



## **British Wind Music: 1981-2007**

A personal look at twenty-four years of repertoire development

*..I am sure that our English masters in Musick (either for Vocal or Instrumental Musick) are not in Skill and Judgement inferiour to any Foreigners whatsoever...*

John Playford  
Introduction to Choice Ayres & Songs, 1681

## **Part II of a History of British Wind Music by Timothy Reynish**

It was to be another 300 years before CBDNA, led by Frank Battisti and Bill Johnson, organized the first International Conference for Symphonic Bands & Wind Ensembles in Manchester at the Royal Northern College of Music. Tim Reynish investigates the proud boast of John Playford and its relevance to today's international wind music scene.

More information about commissions, publications and articles, reviews of music etc available on  
**[www.timreynish.com](http://www.timreynish.com)**

## **Celebrating Basbwe 2007 - Twenty Six Years Of Achievement**

*... the more we encourage composers to use the wind ensemble, the better it's going to be, particularly with the generation of wind players that's out there now*

Sir Simon Rattle  
President of BASBWE

## **World Wind Music**

Every couple of years, the Swiss conductor and pedagogue, Felix Hauswirth, brings out his 1000 Selected Works for Wind Orchestra and Wind Ensembles, (published Ruh Music AG contact@ruh.ch) a list which is personal but which gives a splendid birds-eye view of international repertoire from 1560 to the present day. In the chronological list, there are no British works apart from arrangements of Byrd or Purcell in the first two pages, which cover 1560-1906, a mere two hundred pieces. The third page covers the period 1906 to 1935, and a massive 22% are British; as the late Frederick Fennell pointed out, it is on the works of Holst and Vaughan Williams, premiered by the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, between 1920 and 1924 that the developments of the next seventy years of American repertoire are based. It is easy to overlook The **Pageant of London** (1911, da Capo) and to forget works such as **Three Humoresques** (Boosey & Hawkes) by Walton O'Donnell. For O'Donnell's Wireless Military Band the outstanding work was Holst's **Hammersmith** (Boosey & Hawkes), still a challenge for conductor, players and audience. But between 1935 and 1981, only a handful of works, mainly by Gordon Jacob, appeared. **Welsh Airs and Dances** (1975, Dennis Wick) by Alun Hoddinott and **Scottish Dance Suite** (1959, Chester) by Thea Musgrave are unjustly neglected. Rodney Bashford in Scotland and Harry Legge in England commissioned a number of works for the youth wind bands, some such as the **Variations on The wee Cooper of Fife** by Cedric Thorpe Davie, and the **Sinfonetta** by Derek Bourgeois, well worth exploring, but in 1943 the BBC sacked the Wireless Military Band, and already the professional military bands had long since turned their attention back to ceremonial and entertainment.

2007 is of course the centenary of the birth of Dame Eliazbeth Maconchy whose **Music for Wind and Brass** (Music Sales) is one of the outstanding works in the international repertoire, and also sees the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of John Gardner, whose **English Dance Suite** (OUP) is a wonderful piece, sadly neglected. This was written for the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, and the School celebrates the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding this year, 2007, with a commission from Nigel Clarke, **Fanfares and Celebrations** (2007, Studio).

## **British Renaissance**

After 1981, British music begins to vie with American, and the direct cause of this renaissance can be found in Manchester. 1981 was the year when the American organisation, the College Band Directors National Association, led by Frank Battisti and Bill Johnson, chose the RNCM in Manchester for the first ever International Conference of Symphonic Bands and Wind Ensembles for Conductors, Composers and Publishers. The range of music and the standard of performance of the American groups were inspiring and led directly to the formation of BASBWE, the British Association of Symphonic Bands and Wind Ensembles, and its worldwide big brother, WASBE. In the next decade a new stimulus was provided by BASBWE, through its annual Conferences, through its Journal, which later became WINDS, and through the Annual Boosey & Hawkes Festival with which BASBWE has been closely involved since its inception in 1985.

## **1981 Conference Music - British Repertoire**

For the 1981 Conference, the RNCM commissioned Derek Bourgeois' first major wind work, **Symphony of Winds** (1980, HaFaBra), unjustly neglected because of its alleged technical difficulties, and a work which now is well worth restoring to the repertoire, as standards of playing continue to rise. The British Youth Wind Orchestra, playing several of their commissions, and the Surrey County Wind Orchestra, represented the UK. The soloist in Stephen Dodgson's brilliant **Capriccio**

**Concertante** (Denis Wick) for solo clarinet and band was the young virtuoso, Michael Collins.

### **Derek Bourgeois**

In his **Symphony of Winds** the scoring brilliantly effective, but it has been suggested by American colleagues that the difficulties for players are not equalled by the intellectual demands. He views the Wind Band almost as an extension of the brass band, with massive doublings and a luxuriant palette. Bourgeois' language is deliberately traditional, though the relative naivety of both works is seasoned with the unexpected harmonic or rhythmic twist. Perhaps his best known and most popular piece so far, and easily the most economical, is the little **Serenade** (1982, R Smith) in 11/8, sometimes 13/8, an audience pleaser that is a metric teaser for players and conductors. A more recent work in this genre has a typically punning title **Metro Gnome** (HaFaBra 1999).

The influences in his music include Tchaikovsky, Elgar, Ravel, Walton, Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Britten, all assimilated into an extraordinarily fluent technical language which has consciously stepped away from attempting to vie with the contemporary trends of the seventies and eighties into a far more popular lingua franca which owes much to the world of the brass band. Here virtuosity and sentiment go hand in hand, and I find in some of the later works that this juxtaposition, which works for brass bands, jars when transcribed for wind orchestra. The great trombonist Christian Lindberg writes of Derek: *Bourgeois has not worried about the historical necessities and rules, which dictate the novelty of style regarded as so important by some compositional schools; he keeps instead to traditional musical patterns.*

Among his other works is the traditional and rather sentimental **Bridge over the River Cam** (1989, G&M Brand), the very energetic **Diversions** (1987, Vanderbeek & Imrie) an attractive work, which is sadly neglected. Less inventive are a **Concerto for Brass Sextet** (1994, HaFaBra), and wind arrangements of the **Trombone Concerto** (1989, R Smith) and the **Percussion Concerto**, (1997, G & M Brand), written for Evelyn Glennie. In 1998 he contributed a moving **Northern Lament** (G&M Brand) to my birthday commissions for school band, just a little too hard for most schools perhaps, but again a work that could be very useful for a more experienced band.

In 1981 his **Blitz** was the Test Piece for the National Brass Band Finals, and this marked the beginnings of a new wave of brass band composition, embracing contemporary techniques and introducing the conservative brass band aficionados to more progressive music. Many of these works have been transcribed for wind orchestra, and these include **Wind Blitz** (HaFaBra), virtuosic and aggressive in style. In complete contrast are the salon works such as **Molesworth's Melody** (2001, HaFaBra), while recently he has written or rescored several epic works, the 77 minute Symphony no 8, the **Mountains of Mallorca**, (2002, HaFaBra), the ravishing impressionistic **Cotswold Symphony**, and three works written in 2003, the **Concerto for Alto Saxophone, the Double Concerto for Trumpet and Bass Trombone**, and **Mallorca: Symphonic Fantasy on Traditional Mallorquin Songs**. One of his recent works, **Symphony for William**, was written in six days in July 2004 as part of my personal commissioning project, and the following Autumn saw yet another major celebratory work, **Fribourg – the old City**. After a time as Director of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, Bourgeois was for some years Director of Music at St. Paul's School for Girls, holding Holst's old post. Retirement in Mallorca has renewed his enthusiasm for the wind orchestra; all of his music is published by Ha-Fa-Bra and his very informative website is [www.tramuntana.infoarta.com](http://www.tramuntana.infoarta.com)

His most recent work is **Band Land**, a *Young Person's Guide to the Wind Orchestra* with a text available in 10 languages. If you investigate his file in Sibelius, you will find that he has completed his 40<sup>th</sup> Symphony for Orchestra, equalling Mozart he claims, since one of Mozart's Symphonies was written by someone else!

### **Basbwe Revolution**

The two decades since 1981 have seen a revolution in wind music in the UK. Old works have been restored to the repertoire, new works have been published and recorded, and the selective survey of British wind orchestra and ensemble literature compiled by Jonathan Good in 1997 and updated recently lists over 600 works currently available. In general it was the initiative of BASBWE and the Royal Northern College of Music, which has created a new repertoire, no longer based on suites of dances or folk songs, nor dependant on arrangements and orchestral transcriptions. These new works are largely by composers with little or no wind band background, who created new sounds and sonorities. Nearly all of the works commissioned by BASBWE and the RNCM have been published, and many are now well established in the international wind orchestra repertoire.

