

# RNCM Brass Band Festival

Fri 27 – Sun 29 Jan

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Programme



# Welcome

Fri 27 – Sun 29 Jan  
**RNCM BRASS BAND FESTIVAL**



## Professor Linda Merrick

*RNCM PRINCIPAL*

I am delighted to welcome you to our 2023 RNCM Brass Band Festival. A celebration of the brass band world, this unique event brings together six of the UK's leading ensembles for three days of concerts and discussions, many of which include talented staff, students and alumni from the RNCM. This year's Festival wouldn't have been possible without the invaluable support from our sponsors: ABRSM, BBC Radio 3, Brass Bands England, Getzen Ireland Ltd, The John Golland Trust, PHM Publishing, World of Brass and Yamaha. This will be Paul Hindmarsh's final year as Artistic Director. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Paul for his inspirational direction over the years; his dedication and commitment to this major event has ensured its continued success and we at the RNCM are incredibly grateful for his knowledge and support. All that remains is for me to wish you a very enjoyable few days experiencing what we know will be a unique celebration of brass band music here at the RNCM.

Professor Linda Merrick  
*RNCM Principal*

## Paul Hindmarsh

*ARTISTIC DIRECTOR*

It is my great pleasure to welcome you for the final time to the 2023 RNCM Brass Band Festival. Next year it will be the responsibility of someone else to write these words of introduction. I have decided to step back from the role of Artistic Director, which it has been a privilege to undertake in an official capacity for over 15 years and before that as its curator in collaboration with BBC Radio 3.

The idea for putting together a series of concerts highlighting new repertoire for the brass band originated in 1990 when the then head of BBC Radio 3, John Drummond, asked me to devise short series to replace the weekly Bandstand programme. I gave one of the series the ambitious title of BBC Festival of Brass and the name stuck. When the series had run its course, the Principal of the RNCM Edward Gregson suggested that the college take it on as a public event. At first BBC Radio 3 was closely involved in the programming but after a hiatus of a couple of years the event returned bigger and better than ever and has not looked back. Given the support and commitment of the college to the festival, it is entirely fitting that one of this year's festival themes celebrates the RNCM at 50, featuring soloists, composers and students past and present, many of whom are now at the forefront of the brass band community. I'm grateful to the wonderful bands that support the event in such fine style every year for agreeing to include some of my personal favourites as well as some of my own contributions as commissioner, editor and arranger. We're also paying tribute to the life and legacy of Bramwell Tovey, conductor, composer and inspiring communicator, with some of his unique compositions, plus a series of specially composed pieces 'In Memoriam'.

Have a great weekend!

Paul Hindmarsh  
*Artistic Director*

## The William and Frances Dobie Charitable Foundation

*RNCM50 PARTNER*

We would like to give special thanks to the William and Frances Dobie Charitable Foundation for their transformational support of young brass players at the RNCM. Dr and Mrs Dobie generously supported the College during their lifetime, and we are delighted that the Foundation has continued their legacy.

## Fri 27 Jan RNCM BRASS BAND FESTIVAL

6.30pm – 7pm

// Carole Nash Recital Room

### FESTIVAL PRELUDE

Paul Hindmarsh previews the weekend with music from RNCM student ensemble Rosamund Brass.

**Joel Kirk** Scherzo Piccolo  
**Claude Debussy arr Barron** Andantino from String Quartet in G minor  
**Joseph Horowitz** Variations on a theme of Paganini

**Rosamund Brass:**  
**Seb Williman, Adam Hofland-Ward** cornet  
**Georgia Woodhead** tenor horn  
**Alex Barron** euphonium

7.30pm – 9.30pm

// RNCM Concert Hall

### FODEN'S BAND

**Wilfred Heaton** Glory! Glory!  
**Bramwell Tovey** Pictures in the Smoke for piano and brass band  
**Howard Blake** Sinfonietta (version première)

Interval

**Gilbert Vinter** James Cook, Circumnavigator  
**Claude Debussy arr Snell** La Cathédrale Engloutie  
**Charles Villiers Stanford arr Snell** The Blue Bird  
**Bramwell Tovey** Coventry Variations

**Michael Fowles** conductor  
**Roksana Dabkowska** piano

The 2023 National Champions open the festival with Heaton's concert march *Glory! Glory!* It was inspired by a real 'battle of the bands' between Sheffield Park SA Band and the local Boys' Brigade buglers on the march one Sunday in the late 1940s. Bandmaster John Heaton, Wilfred's father, took against the piece, so he destroyed it. Forty years later he reconstructed it from sketches and memory for the Regent Hall Band of the Salvation Army, at the invitation of its then bandmaster Peter Graham.

When plans were at an early stage, I wrote to Bramwell Tovey to invite him to the festival to celebrate his 70th birthday. The intended celebration has become a memorial tribute. *Pictures in the Smoke*, a portrait of New York, was composed in a quasi-jazz/minimalist in style for Foden's and Bramwell to feature at the 2007 festival. The piano plays with small groups of soloists, until the very end when, as the composer writes, 'the piano finally surrenders to the sound of the full band.'

In 1981, Howard Blake composed *Sinfonietta* (Op 300) for the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble. Five years later a shortened version was prepared for the 1986 British Open Brass Band Championships under the title *Fusions*. At the suggestion of Michael Fowles, and with the agreement of the composer, Paul Hindmarsh has updated *Fusions*, without percussion, to mirror the original. The cuts to the opening variation movement are restored. The short *scherzo* now leads directly into the *finale* to balance the structure, with the haunting flugel horn solo (originally composed for Philip Jones) as the centrepiece.

James Cook *Circumnavigator* was Gilbert Vinter's last work for brass band, completed in June 1969, four months before his death. It was commissioned by the New Zealand Brass Band Association for the Captain Cook Bicentenary Celebrations in 1970. The majestic opening evokes a turbulent Pacific Ocean. The work goes on to portray Cook's death at the hands of Hawaiian tribesmen, and the triumphant discovery of New Zealand.

Howard Snell's mastery of brass band colour is revealed in two haunting impressions composed in 1910. *Le Cathédrale Engloutie* is



the tenth of Debussy's first book of Preludes for piano. The *Blue Bird* is a part song by Stanford, setting a poem by Mary Coleridge which portrays a fleeting image of a blue bird flying over a lake. Snell writes that 'Blue is the colour of peace, of joy and contentment. As the bird flies away, briefly mirrored in the blue lake beneath a blue sky, another deeper meaning is momentarily half revealed — one senses the casting off earthly burdens and pain, and its flying towards the quiet welcome of eternity. Rest in peace, little bird.'

When Bramwell Tovey composed *Coventry Variations* in 1986 he only had time to write down six of the intended nine variations, which he finally completed in 1999. Based on the mediaeval *Coventry Carol*, it presents a kaleidoscope of images of the City's life, including, the music of the Cathedral, with its great bells; relentless production of industry and, unmistakably, the bombing of the City by the Luftwaffe. The slow central variation, 'For the Children' was inspired by a photograph of youngsters playing in the middle of ruined buildings destroyed in the blitz.

Programme note by Paul Hindmarsh.

## SAT 28 JAN RNCM BRASS BAND FESTIVAL

11am – 12.15pm

// RNCM Concert Hall

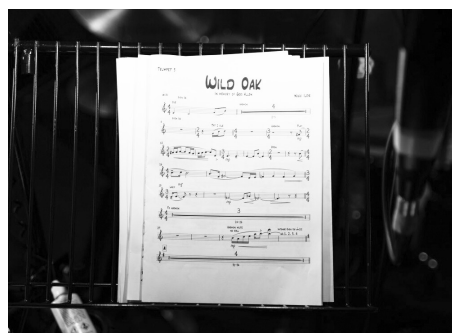
### GRIMETHORPE COLLIERY BAND

**John Ireland** Comedy Overture  
**Harrison Birtwistle** Grimethorpe Aria  
**Liz Lane** Beyond the Light  
**Theo Rossier** Stendhal's Syndrome (UK première)  
**Jack Stamp** Vociferation (world première)  
**Herbert Howells** Three Figures (Triptych for Brass Band)  
*i. Cope's Challenge*  
*ii. Iles' Interlude*  
*iii. Rimmer's Race*

**Ben Palmer** conductor



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**RNCM BRASS BAND FESTIVAL**



*Comedy Overture* (1934) is one of the finest brass band works of the 1930s. The four-note 'Piccadilly' motif upon which much of it is based indicates that Ireland drew inspiration from the sights, sounds and atmosphere of London, which was confirmed two years later when the expanded orchestral version appeared entitled *A London Overture*.

