

WINDS Magazine

Summer 2022



BASBWE

- British Association of Symphonic Bands
- & Wind ensembles



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(it'll take more than a pandemic to stop us!)

Welcome Letter from the Chairman

Phil Shotton

**Chair of British Association of Symphonic Bands
and Wind Ensembles**



Dear all,

I am sure I am not alone to find that after such a positive start to the rehearsal process, following the lifting of lockdown, my wind orchestra's Christmas concerts were cancelled due to concerns regarding the new variant. Of course, this was the safest course of action, and our priority must always be the safety and wellbeing of our musicians and audience members. Disappointing, nonetheless.

However, it got me thinking about how incredibly bands have strived to continue making music both throughout lockdown and beyond. The drive for making music even during a pandemic is inspiring.

There have been many success stories over the last few months of bands making huge steps forward. Unfortunately, there have too, been some bands that are struggling to get going again or in some cases have had to fold. This is indeed a unhappy situation, but we hope that BASBWE can support both struggling bands as well as those who are managing to navigate these uncertain times so well.

To help us support each other I'd like to invite you, our members, to write an article for Winds with a focus on how your bands are dealing with the pandemic musically and moving forward from this difficult time.

How has your band overcome the difficulties of rehearsing and performing within the restrictions - there are so many success stories worth sharing with each other. If that sounds like something you'd like to do - drop us a line!

I am amazed as both a conductor and educator at what a great drive and desire to play the (often mainly amateur) musicians in our groups have. It is a constant source of inspiration for me.

As we move into 2022, I feel very optimistic about the future - the diary is beginning to fill up with performance opportunities for bands and although it's difficult to make too many plans currently, I know many of us have plans a foot...

This issue of Winds is jam packed with fabulous articles from conductors, teachers, composers, and players from across our vast landscape. I do hope you enjoy reading this eclectic collection and wish you and your ensembles all the very best for a fabulous year!

All the best,

Phil

A Concert Band from Scratch

Reflections on how we created a University Concert Band from nothing and kept it going despite all the challenges

In 2008 I joined the Teacher Education department at Liverpool Hope University having spent many years leading secondary music in a variety of high schools. My role was to teach on the music education programmes run by the University. However, I soon discovered that the Vice Chancellor (an avid music fan) also wanted me to develop live music making at the campus. This surprised me as I was not part of the Music department at Hope and had no contact with the academics running music at

the Creative Campus 4 miles away. I was very conscious that I should not 'tread on any toes' and needed to come up with something that would contrast with what was already offered.

I opted for the obvious choice for me, to start a Concert Band. I had run such groups in several high schools over the years and loved the wind band repertoire. In fact, my earliest memories of performing with others was through playing in wind bands at school and county level as a teenager. Once I started studying at The Royal College of Music, I had focused on orchestral playing but as a teacher, I saw wind bands as a wonderful way to integrate numerous young people, with a variety of musical interests, into ensemble performance.

In October 2008 the Liverpool Hope University Concert Band was born. I was very lucky in that a colleague in Teacher Education was a very keen and competent saxophonist who was eager to support the band. Along with her, I managed to encourage a few students and contacts from outside Hope to join in. The first rehearsal saw around 12 of us play through some simple pieces with





me conducting and playing clarinet when we got desperate for another player to fill in missing parts. From this humble beginning grew the band.

Over the next 2 years the band developed largely through the linking of it to the PGCE Secondary Music course which I worked on and eventually led.

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COVID BROUGHT THE NEWEST CHALLENGE AND UNLIKE MANY OTHER GROUPS I DECIDED NOT TO DO ONLINE REHEARSALS OR PERFORMANCES



PGCE Students played if they had appropriate instruments, conducted if they felt the urge and generally supported the concerts and rehearsals as well as trips to the University activity centre in North Wales.

A Concert Band from Scratch

[CONTINUED]

It's been a great story of student commitment, musical learning and joyful music making

We were lucky to have some excellent performers over the years and a few conductors who outdid my limited skills. I also encouraged students from the music department to take part and some of these made competent arrangements for

the band helping develop their compositional skills for large ensemble. However, using students as the core of the band was problematic in that the PGCE course is a 1-year course and even undergraduates disappear after 3 years. This meant that there was a constant need for recruitment and regeneration.



The saviours of the band were those students who committed to remaining with the band after their course finished. Over the years these musicians have helped to provide continuity, stability, and high-level performance skills. Some also bring a wealth of teaching experience which has seen them support less advanced players in sectional and full rehearsals. It is now a joy for me to hand over to one of these ex-students as I retire from Liverpool Hope and pass on the baton to the next director.

As the band grew over the years there have been many highlights. Performing at the Royal Northern College of Music in 2011, after Tim Meechan (the then Chair of BASBWE) convinced me that we could do it, was a fantastic learning experience for us all. Several concerts at the Palm House in Sefton Park gave us the opportunity to perform to large audiences and of course numerous performances at Liverpool Hope University.



I was devastated when having seen the band reborn I was unable to conduct the Christmas Concert due to having to self-isolate in December. However, with the determination and support of a music department colleague the band played some lovely numbers and proved that they are still making great music despite the challenges.

Covid brought the newest challenge and unlike many other groups I decided not to do online rehearsals or performances. This was largely because I felt that although this would help to keep the contact alive with members it would also be a slightly depressing and technologically stressful experience for me. I was therefore nervous to see if we could reform in October 2021. Initially it was hard.

Several older community members felt unable to return due to anxiety about safety, but the hardest part was that we had lost many students who had graduated and left the area during the 18 months of inactivity for the band. This meant recruiting new students and coaxing alumni to return. We did it through the commitment of a wonderful 3rd year Music student who helped encourage new students to join whilst supporting me to organise a Christmas Concert.

“ THEY MIGHT EVEN INVITE ME BACK FOR THE ODD CONCERT WHICH I WILL SUPPORT WITH GREAT PLEASURE

It's been a great story of student commitment, musical learning and joyful music making. 14 years is a long time to run a band and, it's now time for fresh input and expertise. We've had highs and lows, but I am pleased to say that the Liverpool Hope Concert Band will continue to provide many students, alumni, staff, and musical friends with opportunities to perform the great repertoire we all love.





