



Spring 2004 Newsletter

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the New England Brass Band newsletter. We have been mailing and emailing concert information to our supporters for a number of years, and felt that the time was right to expand the type and amount of information we send to you.

We will publish our newsletter twice each year with information about the band members, recordings, concerts competitions and other activities to keep our friends and supporters up to date.

From the Music Director:

The 2003-04 New England Brass Band season is well under way, thanks to the dedicated work of the band's members and the outstanding support of our friends and audiences.

Our season began in September with an all day rehearsal / sectional session held at Medford High School. We have found that spending a whole day together rehearsing, talking around the coffee pot, sharing lunch, and having sectionals is a great way to get the year off to a good start. It also provided a time to read some new repertoire as well as begin polishing music we would be playing during the season.

Our first concert was a return invitation to play for the Boston Baptist Social Union. When we first played for them in November 2002, the response was so enthusiastic that we were immediately invited back for 2003. The concert was held in the John Hancock Hall in downtown Boston and was a huge success.



Here's the band at the Andover concert on December 20, 2003

While snow forced a rare cancellation of the NEBB concert scheduled for the Arlington Street Church on December 7, we did give Christmas concerts in Wilmington and Andover, which were very well received. A special treat for the band was the fact that WGBH radio (89.7 FM, Boston) recorded our concert in Andover on December 20 and broadcast excerpts from the program on December 24. This represented a major step forward for the band in many ways, and we are so grateful to WGBH for recognizing the NEBB as a group that would be of interest to their extensive radio audience.

As 2004 has begun, we look forward to a full calendar of concerts and other activities that are outlined in this newsletter. We hope this newsletter will be a helpful way for you to know more about the NEBB, its activities and its members. With an ever-increasing audience and many loyal friends, we appreciate your support and look forward to seeing you as we continue to present music "In The British Tradition."

Douglas Yeo
Music Director

NEBB on The Airwaves:

During the Christmas season, the NEBB found itself being broadcast on radio stations on three continents. On Christmas Eve, WGBH Radio Boston (89.7) broadcast excerpts from our December 20 concert at the Free Christian Church in Andover. We also got word that the BBC in Britain as well as station 2NUR-FM in Australia broadcast excerpts from our CD, "Christmas Joy!" It's wonderful to know that the NEBB is now reaching out internationally with our sound, music and style.

New Members:

The 2003-04 season has brought some new members to the NEBB: **Elizabeth Jewell** (solo cornet), **Brad Kerns** (principal trombone) and **Matt Gilchrest** (BB flat bass). With a full membership of 29 players, we're pleased to welcome these new members to the band.

Recording News:

The NEBB's best selling recordings "Christmas Joy!" and "Honour and Glory" continue to attract attention from our audiences. A third recording by the band is in progress. Titled, "The Light of the World," this new CD will feature favorite selections of sacred music which have been heard at our concerts in recent years. Recorded in Boston's Symphony Hall in June 2003 and a further session scheduled for June 2004, the CD will include solos by the band's principal cornet player, Terry Everson ("Be Thou My Vision") and music director Douglas Yeo on bass trombone ("Swing Low") as well as a cornet trio played by Terry Everson, Dennis Caron and John Appleby ("The Heralds"). We hope to have this new CD available in the fall of this year, so watch for announcements of its availability.

The North American Brass Band Association Championships 2004 (NABBA):

The NEBB has gone to the North American Brass Band Association annual brass band festival and contest twice, in 2001 (Washington, DC) and 2003 (Little Rock, Arkansas). This year, the NABBA contest will be held in Charleston, West Virginia in April and the NEBB will be going once again. Several NEBB members will also be competing in the solo competition and a small group of NEBB members will compete in the ensemble competition. In 2003, the NEBB placed second in the Challenge section and NEBB solo cornetist Stephanie Watts took third place in the adult technical high instrument solo contest.

The NEBB has chosen an outstanding program to present at NABBA 2004. In addition to the NABBA Challenge Section test piece, "Northern Landscapes" by Peter Graham, we have chosen to perform Stephen Bulla's powerful "Images For Brass", which was written to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the battle of Iwo Jima and William Gordon's "Fortress", a piece based on the great hymn tune, "A Mighty Fortress". Information about the NABBA contest can be found on the NABBA website at <http://www.nabba.org> and the 2004 NABBA contest website at

<http://nabba2004.com>. Do let us know if you plan to travel to Charleston to hear the NEBB so we can give you detailed information about when we will be playing and when other activities will take place.