*Grimethorpe Aria* was premiered in Harrogate (August 1973) conducted by Birtwistle's great friend and trusted collaborator Elgar Howarth. In this unique and perennially challenging brass masterpiece, Harrison Birtwistle (1934 – 2022) challenges our understanding of the relationship between music and time, consonance and dissonance. We might think of the music like the landscape of the old Grimethorpe Colliery and the objects we see – some monumental and imposing, other small and angular – which remain the same but appear to change depending on our viewpoint. In musical terms, Birtwistle presents layers of contrasting material and tempi, re-combining them like a slow procession through a musical landscape.

In 2018 Bramwell Tovey conducted the NYBBGB in two performances of *Tide and Time*, which was inspired by artists in my family. After a rehearsal he took a photo of an illustration created by my grandfather, with reflective words by my great-grandfather on music 'beyond the physical and emotional'. *Tide and Time's* web presence has since led to further family discoveries, including images on a theme of light by my grandfather in the V&A Museum. *Beyond the Light* recalls

a motif from *Tide and Time*, interweaved with new melodic features. Drawing the soundscape together is a setting of the words Bram admired.

Swiss composer Théo Rossier (b 2002) began composing at the age of 14. *Stendhal's Syndrome* was winning work in the 2022 European Composer Competition held as part of the European Brass Band Festival, Birmingham. *Stendhal's Syndrome* refers to physical and mental symptoms such as panic attacks, anxiety, and insomnia that might be experienced while or after viewing a work of art. The music is divided into several parts by the main theme which is repeated three times in the manner of the *Promenades* in Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

*Vociferation* was originally conceived for trumpet ensemble but has yet to be performed in that version; so, this past summer I reworked it for brass band. There are five short sections, three fast episodes separated by two chordal interludes. The underpinning motive, heard at the start, is rhythmic. All three fast sections are contrapuntal, the second is a jazz waltz, and the third, whilst having its own melody, brings back music from the other two fast sections.

*Three Figures*, written for the 1960 National Brass Band Championship. The titles refer to three famous names from the brass band world at the turn of the 20th century: Samuel Cope, the founder of *The British Bandsman*; John Henry Iles, owner of the National and Belle Vue (Open) Championships; and William Rimmer, the legendary conductor and the brass band's 'March King'.

Programme note for *Beyond the Light* by Liz Lane. Programme note for *Vociferation* by Jack Stamp.

All other programme notes by Paul Hindmarsh.

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**1.45pm – 2.30pm**  
 // RNCM Theatre

## WARDLE ACADEMY BRASS BAND

**Frederick Schjelderup** Light  
**William Rimmer** March – Cross  
 of Honour

**Benny Anderson** arr **Duncan**  
 Anthem from Chess  
**Christopher Bond** Corineus  
**John Lennon and Paul McCartney**  
 Hey Jude

**Lee Rigg** conductor

**3pm – 4.15pm**  
 // RNCM Concert Hall

## TREDEGAR TOWN BAND

**Benjamin Britten** arr **Hindmarsh**  
 An American Overture  
**Johann Nepomuk Hummel** arr  
**Golland** Trumpet Concerto in E flat  
 major

**Havergal Brian** ed **John Pickard**  
 Tone Poem – The Battle Song  
 (world premiere)  
**Smon Dobson** Bells  
**Gavin Higgins** So Spoke Albion

**James Fountain** trumpet/flugel  
 horn  
**Ian Porthouse** conductor

*James Fountain's appearance is  
 supported by the John Golland Trust.*

Benjamin Britten (1913 – 1976) composed *American Overture* in October 1941 at the invitation of the Cleveland Orchestra. For reasons unknown they did not perform it and the manuscript eventually found its way into New York Public Library. This overture reveals the influence of Aaron Copland, who the 27-year-old Britten knew during his period in the USA. A lively dance section is framed by an 'all-American' march. Sir Simon Rattle and the CBSO gave the first performance in 1983.

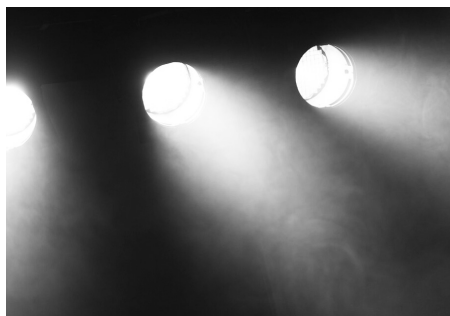
Among the manuscript collection of John Golland's music archived here at the RNCM are the score and parts of a transcription of the one of the classics of the trumpet repertoire, the concerto composed Johann Nepomuk Hummel in December 1803 and first performed on New Year's Day 1804. Hummel wrote it for the inventor of the keyed trumpet, Anton Weidinger, for whom Haydn composed his concerto. Originally in E major, it is more usually played in E flat. Golland's arrangement has been edited and updated by Paul Hindmarsh.

The existence of *The Battle Song* was unknown until a manuscript in short score appeared at a Sotheby's auction in 1996. It had been part of the collection archived at R Smith & Co Havergal. Brian was deeply interested in brass bands, adjudicating contests and writing articles for *The British Bandsman*. In the issue of 22 September 1923, Brian looks forward to the forthcoming Brass Band Festival at the Crystal Palace, dubbing it 'Battle of the Overtures'. The performing edition of *The Battle Song*, with percussion added, was prepared by John Pickard, who writes: 'I believe *The Battle Song* to have been conceived almost certainly as a potential test piece. Dated 1930–31, it is easy to imagine why it was never taken up. It is so harmonically daring that one can only imagine the kind of reaction it would have provoked.'

Composer and conductor Simon Dobson found his time working as assistant conductor of the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain with Bramwell Tovey both enjoyable and valuable. He was in Durham when he heard of Bram's death and has based his tribute work for flugel horn and band on the



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peel of bells he heard at Durham Cathedral. The composer explains that 'the music reflects the sadness I felt but despite that, the calm of the cathedral grounds.'

Gavin Higgins completed *So Spake Albion* in 2019 for Tredegar Band to perform at the 2020 European Championships in Lithuania, but was held over until the 2022 event in Birmingham, where it received a prolonged standing ovation. *So Spake Albion* is inspired by the 17th century visionary genius William Blake. Gavin writes that Blake's 'vision of London as the 'New Jerusalem' and the elaborate mythology of the giant Albion are, for me, perhaps the most beguiling features of his work.' *So Spake Albion* is in three movements. *Angels on Peckham Rye* refers to one of the long walks Blake would take from his home in Soho, 'Sauntering along, the boy looks up and sees a tree filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars'. The second movement is a love song to *Catherine*, Blake's wife. The virtuosic finale, *Albion Rose*, is Blake's vision of a man, Albion, standing naked and outstretched on a rock, beams of light bursting out in all directions from behind him - optimistic, symbolising England's political awakening.

Programme note by Paul Hindmarsh.

**4.45pm – 5.15pm**

// RNCM Theatre

## JUNIOR RNCM BRASS BAND

**Jonathan Bates** Chichester Prelude

**Jonathan Bates** Casper's Lament

**Henry Mancini arr Hall** Moon River

**Edward Gregson** Prelude for an Occasion

**The Go Team arr Dobson**

Bustout Bridge

**Leslie Neish, Jon Malaxetxebarria**  
conductors

**6.15pm – 7pm**

// Carole Nash Recital Room

## BRASS BANDS ENGLAND PRESENTATION

Join Brass Bands England's CEO Kenny Crookston and Education and Development Manager Sarah Baumann to find out more about BBE's plans to support the sector from 2023-2026. Following the organisation's successful application to remain a part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio, Kenny and Sarah will set out BBE's strategic aims and activity and how you and your band can engage and benefit.

**7.30pm – 9.30pm**

// RNCM Concert Hall

## BLACK DYKE BAND

**William Byrd and John Bull arr Howarth**

Music from the Elizabethan Court

i. *The Earle of Oxford's Marche*

(William Byrd)

ii. *Pavane* (John Bull)

iii. *The King's Hunting Jigg* (Bull)

**Judith Bingham** Venice

(Euphonium Concerto, world première)

**Edward Gregson** The World Rejoicing,  
Symphonic Variations on a Lutheran  
Chorale

*Interval*

**Fredrick Schjelderup** Out of Reach

(world première)

**Peter Graham** Turbulence, Torque and  
Tide (Baritone Concerto)

**Peter Graham** Hymn for Bram (world  
première)

**Philip Wilby** Beethoven - Prologue,  
Variations, Fugue and Finale

**Daniel Thomas** euphonium

**Michael Cavanagh** baritone

**Nicholas Childs** conductor

*Judith Bingham's Venice (Euphonium Concerto) is commissioned by Daniel Thomas, with the support of Geneva Musical Instruments*



In the 1970s Elgar Howarth produced some sparkling transcriptions from Elizabethan times. The source for these spirited items is the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, a seminal volume of keyboard works including many by William Byrd, and John Bull.

