

## The Challenge of a Noble Marriage:

# Great Music in Great Spaces

This is the second season for Brass Maryland's Baltimore Great Music in Great Spaces series. And with a concert December 19th in the Smithsonian's Baird auditorium, followed by a reception in one of Washington's most famous spaces - the great elephant rotunda of the Natural History building -- Brass Maryland is launching a new branch of the series in the District of Columbia area. Each of these series has been made possible by an early commitment of funds from Chase Bank of Maryland.

Every Great Spaces concert of the Annapolis Brass Quintet, often accompanied by musical guests, is preceded by a short lecture on the architectural or historical significance of that evening's building or space. To date, the two Baltimore series have featured the home of the Engineering Society of Baltimore in one of the most splendid of those row houses for which the city is famous; a historic church in the center of town, Old St. Paul's; an art gallery, the Walters; a 19th century research library, the Peabody, with its five book-filled tiers of cast iron balconies; and a newly renovated ceremonial courtroom in which decades of lawyers have been sworn in as members of the bar, room 400 of the Clarence Mitchell Courthouse.

Upcoming events include a Christmas concert in the home of the country's oldest continuously meeting German congregation, Zion Lutheran; a concert in a one-time hotel, the Alcazar, that has now been converted into the Baltimore School for the Arts; and the "brass under glass" finale in an all-glass "jewel box" marvel of modern architecture, the new USF&G corporate headquarters.

On the face of it, a peripatetic series of concerts might seem an easy undertaking in a city with many fine, historic structures. It's not. Some buildings that may appear spacious simply do not have enough indoor space. When the space is there, it may not have acoustics suitable for

music, and for brass music in particular. Location may be a problem. The risk of renovation work not being completed in time may be too great. There may be no suitable facilities for a post-concert reception. The building may not be available on weekends or on suitable terms. Building staff may not be familiar with concert requirements, adding to set-up and take-down problems. Unusual hurdles may go along with unusual space, as when a proposed concert featuring a new facility at the Baltimore's National Aquarium ran afoul of concerns about the effect of the music on the aquatic inhabitants.

And added to all of these problems are the demands placed on series subscribers who must travel about, often not knowing just what they will find. The loyal subscribers to a Great Music in Great Spaces series are inevitably a little more inclined to adventure, a little more dedicated than their more sedentary concert-going peers.

Why, then, with all of its challenges to presenter, performers and audience, should Brass Maryland undertake this kind of series tied to places of architectural interest?

One reason is that we think that anything we can do to encourage people to treasure their cultural resources, whether these take the form of buildings or performing groups, is advantageous to the arts in general, including to the cause of brass chamber music. A city which values its architectural heritage is more likely to be a city which values its musical heritage as well. We also consider it a community service to entice people into the notable places that they may know only from the street. Two historians of American architecture, John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, put it this way: "Great architecture...almost always...insists that you meet a great building in two fundamentally different space situations, one when you are outside of it and one when it is outside of you."

But there is a deeper explanation for the series, one that grows out of the linkage between music and fine architecture. This linkage may not seem obvious to you. Of course, music is likely to be performed within space provided by architecture; but nothing in this connection has anything necessarily to do with the quality of that architecture. Indeed, what can connect music, and particularly instrumental music, which is the most abstract -- in Santayana's words, the most "essentially useless"-- of the arts, with architecture, which certainly is the most practical of all the arts, the one most clearly devoted to serving a basic human need?

Yet as is sometimes the case with things that seem so different, there are underlying similarities. For one thing, music shares with architecture the characteristic noted by Longfellow of "existing in itself, and not in seeming something it is not," a characteristic which distinguishes both from the image-making so fundamental in traditional painting and sculpture. In both music and architecture, the designer is commonly separated from the one who produces the final product, the architect's plan being matched by the composer's score, as each relies upon others -- builders or performers -- to translate the design into the intended result.

In both music and architecture extended space is available, in one case measured in feet and the other in minutes; this space allows

exceptional room for the development of rhythm, contrast, symmetry and varied harmonies. Both music and architecture share a substantial mathematical component. Underlying a baroque church one is likely to find a mathematical regularity not so different from that of a Bach fugue. Yet at the same time those grace notes, trills, turns and other devices we know as the "ornaments" that are so common in baroque music have their perfect equivalents in the exuberant details we associate with baroque architecture.

