

RNCM **International** Brass Band Festival

PROGRAMME

23 – 25 JAN 2026

RNCM
ROYAL NORTHERN
COLLEGE of MUSIC



23 – 25 JAN 2026

RNCM International Brass Band Festival

The RNCM International Brass Band Festival is kindly supported by **Besson, Brass Bands England, Bach, Conn Brass, 4barsrest, Geneva Music Foundation** and the **Swiss National Solo and Quartet Contest**.

Bach®

 Brass Bands
England

4br

 YAMAHA


BESSON
LONDON

CONN®

Introduction

A warm welcome to the RNCM International Brass Band Festival 2026! It is a joy to gather once again at the Royal Northern College of Music to celebrate the power, artistry, and ever-evolving spirit of the global brass band community.

This festival has always stood as a vibrant meeting point: where tradition meets innovation, where rising talent shares the stage with world-renowned performers, and where audiences experience the full expressive range of brass music, from the intimate and lyrical to the bold and spectacular. Over the next three days, you will hear ensembles that are the very definition of excellence in our field, premiere performances of new works that challenge and inspire, and collaborations that highlight just how rich and diverse our musical landscape has become.

But beyond the music, this festival is about people. It's about the generations of performers, composers, educators, and listeners who continue to nurture a uniquely powerful art form, an art form capable of connecting communities, igniting creativity, and speaking across cultures without a single word.

Let us celebrate, listen deeply, and allow the music to remind us of what we can achieve when passion and craftsmanship come together. Welcome to the RNCM International Brass Band Festival 2026 - let the music begin!

Dr David Thornton

Artistic Director

SAVE THE DATE:

RNCM International Brass Band Festival 2027
Fri 29 - Sun 31 Jan 2027

Programme

TRADE EXHIBITION

We're delighted to be joined by the following exhibitors at this year's festival:

Besson
Geneva Music Foundation
Mercer & Barker Ltd
Nimbus Music Publishing
Prozone
World of Brass

FRI 23 JAN

6.15PM | Carole Nash Recital Room

FESTIVAL PRELUDE:
RNCM EUPHONIUM AND
BARITONE ENSEMBLE

Dimitri Shostakovich

Finale from The Gadfly

Peter Smalley

Ball of Fire

Trad arr Ken Williamson

Loch Lomond

Benjamin Roundtree

Fantasy on Charge

Trad arr Sean Peterson

She Walked Through the Fair

Jim Fieldhouse

Blaze

Steven Mead *director*

RNCM Euphonium and
Baritone Ensemble

7.30PM | RNCM Concert Hall

FODEN'S BAND

Hermann Pallhuber

A Fanfare of Bells

Claire Cope The Green Chapel*

(IBBF commission and world premiere)

- i. Tranquil, Hidden and Cool
- ii. The Girl with the Unearthly Voice
- iii. The Shot

Paul Mealor Tranquil Abiding

Interval

Benjamin Britten arr Paul Hindmarsh

Prelude and Courtly Dances
from Gloriana

Edmund Rubbra

Variations on the Shining River
(world premiere of a newly re-scored
version by Phillip Littlemore)

- i. Variation I - First Dance
- ii. Variation II - Cradle Song
- iii. Variation III - Pageant
- iv. Variation IV - Ostinato
- v. Variation V - Second Dance

Philip Sparke Partita

Michael Fowles *conductor*

Bones Apart Trombone Quartet*

*Bones Apart Trombone Quartet's
appearance at the RNCM International
Brass Band Festival is kindly supported by
Bach and Conn Brass.*

Bach® **CONN®**

Programme

SAT 24 JAN

11AM | RNCM Concert Hall
CONCORD BRASS BAND

Jacob Vilhelm Larsen DAO Fanfare
Per Nørgaard Doing
Launy Grøndahl Trombone Concerto*

- i. Moderato assai ma molto maestoso
- ii. Quasi una Leggenda: Andante grave
- iii. Finale: Maestoso - Rondo

Frederik Magle

The Hope (Part I) ^

Jacob Vilhelm Larsen

Ravenscroft Variations

- i. Fanfare – Maestoso
- ii. Theme (Carol 705) – Moderato
- iii. Variation I - Allegro ritmico
- iv. Variation II - Allegro fuoco
- v. Variation III - Andante funebre
- vi. Variation IV - Senza misura (cadenzas)
- vii. Variation V - Lento elegia
- viii. Variation VI - Allegro vivo
- ix. Theme (Solved) – Maestoso
- x. Fanfare & Ending - Molto maestoso

Carl Nielsen arr Andreas Spang Olsen

Dance of the Cockerels

Stig Mærsk *conductor*

Jesper Juul Windahl *trombone**

Ben Attfield *organ^*

1.30PM | RNCM Theatre

THE 4BARSREST INTERVIEW

Iwan Fox from 4barsrest interviews several of the Festival's composers, including Philip Sparke and Richard Blackford.

4br

3PM | RNCM Concert Hall

TREDEGAR TOWN BAND

Tamsin Crook A Spark Forgotten

Derek Bourgeois Euphonium Concerto*

- i. Allegro vivace
- ii. Lento con moto
- iii. Allegro molto vivace

Phil Lawrence

Mellisande (world premiere)

Philip Sparke

Land of the Long White Cloud

Ian Porthouse *conductor*

Glenn Van Looy *euphonium**

4.45PM | RNCM Theatre

JUNIOR RNCM BRASS BAND

Eric Ball March: Star Lake

Philip Sparke Lucerne Dances
(British premiere)

Peter Meechan Shift

Peter Meechan Song of Hope*

Oliver Waespi Fanfare and Funk

Dan Price Starburst

Mark Bousie *conductor*

Oliver Tattersall *cornet**



Programme

7.30PM | RNCM Concert Hall

BLACK DYKE BAND

Paul Lovatt-Cooper

Fanfare for Bradford

Bruce Broughton

Wildfire (world premiere)

Philip Sparke

Gemini (Duo Concerto for cornet, euphonium & brass band)
(world premiere of brass band version)[^]

Edward Gregson

Symphony in Two Movements

Interval

Jacob Vilhelm Larsen

Aureum Spiriti (world premiere)

Simon Dobson

Shōfuku-ji - The Hall of Healing: Concerto for Percussion* (world premiere)

- i. Hōjō Tokimune: The Warrior
- ii. Hall of a Thousand Jizō
- iii. A National Treasure

Ottorino Respighi arr Howard Snell

Feste Romane

- i. Circenses (Circus Games)
- ii. Il Giubileo (The Jubilee)
- iii. L'Ottobrata (The October Festival)
- iv. La Befana (The Epiphany)

Professor Nicholas Childs *conductor*

Tom Hutchinson *cornet[^]*

Adam Bokaris *euphonium[^]*

Yasuaki Fukuhara *percussion**

SUN 25 JAN

11AM | RNCM Concert Hall

RNCM BRASS BAND

Philip Sparke London Overture

Simon Dobson The Riot at the Rite

Louis Kroni arr Bertrand Moren

Dark or Bright?*

Derek Jenkins We Seven[^]

Théo Koita Tabi: The Journey
(world premiere)

Errollyn Wallen Gold Saturday

Katrina Marzella-Wheeler *conductor*

Chris Binns *conductor[^]*

Louis Kroni *soprano cornet**

Louis Kroni's appearance at the RNCM International Brass Band Festival is kindly supported by the Swiss National Solo and Quartet Contest.