Judith Bingham's Euphonium Concerto Venice was commissioned by tonight's soloist, Daniel Thomas. The composer writes: 'I found inspiration in an old coin: a silver grosso made around 1280 in the time of the Doge Jacopo Contarini. Holding this coin, with its images of St Mark, the Doge and Christ, made me feel a strange connection with the last person who held it! It could have been a gondolier, who as a ghost, takes us on a trip through time in Venice, from its marshy beginnings to its glory days in the 18th century. Bells signal the rising sun in *Sunrise with Barcarolle*. In *Pantalone and Friends*, Commedia dell'Arte characters appear – Pantalone, the miser, Columbine, and the drunken, sneaky servant Zanni. Pantalone exits with a rude gesture. *Stabat Mater* evokes the slow movements of Vivaldi and Pergolesi. The deep bells of San Marco sound. Finally, a fanfare announces the ceremony of Venice's marriage to the sea, where, every year, the Doge threw a wedding ring into the lagoon.'

*The World Rejoicing* was commissioned jointly from five band organisations around Europe to mark Edward Gregson's 75th birthday in 2020. At the heart of the work is the 17th century chorale *Nun danket alle Gott* ('Now thank we all our God'). The composer writes: 'I have taken phrases from the chorale and used them within an overall process of continuous variation and development. *The World Rejoicing* sums up a particular facet of my life as a composer and reflects the admiration I have always had for one of the great amateur music-making traditions.' The *Prelude* is followed by six symphonic variations - *Capriccio*, *La Danza I*, *Processional*, *La Danza II*, *Arias and Duets*, *Fuga Bulerica* – and a *Postlude*.

Fredrick Schjelderup from Norway is Black Dyke Band's current Young Composer in Association. *Out of Reach* is founded on themes from Vaughan Williams' choral work

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*Dona nobis pacem* (1936), which was the first work Fredrick sang as a member of the Bergen Philharmonic Choir in 2010.

Peter Graham describes his Baritone Concerto *Turbulence, Tide and Torque* (2018) as a 'tribute to three women who were true pioneers and heroines of their age. Aviator Harriet Quimby (b. 1875) was the first woman to fly across the English Channel in 1912. Grace Darling (b. 1815) became a national heroine for her part in rescuing survivors from the wrecked paddle-steamer *Forfarshire*. *Torque* opens with a sudden gear change such as might have been undertaken by Dorothy Levitt (b. 1882), the woman's world land speed record holder, in her Napier racing car.' About *Hymn for Bram*, Dr. Graham continues: 'My work *Metropolis* 1927 was commissioned by Bramwell Tovey and the NYBBGB. It is my response to Fritz Lang's 1927 science fiction epic *Metropolis*. The hymn is the central point in my piece and seems an appropriate memorial to a wonderful human being.'

In 2020, Philip Wilby was asked by David Allen, long-time Chairman of the Black Dyke Band, if he would write a work to celebrate Beethoven's 250th anniversary. The composer writes: 'I spent many wonderful hours revisiting Beethoven's output, and finally decided to use the *Ode to Joy*, from the last movement of his Ninth Symphony. As with many of my pieces that use other composers' work as their springboard, a common way must be found to bridge the gap between music old and new. I use some of my favourite musical and theatrical devices in this score, which is designed to showcase the many splendid individual players available to composers writing for the modern brass band.'

Programme note by Paul Hindmarsh.

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**RNCM BRASS BAND FESTIVAL**

**11am – 12.15am**  
 // RNCM Concert Hall

**RNCM BRASS BAND**

**Adam Webster** A Flying Fanfare  
**Lucy Pankhurst** Prelude: His Depth  
**Chris Cook** Excursion (world première)  
**Martin Ellerby** Euphonium Concerto  
*i. Fantasy ii. Capriccio*  
*iii. Rhapsody (for Luis) iv. Diversions*  
**Jonathan Bates** Prelude on St. Clements (world première)  
**Joel Kirk** Fantasia (Cantata giocoso for brass band)  
**Emmanuel Chabrier arr Snell** Bourée Fantasque

**James Blackford** euphonium  
**Florent Didier, Maria Barbosa**  
**Aristizabal, Andreas Asiikkis**  
 conductors

*Joel Kirk's Fantasia (Cantata giocoso) is the 2023 John Golland Award commission.*

*This performance is sponsored by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM).*

This concert celebrates the achievements both of the RNCM's composition department and its brass band, which was established by Howard Snell over 30 years ago, alongside the complementary study for brass band instrumentalists and conductors. Much of that work has now been integrated into the broader curriculum. Each year RNCM conducting and composing students are given the opportunity to work with the band. Adam Webster's *A Flying Fanfare* and Chris Cook's *Excursion* impressed during workshop sessions last year and have been selected for concert premieres this morning. Chris Cook's work was also the winner of the Brookwright International Composer Competition in October. The uninterrupted sequence also includes a short work commissioned by Paul Hindmarsh from RNCM PhD alumnus Dr. Lucy Pankhurst as part of a celebration of the centenary of the birth of Benjamin Britten in 2013.

Martin Ellerby completed his Euphonium Concerto early in 1995 for RNCM Professor Steven Mead. The first movement, *Fantasy*, is composed around two contrasting tempo, one fast and the other slower and more reflective. As the music unfolds, the distances between these contrasting tempi become ever closer. A short, but bright and virtuosic *Capriccio* follows. The seamless melodies of *Rhapsody (for Luis)* build to a passionate climax, after which we hear an affectionate reference to the slow movement of the Horovitz Euphonium Concerto. Martin Ellerby, who studied with Joseph Horovitz in the late 1970s, writes: 'This movement is dedicated to Luis Maldonado who set the full score of the brass version before his untimely death'. A jazzy variation finale, *Diversions*, brings the Concerto to a dazzling conclusion.

I first heard a composition by Jonathan Bates played by the NYBBGB, conducted by Bramwell Tovey. *Prelude on St. Clements* was completed a few months ago as a tribute to Bramwell Tovey, who used the tune to conclude every NYBBGB course he directed.

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At last year's Festival Joel Kirk's *Scherzo Piccolo* received the John Golland Award. The prize included an invitation to write a short work for the RNCM Brass Band and the result is this dynamic Fantasia. The composer writes: 'Subtitled *Cantata Giocoso*, it is constructed from themes inspired by ancient plainchant in a generally light-hearted style. A playful introduction moves into an extended, scherzo passage which encompasses almost half of the piece. This is followed by a lyrical, somewhat glacial chorale and a final dash to the finish.'

The lively mood continues in the final piece, an arrangement by Howard Snell of one of Chabrier's dance-based piano miniatures, *Bourée Fantasque* (1891). Arranged originally for 10-piece brass, Howard later expanded it for full band. The original parts were destroyed in Foden's band room fire some years ago, but new performing material has been created for today's concert.

Programme note by Paul Hindmarsh.

**12.30 – 12.45pm**  
// RNCM Upper Concourse

## RNCM YOUNG BRASS

RNCM's Young Brass projects look forward to inviting all to join them on the Concourse at 12.30pm for a 15-minute collaborative performance including a fantastic Beatles medley!

RNCM Young Projects provide an exciting opportunity for young players of school age to develop creative, musical and technical skills through free open access workshops held on Sundays, welcoming all playing abilities. Workshops are led by RNCM brass tutors and supported by RNCM student mentors. RNCM Brass Young Projects comprise of RNCM Young Horns, Young Middle Brass, Young Trombones and Young Tubas. We would like to give special thanks to the William and Frances Dobie Charitable Foundation for their transformational support of young brass players at the RNCM.

Find out more about which Sundays our workshops run at  
[www.rncm.ac.uk/engage/young-projects](http://www.rncm.ac.uk/engage/young-projects)

**1.45pm – 2.30pm**  
// RNCM Theatre

## A4 BRASS QUARTET

**Callum Au** Crown and Spectre (world première)  
**Bramwell Tovey** Street Songs  
**Kentaro Sato** arr **Bates** Tsuna'ngari  
**Tom Harrold** Craze  
**Béla Bartók** arr **Robertson** Six  
Romanian Folk Dances  
**Jonathan Bates** Mists of the Mountains

**Jamie Smith** cornet, flugelhorn  
**Grace Jeffers** tenor horn  
**Michael Cavanagh** baritone horn  
**Chris Robertson** euphonium

*Street Songs* was composed by Bramwell Tovey for A4 Brass Quartet's debut appearance at London's Wigmore Hall and was inspired by the quartet's unique instrumentation. The four movements recall stories from the composer's childhood related by his father and grandfather from their time in The Salvation Army, specifically relating to the times of war when many members of the SA bands would be on duty in conflict and the remaining members - in any combination of instruments - would still perform through the Christmas period to bring joy to those left at home.