### **Edward Gregson**

Also played at the 1981 Conference was Edward Gregson's *Metamorphoses* (1979, Novello) written for Goldsmiths College where he was for many years a professor. This remains one of his most experimental works, making fine use of simple aleatoric and electronic techniques which challenge performers and intrigue audiences, a first-rate introduction to contemporary music. The *Tuba Concerto* (1984, Novello) was originally written for brass band, but is now firmly in the international repertoire for tuba players in orchestral, wind and brass band versions. *Festivo* (1985, Novello) is a very successful light overture, which combines traditional band formulae with a Stravinsky-like energy. His choral work *Missa Brevis Pacem* (1988, Novello) for SSA choir, treble and baritone soli and wind orchestra, is a simple yet deeply felt and moving setting of the mass, and the beautiful *Benedictus*, with its treble solo, deserves to be "top of the pops"; all these pieces are in a more populist vein but none the less very effective.

Two significant works, based on his music for Stratford-on-Avon productions of the Wars of the Roses, emerged in the nineties; *The Sword and the Crown* (1991, Studio) is powerful, as is its sequel *The Kings go Forth* (1996, Studio), with its brilliant rock parody of *Sumer is a-cumin* in. Like *Metamorphoses*, *Celebration* (1991, Maecenas), a tour de force, was written for orchestral wind, commissioned by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, while his latest work, written for the 1995 BASBWE Conference, is the *Piano Concerto, Homages*, (1995, Maecenas), unashamedly romantic. Gregson is currently principal of the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester.

### **Philip Sparke**

Like Gregson, many composers, among them Philip Wilby and Derek Bourgeois, write for wind band in tandem with the more commercial field of the brass band with its great traditions of competition and entertainment. The most successful British composer in the two genres is without doubt Philip Sparke, whose earlier works for brass band such as *Gaudium* (1973/1976 Boosey) and *A Concert Prelude* (1979/85 G&M Brand) were later transcribed successfully for wind orchestra. In an interview which I undertook for WINDS, Philip described himself modestly as "a music-writer" rather than a composer, but at his best, in works such as *Orient Express* (1992, Studio) or the Sudler Prize-winning *Dance Movements* (1995 Studio), his music has an infectious energy, and a piece such as *The Year of the Dragon* (1985, Studio) has proved a challenge for wind and brass bands equally. *Lindisfarne Rhapsody* (1999, Studio) is a rhapsodic concerto for solo flute, a lyrical work that avoids the

sentimental. Other works popular with school and amateur bands include **Concert Prelude** (1979, G&M Brand), **Festival Overture** (1992, Studio), **Land of the Long White Cloud** (1987 G&M Brand), two **Sinfoniettas** (1990 & 1992, Studio), **White Rose Overture** (1996, Studio), and **Four Norfolk Dances**, designed as a tribute to Malcolm Arnold and very much in the spirit of his sets of dances. His **Music of the Spheres** (2005) won the prestigious NBA Revelli Competition in 2006. He is now self-publishing with Anglo Music Press.

### Guy Woolfenden

Two Manchester Conferences followed, with first commissions in 1983 from Guy Woolfenden and Philip Wilby, premiered by the RNCM Wind Orchestra. Guy Woolfenden, composer, conductor, broadcaster and formerly a hornplayer with Sadlers Wells Opera, is perhaps the most successful BASBWE commissioned composer, bringing his experience of theatre to the medium; he was for many years head of music at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, with scores for every Shakespeare play to his credit. Two early BASBWE commissions, **Gallimaufry** (1983) and **Illyrian Dances** (1986) both draw on music he has written for the Shakespeare canon; the language is a pastiche of late English renaissance, looking back to both 16th century and the early 20th century, but with twists in the metrical structure and a harmonic piquancy which avoid the obvious.

<u>Birthday Treat</u>	1998
<u>Celebration</u>	2002
<u>Curtain Call</u>	1997
<u>Divertimento</u>	2007
<u>Firedance</u>	2000/2002
<u>French Impressions</u>	1998
* <u>Gallimaufry</u>	1983
* <u>Illyrian Dances</u>	1986
<u>Mockbeggar Variations</u>	1991
<u>Rondo Variations for solo clarinet</u>	1985
* <u>S. P. Q. R.</u>	1988
* Recorded on CD DOY 042: - GALLIMAUFREY RNCM Wind Orchestra conducted by Guy Woolfenden	

More direct are **Deo Gracias** (1985 G&M Brand) and **S.P.Q.R.** (1988). For the 1991 International Conference, he wrote a fine set of variations, **Mockbeggar Variations** (1981). Other pieces include **Curtain Call** (1997), commissioned for performance at the 1997 WASBE Conference in Austria, **French Impressions** (1998) written for the

Metropolitan Wind Symphony of Boston, and **Rondo Variations** (1999) a movement for Clarinet and Wind Ensemble. Most recent pieces are **Birthday Treat** (1998), **Firedance**, (2002), **Celebration** (2003, Ariel) and **Bohemian Dances**, which received its first performance in St Paul, Minnesota on 6th May 2005. For the WASBE Conference in Killarney in 2007, he wrote a **Divertimento**, in three movements, a wonderful addition to the repertoire. Like Gregson, he has recorded most of the works on professional disc with the Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra; his wife under the name Ariel publishes most of his music.

The works of Guy Woolfenden are perhaps typical of this new wave of music for wind orchestra, which has charm and wit. I believe that it is ignorance of the medium, which leads to this repertoire being largely ignored. Robert Maycock wrote of Woolfenden's **Gallimaufry** in *The Independent*:

*In so far as music criticism deals seriously with radio at all, it tends to concentrate on Radio 3, such are the cultural blinkers most critics wear. At the least, this means that good things on the other networks get missed - such as the Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra playing Guy Woolfenden last Friday, again on Radio 2. If you're in the new-music business*

*and smirking, ask yourself if typecasting someone as a theatre composer isn't another case of cultural blinkers ..... A piece like **Gallimaufry**, with its witty ingenuities, expert layout, and a tune that stays with you as long as **Carousel**'s, has helped thousands of players to cut their musical teeth and stirred thousands more with the adventure of living music. Yet how many "contemporary" specialists have heard a note of it?*

### **Philip Wilby**

Philip Wilby also had practical professional playing experience, as a violinist at Covent Garden and in the CBSO, followed by many years lecturing at the University of Leeds. He brings a more advanced harmonic language and the occasional use of aleatoric techniques to the medium. In **Firestar** (1983, Chester/Music Sales), a virtuoso Scherzo for orchestra, these elements are carefully controlled. In the more ambitious **Symphonia Sacra**, (1986, Chester), two groups of percussion and brass typify the forces of evil, with a fine disregard for the conductor and the wind and horns, who play Messiaen-like chords which eventually overwhelm brass and percussion, finally breaking up into folk tunes, before a lone off-stage trumpeter is silenced by the swish of waves from 6 suspended cymbals, and the quiet breathing of the orchestra. The music was chosen, played by musicians from Kneller Hall, as the basis for a moving television programme on Iona, one of the main sources of its inspiration.

Easier is his imaginative **Catcher of Shadows** (1989, Chester), a superb piece for school band, bringing alive the early days of photography; this again introduces simple aleatoric elements. For the 1993 Uster Festival in Switzerland, he wrote **Laudibus in Sanctis** (1993, Chester), specifically for amateur players. Like Gregson in his Plantagenet music, in these last three works he makes dramatic use of players moving around the auditorium, and this is carried further forward with his most ambitious work, the **Passion for Our Times** (1997, Maecenas), in which players, singers, dancers and audience ideally move through a vast Cathedral, re-enacting the drama.

Premiered on Easter Saturday in Liverpool Cathedral, he describes it as a Miracle Play for wind orchestra, choir, narrator and dancers, providing an extraordinary musical and religious experience, combining the narrative of the Passion with elements of the Eucharist. His is an individual voice of great importance in the brass and wind orchestra worlds.

Other works are **Dawn Flight**, the **Concertino Pastorale** for solo flute and wind ensemble (2001, Maecenas), commissioned by James Croft at Florida State University, and **A New World Dancing**, commissioned for a Millennium Festival BBC Prom in 2000, a setting of a text by Archbishop Tutu, performed by the National Youth Choir and the National Youth Wind Orchestra. Like Bourgeois, he is adept at transcribing brass band idiom to wind orchestra, and his works include a fine **Euphonium Concerto** (1996 Studio), a trumpet concerto entitled **Concerto 1945** and a **Percussion Concerto**.

### **Joseph Horovitz**

The Woolfenden and Wilby BASBWE premières were followed by Joseph Horovitz with **Bacchus on Blue Ridge** (1983, Molenaar). Horovitz brings to the wind band a keen ear for sonorities, a central European charm and wit, and an elegance of phrase, which makes his music sometimes elusive in performance. He is on record as longing for a definitive performance of **Wind Harp** (1989, Molenaar), like **Ad Astra** (1992, Smith) a wonderfully restrained piece; two other works pay homage to the world of the rococo dance, **Fête Galante** (R Smith) and **Dance Suite** (1992,

Molenaar). Conductors must bring to all five major works a sensitive feel for balance and restraint, a Viennese light touch and a great sense of fun. For the 1999 BASBWE Conference he completed a long-awaited wind orchestra version of his **Euphonium Concerto** (Novello) and there is now a version of his **Tuba Concerto**.

