

## THE BRASS BAND TRADITION IN FINLAND

Kauko Karjalainen

### Introduction

The oldest continuously functioning Finnish amateur bands are now 125 years old. All were originally brass bands. To be more precise, all have their roots in the brass septet, a specific and typical ensemble in Finland since the 1870s. One can say that the period encompassing the end of nineteenth century and the first decade of twentieth was the golden age of Finnish brass bands.

In order to understand the development of the relatively young band tradition in Finland it is necessary to examine Finland's history, first as a dependency of her neighboring countries and later as an independent nation. Important phases can be clearly identified, primarily by following the models established for military bands.

Parts of Finland belonged to the kingdom of Sweden as early the thirteenth century. Historical documents reveal that Finland and especially the town of Turku (Åbo in Swedish) experienced their initial contacts with Renaissance music when Gustaf Wasa was King of Sweden (1523-1560). He maintained a royal corps of trumpeters, who accompanied him when he visited Finland.

Gustaf Wasa began to establish a national army, and the first military trumpeters are documented in the 1540s. It is known that there were some trumpeters in the Finnish cavalry at least by the 1550s. In addition, the King mentioned in a letter in autumn 1555 that there were all kinds of large and small wind instruments in Finland.<sup>1</sup>

Gustaf Wasa's favorite son, John, was named Duke of Finland in 1556. He maintained his own musical establishment, though it was smaller than his father's. Alto, tenor, and bass trombones were played in Turku around 1562.<sup>2</sup> Trombones were also among the instruments of the Cathedral school (*Collegium gymnasium*) that was established in Turku in 1630.<sup>3</sup>

During the Thirty Years War (1618-48) the trumpeters of the Finnish cavalry became famous in Germany. King Gustaf II Adolf reorganized the military troops and their music. By the end of the seventeenth century there were oboes, bassoons, flutes, trombones, trumpets, and horns in Finnish regiments.<sup>4</sup>

Developments in all Nordic countries followed similar paths during the second half of the eighteenth century. A typical military band consisted at that time of timpani, two horns, three to five oboes, and one to two bassoons.<sup>5</sup> *Harmoniemusik* ensembles were introduced into Finnish military bands in the 1780s. The bands grew in size and they often hired conductors from Germany. During King Gustaf III's wars (1788-90), many professional Swedish bands came to Finland.

Military bands were further developed by King Gustaf IV Adolf. In 1806, after coming to the conclusion that the royal opera and orchestra in Stockholm were too expensive, he resolved to abolish them and retain only the military bands (*Harmoniemusik*).<sup>6</sup> This

development was cut short in 1808 by the war against Russia (the so-called “Finnish War,” 1808-09), which resulted in Finland being wrested from Swedish control and annexed by Russia. The basis for a new development was laid in Porvoo (Borgå in Swedish) in 1809, when the Finnish army was disbanded and Russian bands were substituted for Finnish ones.

### Under the double eagle:

#### Finnish military brass bands of the nineteenth century

The Finnish military bands were reorganized in 1812. They were very small at first, with approximately eight men in each band. When Czar Alexander I heard the Finnish military bands in 1819 during a parade in Parola, he was dissatisfied: the soldiers could not march and the bands were not able to play the Russian parade marches correctly. The small bands were simply not loud enough. The band of the Heinola batallion in Middle Finland, for example, had the following instruments in 1820: two flutes, *clarinetto piccolo*, one clarinet, two bassoons, two horns, two *clarini*, two *corni di poste*, trombone, and military drum. It is therefore easy to understand why Alexander I accepted a proposal to enlarge the military bands.<sup>7</sup>

The Guards’ Band, established in 1819 at Luolaja, Hämeenlinna (Middle Finland), holds a special position in the development of Finnish military bands. On Christmas Eve, 1824, the ensemble moved to Helsinki. When from time to time other military bands were disbanded, the Guards’ Band continued as the czar’s favorite band. Its first conductor (1819-1853) was Jozsef Thaddeus Tvarshansky, a Bohemian by birth. The Guards’ Band assisted in the first performance of the national anthem of Finland, *Maamme (Vårt land)*, in Helsinki on 13 May 1848. That the composer, Friedrich Pacius, was German by birth is characteristic of that time. In addition to the Finnish Guards’ Band there were two Marine Bands in Helsinki, the first active from 1830-1863; the second, 1854-1856. These were brass bands established after the Russian model.<sup>8</sup>

When Ernst Wilhelm Floessel (b. 1819 in Silesia) came to Finland and took the baton of the Guards’ Band in 1853, he brought with him compositions and arrangements for brass band. His scores reveal altogether forty different combinations of brass instruments, ranging from fifteen to twenty-one parts.<sup>9</sup> In 1861, while Floessel was still conductor, the instrumentation of the Finnish Guard’s Band was forced to conform the statute of Czar Alexander II. It was as follows:

Hans Kejslerliga Majestäts Nädiga kungörelse, angående Stat för Lifgardets Finska Skarpskyttebataljonen

#### 3. Musikaliska instrumenter

#### Musical instruments

C kornetter	3	cornets in C
B Dito	2	cornets in B $\flat$
G Dito	2	cornets in G

F Dito	3	cornets in F
C Obligater	2	obbligato horns in C
C Tenor	1	tenor horn in C
B Dito	1	tenor horn in B $\flat$
Es Trumpeter	2	trumpets in E $\flat$
G Waldthorn	2	French horns in G
F Dito	2	French horns in F
Es Dito	2	French horns in E $\flat$
C Dito	2	French horns in C
C Basshorn	2	basses in C (tubas)
Es Baser	2	basses in E $\flat$ (tubas)
C Baser	2	basses in C (tubas)
B Dito	2	basses in B $\flat$ (tubas)
F Bas (Contra)	1	double bass in F (tuba). <sup>10</sup>

Floessel's successor as conductor of the Guards' Band in 1874 was Adolf Fredrik Leander, the first Finnish-born musician to serve in this position. In 1880, during Leander's tenure as conductor, the czar issued a new statute, requiring the following instrumentation:

#### Soitto-Kalut

#### Musical instruments

Kornetteja Ess'issä	kpl	3	cornets in E $\flat$
Sam. B'ssä 1:mo		3	1st cornets in B $\flat$
Sam. B'ssä 2:do		2	2nd cornets in B $\flat$
Althornia Ess'issä 1:mo		2	1st alto horns in E $\flat$
Sam. Ess'issä 2:do		2	2nd alto horns in E $\flat$
Tenorihornia C'ssä		2	tenor horns in C
Sam. B'ssä		2	tenor horns in B $\flat$
Sam. Ass'issa		1	tenor horn in A $\flat$
Trumpeteja Ess'issä 1:mo		2	1st trumpets in E $\flat$
Sam. Ess'issä 2:do		1	2nd trumpet in E $\flat$
Walthornia F'ssä 1:mo		2	1st French horns in F
Sam. F'ssä 2:do		2	2nd French horns in F
Sam. Ess'issä 3:tio		2	3rd French horns in E $\flat$
Euphonium B'ssä		2	euphoniums in B $\flat$
Paasihornia Ess'issä		2	bass horns in E $\flat$
Sam. C'ssä		2	bass horns in C
Sam. B'ssä		1	bass horn in B $\flat$
Helikoni B'ssä		1	helicon in B $\flat$ . <sup>11</sup>

Leander developed the Guards' Band according to these orders, but he had a particular fondness for the so-called *Jäger* sound, typical in Germany and developed there by Wil-

helm Wieprecht. Czar Alexander III (reigned 1881-94) liked a pure brass sound, and the Guards' Band under the baton of Leander was his favorite. Thus, it is no wonder that the mellow brass sound had come to stay in Finland.

As early as 1871 the Finnish army was allowed to import wind instruments from foreign countries duty-free. Leander ordered cornets from Courtois and other horns from Ed. Kruspe, all of best quality, and distributed them in Finland. He did not like Zimmermann's horns because they were rather heavy. Not until 1900, after Leander's death, did the Finnish music company Fazer obtain the right to be the sales agent for Kruspe in Finland.

1885 saw the first class for horn at the Helsinki Music Institute (established 1882; later known as the Sibelius Academy). That same year, a special class for brass instruments was established, whose first teacher, serving until his death in 1899, was Adolf Leander. Many young military musicians who wished to become band conductors studied under Leander.

Since Adolf Leander was in many ways very influential in Finnish musical life, it will be useful to examine his career. The date commonly given for Leander's birth is 7 December 1832, but there is some disagreement in the sources. Some cite Heinola as Leander's birthplace, while others mention Helsinki.<sup>12</sup>

Leander became a military musician. His father, Adolf Wilhelm Leander, served as bandsman in the Hämeenlinna Battalion in 1825-29 and as musician in the Finnish Guards in Helsinki from 1830. Adolf Fredrik Leander, the son, attended the private school of the Guards' parish and studied violin with Carl Gustaf Wasenius. He was apprenticed to a horn player in the Guards' Band as of 15 January 1847, and was promoted to sergeant-major in 1856. The abilities of young Leander had been noticed and he was asked to take the post of conductor in a Russian regimental band, but he preferred to stay in the Guards' Band in Helsinki. This meant that he had to concern himself with the battalion's practice and work within the tradition of the brass band.