American-based composer Kentaro Sato's beautiful *Tsuna'ngari* has been a main-stay of the ensemble's repertoire since its very outset and remains a favourite with audiences in the UK and overseas. The work was originally composed for SATB choir in response to the Boxing Day tsunami of 2006 with the title translating from Japanese to 'connection'.

*Craze* was the RNCM Gold Medal winning composition by alumnus Tom Harrold and is a chaotic and virtuosic

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demonstration of the modern brass quartet's capabilities. The work was also recorded on A4's debut CD *Mists of the Mountains*.

Arguably Bartók's most famous work, his set of Six Romanian Folk Dances has been arranged and performed on a wide variety of instrumentations, ranging from symphony orchestra to solo piano, and here in an arrangement for brass quartet by A4's euphonium player Chris Robertson.

*Mists of the Mountains* was the first substantial work specifically composed for A4 by Jonathan Bates. Its movements draw inspiration from traditional folk music of Eastern Asia. The opening *Gagaku* is a form of music from the Japanese court. The bustling second movement, *Trans-Siberian Express* echoes the high-flying locomotive flying across eastern Asia. *Requiem from the Tuvan Hills* encompasses a number of different tonal enhancements such as multi-phonics and a CD backing track. The finale, *A Tale of Two Peaks* is a tour-de-force of virtuoso technique and range.

Programme note by A4 Brass Quartet.

**3pm – 4.15pm**  
// RNCM Concert Hall

## CORY BAND

**Dean Goffin** Rhapsodic Variations – My Strength, My Tower  
**J Wilfred Heaton** Air Varié – I Will Follow Thee My Saviour (world première)  
**Kelly-Marie Murphy** Into the Darkness They Go, The Wise and the Lovely (world première)  
**John Pickard** Rain, Steam and Speed (Symphonic Study for brass band)  
**Philip Harper** Rings of Saturn  
**Philip Wilby** Saints Triumphant

(Diversions on Vaughan Williams' Hymn Tune 'Sine Nomine')

**Tom Hutchinson** cornet  
**Philip Wilby** organ  
**Philip Harper** conductor

In 1950 Dean Goffin entered and a work entitled *Symphonic Variations* for a competition in Canterbury, New Zealand. It won first prize. Shortly after that he followed his Christian vocation to become a full-time officer in The Salvation Army [SA]. The work was eventually published in the SA as Rhapsodic Variations: *My Strength, My Tower*. Each of the five variations is based on aspects of Goffin's modal theme.

In May 1932, 13-year-old John Wilfred Heaton submitted an *air varié* solo with piano accompaniment to The SA. It remained unpublished but his gifts were noticed. Based on an SA song *I will follow Thee, my Saviour*, it follows the tried and tested variation solo model, with a flamboyant introduction and decorative arietta preceding the theme and four virtuoso variations. The accompaniment is restrained in the variations but teenage (just) Wilfred lets things 'go' in the interludes, the first being the chorus 'In my heart there rings a melody'. [Paul Hindmarsh]

*Into the Darkness They Go, The Wise and the Lovely*, is a short, contemplative piece written as a tribute to Bramwell Tovey. How does one pay tribute to a person who has been so incredibly supportive and generous over my entire career? I found a hint in a poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay, which acknowledges that death comes for us all, but we can protest. With that encouragement, I did. [Kelly-Marie Murphy]



Sun 29 Jan  
RNCM BRASS BAND FESTIVAL

*Rain, Steam and Speed* takes its title from J. M. W. Turner's 1844 painting, which depicts a Great Western Railway locomotive thundering over Maidenhead Bridge in the teeth of a storm, belching fire and steam as it goes. Taking its cue from Turner's locomotive, my piece runs on a track: the traditional metronome, which starts at 40 beats per minute and gradually accelerates up to 208. At times the music may seem to slow down, just as when travelling on a train we may appear to be moving more or less quickly depending on where we fix our attention. In this way, the music attempts to capture some of the ambiguity as well as the visceral excitement of Turner's masterpiece. [John Pickard]

*The Rings of Saturn* attempts to convey the vastness of time, space and the universe, and mankind's miniscule and fleeting existence within it. Spatial effects are used to convey a kind of mystical and celestial discourse stretching across the stars and the ages. [Philip Harper]

*Saints Triumphant* was commissioned by Brass Bands England to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Ralph Vaughan Williams. It is founded on the processional hymn 'For all the Saints', which was written in 1864 by William Walsham How, who became the first Bishop of Wakefield in 1888 and set by Vaughan Williams in his 'English Hymnal' of 1906. *Saints Triumphant* follows closely the text of the hymn with a sequence of seven musical episodes: *Intrada*, *Metamorphosis*, *Valediction*, *Variations*, *Epitaph*, *Finale* and *Jubilus*. *Epitaph* contains a dialogue between an offstage cornet and a soloist standing on stage. In this section, there are passing references to Vaughan Williams two wartime symphonies, Nos. 3 and 5. The work ends with a triumphant close. [Philip Wilby]

5pm – 6pm

// Carole Nash Recital Room

## PRESENTATION BY ARTISTIC DIRECTOR PAUL HINDMARSH

Artistic Director Paul Hindmarsh presents a selection of highlights from 30 years of Manchester's brass band festivals in the company of festival regulars Kenneth Crookston (Brass Bands England) and Christopher Thomas (Brass Band World/4Barsrest).

6.30pm – 8.30pm

// RNCM Concert Hall

## BRIGHOUSE AND RASTRICK BAND

**Eric Ball** Tone Poem – The Triumph of Peace

**Bramwell Tovey** Lincoln Tunnel Cabaret for trombone and brass band

**Arthur Butterworth** Celebrations – Diptych for brass band (world première)

*Interval*

**Granville Bantock** Overture to King Lear  
**Ray Steadman-Allen** Walk with me

**Edward Gregson** A Song for Bram (world première)

**Eric Ball** Tone Poem – Resurgam Variations

**Isobel Daws** trombone  
**Russell Gray** conductor

*Isobel Daws' appearance is sponsored by Getzen Ireland Ltd. importer and distributor for Getzen musical instruments.*

*Russell Gray's appearance is supported by the Butterworth family, Jennifer Mills and PHM Publishing.*

Sun 29 Jan  
RNCM BRASS BAND FESTIVAL

Composed in the wake of the Munich crisis and the return of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain after his talks with Hitler, *The Triumph of Peace* juxtaposes music of urgency with Eric Ball's own hymn for peace, 'Peace in our time O Lord'.

*Lincoln Tunnel Cabaret* was written in 2006 for Joseph Alessi, principal trombone of the New York Philharmonic and the NYBBGB. We might imagine Joe driving his stylish open-top sports car to the Lincoln Center and getting stuck in traffic midway through the Lincoln Tunnel. He decides to get out his 'horn', as he calls it, and entertain the disgruntled crowd with a cocktail jazz and minimalism. Like all traffic jams, this one seems to disperse quickly for no apparent reason.

In 1990, Arthur Butterworth composed a celebratory work for Desford Colliery Band as a thank you for its winning performance of *Odin* at the 1989 Nationals. He called it *Peaen* and always intended at some stage to add a prelude. He eventually got round to the task in 2007, producing *Gonfalon* for Brighthouse and Rastrick Band to play at the 2008 RNCM festival. A *Gonfalon* was a swallow-tailed pennant used in processions of dignitaries in ancient Rome. Sadly, Arthur did not live to hear the two works played together. The title *Celebrations* has been added by his publisher.

Sir Granville Bantock (1868-1946) composed the dramatic overture *King Lear* for Callender's Cableworks Band (Erith) in 1932. It is a substantial work in the grand romantic manner, presenting a series of character portraits of the old king and his three daughters. While Bantock's score is serviceable, it lacks the colour and range typical of his other work, in particular percussion, which can be heard an extract recorded with orchestra. I have prepared a performing edition that incorporates percussion derived from the recording. I have also revoiced some of the low-lying instrumental parts to present the material more colourfully.