12.30PM | Upper Concourse

RNCM YOUNG LOW BRASS AND YOUNG TROMBONES

RNCM Young Low Brass and Young Trombones offers weekly sessions for budding brass players aged five to 12, aimed at nurturing their musicianship, creativity, and technical abilities.

The group will showcase ensemble music in this exciting pop-up performance featuring a lively blend of works.

Programme

1.30PM | RNCM Theatre
YORKSHIRE YOUTH BAND

Philip Sparke Concert Prelude
Mia Yee When One Sees Light
William Himes Concertino for
Flugel Horn*
Andrew Mackereth Dance Like David
James Curnow Legends in Brass

Richard Marshall *conductor*
Phoebe Mallinson *flugel horn**

3pm | RNCM Concert Hall
CORY BAND

Philip Harper Anno 1920
Richard Blackford Orbital
(world premiere)
i. Sudden Daylight
ii. The Earth Is Like Heaven
iii. Weightlessness
iv. Re-entry

Philip Wilby Light Fantastic*
(for trombone and brass band)
Mark Boden Descent
(world premiere of the brass
band version)
Philip Sparke Raveling, Unraveling

Philip Harper *conductor*
Brett Baker *trombone**

4.45PM | Carole Nash Recital Room
BRASS BANDS ENGLAND
DISCUSSION: BRASS BANDS
AND THE MEDIA

Brass Bands England supports and promotes brass bands by fostering community engagement, sharing resources, and increasing public understanding of their value. It provides access to funding, training, and resources in key areas like marketing, digital technology, and legislative compliance while encouraging innovation, creative collaboration, and broader audience engagement.



6.30PM | RNCM Concert Hall
BRIGHOUSE & RASTRICK BAND

Peter Meechan B of the Bang
Torstein Aagaard-Nilsen
Euphonium Concerto No 2*
i. Air
ii. Blue
iii. Ice

George Lloyd Royal Parks

Interval

Programme

Helena Zyskowska

Ondinas (world premiere)

Dorothy Gates

Concertino for Tuba and Brass Band[^]
(world premiere)

Philip Sparke

Music of the Spheres

Dr David Thornton *conductor*

Chris Robertson *euphonium**

Les Neish *tuba[^]*

*Les Neish's appearance at the RNCM
International Brass Band Festival is kindly
supported by Besson.*



BESSON
LONDON





Our World Premieres

CLAIRE COPE

The Green Chapel
(IBBF commission and
world premiere)

Foden's Band
FRI 23 JAN | 7.30PM

Located in Back Wood, part of the Dark Peak towards the Southwest of the peak district, Lud's Church is a deep chasm penetrating the Millstone Grit bedrock, created by a massive landslide on the hill above Gradbach in Staffordshire. This mysterious cave-like hide-out is mossy and overgrown, and wet and cool even on very hot days; it is even thought to have its own micro-climate due to its depth and moisture.

A place of fascinating history, mythology and supposedly paranormal activity, the connection between this hidden place and the 14th century Lollards has perhaps provided the most lasting and distinctive story behind this enigmatic place. The Lollards, a pre-protestant Christian group who rejected Catholicism and were persecuted because of their beliefs, supposedly used this cool cavern as a place to worship in peace. The name 'Lud' is supposed to have derived from worshipper Walter de Lud-Auk, who was captured during a raid of Lud's Church.

According to Hugh Williams, *'The congregation that met secretly at Lud's Church was reputedly led by a priest named Walter de Lud-Auk, and they say he looked after his orphaned granddaughter Alice, a beautiful young woman with 'an unearthly voice' who would sing a verse of each hymn solo [with] the assembled Lollards'. It is said that during the raid when Walter de Lud-Auk was captured, Alice was accidentally killed; as a result, her ghost haunts the chasm to this day, clad in white and singing loudly in her 'unearthly voice'.*

i. Tranquil, Hidden and Cool

Ambient, cold and eerie percussion permeates the opening, producing a dark and cave-like atmosphere, with whispering wind through the cornets. The trombones enter with unnerving, dissonant glissandi, underpinned by strange, muted harmonies elsewhere.

Alongside a ghostly upward arpeggio motif, gradually more tranquil melodic ideas imbue the score, rising towards more triumphant fanfare chords in the whole ensemble. Soon, more calm and serene pedal, suspended harmonies infuse the movement, with cascading melodicism in the cornets and trombones, and softly ringing percussion, evoking a sense of this serene and peaceful place.

ii. The Girl with the Unearthly Voice

The quartet begins the movement with a plaintive chorale, that soon opens into a livelier dance, full of counterpoint

and imitation. There is a more energetic development of the opening chorale within the whole band, before the quartet introduces a more percussive, syncopated section. The band develops the contrapuntal dance once again, before a calmer and more reflective iteration over a drone of the movement's main melodic theme. The movement ends with a darker, more sombre repetition of the opening chorale from the quartet.

iii. The Shot

This movement unfolds as a dramatic '*hunt*' for the Lollards and the fatal wounding of Alice. There is an intense opening with repeated and overlapping stabbing semiquavers becoming the major theme of the movement. The quartet soon takes over with some virtuosity, interweaving the accented motif. An ominous and more syncopated bass line motif takes hold at certain points below varied rhythmic interjections and decorations within the band; in the centre of the movement a dronelike feeling of suspension occurs, as a reminder of Alice's '*unearthly voice*'. The movement ends with some reminiscence of the serene atmosphere of the first movement, before ghostly chromatic lines interweave in muted cornets and then the trombones, signalling the supposed continued haunting of Alice's ghost at Lud's Church.

EDMUND RUBBRA

Variations on the
Shining River
(world premiere of a
newly re-scored version
by Phillip Littlemore)

Foden's Band
FRI 23 JAN | 7.30PM

Composed in 1936, Edmund Rubbra's *Variations on the Shining River* is one of the composer's most evocative early orchestral works, later brought into the brass band repertoire through Frank Wright's sensitive and widely performed arrangement. Rubbra, known for his deeply spiritual musical language and long-arching melodic thought, often drew inspiration from natural imagery. In this piece, the '*shining river*' becomes both a poetic symbol and a musical idea – a serene theme whose character changes as it flows through a sequence of contrasting variations.

