




YWO NEWS

The Newsletter of the 

Wind Orchestra

BAND NEWS

Congratulations...

. . . to Charmaine Butler who was the winner of our last competition. We hope she enjoys spending her £15 gift voucher. Thank you to everybody who took the trouble to enter.

. . . to Musical Director Michael Philip who has reached his half century (which is more than most of Scotland's cricket team managed to do!). By one of those strange quirks of fate, Michael's son Duncan was born on his father's 25th birthday so it was a double celebration on 3rd April. To celebrate Michael's golden anniversary and Duncan's silver anniversary, they both jetted off to Spain to enjoy an Easter break together. Further congratulations to Michael who has recently qualified as a massage therapist.

We are used to congratulating individual members on their achievements but this is the first time that we have been able to congratulate a whole audience!

On Friday 9th March, we performed a concert in St Marks Primary School in Barrhead. We all remarked on the fact that the audience, made up mostly of pupils, was very receptive, attentive and well behaved so it was no surprise to us that the school was named by the Education Watchdog as the best school in Scotland. We send heartiest congratulations to Head Teacher, Patricia Kennedy, her staff and all the pupils.

Here is a report of the concert by our Special Correspondent:

"My name is Tim Vos. I am 6 years and go to St Marks Primary School in Barrhead, primary 2. My mum plays saxophone in the YMCA orchestra.



On Friday night me, mum, dad and Jonah went to see the Big band. The YMCA played at St Marks, the best school in Scotland. I felt GREAT! because they were excellent. I liked 'the teddy bears picnic' the most. Michael the director asked some children to hold up a letter and he asked me too. I held up 'coda'. During the break I had crisps and water. I had a brilliant time. I hope the orchestra will come to my school again soon."



This year the YWO celebrates its 25th anniversary and to mark the occasion a special gala dinner was held in the Hillhead Sports Centre on Friday 16th March. The picture shows committee chairman David Welsh, his wife Aileen and our Musical Director Michael Philip.

You can read more about the evening's events later in this newsletter.



AN INVITATION

**Our Summer Concert
will be held at
7.30 pm
on
Friday 22nd June 2007
in
Renfield St Stephen's
Church Centre.**

Please come along and bring your friends.

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SILVER ANNIVERSARY DINNER

As soon as I arrived at the Hillhead Sports Centre, I knew it was going to be a great evening because there was such a happy festive atmosphere as people wandered round greeting old friends and new.

As we organized ourselves into tables, we found three things at our place settings: a souvenir programme, a YMCA pen (for writing cheques we were told!) and most intriguingly of all, a kazoo which we were ordered to put aside until later. Of course there's always someone who disobeys orders (Yes, Iain, it's you I'm talking to!) but most of us complied meekly with this request.

After welcoming the assembled throng of members, their families and ex-members, our Committee Chairman, David Welsh introduced our special guests for the evening. These were Bill Harte, CEO of YMCA Glasgow and his wife Usha, Ken Macaldowie President of YMCA Glasgow and his wife Jean, Councillor Alex Mosson, Vice President of YMCA Glasgow, Dougie Peddie, liaison officer for the YWO and YMCA Glasgow and his wife Mags and seven visitors from the Bangladesh YMCA.



David then invited me to cut the special anniversary cake and although I'm not one to boast, I think I can safely say that rarely has a cake been cut with such style, precision and sheer panache! But I digress!



After the grace beautifully delivered by Andrew Bradley, we settled down to enjoy a delicious three course meal – smoked salmon, chicken in cream sauce and strawberry pavlova.



Now it was time for the brief formal part of the evening when David invited Bill Harte to propose a toast to the YWO a reply to which was made on behalf of the band by our musical director Michael Philip.

At last we were told we could finally play our kazoos and immediately we all started practising. I quickly established that a horn embouchure is not conducive to competent kazoo playing but fortunately Ian Simmet was on hand to give me a quick lesson. (It seems that I was blowing through the wrong end, not a mistake you're likely to make with the French horn unless you want to look very silly!)