Adolf Leander has been described as a man who swore an oath of allegiance to four czars. Alexander III especially appreciated Leander and his band. Since the czar was himself a keen brass enthusiast, he gave all possible support to Leander. It was Leander's duty to entertain the czar and the czarina when they visited Finland, and at times also in St. Petersburg. Karl Flodin was quite right when in 1900, soon after Leander's death, he called him the "father of Finnish brass playing."

Leander's arrangements for brass band total around six hundred. It has been reported that Edvard Grieg allowed only Leander to arrange his compositions for wind bands. Leander also composed some fifty original works, and he participated in the creation of signals for the Finnish Hunting Society. In 1881 he was appointed director of the army signals school. Leander was not only a bandsman; he had also studied violin, as did most of the military musicians at that time. His accomplishments on the violin were such that he was able to teach Robert Kajanus, who later founded the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra. Leander's principal instrument was the French horn, and he played both horn and violin in Helsinki's orchestras. He was also one of the members of the French horn group when the first Finnish opera, *Kung Carls Jakt* ("King Carl's Hunt"), received its premiere performance in Helsinki in 1852.

Leander died in Helsinki on 13 July 1899 at the age of sixty-six years, six months, and twenty-six days, according to the parish register.<sup>13</sup>

### **The birth of the national specialty: the Finnish brass septet**

The traditional Finnish brass septet consists of the following instruments: 1 cornet in E $\flat$ , two cornets in B $\flat$ , one alto horn in E $\flat$ , one tenor horn in B $\flat$ , one baritone horn (euphonium) in B $\flat$ , one tuba in E $\flat$  (or B $\flat$ ), and percussion *ad libitum*. Thus, it features the softer sound of conical-bore instruments. The performance set-up has varied over the years, and there are no sources documenting early practices. A fairly common arrangement finds the baritone player sitting in the middle of the group with the E $\flat$  instruments on one side and the B $\flat$  instruments on the other side.

There is no evidence that real brass septets existed before 1870. Quartets, quintets, and sextets were fairly common already in the 1850s and '60s in amateur circles. Adolf Leander's elementary book (*Torvisoitannon oppikirja* [Helsinki, 1885]) still includes arrangements for these smaller ensembles. In the 1870s, there are references in newspapers to "double quartets." In many cases the combinations are, however, quite obscure. Historical studies refer only to "bands."

Since the septets consist of horns in E $\flat$  and in B $\flat$  they can be compared to similar groupings used in the American Civil War, even though American groups primarily used saxhorns. By 1845 even the youngest of the septet horns, the euphonium/baritone, was in existence. From the 1850s onward it was possible to buy horns not only from Germany but also from Sweden, where the Ahlberg & Ohlsson company had developed a special model known as the Swedish cornet. The brass sextet that was popular in Sweden and Norway may be the early model for the Finnish septet. The Swedish sextet consists of piccolo cornet in E $\flat$ , cornet in B $\flat$ , alto horn in E $\flat$ , tenor horn in B $\flat$ , tenor (valved) trombone in B $\flat$ , and tuba in C.

Johan Willgren, a well-known figure in the Finnish septet tradition who served as a bandman in the Guards' Band in 1879-1900, regarded Adolf Leander as the founder of the Finnish brass septet. According to Willgren, Leander added the second cornet in B $\flat$  to the Swedish sextet.<sup>14</sup> Another well-known military musician and active writer, Lenni Linnala, stated that the real father of the Finnish brass septet was Leander's assistant, Antti Ahonen.<sup>15</sup>

At the end of nineteenth century, Porvoo (Borgå in Swedish) was one of Finland's small, idyllic seaside towns. Since the abolition of the batallions in 1868 caused a setback in its musical life, the town decided to establish its own band. No precise information on this band is available. We know only that its first performance was at Christmas, 1868, and that the conductor was the fairly well-known composer Gabriel Linsén. In Kuopio as well, the town hired eight unemployed military musicians, who also played stringed instruments.<sup>16</sup>

The brass band of the Tervakoski paper factory, established in Janakkala village in 1872, has long been regarded as the oldest Finnish amateur band. Mr. Humble, director of the factory, purchased instruments for the workers and hired a former military musician named Hänninen to teach the players.<sup>17</sup>

In 1873 there were preparations in Alavus village in Ostrobothnia to establish a brass band, but this undertaking was not fully realized until 1880, and the band probably did not obtain its own instruments before 1882. The Alavus Youth Society (*Nuorisoseura*) supported the band.<sup>18</sup>

Bands were enthusiastically established in the 1870s by the voluntary fire brigades (*VPK*) in the following towns: Helsinki (1870), Turku (1872/73), Vaasa (1877), Rauma (1879), Hämeenlinna (1878), and Tampere (1879). Other bands based on the septet appeared in the 1870s in the towns of Uusikaupunki (1875), Kotka (1880), Jyväskylä (1878), and Kristiinankaupunki (1878).<sup>19</sup>

Brass instruments, their forms, pitches, origins, and subsequent development, have to date been studied very little in Finland. There is therefore very little information on the early instruments of the Finnish septet. Fortunately, there are many historical photographs in which the instruments can be seen. The Tervakoski band got its instruments, which may originally have come from Germany, from the army. Military bands distributed instruments to amateurs, as did Adolf Leander. There are also many documents that confirm that amateur septets ordered instruments directly from Sweden (Ahlberg & Ohlsson, Stockholm) and especially from Germany (Erfurt, Markneukirchen, Stuttgart).