Niamh Boland

My first term as a woodwind peripatetic music teacher – if only this experience could be summed up in just a few words!

Of course, I mean this in the most positive way possible, and there is no denying that the experience I have gained throughout my career so far has been invaluable. It is important to note, however, that starting a career in music has been far from easy and has definitely presented a variety of challenges along the way. Even to get to get to where I am now (working peripatetically for



Wigan Music Service and teaching privately at Opus1 Music Studios in Horwich) I have had to embrace different ways of thinking, approach routes I never thought I'd explore, and most importantly, accept who I am as a musician.

As a teenager, performing in ensembles was all I wanted to do for a career. I spent most of my childhood playing music within the Wigan Music Service's ensembles and came to really love performing. "Why would I want to teach if I enjoy playing music so much?... I'd never be good enough to teach anyway, I don't know how", I'd often hear myself say. Self-doubt is never a musician's friend, but neither is being closed-minded and unfortunately, being a naïve teenager at the time, I didn't fully understand the importance of learning from new experiences. However, my outlook swiftly changed back in 2018, when I made the informed decision to leave university to focus on my health. I had to accept that although I had (and still very much do have) a true love for performing, it wasn't the only avenue out there that was open to me.



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ONE OF THE MOST
COMMON ISSUES I HAVE
ENCOUNTERED WITH
PERIPATETIC TEACHING,
IS THAT SOME CHILDREN
SIMPLY DON'T WANT TO BE
THERE



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Whilst considering my options, I was approached by my former place of musical education (Opus1 nonetheless) and was offered the opportunity to work there privately as a music teacher. If somewhat apprehensive at first, I soon realised how eye-opening teaching could be - not only regarding personal strengths but also highlighting how every experience, both good and bad, can be used to aid future scenarios and challenges. As I have found during my first term, peripatetic teaching comes with its fair share of challenges, often ones that don't present themselves as frequently within private teaching.

Aside from the seemingly trivial problems that arise from a job that requires constant travel from one school to another (lack of car parking being a main stress for me), one of the most common issues I have encountered with peripatetic teaching, is that some children simply don't want to be there. On a weekly basis, I can find that there has been no motivation to practice, they have lost or chosen not to bring their books or instruments (making it increasingly difficult to

communicate with their parents, when the only form of communication is a practice diary that the child never brings) or they generally have no enthusiasm. It can be heart-breaking, especially after putting so much effort into making their lessons as enjoyable as possible.



Alongside this, the added stress of having to take the child out of curriculum lessons is a problem I had never encountered prior to my peripatetic teaching. Fortunately, previous interpersonal communication experience within my private teaching has proven useful for helping me deal with difficult situations like this where I was penalised for doing my job. I do feel that the importance of music education is often lost within schools and ultimately, can contribute to the lack of motivation I have discussed. If a child is shown that music education is unimportant, by both parents and teachers, why would they then want to work hard at

learning an instrument? This situation is sad as I am a big believer that patience and understanding are key to having a happy/engaged student, and if they truly want to learn music, they will find their way- given time and support, they will flourish. As much as it appears I am focussing on the negatives here, I would like to stress that I do very much enjoy my job and my first term of peripatetic teaching has been enlightening, particularly highlighting how my previous work experience has helped me when presented with a different scenario than that expected. For instance, there has been a handful of times where I have prepared a lesson plan for a one-to-one lesson, only to then be told I will be running a group session- ah! I'm grateful that I am an organised person by nature (I always plan my lessons and log anything of importance) but I am also very thankful for my previous work experience- it is only from watching other musicians teach, my writing of notes, and practicing of these skills that I am able to encounter and conquer challenges like these effectively. It would also be important to add that I have also taken a great amount of teaching strategies from my recent degree and continuous personal/professional development.

a different approach

By taking a different approach and completing my degree via distance learning, I was able to study and gain more practical work experience whilst also developing as a musician. Part of my degree was to study with Trinity Laban Conservatoire, focussing mainly on the creative aspects of music. As much as I saw myself as a creative at the time, I encountered many techniques and approaches I wouldn't consider using prior to taking this course. Since then, I have adopted these techniques, utilising them within my lessons, and adapting them to suit the individual student- not everyone learns the same or is neurotypical. Being actively involved within ensembles (such as the Maghull Wind Orchestra, Northwest Saxophone Choir, Wigan Music Continuum's Really Awful Orchestra, and pre-pandemic, the Edge Hill University Big Band), and taking any performance opportunities that have arisen, has also proven very useful for my personal development. By attending rehearsals, I have been able to watch different musicians and directors in action,

Towards the end of 2021, I graduated from the Open University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in music.

learning how other people approach a scenario I may find myself in, and taking a mental note for future use. Being a member of multiple ensembles also means that I have been able to network with musicians from a variety of backgrounds and skillsets. By performing within ensembles, I'm not only doing something that I love, but I am also gaining valuable knowledge and skills that can help aid my teaching- by helping myself, I am helping my students. I can thank the amazing Mr Phil Shotton for many of these opportunities though. Since undertaking private lessons with Phil, I have learnt how to better myself as a musician, learn techniques I never thought I could do, and most importantly, learn how to utilise these various aspects within my own teaching. If you have a teacher who believes in you, you will undoubtedly go far, and that is something I wish to pass down onto my students.

All in all, my peripatetic teaching has been a positive experience so far and can only continue to get better the more

experienced I become. My work experience, within both private and peripatetic settings, has proven useful when presented with difficult or unknown situations and I also have my personal development to thank for this. I am always actively looking to expand my business as a professional musician, and I often utilise social media platforms to achieve this. If you are interested in having lessons (in either woodwind, piano, and/or music theory), or just simply want to follow what I get up to, please don't hesitate to contact me directly via the details below and follow my social media accounts. Thank you for reading!

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BEING A MEMBER OF
MULTIPLE ENSEMBLES
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BEEN ABLE TO NETWORK
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BACKGROUNDS AND
SKILLSETS



I come from Stoke-On-Trent, merely an hour's jaunt southbound on the M6 from the prestigious Royal Northern College of Music, and in Stoke there is nowhere more aspirational than the Northern.