Its beauty lies not in overt drama, but in its steady flow of luminous sound and its capacity to evoke the tranquillity and mystery of nature itself.

Foden's Bands bring us a newly scored version by former member and trumpeter, Phillip Littlemore.

Our World Premieres

PHILIP SPARKE

Lucerne Dances
(British premiere)

Junior RNCM Brass Band
SAT 24 JAN | 4.45PM

Lucerne Dances was commissioned by the Swiss Brass Band Association for the 50th Swiss Brass Band Championship, which took place in Lucerne in November 2025. The work is set in three movements, performed without a break.

The first movement opens with an athletic figure on solo cornets and euphoniums, which is punctuated with chords from the full band. A suave melody follows (reappearing in the second movement), before a horn figure takes centre stage under chattering cornets. After a short bridge passage, euphoniums and baritone change meter to introduce a second main theme. An altered version of the bridge passage then leads to a varied reiteration of this theme on horns and euphonium. This is followed by a reorchestrated recapitulation until the movement winds down to the next movement.

The second movement opens mysteriously with a bass theme under cornet figurations. A reminder of the first movement eventually leads to a noble chorale theme, which is repeated by a sextet of soloists. A cornet cadenza is joined by a euphonium to build to the finale.

The third movement opens with a polytonal fanfare, leading to a robust and modal main theme on horns and baritone. A lyrical second subject on solo cornet leads to a full-band version, which introduces a gentle chorale with cornet interpolations, repeated by the full band. A return to the opening fanfare heralds a partial recapitulation until the chorale returns triumphally before a coda closes the work emphatically.

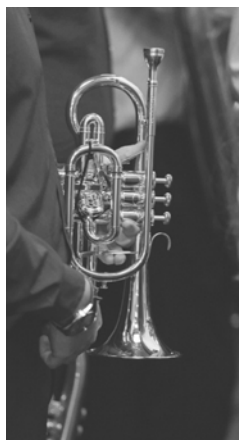
BRUCE BROUGHTON

Wildfire (world premiere)
Black Dyke Band
SAT 24 JAN | 7.30PM

On January 7, 2025, two devastating wildfires erupted in Southern California. The Pacific Palisades Fire began in the Santa Monica Mountains and went on to destroy large areas of Pacific Palisades, Topanga, and Malibu, becoming the most destructive fire in the history of Los Angeles. On the same day, powerful Santa Ana winds fuelled another blaze in Eaton Canyon, near Pasadena, which swept through foothill communities including Altadena. Together, the fires burned tens of thousands of acres, destroyed thousands of homes, and claimed many lives.

The idea for *Wildfire* emerged during the disaster itself and was inspired by the human stories, both heroic and tragic, that surrounded it. The Eaton Canyon Fire came dangerously close to my home. Friends who sought shelter overnight

Our World Premieres



awoke to find their house destroyed, and many others within the community lost everything. We were close enough to the fire to evacuate briefly, thinking it could spread to our neighbourhood; fortunately, it didn't. Both fires, however, took nearly a month to completely contain.

Musically, *Wildfire* begins with small, musical gestures rather than an overall theme, mirroring sparks that struggle to ignite before suddenly erupting. Scratching sounds from a guiro imitate matches being struck, as fragments accumulate and the fire grows in scale and intensity. There is excitement, drama, and terror as the fire spreads, and eventually it feels unstoppable. One of the hallmarks of a great fire is that it can travel quickly and move in many directions. In the fires mentioned above, strong winds made them more dangerous by allowing them to spread quickly.

The middle section is a pause from the fires' destruction and a reflection on the human hurt. A solo cornet, and later two euphoniums, represent the anguish and disbelief in the power and speed of the fire, which at some points seems unstoppable. Hot weather and fast winds make its energy and power seem inexhaustible. And eventually, the fire's relentlessness returns and takes over.

The ending suggests that there was some great heroism involved in containing the fires, and this was true. But it also implies that the fire may be the greater power at large. Certainly, due to the skill and work of many firefighters, these enormous fires were eventually weakened and contained. A fire is a force of nature. But so is a man.

PHILIP SPARKE

Gemini

(Duo Concerto for cornet,
euphonium & brass band)

Black Dyke Band

SAT 24 JAN | 7.30PM

Gemini was commissioned by and written for Ryukoku University (Japan), André Henry, and Shoichiro Hokazono. They gave the premiere with the Ryukoku University Symphonic Band in 2016 at the Biwako Hall Center for the Performing Arts in Shiga, Japan.

Set in three movements, the concerto aims to explore the close relationship, as solo instruments, between the cornet and euphonium, exploiting the many common factors between the two as well as the subtly different characteristics they possess in terms of both lyrical and rhythmic playing. The first movement is a bustling toccata, with continuous semiquaver (sixteenth) figuration and harmonic development



Bach[®] EUROPE

JAMES FOUNTAIN

Principal Trumpet

London Symphony Orchestra

Our World Premieres

urging the music forward. Material is shared between the two soloists in conversational form with episodes from the band further developing the contrasting themes.

The second movement is lyrical and improvisatory in nature. The cornet first states both the main and secondary themes and is answered by the euphonium. A dual cadenza leads directly to the finale, a caccia in a lighter mood that briefly features a melody from the second movement as a lyrical central section.

Today's performance is the world premiere of the brass band version.

JACOB VILHELM LARSEN

Aureum Spiriti
(world premiere)

Black Dyke Band
SAT 24 JAN | 7.30PM

Aureum Spiriti was commissioned by Professor Nicholas Childs and the Black Dyke Band. The collaboration between Jacob Vilhelm Larsen and Black Dyke began in 2024 with the recording of the composer's second brass band album, *Elysian Fields*. Following this project, Professor Nicholas Childs invited Larsen to write a new concert opener for the band, resulting in *Aureum Spiriti*.

The title is a Latin phrase meaning '*the golden spirit*', reflecting the idea that what we give in life, and what we hold dear, resonates beyond the present moment:

*Quod in vita donas,
pro eo quod ardes,
in Aureum Spiritum aeternum ascendit.*

(What you give in life, for what you cherish, echoes in eternity as the golden spirit.)

Lasting approximately five minutes, *Aureum Spiriti* is written in Jacob Vilhelm Larsen's characteristic, expansive and lyrical musical language, infused with radiant energy and a strong sense of forward motion. The work is subtly coloured by harmonic and orchestral associations to the ceremonial grandeur of John Williams' music for the Olympic Games, lending the piece a sense of nobility, optimism, and celebration.