### The repertoire of the early brass septets

In the early 1880s, Finnish newspapers closely followed the development of the septet, and even encouraged clubs and associations to establish such ensembles. The brass septet movement was linked to public education through the National Society for Education (*Kansanvalistusseura*; abbrev., *KVS*), established in 1874. Finland was called the “Land of a thousand lakes and brass septets.”

The early septet repertoire came from two main sources: military battalions’ books and publications of the *KVS*. Adolf Leander was initially responsible for most of the arrangements. After 1888 the *KVS* also started to enlarge the repertoire by arranging competitions for composers. Jean Sibelius submitted a piece entitled “Allegro” to the competition, but without result. The piece did not become known until a hundred years later, in 1987.

In his youth, Sibelius spent his summer holidays in the small idyllic town of Loviisa. Before leaving for Berlin on his first foreign study trip, Sibelius wrote some charming pieces for the Loviisa brass septet. The conductor of this septet was Christian Haupt, who had played French horn in the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra from 1882-88 under the baton of its founder, Robert Kajanus. According to Holger Fransman, Christian Haupt moved to Loviisa at the request of Sibelius.<sup>20</sup> Three pieces written by Sibelius around 1891—*Preludium*, *Andantino*, and *Menuetto*—were edited by Holger Fransman and published under the title *Petite Suite*.<sup>21</sup> Other compositions for septet by Sibelius include an Allegro (the competition piece of 1889), the Overture in F Minor (1889-90), and *Tiera* for septet and percussion (1894, 1898, or 1899).<sup>22</sup> Another work, *Ateenalaisten laulu*, op. 31/3, the battle song of Tyrtaeus, was composed in 1899 for boys’ and mens’ choir, brass septet, and percussion, but afterwards many different arrangements were made.

In the 1880s potpourris of Finnish folk music constituted a very typical genre of

septet pieces. KVS published them among its scores and the potpurri model remained in the septet repertoire. Some of the more conservative ensembles still play them today.

A fine example of the early repertoire is an arrangement by Antti Ahonen of Yradier's *La Paloma*. Ahonen was a military musician who conducted the Mänttä factory band in 1892 and 1895-1902. The arrangement is dated Mänttä, 26 March 1899. It is scored for an enlarged brass ensemble: one cornet in E $\flat$ , two cornets in B $\flat$ , two alto horns in E $\flat$ , two tenor horns in B $\flat$ , baritone (euphonium) in B $\flat$ , two basses (one in E $\flat$ , one in B $\flat$ ), and in addition two enigmatic groups of brass instruments whose names come either from old Finnish or perhaps dialect—*räikät* and *lieriöt* (see Figure 1). These two terms are not generally known in the Finnish music vocabulary.

Two instruments called *räikät*, pitched in E $\flat$ , appear in the score as nos. 8-9, under the tenor horns. While in modern Finnish there is an instrument known as *räikkä* (plural, *räikät*), it is not a brass-wind instrument, but a member of the percussion family. What is then is the *räikkä* in Ahonen's score? In old Finnish, there is a descriptive verb, *räikyä*, which refers to a loud sound. The Finnish composer Leevi Madetoja (1887-1947) used the adjective *räikkyvä* when describing the B $\flat$  trumpet in the third movement Gustav Mahler's First Symphony<sup>23</sup> (probably by way of comparison to the F trumpet at the beginning of the symphony). Extrapolating from these clues, the *räikät* in Ahonen's score might be trumpets in E $\flat$ .

The other odd group of brass instruments, the *lieriöt*, follows the *räikät*.<sup>24</sup> They are pitched in F, and it is fairly easy to determine what instruments they must be. If we look back at the instrumentation of the Guards' Band from the year 1880, we can observe that it includes French horns in F, as well as trumpets in E $\flat$ . Ahonen served in the Guards' Band at that time and naturally followed the available model, albeit applyin obscure terminology. *Lieriö* (plural, *lieriöt*), both in old and modern Finnish, means cylinder—an odd way to describe a French horn!