My Journey Through a Masters Degree in Composition

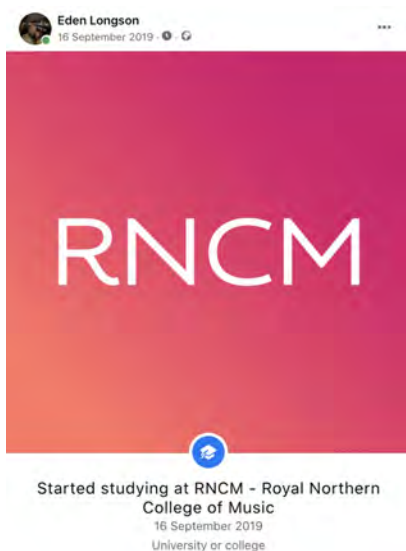
Many of the most talented students from my school would end up studying at the RNCM. I count myself very lucky to be one of the few who made it to Postgraduate Level at the RNCM.

The Northern had always been aspirational to me. I knew I wanted to study there and join the ranks of who I deemed the greatest musicians of the north (I know I'm from the Midlands, but if I had to pick sides, I'm northern... I'm a big fan of pie). My Masters was

a two-year course which I graduated from in October with a distinction (yay!) and now I am studying for my Post-Graduate Diploma in Composition also here at the RNCM. At the beginning of my master's degree, I had lofty heights of writing for large symphony orchestras, creating art music that

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I know I'm from the Midlands, but if I had to pick sides, I'm northern

pushed boundaries and challenged the listener. And I did just that. I was given free rein to write whatever I wanted to write. I wrote pieces for sax quartet, string quartet, piano, symphony orchestra, big band, solo cello, you name it. For whatever reason, I hadn't yet considered writing for a large wind ensemble.

My first experience of working with a wind ensemble came during my teens as part of the Longton Central Hall Methodist Marching Band. Admittedly we didn't march very often, but we were a wind ensemble and we played mega mixes, film scores, classical music, and the occasional hymnal to play on a Sunday in the Central Hall. My second experience of working with a wind ensemble came during my undergraduate music degree at the University of Liverpool where I conducted (and arranged music for) the university Concert Band. Both experiences were extremely positive for me as a musician, arranger, and a composer. Though I never wrote any music for these ensembles, it was amazing to hear the unique colour palette on offer that flew in the face of what I understood to be the classic 'classical' ensemble that began and ended with strings.

It wasn't until I decided to take the Arrangement module in my second year that I rediscovered this love for large wind ensembles. Given the task of creating three arrangements for any ensemble (with at least one being a large ensemble) I decided to write for Wind Orchestra. I drew on my experience in the Longton Central Methodist Hall Marching Band as well as the University of Liverpool Concert Band, both ensembles who played medleys and mega mixes, and decided to create my own.

I love American folk tunes and I thought that would make great motives in a short rhapsodic suite (fancy title for mega mix, always just think mega mix). I chose to use O, Shenandoah, Wade in the Water, House of the Rising Sun, and John Brown's Body (also known as the Battle Hymn for the Republic). With these melodies at my disposal, I set about creating a structure and orchestrating the suite (mega mix).

I called the piece *America, You Great Unfinished Symphony* borrowing a line from Lin-Manuel Miranda's exceptional musical *Hamilton*. I liked the idea that the themes I had used were parts of an unfinished symphony that I was bringing together, (much in the same way that the USA is constructed.) These component parts include the African diaspora which I wished to pay homage to in the arrangement with the inclusion of *Wade in the Water*: An African American spiritual.



The American Folk Tradition

It was my hope that this arrangement would pay tribute to all aspects of the American Folk Tradition, including European and African-derived harmony and rhythm. I was extremely pleased with the result of these arrangements and so, it seemed, was Adam Gorb, head of Composition at the RNCM who, after seeing it, asked me to write a new piece for the RNCM Wind Orchestra.

The piece was to complement a line-up of works by professional composers: Jennifer Jolley's Lichtweg, Jennifer Higdon's Percussion Concerto (soloist: Colin Currie), as well as Frank Tichelli's Symphony No.2. These composers are all well-established, and all of these pieces well regarded - Higdon's Concerto won a Grammy for Best Contemporary Classical Composition - and I was asked to be part of the line-up. I was nervous at first: how do I fill these massive shoes? Other questions popped up too: how I go about setting myself apart from these other composers. We are all using the same ensemble, so how do I make my piece stand out, what will make my piece unique?

FILED ON THE INTERSTELLAR HARD DRIVES AND ARCHIVES

My piece is entitled Filed on the Interstellar Hard Drives and Archives, which I know is a handful, but it is a line from the final stanza of Send in the Sun by rapper George Watsky:

*You you you you you packed your problems in a suitcase
You you you went away forever to a new place
You left behind a lot of blue faces and bouquets and loose
ends like shoelaces
But my friend, it's too late
So all my lightweights and barflies, let's raise a pint each
time a star dies
And toast the memory of hard lives
Filed on the interstellar hard drives and archives*

The song talks of how stars can't die of old age otherwise they would fade away and wither, whereas stars die with an explosion. The song uses this metaphor to talk about suicide, and the final line 'Filed on the interstellar hard drives and archives' makes me think of all the things we do in life that will be remembered by the universe. Even though we may think we are inconsequential, we may see our lives as small and insignificant. However, no matter what: we existed, and in so we have in some small way changed the universe forever. Whether hard or easy, our lives matter.

Heavy stuff I know, but as someone who has struggled with their mental health: I think it is important to let it influence my work to both help spread awareness and to help me work through my emotions and experiences. During the early stages the name of the piece was Joy as an act of Resistance which is the name of a studio album by one of my favourite bands: Idles. I love the idea that in finding joy and being happy, we are resisting the darkness and resisting those that would put us down or control us. I thought that stealing the title of a whole album was a bit on the nose, so I went with the Wastky line instead, using the album title as a subtitle: Filed on The Interstellar Hard Drives and Archives - an act of resistance for wind orchestra.