Shōfuku-ji is an ancient Buddhist temple in Japan, famed for its history, spirituality, and wooden architecture. Founded

Our World Premieres

SIMON DOBSON

Shōfuku-ji -

The Hall of Healing:

Concerto for Percussion
(world premiere)

Black Dyke Band

SAT 24 JAN | 7.30PM

in 1407, it remains one of the nation's oldest temples and a cherished cultural treasure.

i. Hōjō Tokimune: The Warrior

The 13th century samurai Hōjō Tokimune once fell gravely ill at this site. In a dream, Jizō Bosatsu gave him a healing pill. Awaking and cured of his illness, Tokimune built a temple in gratitude, dedicating it to Jizō.

ii. Hall of a Thousand Jizō

The Jizō-dō holds thousands of statues of Jizō Bosatsu, guardian of children and travellers. Many wear red caps. Visitors may take one for healing, returning two in thanks.

iii. A National Treasure

Shōfuku-ji endures as a site of pilgrimage, healing, and pride, embodying centuries of faith and devotion.

THÉO KOITA

Tabi: The Journey
(world premiere)

RNCM Brass Band

SUN 25 JAN | 11AM

Tabi is a sonic journey through the instruments of the brass band, where each moment of the piece invites exploration and emotion. The work's sound dramaturgy allows for a wide range of personal interpretations, evoking deep and varied emotions.

RICHARD BLACKFORD

Orbital

(world premiere)

Cory Band

SUN 25 JAN | 3PM

Orbital was written on Martyn Brabbins' recommendation and was co-commissioned by Cory Band, Tredegar Band, Foden's Band, The Cooperation Band, Flower's Band, and BBC Radio 3.

The 15-minute work is inspired by Samantha Harvey's Booker Prize Winning eponymous novel chronicling a single day in the lives of six astronauts aboard the International Space Station as they complete sixteen orbits around the Earth.

Divided into four movements: Sudden Daylight; The Earth Is Like Heaven; Weightlessness; Re-entry, *Orbital* is a virtuoso suite for brass band that explores the themes of space and our perception of the Earth. The entire work is based on a motto theme, heard at the beginning on the tenor horns, that permeates every movement in different guises, from dramatic solos, soft ethereal textures, and even a high-octane fugue in the final movement. I am deeply indebted to colleagues and friends in the brass band fraternity who gave their time and advice as the score progressed.

Our World Premieres

MARK BODEN

Descent
(world premiere of the
brass band version)

Cory Band
SUN 25 JAN | 3PM

Descent is a short, high-energy work, originally commissioned by the Vale of Glamorgan Festival for BBC National Orchestra of Wales. The original brief was to create a piece that celebrated the virtuosity of both the instrumentalists and ensemble. I always imagined that the material would work effectively when reimagined for brass and approached Philip Harper about creating a fresh version of the piece for the Cory Band by reshaping and reworking content from the original score.

Set in a loose ternary form, the initial material of Descent is highly animated with frequent solos for varying instrumentalists across the ensemble. A slower intermezzo interrupts the opening material, forming the central passage of the piece and featuring an extensive solo for euphonium interspersed with further solos from across the band. The opening, energised material returns with greater vigour than the beginning, including striking interruptions from the percussion. Rising machine-like figures return as the piece builds towards a climax before a short coda leads to a boisterous finale.

HELENA ZYSKOWSKA

Ondinas (world premiere)
Brighthouse & Rastrick Band
SUN 25 JAN | 6.30PM

Ondinas evokes mythical water spirits from a different perspective: hidden in deep waters, mightful, and foreboding. As the piece progresses, there is a metaphorical rise towards the water's surface, escaping the dark depths of the aquatic abyss.

DOROTHY GATES

Concertino for Tuba
and Brass Band
(world premiere)
Brighthouse & Rastrick Band
SUN 25 JAN | 6.30PM

Concertino for Tuba and Brass Band was written at the request of Les Neish. He wanted something rhythmical and lyrical. The outer two movements form the rhythmical basis of the piece. Some of it was written while on a mission trip to South Africa this year, so there is a hint of African rhythms.

Les also specifically asked for a nod to Les and Dorothy's shared culture of The Salvation Army and Northern Ireland. The second movement is the embodiment of this request. It is slightly mournful, modal, and Celtic sounding and is based on a Salvation Army song, *Take Time to be Holy*. The piece offers the Tuba soloist both technical and lyrical moments to show off their expertise.





A Lasting Legacy

RNCM alumni are proud members of many of the professional bands performing in this year's festival.

THEIR SUCCESS BEGINS HERE AT THE RNCM.

By pledging to support our young musicians, you are directly investing in the next generation of talent.

Leaving a gift in your will to the RNCM creates a lasting legacy, transforming lives and helping future students achieve their ambitions.

Find out more at
rncm.ac.uk/leaveagift



Our Featured Composer

PHILIP SPARKE

Philip Sparke was born in London and studied composition, trumpet, and piano at the Royal College of Music, where he gained an ARCM and first developed his interest in band music. While at the College, he played in the wind orchestra and formed a student brass band, composing early works that soon led to publication, including *Concert Prelude* and *Gaudium*.

Growing recognition of his music resulted in major commissions, beginning with *The Land of the Long White Cloud* for the New Zealand Centennial Brass Band Championships. Further commissions followed from individual bands, band associations, and the BBC, for whom he won the EBU New Music for Band Competition three times (with *Slipstream*, *Skyrider*, and *Orient Express*). His championship works have been featured internationally, including three appearances at the National Finals at the Royal Albert Hall.



A close association with Japan led to performances and recordings with the Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra, opening doors to significant wind band commissions worldwide. In 1996, the United States Air Force Band commissioned *Dance Movements*, which won the Sudler Prize. In 2005, *Music of the Spheres* won the National Band Association/William D. Revelli Memorial Band Composition Contest, and *A Colour Symphony* won the same prize in 2016.

Philip Sparke has received numerous international awards and honours, including the BUMA International Brass Award and the 4barsrest.com Special Award for his contribution to brass music. He's also received recognition at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago, and in 2000 founded Anglo Music Press, enabling him to work full-time as a composer and publisher.



CONN[®]

conn-selmer.eu

  @ConnInstruments

Our Soloists

BONES APART TROMBONE QUARTET

Bones Apart Trombone Quartet has been at the forefront of brass chamber music for over 25 years. Formed at the Royal Northern College of Music in 1999, the quartet rapidly gained international recognition as a leading chamber ensemble. Its members – Becky Smith, Helen Vollam, Jayne Murrill and Sarah Williams – combine exceptional top-level experience across symphony and chamber orchestras, period-instrument performance, contemporary music, brass band, and jazz.

Bones Apart is committed to raising the profile of the trombone as a chamber music instrument, championing its versatility through new commissions and skilful arrangements that have significantly expanded the repertoire. The quartet has premiered works by composers including Gary Carpenter, Christian Lindberg, Matthew Taylor, Peter Meechan, John Kenny, Dan Jenkins, and Ryan Hume.

Award highlights include the Royal Over-Seas League Ensemble Prize, the Philip Jones Award, and the British Trombone

Society's Sheila Tracy Award. Performances have taken place at major venues including Wigmore Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, and Symphony Hall Birmingham, alongside broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM. The quartet regularly presents recitals, masterclasses, and workshops worldwide and tours extensively throughout Europe, the USA, and Japan.