In the 1890s the septet repertoire continued to grow, partly as a result of the interest of commercial publishers. The most important of these were A.E. Lindgren (established ca. 1877), K.F. Wasenius (1888), R.E. Westerlund (1896), and Helsingin Uusi Musiikkikauppa (1897; called Helsingfors Nya Musikhandel in Swedish; later known as Fazer & Westerlund). The first publications of the last-named company (still later Fazer, and today part of Warner/Chappell Music) were pieces for brass septet. Much of the septet repertoire at that time was printed in Leipzig.<sup>25</sup>

### Septets and brass bands at the beginning of the twentieth century

When the Guards' Band, the last of the Finnish military bands, was desolved in 1905, there were suddenly many unemployed musicians. This situation caused a stir in the towns and villages. Old, established bands received professional conductors and players, and factories even competed for the best players. In Helsinki and Turku, large brass bands supported by private organizations were formed. In 1901, Alexei Apostol, then conductor of the Guards' Band, quit the army in protest against the dissolution of the bands. He recruited the Guards' best players to a new band known as Helsingin Torvisoittokunta (Helsinki Brass Band),



Figure 1  
Antti Ahonen, *La Paloma*.



which was established early in 1902. It consisted of about thirty players, and included clarinets as well as brasses. One of the well-known Finnish septet men, Axel Wirzenius, played cornet in this band. At the same time, a new band called Turun Torvisoittokunta/Åbo Hornorkester was formed in Turku, with Karl Fredrik Lindén as conductor. Twenty military musicians were hired immediately, even though they still were on duty. The band went on tour already in 1902. The tour lasted until 1904, and the band played in some forty towns in Germany and Scandinavia. This brass band included two separate septets. Two prominent septet men, Karl Vasama (former Wallenius) and Väinö Tuominen, were members of the Turku band.

In 1908 Johan Willgren—also a central figure in the Finnish septet tradition—traveled to Scandinavia and Germany to study wind bands. As a result of this study trip he established a band in the city of Viipuri, in Finnish territory ceded to the Soviet Union in 1945. Willgren's band, including flutes and clarinets, was a new experience for Finnish audiences who were accustomed to the cornet sound. Willgren was probably the first arranger to transcend the brass septet by adding two clarinets, extra alto and tenor horns, tuba in B $\flat$ , and percussion instruments, all *ad libitum*.

### **The contribution of Alexei Apostol to septet playing**

Alexei Apostol (b. 6 January 1866, Athens; d. 20 June 1927, Helsinki) is a legendary figure in the history of Finnish musical life in general and in the brass-playing tradition in particular. Apostol's parents had moved to Gallipoli in Bulgaria and later to Turkey, near San Stefano. They were killed in the Turkish war of 1877-78. The Finnish Guards, as part of the Russian Czars' army, participated in the war. Some Finnish soldiers took care of Alexei, who was orphaned, and he came with the Guards' batallion to Helsinki. Adolf Leander took the boy on as an apprentice in the Guards' Band. Apostol studied music theory, choral singing, French horn, and piano at the Helsinki Music Institute, eventually completing his studies in Germany and Austria. After Leander's death in 1899, Apostol became his successor both as conductor of the Guards' Band and as teacher of brass instruments at the Helsinki Music Institute (1899-1912). At the beginning of the twentieth century Apostol contributed significantly to the advancement of Finnish brass septet playing. In 1914-18, he worked for the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra as manager. In 1917 Finland became independent and the army bands were reorganized. Apostol, who had withdrawn from the army in 1901, returned to the ranks and served as chief conductor of the Finnish military bands until his death.

In addition to his activity with the Helsingin Torvisoittokunta, Apostol started a private music business in Helsinki in 1901. A. Apostol's Music Shop sold and delivered all kinds of musical instruments and sheet music. Apostol's 1910 sales catalogue, thirty pages long, offered thirty-seven volumes of septet music. This collection, known as A. Apostol's score library, was of great importance for amateur bands. It also included arrangements for ten-piece bands. Apostol also sold septet instruments bearing his own label.

There has been much discussion about the origin of these instruments. According to an article written in 1911 by Karl Hjelt in the Swedish-language music magazine *Tidning*

*för musik*,<sup>26</sup> Apostol began the manufacture of brass instruments of his own design at some point in 1906 or 1907. Hjelt describes how the instruments were prepared from raw materials under the supervision of a German master.<sup>27</sup> Heikki Moisio, trombonist in the Turku Philharmonic and a collector of brass instruments, has informed me that a German or Bohemian master named Wenzel Mirsch worked for Apostol 1908-17, establishing his own company in 1924. At some point Mirsch also worked for the R.E. Westerlund Music Co. in Helsinki.<sup>28</sup> When Fazer Music took over the Westerlund company it also took over the distribution of Apostol's horns. In his catalogue, Apostol also published endorsements by prominent septet leaders, all of whom praised the high quality and excellent intonation of his instruments.