The piece has two main components: a short motive that I weave into various parts of the piece, as well as a strong rhythmic design that develops over the course of the composition. The opening section is slow and moving, very old-style film score-esque, and features a Euph solo! The enthusiasm for the Euphonium solo must not be understated as outside of brass bands they rarely get a look in or a time to shine, so I wrote one.

This solo is the motive, it is very simple, but also employs modal interchange (G changing to Cm7, a chord which appears in the parallel G minor as well as the G Aeolian mode) as well as some voice leading from the B \flat in the fourth bar down to an A \flat leading to the final note G (which is also the tonic), a voice leading Schenker himself would have enjoyed. I develop this motive in the classic wind orchestra tradition of moving it around the brass until letting rip and giving it to all the top winds to enjoy. I then let the high winds and mallet percussion play an ostinato above the low brass blasting out the melody below. All what I believe to be standard wind orchestra orchestration.

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WHETHER HARD OR EASY, OUR LIVES MATTER.

This all builds to a climax which then quickly falls away and gives rise to the next section whereby I deploy the rhythmic basis for the whole piece. In essence I tried to play with different types of off-beats, which get longer as the piece goes on. The first off-beats I use are the final semiquavers within a crotchet beat (see trombone chords below), then I use off-beat triplet quavers (or a swung quaver), before ending with off-beat straight quavers. My reasoning behind this rhythmical development was to see how I can use the same material and create a totally different feel simply by changing how the off beats are played.

I begin the section faster, with repeated staccato notes on the crotchet pulse played by the trumpets. Each player misses out a beat in each bar to allow for breathing (that pesky thing wind players need to do...) and they create this rhythmic tension and impetus that gets undermined and interrupted by the trombones and tuba playing chords on the off-beat final semiquaver on the fourth beat of each bar.



These chords are used again and again throughout the piece in various forms, like the opening melody they seek to undermine themselves as they go along. The first is a C major chord followed by F minor (introducing an A \flat to the mix, showing we are no longer in C major), using the F and A \flat to pivot we hit D \flat major, finally we hit B \flat minor using the F and D \flat as pivots before returning to C major. I never want the piece to feel all that settled, with every chord I want to challenge what the tonal centre of the piece is. Using voice leading and note pivots are well-established jazz techniques that help me to develop the piece in a way different to the classical music pieces that came before.



Another technique I use in the mid-section of the piece is the Shepard tone, which is an auditory illusion that makes a sound appear as though it is perpetually rising. Hans Zimmer makes

frequent use of this to build tension in his score to Dunkirk (did I just compare myself to Hans Zimmer? Sure, I did.). In this piece I make the bass instruments sound as though they are constantly descending whilst the higher instruments sound as though they are constantly ascending. This is achieved by creating the scale going upwards and downwards (in this instance downwards was in major thirds and upwards was in the Lydian Dominant scale - a major scale with a sharp 4 and flattened 7th) and starting each of them quietly rising in volume before getting quieter again whilst introducing a repeat of this in other instruments. By staggering these repeated entries, you create this effect that there is always someone playing downwards and upwards, but you can't tell where that line starts, you just constantly hear the lines up and down. A Shepard tone for wind orchestra!



The final section sees a dramatic full orchestral rendition of the off-beat figure seen earlier, plus the motive on top, now with more of a rhythmic drive than before. This forms the climax of the piece with a set of final chords that accelerate towards us using an abridged form of the overall rhythmic development with the illusion of getting quicker, simply by changing the position of the off-beat from semiquaver to triplet-quaver to quaver.

The performance was amazing. I was extremely happy with how the orchestra played the piece; they were fantastic. The conductor Lauren Wasynczuk helped guide them through the more difficult rhythmic figures that were central to the piece. I also feel that the ensemble played beautifully through the legato and moving passages and shout out to Rhys Edwards for his superb opening euphonium solo.

Hearing this piece live really served to demonstrate not only why I love composing, but why I decided to embark on a master's degree. I don't simply want to sit in my room and write music for myself, I want to write music for people to listen to and enjoy. Working with my fellow students at the RNCM has opened my eyes to the power of musical

cooperation and the benefits of a group of people all working toward the same goal of musical creativity.

More than this, writing for a wind orchestra has been an exciting challenge. This ensemble gets overlooked and overshadowed by its colossal brute of a cousin, the symphony orchestra. Wind ensembles (such as the wind orchestra or brass band) give opportunities for amateur musicians across Britain (and worldwide) to play amazing music together.

Wind orchestras provide a unique colour palette that pushes us to extend our creativity, it is a challenge remembering that everyone HAS to breathe sometimes. Knowing that every note must end lest your players go blue in the face trying to make it last forever. I love writing for Wind Orchestra and I cannot wait to do it again. I hope someone plays my works and can share in my love of the art. If any readers fancy playing anything just contact me on my website (shameless plug, but it had to be done).

Here's to the next commission!



Eden Longson

FILED ON THE INTERSTELLAR HARD DRIVES AND ARCHIVES

an act of resistance for wind orchestra
120211



Working as a Graduate Composer

I have been living and working as a Songwriter and Composer for almost two years and there has not been a day where I have tired of it. My name is **Ellie Quayle**, Graduate of Liverpool Hope University. I am a musician, performer, and composer.

I remember when the love of writing music started. I was twelve, and my first ever song entitled, "Always" was written for my best friend's birthday. My father and I made a rough recording of the track and somehow managed to burn it onto a CD. This four-chord ballad about lasting friendship sparked something inside of me that I just couldn't shake. Now, eleven years on, and a hundred compositions later, my passion for writing is stronger than ever.

From the age of seven, I took lessons in the piano and flute, scribbling the occasional made-up tune in my manuscript. I enjoyed both instruments, but I loved how the piano could make such a full sound. I wasn't very interested in playing solo flute and looked forward tremendously to playing in the local wind band on Saturday mornings. One of my earliest classical compositions was for flute quartet as I love the timbre and tone flutes make. But as I got older, I branched out into writing anything and everything. By the time I was at University, I would spend hours of my piano practice writing a song and then kick

myself later for it. I'd think – "Well it's a shame I lost some precious Debussy time but hey, at least I have a song about bunnies now." That's how random it was. I just wanted to write.