David then asked the band members to stand and give a performance of the Tritsch Tratsch Polka by Johann Strauss. Quite what our visitors from Bangladesh made of the cacophony that ensued for the next five minutes is anybody's guess but we all thought it was great fun.

It was now time to retire to the bar while the hall was cleared for that inevitable part of any function in Scotland – the ceilidh dance on this occasion presided over by Ian Simmet and his excellent band, the Elderberries.

Personally I have never understood the pleasure my fellow Scots take from throwing each other around the room in dances like The Dashing White Sergeant and Strip the Willow, but judging from the looks of delight on the faces of the dancers, I was in a minority of one that night.



Even some of our Bangladeshi guests were persuaded to join in although whether this was because of their natural politeness or whether they were so traumatised by our kazoo playing that they hadn't the strength to refuse we shall never know.



I was persuaded to join in the last dance, the Hokey Cokey (Ah, fond memories of Sunday School parties!) which was followed by Auld Lang Syne. I have sung this song all over the world but it is always a pleasure to sing it with a crowd of fellow Scots who a) know the correct words and b) know the right time to cross hands. (For the benefit of non Scottish readers, the word "sake" does not appear and you cross hands only when you sing the words:

"And there's a hand my trusty fiere
And gie's a hand of thine")

With three rousing cheers a brilliant evening came to an end. Congratulations and many, many thanks to David Welsh who worked so hard to make it a success.

Like several other members of the band, it is unlikely that I'll be around for the Golden Anniversary but I sincerely hope that there is one. Long live the YWO!

Lorna McMillan (horn - and kazoo!)

Major 'Ben' Bentley - A Tribute

The YWO was saddened to hear of the death in March of Major 'Ben' Bentley.

After a career in the Army, Major Bentley moved to Scotland and took up a post teaching woodwind at St. Aloysius College in Glasgow. He was approached with the invitation to become the first conductor of the YMCA Glasgow Wind Orchestra within a few months of its founding in 1982, and held the post for two years.

Ben's gifts and personality proved to be ideal for the YWO and he gave us a good grounding in both technique and repertoire, setting the tone for the years to follow. His quiet but authoritative manner, his obvious expertise and experience, and his wide-ranging choice of music all imparted confidence to us. He took us from being a disparate group of musicians to becoming a coherent wind band and was conductor on our first ever overseas trip - to The Netherlands at Easter, 1983.

More recently, he took part in the YWO's 21st Anniversary celebrations in 2003 and conducted a segment of our open rehearsal which included a large number of members, past and present. The fact that we have continued for what is now 25 years, is in no small measure due to the firm foundations Ben laid for us in the early days.

With a lasting sense of gratitude for Ben's role in the development of the YWO, we extend our best wishes to his wife Pam and the whole family at this time of loss.

Michael Philip (Musical Director)



Ben conducting the massed band at our 21st anniversary reunion.

Musical Spotlight: Farandole

When one thinks of the 'rules' of music one's mind would normally immediately focus on counterpoint, harmony or some other structured concept, but these are not the only rules of music. There are some rules of music that are similar to rules of fashion or of good taste – guidelines to ensure good musical sophistication. Others are like the laws of nature – just statements of the way things inevitably are: for instance, brass players will at all times play behind the beat.

Another commonly demonstrated example of this sort is 'Goff's Law', which states that without exception, "brass bands cannot, and should not, play jazz." Many a seasoned brass band has thrown itself enthusiastically into a section marked "fast swing" only to trip over their shoelaces in a stilted shuffle with about as much grace as the tutu-clad hippos in "Fantasia".

Interestingly Goff's Law does not appear to apply to wind bands. Perhaps this is because more wind band players have played some 'real' jazz in their time, or just that the addition of saxophones to an ensemble guarantees at least a little bit of swing! However, the corollary of having the ability to play jazz is an inability on the part of wind bands to play cheesy music to the same impressive standard as a brass band can manage.