Writers have sometimes tried to describe architecture in musical terms. Friedrich von Schelling wrote that architecture is "music in space, as it were a kind of frozen music." Hawthorne thought that whole cities might be described as having been built by the sound of music, with some edifices made of grave, solemn tones, while others "danced forth to light fantastic airs." A more subtle connection was suggested by Sir Kenneth Clark who thought medieval cathedrals would naturally reflect the influence of music at a time when the study of musical forms was one of the seven traditional liberal arts, a group of disciplines that for hundreds of years was central to all higher education.

This is all theory, you say. But there are also some very concrete and specific connections, connections that are particularly important for those who enjoy brass music. If you

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## About The Brass Gazette

The Brass Gazette is a publication of Brass Maryland, Inc. The Gazette carries news and information concerning the concerts, educational and other activities of Brass Maryland, the Brass Chamber Music Society of Annapolis, and the musical group that works with both of these organizations to further the cause of brass chamber music, the Annapolis Brass Quintet.

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have attended Annapolis Brass Quintet concerts you have probably heard the term "tower music" used to describe some of the very early compositions that the Quintet performs. The term takes us back to the time hundreds of years ago when town musicians were stationed in towers to announce musically the hours of the day. With this music, we are reminded of a connection between brass music and a particular kind of architecture likely to be found in the walled cities and towns of medieval Europe.

But was it great architecture? Perhaps not. But here we come to our final case, the one in which music as a whole, and brass music above all, must acknowledge a debt to what is undeniably great architecture.

The Gabrielis, Antonio and his nephew Giovanni, were organists in St. Mark's Basilica in Venice. St. Mark's was then, as it remains today, one of the great spaces in Western architecture. But unlike most other Western churches, St. Mark's was built, not in the form of the Latin Cross, but in a Greek Cross, with choir lofts in transepts that opened directly onto the center of the Basilica under the main cupola. This design suggested to the Gabrielis some unusual possibilities for exploiting the interplay of choirs in

opposing lofts, whose sounds could also be combined with those produced from St. Mark's two organ keyboards. At first, the choirs were voice choirs or choirs of combined voices and instruments. But Giovanni Gabrieli pioneered in developing separate instrumental choirs, choirs in which he relied heavily upon the trombones and "cornetts" of his day. And for the first time, Giovanni began assigning specific musical lines or parts to specific musical instruments.

The Gabrielis by example and by Giovanni's teaching changed music forever. With them, serious music broke away from the vocal forms we associate with Palestrina. The instrumental-contrapuntal style familiar to us in Bach fugues as well as the modern concerto in which orchestra and soloist engage in a kind of competition can be traced to various combinations of separate choirs that competed with one another, sounding across the great spaces of St. Mark's, four hundred years ago.

But if all music owes a debt to the Gabrielis and their great architectural resource, brass musicians certainly are in the best position to celebrate the architectural connection. For not only do brass performers, like other instrumentalists, enjoy the general instrumental forms that stem from

the work of the Gabrieli's, but brass groups regularly perform Giovanni Gabrieli's musical compositions. Gabrieli is a common name on Annapolis Brass Quintet programs. And whenever enough brass players get together, they will be tempted to split into separate groups to recreate, wherever they may be, a musical slice of St. Mark's, even in the out-of-doors. No International Brass Quintet Festival is ever complete until the audience has been treated to the noble sounds of brass choirs conversing and competing with one another from opposite points of the compass.

So in addition to other, immediate considerations, we in Brass Maryland believe that by celebrating notable architecture through the Great Music and Great Spaces series we are also celebrating our own origins, the origins of modern instrumental music, the origins above all of brass music with all of its possibilities. Of course, we do not have available to us a great space like St. Mark's; and not every noble space calls for the music of the Gabrielis. But we like to think that their spirits are nevertheless present whenever we make the musical vows in our marriage of architecture and music. If you attend one of our concerts, look around carefully. Maybe a shadow of St. Mark's can be seen. And maybe the ghost of a Gabrieli will be there too.



## Tradition!

The traditional association of brass instruments with Christmas is centuries old. While certainly having nothing to do with the first Christmas, this involvement probably has its earliest roots in Renaissance painting. The familiar image of chubby cheeked cherubs blowing trumpets to herald the birth of Christ is almost without rival in its depiction of holiday tidings. And the brass-Christmas link has long seemed only natural, since the brasses have always been the loudest, most brilliant, and therefore most celebratory of all instruments. Many people think of a sparkling Renaissance canzona or galliard as having a "Christmas-y" sound.