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WHILST I LOVED POP, I ALSO LOVED CLASSICAL, JAZZ, REGGAE, MUSICAL THEATRE, ROCK...THE LIST GOES ON.

Entering my twenties, I started to set up social media accounts for my music and to think about it more seriously. I released two pop songs in university but quickly realised this wasn't me. Whilst I loved pop, I also loved classical, jazz, reggae, musical theatre, rock... the list goes on. Another genre I loved writing in was comedy. So, to start writing exactly what I wanted, I changed my brand name and look and started to write and write and write.

Working as a Graduate Composer

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My musical inspirations include writers such as Elton John and Taylor Swift. I adore John's piano solos and chords and admire Swift's meaningful lyrics. The music of Alan Menken and Jim Steinmann are also huge inspirations to me.

As a big fan of musical theatre, I admire the drama of their music and their phenomenal storytelling. The works of Menken have inspired me to write many musical theatre numbers over the years and this is something I want to pursue further. One of my aspirations is to write a musical, along with music for film and stage.



INSPIRATION

However, my primary inspiration is Victoria Wood. Witty yet relatable, Wood manages to combine comedy with song in the most hilarious and delightful way. With hits such as "The Ballad of Barry and Freda", a comical account of the intimacies between a married couple, you cannot help but smile. What I love about Wood's writing is her use of everyday characters, making her songs relatable to her audience. Her use of pathos in her slower songs is heart-breaking and I use 2nds, major 7ths, and 9ths like she does to create this bittersweet feel. One of my goals is to perform my comedy songs with an orchestra accompanying me. See "Let's do it (The Ballad of Barry and Freda)".

ACHIEVEMENT

My biggest achievement to date has been the Royal Premier of my composition for organ on Tynwald Day, the Isle of Man's Day of Parliament, 2021. I was asked by the official organist if I would compose a fanfare-like piece to accompany the members of Manx Parliament after the church service. The piece is called "Brighter Days Ahead" and is a moving and uplifting march. I wanted to make it joyful and triumphant to portray the courage the public have shown over 2020 and 2021. Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal attended Tynwald day 2021 and it was an honour and a privilege to compose a piece for such an important occasion. Here is the start of the piece. The composition starts in C major to give a bright feel and features triplets to imitate a trumpet fanfare.



By the end of the piece, it has passed through D major and ends in E major to reflect, "Brighter Days Ahead". It finishes with a right-hand part like that of a descant, further establishing the regal feel.

INSPIRATION

In the past, I have written pieces for all sorts of instrumentation. I have particularly enjoyed writing for string quartet and SATB as I love the rich textures and harmony. My choral work takes inspiration from Renaissance composers such as Tallis and Byrd. My father is in a Renaissance group and I believe this is some of the most beautiful music ever written. However, my favourite choral piece for its harmony, suspensions and beauty is "Oh Magnum Mysterium" by Morten Lauridsen. I have also written a piece for chamber orchestra, and this was premiered in June 2021. This was a folk piece inspired by a traditional myth of the Isle of Man. In University, I had the privilege of being able to workshop my compositions with musicians from the Liverpool Philharmonic and this inspired me to think about what the future holds. In the future, I would like to experiment in writing in different styles and for different instruments. For example, writing for wind band is something I would really like to do. I would love to score "Brighter Days Ahead" for wind band.

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YouTube – Ellie Quayle

ACHIEVEMENT

As a composer, I think it is important to have a reason to write; That inspiration, commission, or drive to create. Without this, it is easy to spiral into a lull of wondering what to write and why. I faced this hurdle in lockdown where suddenly, there was little inspiration or reason to compose. In the Isle of Man, lockdown was estimated to last 30 days. I thought, what can I achieve in 30 days that meant lots of writing and creation? And so, my "Song a day challenge" was born. Lockdown lasted a little longer than expected so in total I wrote 33 songs over 33 days. The aim was to write something different every day inspired by the public's song suggestions. The results were extremely varied and the ideas I received never failed to amaze me! Some of songs include "Alfie, the laziest dog in the world," "Chocolate mini egg ice cream" and one about a man who fell off a table when dancing on it! The ideas ranged from touching to ridiculous. The genres were varied too. Writing a reggae song about Bongos and Ping Pong balls was a first. The experience improved my compositional skills and writing style but above everything else, it was tremendous fun! If you are a composer, I would strongly recommend trying to write something every day. It doesn't have to be a symphony – mine were only a minute or so. Give it a go and see how far you will progress!

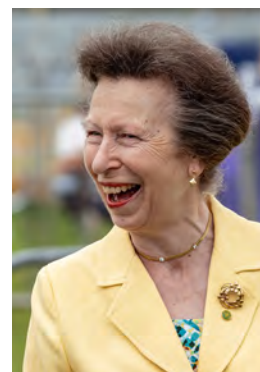
It is important to note that I do not work solely as a composer. I have a day job in a secondary school 4 days a week where I teach children with Special Needs. I love my job and I run music and performing arts lessons which is great. I am not saying that composing cannot be a full-time job, just that working solely as a composer is not easy. I get commissions and I earn money from writing but for me, its more of a portfolio career. After all, you have got to live. I believe, the key is to find something you quite like doing to pay the bills while you pursue that dream. And for me, I am lucky enough to be doing both.

As a final note, I believe music is fundamental to the human connection.

At a time where being together is difficult, music is an amazing tool that comes above that and connects us in so many ways. It is good for our mental health, our well-being and in my opinion, is vital. So, for me to write music, whether it be songs or pieces, makes me feel alive.



“



HER ROYAL HIGHNESS,
THE PRINCESS ROYAL
ATTENDED TYNWALD
DAY 2021 AND IT
WAS AN HONOUR
AND A PRIVILEGE TO
COMPOSE A PIECE FOR
SUCH AN IMPORTANT
OCCASION.





Throughout 2022, Eynsford Concert Band will be celebrating its 50th anniversary

Eynsford Concert Band at Fifty

(it'll take more than a pandemic to stop us!)