Bones Apart play on Conn-Selmer and Vincent Bach trombones.

JESPER JUUL WINDAHL trombone

Jesper Juul Windahl (born 1973) studied trombone at the Royal Academy of Music, continuing his training in Paris, Chicago, and London, and at the Royal Danish Academy of Music. He is an internationally respected performer with a distinguished career as an orchestral musician, soloist, and chamber musician, alongside significant experience as a teacher and conductor.

At the age of 23, Jesper was appointed Principal Trombonist of the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, a position he

has held ever since. He has also been a long-standing member of Athelas Sinfonietta and an active chamber musician, founding ensembles including Den Danske Basunkvartet and the Danish Brass Quintet.

A prize-winner in several international competitions, he was named Artist of the Year by the P2 radio channel of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation in 2000 and has appeared as a soloist with leading orchestras across Europe. His recordings include *Romantic Trombone Concertos* with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, and he has premiered numerous new Danish works for trombone.

As a conductor, Jesper has led major Danish orchestras and ensembles, was Principal Conductor of the Prince's Music Corps from 2009-2012, and is currently conductor of Concord Brass Band.

GLENN VAN LOOY euphonium

Glenn Van Looy, born in Bonheiden in the province of Antwerp, has established himself as one of the leading euphonium

Our Soloists

players. His musical journey began in a local wind band conducted by his father, and he is equally at home as a soloist and ensemble performer. After early success with Brass Band Heist and Brass Band Buizingen, Glenn has held the solo euphonium seat with the Valaisia Brass Band for over a decade.

Glenn's solo achievements set him apart internationally. He has won the solo championships of his native Belgium in every category, the European Solo Championships in Linz, and he became the youngest winner of the British Open Solo Championship. Further honours include International Soloist of the Year at the Ern Keller Memorial in Sydney, alongside major prizes in South Korea, France, Finland, and Belgium.

In addition to performing, Glenn is active as a conductor, adjudicator, and educator, guest conducting across Europe and serving as Musical Director of Ensemble de Cuivre Euphonia in Switzerland. He teaches low brass at the Conservatoire Cantonal du Valais in Sion and frequently presents

masterclasses worldwide. In 2021, he was awarded a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Salford.

Glenn is a Geneva performing and development artist and plays on his signature GVL Cardinal model as well as on his signature AR Resonance mouthpiece.

Glenn Van Looy's appearance is kindly supported by Geneva Music foundation.

OLIVER TATTERSALL *cornet*

Oliver began playing the cornet at the age of three with Whitworth Academy Band, quickly progressing through the junior and youth bands before moving on to Rochdale Youth Band. He later began receiving lessons from Joe Murtagh of Black Dyke and Foden's Band. Following this, Oliver played with BMP (Europe) Goodshaw Band; during his time there, he successfully auditioned for the National Children's Brass Band of Great Britain in 2020. He progressed to the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain in 2023.

Oliver currently studies GCSE Music under Kevin Gibbs and receives one-to-one tuition from Graham South while studying at the Junior Royal Northern College of Music. He has gained experience performing as a guest or deputy with bands including Leyland, Boarshurst, and Pemberton, and has previously played with Foden's Youth Band and the Greater Manchester Hub Band.

He currently performs with Whitworth Vale and Healey Band, as well as with his local music service in Rochdale. Oliver has appeared in concerts and contests at venues such as Bolsover, Buxton, Blackpool Winter Gardens, Stoller Hall, and Bridgewater Hall.

TOM HUTCHINSON *cornet*

Tom Hutchinson is one of the most distinguished cornet players of his generation, renowned for his technical mastery, musical sensitivity, and leadership of brass bands at the highest level. He began playing the cornet at the age of nine with Stannington Band and quickly rose to prominence, becoming

Our Soloists

Principal Cornet of the Barnsley Building Society Band and later Rothwell Temperance Band while still a teenager. His formative years included leadership roles with the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, where his talent was first recognised by Prof Nicholas Childs.

Invited to join the Black Dyke Band, Tom spent four years at Queensbury, contributing to major contest successes, international tours and numerous recordings. After graduating from the Royal Northern College of Music in 2009, he was appointed Principal Cornet of the Cory Band, helping to lead one of the most successful periods in the band's history, including multiple British Opens, National, and European Championship victories.

In November 2025, Tom returned to Black Dyke Band as Principal Cornet, marking a significant milestone in a career defined by excellence, experience, and a strong commitment to the future of brass banding.

ADAM BOKARIS

euphonium

Adam is the solo euphonium player with the Black Dyke Band. Since moving to the UK, he has also performed with the Grimethorpe Colliery Band, Fairey Band, and Leyland Band, and has appeared in some of the world's most iconic venues – most notably as a soloist on the Sydney Opera House stage.

Adam works as a euphonium and baritone tutor at the University of Salford and the University of Manchester. He also teaches with the Stockport Schools' Brass Bands and is a private tutor.

He is a founding member of the internationally award-winning Brass Compass Euphonium Quartet, which won both the 2016 International Tuba and Euphonium Competition and the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble Chamber Music Competition. The quartet has also appeared as featured artists at the Singapore Low Brass Festival.

Adam performs on a Geneva Symphony Euphonium and a Denis Wick 4AL mouthpiece.

YASUAKI FUKUHARA

percussion

Yasuaki Fukuhara was born in Japan and initially studied psychology, graduating in 2009 before moving to the UK to study percussion at the Royal Northern College of Music, where he was awarded a scholarship and graduated in 2014. He gained international recognition as the winner of the Italy Percussion Competition (vibraphone) and is an instrument endorsee for Majestic Percussion.

In 2011, Yasuaki became the first Japanese percussionist to join the Fairey Band and was soon named among the '*Top Five Percussionists of 2011*' by 4barsrest. He has since been featured in major music publications, including *The British Bandsman*.

Committed to expanding the solo percussion repertoire with brass band, he gave the premiere of Rodney Newton's *The Golden Apples of the Sun* at the 2013 RNCM Festival of Brass and later joined the Leyland Band, performing as a soloist at Brass in Concert Contest. His debut solo album, recorded with Leyland Band in 2014, received

Our Soloists

international acclaim.

Yasuaki later joined the Black Dyke Band, becoming the first Japanese player in the band's history. After returning to Japan, he trained for three years as a Buddhist priest and is now active as both a performer and priest, with regular television appearances.

LOUIS KRONI

soprano cornet

Louis Kroni began playing the cornet at the age of eight and joined the Fanfare Union Instrumentale de Courroux a year later, where he currently holds the position of soprano cornet. He has won the Concours Jurassien for Soloists and Ensembles on several occasions, both as a soloist and as a member of a quartet, and in 2025 became Swiss champion in all categories.