### **Basbwe Conferences - Something Old, Something New**

The third BASBWE commission was Arthur Butterworth's evocative tribute to Sibelius, **Tundra** (1984, Vanderbeek). Its restrained tones have led to undeserved neglect, a fate also befalling his very beautiful **Wintermusic** (1983, Molenaar), and both works need to be re-assessed and played.

One feature of BASBWE Conferences has always been platform concerts for both new and old works, which then may be taken up and published. One such work was by the late Buxton Orr, who conducted an early Delegates Orchestra in his very successful pastiche of 18th century popular songs, **John Gay Suite** (1977, Novello), resulting in publication nearly ten years after composition. A work neglected for even longer was, Holst's **Marching Song** (1930, Novello), known only in Eric Leidzen's inflated and transposed arrangement. Holst's original scoring was played in a performance at the Manchester 1984 Conference and soon afterwards published by Novello.

### **David Bedford And The Tingle Factor**

In 1985, Conference moved to Bristol; the BASBWE Commission was David Bedford's **Sea and Sky and Golden Hill** (1985, Novello/Music Sales), with its evocative use of tuned wine glasses. His scores show a fascination for unusual soloists, piccolo, cor anglais, bass clarinet, baritone saxophone; he was writing minimalist scores before it was fashionable, and his love of "the tingle-factor", often caused by sharply contrasted overlapping common chords piled into huge masses, abruptly switching to ppp or to silence, makes his work very dramatic, albeit needing a large acoustic for full effect.

Bedford had been something of an enfant terrible, but experiences as associate visiting composer at Gordonstoun School and as an arranger in the 1970's rock scene have tempered his early training with Luigi Nono and the electronic studios

<b>The Wind Music of David Bedford</b>	
Praeludium	1990
Sun Paints Rainbows on the Vast Waves	1984
Canons and Cadenzas	1995/6
Sea and Sky and Golden Hill	1985
Ronde for Isolde	1985
The Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra/Rundell Doyen DOY CD 082	

in Milan, and in **Ronde for Isolde** (1985, Novello) and the **Symphony No. 2** (1995, Novello) he has created two fine works for schools to stand alongside the best pieces by Connor, Ellerby, Sparke, Woolfenden and Wilby. **Praeludium** (1990, Novello) makes use of four antiphonal groups drawn from the main band, which remains on stage, while the BASBWE Trust commission for the Leeds Festival is a piano concertante work, **Susato Variations** (1993, Novello) with orchestral wind accompaniment. The most successful work internationally is still **Sun Paints Rainbows on the Vast Waves** (1982, Novello) written for the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival.

Thus within five years, a small but significant original repertoire was created largely on the initiative of the RNCM and BASBWE, from composers who were to continue writing for the next decade. Alongside these continued the work of proven writers in the educational field such as Philip Sparke, Bruce Fraser and Stuart Johnson, whose

well-crafted works, published by R. Smith (G & M Brand) and Studio, fill a need in repertoire for schools and amateur groups.

### Michael Ball

For the 1987 WASBE Conference in Boston, two British works were commissioned, Richard Rodney Bennett's *Morning Music* (1987, Novello) and Michael Ball's virtuoso tribute to Italy, *Omaggio* (1987, Novello). In the event, Michael Ball's piece was judged to be too hard by one of the US top military band due to play it and the world premiere was

### MICHAEL BALL

I believe that the composer has an implicit duty to serve the society he or she lives in by providing well-crafted music which is both grateful and stimulating to play or sing and hopefully uplifting to the imagination and the spirit, both for the player(s) and the listener. In short, my concern is to be useful and to communicate.

given at the BASBWE Conference that Autumn in Manchester, with the UK premiere of the Bennett in a concert also featuring John Harle as soloist in the Ingolf Dahl *Saxophone Concerto*. Michael Ball has written three less difficult works aimed at the good school band, *Chaucer's Tunes* (1993, Novello), commissioned for Stockport Grammar School, *Introduction, Chaconne and Chorale* (1995, Maecenas) commissioned by Hugh Craig and the Surrey County Youth Wind Orchestras, and the very fine *Saxophone Concerto* (1994, Maecenas) commissioned for the Huddersfield BASBWE Conference in 1994.

Another outstanding work, unfortunately seldom performed, is his brilliant *Pageant* (1995, Novello) scored as a companion piece for the Stravinsky *Mass* for choir, double reeds and brass. His *Three Processionals* (1998, Studio) is one of those rare works, a successful, musical work at Grade 3 level, and more recently he has transcribed his *Cambrian Suite* also for school band, while his *Euphonium Concerto* (2003), originally also for brass band, was premiered in the wind version at the Cheltenham International Festival in 2004.

### Wind Ensemble Concept

Many of the earliest BASBWE-inspired works were scored with large-scale forces in mind, the Symphonic Wind Band, with its doubling of players in flutes, clarinets and brass. However, in 1952, the late Frederick Fennell had founded his Eastman Wind Ensemble, in which the concept of one player to a part gave composers control at last over the sonorities for which they were writing, and in general the most significant repertoire of the past forty years has been written with solo players in mind.

The Wind Ensemble concept of any ensemble up to about 45 solo players, one to a part, can be adopted for most wind works, and the clarity given even to opaque and dense textures is welcome. The scoring is in fact derived from an enlarged symphony orchestra wind section and is generally for Piccolo and two Flutes, two Oboes and Cor Anglais, Eb Clarinet, 3 Bb Clarinets, Bass Clarinet, two Bassoons and Contra Bassoon and a Saxophone quartet of two Altos, Tenor and Baritone with possible doublings on Percy Grainger's beloved Soprano, in the brass, four Horns, three or more Trumpets or Cornets, three Trombones, one or two Tubas, with Timpani, Percussion, Double Bass, Harp and Piano.

This rich palette of colours has been superbly tapped by Richard Rodney Bennett in his *Morning Music* (1987, Novello), *Four Seasons* (1991, Novello) and *Trumpet Concerto* (1993, Novello).

### **Richard Rodney Bennett - The Stylistic Middle Ground**

These three works by Bennett represent the composer at the height of his powers and are in my opinion amongst the most significant works for wind ensemble of the end of the last century. Bennett studied at the Royal Academy under Lennox Berkeley and Howard Ferguson, and in Paris with Pierre Boulez. His works include symphonies, concertos, a vast amount of chamber and vocal music, opera, ballet and film and television scores, ranging from the award winning *Murder on the Orient Express* to the more recent *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. He has a naturally affinity for wind, brass and percussion, an extraordinary ear for sonorities allied with a lyricism lacking in so many composers for the medium. To be analytical, all three works are in what Bennett refers to as "more-or-less" serial texture; all three have series which are tonal, based on closely related intervals and harmonies

Susan Bradshaw writes: *No other composer has done more to develop the stylistic middle ground of 20th Century music - an area widely ignored throughout the 1950's and 1960's - or, incidentally, to encourage its listeners.*

<p style="text-align:center"><b>MORNING MUSIC – MIDNIGHT MUSIC</b> <b>THE WIND MUSIC OF RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT</b> <b>And IRWIN BAZELON</b></p> <p><b>RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT</b> Morning Music Concerto for Trumpet and Wind Orchestra The Four Seasons</p> <p style="text-align:right"><b>IRWIN BAZELON</b> Midnight Music</p> <p style="text-align:center">RNCM Wind Orchestra on DOY CD 037</p>
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The row which launches *Morning Music* can be easily sung by audience and ensemble with its diatonic patterning of 4ths and 3rds, while the row which is boldly stated as an introductory cadenza in the *Trumpet Concerto* turns out to be much the same tune as Miles Davis' *Maid of Cadiz*; this slow movement is a heartfelt *Elegy for Miles Davis*, the perfect cross-over work, a bridge between Schoenberg and contemporary jazz. Bennett's most recent work for wind is *Reflections on a Sixteenth Century Tune* (Novello, 1999); originally scored for string orchestra, the composer has transcribed it effortlessly for a double wind quintet. Recently, Novello released the slow movement to be purchased separate from the rest of the work.

### **The Second Decade: 1991 – 2001: Consolidation**

By 1991 a new repertoire of British wind music had been established by BASBWE. At a College interview, a would-be student responded in answer to a question about the sort of music his school wind orchestra played "Oh, we play the usual classics, Holst and Woolfenden." Happily for the movement, despite the problems inherent in printing music, many publishers responded to the new needs of bands, and more recently new computer technology has helped composers considerably.

### **Publishing Initiatives**

With the introduction of computerised music programmes like Finale and Sibelius, publishing has undergone a revolution, but even before these innovations, new initiatives were launched by R. Smith, (now G. and M. Brand), Studio Music and Novello (now Music Sales); other series from Chester and Schirmer were less

successful, and wind orchestra publishing by traditional firms such as OUP and Boosey & Hawkes continued fitfully, mainly in the USA, since the UK market is limited. As with brass bands, wind orchestras prefer to purchase music rather than hiring, and luckily not only were most of the new commissions put on sale, but Studio Music launched the old Chappell Journal as a reprint series. More recently still, other firms have come into the market, such as Maecenas, Faber, Samuel King, Da Capo, Bandleader, CMA and Denis Wick.

