clarinet design and customisation, working with many top professional players throughout the UK.

For 35 years Andrew has been in demand

and performing regularly with many of the major orchestra in the UK, playing everything from Soloist to Contra-Bass and the E flat clarinet.

The second commission was a work by MWO's Bass Trombonist; Adam Dutch. Adam is Head of Music at Maghull High School and is known as one of the most versatile trombonists, bass players and musical directors on the local scene.



Bill Connor



Andrew Roberts



Adam Dutch



brating 40 Years



Tom Harrold



The third was a new work by Tom Harrold. Tom (b.1991) is a Glasgow-born composer whose award-winning music has received performances worldwide by a multitude of performing groups and artists. Tom's recent projects include Darkened Dreams (a Proms commission that was broadcast live simultaneously on BBC Radios 3 and 4), Nightfires, a BBC SSO commission that was described as "among the most exciting pieces by a Scottish composer in the last 25 years" (The Herald), and Raze, which opened the last night of the 2016 BBC Proms. These works were showcased alongside a

Phil Shotton



varied programme, including music from film composing legend Ennio Morricone, music from the stage and screen; 'Beauty and the Beast' and 'Oliver!' and even music from the Beatles! The wind orchestra of over 100 musicians was joined by choirs from OLOL Catholic Primary School and the Merseyside NHS Choir.

This concert was 40 years in the making and showed the high standards that can be reached with a community wind orchestra and the power of collaborating with other organisations, composers and soloists.

George - our band doggie!



As Conductor Phil Shotton said:

"This was the first band I ever played in (nearly 30 years ago), the first band I ever conducted and the band that put me firmly on the path I'm on now - as you can imagine I'm extremely proud of what we have achieved, and loved celebrating this milestone in the Bands history. The audience was excellent and a wonderful afternoon of music took place".



More on page 16



Craig V. Hamilton

Conducting: Diagnosis and Prescription

One of the major responsibilities of the conductor is to listen to the sounds the ensemble is creating and offer suggestions for improvement. Similar to a doctor, the conductor makes a diagnosis and offers a prescription for making the sound better.

The conductor's diagnosis is based on a solid aural image of the composition. This aural image can only be achieved through thorough score study. The conductor should have the "sound in his ear" before ever standing in front of the ensemble.

If the sounds created don't match the "ideal", the conductor must instantaneously decide what the problem is and how to "fix" it.

Problem solving from the podium becomes easier with experience and study. Another way conductors can hone their skills is by observing other's rehearsals. Most ensemble problems fall into several musical categories – rhythm, balance, blend, dynamics, and style.

Rhythmic problems usually stem from rushing, dragging, playing wrong rhythms, or not connecting composite rhythms. The first step in solving rhythmic problems is to make sure everyone is "speaking the same language." Whether you use "1-e-and-a" or "1-ta-te-ta" or something else – everyone needs to understand how to count rhythms. It is crucial to establish a pulse either through one's conducting, a metronome, or a drummer.

The ensemble must also know where the subdivisions are and how their rhythm fits within those subdivisions. Many rhythmic problems can be solved by improving one's conducting – be very clear with patterns. Some rhythmic accuracy problems are because of ties or ornamentation. Remove ties and ornamentation to make the rhythm easier and then replace them once the rhythm is understood. The best solution for any rhythmic problems is to slow the tempo and return to performance tempo incrementally.

Make sure the ensemble knows where composite rhythms occur and who continues each part of the line. Remember that the conductor is the only one that can see that the rhythm continues in other voices.

Balance issues are usually two fold – either the melody can't be heard over the accompaniment or chords are out of balance. For melody vs. accompaniment problems isolate the melody so the ensemble knows to what they should balance. Balancing chords begins with each player playing with a characteristic sound and ensemble intonation (see blend).


Isolate each chord within and between sections. Usually principles of "pyramid balance" apply – lower parts should play louder to achieve the desired balance. Other ideas for achieving chordal balance include changing the seating of the ensemble and "stacking the sections." Instruments on the outside of the set or raised on risers will be heard better than those hidden inside the ensemble. Using better players on lower parts or adding players to lower parts will help to ensure those parts will balance with upper tessitura parts.

