

# NEWS OF THE FIELD

*Since the start of this column, we have benefited from a positive response from our members and hope that you will continue to send word of importance to us. Information for publication in future issues of the HBS Newsletter or Journal should be sent to: John C. Thomas, News Editor, Historic Brass Society, 884 Riverside Dr., Apt. 5A, New York, N.Y. 10032.*

## Classic and Romantic music for trumpet

Just released (November, 1989) is a recording that features some "firsts" for trumpeter Edward Tarr. Entitled "Classical-Romantic Trumpet Concertos," this features Tarr's first recording of the Haydn concerto and a first recording of the *Versione Seconda* of the Hummel concerto "with some exciting new information about that piece," says Tarr. Also featured will be the recording premiere with a Romantic trumpet (F. Besson, c. 1865) of two early 19th-century works by Conradin Kreutzer (c. 1830) and Augustin Millares (c. 1848). Tarr reports that it took him a year and a half to play the Romantic trumpet (pitched in low D and E-flat) properly. The recording (CD 74557) comes from West Germany's Christophorus label.

## Recreation of 'The Judgment of Paris' in London

In 1701, four composers were invited to compose music to Congreve's "The Judgment of Paris." This summer, on Aug. 13 at the Promenade Concert series at the Royal Albert Hall in London, four natural trumpeters played a prominent part in the recreation of the famous competition. Crispian Steele-Perkins, performing on a David Edwards copy of the Simon Beale 1667 trumpet, was joined by Jonathan Impett, David Blackadder and Jonathan Freeman-Attwood. Music by Daniel Purcell, John Weldon and John Eccles contributed many sonatas and important trumpet parts during the 4½-hour concert. The opera submitted by Godfrey Finger was not performed. The winner in 1701, incidentally, was John Weldon.

## Invitation to HBS members

Jeremy Montagu, curator of the Bate Collection of Historical Instruments at the University of Oxford, invites members of the Historic Brass Society to visit this large and interesting collection. The Bate Collection includes many natural trumpets, cornetti, sackbuts, horns and 19th-century brass instruments. Appointments should be made: University of Oxford, Faculty of Music, St. Aldate's, Oxford, OX1 1DB, England.

## Trumpet and slide trumpet publication notes

Recently, several prominent music journals have published articles on the slide trumpet. The *Galpin Society Journal* (XLII, August, 1989) contains several interesting articles on slide trumpet and trumpet topics by Andrew Pinnock, Crispian Steele-Perkins, David Rycroft and Peter Barton. *Early Music* (Vol. XVII No. 3, Au-

gust, 1989) has three articles on the slide trumpet, by Herbert Myers, Keith Polk and Ross Duffin.

### Christopher Monk and the 'flat trumpet'

Some of the best reasons for playing the Baroque trumpet, writes Christopher Monk, are to be found in the parts Purcell and Handel wrote for it. These differ in certain respects from the characteristic writing of J.S. Bach or the Bologna School, for example. The differences owe something to the players like John Shore and Valentine Snow for whom they were written. They owe something, too, to the instruments made for those players and their colleagues by William Bull and John Harris, among others.

Trumpets by those makers were highly regarded. When James Talbot, professor of Hebrew at Cambridge University and a keen amateur organologist, compiled detailed notes between 1685 and 1701 on the best instruments of his day, it was John Shore who provided much information and lent his trumpets and other instruments for careful measurement. Among those was a "Flat Trumpet." The main feature of this is a slide mechanism capable of effectively filling gaps in the natural harmonic series and correcting intonation of certain out-of-tune partials.

Intriguing mentions of the flat trumpet have been noticed over many years. For example, the *Gentleman's Journal* in 1692 recorded: "Whilst the company is at table the hautboys and the trumpets play successively. Mr. Showers [Shore] hath taught the latter of late years to sound with all the softness imaginable; they plaid us some flat tunes made by Mr. Finger with a general applause, it being a thing formerly thought impossible upon an instrument designed for a sharp key."

Better known still is the Full Anthem "... sung at the funerall solemnity of Queen Mary, 1694, accompanied with flat Mournfull Trumpets. Composed by Mr. Henry Purcell; in honour to whose Memory the same composition was performed the year following, at his own funerall, in Westminster Abbey."