'Ray Steadman-Allen composed Walk with me in the early 1970s as a solo for Maisie Wiggins

to take on tour in Australia. It incorporates an old gospel chorus, 'All the way from Earth to Heaven, blessed Master, walk with me'.

Shortly after the announcement of Bramwell Tovey's passing, Edward Gregson contacted me asking if he might write something in his memory. Within a few days *A Song for Bram* had been sketched. The composer writes: 'I have tried to imagine what tune Bram might have improvised at the piano, and then embellished it in a middle section with two hymn tunes he loved, before a plaintive flugelhorn horn recalls the original tune and wanders off into the distance (to a new life?).'

Brighthouse and Rastrick brings the festival to a close with a favourite work of Bram's, Eric Ball's *Resurgam*. Composed in the late 1940s, it is dedicated to the memory of Ball's sister-in-law Elsie (or Elsa, as he called her). *Resurgam*'s main themes owe their character to the words associated with them. The opening passage 'sets' words from the Book of Wisdom, 'The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and no torment shall touch them'. The central lament recalls the words 'Death took my love away'. Ball explains that 'the opening section might be called the 'faith' motif, (which) at the end is heard triumphantly when all the intervening tumult is over. There is an atmosphere of fear, interspersed with sudden silences and a sinister 'fateful knocking at the door'. Here also is heard part of the ancient hymn *Dies Irae*.'

Programme note for *Lincoln Tunnel Cabaret* by Bramwell Tovey. All other programme notes by Paul Hindmarsh.





THUR 23 FEB 2023 | 7.30PM

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Fri 27 – Sun 29 Jan

## BANDS

### FODEN'S BAND

Foden's Band were formed in 1902 by Edwin Foden, originally being named The Foden's Motorworks Band. From these humble beginnings few would have thought they would go on to win 12 British Open titles, 15 National Championships of Great Britain and an unparalleled double hat-trick in 1932, 33, 34 and in 1936, 37 and 38. The band currently holds the record for the number of Area Contest wins with an unprecedented 24 North West Area titles. Since the bands formation they have maintained their positions as one of the World's leading bands on and off the contest stage. In 2012 Foden's won the 'Double' being crowned the 2012 British Open and National Champions and in 2018, 2021 and 2022 were crowned the National Champions at the Royal Albert Hall once again. As well as being very successful on the contest front the band have won numerous awards for CD releases, regularly appear on BBC television and radio and perform at all the country's leading concert halls. Around the world Foden's Band is a trademark that musicians associate with inestimable class and musicianship. This fact is reflected in the wide variety of countries that the band has toured, including Italy, America and Israel.

### GRIMETHORPE COLLIERY BAND

Formed in 1917, during the First World War, Grimethorpe Colliery Band is a British institution. National and British Open Champions on numerous occasions, the band's contest successes remain legendary. These include 16 Brass in Concert Championship titles, 11 times Yorkshire

Regional Champions, two English National Championship victories, four times British Open Champions and four times National Champion Brass Band of Great Britain.

Grimethorpe's diverse noted concert performances include those at the FIFA World Cup, BAFTA Awards, BBC Proms, Eurovision and London 2012 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony, together with a wealth of national and international television/radio appearances and professional recordings. The band has been the recipient of two gold discs, as well as a BAFTA nomination for its contributions to the global hit movie *Brassed Off* for which Grimethorpe was the focal point.

The Royal Albert Hall, Symphony Hall, Barbican, Westminster Abbey, European Parliament, Sydney Opera House and more, have all played host to Grimethorpe. In addition to continuing to delight audiences across the globe, Grimethorpe also continues to invest in and support its local community in Grimethorpe, Barnsley and South Yorkshire, particularly through its youth music initiatives and community performances, both locally and on a national scale.

### WARDLE ACADEMY BRASS BAND

Wardle Academy (formerly Wardle High School) has been at the forefront of youth banding for over 40 years. This year the youth band became European Youth Champions for the third time in succession – they have won four out of five attempts. The band is also currently Whit Friday Youth Champions.

The band has had a busy year with parades, most notably the Queen's

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Platinum Jubilee Parade in London, something the band was very honoured to have been asked to take part in, also a lifetime experience (especially marching down the Mall). Other events have seen the band perform at its own musical evenings and several community engagements including Remembrance Day and Christmas Eve. The band are also proud to see young players start off their musical careers in the seven feeder primary schools around the town. The young players form the very successful 'Junior Blast' from which they then move up to high school to perform with the Academy's different brass bands.

We are all very excited once again to be representing England at the forthcoming European Brass Band Championships in Malmo, Sweden. Before this event they are also very privileged to have been invited to take part in this RNCM 50 Anniversary season and share the stage with some many of our most famous brass bands.

## TREDEGAR TOWN BAND

Renowned for their commitment to artistic innovation, Tredegar Band is one of the brass banding world's elite performers. Formed in 1876, the multiple major contest winner provided the music to the 2015 BAFTA winning film *Pride* as well as giving the world premiere of Gavin Higgins' acclaimed *Dark Arteries* production with the Rambert Ballet at Sadler's Wells.

Their award-winning CD releases have been complemented by the world premiere of a brass band realisation of the renaissance masterpiece *Spem in Alium*, concerts with musician Tim Minchin as part of the Old Vic

Theatre's 200th Anniversary, as well as at London's Southbank, the Hofburg Imperial Palace in Austria and the Brucknerhaus as part of the prestigious Linz Brass Festival.

Tredegar was the first brass band to perform in The Speakers House in The Palace of Westminster as part of the 70th anniversary celebrations of the NHS, and in 2022 was commissioned to release a CD of the brass music of Ralph Vaughan Williams as part of the RVW 150th celebrations. In August they performed at the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in a major collaboration with the National Orchestra of Wales and with their own Late Night Promenade appearance.

## JUNIOR RNCM BRASS BAND

Every Saturday students travel from as far afield as North Wales, Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and the Midlands to be part of a vibrant community, to study in a welcoming and stimulating environment, and to soak up the creative atmosphere of one of the world's best conservatoires. To complement an established Symphony Orchestra, Jazz Ensemble and Vocal Ensemble, the Junior RNCM Brass Band was formed in September 2009 by Les Neish and Maria Molund. Les and Maria embraced the challenge of traditional brass band players and sounds, combined with orchestrally trained musicians (including French horns and trumpets) with gusto, creating a band with a vibrant sound and an eclectic taste. Jon Malaxtebarria joined the band as a conductor in September 2011 and has continued to introduce the band to a variety of styles and composers.

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## BANDS

To find out more about the Junior RNCM and to book a place at Open Day (Saturday 12 February 2019) contact Euan Au on **0161 907 5264** or email [euan.au@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:euan.au@rncm.ac.uk)

## BLACK DYKE BAND

Black Dyke Band is the most recorded band in the world with over 350 recordings and growing every year, in October 2020 the band's recording of music by John Rutter become the first by a brass band to reach No.1 in the classical music chart.

It is also the most successful contesting band in the world having won the European Championships thirteen times, most recently in 2015, the British Open no fewer than 30 times (most recently 2014) and the National Championships of Great Britain 23 times (most recently 2014). In 2009, and again in 2011, 2012 and 2013, the band became Champion Band at the English National Championships and were named English National Champions in 2014 by virtue of having won the National Brass Band Championships in October 2014. In recent years, the band secured an unprecedented hat trick of wins at the Yorkshire regional championships in 2016, 17 and 18, which they followed up with further wins in 2020 and 2022 (there was no contest in 2021 due to Covid-19).

The band logo of the stags head and Latin quotation are taken from the armorial bearings granted in 1857 to John Foster, founder of the band. The quotation translates to 'Act Justly and Fear Nothing'.

## RNCM BRASS BAND

Established during the 1990s by brass innovator Howard Snell, the RNCM Brass Band has always been a flagship ensemble of the institution. Geographically the RNCM is ideally placed for brass band students and it can boast a teaching staff that includes Roger Webster, Richard Marshall, Owen Farr, Katy Jones and Steven Mead. In 2014 the college appointed Prof. James Gourlay and Prof. David King as International Chairs in Brass Band Studies and they both work with the band students on a bi-annual basis. Other recent guest conductors include Nicholas Childs, Russell Gray, Garry Cutt and Elgar Howarth.

The teaching staff encourages students to become members of bands outside of the college and the RNCM benefits greatly from partnerships with some of the UK's leading brass bands. The current RNCM Brass Band has members of Black Dyke, Grimethorpe, Brighouse & Rastrick and the Fairey Bands within its ranks, as well as a good international representation from countries including, Switzerland, Latvia, Japan, Hong Kong and Australia.

## CORY BAND

Cory Band hail from the Rhondda Valley in South Wales. They are the current European and Welsh Champions.