### The golden era of brass septets in the 1910s

Apostol's successful marketing of septet horns and scores may be one reason for the "golden age" of septets in the 1910s. It is also possible that Apostol simply took advantage of a promising opportunity; septet playing was undergoing very rapid development at that time. There were other factors as well, such as the seaside resort life and its accompanying entertainments. There were many foreigners in Finnish towns—Naantali, Hanko, Loviisa, Lappeenranta, and Savonlinna. The proximity of St. Petersburg also drew residents of that city to Finland. People liked to listen to septets playing popular tunes and the dance music that was then in fashion. In the 1910s there were at least four excellent septet-based brass bands in Helsinki: Helsingin Torvisoittokunta, conducted by Apostol, as well as the bands of the postal workers, the trade union, and the fire brigade. All of them could boast players from the old Guards' Band. The golden era was also supported by Kansanvalistusseura, with its festivals and competitions.

After Sibelius, Armas Järnefelt (1869-1958) was the next prominent figure to compose music for septets. Leevi Madetoja, who is known as the composer of *Pohjalaisia*, the national opera of Finland, also wrote some fine works for septet. First he arranged his own festival march from the incidental music *Shakkipeli* ("Chess"). It was intended for performance at the Kansanvalistusseura's festival in 1911. Madetoja's other septet pieces, also published by Kansanvalistusseura, are: *Intermezzo* (1912), *Barcarola* (1929), and *Tanssilaulu* (1929). Madetoja's friend Toivo Kuula (1883-1918) composed two pieces that can also be played by an enlarged brass septet, *Vuorella* and *Soitto* (1914; also published by Kansanvalistusseura). Toivo Kuula, who was tragically shot by a compatriot in Viipuri in 1918, had established a brass septet in central Finland.

### Brass septets in the turmoil of 1917-18

Finland's battle for independence and the Civil War immediately following it brought with them very chaotic times, and little documentation of musical activity survives. For amateur bands and septets it often meant a change in the supporting organization, and of course a corresponding change in name. These changes were largely due to the Civil Guards (Suojeluskunnat), an organization established in 1917. In many cases the septets simply joined the local body of the Guards. The same happened on the other side of the

political border: workers' septets joined the Red Guards. Individual players, however, did not always pay much attention to ideological matters. Playing together was more important. It was also common for players to change sides. In Helsinki, former military musicians formed the framework of the Red Guards band, but many of them later moved to the Civil Guards' band.

During the period of the Civil Guards in Finland, 1917-44, the septets were already on the decline. Especially in the 1920s, changes in the musical culture, new media and forms of music-making such as jazz, big bands, radio, and gramophone seemed to be the final nails in the septet tradition's coffin. But research indicates that the Civil Guards preserved the tradition. With such prominent brass men as Hannes Konno, Axel Wirzenius, and Väinö Tuominen supervising the Guards' music, the septet's future was guaranteed. There is one well-known example in Finland that shows how music crossed ideological and political frontiers. Hannes Konno composed a rousing march, *Farväl mitt fosterland* ("Farewell my Fatherland") for the Civil Guards band. The march was intended as a salute to the Finnish volunteers who were trained in Germany and then came back to the war of independence. Konno's march was taken by the class-conscious workers' movement and used for a long time as a fighting song, with words added by Knut Kangas.

Legislation also played a role in preserving the septet tradition. In 1927 the Civil Guard was assimilated into the Finnish military forces. This meant that the Guards' bands performed in the same way as the military bands. Their repertoire also became similar and in a way, more traditional. Their basic repertoire consisted of national anthems, hymns, marches, and folk songs. In 1927, the Civil Guard organization had 144 brass bands, all of them based on the septet. This also furthered the sale of instruments in Finland.

### **Changes in the music culture during the 1920s and 1930s:**

#### **Decline of the brass bands**

In spite of the cultural changes that were in some ways quite radical, the septets were still needed in the 1920s and in the 1930s. The Civil Guards organization was abolished only in 1944 and in addition to Kansanvalistusseura and Svenska Folkskolans Vänner, a new organization, the Finnish Workers' Music League (Suomen Työväen Musiikkiliitto—STM) was founded in 1920. From the very beginning it was fertile ground for septet music. This is not surprising when we consider that one of its leading figures was Sikstus Bernhard Lundelin, a former military musician and highly regarded arranger. STM published its own series of septet music.

Finland, like other countries, experienced at this time a tremendous growth in the popularity of jazz and dance music, but there were no proper orchestras to play such music in the 1920s. The septets therefore had to fill in as best they could. Septets were also needed in cinemas to play for silent films.

