

THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY BRASS BAND - A REBIRTH

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The celebrations surrounding the centenary of the American Civil War (1861-65 to 1961-65) enhanced a long-standing interest in Civil War history and military artifacts.

Due in part, perhaps, to a concurrent and growing international preoccupation with practical musicology, i.e., scholarly performance practice involving the use of original or replicated period instruments, interest began to be focused on the *military music* of the Civil War era. The kind of intense interest in Civil War *living history* that had generated meticulously researched re-enactments of historic battles had, by the mid-'60s, begun to include military bands in some of these scenarios. Of greater importance, of course, is that these bands could stand alone and present the "vernacular" music of the Civil War era in concert, parade, and patriotic/historic celebrations independent of any battlefield re-enactments.

Authentic performance practice of music of past times using restored or replicated instruments has had a recent but distinguished history in the United States. Musicological interest in performance practice after World War II had set in motion a movement requiring fairly easy access to early instruments through restoration and replication. During the first two decades after the war, the movement was largely, though not entirely, devoted to the music and instruments of the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque eras, and, somewhat later, to the Classical period.

The great post-war expansion of higher education brought many students in contact with early music through courses in appreciation and history of music. Participation in the performance of early music was found to be an intellectually satisfying and stimulating activity, especially when guided by a scholar exhibiting zeal and passion for the field. Despite its age, this music was found to be accessible and playing the instruments did not require a virtuoso technique. Both of these points must be considered fundamental when encouraging participation by avocational or covocational adults. Furthermore, ownership of a finely crafted replica of an early wind, string or percussion instrument did not require expenditure of large amounts of money — keyboard instruments always excepted.

Operating or organizing a 19th-century-style brass band presents several problems not encountered by practitioners of earlier music. First, unlike other early music groups, which lean heavily on instrumental reproductions, modern replicas of 19th century brass bands rely almost completely on restored *original* instruments. Currently, only two crafters of 19th-century brass instrument reproductions are known to this writer: Robb Stewart, 140 East Santa Clara St. No. 18, Arcadia, Calif. 91006, and Halifax & Co., (Pvt) Ltd., Industrial Estate, Sialkot-4, Pakistan.

Stewart produces reproductions of well-known types of brass instruments and, occasionally, of submitted originals. The Halifax Co. generally requires that an original be sent to serve as a pattern for reproduction. However, Halifax Co. reports that it can create an entire set of brass band instruments from one original pattern as long as the required set is of one kind as, for instance, the over-the-shoulder model.

The second problem facing the replicated band is that, despite a growing literature about performance practice in 19th-century art music, little is known about parallel practices in popular and military brass band music. Because brass band playing was overwhelmingly an amateur movement, it is safe to say that performance standards varied widely. This, together with a frustrating lack of written, critical accounts of actual performances, leads one to believe that beyond some good guesses, we may never have an accurate knowledge about how things actually sounded.

The third problem is the lack of availability of authentic brass band music. With printed music for band being scarce in the early and mid-19th century, it was standard practice for each bandmaster to create his own arrangements working generally from existing vocal and piano music. Each arrangement was made for a specific band taking into account its peculiar strengths and weaknesses. Each arrangement, thereby, was one-of-a-kind with parts being extracted and copied out by the band members themselves. With the passage of time, scores and parts wore out, were lost, were destroyed (perhaps because they weren't thought to be of much importance), or simply disintegrated with age. All is not lost, however, as some important 19th-century band books and pieces have been preserved in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the Library of Congress, and in archives of various state historical societies. Arrangements for duplication of these materials can frequently be made. Much research is needed in state, city and town historical societies where 19th-century brass bands were known to have flourished.

The scholar/conductor Paul Maybery has, since 1977, produced performing editions of historic American brass band music of the mid-19th century. He has made available such classic works as E.K. Eaton's *Twelve Pieces of Harmony for Military Band* (1846) and Eaton's *National and popular songs* (1853), and G.W.E. Friederich's 24-piece collection *The Brass Band Journal*. Additionally, Maybery has created a large number of his own arrangements of significant and typical mid-19th-century brass band music in the manner of a bandmaster/arranger of the period. For a band whose purposes include performance and entertainment as opposed to absolute authenticity, Maybery's work here represents a valuable resource of usable music. Also included in Maybery's catalog are two reprints of important texts about brass bands: *The Brass Band School* by Allen Dodworth (New York: H.B. Dodworth, 1853) and *A Practical Guide to the Arrangement of Band Music* by G.F. Patton (New York: John F. Stratton & Co., 1875). The address: Paul Maybery Editions, American Brass Band Music, 360 Emma St., Saint Paul, Minn. 55102.