The last few years have also seen an increase in self-publishing, with composers such as the late Adrian Cruft, Stephen Dodgson, Peter Graham, Keith Amos and Bruce Fraser, building considerable repertoire lists under their own imprint. A number of commissions, self-published in the seventies and eighties, merit a more regular place in the repertoire. Adrian Cruft was assiduous in his support of the symphonic wind band, as is Stephen Dodgson, formerly chairman of the National Youth Wind Orchestra, whose *The Eagle* (1976) and a very successful work for solo clarinet and wind, *Capriccio Concertante* (1984) are perhaps his most substantial works. Many of his works are now published by Denis Wick, who has also entered the field with works by Alun Hoddinott and a series of his own fine arrangements of standard orchestral repertoire. Michael Short, published by Bandleader, is another composer, whose works such as *Estonia* and *Our Fighting Ships* should reach wider circulation.

#### **Wasbe/Basbwe Conference 1991**

BASBWE's first decade culminated in the 1991 joint WASBE/BASBWE Conference. Marred by the outbreak of the Gulf War, which frightened off many of the American bands, groups still came from Europe, Japan, Australia and Texas, and the repertoire of over 140 works ranged through four centuries, from Gabrieli and Schütz to world premieres. Berkshire commissioned a sparkling new non-Shakespearean work from Guy Woolfenden, *Mockbeggar Variations* (1991, Ariel) and also premiered an excellent *Trumpet Concerto* (1991, AXA) by the Hungarian composer, Istvan Lendvay.

Of other works commissioned in connection with the 1991 Conference, *Canyons* (1991, Novello) by John McCabe, commissioned jointly by Eastman and London's Guildhall, is a striking evocation of the Grand Canyon, certainly accessible to a good youth band, while Patterson's *The Mighty Voice*, (1991, Studio Music) written for Youth Bands, should become equally successful now it is revised. Bennett contributed *The Four Seasons* (1991, Novello), premiered at the Cheltenham Festival, and two large-scale ensemble works received workshop performances. Nicholas Maw's *American Games* (1991 Faber) was premiered the following week at the BBC Proms, and won the 1991 Sudler Award in Chicago. It is an energetic virtuoso romp through American life, with the razzmatazz of the marching bands contrasted with the simple piety of traditional American values. Equally appealing was the new CBDNA Consortium commission by Robin Holloway, *Entrance; Carousing; Embarcation* (1991 Boosey and Hawkes), presented in a workshop by Jerry Junkin and the University of Texas at Austin Wind Ensemble. This is a sprawling Mahlerian epic, scored for a fairly normal wind ensemble except for the clarinets, of which 8 Bb are required, together with 2 bass, contra alto and contra bass.

#### **Trends In British Music**

Perhaps two strands can be perceived in the "symphonic" repertoire. On the one hand there are works cast in a more populist mould, equally suited to performance either with solo players or by a larger, perhaps less experienced, Symphonic Band. Some of these are pastiche, Malcolm Binney's *Charivari* (1981, Maecenas), Martin

Dalby's *A Plain Man's Hammer* (1984, Novello), Joseph Horowitz' *Bacchus on Blue Ridge* and *Fête Galante*, Orr's *John Gay Suite*, Woolfenden's *Gallimaufry* and *Illyrian Dances*, Muldowney's *1984* (ms) and *Dance Suite* (1996, Ariel) generally following European rather than American models. On the other hand, composers developed traditional forms and language, Dodgson's *Concertante Capriccioso*, Cruft's Overture *Tamburlaine* (1962, Joad Press), Gregson's *Tuba Concerto* and *Festivo*, Iain Hamilton's witty *Overture 1912* (1958, Presser), and Patterson's *The Mighty Voice* (1991, Studio) but, it might be chauvinistically claimed, often with a refreshing vigour and spontaneity not always present in some of the formulaic music of their American contemporaries.

Meanwhile a new generation of composers, emerged, writing Gebrauchsmusik suitable for either the wind ensemble concept or the symphonic, which, like so much earlier British music, entertains the audience while challenging the player, whether conservatoire or professional, student or amateur. Paul Hart has three works full of brio and gusto in *Journey and Celebration* (1989, R Smith), *Cartoon* (1990, R Smith), and *Circus Ring* (1995, G & M Brand). Nigel Hess has responded to commissions from the National Youth Wind Orchestra and others with five works including *East Coast Pictures* (1985, Faber), *Global Variations* (1990, Faber) and *Stephenson's Rocket* (1992, Faber).

#### Huddersfield Consortia

Typical of the emerging younger group is Martin Ellerby, whose *Paris Sketches* (1994, Maecenas), a four-movement homage to Parisian composers such as Ravel, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Satie and Berlioz, was commissioned by a consortium of schools put together by Richard Jones for the 1994 Huddersfield Conference, wonderfully scored filmic music, premiered by the first BASBWE Honours Band conducted by Clark Rundell. The other Huddersfield commission was Gary Carpenter's slightly over scored rock-based *Flying God Suite* (1994, Camden) published by another publishing newcomer, Camden Music. Carpenter's earlier commission by the NYWOGB, *Theatre Fountains*, (1991, Camden) is more successful and should be revived; his *Eine Kleine Snookerspiel* (Camden) is a brilliant Harmonie spoof for wind octet. His most recent work was written for the Sunderland Festival of 1997, *Sunderland Lasses, Wearside Lads*, again perhaps a little heavy handed in its treatment of the material.

#### Martin Ellerby

<b>METROPOLIS</b>	
Samurai	Nigel Clarke
Paris Sketches	Martin Ellerby
Metropolis	Adam Gorb
Sailing with Archangels	Geoffrey Poole
RNCM WIND ORCHESTRA	
Conductors Clark Rundell and Timothy Reynish	
KLAV 11152	

Ellerby's earliest essay for wind, the evocative *Tuba Concerto* (1988, Maecenas), has been followed by *Dona Nobis Pacem* (1995, Maecenas) a heartfelt elegy for the heroes of the Second World

War, premiered at Symphony Hall, Birmingham. More ambitious is the *Symphony* (1997, Studio), commissioned for the 1997 BASBWE Conference, and a wind version of his *Euphonium Concerto* (1996, Studio), while his *Venetian Spells* (1997 Studio) recalls the pastiche qualities of *Paris Sketches*, evoking the music of Gabrieli, Vivaldi and other Italian masters with telling use of both harp and harpsichord. *New*

**World Dances** (1998, Studio) is a transcription of a brass band original, designed for a youth band tour of USA and readily accessible. More recently there seems to have been a divergence between his more serious works, **Meditations** and **Via Crucis**, and the lighter side, which includes the **Clarinet Concerto** and the educational piece **The Big Easy Suite**. In 2005 he received a commission from Her Majesty's Band of the Coldstream Guards for a work entitled **The Cries of London**. He is now editor for Studio Music.

### Adam Gorb

His former colleague at London College of Music is Adam Gorb, ([www.adamgorb.co.uk](http://www.adamgorb.co.uk)) whose first work was the exciting and exacting **Metropolis** (1993, Maecenas), written for the Royal Academy of Music Wind Orchestra, which won the Walter Beeler Memorial Prize in 1984. Since then he has written **Bermuda Triangle** (1995, Maecenas), a **Euphonium Concerto** (1997, Maecenas) and a brilliant "post-Bernstein" Overture, **Awayday**, (1996, Maecenas). His **Yiddish Dances**, (1998 Maecenas) is a marvellous five-movement work based on the Klezmer tradition, about Grade 4 but requiring an expert Eb player; his most substantial work to date is a concerto for percussion, written for Evelyn Glennie, **The Elements** (1998, Maecenas), premiered at the Bridgewater Hall Manchester on 6th April 1998. Two more elusive works tap a gentler sound-world, **Ascent**, commissioned by Felix Hauswirth for the lamented Uster Festival, and **Towards Nirvana**, which begins as a hedonistic whirl, reminiscent of the language of Metropolis, but ends in a Buddhist trance of chanting, recorders, repetitive motifs, dying away to nothing. "Too long and too quiet" was the criticism levelled by one eminent wind orchestra aficionado! Despite that, it won the award from the British Academy of Composers and Songwriters for the best wind work of 2004.

He is an essentially practical composer, and his works for school band have a spontaneity and sensitivity rare at this level. I especially enjoy **Bridgewater Breeze** (Maecenas), five good tunes with teasing quirks of phrasing, orchestration and metre, and **Candelight Procession** (G&M Brand), both at about Grade 3 level.