Problems with blend are simply voices sticking out. Intonation, characteristic sounds, and blend all go hand in hand. Work on both individual and ensemble sound and intonation every rehearsal. All players must play with a characteristic sound (a combination of equipment, embouchure, air, and "ear"). All players should own and use a tuner. Good practice for establishing intonation and ensemble sound is to have the ensemble (including the percussion section) sing. Always include one selection on each concert and rehearsal where the ensemble can concentrate on sound rather than technique – chorales or

slow lyrical music are great tools to create blend, intonation, breath support, and musicality. Blend and intonation is an issue that must be continually reinforced.

Dynamic issues seem to be the easiest to identify. The problems are that players are too loud, too soft, or don't have enough dynamic variation. The ensemble must understand that often a composer will write *ff* on each part, but if each player plays *ff* the balance and blend will be destroyed. Ensemble dynamics and individual dynamics are each different and only the conductor has the full score to know how loud each voice should be. Work with the ensemble on isolated chords to create five distinct volumes (*pp*, *p*, *m*, *f*, *ff*). After the balance and blend in each volume is established the conductor can then use a numbering system 1 through 5 to signal changes in volume. Work on balance, blend, tuning, and dynamics during the warm-up period. Always work to improve your conducting to show gradations in dynamics and intensity.

Stylistic problems seem to be obvious, yet many ensembles play notes that make no musical sense. Style usually is associated with articulation and note length. Singing is a great shortcut to establishing style. The conductor and the ensemble should sing the music in the correct style. When the conductor is explaining the problem they should speak in the correct style.



*The conductor and the ensemble
should sing the music in the correct style.*

*When the conductor is explaining the
problem they should speak in the correct style.*

Craig V. Hamilton

Conducting: Diagnosis and Prescription

(continued)

Model the correct style for the ensemble either through singing, recordings, or playing your instrument. Allow the ensemble to hear live and recorded examples of the music they are working on or music similar to the selections. Develop an arsenal of articulations – marcato, staccato, and legato. Make sure the ensemble can react to your conducting to play each style at each dynamic level. This is easily done using the Remington exercise either on concert F or a B \flat chord with quarter notes on each pitch.

Example:

Measure 1 – 4 quarter notes f and marcato

Measure 2 – 4 quarter notes p and legato

Measure 3 – 4 quarter notes m and staccato Etc.

Use only conducting gestures to make the changes. Demand intonation, balance, and blend throughout. Explain music as sounds in motion – identify target pitches and arrival points for each phrase.

The following is a synopsis of problems and possible solutions.

1. RHYTHM
2. BALANCE
3. BLEND
4. DYNAMICS
5. STYLE



The list is by no means exhaustive. The great part of being a musician is that we never learn it all and we all learn from each other. We all borrow tricks and techniques that work to help our ensemble make greater music.



1. RHYTHM

Rushing, dragging, wrong rhythms, composite rhythms

- have a system for counting/make sure you're all speaking the same language
- establish the pulse (conducting, metronome, drummer)
- show subdivisions and how rhythm fits within those subdivisions
- improve conducting baton technique
- adjust the music for rehearsal – remove ties, ornamentation, change articulations
- rehearse slowly – return to performance tempo incrementally

2. BALANCE

Melody can't be heard over accompaniment or chords are out of balance

- have the melody play alone so everyone can hear the melody
- isolate and balance the chords within and between sections
- pyramid (lower parts play louder – assign dynamics)
- adjust the seating – parts on the outside will be heard more
- stack the sections – put better players on the lower parts, put more players on lower parts

3. BLEND

Voices are sticking out

- work on intonation and balance
- all must play with a characteristic sound (air and ear)
- use a tuner
- have the ensemble sing
- play chorale or slow, tuneful, tutti selections that are easy enough to concentrate on the sound rather than the technique
- must establish and continually reinforce

4. DYNAMICS

Too loud, too soft, not enough variation

- use a numbering system – 1 (pp) through 5 (ff)
- analogy of a big volume knob or slider
- work on dynamics in the warm-up
- improve conducting baton technique and demand response from the ensemble

5. STYLE

Playing in the wrong style (note length and articulation)

- sing (conductor and ensemble)
- model for the ensemble (sing and play)
- listen to live and recorded examples
- develop an arsenal of articulations (marcato, staccato, legato) at all dynamic levels
- explain music as motion, identify the target pitches

Growing *Your* Audience



Craig V. Hamilton

www.hotspringsband.org

So what if you gave a concert and no one came? Have you even played a concert where there were more people on stage than in the audience? I often tell our audience that I'm glad they came - because without them, it's just another rehearsal. That's not exactly true, but it is a lot more fun to play for a "full house."

