Greetings From the President
by Amy Hall

Welcome to the winter issue of the BCB newsletter. Since this issue contains many articles of interest, I'll keep this message short and sweet.

The Christmas season is officially here including all that hustle and bustle of shopping, visiting relatives, eating, and playing in BCB Christmas concerts. People in the community really look forward to listening to the traditional songs we play. Just look at the number of concerts we've booked. Music really makes life brighter at this hectic time especially for those people in nursing homes who are unable to get out to community events.

Even though time is tight, it is wonderful to see people in the band make time to 'spread the spirit' by covering the full band and mini band concerts this Christmas. This means a lot to me and I want to let you know that what the band members do is appreciated.

I also want to thank the band for supporting me in 1995 as the Vice President/President. It was a great learning experience. I look forward to serving the BCB as President in 1996 and making it a great year for everyone. I like to keep an open mind and will gladly accept any suggestions for improving the band and its community activities.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

God Bless You,
Amy Hall

All BCB members are welcome to attend Amy & Don Hall's 5th annual Christmas party which will be held Dec. 16th from 6-10pm. Please call and let us know you will be coming. We'll give you directions when you call. (382-1963)

BCB'S OFFICERS FOR 1996

President - Amy Hall (trombone)
Vice President - Ginny Eyman (horn)
Secretary - Renee Jacobsen (clarinet)
Treasurer - Laura Collee (trumpet)
Member-At-Large - Elizabeth Bowles (oboe)
Member-At-Large - Don Hall (trombone)
Member-At-Large - Karl Sanzenbach (alto sax)

Looking Ahead - 1996 Important Dates

1. January 3, Wednesday, 7:00 pm - Meeting for all officers and interested band members. Please talk to Amy Hall if you are an officer (including past presidents) and cannot attend. Also, if you are not an officer and plan to attend, contact Amy for information on our meeting location. It will probably be the Community Center.
2. January 10, Wednesday, 7:30 pm - First regular rehearsal of the new year. Blacksburg High School Band Room. Remember, when bad weather closes the High School, it cancels our rehearsals.
3. March 29, Friday, 8:00 pm - Spring Concert, Blacksburg High School Auditorium. This will be followed by a lively get-together.
4. Early April, date & time TBA, Brush Mt. Craft Fair at the Rector Field House

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British Military Band Suites
by John Howell

Everybody enjoys playing the band suites by Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Not only is the music classy, but players are left with the feeling that every part is important and nobody is playing just to keep busy. Well, some recent postings on the Community Music List explain why.

Holst’s two suites—the “Suite in Eb” (1909) and the “Suite in F” (1911)—were originally scored for the British military bands of the time, which had a basic complement of 19 brass and reed players plus one or two percussion. In other words, he was writing chamber music for a medium sized ensemble of soloists, one on a part, with nothing doubled. Every note seems essential because every note is essential. Interestingly, British military band conductors at the time weren’t interested in this music, claiming that it was too serious for their purposes. It was more than a decade before the suites were premiered.

Right from the beginning, however, Holst intended the suites to be playable by larger bands, like those stationed in London. He wrote the necessary parts, but marked them “optional.” The same may also be true of the Vaughan Williams “Folk Song Suite” (1923). All three suites were later arranged for orchestra by Gordon Jacob, so for once the band versions were the originals.

According to Keith Kinder of McMaster University, the revised (and heavily corrected) edition of the Holst “Suite in Eb” (1984, ed. by Colin Matthews) gives this original instrumentation: flute; Db piccolo; 2 Eb soprano clarinets (2nd optional); 2 oboes (optional); solo clarinet plus 1st, 2nd, & 3rd clarinets; alto and tenor sax (both optional); bass clarinet (optional); 2 bassoons (2nd optional); 1st & 2nd cornets (with divisi parts); 2 trumpets in Eb (optional); 2 trumpets in Bb (optional); 2 F horns; 2 Eb horns (optional); baritone in Bb (optional—this part was inadvertently omitted from the original printed edition!); 2 tenor trombones (2nd optional); bass trombone; euphonium; bombardons (presumably meaning one Eb and one BBb tuba); string bass (optional); timpani.