This connection was intensified in the great Baroque Christmas oratorios and cantatas of Bach, Handel, and Vivaldi, in which trumpets and horns ring out in the most joyous choruses. Later still, choirs of trombones were incorporated into Moravian Christmas music. Closer to modern times, small Salvation Army bands on street corners are often thought of in a typical holiday season tableau. And in some cities in recent years, the curious spectacle of hundreds of tuba-playing Santas contributes to the festive atmosphere of the season.

Perhaps the heart of the matter can be stated this way: brass music with its crispness and vibrancy has a unique ability to cut through the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, reaching our deeper feelings and answering our need for optimism even in the darkest hours in this season of good cheer.

## Mini-Series Available

Three or four concert mini-series subscriptions are available for the Great Music in Great Spaces Baltimore concerts. Select any three concerts for \$48 or all four for \$60.

1. December 14 - Holiday Brass, Zion Lutheran Church, City Hall Plaza. The Annapolis Brass Quintet.

2. February 16 - Percussive Brass, Baltimore School for the Arts. The ABO and percussionists from the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

3. March 29 - Brass and Organ, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Garrison Forest. The ABO and organist.

4. April 6 - Brass Under Glass, U.S.E. & G. all glass pavilion Mt. Washington. The ABO, Tower Brass Quintet, and Philadelphia Brass.

Select any three or all four. You decide. Include your check and a self-addressed stamped envelope. You will receive your tickets by return mail.

Single tickets are also available for concerts 1, 2 and 4 at \$17.50 each. Tickets for concert 3, March 29, are \$12.

For more information, call us at 235-4302 or 730-8334.

## Be A Great Spaces Scout!

Brass Maryland is seeking future sites for Great Music in Great Spaces concerts in both the Baltimore and Washington D.C. areas. We invite our readers to help.

A great space need not always be in an architecturally famous building. A notable interior space may be located in an unexpected location. The site may or may not have an auditorium, but it should have an open area sufficient to accommodate at least 250 concert-goers and either include, or have conveniently available to it, space for a post-concert reception.

Great Spaces scouts should report by writing Brass Maryland, Inc., P.O. Box 65011, Baltimore, MD 21209, or by calling us at 301-235-4302.

## Brass Lexicon:

# Who's Who and What's What

Readers will notice that a number of organizations and activities are mentioned in this newsletter. To help you keep the distinctions clear, we offer the following summary.

**The Annapolis Brass Quintet or ABQ.** This is a partnership of talented and dedicated musicians which has worked for more than twenty years to make brass chamber music a recognized art form throughout the world. The ABQ is a separate entity which contracts with other organizations to engage in specific concerts, residencies and workshops. These include activities in Annapolis sponsored by the Brass Chamber Music Society of Annapolis and activities elsewhere in the

Maryland area sponsored by Brass Maryland Inc.

**Brass Chamber Music Society of Annapolis or BCMSA.** This is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) membership corporation which sponsors concerts by the ABQ in the Annapolis area and engages in other educational projects, including the awarding of scholarships to young brass players. The BCMSA has a thirteen year record of sponsoring one of the most successful chamber music series in the State of Maryland.

**Brass Maryland, Inc.** This is a non-profit 501(c)(3) membership corporation that sponsors the International Brass Quintet Festival

and the Great Music in Great Spaces series and works with the ABQ to promote the cause of brass chamber music through a variety of educational, performance and community service activities in the Maryland area. Brass Maryland is the successor to the International Brass Quintet Festival, Inc., which limited its activities to the summer festival. The change in name reflects Brass Maryland's much broader focus and year-round schedule of activities.

**International Brass Quintet Festival.** This is a summer project of Brass Maryland consisting of a variety of mostly free concerts by the ABQ and guest quintets as well as workshops,

composer forums and other educational activities. Over the years, the Festival has featured many guest European and American brass quintets, including a joint appearance of quintets from East and West Berlin before the Germany was reunited.

**Great Music in Great Spaces.** This is a series of lecture-concerts in architecturally notable spaces sponsored by Brass Maryland. The series is in its second year in Baltimore. A second series is being launched in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. This series is the subject of the feature article in this newsletter.