Certainly, the most attractive aspect of a renewed interest in 19th-century brass bands has been the recent organization of several replica bands of the Civil War era.

These organizations perform on restored period instruments, play music of the mid-19th century, and are outfitted in proper Civil War army uniforms of both the Union and the Confederacy. Their purposes vary from providing entertainment to attempts at obtaining musicologically accurate performances of period music on period instruments.

A simple survey form was devised to obtain information about history, purposes, type of current playing membership, ownership of instruments, a catalog of instruments used by each band, and organizational information. Seven forms were mailed to individuals known to be either active brass band directors or scholars of the brass band era. Four fully completed returns were received. One survey was done via personal interview, one return contained only partial information, and one was received from a scholar not having a current association with a performing brass band.

Since mailing the survey form, the existence of several other Civil War period bands and one representing the 1840s era have become known to this writer. Due to pressure of time, however, it was not possible to include these organizations in the survey.

Restored or replicated Civil War-era brass bands

1. First Brigade (Wisconsin) Band, Third and Fourth Divisions, Fifteenth Army Corps, c/o Heritage Military Music Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 1864, Milwaukee, Wis. 53201

Dan Woolpert, bandmaster

The First Brigade Band, the oldest unit included in this survey, is a restoration of an actual band that enlisted in the Union Army in 1864. It was reorganized in 1964 for the purpose of participating in a celebration commemorating the centennial of Gen. U.S. Grant's return to Galena, Ill. — his home. Instruments are owned by the Military Music Foundation and are issued on loan to the musicians together with music and items of uniform. This is a large unit by Civil War standards. The band's membership is around 60 musicians and it frequently performs with upwards of 30 members. Band members are volunteers who are remunerated for expenses incurred. No dues are paid by members to belong to the band.

2. Dodworth Saxhorn Reserve Band
16179 Bentler Ave., Detroit, Mich. 48219

Alexander Pollock, director

The Dodworth Saxhorn Reserve Band (previously known as the Detroit Light Guard Band) was organized in 1986 and is a non-specific, prototypical band of the Civil War period, i.e., not a replication of any specific historic unit. The band is a research/

performance project in "living history" which seeks to obtain musicologically accurate performance of period literature performed on original instruments. It makes its membership available to persons interested in performance of music of this specific period in American History. The band generally performs with a roster of 15 musicians. Members are volunteers but are remunerated for expenses. The instrument catalog lists 14 brass instruments — all of the over-the-shoulder type except for one upright B-flat tenor ophicleide of 11 keys. The band is outfitted in uniforms patterned on the "fatigue" style used by cadets at the United States Military Academy in the mid-19th century. The instruments of the band constitute a private collection owned by Pollock.

3. El Dorado Brass Band

1030 Gate Lane, Pilot Hill, Calif. 95664

Capt. Conrad C. Hicks, leader

The El Dorado Brass Band was organized as a historical representative of the California National Guard and State Military Reserve for the Grand Parade and Festival celebrating the restoration of the state capitol in Sacramento in January of 1982. Membership, which is now civilian, was initially drawn from the 59th Army Band of the California National Guard. The band was formed to present authentic brass band music for all types of events in the greater Sacramento area. A catalog of instruments was not received from this unit in time to be included in this article, but photographs of the band suggest a mixture of mid-19th century and modern instruments. The band has a playing membership of 14. The band's performances have included "living history" programs in state parks, the Sacramento History Center, the Crocker Art Museum, concerts, and civic celebrations throughout northern California.

4. Federal City Cornet Band

(Formerly Heritage Americana Band)

9644 Shadow Oak Dr., Gaithersburg, Md. 20879

Robert Webb, director

The Federal City Cornet Band, founded in 1985, is the successor of the Heritage Americana Band, founded in 1978 by Mark A. Elrod and Robert Garofalo of the School of Music of Catholic University of America and devoted to obtaining musicologically accurate performances of Civil War era brass band music. The history of both bands should be considered as one.