The World's number one ranked band for 16 consecutive years, Cory made history in 2016 by winning an elusive Grand Slam and becoming the first band in history to be Quadruple Champions – simultaneously holding the National, Open, European and Brass in Concert titles, they repeated this feat again in 2019.



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The band has a long and illustrious history. Formed in 1884, it originally bore the name 'Ton Temperance'. In 1895 Sir Clifford Cory, the local colliery owner, heard the band and offered to provide financial assistance, resulting in the band's change of name to Cory.

Since 2012 the band has been conducted by Philip Harper, winning another four European titles (2013, 2016, 2019, 2022), four Nationals (2013, 2015, 2016 and 2019) seven Brass in Concert titles (2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2021) and three British Open titles (2016, 2018, 2019). In 2014 it became the inaugural winner of TV Channel S4C's Band Cymru programme and repeated this achievement in 2018. It toured Australia in 2013, the USA in 2016 and 2019 and South Korea in 2022.

## BRIGHOUSE AND RASTRICK BAND

The Brighouse & Rastrick Band is regarded by many as the best and most consistent public subscription band in the world. The band was formed in 1881, through public donations given by the townsfolk of the adjacent villages of Brighouse and Rastrick that face each other across the River Calder in West Yorkshire. Today, it continues to be supported through public subscriptions and its own fundraising efforts.

B&R caught the ears and imagination of the British public with their recording of *The Floral Dance*, holding the No.2 position in the British singles chart for 9 weeks. Even though they were held off the top spot by Paul McCartney, they still achieved sales of over a million, earning both Gold and Silver discs. *The Floral Dance* has now become a permanent feature of the band's programmes as their encore.

Over recent years, the band has been engaged in a number of very successful music collaborations outside the brass band tradition, including Rick Astley, BBC Radio 2 Folk Award winners The Unthanks and classical actor Simon Callow.

Brighouse & Rastrick have been crowned National Champions of Great Britain ten times and are the current British Open and Brass in Concert Champions. The band will represent England at the European Championships in Lithuania in 2024.



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## BIOGRAPHIES

### ROSAMOND BRASS QUARTET

**Seb Williman** *cornet*  
**Adam Hofland-Ward** *cornet*  
**Georgia Woodhead** *tenor horn*  
**Alex Barron** *euphonium*

Rosamund Brass was formed in September 2020 at the RNCM. The members have all known each other for a considerably longer time however, as some of previously been members of the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, as well as other competing youth bands.

Individually, members have been involved in many projects such as Music for Youth, playing with the Wallberg Band and the Brass Pass Young Brass Award. They are also active members of some of the country's leading brass bands including Grimethorpe Colliery Band, Carlton Main Frickley Colliery Band, and Hepworth Band. With these bands, members of the quartet have competed at some of the highest level brass band contests such as the British Open Brass Band championships, Brass in Concert and the British Open Spring Festival.

In May 2022, the quartet won the RNCM's annual Philip Jones Brass prize. The ensemble has also been coached by many leading brass and wind professionals including Richard Marshall, David Thornton, Timothy Barber, Rob Buckland and John Miller.

As an ensemble, Rosamund Brass hopes to develop further and explore repertoire available to brass quartets. They want to share their passion for brass chamber music to as many people as possible.

### MICHAEL FOWLES *conductor*

Widely regarded as one of the leading conductors of his generation Michael is an honours and post-graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music and has been Musical Director of Foden's Band since 2009. Michael is also a member of the Association of Brass Band Adjudicators and has officiated at numerous Regional Qualifying contests, The National Finals, Butlins Mineworkers Festival and the Swiss Nationals amongst others.

Educational work also forms an important part of Michael's musical life. He is Course Director of both the Wessex Band Summer School and Foden's Armagh Summer School. As a guest conductor he undertakes much training work throughout the UK with bands of all levels from championship to youth including being Musical Director of Foden's Youth Band, The NEMBBA Youth Band and Associate Conductor and Musical Adviser of Lions Youth Band. He is also a regular guest conductor for school and youth workshops in Leicestershire, Staffordshire and Northern Ireland with both Brass and Wind Bands.

Michael has written articles and reviews for both Brass Band World and British Bandsman, given many premiere performances, conducted concerto appearances of eminent soloists and directed many commercial CDs and broadcasts for both BBC Radio 2 and 3.

### ROKSANA DĄBKOWSKA *piano*

Polish pianist Roksana Dabkowska is a postgraduate student at the Royal Northern College of Music under tutelage of Dina Parakhina. Roksana received a full scholarship from the ABRSM to study her Masters diploma in 2022.

## BIOGRAPHIES

She became a laureate of Zachodniopomorski Chopin Competition 2017 and the 4th International Subcarpathian Chopin Piano Competition for Young Pianists. She has also received commendation at the Third International Competition Augustów and became a laureate of the third prize in IX 'Andrea Baldi' International Pianistic Competition in Bologna.

Roksana has participated in plenty of festivals and piano masterclasses including the 7th and 8th International Masterclass Course for Young Pianists Radziejowice by The Fryderyk Chopin Institute, 7th and 8th Piano Festival Torre de Canyamel in 2018 and 2019, and VIII Imola Summer Piano Academy and Festival. Over the years Roksana has had lessons and masterclasses with renowned teachers such as Dang Thai Son, Kevin Kenner, Angela Hewitt, Steven Osborne, Philippe Cassard, Tobias Koch, Katarzyna Popowa-Zydroń, Boris Petrushansky, Ewa Pobłocka, Elżbieta Stefańska.

### BEN PALMER *conductor*

Entering his sixth year as Chief Conductor of the Deutsche Philharmonie Merck in Darmstadt, Ben Palmer is also Chief Conductor of Babylon Orchester Berlin, and Founder and Artistic Director of Covent Garden Sinfonia. He works regularly with the Hallé, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsches Filmorchester Babelsberg, Pilsen Philharmonic, and the world-famous Grimethorpe Colliery Band.

He can often be heard on BBC Radio 3 conducting the BBC Singers and the BBC Orchestras. Other recent guest conducting engagements include the Heidelberger Sinfoniker, Hong Kong

Philharmonic, Sinfonietta de Lausanne, Sinfonietta Riga, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Royal Scottish National Orchestra. He has made recordings with the NDR Radiophilharmonie (for Sony Classical, nominated for an Opus Klassik award), BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Covent Garden Sinfonia, Deutsche Philharmonie Merck, and Deutsches Kammerorchester Berlin.

A trumpeter and composer by training, he studied at the University of Birmingham and the Royal Academy of Music, which elected him an Associate (ARAM) in 2017. He continues to be in great demand as a composer, arranger and orchestrator, most notably for Sony. He is more than three quarters of the way through his lifetime ambition to conduct all 107 of the Haydn symphonies.

### LEE RIGG *conductor*

Lee Rigg began playing the cornet aged 8 with his local brass band before moving to Wardle High School. During his time at Wardle High School, he became the Butlins National Junior Solo Champion of Great Britain, giving him the opportunity to perform as guest soloist before the results of the 1981 National Brass Band Finals held at the Royal Albert Hall, London.

It was in Year 11 when the then Fairey Engineering Band approached Lee to audition to join the band. After two auditions he was invited by the then professional conductor Major Peter Parkes to join the band. From 1985 to 1989 Lee enjoyed winning both the Open and Nationals with Fairey Band, also becoming runner up at the Europeans in 1987. 1989 saw Lee eventually move to Black Dyke Band. The band had three great

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## BIOGRAPHIES

years winning back-to-back Europeans in 1990 and 1991 and a Yorkshire Area title. His time at Black Dyke Band saw him play on every cornet seat including principal cornet and flugelhorn. During his playing career Lee has won six Nationals, six British Opens, five European Championships, four English Nationals, two Brass in Concerts and several Yorkshire and Lancashire areas.

### IAN PORTHOUSE *conductor*

Ian Porthouse is regarded as one of the brass band movement's leading conductors, educators, performers and teachers. The Head of Brass Band Studies at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire hails from a musical family in the heart of Cumbria. A former leader of the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain he later became principal cornet with Desford Colliery and Black Dyke Bands. He also played with a number of the world's finest instrumentalists at Carnegie Hall in New York, and was a featured soloist with Phillip Smith, Principal Trumpet with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

His first connection with Tredegar Band came in 1995 before moving north two years later to become principal cornet of Yorkshire Building Society Band. In 2008 he made his long awaited return when he accepted the position as Musical Director of Tredegar Band - a move that has since seen them become one of the world's leading contest and concert ensembles.

