

The British Open Brass Band Championship

The Senior Warden and I attended the resoundingly successful 153rd British Open Brass Band Championship at Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Eighteen performances of Bramwell Tovey (Iles Medal 2003)'s *The Night to Sing*, specially composed for the Championship, were given and produced a remarkable and sparkling range of interpretations from the finest Brass Bands in the land and the Brass Band of Central Florida, the US champions. Bram's test piece was singled out for the highest praise, and evocatively recalled, in his own words to the collective brass-banding fraternity, the poignancy of VE Day in 1945 and the night which followed.

The consensus was that the test piece was, if not the 'hardest ever commissioned at the championships in living memory, certainly one of the hardest. The winners were the Black Dyke Band under the baton of Dr Nicholas Childs; the judges who heard some "scintillating" performances decided that the clear incision and accuracy of Black Dyke's memorable performance carried the day, thereby adding the British Open to the winners' European Championship, and last year's GB National. The runners up, for the second year running, were the Pay As

You View Band under the baton of Nicholas' sibling, Dr Robert Childs. Yorkshire Building Society Band conducted by Professor David King came third. Liveryman Lt Col Frank Renton conducted the Scottish Cooperative Band to a very creditable 10th place.



Paul Hindmarsh receiving his medal from the Master

At the conclusion of the performances, I presented the Company's 2005 Iles Medal on stage to Paul Hindmarsh, honouring him not least for his enormous contribution to the development of new repertoire for brass bands by securing the commission of over thirty compositions for the movement. The Company's 2005 Mortimer Medal was

presented to Alun Williams, Deputy Head of Gwent Music Service, for his untiring work for Gwent youth brass banding, particularly with the Greater Gwent Youth Brass Band, which he recently led to victory in the inaugural Butlins British Open Youth Brass Band Championship. Both the Company's award winners were richly acclaimed by the packed auditorium.

Our thanks go, as ever, to Mr and Mrs Martin Mortimer and their team for their kind hospitality and efficient organisation of an exciting and engaging competition.

A report by the Master

and that 'the fiery aspects of thought and feeling' which trigger a great work of art very frequently carry with them grimmer energies including bouts of madness. (Would Bach recognize such a view of a composer, I wonder.)

The music is put into context: the early influence of bands and jazz informed Arnold's use of singable melody and pungent rhythm. His professional orchestral experience as a trumpeter (Vaughan Williams called him 'the best trumpet player in England') ensured that his orchestration was practical and effective. The argument is convincingly offered that his mercurial behaviour offended key members of the musical establishment, and that his immensely popular music, crossing as it did the usual boundaries, offended the fashions and acceptable tastes of the sixties and seventies.

This is a fascinating story of an extraordinarily talented musician. On 10 April 2006 we shall be in a position to celebrate his fiftieth anniversary as a Liveryman of our Company.

Past Master Jonathan Rennet

Recordings are one thing, but what ultimately interests the music lover is their publication. Fortunately, most of the known recordings have been issued on 78s or LPs and later transferred to CD, many of them also remastered. These are discussed and compared in the main text, and collectors are well served by complete listings in Part II. The list of recorded items helpfully enumerates the discs and tapes on which each item has been issued; however, the list of issue numbers itself would be more useful if it included details of each issue's contents.

Campion's meticulously researched treatise remains a leading work in the Ferrier literature. It is a significant contribution to the history of recording, with fascinating glimpses of the mid-twentieth century music scene. For record collectors and Ferrier enthusiasts alike, it is an indispensable guide.

Anthony Shuttleworth

Anthony Shuttleworth, who lives in Berne, Switzerland, is a Ferrier enthusiast of long-standing and a member of the Kathleen Ferrier Society.

The Henry Willis Voicing Medal

In the organ building world 'voicing' is the art of taking a newly made organ pipe from the pipe-maker and making the necessary adjustments and alterations to it so that it produces the required sound.

This is a highly skilled, specialist field and Pastmaster Henry Willis 4 has set up a medal within our Company that shall be awarded for those competent to pass the necessary examination.

Members of the Court can easily adjudicate the examination, as the required tasks are all set in a paper and the accepted skills of a successful candidate are obvious from the resulting sounds that the organ pipe will make.

At the Informal Livery Lunch on 13 July, Henry Willis proceeded to demonstrate to those members of the Court and guests present what would be required for a candidate to be awarded the Voicing Medal.

With consummate skill, that made the tasks look so simple, Henry took a pipe and, by altering the length, mouth shape and other necessary adjustments, produced Diapason (basic church) tones of various varieties, String tones, three Flute tones and he finished with a very short pipe on which, by shading with one hand, he was able to play *God Save the Queen*.

All these tasks should be within the capabilities of a skilled and experienced voicer and correctly carried out would earn the award of the Company's Voicing Medal.

This demonstration also established that the practical skills are required by the candidate, and not necessarily by those adjudicating. Our thanks to Henry for providing the necessary illumination on this subject.

Past Master Frank Fowler