Important changes also occurred in the army bands in the 1920s. In 1923 a special committee, with Lenni Linnala as its secretary, was set up to reorganize the bands. As conductor of the White Guards' Regimental Band, he was authorized in 1925 to test different combinations of instruments. These activities resulted in 1926 in a command to replace

the old instrumentations with new ones that included many woodwinds. There has been speculation that the new instrumentations may have been inspired by American models. According to this hypothesis, Lenni Linnala based his ideas on the American-Finnish wind bands touring in Finland at that time. Indeed, at least three such bands, Humina, Louhi, and Suomi, visited Helsinki, Viipuri, and other Finnish towns in the 1920s.<sup>29</sup>

In the 1910s, the Finnish septets lost members because of emigration. Many players went to America. They joined American wind or jazz bands and they also founded their own bands, such as Humina, Louhi, and Suomi. These were large wind bands, but Finnish-Americans also cultivated brass quintets and septets. Old Finnish septet music was exported to the New World. Some pieces, such as the famous potpourri of Emil Pahlman, were even printed in America.

Yet as early as 1918, a proposal for an expanded instrumentation had been put forth by Aatto A. Liljeström, first head of the military bands of independent Finland. Liljeström's proposed instrumentation is as follows:

- 1 piccolo flute in D $\flat$
- 2 clarinets in E $\flat$
- 6 clarinets in B $\flat$
- 1 bass clarinet
- 1 soprano saxophone
- 1 alto saxophone
- 1 tenor saxophone
- 1 baritone saxophone
- 2 cornets in E $\flat$
- 3 cornets in B $\flat$
- 2 flugelhorns in B $\flat$
- 2 alto horns in E $\flat$
- 2 tenor horns in B $\flat$
- 2 trumpets in B $\flat$
- 2 French horns in F
- 2 baritone horns in B $\flat$
- 2 basses in E $\flat$
- 2 Bases in B $\flat$  (helicons)
- 2 percussionists
- 2 trombones (a later addition to the plan).<sup>30</sup>

### **The current scene: performance and research**

My book on the Finnish brass septet tradition was published in 1995.<sup>31</sup> Practical considerations dictated that it include only a part of the material at my disposal. The research was begun in the summer of 1974. At that time it was known that the tradition had never entirely disappeared. In the 1950s, however, the trend among Finnish wind bands was toward large American-style combinations, and the septets were regarded as old-fashioned, especially as regards repertoire. At about the time of the start of this research, ca. 1974, there was a

growing interest in finding old septet pieces and arranging them differently. People were fond of the septet sound and the older music. This was also noted in professional circles, and many organizations began to regard the brass septet tradition as a national treasure. Modern septets are willing to use the very same instruments that formed the septet in the nineteenth century. It may be that the mellow sound of the conical horns of the cornet family serves as an antidote to the stress of modern life.

In 1980 the first Lieksa Brass Week, in eastern Finland near the Russian border, was organized. Brass septets have appeared in Lieksa every year since in some form or another: in concerts, courses, exhibitions, lectures, and dance evenings. The Lieksa Brass Week and Professor Holger Fransman were the first to introduce the rare septet pieces by Sibelius to modern audiences. In 1988 the Finnish brass septet was the theme of the Lieksa Brass Week. A new recording, *The Best of Finnish Brass Septets*, made by the Lieksa teachers' septet and conducted by Erkki Karjalainen, was issued.

Currently there is a plan to start a competition for brass septets. The first competition is to take place in Helsinki, August 1998. Only those ensembles using "authentic" instruments will be allowed to participate. This will be one way to preserve the national tradition. New compositions for brass septets are welcome, and some have already been written by Finnish composers.

Research into old brass bands, instruments, and repertoire is still in its infancy, and there are only a few people who are interested and knowledgeable in this field. Accordingly, there has been little support for this kind of research until now. Recently, however, the Cultural Foundation of Finland has established a grant that will enable several months of special research for five to six scholars. The first step will probably be a seminar and preliminary visits to Finnish archives.

*Kauko Karjalainen earned the Ph.D. in musicology from Helsinki University in 1991 with a dissertation entitled Leevi Madetojan oopperat Pohjalaisia ja Juha. Teokset, tekstit ja kontekstit [Pohjalaisia and Juha, the Operas of Leevi Madetoja: The Works, the Texts, and the Contexts]. He is currently head of the music library of the Finnish Broadcasting Company. His publications include Suomalainen torvisoitin. Historia ja perinteen jatkuminen [The Finnish Brass Septet: History and Living Tradition] (University of Tampere, Department of Folk Traditions, Publications, no. 20 [Tampere, 1995]).*

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Jakob Bagge. In Fabian Dahlström, "Prolog till året 1790" (Prologue to the Year 1790), in *Musikalska Sällskapet i Åbo 200 år* (200 Years of Musical Society in Åbo) (Turku, 1990), p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> Dahlström, "Prolog," p. 100.