He is now Head of Composition and Contemporary Performance at the Royal Northern College of Music, but wears his learning lightly as demonstrated by a number of charming pieces at Grade 2/3 level. Gorb has often nailed his colours to the mast over "light" music. The hilarious trombone concerto, **Downtown Diversions** (2001, Maecenas) demonstrates the ease with which he skates near the thin edge of popular cliché without ever falling into that easiest of ruts. In his most recent work he returns to the populist mode of **Yiddish Dances; Dances from Crete**, (2003, Maecenas) is a four movement rumbustious suite of dances in which vulgar high-spirits and virtuosity are juxtaposed with deeply felt tragic lyricism. His most recent works are

the virtuoso **Adrenaline City** (2007, Studio) written for a consortium of American army bands, and the much simpler

<b>International Repertoire Volume 2 5342-MCD</b>	
<b>UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY WIND ENSEMBLE</b>	
Adam Gorb	Dances from Crete
Magnus Lindberg	Gran Duo
Laurence Bitensky	Awake, You Sleepers
Joaquin Rodrigo	Per la Flor del Lliri Blau

**Safari and Sunrise** (2007, Maecenas) written for the biennial band contest in Singapore, together with a work for singers, brass and organ, **Scribblings on a Blank Wall**.

### **Malcolm Binney & Maecenas**

A number of other composers are writing for Maecenas, notably Malcolm Binney, its publisher and a conductor. Brilliantly scored, full of wit and vigour, works such as **Charivari** (1981, Maecenas), **Four Character Studies** (1988, Maecenas) and **Saturnalia** (1992, Maecenas) are fun to play and to listen to. **Emerald Breeze** (1994, Maecenas) is a miniature Straussian tone-poem of some power, **Brasser** (1997) a rumbustious Overture and **Civitas** (1997) is a more serious three movement work, reflecting the vigour, courage and rewards of northern life in the Industrial Revolution. The inspiration behind the Maecenas catalogue is Giles Easterbrook, who was responsible also for the development of the Novello Wind Series in the 80's. The Series includes established masterpieces by Respighi and Saint-Saens, virtuoso works such as Roger Marsh's **Heathcote's Inferno** (1996) and Judith Bingham's **Three American Icons** (1997), with movements dedicated to Marilyn Monroe, Lee Harvey Oswald and others. Other contributing composers are Gareth Wood and Geoffrey Poole, both vastly experienced.

Many Maecenas composers have had a specific brief to write easy music in a contemporary idiom which gives players a musical challenge while providing them and their audiences with an emotional experience similar to that derived by their colleagues from playing standard orchestral repertoire. Such a work is Bill Connor's **Tails aus dem Woods Viennoise** (1992, Maecenas) a masterpiece for Grade 3-4 players, Mahlerian in its sweep and impact. Adam Gorb's **Bridgewater Breeze** (1997) is a re-scoring of his **Suite for Winds**, five very attractive tuneful movements at Grade 3 level. Gareth Wood is another composer with a flair for the good tune and attractive scoring, shown in **Three Mexican Pictures** (1992 Maecenas), **A Wiltshire Symphony** (1997 Maecenas) or recently in **The Cauldron** (2003, Maecenas). Malcolm Binney's latest initiative is to invite Adam Gorb, Fergal Carroll and Gareth Woods to write works at about Grade 2 level, with carefully selected parameters of ranges, keys and difficulty, published as the *Genesis Series*.

### **Today's Dilemma - We Can't Unpick The Twentieth Century**

For the more "serious" composers who have responded to commissions, Robin Holloway perhaps sums up the present state of a great deal of British music of today when he writes:

*I am trying to write music, which, though conversant with most of the revolutionary technical innovations of the last 80 years or so, and by no means turning its back on them, nonetheless keeps a continuity of language and expressive intention with the classics and romantics of the past.*

Composer, Diana Burrell, spoke of her perception of the job of a composer:

*Try and find a language which doesn't disregard everything which has happened in the twentieth century, that does acknowledge Stravinsky and Schoenberg and Boulez, while being simple enough to work for the concert hall, or church, or for young people - the wider community in some way, but which acknowledges that this is where we are - we can't go back. We can't unpick the twentieth century.*

### **Important Statements**

The commissioning programme of the last ten years has deliberately encouraged leading British composers who might subscribe to this creed to write for wind. One of the strongest works is a commission for Glasgow from the Scottish composer, James Macmillan, whose **Sowetan Spring** (1990, Boosey) has been recorded professionally by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra but has received relatively few performances. Similar neglect has befallen other more "serious" works, such as

John Casken's *Distant Variations for Saxophone Quartet and Wind* (1997, Schott), Anthony Gilbert's *Dream Carousels* (1989, Schott), Edward Harper's *Double Variations* for oboe, bassoon and ensemble (1989, OUP) and Thea Musgrave's *Journey through a Japanese Landscape* (1993/Novello). a Marimba Concerto, dedicated to Evelyn Glennie. Almost more exciting, in the struggle to legitimise the medium, is the involvement of professional orchestras in commissioning composers for their wind, brass and percussion section. Orchestras such as the Liverpool Philharmonic with Gregson's *Celebration* (1991, Maecenas), The London Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas with *Quatrain* (1989, Faber) by Colin Matthews, and the BBC Symphony with Birtwistle's *Panic* (1995, Booseys) have all added major works to the professional repertoire. Two other works rarely performed are Robin Holloway's *Entrance; Carousing; Embarcation* (1997, Boosey) and Michael Tippett's *Triumph* (Schott), both commissioned by American Universities. Together with Sallinen's *Palace Rhapsody* (1997), the three works by Richard Rodney Bennett and Irwin Bazelon's *Midnight Music* (1991, Novello), these represent a body of music for wind ensemble, which can be considered an important statement by leading British publishers and composers.

**Sir Michael Tippett**  
**2 January 1905 – 8**  
**January 1998**  
**Triumph**

It was typical of Michael Tippett, the doyen of British composers, to have responded enthusiastically at the age of eighty-seven to a wind ensemble commission from an American Consortium led by Frank Battisti.

*We all know that the big public is extremely conservative and is willing to ring the changes on a few beloved works till the end of time, and that our concert life, through the taste of this public, suffers from a kind of inertia of sensibility, that seems to want no musical experience whatever beyond what it already knows.....Surely the matter is that the very big public masses together in a kind of dead passion of mediocrity, and that this blanket of mediocrity is deeply offended by any living passion of the unusual, the rare, the rich, the exuberant. the heroic and the aristocratic in art.*

*Triumph*, (1992, Schott), based on was described by his close colleague and collaborator Merion Bowen, as a *Paraphrase after the manner of Liszt*.

Tippett also sanctioned use of the first movement of his *Concerto for Orchestra* to be played as a separate wind ensemble piece, entitled *Mosaic* (1963, Schott).

### **The Professional Symphony Orchestra & Wind Ensemble**

Despite the energy in commissioning and the virtuosity of performance of our major wind ensembles and orchestras, the movement is essentially amateur. A new work will receive multiple performances if, to echo Sir Simon Rattle, it does not "frighten the horses". Despite the pressures of box-office, the professional symphony orchestras are far more imaginative in their treatment of a new work. For the Millennium, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra celebrated with a commission from Magnus Lindberg. *Gran Duo* (2000, Boosey & Hawkes) has had before 2005 over forty performances from Symphony Orchestras worldwide, though very few wind ensembles essayed it. When Sir Simon took over as musical director of the Berlin Philharmonic, he programmed *Gran Duo* in the first season, together with another Rattle commission, Heiner Goebbel's extraordinary *Aus einem Tagebuch* (From a Diary), for wind, brass, percussion, double basses and sampler, and he then toured it across the USA.

### **Professional Recordings**

A further crucial element in the development of wind music in UK and elsewhere has been the enormous growth of availability of professionally produced compact discs. Geoffrey Brand and Stan Kitchen have both made recordings of their publications using professional players from the London free-lance scene and from the services, while the Royal Northern College of Music has recorded wind works of Richard Rodney Bennett, David Bedford, Edward Gregson and Guy Woolfenden for Doyen, works by Ellerby, Gorb, Poole and Clarke for Serendipity. Their two Grainger discs in the Chandos complete Grainger series met with critical acclaim, and have led to recordings of the works of Holst and Vaughan Williams, of German, French, Russian and Nordic classics, and most recently of concert dance music.

### **Cbdna Commissioning Consortia**

The setting up of international and national commissioning consortia is a welcome development at university, professional and at school level; here perhaps WASBE has a growing role to play. A collaboration between BASBWE, the RNCM and CBDNA resulted in a commission from the distinguished Finnish composer, Aulis Sallinen (born 1930) for the 1997 Cheltenham International festival, ***The Palace Rhapsody***, (1997, Novello/Music Sales), and first performances were given in USA, Finland, Sweden and Norway. This is an elusive work, based on the composer's opera ***The Palace***, itself drawn from a book about Haille Selassie with elements of ***Die Entfuhrung aus dem Serail***, often simple and heart rending, frequently ironic and teasing. A recording is now available on 5600 – MCD while a professional CD is imminent in a Sallinen series from Ondine. A welcome move towards international commissioning consortia at school level began in Yorkshire with Richard Jones, who set up commissions from Adam Gorb, his ***Euphonium Concerto***, and from New Zealander Christopher Marshall, ***Aue***, with funding from and premières in high schools and colleges in UK, USA, Australia and Canada.