He is in great demand throughout the banding world - being the professional conductor of the Oberosterreich Brass Band in Austria as well as the Director of the National Youth Brass Bands of Scotland. He is also a leading elite level adjudicator.

### JAMES FOUNTAIN *trumpet/ flugel horn*

Principal Trumpet of the London Symphony Orchestra, James Fountain is also Professor of Trumpet at the Royal College of Music, a member of the highly acclaimed brass ensemble Septura and the innovative new music group Neoteric Ensemble.

James grew up surrounded by music, in particular brass bands and began playing the cornet at the age of three. As a youngster, James was Principal Cornet of the NYBBGB and the GUS Brass Band before becoming Principal Cornet with the world famous Grimethorpe Colliery Brass Band aged just 17.

After moving to London in 2012 to study Trumpet at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, James was appointed as the Principal Trumpet of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra just three years later. He was featured as a concerto soloist on numerous occasions with the Royal Philharmonic and other solo appearances have taken him around the world, with concerts in Australia, Brazil, Japan and the USA, as well as regular trips across Europe.

After spending five years with the RPO, James accepted the position of Principal Trumpet with the London Philharmonic Orchestra before moving to the LSO in 2021. James' journey from brass band musician to the LSO's highly illustrious Principal Trumpet position sees him follow in the footsteps of some of his brass playing heroes including, Philip Cobb, Maurice Murphy, Rod Franks, Howard Snell and Willie Lang.



## BIOGRAPHIES

### LES NEISH *tuba and conductor*

Les Neish has created a career as a tuba soloist and educator with a world-wide reputation. Known for his musicianship, artistry and high level of communication, Les dazzles audiences with fabulous technique and the real essence of music-making; Fun.

Performing the first solo tuba recital at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester and the first tuba player to be awarded the Worshipful Company of Dyers Award at the Royal Overseas League Competition Les has always pushed the boundaries leading him to a performance at Millennium Park, Chicago and recording with pop star Sting.

Away from solo performance, Les is part of the tuba section of the Brass Band of Battle Creek and as a chamber musician is a member of the Fine Arts Brass Ensemble, a group with a 30 year history having performed in over 60 countries. He has also performed with orchestras throughout the UK, including the Hallé, RTE Concert Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra and London Symphony Orchestra.

Alongside his performing commitments Les is tuba tutor at the Royal Northern College of Music, Trinity Laban Conservatoire, RNCM Junior School, Salford University, Huddersfield University and Birmingham Conservatoire. He has also given masterclasses at the Trinity College and Royal Academy of Music, London. He has served as tutor on the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, Scotland, Wales and Switzerland.

### JON MALAXETXEBARRIA conductor

Jon's conducting career is developing in the UK and in Spain. In Spain he has worked with the Bilbao Symphony, Extremadura Symphony, Basque Country Symphony, Malaga Philharmonic and the Navarra Symphony Orchestra and was appointed Music Director of the Euskadiko Ikasleen Orkestra, the Basque Youth Orchestra. In 2016 Jon conducted a sold-out performance of Handel's Messiah which brought the Zenarruza Sacred Music Festival to a close, with the Bilbao Choral Society and the Zenarruza Kamerata.

In the UK he has conducted Manchester Camerata, Leeds College of Music Chamber and Wind Orchestras, Liverpool Mozart Orchestra and Nottingham Youth Orchestra. He has worked regularly with the Derbyshire County Youth Band and Symphony Orchestra and has been Music Director of Solihull Symphony Orchestra since 2013. After completing his studies in French Horn in Chicago, Jon moved to Manchester to study conducting at the RNCM. In 2011 he was appointed tutor and conductor at Junior RNCM.

### NICHOLAS CHILDS *conductor*

Professor Nicholas Childs has achieved the highest international reputation as a performer, teacher, conductor, interpreter and advocate of new music, and producer of pacesetting recordings. Nicholas has had phenomenal success with many bands, including highly acclaimed national titles and European championships. His current tenure as Principal Conductor and Director of Music of the Black Dyke Band has been marked with continued contest success, claiming both British Open and National

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## BIOGRAPHIES

Brass Band Championships of Great Britain, awarded the Harry Mortimer Maestro award for his outstanding ability as a conductor, and being named the 2014 Conductor of the Year by 4br.com and Brass Band World. His recordings with Black Dyke Band have been heralded as the very best in the brass band world including multiple CD of the Year awards.

Nicholas gives important emphasis to the development of the brass band movement. This comes via his commitment to the training of outstanding young musicians both at the collegiate level as well as within the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, the Yorkshire Youth Brass Band, and the National Children's Brass Band of Great Britain (Founder and Music Director). He currently serves as Professor of Music at the Royal Northern College of Music, where he has taught for many years.

### **DANIEL THOMAS** *euphonium*

Daniel Thomas hails from Rhymney in the South Wales valleys. His first band was the now reformed Ebbw Vale Town Band, a local fourth section band who regularly recruited in schools. He enjoyed two years with the band, sitting next to Grimethorpe's current second euphonium, Christian Dullea! In 2009 Daniel successfully auditioned for the NYBBW under Nicholas Childs and Edward Gregson.

After spending a year with Markham and District Brass Band, Daniel was invited to join the Cory Band by Robert Childs. This was also the year that he won the local 'Caerphilly Young Musician of The Year' competition.

Daniel won the Welsh Area with the Cory before transferring to local

rivals, Tredegar. He is very proud to have participated in the band's British Open win of 2013, also scooping up the 'Best Euphonium' prize. After two years, he then moved to study at the RNCM and took over from Ian Yates as Black Dyke Band's second euphonium. Daniel was very fortunate to take part in winning performances at the Nationals, Europeans and Yorkshire Championships with Black Dyke. Since beginning his studies, Daniel has won both the BBC Radio 2 Young Brass Award and the Euphonium Artist Competition at the International Tuba Euphonium Conference held in Tennessee.

### **MICHAEL CAVANAGH** *baritone*

Born in 1994, Mike is from Stockport and began playing the Baritone at the age of 8. He is currently Principal Baritone of the Black Dyke Band, following a five-and-a-half-year spell with Grimethorpe Colliery Band. He was Principal Baritone of the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain for five years under the direction of Bramwell Tovey and a highlight of this period was performing as part of the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall live on BBC Radio 3.

Mike's performance career has taken him to many of the UK's leading concert venues including the Royal Albert Hall, Symphony Hall, Bridgewater Hall, The Sage, Snape Maltings and Perth Concert Hall, in addition to performing overseas in Australia and France.

In June 2016 Mike graduated with First Class Honours from the Royal Northern College of Music under the tutorship of Professor Steven Mead and Dr. David Thornton, and in June 2018 he completed the prestigious RNCM International Artist Diploma in Chamber

## BIOGRAPHIES

Music as a John Fewkes Scholar with A4 Brass Quartet. He regularly works with Live Music Now! and Music in Hospitals & Care, helping to transform lives through the power of live music.

### **JAMES BLACKFORD** *euphonium*

James Blackford is a Besson Sponsored Artist and one of Australia's most eminent and versatile euphonium players. He is currently in the final year of his Master of Music at the Royal Northern College of Music, under the guidance of David Thornton and Steven Mead. James' list of performance accolades and experiences includes appearances in the Royal Albert Hall, solo recitals in the High Commission of Australia, London, and as a soloist with several of Australia's premier wind bands. He holds the position of solo euphonium with the Royal Australian Air Force Band, has performed with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, as well as many leading Australian, English and Norwegian brass bands. James has been a recipient of numerous arts funding awards, including a grant from CreateNSW, which together with trumpet virtuoso Matthew Collins, saw the duo commission four Australian works during 2021, all recorded and released on the album Blackford & Collins; New Australian Music for Brass.

James' studies at the RNCM are proudly supported by the Australian Music Foundation, through the AMF Overseas Study Award, and the Tait Memorial Trust, through the Tait White Loewenthal Award. He is the first euphonium player ever to receive awards from either foundation. In February, James will travel to London to perform in the semi-finals of the Royal Overseas League Annual Music Competition.

### **FLORENT DIDER** *conductor*

A sensitive and passionate conductor, Florent Didier conducts symphony orchestras, contemporary and multifaceted ensembles, choirs, wind bands and brass bands in France, Scandinavia, Switzerland, England, Scotland, Asia, among others. Laureate of various international competitions, he is now asked to conduct at major international venues such as Philharmonie de Paris, Auditorium de Radio-France, Birmingham Symphony Hall, the Royal Albert Hall, Oslo Konserthus, Bergen Grieghallen and Sage Gateshead to name but a few.