Purcell scholar Andrew Pinnock, in a 1989 *Galpin Society Journal* article, develops the flat trumpet's significance. "In my opinion," he writes, "flat trumpets were used routinely in the English orchestra of the Purcell period, for playing ordinary as well as 'flat' (minor key) trumpet parts." He argues a convincing case that use of flat trumpets explains the shifts from D to C major and vice versa in all four of Purcell's dramatic operas. Don Smithers wrote of those operas: "No other Baroque works observed, either sacred, secular or purely instrumental, ever change the pitch of the trumpets from that of their first appearance." It also can explain prominent non-harmonic notes occasionally found in English trumpet parts.

One of the most important conclusions, however, is that English and Continental lip techniques at this time were likely to have differed. If English players of the Purcell period used a slide to correct poor intonation while trumpeters in other countries lipped to the best of their ability, then trumpet tone in England may well have been distinctive. Differences in construction between English and Continental trumpets are quite noticeable as well.

This is not just theoretical. John Shore's flat trumpet was more than likely made by William Bull, as his sharp (common) trumpet and horn certainly were. Edward Kirby and Christopher Monk a few years ago made a close examination

and took careful measurements of two surviving common trumpets by William Bull. Edward Kirby made an accurate mandrel for the bell of the better-playing one, in the Museum of London. He also built for Christopher Monk a number of copies of this instrument. Now, Frank Tomes has joined in, with guidance and ideas from Andrew Pinnock. Using the Bull mandrel and following the detailed description in Talbot's manuscript, he has made some flat trumpets. These have already proved successful in the hands of two renowned English trumpeters, Michael Laird and Crispian Steele-Perkins, both of whom suggested practical modifications.

Tomes' flat trumpet is based on a common trumpet by William Bull standing as normal in D (E-flat low pitch). It is provided with a set of tuning bits and a crook in C. This means it can be used in D 440, 430 and 415 and in C 440, 430 and 415. It has a slide of exactly the sort Talbot describes: a double or U-shaped slide with arms of unequal length pulled out backwards past the player's left ear. The idea comes from the tuning system found on Bull trumpets and was of course re-invented and improved by Thomas Harper in the 19th century. Pinnock believes the slide was ordinarily positioned partially extended, allowing a shift up as well as down. The Harper Improved only flattens. When the slide is used, a bent mouthpipe is needed for the slide to clear the player's face. A straight mouthpipe is also provided so that it can also be used as a common trumpet. A throwaway remark by Roger North in 1710 suggests a means of regulating the movement of the slide with a *turne screw* (wing nut). This is provided as a useful adjunct. The bell is hand-beaten, and only spun for finishing. The bell is finished with an ornamental garland. A large ball holds the mouthpipe and bell yards in place.

Tomes is also making copies of the Bull common (sharp) trumpet, closely following the one in the Museum of London. This, too, stands in D (E flat low pitch). Unlike the flat trumpet, the bell taper continues further towards the bell bow since there is no slide to accommodate. Like all Bull trumpets, it has a triple ball that holds the mouthpipe and bell yards loosely in place. The yards have long and short garnishes arranged as on the original. Only the short garnishes are soldered. The long garnishes are push-fits, to allow premeditated (as opposed to instant) tuning. It has a set of tuning bits and a crook in C so that it, too, can be used in D and C at 440, 430 and 415.

Tomes is now taking orders for flat and common trumpets. They can be ordered direct from him, at 25 Church Path, Merton Park, London SW19, or from Christopher Monk, Stock Farm House, Churt, Farnham, Surrey GU10 2LS, England. He anticipates 6 months delivery and a price of £400 for the common trumpet and £600 for the flat trumpet.

*Submitted by Christopher Monk*

## Music of Francis Johnson recorded

The Chestnut Brass Company recently completed work on a five-year project to record the music of Francis Johnson and his contemporaries. Johnson (1792-1844) was a renowned black American composer, keyed-bugle virtuoso and bandmaster whose career centered in Philadelphia. He composed more than 300 pieces of music, led his famed band on tour throughout the United States and was the first American to take an ensemble on tour to Europe. His success abroad

could qualify him as America's first internationally recognized musician.

Johnson was also the focal point of a school of African-American Philadelphia composers, all of whom were associated with writing for wind band. While none of their full scores survive, the Chestnut Brass Company reconstructed more than 30 scores from instrumental indications in piano reductions of their music, written accounts, programs, lithographs and surviving scores of other bands of the era.

A 22-piece period instrument band of winds, brass, percussion and a violin soloist was assembled to perform and record this material. Brass players included Bruce Barrie, Terry Everson and Ralph Dudgeon, keyed bugles; John Thiessen and Ralph Buck, natural trumpets and corneopans; Nancy Dowlin, valved trumpet; Marian Hesse and Douglas Lundeen, hand horns; William Stanley, Scott Van Patter and Phillip McClelland, trombones; David Vining, trombone and ophicleide, and Jay Krush, ophicleide and serpent.