The instruments used in this band are part of the John H. Elrod Memorial Collection of Antique Brasswinds Used in America, 1830-1870. Mark A. Elrod is the founder and curator of this large and superior collection. The 1989 catalog lists 40 brass instruments, all in completely restored working order. The band performs with 13 to 16 members, all

of whom are paid professional musicians. The unit is a non-specific, prototypical ensemble of the Civil War period. It seeks to present "living history" programs of musicologically accurate performances of period music.

For some years now, the Elrod Collection has formed the basis of the "Yankee Brass Band," a consortium of brass players from throughout the United States who come together each summer in New Hampshire and Vermont for the purpose of presenting 19th-century brass band concerts throughout upper New England. This band is conducted by Paul Maybery of St. Paul, Minn., a conductor, arranger, and publisher of 19th-century brass band music.

5. Regimental Band of the 37th Georgia Volunteer Infantry (CSA)

766 Riverhill Dr., Athens, Ga. 30606

Clyde E. Noble, bandmaster

This band, organized in 1980, is a reactivation of a Confederate Army Band originally founded in 1862. It has a playing membership of 13-16 musicians who are volunteers remunerated for expenses. Instruments used are mostly, though not entirely, from the private collection of the bandmaster. The band is a research/performance project in "living history" and seeks to present accurate performances of authentic period music played on original instruments. This collection consists of 21 brass instruments in addition to a number of wind and percussion instruments. The band has performed in concert and battle re-enactments "from the Potomac to the Mississippi." Of particular note is the band's appearance in the motion picture "Glory" and in the television film "The Rose and the Jackal."

6. The Regiment Band of the 11th North Carolina Troops (CSA)

P.O. Box 53513, Fayetteville, N.C. 28305

Robert Downing, chief musician

This band is a reactivation of a unit originally founded in 1862. The present band was formed in 1982. Instruments are owned by the band, which is governed by a board of directors. The interesting catalog of instruments lists three mid-19th century instruments and 15 reproductions created by Robb Stewart. There are 14 playing members who are volunteers remunerated for expenses. The band's purpose is to obtain accurate performances of authentic period music on both original and replicated instruments and to recreate a Confederate band of music from a North Carolina regiment.

Eb Bass

Summation of Valved Brass from Responding Bands

Eb Bass	Bb Bass	Bb Baritone	Bb Tenor	Eb Alto	Bb Cornet	Eb Cornet	Design and Mounting of Valve Mechanism	% of Total Instruments
10	9	13	14	13			American string action rotary - top mounted	40.7
2	8	5	8	11			American string action rotary - side mounted	23.5
3	3						American string action rotary - mid-horn mounted	4.1
	4						American string action rotary - mounting unspecified	2.8
				2			American mechanical action rotary	1.4
1	2	1		4			Allen patent string action pinched rotary - top mounted	5.5
			1	1			Allen patent string action pinched rotary - side mounted	1.4
	1	2	3	1			German clock spring mechanical action rotary - side mounted	4.8
	1			1			Fiske patent piston driven rotary - top mounted	1.4
2	3	3	1	1			Berliner pumpen piston - top mounted	6.9
	1						Berliner pumpen piston - side mounted	0.7
1	1	2	2				Berliner pumpen piston - mid-horn mounted	4.1
							Berliner pumpen piston - mounting unspecified	
	1						French piston w/pinched tubing - side mounted	0.7
			2				Stoelzel piston	1.4
1							Perinet piston	0.7
Bell Directions								
11	18	12	8	11			Over-the-shoulder	41.4
		3	18	23			Bell front	30.4
6	14	11					Bell up	21.4
2	2		5	1			Circular	6.9
Metal Materials								
1	3		2	1			Brass w/German silver trim	4.8
3	4	4	3	10			German silver	16.6
3	3	6	7	10			Nickel silver	20.0
			1				Copper w/brass trim	0.7
13	24	16	18	13			Brass	57.9
20	34	26	31	34			TOTAL INSTRUMENTS =	145
13.8	23.5	17.9	21.4	23.5			% of Total	

Observations

The table above contains summations derived from survey forms sent to six Civil War period bands. One band did not return an instrument catalog of its holdings. Therefore, the summation given is for the 145 instruments owned by five bands responding to the survey. No inferences are attempted beyond these returns.