### **Basbwe Educational Trust**

A vital component in the development of commissioning is the work of the BASBWE Educational Trust under Charles Hine; in 1993 he set up the first Commissioning Consortium with the Trust partnered by British conservatoires and universities. The work was the marimba concerto ***Journey through a Japanese Landscape*** (1994, Novello) from Thea Musgrave, and other works have followed from Robert Saxton whose ***Ring, Time*** (1994, Chester) is partially inspired by the music of Tippett, and Dominic Muldowney, with ***Dance Suite*** (1996, Ariel). More recent works have been written by John Woolrich, Elena Firsova and Ilona Sekacs. Help has also been given to the Leeds Festival for commissions from David Bedford ***Susato Variations*** (1993, Novello) and Alan Bullard's ***Heritage*** (1993, Colne).

### **D\*\*N Good Contemporary British Music**

Angus Duke, writing in the British Music Society Journal, reckoned that his first BASBWE Conference was a revelation.

*There are still composers who are conserving and rejuvenating the music of uplifting melody, springing rhythms, strength and joy.*

The 1996 Conference gave a survey of fourteen years of BASBWE Commissioning policy. As Angus Duke reports that

*there were inevitably some "duds", longueurs and "heavy" pieces, but most of the items performed, I at least want to hear again. It seems as if the medium itself induces a spring in the step, and a sense of robust appreciation*

*of life such as we have seldom heard since the VW and Holst wind band suites.*

It is imperative that as many bands and orchestras as possible commission works at all levels on a regular basis, and play them regularly. For the 1997 BASBWE Conference at Canterbury, Brendon le Page encouraged this with a series of high-profile premieres. Perhaps the outstanding premiere was ***A Lindisfarne Rhapsody*** (1997, Studio) for Flute and Wind Orchestra, commissioned by Kenneth Bell, principal flute of the Central Band of the RAF in memory and celebration of his parents. The RAF programme also included two striking new pieces, David Bedford's ***Canons and Cadenzas*** (1997, G & M Brand) commissioned by Frederick Fennell for the Kosei Orchestra, and a commission from Philip Sparke by the United States Air Force Band, ***Dance Movements*** (1996, Studio), which later in the year won the Sudler Award in Chicago.

Other works premiered at Canterbury include ***Gaudeamus*** (1997, Bandleader) by Michael Short, ***Symphony for Winds*** (1997, Studio) by Martin Ellerby, ***Abigail's Video Diary*** (1997) by Robert Godman and ***Prayer and Eastern Dance*** (1997) by Duncan Stubbs, written with the intention of being playable by the average community/school band while providing interesting rhythmic demands for more advanced players.

In 1998 I commissioned for the Manchester BASBWE Conference a series of easier works at Grade 3 & 4 from Michael Ball, Martin Ellerby, Tim Ewers, Edward Gregson, Adam Gorb, Philip Wilby, Guy Woolfenden and others; this is the real challenge for composers, to write works which do not patronise school bands or less gifted amateurs, and which are musically interesting and technically not too difficult.

With less money available from the Arts Council and regional associations, we have turned increasingly in recent years towards the idea of consortia, with the exciting development that a work can then be assured of more than one premiere.

### **Edwin Roxburgh**

Geoffrey Reed and the Sefton Music Service commissioned one such splendid work in Edwin Roxburgh's ***Time's Harvest*** (2001 Maecenas) a work written for the technical requirements of High School Band, but with the musical demands of a commission for the London Sinfonietta. Roxburgh's work is included in volume 3 of my international Repertoire series, unfortunately now withdrawn, along with important works by Sallinen, Casken and Holloway mentioned above, and Judith Bingham's heartfelt ***Bright Spirit*** (2002 Maecenas). The young Edwin Roxburgh was described by Nadia Boulanger as the new Stravinsky, but I think that a career as a composer was too narrow for him, he is a fine professional oboist, was a teacher at the Royal College of Music where he for many years conducted the contemporary group, and he brings these skills to his composition. He has recently written two works as part of my commissioning series. ***An Elegy for Ur*** (2006, Maecenas) is a heartfelt plea for sanity in the Middle East, scored for solo oboe and orchestral wind and brass ; Ur of the Chaldees is the 6000 year old cradle of civilisation, now despoiled by the invading forces and the home of a Burger King and a Pizza Hut. ***Aeolian Carillons*** is a brilliant short work of a more optimistic character.

## Judith Bingham

### CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH MUSIC

Adam Gorb  
Judith Bingham  
Roger Marsh

Elements  
Three American Icons  
Heathcote's Inferno

Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra, conducted  
by Timothy Reynish on DOYCD 127

One of the first of my commissions in the current series in memory of our third son was **Bright Spirit**. This is an elegy without the sentimentality that often clouds such pieces, premiered and co-commissioned by Baylor University in Texas Her

first work for wind ensemble was **Three American Icons** 1997, Maecenas), a kind of French Suite with a *Rondeau* for Marilyn Monroe, and graphic depiction of the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald and of the infamous Grassy Knoll.

### The New Millennium - Basbwe/Rncm International Festivals

In 2001, my connection with the RNCM was severed, and my colleague Clark Rundell took over the artistic direction of the annual International Festival and BASBWE Conference. To chart the development of British wind music of the past four years, it is convenient to trace the programming under Clark. In 2002, in his first message to the delegates, Clark encouraged everyone to look out for new works by Tom Moss, Steve McNeff, Cecilia McDowell, Robert Hinchliffe, Kit Turnbull, Paul Hart, Darrol Barry, Bruce Fraser, Tim Garland, Torstein Aagaard-Nilsen, Jukka-Pekka Lehto, Fergal Carroll, Andy Scott, David Bedford, Stephen Montague, Joseph Horovitz, Mark Slater, Jonathan Booty, Ken Hesketh, Martin Ellerby, Nigel Clarke, John Reeman, Derek Bourgeois, Gareth Wood and Dave Smith, an extraordinary range of twenty-five new works.

Brendon Le Page reviewed the conference for WINDS and found it a mixed experience. He enthused about Sallinen's brooding **Chorali** (though I much prefer the irony and crazy mix of styles of the same composer's **Palace Rhapsody**), he enjoyed Jack Stamp's Copland-esque **Four Maryland Songs**, Wilby's **Catcher of Shadows**, Paul Hart's "dreamy, meandering" **Sunrise** for solo horn, McNeff's **Ghosts** (which he felt needed pictures) and **Wasteland Wind Music 2** as well as the wind version of Derek Bourgeois' **Blitz** and Fergal Carroll's **Winter Dances**, with its "Riverdance" style finale, attractive and sufficiently new-sounding to be given more performances. From the RAF Central Band he enjoyed the virtuosity of Martin Ellerby's **Euphonium Concerto** and he thought that Kenneth Hesketh's **A Festive Overture** and Philip Sparke's **Four Norfolk Dances** deserved further hearings.

### Kenneth Hesketh & Stephen Mcneff

Two composers with distinctive voices have emerged in the past few years. Kenneth Hesketh at first wrote under a pseudonym, preferring to keep his wind music and his "serious" music separate. His **Masque** (2001 Faber) is an energetic overture, full of good tunes and exciting scoring, while an earlier work, **Danceries**, (2000 Faber) is a four-movement work derived from Playford's Dancing Masters Tunes of the 17th century. **Diaghilev Dances** (2003 Faber) is a wonderful homage to the impressionistic ballets of the early 20th century, early Stravinsky, Debussy and Ravel, marvellously scored with great solo parts especially for subsidiary woodwind instruments. His **Clouds of Unknowing** (2004, Schotts) was premiered by the Royal College of Music in 2005; it is a marvellously scored work, with demanding parts for tuned percussion, piano, celeste and harp, a rich soundworld unique in the wind ensemble medium. Three other works emerged during 2004, all published by Faber;

*Internal Ride* was commissioned by the University of St. Thomas, *Whirligigg* and a *Flute Concerto*; his most recent work is *Vranjanka* which was premiered by the Guildhall School of Music and Drama at the RNCM 2005 Conference. A brooding incisive introduction leads into an exciting Balkan Dance mainly in 7/8, with rewarding parts for everyone, as in all of his music.

### Stephen Mcneff

Ghosts	2001
Wasteland Wind Music 1	2000
Wasteland Wind Music 11	2001
Bucintoro	2003
Moving Parts	2003
Venice, the Winged Lion	2004
Clarinet Concerto	2005
Image in Stone	2007
Published by Maecenas	

Stephen McNeff comes to the wind band from a predominantly theatrical background, and has written three works for the RNCM, *Wasteland Wind Music 1* (2000), *Wasteland Wind Music 2* (2001) and *Ghosts* (2001), all published by Maecenas, and all quirky, fun to play and to listen to. *Ghosts* is a kind of *Enigma Variations* for wind ensemble, in that it is a set of variations each with a ghost story as a title. One added advantage is that you can play as many or as few of the movements as you like. There are also two shorter, one movement works, *Rant* and *Moving Parts*, and *The Winged Lion*, a Venice fantasy which - far from being a travelogue - plays on the darker side of the watery city in its five movements with titles like *Carnevale* and *Bocca di Leone*. His most recent work is a *Concerto for Clarinet and Wind Orchestra* (commissioned by a consortium of bands for Linda Merrick) which was premiered in London, Warrington and Finland. He is currently composer in association with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, and his most recent wind work is a song cycle for mezzo soprano and wind, *Image in Stone*, which was premiered by the Irish Youth Wind Ensemble in summer 2007. This is a four movement songcycle of touching simplicity and poignancy.