All in all this leaves the YWO in an interesting position as it prepares to perform what can only be described as a "masterpiece... revised." Or should I say, there is only one way to describe it that is acceptable for print. I am, of course, referring to Farandole by Bizet, tastefully arranged for shopping centres everywhere by Bob James, and brought to the wind band arena by Jay Chattaway. The Bob James recording of Farandole is available on the enticingly titled "Bob James: The Essential Collection (24 Smooth Jazz Classics)" - his rendition of Night On Bare Mountain (fused with the theme from Shaft seemingly) has to be heard to be believed. Listening to any album in the classical-made-jazz style, of which there is a surprisingly large number, gives rise to one of music's most important laws. I refer of course to that well-known law which informs would-be composers of an important truth:

"Pulling off an album of classical pieces arranged for a jazz ensemble is a once in a century accomplishment. Jacques Loussier has already done so within living memory. The odds are against you."

On the other hand, much of the enjoyment of such pieces comes from revelling in the almost embarrassing cheese-factor of such compositions, and I must confess to having a real soft-spot for "so bad its good" pieces.

Duncan Parkinson (trombone)

Carnival in Maastricht

Some time ago I wrote about the Dutch festival of fraternization: Carnival or: Lent Eve. These three days before lent starts are very important in the South of the Netherlands, especially in the capital of the far south, Maastricht. During these days all people from this area are like one family, they dress up and celebrate this "feast of relativity" (including babies and elderly people). Loads of activities take place during these days, like parades through the city centre, costume contests, official opening and closure of the party and a contest for carnival bands.

Music plays a very important role in the culture of the south. There are many so called 'harmonies' and every town or village has its own wind orchestra/ marching band, sometimes even 2 if the band had split due to a fight or disagreement. As the carnival is a major part of the Maastricht culture, music has an important role in it as well. Since the 1950's there are 'harmonies', which come together and play during carnival. As the members of these harmonies are usually not sober, these are called 'drunken harmonies' (in Maastricht dialect Zate Herremenie) and they perform on the streets and in the pubs of Maastricht during carnival.

After World War II a new group of people took charge in Maastricht and it has organised the Maastricht carnival since. Every year a new Maastricht prince is pronounced and also a new song is chosen annually. Additionally many songs are written and performed every year by the many artists/musicians in Maastricht. Therefore there is a lot of this carnival music and this is the main repertoire of the Maastricht 'drunken bands'.

The bands have names like "Laat & Zaat" (Late & Drunk), "Vreug & Neugter" (Early & Sober), "Dao zien de toch" (There they are), "Hermenieke Unnesajs" (Onion sauce band), "Herremenoestmie" (Never again band) and "Blamaasj" (Shame). The members of these bands like a drink, enjoy making music together and it doesn't matter how it sounds. The average band doesn't play very well, but very loudly and this creates a great atmosphere in Maastricht. Every year I try to go to Maastricht to celebrate carnival and I very much enjoy playing in one of the many bands. Musically it's a disaster, but it's great to make music with my friends and make friends through music.

Sabine Vos (saxophone)

COMPETITION!

As golden and silver anniversaries seem to be a recurring theme in this newsletter, that is the basis of our competition. The answer to each of the clues contains the word *gold* or *silver* (sometimes both) or a related word like *silvery* or *golden*. When you have worked out the answers send them by post to L. McMillan 56 Lounsdale Drive Paisley PA2 9ED or by email to lorname@tinyworld.co.uk by 20th July. The usual prize is on offer.

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| 1) A pirate | 11) An American actor who starred in "Blue Steel" and "Timecop" |
| 2) A famous bridge | 12) A dog... |
| 3) A waltz by Johann Strauss | 13) ...and a cat... |
| 4) A film starring Michael Caine | 14) ...and a bird (<i>carduelis carduelis</i>) |
| 5) A film in which both leading actors won the Oscar. | 15) ...and a wingless insect... |
| 6) A film starring Doris Day | 16) ...and a tree (<i>betula pendula</i>) |
| 7) Sir Francis Drake's ship | 17) Worshipped by the Israelites in the wilderness |
| 8) The price of betrayal | 18) Found at the end of the rainbow |
| 9) A James Bond Film (2 possible answers) | 19) The object of Jason's search |
| 10) A film award ceremony | 20) A song by H.P. Danks based on a poem by Eben Exford. |