Eynsford Concert Band began its journey to become one of the UK's leading symphonic wind ensembles back in 1972, with just a handful of schoolchildren guided by a passionate and dedicated schoolteacher, Robin O'Connell.



EYNSFORD CONCERT BAND 1976

It is hard to believe that we're now a band of 50+ members, drawn from across Southeast England. All of us are proud to have been part of the band's growth and aspiration to achieve the highest standards of musicianship.

But, like all ensembles, we're now recovering from a tough couple of years and are looking forward. If we are going to survive another 50 years, we won't be able to sit on our laurels. It was already tough enough running a community band, even without a pandemic thrown in our path!

To help us navigate the future, we asked some of our members to think about the lessons they've learnt that have kept us going and growing. Here's their feedback - we believe that if we, and bands like us, can focus on these, then maybe we have a chance of surviving another 50.

Lesson 1: Aim high but stay grounded

We push ourselves to high standards, work hard to achieve them, but refuse to take it so seriously that it becomes detrimental to what we are about. We are absent of Prima Donna's or any sense of 'music police'.

We know that not everyone can make every rehearsal and not everyone can be on their Agame after a day at work, but everyone knows what we're trying to achieve, the role they play and what they need to do to prepare for the next concert, competition, or tour...it's all part of the challenge.

Lesson 2: Keep the repertoire 'fresh'

We've built an extensive library of music over the years, covering a multitude of genres and difficulty, but the real enjoyment for the band comes from getting away from the 'staples' and playing new and challenging music.

There is a great deal of excellent music out there but there is also a joy in 'creating your own'. Our collaborations with renowned composers (such as Dr Nigel Clarke, Dr Jack Stamp and, more recently, David Hackbridge-Johnson) have been great experiences.

To experience how they see the band and our capabilities is inspirational. It then, of course, becomes our challenge to do justice to their compositions!



SOME OF OUR YOUNGER MUSICIANS DURING A WORKSHOP WITH JACK STAMP



EYNSFORD CONCERT BAND PERFORMED AT LULLINGSTONE CASTLE, FORMER HOME OF FOUNDER ROBIN O'CONNELL, IN SEPTEMBER 2021

Lesson 3: Set one new challenge every year

We love our traditional concert programme but, year in, year out, we want at least one 'new thing' in the diary. Whether it's a new venue, a recording, an international tour, a competition or a collaboration with another group, we want something exciting to talk about and to work towards.

Collaborations with other bands and artists provide an insight to how others approach these challenges and the standards they have achieved. Over the years, we have been fortunate and thankful to have worked with and alongside a range of groups across the country and from abroad – with performance alongside The London Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Band of the Grenadier Guards, being highlights.



WINNING THE NATIONAL CONCERT BAND SYMPOSIUM IN 2014



ECB WERE THE FIRST BAND TO REPRESENT THE UK AT THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS FOR WIND ORCHESTRAS



Lesson 4: Nurture your younger members

We work hard to find, recruit and nurture younger members and spark enthusiasm and passion for our band within them. With many members who being with us for twenty, thirty, or even more years, we must keep reminding ourselves that we're not getting any younger!

We've established the ECB Young Musicians Academy to provide our young musicians with a safe and encouraging environment, building their experience of playing in a large ensemble while getting to know us and the music we play. We hope that this builds affiliation and loyalty to the band whilst they're still at school, in order that they might then return to us once home from university / college.

OVER THE YEARS, ECB HAS RAISED OVER £70,000 FOR LOCAL AND NATIONAL CHARITIES. IN 2005, THE BAND RAISED £14,700 FOR CHILDLINE BY UNDERTAKING A 'GRADE-1-ATHON' WHERE MEMBERS WERE SPONSORED TO LEARN A NEW INSTRUMENT AND PASS THEIR GRADE-1 EXAM.



FIRST AMATEUR BAND TO PLAY AT THE HOUSEHOLD DIVISION MUSIC FESTIVAL IN JUNE 2019

Lesson 5: Invest in your Musical Director

The MD shapes the musical identity of the band and engages us week after week - so it's critical to find the right fit and to look after them.

All of our MD's have been inspiring, highly regarded, and have each stayed for a number of years, giving the band stability and allowing us to progress musically. They have all helped orchestrate or happily embraced the challenges the band has taken on, shaping them to their own style and ensuring their success.



EVENING CONCERT ABOARD CMV COLUMBUS IN 2017



LT. COL. MICHAEL SMITH (ECB'S CURRENT MD) IS FORMER DIRECTOR OF MUSIC OF THE BAND OF THE GRENADIER GUARDS AND CURRENTLY COMMANDING OFFICER, BRITISH ARMY REGIONAL BANDS.



AFTERNOON CONCERT ABOARD CMV COLUMBUS IN 2017

But you need to look after your MD! The Musical Director cannot be responsible for running the band. We make sure we have a well organised management team in place to handle the admin, so our MD has the time and freedom to focus on their creative side.

Lesson 6: Respect your audience

Music is nothing without an audience and our concerts are not 'just for us'. Developing programmes that have the audience in mind is critical. We aim to have a balance of musical 'challenge' and entertainment in every concert – with engagement that helps them understand and better appreciate our musical choices. Having a loyal audience and strong ticket sales is important – it allows us to book larger, high-end concert halls, enhancing the experience for everyone.