He developed an interest in composition at an early age, writing several solo works that he performed in soloist competitions. He has also composed music for brass band, including *The Untold Story*, which was selected by the Ensemble de Cuivres Jurassien as a free choice

at the Swiss Brass Band Championship when he was just 19.

After twelve years with the Ensemble de Cuivres Jurassien, Louis joined the Valaisia Brass Band in 2025. He has also performed with the Leyland Band, appearing as a featured soloist in concerts, and has taken part in major competitions including the British Open and the English National Championships.

PHOEBE MALLINSON

flugel horn

Phoebe Mallinson is a flugelhorn and trumpet player from Bradford. She began playing cornet aged eight in the City of Bradford Brass Band Organisation, discovering a love for flugelhorn at ten.

In 2017, she gained a place to study trumpet at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester. Between 2020 and 2024, she served as Principal Flugelhorn of the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, a position she held from the ages of 14 to 18. Phoebe gained recognition by reaching the televised Brass Category Final of the BBC Young Musician competition in 2022, showcasing both trumpet

and flugelhorn repertoire.

Phoebe has also performed as a concerto soloist with the Todmorden Orchestra, notably playing the Arutunian Trumpet Concerto, and with the Opera North Youth Orchestra. Phoebe is now an undergraduate student at the Royal Northern College of Music studying trumpet with Tracey Redfern and Roger Webster.

BRETT BAKER

trombone

Dr L. Brett Baker is internationally recognised as one of the foremost trombone soloists of his generation, renowned for his expressive musicianship, flawless technique, and pioneering spirit. He has built a global reputation through an exceptional body of solo work encompassing recordings, live performance, and education.

A passionate advocate for new music, Brett has commissioned more than 100 solo works for trombone in collaboration with leading composers. He is among the most recorded brass soloists in the world, having released

Our Soloists

over 60 solo albums, including eight on his own label, White River Evocations, and appearing as a featured soloist on more than 40 additional recordings.

Brett's solo career has taken him across the UK, Europe, the USA, Australia, South America, and Asia, with performances at major festivals including the International Trombone Festival, Trombonanza, and the American Trombone Workshop. He presents up to 50 solo performances annually, regularly combining concerts with masterclasses and workshops.

Brett Baker's career exemplifies the artistic and expressive potential of solo trombone performance through innovation, commitment, and excellence.

CHRIS ROBERTSON *euphonium*

Chris is originally from Carnoustie, Scotland and began playing euphonium at the age of 10. He has been a member of Brighouse & Rastrick Brass Band since September 2018, having previously played with Grimethorpe Colliery, Wingates,

Kirkintilloch, and the multi-award winning Carnoustie and District Youth Band.

Chris moved to Manchester, England to study at the Royal Northern College of Music in 2013 with tutors Professor Steven Mead and Dr David Thornton. He graduated with First Class Honours and was nominated for the Harry Mortimer Award in his final year. The following year, he graduated from the RNCM's prestigious International Artist Diploma course as a member of A4 Brass Quartet and is now an Honorary Associate Artist of the College. Chris has performed as a soloist throughout the UK as well as in Switzerland, Ireland, Lithuania, Isle of Man, and Finland.

LES NEISH *tuba*

Les Neish is a tuba soloist, chamber musician, and educator with a worldwide reputation, celebrated for his artistry, musicianship, and exceptional technical brilliance. A pioneer in his field, he gave the first solo tuba recital at Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, and remains the only tuba player to receive the Worshipful Company

of Dyers Award at the Royal Over-Seas League Competition.

His solo recordings – *Salt of the Earth*, *Shine and Affinity* – have received major international acclaim, including multiple Solo CD of the Year awards and the prestigious Roger Bobo Award for Recording Excellence from the International Tuba Euphonium Association. A committed advocate for new music, Les has commissioned numerous works for solo tuba, and his performance of Dorothy Gates' Concertino for Tuba marks his fourth world premiere at the RNCM International Brass Band Festival.

Beyond solo performance, Les appears regularly with leading ensembles, including the Brass Band of Battle Creek and the Fine Arts Brass Ensemble, and has performed with major orchestras across the UK and Ireland. A dedicated educator, he holds teaching positions at the Royal Northern College of Music, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, and Liverpool University, presents masterclasses internationally, and remains deeply involved in youth brass education.



**THE NATIONAL
YOUTH BRASS BAND
OF GREAT BRITAIN**

EASTER CONCERT 2026

Join over 90 of the UK's most talented young brass and percussion players for an inspiring evening of world-class music, featuring the world première of a new work by Andrea Price celebrating the music and humour of the legendary Victoria Wood

Guest Conductor
Professor Nicholas Childs

Guest Soloist
Mike Cavanagh (baritone)

18:00 – 20:00 | Saturday 18 April 2026

Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester

Tickets £19, £16.50 & FREE (under 18s) from www.rncm.ac.uk or call **0161 907 5555**



**The National
Youth Brass Band
of Great Britain**



RNCM
ROYAL NORTHERN
COLLEGE of MUSIC

© 2026 The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain. All rights reserved. The National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in England and Wales no. 1089724.

Band and Conductor Biographies

FODEN'S BAND

Foden's Band was formed in 1902 by Edwin Foden, originally named The Foden's Motorworks Band. From these humble beginnings few would have thought the group would go on to win 13 British Open titles, 16 National Championships of Great Britain, and an unparalleled double hat-trick in 1932, 33, 34 and 1936, 37 and 38. The band currently holds the record for the number of Area Contest wins with an unprecedented 27 North West Area titles. Since 1902, Foden's Band has maintained its position as one of the world's leading bands on and off the contest stage.

In 2012, Foden's achieved the '*Double*', being crowned the British Open and National Champions. Further National Championship titles followed in 2018, 2021 and 2022. In September 2023, the band became British Open Champions at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, and in November 2023 was crowned BIC Champions. During the summer of 2024, Foden's completed a highly successful seven-day tour of South Korea, where the ensemble's opening concert was broadcast on national television.

The band is heavily involved in its local community, working with a wide range of youth organisations. Foden's also runs its own 65-strong Youth Band, as well as a Community Band with members aged between 65 and 95.

MICHAEL FOWLES

conductor

An alumnus of the Royal Northern College of Music, Michael has been Musical Director of Foden's Band since 2009 and Professional Conductor of the Desford Colliery Band since 2016.

Having worked with many of the UK's leading bands, Michael is known for imaginative concert programming and consistently high standards in competition. He has won Championship section contests with 11 different bands, both in long-term roles and as a freelance conductor, making him highly sought after in the UK and abroad.

A member of the Association of Brass Band Adjudicators, Michael has officiated at numerous Regional Qualifying contests, the National Finals, the Butlins Mineworkers Festival, and the Swiss Nationals. Education is central to his work: he is Course Director of the Wessex Band and Foden's Armagh Summer Schools, Musical Director of Foden's Youth Band, and Associate Conductor and Musical Adviser of Lions Youth Band.