The recording will be released on CD and cassette by the Musical Heritage Society in 1990. In January, 1990, the Chestnut Brass Company and Friends are scheduled to record a second CD of 19th-century brass band music, featuring both keyed and valved instruments, for Newport Classics, distributed by MCA. Contact the Chestnut Brass Company, P.O. Box 30165, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103.

—Submitted by Bruce Barrie

### Fifth Early Brass Festival at Amherst

For America's historical brass enthusiasts, the Early Brass Festival has become a late-summer tradition. The fifth annual renewal of this unique event drew 42 participants to Amherst, Mass., for the weekend of Aug. 4-6. The surroundings have become pleasantly familiar: the picturesque New England village, the Amherst College campus and the rambling Georgian architecture of Garman House overlooking the town common. The faces were also familiar, for while a few fresh recruits appeared, most of those in attendance were veterans of at least one previous festival. Ben Peck, one of the festival's founders, served again as co-director, sharing this post with Phil Benson.

EBF 5 boasted a few new features as well. Playing sessions were handled more informally this year, and the result was a more flexible playing environment for everyone. More importantly, 1989 marked EBF's first year under the auspices of the newly formed Historic Brass Society. On Saturday afternoon, HBS President Jeff Nussbaum led the first official membership meeting of the Society. Appropriately, the Society now sponsors the event that gave it birth.

Papers and presentations formed the core of the Festival's activities. As always, these were designed to serve practical as well as scholarly interests. On Saturday morning, Rick Seraphinoff led off with a maker's perspective on historical horn mouthpieces, followed in the afternoon by Doug Kirk's intriguing discussion of cornett pitch in Italy—the "second chapter" of a report he presented at EBF 3 in 1987. Ben Peck and Keith Polk's presentation on the early history of the trombone and its use in ensembles—copiously illustrated with slides of Renaissance art works—concluded Saturday's activities.

On Sunday morning, Keith Polk spoke on the Schubingers, an important family of brass players who held posts in Germany and Italy in the late 15th and early

16th centuries. Polk's presentation was illustrated by a fine concert from the Hampshire Consort, faculty early music ensemble of the University of New Hampshire. This versatile group is primarily a cornett and sackbut band, but its members play other wind and percussion instruments as well.

On Sunday afternoon, Ron Borrer offered a presentation on solo trombone literature from 17th-century Italy, complete with performances of works by Frescobaldi and Cesare. The Festival Concert, held later the same afternoon, opened with two fanfares for six Baroque trumpets and timpani, and two short pieces for hand horn played from the balcony by Rick Seraphinoff and Viola Roth. Once inside, the concert featured several ensemble works, plus solo sonatas performed by Fred Holmgren (Baroque trumpet), Ben Peck (alto sackbut), Ron Borrer (tenor sackbut) and John Thomas (cornett). The final number on the concert was a five-part composition by Zielenski, impressively performed by 16 sackbuts. The concert served both as a concluding event for EBF 5 and an introductory event for the ninth annual Amherst Early Music Festival/Institute which began Aug. 6.

We anticipate an even bigger and better Festival in 1990, so plan now to join us in Amherst next August for the Sixth Early Brass Festival.

—Submitted by Stewart Carter

### Saxhorn query

Alexander Pollock of the Dodworth Saxhorn Reserve Band in Detroit is interested in information about the history and proper use of the Saxhorn in ensemble. Specifically, what type of audience the music was played for, who the makers were, what the dress of the time was, and proper selection of music played by Saxhorn bands of the 1850s-1860s. Anyone who has information or wishes to pool resources can contact Pollock at 16179 Bentler Ave., Detroit, Mich. 48219.

### Natural trumpet in the United States: info sought

Ernest Gross is researching and writing a doctoral document titled *The Natural Trumpet in the U.S. until 1825: Its religious, civil and military use and significance in Society*. Focus of the study will be trumpeters in the Moravian church in Boston, Philadelphia and Williamsburg. Any information about activity in the eastern portion of the United States during this period will be welcomed with interest. He is particularly interested in any specific information about activities of individual trumpeters, their livelihoods, performances, military service, instruments, public or religious ceremonial music, diaries, wills, court documents, military manuals, newspaper articles or concert programs. Contact Ernest Gross, Hargrave Military Academy, Military Drive, Chatham, Va. 24531.