It is obvious that the top-mounted American string rotary was the most used valve systems in this survey — followed by the side-mounted version of the same system. Following these at a very considerable distance was the Berliner pumpen piston- top-mounted. The systems least used appeared to be the side-mounted Berliner pumpen piston, the French piston with pinched tubing, and Perinet so common today.

Bell direction designs indicate a probable preference for the over-the-shoulder style so frequently observed in photographs of the Civil War period bands. In descending order of popularity were the bell-front followed by the bell-up styles. Least used by far were various circular models.

It should surprise no one that brass was the favored metal in brass instrument construction accounting for nearly 60 percent of instruments in this survey. A descending order of preference was noted for nickel silver (20 percent), German silver (16.6 percent), and brass with German silver trim (4.8 percent). Only one instrument was built from copper with brass trim despite the popularity of this combination in the older keyed bugles.

Instrument makers

The 145 instruments allowed identification of 38 makers. These are given with the number of their instruments contained in this survey.

1. John F. Stratton - New York	10
2. Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory - Boston	7
3. Isaac Fiske - Worcester, Mass.	6
4. Klemm Bros. - Philadelphia	6
5. Hall & Quinby - Boston	5
6. E.G. Wright - Boston	5
7. D.C. Hall - Boston	4
8. Allen & Hall - Boston	3
9. Graves & CO. - Boston	3
10. W. Seefeldt - Philadelphia	3
11. C.A. Zoebish & Sons - New York	3
12. Halarie - Paris	2
13. H. Lehnert - Philadelphia	2
14. Horst W. Moennig - New York	2
15. Ernest Seltman - Philadelphia	2
16. Kummer & Shetelich - Baltimore	2
17. Allen Mfg. Co. - Boston	1

18. Efrem Benelli - Florence	1
19. Cazzani & Co.	1
20. Henry Distin - Philadelphia	1
21. Granville Draper - Boston	1
22. G. Freemantle - Boston	1
23. Gilmore & Co. - Boston	1
24. Gilmore, Graves & Co. - Boston	1
25. F. Joubert & Cie - Paris	1
26. A. Lacompte - Paris	1
27. Arsene Zoe Le Connte	1
28. Vincent Muller	1
29. George Peachy - London	1
30. Quinby Bros. - Boston	1
31. Aug. Rampone, B. Cazzani	1
32. A. Rohe - Paris	1
33. Adolphe Sax & Cie - Paris	1
34. Louis Schreiber - New York	1
35. Moses Slater - New York	1
36. Slater & Martin - New York	1
37. George P. Stratton - Boston	1
38. Wright & Gilmore - Boston	1

Coda

The historic band revival movement, which is apparently gaining momentum in the United States, may be the most exciting and important development to overtake the band world since the introduction of the symphonic wind ensemble in the early 1950s. Requiring both independent, expert instrumentalists and an array of sophisticated (and expensive) instruments, the wind ensemble movement has been largely confined to schools and colleges and has had little real and widespread impact on community-based music. Adult community bands have never recovered from the demise of the town band after 1920.

The historic band movement suits the needs of community-based music and adult music education in many ways:

- a. Finding old, period band music, which is long out of print, requires digging in the archives of town and state historical societies. This pursuit can, in itself, be a valuable learning experience. Added to this is the fact that such research, like antique hunting, can be a very enjoyable experience for those so inclined.
- b. Assembling a set of period instruments need not be prohibitively expensive. Depending of course on the period chosen for replication, good usable or repairable instruments can still be found at reasonable prices. Even newly crafted replicas are frequently less expensive than many symphonic instruments required by a present-day wind ensemble or symphonic band instrumentation.

c. A well-developed and properly outfitted period band, appropriately costumed, can be of considerable value to a community-at-large and its civic projects. It hardly needs saying that music education at all levels can be enjoyably enhanced by such historic musical enterprises.

Period bands have been shown to engender *participation* in music-making by that part of the general population that once learned to play band instruments and then had no place to perform after the school and college years were over.

Finally, period band music offers a refreshing alternative to the generally depressing “educational” band literature that has so often disappointed musicians in the past.

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