

THE WIND BAND AND THE AVANT GARDE

The success of the COMA (Contemporary Music for Amateurs) movement in Britain should encourage us all to look into the wind band repertoire and find works in which our players, be they school age or retirement age, can explore AND enjoy "modern" music. The great thing about much of this music is that it is technically incredibly easy - all it takes is imagination on the part of the conductor. These works are all theatrical, and they take the listeners and the players on a real journey through sound, however unconventional some of these sounds may seem.

Statement by Brent Heisinger (American grade 3.5, publisher Shawnee) duration circa 12 minutes)

Performing this work as a player in my high school band remains one of my most vivid childhood musical memories. Written in the sixties, it has an absolutely timeless message. The lights go out (quite important - beg borrow or steal some stand lights), and the flutes start a cluster. Players join in, but the audience becomes aware of some murmuring and whispering around them - perhaps someone is being rude and chatting during the performance. Not at all - each player has a political statement, and they gradually start whispering it. Suddenly, a player stands up, shakes a fist and delivers a radical and provocative statement. Another player rises and denounces it. A riot develops - sirens blare, screams are heard and the band breaks into some ferocious music. The riot eventually calms, and the work ends in darkness with the ensemble singing *Dona Nobis Pacem*. When I did this work with

Clark Rundell describes two classic works and a brilliant new arrival

schoolchildren in Scotland, the audience of parents and friends went bananas. The notation is very straightforward - the only odd thing for the players is getting used to delivering the statements (though once they get used to it, it can be a challenge to stop them).

Epinicion by John Paulson (American grade 3.5, publisher Kjos) duration circa 10 minutes)

A sombre essay on the aftermath of war, this is a work not unlike the Penderecki **Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima**. The clusters are haunting, and I find pitch bending in this context very moving. The composer hopes to evoke the sheer desolation of a walk through a battleground after battle. The notation here is slightly less conventional, as there is some use of spacial notation and pitch bending, but both can be mastered easily, even by beginners. The great success of this piece is the number of purely musical decisions it forces onto the players - they decide when to play, how to play, and how much to bend the pitch for maximum expression. It never fails to increase the sensitivity of the players.

Tut Kreuz und kein Bläser by Urban Mader (American grade 2, unpublished, but possibly soon with Maceanas, duration circa 15 minutes)

Yet another winner from the Uster Festival in Switzerland. Described by the composer as a music theatre piece for 12

players, two percussion and conductor, this is a real work of theatre. It is hilarious, but also makes a valid point about the power in an ensemble. The conductor arrogantly struts on, bows, turns around and starts conducting. The ensemble is nowhere to be seen. One player peeks around the corner, starts playing, doesn't like the look of the situation and retreats. Eventually the players do make it, playing one motive as they walk, another as they stand still, and this first movement ends with the conductor finally taking control. In movement two, there are percussion problems. The band warms up as the conductor desperately tries to get the percussion to play a very simple figure. They eventually manage it, but now the conductor can't get the orchestra to stop warming up. The trumpet, feeling sorry for the conductor, steps forward and offers to help. One simple gesture from the trumpet, and the orchestra stops. In movement three, the players, again led by the trumpet and in complete defiance of the conductor, eventually get a little march together.

The first movement gives each player two little phrases to memorize - that's it for the notes. In movement two, the composer specifies the 'warming up' sounds with a very simple type of spacial notation.

The last movement is a little trickier in that some of the rhythms catch you off guard, though they never stray beyond minims and crotchets. After the UK premiere, the inspirational Keith Robinson of Wade Deacon High School asked for the parts - he knew his school band would both love it and easily manage it.

EDUCATION

TEACHING FOR THE NON-SPECIALIST INSTRUMENTAL TEACHER

PETER WHITE

Instrumental teaching can be a very subjective business and no doubt not everyone will totally agree with all that I have to say. However, I have tried to distil all that I have learnt over the years as teacher and performer and also attempt to pass on a lot of what we do in Berkshire, where we have a tremendous amount of in-service training and support. As a trumpet specialist, much of this article will naturally be trumpet specific, although I hope that there will

be something of interest to all brass teachers

SELECTION

Over the years I have developed four main requirements for selecting students:

- 1 Reasonable tooth structure including top and bottom front and second teeth.
- 2 Making sure they can buzz their lips
- 3 Discussion with the prospective pupil to ensure a commitment and

keenness to learn

4 Possibly the most important; supportive parents

I have always found it vital to meet with parents to explain to them what learning to play an instrument means in terms of their active support. This implies taking time to encourage and listen to their child playing, even in the early painful stages. To this end, I encourage all of my pupils to have a lesson diary in which I not only note what they are to