The Hot Springs Concert Band in Hot Springs, Arkansas is a year round community band with 90+ members. We perform between 12-15 different concerts throughout the year. In the summers we perform an outdoor program every other week to audiences that average 1000 people for each concert.

October through February we perform inside to packed houses. This has not always been the case. Through a lot of work by talented people and a conscious effort to build our audiences, we have cultivated a very loyal audience base that continues to grow. I am not suggesting that what we do will work for every situation, or that it is the only way, but it has and is working for us.

When I think of growing an audience I think of three things: Promotion, People and Programming.

– 1. PROMOTION –

Promotion of your programme can never be underestimated. If your potential audience members don't know about your performances, they will surely not show up. It's like winking at someone in the dark - how do they know? The Hot Springs Concert Band has used numerous tactics and tools for promoting our concerts.

Before each concert we run an announcement in the local paper - a simple article that tells the reader when and where the concert will be, the theme, and any guest artists. We also include a color picture to catch the reader's eye. A week or so before the concert we run a spot on the local radio station. Different members of the band tell about the upcoming concert and are interviewed by the local radio station DJ.

Our concerts are also promoted by several billboards around town, as well as an electronic billboard in the center of town, and at the convention center. Flyers and posters are printed and placed in local businesses, schools and churches. Harvey McIntyre secures corporate sponsors for each of our concerts. This guarantees representatives from the sponsors showing up for our concert and promotion for them and us.



Facebook
www.facebook.com/groups/224545217648368



Website
www.hotspringsband.org



In the past few years we have made additions to our electronic media with a Facebook page and website. We also have YouTube videos, and a listserve with announcements, pictures and comments about our concerts. We also use our programs to list upcoming concerts and promote future concerts with our current audience.

– 2. PEOPLE –

Nothing builds an audience like personal contact. Before each concert, band members and I walk through the audience talking with the people and getting “up close” to our audience members. I enjoy meeting the audience and hearing what they have to say about our concerts. This has been a wonderful way to make the audience feel they are a part of the band and have feedback.

The band members and audience members are encouraged at each concert to invite someone else to the concerts. Churches and social groups have begun bringing van and bus loads of people to our concerts, making it an event to build community among their groups. We make a conscious effort to talk to civic groups (Rotary, Kiwanas, Optimists, etc) about the band and our upcoming concerts.

The Hot Springs Concert Band is fortunate to have wonderful donors at several levels. In each of our programmes we list the donors, by level, as a token of our appreciation.



It is important to make the audience comfortable. For each of our outdoor concerts we provide portable toilets (one regular and one handicap accessible), water, and paper fans (with advertising of course). Summers in Arkansas can be brutal at times, heat indexes about 105 degrees, so we always have an indoor alternative when the weather is too hot or raining.



With each concert we try to involve the audience. Whether it's clapping to a march, singing along with tunes they know, or just standing up and letting us play “Happy Birthday” for them, the audience feels that they are part of the “show.” Many bands use a narrator or master of ceremonies for their concerts, but I enjoy talking and joking with the audience between tunes. It provides another opportunity to connect with them and pace the concert to fit the needs of the band.



Growing *Your* Audience

– 3. PROGRAMMING –

Once you get them to a concert you want them to come back and bring someone else. During the summer our concerts are based on themes. This years themes included **Circus Days**, **Going Places**, **British Invasion**, **And Freedom for All**, **On Broadway**, and **Planes, Trains and Automobiles**. We ask the audience to submit theme ideas. They submit ideas to me as I walk through the audience, through our website, or send me or band members an email. Some of the best concert ideas have come from our audience members.

As I select music for each concert I strive to make it audience friendly. "Audience friendly" doesn't mean watering down your program to the lowest denominator, actually it is quite the opposite. Good music, performed well, will be recognized by the audience and they will return. Those charged with selecting music have a responsibility to their band and audience to seek out the best compositions and arrangements that fit their band's ability level. Throughout the past one hundred plus years some of the greatest music has been written for the wind band. We owe it to our band and our audience to play good music well.