### Community Wind Programmes At Their Best

It is satisfying to find RNCM alumni from the last two decades now out there influencing programming in school and community bands. Tim Redmond has programmed Bennett's *Morning Music* in a couple of symphony orchestra concerts, while in 2003, two other influential conductors brought interesting programmes to conference. Keiron Anderson's Yorkshire Wind Orchestra gave a programme of which any community orchestra would be proud, Phil Littlemore's extremely effective version of Jonathan Dove's *Ringing Isle* (Faber), Philip Wilby's *Dawn Flight* (G&M Brand), Judith Bingham's tricky *Three American Icons* (Maecenas) and Nigel Clarke's clarinet concerto *Battles and Chants* (Studio). Mark Heron's programme with Lancashire Symphonic Wind Orchestra was perhaps more international and even more intriguing, starting with the two little pieces by Scarlatti arranged Shostakovich (Sikorski), ending with the Martinu *Cello Concertino*, with an extraordinarily evocative work in the middle, *Magnum Ignotum* by Kancheli, a montage of bells and Russian Orthodox chant with wind ensemble. In 2003 also, Birmingham Conservatoire under Guy Woolfenden and Eric Hinton brought a fascinating programme of British music; Guy's own *Celebration* opened energetically and cheerfully, and introduced Martin Ellerby's *Meditation*, a more introspective serious work than we are used to hearing from this composer. Based on *The Seven Last Words*, Ellerby creates some dramatic effects and singing lines, as ever

beautifully scored. Philip Wilbys's **Trumpet Concerto** is more acerbic in its wit and brilliance, a very useful addition to the repertoire for this instrument.

### **Panic Scandal**

The 2003 Conference RNCM Concert conducted by Clark Rundell and Frank Battisti was more international, with two works commissioned by the BBC for its own Symphony Orchestra, one commissioned by the Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra, one by the San Francisco Symphony and one to celebrate Frank Battisti's 70th birthday. The concert began with Mark-Anthony Turnage's **A Quick Blast**, (Schott) an acerbic exciting commission for the Cheltenham Festival of 2000, it ended with the scandalous commission for the 1995 Last Night of the Proms, **Panic** by Harrison Birtwistle (Boosey & Hawkes) for solo saxophone and kit percussion, receiving here a performance marked with much greater clarity than its premiere in that cavernous Royal Albert Hall. One work new for UK audiences was the award-winning **Towards Nirvana** of Adam Gorb which won the British Composers' Award in 2005.

Perhaps the 2004 BASBWE Conference did not have quite the excitement of some past occasions, not too many special commissions or major world premieres. However, there were a few sound works by old and new composers. It was good to hear Michael Ball's voice again in **A Cambrian Suite**, an arrangement of a slightly old-fashioned brass band fantasy on Welsh tunes, and also good to hear a couple of movements from Ernest Tomlinson's **Suite of English Dances**, (Novello/Studio) arranged by the composer from the orchestral version, six thumping good settings of great tunes from the 17th century. There were a number of new works from experienced pens or computers; among these were Peter Graham's **Call of the Cossacks** (Gramercy), Nigel Clarke's **Mata Hari** (Studio) and his tour de force for Euphonium **City in the Sea**, (Studio) while Philip Sparke has added a **Clarinet Concerto** (Anglo) to his sensitive Flute Concerto, **Lindisfarne Rhapsody**.

Among the newer voices, the Irish composer Fergal Carroll, whose **Winter Dances** (2002, Maecenas) had been very successful as an amateur band commission, achieved in his sensitive **Song of Lir** (2004, Maecenas) what is really difficult, a major extended 7 minute tone poem for Grade 3 band. Unfortunately another major work for school band by David Smith could not be performed, but his **Fractures** (2002, Maecenas) was a very useful addition to the school band repertoire. Stephen McNeff was represented by **Venice, the Winged Lion**, (2004, Maecenas), another fine tone poem by this exciting composer. A major work for schools work by an under-rated European composer, Marco Pütz, received its UK premiere at the Conference; **Dance Sequence** (2003, Maecenas) was commissioned by a WASBE consortium set up by Richard Jones of Yorkshire and Marc Crompton of Vancouver.

The extraordinary growth of repertoire at all levels in United Kingdom in the past two decades is due only partly to the lead taken by the Royal Northern College of Music and BASBWE. As in Europe, America and the Far East, many conductors are actively engaged in commissioning music of integrity, but such is the profession that news of such works gets easily buried, unless the work is clearly commercial - we need to correspond through newsletters and the internet. One major work was premiered in March 2004, **Rainland**, by Joseph Phibbs; a work of 30 minutes involving over 1,600 students, it received not a mention in any press, while his 10-minute orchestral piece for the BBC Proms in September 2004 met with critical acclaim.

### Beware The Armed Man

It was unfortunate that a performance of Gorb's hilarious latest work, **Dances from Crete**, was cancelled, but another of my commissions for WASBE, **L'Homme Armé**, was played. Both works are potentially major additions to the repertoire, since both are packed with emotion, variety, drama, humour, contrast, with great parts for everyone, good for audience and players

### INTERNATIONAL REPERTOIRE SERIES

Volume 1 4949-MCD

### UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY WIND ENSEMBLE

Nigel Clarke	Samurai
<b>Christopher Marshall</b>	<b>L'Homme Arme</b>
Kenneth Hesketh	Diaghilev Dances
Jules Strens	Danse Funambulesque
Christian Lindberg	Concerto for Wind Orchestra

L'Homme Armé (Maecenas) by New Zealander Christopher Marshall is a set of variations on the old mediaeval tune, loosely patterned on the **Symphonic Variations** of Dvorak. With a Maori war song, a funeral march, a Mahlerian Ländler,

*Sometimes the single-minded pursuit of originality severs too many links with the past. Without existing music as a reference point, communication may be lost. By the same token, a composer who restricts himself to the techniques and aesthetics of the past is irrelevant. The challenge, as I see it, is to produce music that is recognisably of our time, yet also timeless.*

Chris Marshall

jazz and pop influences and a brief prologue and epilogue of sirens, penned under the shadow of the Iraq war, the work has enormous strength and integrity. Marshall's first wind work was the beautiful but elusive **Aue**, (2002, Maecenas) an Ivesian miniature based on the songs and sounds of Samoa, aimed

at school bands but demanding the control and confidence of more mature groups, well worth exploring if you are seeking a short restrained tone-poem. In 2006, Chris Marshall responded to another commission with the very beautiful **Resonance** (2006 Maecenas), a montage of forest sounds, culminating in a missionary hymn tune with variations which dissolves into birdsong, as the whole wind orchestra gently whistles.

**All we can do is to make it better for the next generations.** - H Robert Reynolds

Since 2000 the pace in the UK of commissioning has slowed somewhat, and there has been a certain air of "dumbing down" as the charge of elitism raised its head yet again in the BASBWE Journal and in the WASBE minutes. I wrote my own feelings on "elitism" in an issue of Winds in early 2003:

*It was good to see that the old BASBWE rows have still not subsided, and that the critics of "elitist" music are still writing. I am not repentant in the slightest – some of the scores I have commissioned could well be called elitist, Judith Bingham's **Three American Icons** (1997, Maecenas), John Casken's **Distant Variations** (1997, Schotts), Tony Gilbert's **Dream Carousels** (1989, Schotts), many are aimed at students and amateurs. Mozart was accused of writing too many notes, but he seems to have outlasted his less fecund colleagues!*

### MUSIC FOR SCHOOL AND AMATEUR BANDS

I wonder, too, whether band directors complaining about elitism have ever looked at Adam Gorb's **Bridgewater Breeze** (2003, Maecenas), five stunning little movements at about Grade 3, with a **Merry-go-round** and a **Hoe Down**, fun for all, or have they explored Michael Ball's **Three Processionals**, Derek Bourgeois' **Northern Lament**,

Malcolm Binney's *Timpanaglia* or Guy Woolfenden's *Birthday Treat*, all at about Grade ¾, written for school and community bands to celebrate my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. Have they tried through Stephen McNeff's *Ghosts*, (2002, Maecenas) a piece almost 20 minutes long, but with licence for the conductor to choose which movements (s) he wants to play, dependant on the difficulty and the calibre of the ensemble. Then there is Philip Wilby's powerful *Passion for our Time*, (1997, Maecenas) written for school band with choir and dancers and narrator. Or have they given their Grade 4 students the extraordinary Mahlerian experience of playing Bill Connor's *Tales aus dem Vood Viennoise* (Maecenas)?