Michael has directed around 45 recordings in addition to directing broadcasts for BBC Radio 2 and 3. He has given many premiere performances and has conducted concerto appearances of eminent soloists. His relationship with Foden's Band has produced high quality concerts and recordings that have been met with critical acclaim alongside achieving major championship success.

CONCORD BRASS BAND

Concord Brass Band is comprised of talented amateur musicians, conservatory students, and professionals, taking pride in nurturing many young musicians as part of its commitment to developing the future of Denmark's cultural and musical life. The name '*Concord*' is derived from the Latin *Concordia*, meaning cooperation and joy, and these two qualities strongly reflect the band's spirit.

A woman with glasses and a ponytail is playing a drum. She is wearing a black sleeveless top and a heart-shaped earring. The background is a blurred cityscape.

RNCM

SUN 8 FEB 2026 | FROM 10AM

RNCM Day of Percussion

With special guests Emmanuel Séjourné, Sanju Sahai,
Paul Clarvis, BackBeat Percussion Quartet,
and Kai Strobel.



Book Online

rncm.ac.uk/whats-on

Band and Conductor Biographies

Concord Brass Band enjoys a strong and inclusive community that spans gender, age, and cultural and social backgrounds. This sense of unity is especially significant in competitive settings, not least at the Danish Brass Band Championship, which Concord Brass Band has won seven out of nine possible times over the past ten years.

Alongside competition success, the band plays an active role in shaping Danish musical life, presenting diverse concert programmes that include pop music, classical music, and original brass band works throughout the year.

The band looks forward to participating in the RNCM International Brass Band Festival and regards the opportunity to perform alongside some of the world's finest brass bands as a major highlight. The band is led by Stig Mærsk, a highly respected conductor within the English brass band community.

STIG MÆRSK *conductor*

Stig Mærsk is a prominent Danish brass band conductor and is also known for leading several top UK bands, including East Yorkshire Motor Services (EYMS) Band and Vernon Building Society (Poynton) Band. Under his direction, bands have secured high placements in major championships such as the British Nationals, and his return to Denmark sees him lead Danish National Champions, Concord Brass Band.

TREDEGAR TOWN BAND

Renowned for its 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.

The band's award-winning recorded releases have been complemented by a stellar series of performances, which include the world premiere of a brass band realisation of the renaissance masterpiece *Spem in alium* and concerts with musician Tim Minchin as part of the Old Vic Theatre's 200th Anniversary, plus appearances 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 record and release the brass music of Ralph Vaughan Williams as part of the RVW 150th celebrations. In August 2023, Tredegar performed at the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in a major collaboration with the National Orchestra of Wales and in its own Late Night Promenade appearance.

Band and Conductor Biographies

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.

JRNCM 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 at 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 orchestral trained musicians (including

French horns and trumpets) with gusto and created a band with a vibrant sound and an eclectic taste.

In September 2023, the band was taken on by Mark Bousie (euphonium, Foden's Band) who continues to challenge its musicians with a range of new and traditional repertoire, encouraging young composers from within the band and sourcing music from a diverse selection of composers. To find out more about Junior RNCM and to book a place at the next Open Day (Saturday 7 February 2026) please contact Millie Whittle, JRNCM Administrator, on **0161 907 5264** or **juniors@rncm.ac.uk**.

MARK BOUSIE

conductor

Mark has held Principal Euphonium seats with a number of leading brass bands, including Sellers International and Fairey. He has been a member of the euphonium section of the Foden's Band since 2009.

During his time with the band, Mark has won the 'Double' of the British Open Brass Band Championship and National Brass Band Championship in 2012 and the National Championships again in 2018, 2021 and 2022.

Mark is also well known as a successful conductor, particularly of youth and lower section brass bands. He won the 2009 National Youth Brass Championship with the Sellers International Youth Band; in 2012, Mark was honoured to be awarded the prestigious Mortimer Medal by the Worshipful Company of Musicians in recognition of services for the teaching of young people in the brass band movement.



Band and Conductor Biographies

BLACK DYKE BAND

Black Dyke Band is the most recorded band in the world with over 350 recordings. Growing every year, in October 2020, the band's recording of music by John Rutter became 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 13 times, most recently in 2015, the British Open no fewer than 30 times (most recently 2014) and the National Championships of Great Britain 24 times (most recently 2023). 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 has secured an unprecedented hat trick of wins at the Yorkshire regional championships in 2016, 17 and 18, which the group followed up with further wins in 2020, 22, 23, 24 and 2025 creating history again being the first band to ever win the championship in five consecutive years (there was no contest in 2021 due to Covid-19).

PROFESSOR 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 famous Black Dyke Band has been marked with continued contest success, claiming both British Open and National 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 4barsrest and Brass Band World (magazine). Further acclaim has come for his many innovative concerts and world premieres featuring a variety of soloists and musical combinations. 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.

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, under the direction of Dr David Thornton, boasts a teaching staff that includes Roger Webster, Richard Marshall, Owen Farr, Carol Jarvis, Steven Mead, Michael Cavanagh, and Les Nish.

Band and Conductor Biographies

In 2014, the College appointed Professor James Gourlay and Professor 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, Brighouse & Rastrick, Carlton Main Frickley Colliery, Hammonds, Leyland, and Fairey bands in its ranks, as well as international representation from countries including Germany, New Zealand, Japan, China, Hong Kong and the US.

KATRINA MARZELLA-WHEELER

conductor

Katrina Marzella-Wheeler is well-established in the brass music world as an instrumentalist, conductor, and teacher. As an instrumentalist, Katrina was the solo baritone horn player of the world-famous Black Dyke Band from 2011 to 2020. She won the inaugural BBC Radio 2 Young Brass Soloist of the Year in 2004, as well as the British Open Solo Championships in 2006 and 2007, and the Ern Keller International Soloist Award in 2007 and 2008. She was runner-up at the 5th European Soloist Competition in Linz in 2010 and was awarded the 'Best Soloist' award at the 2014 European Brass Band Championships in Perth.

Katrina is passionate about new music and has premiered over 25 new solo works for her instrument with piano, brass bands, wind bands, and orchestra.

Katrina was integral to the development of the Yamaha Neo baritone horn and performs exclusively as a Yamaha Artist on the instrument she helped design.

As a conductor, she aims to bring vitality to the brass music sector with her programming, collaborations and creative productions, and has a commitment to increasing diversity on the conductor's podium in brass and wind bands. In recognition for her work in this area, she was one of four nominees shortlisted for the 2025 RPS Inspiration Award. She is currently the Principal Conductor of the Glasgow-based Cooperation Band.