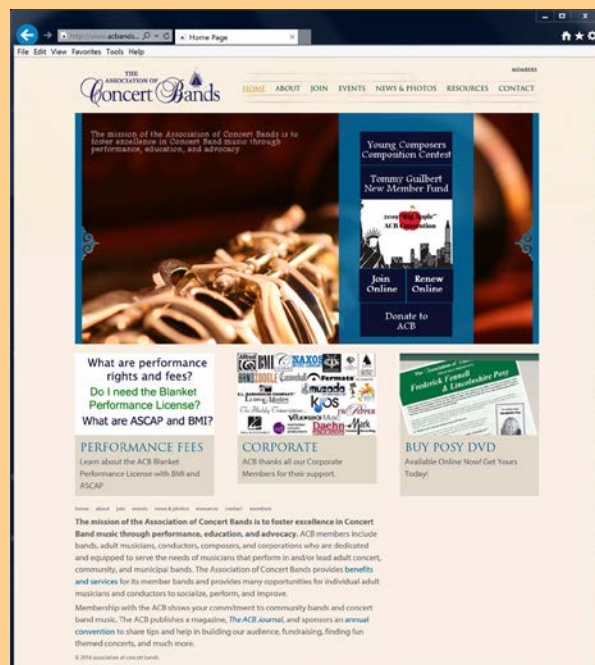
The programme should also balance something to help the band grow and something the audience recognizes - leave them singing a tune from your concert!



READ MORE ABOUT IT

There are several good resources available for ideas about building audiences. Many are available online.

David P. Miller has created a wonderful handbook available through the ACB website entitled **Building Your Audience to Standing Room Only** (www.acbands.org/Resources.html). Bob Harlow, Thomas Alfieri, Aaron Dalton, and Anne Field wrote **Attracting An Elusive Audience** (pdf document). Jonathan Abbott has an article titled **Audience Development: Try It, You'll Like It** (pdf document). For the pdf documents type the title in the search box and it will upload the document.



Another way to draw an audience is to invite guest soloists or groups, guest conductors or composers to perform on your concerts. If there is a local artist that has a following in your community, feature them with the band. It will bring their audience to your audience.

During our summer concerts we have begun a scholarship programme for local high school students to sit in with the band. This is great for the students, who play over one hundred and twenty different selections during the course of the summer.

It's great for our audience because it brings the students' family, friends and band directors to our concerts. Many of the students return to play with the band or become future audience members.

Whatever your situation, I wish you success in growing your audience. Get to know the people in your band and community. Ask them how they would like to be involved in growing the audience for your concerts.

Don't be afraid to adjust and experiment with different methods of promoting your programs. Always strive for quality performances.



STANDING OVATION AT THE “PHIL”

Liverpool Philharmonic Hall gave a standing ovation to Maghull Wind Orchestra at the end of a triumphant concert to mark the orchestra's 40th anniversary.

The two and a half hour concert featured a string of familiar numbers as well as three world premiere compositions.

Centrepiece of the concert, attended by over 700 people, was Sciamachy, a bass clarinet concerto composed by BASBWE chairman Bill Connor especially for

Maghull Wind Orchestra, featuring soloist Andrew Roberts.

Other world premieres were Evil Eye by Tom Harrold and Three States of Change by MWO's own bass trombonist Adam Dutch.

MWO performed Voyage of Valour, a previous BASBWE commission composed by Adam Roberts.

Arrangements scored especially for the concert were Selections from Oliver and Swing March, both by Dave Matthews, and The Mountains of

Mourne by Adam Dutch in memory of one of MWO's most popular and long-serving musicians, Dave Denman.

The orchestra was joined by the Cheshire & Merseyside NHS Choir and the choir from Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School in Southport.

The final number, a medley of Beatles hits, was a true showstopper which brought the audience to their feet.

THE
BEATLES



Maghull Wind Orchestra

Musical Director

Phil Shotton

“

We are extremely proud to be an ambassador band for BASBWE and grateful for their help in extending the repertoire for symphonic wind bands by commissioning new works. It gives me particular pleasure that three of the composers (Bill Connor, Adam Dutch, Adam Roberts) were also performing with MWO at our 40th anniversary concert!