## ABQ's Third Decade: Still Something New

The twenty-first season of the Annapolis Brass Quintet began in the late September following a busy schedule of summer concerts, and a few weeks of rest and relaxation.

The new season will feature a number of the new and out-of-the-ordinary compositions for which the ABQ has always had a voracious appetite. The Quintet opened the BCMSA Artists series with a premiere of two works for brass quintet and synthesizer by guest artist/soloist Thomas Alonso. On October 7, a concert for the 8th International Congress of Human Genetics featured the world premiere of a work the Congress had commissioned, "Divisions on a Repeated Sequence" by Elam Ray Sprenkle. Among the works coming up in the Spring are two for choir and brass, one by Daniel Pinkham and another by Scott Pender. And a grant from Meet the Composer/Reader's Digest Commissioning Program in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, has resulted in a work by John Lewis which the Quintet will premiere with the Charlie Byrd Trio as part of the Washington D.C. Great Music in Great Spaces series.

But first there will be a busy schedule of holiday concerts. This will be followed by a trip to warmer climes as the Quintet presents a series of performances in the Port Charlotte area of Florida. Then the

realities of winter in the Midwest will be braved as the ABQ travels to Illinois and northern Minnesota for concerts in Argonne, IL on Feb. 2nd, and Duluth, MN on Feb. 3 and 4.

## What You Can Do: Volunteer for Brass Chamber Music

### AT A CONCERT

...come a little early and...

Set up chairs; Take tickets; Hand out programs; Set up the reception; Take pictures.

...during intermission...

Sell recordings; Answer questions.

...stay a little later and...

Serve at the reception; Clean up after the reception; Take down chairs.

### FROM HOME

Make phone calls; Write for this newsletter; Prepare press releases; Do follow-up phoning for publicity; Sell advertising for program books; Post flyers and posters in your neighborhood or at work; Bake cookies; Provide transportation for invited guests.

### AT OUR OFFICE

Prepare mailings; Join a labeling party; File reviews and other press coverage; Help with correspondence; Write press releases.

### AS A COMMITTEE MEMBER

Edit this newsletter; Help develop lists and information on prospective contributors; Solicit contributions; Arrange concert details.

## FOR THE INTERNATIONAL BRASS QUINTET FESTIVAL AND MARYLAND BRASS DAYS

Register participants; Sell advertising for program book; Hand our concert programs; Set up; Serve and take down receptions; Sell IBQF items and recordings; Buy advertising in program book for company in support of the festival; Help with labeling and mailing parties; Take photographs.

Call the office at 235-4302 if you are interested in helping with any of these volunteer activities.

## Bones in Your Closet?

At a recent Brass Maryland committee meeting, we were talking about how many of us had musical instruments at home in the closet which had not been played for many years either by ourselves or our children. We gently chided ourselves for "not doing something about it."

Well, we are going to do something, and we hope that many of you will join us.

In January, Brass Maryland, Inc. will receive any musical instrument in good condition (except piano) which we in turn will donate to a Maryland school music program in need of instruments.

You must set the value on your donation and Brass Maryland will provide you with a receipt for this tax-deductible gift.

If you would like to participate in this project, please call 235-4302, leave a message, and we will get back to you.

## Crocker Honored: Thirty-Three Years of Concerts in the Schools

Last June a large gathering of friends, colleagues and educators joined in a surprise celebration at the Bel Air Country Club to honor Rosa Crocker who stepped down as Chairman of the School Concert Committee of Harford County, Maryland, after thirty-three years of dedicated service and inspirational leadership. The Annapolis Brass Quintet has been performing as a part of this program since 1971 and joined in the celebration with a musical performance.

The Harford County program over these years achieved levels of excellence in quality of music and organization that should be models for similar programs elsewhere. Under Rosa Crocker's leadership, the Harford program has touched the lives of innumerable children, some of whom have been encouraged to pursue music as a career, while many others have received invaluable lessons in music appreciation of a kind that cannot be matched in the classroom, or in school, chorus, band or orchestra. If we enjoyed similar programs everywhere in this country, we could look forward to a future in which good music, in all its variety, would not only survive but grow and flourish, reaching many millions of people who will otherwise be unaware of what it can offer.

Thank you, Rosa Crocker!

# Brass Q's and A's: Why Five?

"Why are you a quintet? Why always five?" When the question is asked, as it sometimes is, one who has spent most of his adult life playing in a brass quintet is tempted to respond with a simple, "Historic precedent."