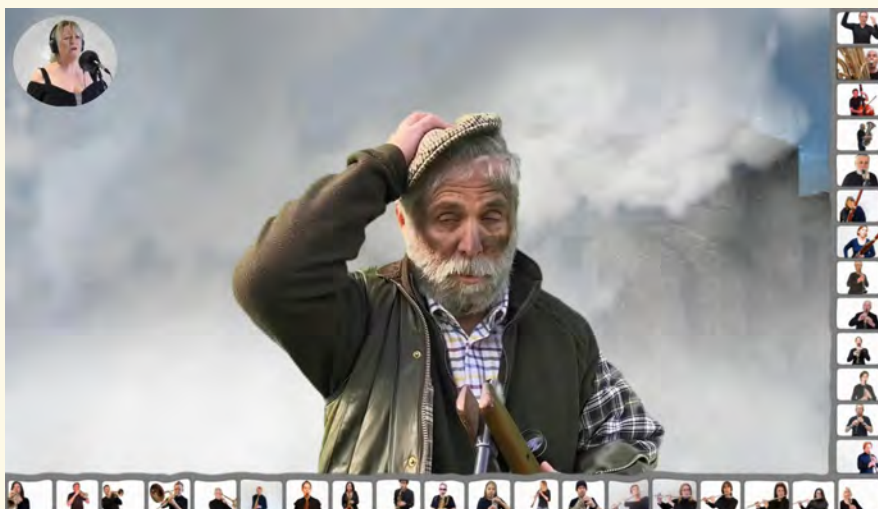
We work hard to maintain an ongoing relationship with our loyal following through a strong audience database and regular ongoing communication. We actively use social media and our YouTube channel to reach a wider audience around the world. This has been invaluable during the pandemic and will surely be more important going forward.

Lesson 7: We are not just musicians, we're a family

At the end of the day, we are a group of friends who happen to enjoy playing music together.

We come from many walks of life, but music creates a bond that seems to transcend this. Everyone is treated with respect whether they're in their teens or their 80s. While life-long friendships have been created amongst our older members, we also work to ensure newer members are embraced and looked after until they're settled-in.

This sense of family became apparent and became key during the pandemic. It would have been easy for us to drift apart, but instead, the exact opposite happened. For 16 months our regular Tuesday rehearsals were replaced by quiz nights and guest speakers and our concerts were replaced by virtual recordings and hilarious film making. For many, this became an important highlight in their locked-down week.



ECB BASS CLARINETTIST, BRIAN EVANS, RECREATING A FAMOUS SCENE FROM SKYFALL IN THE BAND'S THIRD LOCKDOWN VIDEO OF "BOND, JAMES BOND", ARRANGED STEPHEN BULLA. RELEASED IN MAY 2021 AND AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE AND YOUTUBE CHANNEL.

So bring on the next 50!

Pandemics withstanding, we're positive about the future and excited about celebrating our 50th Anniversary.

We're particularly proud to be introducing two new compositions created especially for the band:

- Eynsford Invictus' is a fanfare piece written by David Hackbridge Johnson that will be premiered during our Anniversary Celebration Concert in April.
- 'Unseen Wings' is a new work commemorating the life of Winston Churchill being written for by US composer Dr Jack Stamp and based on the book "Never Give In", written by Dr Stephen Mansfield. We're very excited that both Jack and Stephen will attend to conduct and narrate the piece at a special premiere concert in July at (we hope) the amazing new concert hall being built at Benenden School in Kent.

So, despite the rough times of the last two years, we are moving forward with optimism. In many ways (and judging by rehearsal attendance), the time away from rehearsals has awakened an even greater passion for our music making – we hope that community bands around the country feel the same way.

Eynsford Concert Band is itself a Registered Charity (No. 277086), investing any revenue from performances back into the band, to fund the purchase of music, hire of the rehearsal and performance venues and obtaining instruments and lessons for those members who may need help to afford them. The band is also grateful for grants received from the Sevenoaks District Arts Council in support of the development of our young musicians.

Read more about Eynsford Concert Band and our Young Musicians' Academy at:

www.eynsfordconcertband.co.uk

See us in action at:

www.youtube.com/c/eynsfordconcertband

Also on Facebook: [EynsfordBand](https://www.facebook.com/EynsfordBand)

Instagram: [@EynsfordBand](https://www.instagram.com/EynsfordBand)

QUOTE FROM STEPHEN BULLA, ARRANGER OF BOND, JAMES BOND:

"I absolutely loved every moment of this ECB video. The creative work that went into the planning and execution shows me that you have a band full of enthusiasm for everything it does. I did indeed find myself smiling as I watched your take on Bond."

Keep up the good work and let me know if in the future you might have any ideas for a newly commissioned work for ECB.

All best to you and the band members, Stephen Bulla"

EYNSFORD CONCERT BAND AT 50 – KEY HIGHLIGHTS

August 1979: First band tour to Hanover, Germany (soon to be followed by Malta, Austria, Spain, Ireland and many more!)

September 1980, The band performs on BBC's Nationwide TV programme

July 1981: First LP Record recorded at Roedean School, Brighton

December 1984: First amateur wind ensemble to play at the Albert Hall in support of the London Philharmonic Orchestra

August 2006: First asked by Fred Olsen to provide entertainment on their cruise ships (and again in 2017 by Cruise and Maritime Voyages)

November 2006: The band wins Gold at the BASBWE National Concert Band Festival

April 2010: The band helps with 'Promoting Music in Schools' workshops for the new secondary intake and their parents at The Malling School, Kent and funds a brass teacher for a year

November 2013: First of many performances alongside the Band of the Grenadier Guards, during which over £35,000 was raised for SSAFA and ABF-The Soldiers' Charity

July 2014: The band wins Best Band at the National Concert Band Symposium

May 2016: First band to represent the UK at the European Championships for Wind Orchestras

July 2016: The band performed a charity concert for Valence School, Kent that included a Spitfire fly-by to music

November 2016: Young Musician's Academy launched

June 2019: First amateur band to play at the Household Division Music Festival

PERCUSSIONISTS IN WIND ENSEMBLES; HOW DO WE MANAGE THEM?



The fantastical sound world of wind ensembles opens up repertoire that demonstrates new and exciting timbres. One of those new timbres surely has to be the development and range of percussion writing, which continues to grow and evolve; multiple players are required, a wider range of instruments and far more notes to play. This can be fabulously exciting or - depending on your point of view - intimidatingly tricky. Conducting or 'managing' percussionists in wind ensembles can be challenging to navigate, and if we are not careful, overlooked or underestimated as an essential skill.

Let's face it; it has often been assumed that percussionists are the most unmusical and least educated members of the musical diaspora.