<sup>4</sup> Arvo Viljanti, "Vakinaisen sotamiehenpidon sovelluttaminen Suomessa 1600-luvun lopulla. Eriytisesti silmälläpitäen Turun läänin jalkaväkirykmenttiä" *Lisiä Varinain-Suomen historiaan* 3 (Turku, 1935).

<sup>5</sup> Dahlström, "Prolog," p. 128.

<sup>6</sup> Åke Holmqvist, *Från signalgivning till regionmusik* (Stockholm, 1974).

<sup>7</sup> Paaavo Talvio, *Kenttämusiikista varuskuntiin. Sotilasmusiikkimme perinnettä* (Helsinki 1980).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> The collection of E.W. Floessel's scores, Helsinki University Library.

<sup>10</sup> *Storfurstendom Finlands Författnings-Samling för 1861. Nro 27, 27.8.1861*. State Archive of Finland, Helsinki. (*Dito* in old Swedish means "same.") *Obligater* may be synonymous with alto horn. Note the lack of trombones.

<sup>11</sup> *Suomen Ruhtinaanmaan Asetus-Kokoelma n:o 26/1880*. Helsinki University Library. The old Finnish word *Sam.* means "same."

<sup>12</sup> Oskar Wasatjerna, *Matrikel öfver generaler, Tabs- och Öfverofficerare vid finska Militären i Jaunari 1894* (Matriculation Book on Generals and Officers of the Finnish Military), State Archives, Helsinki.

<sup>13</sup> State Archives, Helsinki.

<sup>14</sup> Johan Willgren, "Hieman torvisoittokunnistamme" (A Little about our Brass Bands), *Säveleitä* (Finnish newspaper), 31 December 1909.

<sup>15</sup> Lenni Linnala, "Puhallussoittokuntien soitinkokoonpano" (The Instrumentation of Wind Bands), *Suomen Musiikkilehti* (Finnish music magazine), May 1931.

<sup>16</sup> *Tapio* (Finnish newspaper, published in Kuopio), No. 30 (25 July 1868).

<sup>17</sup> From the 100th anniversary program of the Tervakoski band. See also Jukka Vehmas, *Sytyttävät sävelet* (Inspiring Tones) (Laitila, 1983).

<sup>18</sup> Vehmas, *Sytyttävät sävelet*.

<sup>19</sup> Kauko Karjalainen, *Suomalainen torvisoitsikko. Historia ja perinteen jatkuminen* (The Finnish Brass Septet: History and Living Tradition) (Tampere 1995) [with English summary], pp. 161-178]. The present article is based on this book.

<sup>20</sup> Holger Fransman, preface to Sibelius, *Petite Suite*, arr. Fransman (Helsinki: Fazer, 1988).

<sup>21</sup> Helsinki: Fazer Musik.

<sup>22</sup> Sibelius' works for brass septet are available on discs produced by Alba (Finland), Bluebell (Sweden), and Hyperion (U.K.).

<sup>23</sup> Madetoja, letter from Paris. *Säveletär* 3 (1911).

<sup>24</sup> Though marked nos. 10, 12, and 13 in the score, there is an obvious mistake in the numbering, since after the *lieriöt* we find no. 13, baritone. The *lieriöt* must thus be numbers 10, 11, and 12.

<sup>25</sup> by Engelhard & Mühlber.

<sup>26</sup> Karl Hjelt, "Ett besök i Apostols instrmentfabrik" (A Visit to Apostol's Musical Instrument Factory), *Annonssavdelning till Tidning för Musik 1901-11* (Inaugural Volume of *Tidning för Musik*, Finnish music magazine in Swedish).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Dates of Mirsch's employment with the Westerlund firm are unclear.

<sup>29</sup> The Humina Band was established in 1894 in Ashtabula Harbor, Ohio, by John Rönning. The Louhi Band was established in 1900 in Monessen, Pennsylvania. Its first conductor was Akseli Ruuti. Regarding these bands, see Arvi Karvonen, "Amerikan suomalaisten soittokunnista ja kuoroista" (About the American Finnish Bands and Choirs), *Suomen Musiikkilehti* 4 (1923). Regarding the visits of these bands to Finland, see *Tervehdys Suomelle* (A Salutation to Finland) (New York, 1920).

<sup>30</sup> Liljeström, a letter dated 5.5.1918. The Military Archives, Helsinki.

<sup>31</sup> *Suomalainen torvisoitsikko. Historia ja perinteen jatkuminen* (The Finnish Brass Septet: History and Living Tradition), University of Tampere, Department of Folk Traditions, Publications, no. 20 (Tampere, 1995).