Earlier epochs were surprisingly cavalier about which instrument might play which part in any give piece of music, and it was not until the seventeenth century that music began to appear with parts labeled for specific instruments. In the latter part of that century, certain standard combinations of instruments began to emerge as ensembles of choice among composers. One of these was comprised of two cornetts and three trombones. Although music then and later was written for more or less than five brasses, one must suppose that the greatest number of composers, performers and listeners found five to give the most agreeable sonority, and once this was established, however tentatively, repertoire accumulated so as increasingly to add to the strength of the tradition.

The brass quintet's strongest early foothold was undoubtedly in Germany. Among German composers, Johann Pezel is notable as the man who wrote more brass quintet music than any composer before or since. Pezel was part of

the "*Stadpfeiffer*" tradition in which an instrument's potential for sheer volume was a definite attribute for outdoor performance. Most of Pezel's brass quintet compositions are likely to have been written with this potential in mind. For a time, England's enthusiasm for a brass ensemble of five was second only to Germany's. Titles like "Music for his Majesty's Sackbutts and Cornetts" suggest that the brass quintet may have achieved great prestige in England.

But, oh, noble and auspicious promise long unfulfilled. By mid-eighteenth century the brass quintet was dead. Or perhaps one could say it was sleeping. Either way, *mirabile dictu*, it arose Phoenix-like or in the manner of Rip Van Winkle, two hundred years later, remembering something of its ancient past but confronting new possibilities in instrumentation.

According to one account, the New York Brass Quintet formed in the 1950s with an instrumentation of two trumpets, horn, trombone and tuba in order to be able to demonstrate each of the brass instruments of the modern orchestra in educational concerts. The American Brass Quintet, formed at about the same time, chose two

trombones, presumably as a closer modern approximation of its middle baroque predecessor. These two pioneer groups researched the early repertoire, commissioned contemporary works and laid the foundation on which the structure of the brass quintet in the modern age has been built.

There have been attempts in the last twenty-five years at both the amateur and professional levels to establish four-member and six-member brass ensembles. None of these has met with great success. Where one encounters a group of more or less than five, it will probably have resulted more from the

frustration of having more or fewer than five eager players than from any philosophical conviction or artistic design.

Considering the current popularity of brass quintets among both players and audiences and the relatively larger repertoire for the quintet that has been generated in the past forty years, it seems unlikely that the magic number of five will change in the near future. Perhaps, after all, it is just "historical precedent," but it is a precedent that has both old and new roots, having survived the two hundred years that the brass quintet disappeared from the musical world.

## An Annapolis Tradition

It is that time of year again! Since 1979, when the formation of the BCMSSA was first announced, the Annapolis Brass Quintet's annual holiday season concert at St. Anne's Church has become a traditional highlight of December in Annapolis. The tradition continues this year with scintillating presentation in the historic Church Circle landmark on Sunday, December 8 at 7:30 p.m.

The quintet will perform holiday selections from many eras and

countries, both secular and sacred, including Christmas and Channukah favorites. From the 17th century sounds of German composer Heinrich Schütz to the quasi "big band" stylings of Annapolitan C. Warren Kellerhouse, this year's concert promises to be an exciting blend of old and new.

Single tickets are available by calling 974-0139 on a first come - first served basis.

## A Unique & Historic Space: Baltimore's Christmas Concert

The Holiday "Great Music" concert will give the feeling of a trip to the "Old World" as it takes place in Zion Lutheran Church, the oldest German congregation in America with uninterrupted ministry in German. Founded in 1755, the current building dates from 1808 and was the second church built by the congregation. Destroyed in a fire in 1840 the church was rebuilt retaining the original outer walls and design. The Parish House with its beautiful *Adlersaal*, (social hall), parsonage and tower were added in 1912 when the congregation felt the need to expand to give the many German immigrants

coming to Baltimore a place to gather and share fellowship. Pastor Julius Hoffman designed the new buildings and his presence is most felt in the *Adlersaal* with its hand stenciled decorations. Come and hear more about this Baltimore landmark on Saturday, December 14th at 7:30pm as Great Music in Great Spaces continues with its Holiday Brass Concert. Pastor Siegfried Otto will speak about Zion and you can tour the church and enjoy a reception in the *Adlersaal* featuring traditional European Holiday food.

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