Brass Band Competitions?

As we mentioned above, the NEBB will be traveling to West Virginia for the NABBA festival and North American Championship. Many of you are probably wondering what a brass band competition is, and how it works.

NABBA competitions are limited to groups that use the traditional British instrumentation (cornets, flugel horn, alto horns, baritones, euphonia, tenor and bass trombones, E flat, B flat basses or tubas and percussion). The membership is limited to 30 members on stage at any one time.

The competition is based on a blind judging of a 30-minute program of music. This program must include the designated "test piece". Test pieces are often commissioned by major competitions, and are specifically designed to challenge each member and section of the band. Test pieces are typically much more complex and difficult than most of the rest of the brass band repertoire. They are also longer than most other pieces at 8 to 15 minutes in length. Each class of competition – youth, challenge, honors and championship – usually plays a different test piece.

The judging is conducted by highly qualified judges, typically music directors of major bands, composers and other well-known brass musicians. The judges cannot see the band performing, nor do they know which band is performing for them. They are usually in a "booth" of curtains that screen the band from their view. They are also separated from the rest of the audience during the performance to keep them from knowing which band is performing, or from being influenced by overly zealous audience members.

Judges give their comments on the performance verbally into a compact tape recorder, and also fill out an evaluation sheet at the end of the performance. The judging is based on a 300-point scale. The judges are looking for many things including the quality of sound, artistic interpretation, how well the ensemble plays together and in tune as well as the overall difficulty of the music selected for the program.

The NEBB has chosen to compete in NABBA and other festivals for several reasons. First, it gives us an opportunity to see and hear the best bands in North America and occasionally from Europe. Second, the

NEBB members learn from and enjoy meeting members of other bands. Those members that choose to compete in the solo and small ensemble competition also feel better for the experience. Finally, preparing for a competition is another way for the band to continue to grow and improve, and really polish difficult music. It is a different kind of preparation and has different types of demands than preparing music for a CD recording session.

Upcoming Concerts:

Sunday, February 8, 2004; 7:00 p.m. - Westgate Church, Weston, MA - Westgate Church is at 100 Winter St. in Weston. Winter St. runs south from Route 30, which is east of Route 27 and west of Route 95/128. The Church is just south of the Mass Turnpike, but cannot be reached directly from the Turnpike. From the North or East take Route 95/128 south to Route 30 west. Pass Weston High School on the left, go through the next traffic light, and take a left a few hundred yards ahead on to Winter St. Stay on Winter St., go over the Mass Turnpike, and the Westgate Church will be on the left. From the West take Route 30 eastbound and turn right on to Winter St. If you come to Weston High School you've gone too far.

Friday, March 12, 2004; 8:00 p.m. - Center for Arts in Natick, 14 Summer Street (508-647-0097) Admission \$12 in advance, \$14 at the door, (*\$1 off for students and seniors*), \$7 under 12. Handicapped accessible. Join us at this new venue for a musical Spring fling. Directions to follow.

Saturday April 3, 2004 -WCRB/Boston Symphony Orchestra Classical Cartoon Festival – Symphony Hall, Boston - 11:00 - 11:30 a.m. The WCRB/BSO Classical Cartoon festival is a day-long activity (10:00 AM to 4:00 PM) which features showings of classic cartoons on classical music themes, performances by live music groups and activities to entertain all ages. The NEBB has been asked to perform as one of a few select groups featured on the main stage of Boston's historic Symphony Hall. Admission is \$6.00 for the entire day. We will be performing our NABBA program as preparation for the upcoming NABBA festival later in April.

April 15-18, 2004 - North American Brass Band Association (NABBA), Charleston, WV - the NEBB plans to return again this year to the NABBA festival that brought us so much personal enjoyment and growth last year.

May 29, 2004 - Tentative Concert still in planning

Sunday, June 6, 2004- Hope Church, Lenox MA - Hope Church, Lenox, MA. 259 Kemble Street. Church office phone: (413) 637-2210 Take an early summer drive through beautiful western Massachusetts and join us for an evening of sacred music. Directions to Hope Church from the East: Take Mass Turnpike west to Exit 2. After toll, bear right, following signs for Route 20 into the town of Lee. Go through the center of town. Stay on Route 20 which bears left at the T intersection (Mobil station on the left, Joe's Diner straight ahead. Proceed up the hill and turn left on Plunkett Street (where Plunkett Street crosses Route 20, there is a sign on the right for the Blantyre Resort). At the traffic light you will then come to (intersection of Plunkett Street and Route 7) you can see the church across the street to your right. Cross over Route 7 and bear right onto Kemble Street (also known on maps as Route 7A). Hope Church is immediately on your right.