CHRIS BINNS

conductor

Chris hails from Rochdale, Lancashire, and began his musical journey on the cornet at the age of eight before moving to trombone a year later. Under the guidance of Richard Brown, he progressed rapidly and became solo trombone of Milnrow Band at just 13. At 16, Chris joined the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, becoming the third generation of his family to do so and later attaining the Principal Trombone seat previously held by his father.

In 2013, Chris began four highly successful years at the Royal Northern College of Music, where he was a finalist in the RNCM Concerto Competition, served as Principal Trombone of the RNCM Symphony Orchestra, and won the ITF Emory Remington Trombone Ensemble Prize with the RNCM Trombone Octet. During this time, he also held the position of Principal Trombone with Black Dyke Band, winning the European Brass Band Championship in 2015 and touring New York and Japan.

Band and Conductor Biographies

Chris graduated with First Class Honours in 2017 and joined Grimethorpe Colliery Band as Principal Trombone in 2018, winning the Stanley Wainwright Memorial Trophy at the British Open Championship in 2022. In 2024, he was appointed Musical Director of Milnrow Band.

RNCM YOUNG LOW BRASS AND YOUNG TROMBONES

RNCM Young Projects (ages 8-18) is an exciting opportunity for young players of school age to develop creative, musical, and technical skills. For more information on how to get involved, please contact youngprojects@rncm.ac.uk, or visit rncm.ac.uk/engage/young-projects.

YORKSHIRE YOUTH BAND

Founded in 2006 by Director of Music, Professor Nicholas Childs, the Yorkshire Youth Brass Band (YYBB) was established as the academy of the world-famous Black Dyke band to inspire young musicians aged 11 to 21 to play high quality brass music.

The YYBB offers young people who have already achieved a Grade 4 standard the opportunity to develop their musical ability and play together in one of the country's best youth bands. There are many bands that include youth sections, but few are able to offer the leadership, musical tutoring, and mentoring that Black Dyke members can give to the YYBB.

Each year, YYBB holds between five and six workshop weekends, including full band rehearsals, sectionals, and masterclasses led by Richard Marshall

and music staff from the Black Dyke Band. Courses are held at Saddleworth School in Uppermill, and the band is supported in everything it does by the sponsorship of Oldroyd Musical Instruments.

Many of the group's members have advanced to music colleges, including the Royal Northern College of Music and Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

RICHARD MARSHALL

conductor

Quoted at the Black Dyke Arts Festival, the internationally acclaimed maestro Elgar Howarth described Richard as '*the most outstanding cornet player this country has ever produced*'.

Previously Principal Cornet with the Grimethorpe Colliery Band for ten years, Richard recently retired from his position as Principal Cornet with the world famous Black Dyke Band, a position he has been the custodian of for the past twenty years.

Richard has released six solo recordings, the most recent, *Sonatina*, being awarded BBW Solo CD of the Year 2020. As a performer, Richard has travelled throughout the world performing in many iconic concert venues such as Sydney Opera House and New York's Carnegie Hall.

He is a cornet tutor at the Royal Northern College of Music and Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

Richard plays exclusively on the Oldroyd Evo Cornet and the RM1A Signature Alliance Mouthpiece.

Band and Conductor Biographies

CORY BAND

Cory Band hail from the Rhondda Valley in South Wales. They have been 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 in 2019.

The band has a long and illustrious history. Formed in 1884, it originally bore the name Ton Temperance until 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 and won another four European titles (2013, 2016, 2019, 2022), four Nationals (2013, 2015, 2016, 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 and the US in 2016 and 2019.

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, repeated in 2019: the European, the British Open, the Nationals and Brass in Concert, all won in a single calendar year. Philip won the coveted 4barsrest.com

Conductor of the Year Award in 2013, 2015, 2016, 2019 and 2020.

In recent years, he has been a guest conductor of the Manger Musikklag Band in Norway, the National Youth Brass Bands of Great Britain, Switzerland, Wales and The Netherlands, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra Symphonic Brass, amongst many others. In 2021, he was awarded the Iles Medal by the Worshipful Company of Musicians for his services to brass bands, and in 2023 was appointed an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

Philip is also a prolific composer, and his original works and arrangements are played all over the world. Philip was the Editor of Brass Band World magazine between 2009 and 2015 and, since 2005, has been the Music Editor of the historic Wright and Round publishing company.

BRIGHOUSE & RASTRICK BRASS BAND

The Brighouse & Rastrick Brass 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 faced each other across the River Calder, in West Yorkshire. Today, it continues to be supported through public subscriptions and its own fundraising efforts.

Brighouse & Rastrick caught the ears and imagination of the British public with its recording of *The Floral Dance*, which held the number two position in the British singles chart for nine weeks. Even though it was held off the top spot by *Wings*, the song still achieved sales of over a million, earning both Gold and Silver discs. *The Floral Dance* has now

Band and Conductor Biographies

become a permanent feature of the band's programmes, as an encore.

Over recent years, the band has been engaged in a number of very successful music collaborations outside the brass band tradition, including with Rick Astley, BBC Radio 2 Folk Award winners The Unthanks, and classical actor Simon Callow. Brighouse & Rastrick Band is the 2025 British Open Champions and has been crowned National Champions of Great Britain 10 times.

DR DAVID THORNTON

conductor

Dr David Thornton is one of the most distinguished figures in the international brass band world, celebrated as a conductor, soloist, educator, and advocate for the art form. He began his musical journey on the euphonium at the age of eight and studied at both Chetham's School of Music and the Royal Northern College of Music. His career as a professional solo euphonium player has seen him hold principal positions with some of the UK's foremost bands, including the Fairey Band, Black Dyke Band, and Brighouse & Rastrick Band.

As a conductor, David has held leadership roles with major ensembles such as the Brighouse & Rastrick Band (including a second term from 2025), Grimethorpe Colliery Band, and the GUS Band.

An acclaimed recording artist, he has released several solo albums and contributed to high-profile projects across the brass repertoire. David is also Director of Brass Band Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music, Joint

Head of Wind, Brass and Percussion at Chetham's School of Music, and Artistic Director of the RNCM International Brass Band Festival, where he continues to inspire the next generation of performers and audiences worldwide.



BESSON
LONDON



BRASS BAND SPECIALISTS



Cornet
Tenor horn
Euphonium
Tuba
Baritone

besson.com

#WeAreBesson

BUFFET CRAMPON
buffetcrampongroupp.com

Contact Us

Box.office@rncm.ac.uk | 0161 907 5555

Phone lines open Mondays and Thursdays
between 2pm and 5pm

rncm.ac.uk

124 Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9RD

  **@rncmlive**  **Manchester, UK**

Registered charity numbers

RNCM Awards Fund 504948 | RNCM Endowment Fund 504949

Artists and programmes are correct at the time of going to press and we reserve the right to change artists and/or programmes without notice if necessary.

This booklet has been printed on Eco FSC-Certified paper.