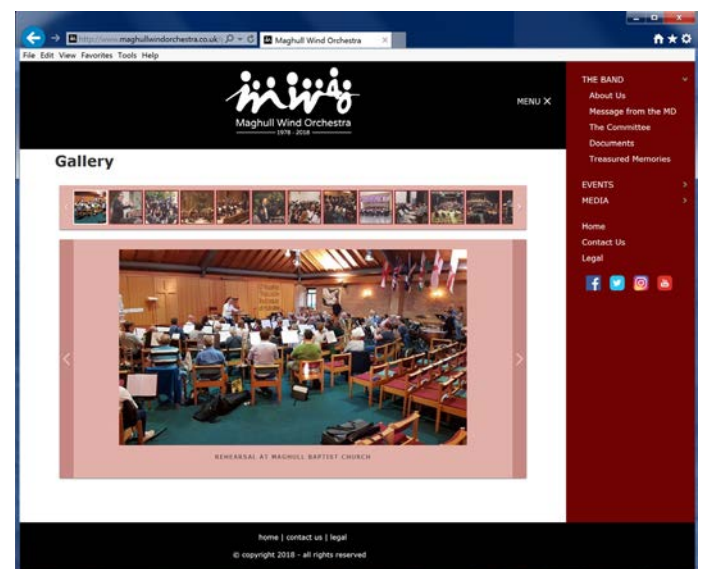


Liverpool Philharmonic Hall

Musical director Phil Shotton returned to the stage to lead the band and choirs in an emotional encore, the uplifting anthem World in Union.

“To end with a standing ovation from the audience was an absolute joy and proves just what can be achieved with a true community band,” said Phil. “Collaborating with world class soloists and composers alongside the NHS Choir and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School choir was the icing on the cake. It was a concert none of us will forget in a hurry!”

You can find out more about Maghull Wind Orchestra at www.maghullwindorchestra.co.uk





Musicians extend the band for a night



“What a great band and what an amazing sound!”

NOTTINGHAM CONCERT BAND

‘What a great band – and what an amazing sound!’ said Nottingham Concert Band’s Conductor & Music Director Robert Parker on Tuesday evening after steering 75 musicians through a special ‘Open Rehearsal’.

Covering woodwind, brass and percussion sections, the attendees comprised the regular members of Nottingham Concert Band supplemented by a number of invited guests, including players from as far afield as Loughborough and Derby.

The event took place at Jesse Gray School in West Bridgford, which is the band’s weekly rehearsal venue, with Robert Parker and Associate Conductor Ashley Parnell leading the players through five pieces specially chosen for the occasion.

Adam Gorb’s African Samba, which gave the percussion section a chance to shine, was followed by the swing-time A Tribute to Count Basie arranged by John Moss. Two reflective pieces came next – Pierre la Plante’s Gathering Places medley of spirituals and Vaughan Williams’ evocative

Prelude to 49th Parallel - and the evening ended with a run-through of New York: 1927, an exuberant musical landscape by Warren Barker.

‘It was a great experience for everyone!’ said Jeff Fry, Chairman of Nottingham Concert Band’s Management Committee afterwards. ‘We welcomed new players, met old friends and explored exciting new pieces. I must extend a huge vote of thanks to all those who joined in and helped make it happen - especially to Robert and Ashley for leading from the podium.’

Founded in 1991, Nottingham Concert Band comprises 60+ regular members and performs all over the area. Enquiries about membership and events are always welcome:

Call Jeff on [01949 860 126](tel:01949860126) or e-mail music@nottinghamconcertband.org

The band is profiled on Facebook and at www.nottinghamconcertband.org

Conducting Masterclasses

Royal Northern College of Music announce conducting courses

The Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) has announced its annual programme of external conducting courses. Led by RNCM conducting staff Mark Heron and Clark Rundell, these events provide world class development opportunities for conductors at all levels.

Following last year's successful début, there will again be a weekend course in November focusing on conducting wind and brass bands. Participants will have the opportunity to conduct both the RNCM's Wind Orchestra and Brass Band, giving an unparalleled opportunity to develop their skills in front of these outstanding ensembles.

Mark Heron, says: 'At RNCM we are very proud of our conducting courses, both for full-time students and the various short courses that we run. The masterclass programme is long established and has unearthed some outstanding talents, so we are delighted to extend it to include this focus on wind & brass band conducting. The RNCM Wind Orchestra has an international reputation through its acclaimed series of recordings, and of course Manchester and the RNCM are strongly connected to the brass band tradition.'

This course is part of a series of four events which also includes a two-day course for choral conductors, and four orchestral courses in partnership with Manchester Camerata.

There is also a second strand of courses aimed at music educators working with youth orchestras, bands and ensembles. This course enables participants to develop their technical and artistic skills with a specific focus on working with young musicians, and operates over three workshops (October, January and February) with an e-learning component between the practical sessions.



Full course details and application packs are available online
www.rncm.ac.uk/short-conducting-courses



Conducting Masterclasses



Conducting Course for Music Educators

www.rncm.ac.uk



Please make sure to visit the BASBWE website



www.basbwe.net

Here you can download previous year's magazines