Actually I have never particularly minded this label; for a start there is a grain of truth in it (I am yet to hear a percussionist discussing Schenkerian analysis for example; somebody would probably punch them if they did). Percussionists are more likely to have been raised on funk grooves than Brahms, rock rhythms than Schubert. Their musical education is likely to have had depth - sure - but the very nature of all things you hit, scrape or shake will mean that they have to have a broader range of skills; are literally required to play more instruments and will far more often have to wing it. A degree of improvisation has to be part of their DNA and their thinking requires speedy decisions rather than an in-depth exploration of the recapitulation. Or whatever.



The unmusical label is trickier to handle but is at least something you can shock people with. I have experienced far more examples of this than could possibly be listed here but here is a passing but truthful illustration; in my questioning the interval of a tri-tone at a rehearsal my (wind playing) colleague was stunned into silence.



Pleasingly he had the presence of mind to make a joke of it; 'a percussionist with an ear - how dare you!' Actually, jokey banter can be really funny, and taken with the right spirit can be bonding for a team of players. It is true that percussionists can often be the type of musicians who enjoy practical, swear-y pranks, bore easily (guilty as charged) or don't necessarily 'settle' very well on other instruments. But I prefer to think of them as musically diverse, rather than suffering from poor concentration or a lack of creative instinct.

My point is really that there can be terribly lazy assumptions about percussionists. All too often I have seen musical directors stand at the front and say 'I know nothing about percussion' - not with embarrassment - but with pride. The trouble with such ignorance is that crazy expectations are made of the players; you can't start a rehearsal in a 'tutti' section with percussionists on several different instruments if they haven't yet worked out the distribution of parts, sticks, instruments and hadn't been told of the repertoire beforehand for example. Being told to 'sort yourselves out' - particularly when it comes to children is not only unhelpful but also allows for some dangerous precedents being set.

Consider for example, the conductor who implies that the 'loudest' child should play the kit or the snare drum. Where does that leave us? Potentially with the most confident personality, but not necessarily the best player thrashing around.

Also, sadly stereotypes continue to persist; there remain too many examples of girls being pushed to the tuned percussion parts only and left there.



This can occasionally be dressed up in language such as 'she is the tuned specialist,' but is essentially unfair and sloppy decision making. Ideally, instruments should be rotated, but also players shouldn't necessarily be allowed to get away with saying they 'can't' play something. Students can be encouraged to challenge themselves and look to widen their boundaries. If there is a simple glockenspiel part for example, anyone can play it and an alternative student who wouldn't otherwise have the chance can attempt the snare drum or kit part.

As the need to embrace percussion in most wind ensembles is inescapable, here are some suggestions for steering your way through this mysterious world:

- If you are not a percussionist and are intimidated by the thought of handing out tips to students, try and get some advice from a colleague. It is impossible to know everything about every instrument, and continuing to exchange musical information is always useful.

- Occasionally there is a score that has been written by an enthusiastic composer with a set of unnecessary or expensive instruments. There may be something written for 'marimba' for example that can just as easily be played at the bottom of the xylophone with softer mallets. Similarly, 'tenor drum' can be replaced with a snare drum or a floor tom - depending on the sound required. Once again, advice from a specialist is so useful - particularly if you can be clear about the sound you envisage.

- If you are conducting a wind band, it is likely that there will be lots of percussion parts, so decide which are your priority. A lot of educational based arrangements in particular have extra 'padding' for those ensembles who are in the happy position of having multiple players.

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- Try and avoid putting a child who has never had a percussion lesson in the section. The result can often be humiliation for the child, an instrument incorrectly played - and I mean really wrongly - resulting occasionally in damage to the instrument and frustration all round. There are of course exceptions to this; as a percussion coach I have from time to time been asked to accommodate pianists or guitarists, which - if they can read - is doable. But bear in mind that is because they can be guided by someone who has expertise and the students themselves are able to follow the score. Do try and do this sparingly however; I have been asked to find parts for up to eight non-percussionists before - all at once.

- Understand that the parts will almost certainly not be presented in the form of a percussion 'score,' so if someone is looking at say a snare drum part, they are unlikely to be aware of what is going on in the tuned percussion.

- Not wishing to be sarcastic - get to know the names of the instruments; a glockenspiel is the metal one, a xylophone is the wooden one. Clear communication matters.

- Whilst there is increasing agreement on how to write percussion parts for all the instruments, not all manuscript is the same; snare drum parts for example are meant to be written on the third space up on the stave, but I have seen them all over the place. Some are just frankly appalling. Be prepared to edit ruthlessly.

- Encourage your players to work as a team. This is not the same as one person hogging all the exciting instruments, but may involve a sensible distribution of parts; playing to their strengths but with an eye on stretching them a little.

- Drum kit parts are often unnecessarily complicated and can usually be simplified down to a straightforward groove, punctuated with appropriate fills. It's worth talking to a drummer about this, and also having an idea of the feel of a piece. Is it a pop ballad? Is it a Latin piece? Is it a march? If there are multiple tempo and stylistic changes, then the conductor needs to be very clear about this; you all know why.

- Understand that percussionists are essentially soloists; if they go wrong it is likely to be visible and audible, so try to be kind.

- Be mindful of the fact that percussionists are rarely, if ever playing their own instruments. In some instances, the differences between models are stark; timpani for example can be tuned in a multitude of different ways depending on the mechanism. Once again, students have to get used to this, but may need some time to adapt

Finally, really superb percussion writing is the type where every part counts; players will always sense when what they are playing matters - or when they are merely contributing to the general racket. The best composers for wind ensembles always recognise this, write accordingly and the result is immensely satisfying. Adding well-rehearsed and sensitive percussion can really lift an ensemble to a much more exciting level. And don't forget - audiences love it.



EDITORIAL NOTE

Have You Been a Member of BASBWE?

Following our membership review, we have identified the fact that some lapsed members are continuing to make direct debit membership payments.

Although some of these payments are now in the form of donations to BASBWE of which we are very grateful, some may be an oversight from previous members who have not kept their contact details up to date with us.

If this is you, please **get in touch** to re-new your contact details and reinstate receiving your copy of Winds.

Many Thanks,
BASBWE Executive Committee

MAKE SURE TO VISIT THE BASBWE WEBSITE

www.basbwe.net

Here you can download all
previous year's magazines