Planning Ahead...

Sunday, November 7, 2004; 3:00 p.m. - Trinity Congregational Church, Gloucester, MA

Sunday, November 21, 2004; 4:00 p.m. - Kingswood High School Auditorium, Wolfeboro, NH

Sunday, December 5, 2004; 4:00 PM – Rockport Congregational Church, Rockport, MA

Additional information is available on our website at: <http://www.newenglandbrassband.org>

Concert Arrangements - The New England Brass Band is available for concerts throughout the New England Area. We may be reached by mail at:

**Attn: John Bassett
The New England Brass Band,
P.O. Box 046,
Wilmington, MA 01887.**

Or email us at: newsinfo@newenglandbrassband.org

Stephen Bulla Clinic:

Stephen Bulla is an internationally recognized composer, arranger, trombonist, conductor, adjudicator and clinician. Well known to many in the brass band world for his fine music and arrangements, Steve is also the staff arranger for the United States Marine Band in Washington, DC. The NEBB is bringing Steve Bulla to Boston for a one-day rehearsal / clinic in February where he will work with the band as we polish our NABBA program.

This is a special treat for the band as Steve is the composer of one of the pieces in the band's NABBA program – "Images for Brass". We're very excited that Steve will bring his vast expertise to help the NEBB continue to improve and learn more. The day will include full band rehearsals, sectionals and a shared lunch (as well as plenty of time to just enjoy being together).

Honour and Glory:

The title track to the NEBB CD "Honour and Glory" was composed by Hubert Bath (1883-1945), a prolific British composer who wrote several test pieces for band competitions in the early twentieth century.

The NEBB always tries to make connections with the composers of the works we play, so we were delighted when Bath's grandson, Adrian Bath, recently heard about our recording (as far as we can tell, the NEBB recording of "Honour and Glory" is the only one ever made) and asked if he could order a copy of our CD. We sent a complimentary copy of the recording to him and were pleased to receive this kind email message from him:

"Thanks so much for the CD 'Honour and Glory' which arrived today - it's playing right now as I draft this e mail. I spoke with my father (Tony Bath, aged 86, and Hubert Bath's son) last night and he's looking forward to hearing your recording. He remembers his father writing Honour and Glory as a test piece for, I think, the Crystal Palace Brass Band competition in the mid-1930's. Very best wishes and again many thanks for your kind gift. - Adrian Bath"

Indeed, Honour and Glory was written for the 1931 British National Championship that was won by the Wingates Temperance Band conducted by Harold Moss.

A Reminder and Thank You:

This newsletter is sent to you because you have indicated you would like to be informed regularly of the New England Brass Band's activities. We appreciate very much your ongoing support of the band through your presence at concerts, purchase of our CDs and other products, and your communication and interaction with the band and its members. Without supporters like you, the NEBB would be playing concerts in empty halls!

We want to remind you that the New England Brass Band is a non-profit corporation, recognized as a tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization by the IRS. We are a volunteer group and pay no salaries to members, board members or our conductors. All funds raised by the band through our concerts and sale of CDs and other products are used for the ongoing work of the band, allowing us to purchase instruments, music, take trips, produce recordings and engage in other activities which help bring the unique sound of the British brass band to audiences in new England and beyond.

We are currently working to raise \$3,000 to purchase a set of orchestral chimes. Melody percussion is important in much of the music we want to play. We are fortunate to have three excellent percussionists, and a good set of chimes will expand our repertoire and be put to good use.

We welcome the tax-deductible financial support of our friends who contribute either to a specific need or project the band is undertaking, or toward assistance in promoting the general and ongoing mission of the band. If you would like to make a donation to the band, please send it to our treasurer at the address below; we will be pleased to give you a receipt for tax purposes and will be most grateful for your support. If your company or place of work participates in a matching program, your contribution could potentially double. To all of you who continue to support the NEBB, we offer our thanks.

For more information about the NEBB's activities, or if you would like to make a donation, please write to us at:

**The New England Brass Band
P.O. Box 046
Wilmington, MA 01887**

Or visit us on the web at:

www.newenglandbrassband.org