Florent has recently made his conducting debut with Ars Nova and with the Ensemble 2e2m, a contemporary renowned music ensemble, with which he is now regularly asked to conduct at Radio France, France Musique, Studio de l'Ermitage and the CRR in Paris.

Florent was the Musical and Artistic Director of the Paris Brass Band from 2008 to 2020 and is Professor of Conducting and Director of Orchestras at the Creteil Regional Conservatory. He actively takes part in the D mos Philharmonie de Paris project and he regularly gives masterclasses or is a jury member at French and international contests. He is the Artistic Director of the Metalak Euskal Herrian and the Principal Trombone of the French Air Force Band and Ensemble 2e2m.

During the summer 2021, Florent DIDIER was honoured with the *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*, an award given by the French Minister of Culture.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### A4 BRASS QUARTET

**Jamie Smith** *cornet / flugelhorn*

**Grace Jeffers** *tenor horn*

**Mike Cavanagh** *baritone horn*

**Chris Robertson** *euphonium*

A4 Brass Quartet comprises of principal players from some of the UK's top brass bands, including Black Dyke, Grimethorpe, Brighouse & Rastrick and Foden's. With 'technical virtuosity in abundance' (*Brass Band World*), these four astonishing musicians come together to perform both lyrical and high-octane works, forming a distinctive and new take on chamber music.

The Quartet has a unique blend of instruments, with a cornet, tenor horn, baritone and euphonium creating an exclusive sound that stands out from the standard brass quartet. With this unusual instrumentation, A4 Brass has actively developed their repertoire, commissioning new music, composing and arranging music themselves.

Formed in 2013 at the RNCM, A4 Brass Quartet has gone on to become a multi-award-winning chamber ensemble. Prizes including the Royal Over-Seas League Chamber Music Competition and a Tunnell Trust Award. In 2018 they became City Music Foundation Artists and were the first brass ensemble to ever win the Royal Philharmonic Society Henderson Chamber Ensemble Award. They also regularly work with Live Music Now and Music in Hospitals & Care and are committed to expanding and diversifying their work.

### TOM HUTCHINSON *cornet*

Tom began learning the cornet at the age of nine and joined his local brass band, Stannington. Tom's first taste of playing 'top man' in a championship

section band happened a few years later, aged fifteen, when he joined the Rothwell Temperance Band. During these formative years Tom played solo cornet with the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain including two courses as Leader. It was the Band's Associate Conductor, Dr Nicholas Childs, who noticed his talent and later invited him to join the Black Dyke Band.

After his graduation from the Royal Northern College of Music in 2009, Tom was invited to join the Cory Band as principal cornet. Some highlights of his time so far at Cory has been receiving the 'Player of the Year' award three times, releasing his debut solo CD *In Principal*, and leading Cory to its historic Grand Slam achievement in 2016.

Tom is a Besson artist Tom represents the Buffet Crampon Group across the world, he is a Professor of Cornet at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Cornet tutor for the National Youth Brass Band of Wales and Cornet tutor for the National Children's Brass Band of Great Britain.

### PHILIP HARPER *conductor*

Philip Harper became Musical Director of the Cory Band in 2012. Since then he has won all the major trophies many times, including an unprecedented Grand Slam of major titles in 2016: the European, the British Open, the Nationals and Brass in Concert, all won in a single calendar year, and then repeated in 2019. Philip won the coveted 4barsrest.com Conductor of the Year Award in 2013, 2015, 2016, 2019 and 2020. In recent years he was a guest conductor of the Manger Musikklag Band in Norway, the National Youth Brass Bands of Great Britain, Switzerland and Wales and the Royal

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Philharmonic Orchestra Symphonic Brass, amongst many others. In 2021 Philip was awarded the Iles Medal by the Worshipful Company of Musicians for his services to brass bands.

Philip graduated from the University of Bristol in 1994 before going on to take a Masters Degree in Composition and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education. He had a successful performing career and was the principal tenor horn of the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain and the Sun Life Band in Bristol, as well as winning through to the Brass Final of the BBC Young Musician of the Year in 1991.

### **RUSSELL GRAY** *conductor*

Russell Gray's career as a conductor began in 1998, when he was appointed as the resident musical director of the Stavanger Brass Band (Norway). Since 2008, he has been principal conductor of Molde Brass Band (Norway) and is Adjunct Professor of Brass at Queensland University. Russell has enjoyed considerable success within the world of brass band competitions with leading ensembles in Norway, Denmark, Finland, France, Switzerland, Japan, New Zealand, Australia and Switzerland. Russell enjoyed periods as the principal conductor of Foden's, Fairey and Leyland brass bands and since 2012 has been Principal Conductor of Reg Vardy Brass Band.

During his student years, Russell was a member of the Black Dyke Band and went on to enjoy a number of years as principal cornet of the Leyland Band. He has also produced six solo albums and is much in demand as a leader of workshops, clinics and seminars. He also leads Yamaha's star-studded NEO Brass Ensemble.

He has appeared to great acclaim at the Royal Albert Hall and Symphony Hall (Birmingham) to the Grieg Hall (Bergen), Stravinsky Hall (Montreux) and the Sydney Opera House. He has conducted the National Youth Brass Bands of Switzerland and Queensland (Australia) and in 2014 was appointed Artistic Director of the National Youth Brass Band of Scotland. He is a recipient of the prestigious Iles Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians in acknowledgment of his outstanding services to the brass bands.

### **ISOBEL DAWS** *trombone*

Isobel began to play the cornet at the age of three under the joint direction of her father, David Daws, and the late Maisie Ringham Wiggins MBE. She transferred the trombone in 2008 and within six months gained a scholarship to study trombone and piano at The Purcell School of Music. After eight years at the Purcell, she moved to Chetham's School.

In 2014 Isobel was one of the five finalists in the BBC's Young Musician of the Year Brass Category. In 2018 she was crowned the winner of the Brass Category Final. In 2017, Isobel was the winner of the BBC Young Brass Award playing live on Radio 2. Isobel is alumni of the Junior GSMD, The National Children's and Youth Brass Bands of Great Britain, and The National Children's and Youth Orchestras of Great Britain.

Isobel graduated from the Royal Academy of Music in 2022. Isobel won the Karajan Academy position at the Berlin Philharmonic in January 2022 and is currently living in Berlin. Isobel has performed with orchestras including the LSO, Berlin Philharmonic, Philharmonia,

## BIOGRAPHIES

RSNO, RPO, BBC SO, WNO and brass ensemble, Septura. Isobel is a founding member of trombone quartet, Bone-afide.

Isobel is a Getzen Artist and plays on a 41471B Getzen Trombone. She is sponsored by Greg Black Mouthpieces.

### **SIMONE REBELLO** *presenter*

Simone Rebello graduated with Distinction from the RNCM to embark on a solo career that has seen her record several solo CDs, tour extensively nationally and internationally, appear on UK and international television and radio, and win a collection of awards and prizes, including the Cosmopolitan Woman of the Year in Performing Arts. Simone is a founding member of the highly successful BackBeat Percussion Quartet, which frequently tours and records internationally and has won a number of chamber music competitions in the UK, Japan and the USA. Alongside performing, Simone is an experienced adjudicator of percussion events, brass and wind band contests and general music competitions. She has been invited to judge at the highest level including for the Royal Academy of Music, BBC Young Musician of the Year, National Concert Band Finals and National Brass Championships for New Zealand, Australia, USA and Switzerland.

Simone is frequently asked to present concerts and talks/lectures featuring all aspects of playing percussion and she works as a presenter at numerous events. Simone is currently Head of School of Wind, Brass and Percussion and Director of Percussion at the RNCM.

Simone's appearance at the RNCM Brass Band Festival is sponsored by Yamaha.

### **PAUL HINDMARSH** *artistic director*

Paul Hindmarsh is an award-winning music producer, editor and journalist. After graduating from Birmingham University in the 1970s, he enjoyed a short career as a professional tenor, appearing at the Edinburgh Festival and BBC Proms. Between 1985 and 2006, he was a producer for BBC Radio 3, working on a range of programmes, including the BBC, now RNCM Brass Band Festival, which he established in 1990. Paul was musical director of Besses o' th' Barn Band in the 1990s and is a regular guest conductor of brass bands in the UK. Through the BBC and the Brass Band Heritage Trust, which he established in 1996, he has commissioned over 40 works for brass band and has written widely on British and brass band music. He recently completed a biography of composer Wilfred Heaton. In 2005, Paul was awarded the Iles Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians for his services to brass bands. He is currently Features Editor of British Bandsman and Band Consultant for the publisher Faber Music Ltd.





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