### **Pink Panther Meets The Wizard Of Oz**

Paul Patterson's great setting of Roald Dahl's *Little Red Riding Hood* for narrator and band is harder to play, but certainly not elitist, nor is Gorb's *Yiddish Dances* or *Awayday*. If being non-elitist means conducting endless performances of *Pink Panther meets the Wizard of Oz* or *Phantom of the Opera*, then give me elitism any day, as long as it entertains, it packs an emotional punch, it makes me laugh or weep, scared, whatever! David Bedford once wrote in WINDS of the "tingle factor," the hairs standing up on your spine in a Hitchcock thriller, a Spielberg horror, the entry of the Commendatore in the last act of *Don Giovanni*, the production of the head of John the Baptist in *Salome*, the climax of a Mahler Symphony, those fortissimo chords in David's *Sun Paints Rainbows over the Vast Waves* which dissolve onto a *molto pianissimo*, an effect for which you need the Royal Albert Hall or a similar vast acoustic. Really that's is what BASBWE, its big brother WASBE, and the commissions are all about, creating a repertoire at all levels of good music.

### **Past, Present & Future**

The heady excitement of the eighties and nineties and the creation of good and sometimes great music at all levels has given way to a cut back of interest in conference and in new repertoire, probably much to do with the changing attitudes now prevalent in our schools towards out of school activities, and the cuts in budgets for creative music. The Conference of 2005 proved to be the last at the Royal Northern College of Music, and although musically strong, it was poorly attended; the only new piece was Kenneth Hesketh's *Vranjanka*, though John Harle and Rob Buckland were soloists with Chethams School in Andy Scott's Concerto for Two Saxophones, *Dark Rain*, a striking and energetic work which was to win the British Composers' Award later that year. 2006 saw the first regional conferences, held in London hosted by the Guildhall and Birmingham, hosted by the Birmingham Conservatoire, and no new music emerged.

2007 was something of a vintage year after the relative drought; a return to Glasgow for BASBWE resulted in a number of fine performances of new works, some of which were repeated a week later in Killarney at the WASBE Conference, while British music was strongly featured in the WASBE Germany Conference held in Stuttgart in March.

### **Irish Youth Wind Ensemble**

Inspired by the work of BASBWE in the early eighties, James Cavanagh founded the IYWE in 1985 with Colonel Fred O'Callaghan, and has been conductor for the last twenty two years, with a clear vision of developing programmes of the best possible music. For his final concerts, Cavanagh shared the conducting once again with me, and the programmes were typically challenging. Both summer programmes featured trumpet soloists, John Wallace in Glasgow with the world public premiere of the Pütz *Trumpet Concerto*, and Mark O'Keefe in Killarney with the Lendvay Concerto, premiered at WASBE in Manchester 1991. Both concerts began with an amusing Irish traditional piece, Potter's *Finnegan's Wake* and ended with Nigel Clarke's

**Samurai**, and both concerts included **Vranjanka** and the world premieres of **Prelude and Toccata** by John Kinsella and the song cycle **Image in Stone** by Stephen McNeff. The Easter course also paid homage to the Anglo-Irish composer, Elizabeth Maconchy with her **Music for Wind and Brass** as well as including Gorb's **Dances from Crete**.

### **Composers In Residence**

In Glasgow, BASBWE recaptured much of the excitement of earlier times; Philip Sparke, Guy Woolfenden, James MacMillan, Rory Boyle, Eddie McGuire, Raymond Head, Stephen McNeff, Martin Ellerby, Christopher Noble, Oliver Searle and Emily Howard were all present, and there were two composers featured "in residence", Marco Pütz and Edwin Roxburgh. There were several new works from Pütz, from Edwin Roxburgh his brilliant **Aeolian Carillons**, powerful **Passacaglia** from Timothy Jackson and a wonderful meditation from Bill Connor, **Sun Low Over Water**. Especially exciting was the world premiere of a quintet by James MacMillan, conducted by the composer.

### **Wasbe In Ireland**

Three groups from UK played in WASBE in 2007, each bringing relatively new pieces. Chethams School Wind Ensemble gave a startlingly exciting account of Andy Scott's Concerto **Dark Rain**, and joined with local choirs for a moving performance of Joseph Phibb's **Rain Land**, a choral work on a large scale, conceived for the Albert Hall. Joseph Phibbs was also featured by the National Youth Wind Ensemble of Great Britain in an extraordinarily ambitious programme of British works, carried off completely professionally by an orchestra with average age of 17. Hesketh's elusive impressionistic **Diaghilev Dances** were a warm up for Philip Grange's clarinet concerto **Sheng Sheng Bu Shi**, an avant garde work played here brilliantly. The second half ended with **Omaggio** of Michael Ball and included the world premiere of Joseph Phibb's **The Spiralling Night**. What a programme to show off British players and composers. We were also lucky enough to hear Ball's **Pageant** in Killarney Cathedral in an extra concert.

After Chethams and the NYWEGB with their carefully chosen programmes each of four works, the Birmingham Symphonic Winds took us back to the wind band as entertainment with twelve pieces including works by Jonathan Dove, Kit Turnbull, Fergall Carroll, Kenneth Hesketh and Martin Ellerby. I came away with the strong feeling that the two most substantial works were by Guy Woolfenden, a first-rate performance of **Gallimaufry** which he premiered at BASBWE in 1983, and the world premiere of his latest work, **Divertimento for Band**, a three movement work which breaks new ground in the first movement with some tonal acerbities unusual in his music, which has a truly beautiful slow movement and a finale well up to his best music, an excellent addition to the repertoire.

### **Woolfenden In Waco**

H Robert Reynolds said to me back in 1982 when I visited Ann Arbor on a Churchill Fellowship: *All we can do is to make it better for the next generation*. The job is only partially done, and I hope that the commissioning will continue, introducing new composers to the medium, and hence to new audiences. It has certainly been a great experience in recent years to have the opportunity to conduct works, which I helped to create, Bennett in Boston, Casken in Croatia, **L'Homme Armé** in Louisville, Marshall in Manchester, Sallinen in South Kensington, Samurai in Singapore, Woolfenden and Wilby in Waco.

The glory of the wind band/wind ensemble is its breadth and variety; the repertoire covers educational music for school students, Gebrauchsmusik for ceremonial and entertainment, for amateur and professional wind bands, and also so-called *art* or *serious* music. Much of the band repertoire which is regularly performed is essentially commercial, and is promoted with all the skills of commerce; it is not necessarily the worse for that, but a great deal of the significant music of our time does not “sell” commercially. Let us not confuse the “business” of music with the “art” of music.

Frederick Fennell once underlined our personal responsibility in selecting repertoire and teaching our players:

*We must learn to teach music - not band, not orchestra, not chorus, but music itself...Choosing music is the single most important thing a band director can do, and is the only thing a band director can do alone, made more important because of the substandard repertoire continuously being published. So many publishers in the business today are printers who don't care about quality, but only about what will sell. We must not allow them to give the band a bad reputation nor to make our decisions for us, since the music we choose today can affect students for ever.*

### **Sweetness And Purity Of Lullabies**

In a great edition of the WASBE Journal edited by David Whitwell, Warren Benson wrote

*... I wish I could hear more wind conductors and instrumental teachers using better and larger vocabularies that relate to beauty, aesthetics, to charm, to gentleness, strength and power without rancour or anger, to useful tonal vibrance, live sound, to grace of movement, to stillness, to fervour, to the depth of great age the exultation of great happiness, the feel of millennia, the sweetness and purity of lullabies, the precision of fine watches, the reach into time-space of great love and respect, the care of phrasing, the delicacy of balance, the ease of warmth, the resonance of history, the susurrus of kind weight of togetherness and the rising spirit of creating something, bringing something to life from cold print, living music, moving music.*

Percy Grainger wrote:

Possibilities of the Concert Wind Band from the Standpoint of a Modern Composer  
1918

*No doubt there are many phases of musical emotion that the wind band is not so fitted to portray as is the symphony orchestra, but on the other hand it is quite evident that in certain realms of musical expressiveness the wind band has no rival.*

Gunther Schuller in 1981 in a famous address to the Conference of College Band Directors National Association, urged the delegates to look outside academe to commission composers:

*There are too many fine and/or famous composers that have eluded your grasp thus far. You need more of that kind of international world calibre amongst the composers in your repertory before that world will begin to take you seriously, before a critic from the New York Times or The New Yorker will look in on what you're doing and look in on festivals such as this. And you must more aggressively pursue that establishment world, with its critics and taste-makers, its foundations and other benefactors, its managers, and its musical leaders. You must reach out now beyond your own seemingly large*

*but actually small world. For they will not come to you; you must go to them. Mostly they don't know you exist.*

The medium has a number of problems inherent in the fact that we are for the most part bound up with amateur music or educational, whether at primary, secondary or tertiary levels. We rarely attract serious critical attention, we tend to play safe in our choice of repertoire, our placing of commissions, and we tend to compromise in our programming. There is no need to do this any more, since there is now a huge range of good music, sometimes great, for our players and conductors; we now await notice from administrators and the media.