Please see "BRASS" on page 7

Sauerkraut Experience
by Mary Keffer

Fall means different things to different people, but to Ed Schwartz and several other members of the Blacksburg Community Band fall means Oktoberfest. It means donning lederhosen and felt hats, and dirndls for the ladies. It means eating sausages and potato cakes and drinking dark German bier. If you’ve been to an Oktoberfest you know that it also means doing the chicken dance and schunkeling or swaying to the waltzes, and of course doing a polka or two.

In 1810, as part of a celebration of the wedding of Princess Therese of Saxe-Hildburghausen to Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig, a horse race was held which attracted thousands from all over Bavaria. The party afterwards was such a success that it has been repeated ever since as Oktoberfest. In fact, the meadow that was used for the original party was named Theresienwiese, after Princess Therese, and is the site of the Oktoberfest in Munich today.

The Sauerkraut band, led by Ed, has just completed a busy Oktoberfest season. They played authentic arrangements of the waltzes, polkas and, marches heard in the bier tents of Germany. In the band this year were Russell Shock, Ed Turner, Kathy Duncan, John Gregg, Damien Winbush, Mike Reid, Kevin Wilkes, Jude Raifeifer, Dan Conway, Mary Keffer, Bob Langford, and Jennifer Wall. Seth Williamson also joined in for one weekend up at the Oktoberfest at Mountain Lake. This year, Ruth Brick joined the band as accordion player and singer. Ruth grew up in Bavaria where she learned to yodel from the mountain tops. Mary Rhoades was there also to help with the dancing and marching.

If you missed Oktoberfest this year you can still hear the music. The Sauerkraut band made a CD last spring called “The Sauerkraut Band Oktoberfest at Mountain Lake.” If you would like a CD or a cassette tape see Ed. He will be glad to sell you one. Some of the songs featured on the recording are “Alte Kameraden”, “Trompeten Echo”, featuring the trumpet section, and of course “Dance Little Bird”, better known as the Chicken Dance. Get your copy soon and start getting in shape for the polka contest in ’96!
Band News from 1888
by Jim Averman

Community bands were going big time 100 years ago. Almost every town had at one and for those that wanted to start one, band instrument companies such as C. G. Conn offered to equip them with all needed instruments, uniforms and music for only a few dollars down and a few cents per month.

Col. Conn, a former cornet soloist turned instrument maker (and later a congressman and a millionaire who died almost penniless) was, without doubt, the country's premier brass instrument salesman. To encourage community bands and to sell his instruments he published a monthly newsletter called Trumpet Notes which contained news of bands across the nation interspersed with testimonials and ads for his instruments. For a glimpse into the world of community bands in 1888 I offer the following excerpts from the August 1888 issue:

"Rice Park, St. Paul, Minn., 18th Season, Great Western Band, Geo. Seibert, director; A. L. Tillman, solo cornetist and assistant director. Every Saturday evening, 7 to 9 pm, weather permitting.

PROGRAMME.
1. March...... "Gun Club".................Wiegand
2. Overture... "All Hands on Deck".......Suppe
3. Waltz...... "Donau Wellen"...............Ivanovich
4. Cornet Solo "Spanish Serenade"......Eilenberg
5. Selection... "Il Trovatore"...............Verdi
6. Overture...... "Jubilee"...............Bach
7. A Hunting Scene... (Descriptive)...Bucalossi
8. Medley... "A Night in New York"...E. Brooks"

"The Lafayette Cornet Band, of Higginsville, Mo., have their fine set of Conn instruments, uniforms and other equipment all paid for, and at the close of the campaign will go into winter quarters with plenty of 'coal and potatoes in the cellar'."

"Reeves' American Band, of Providence, have been a great attraction at Nantasket beach this season, and if such were possible the popularity of this famous band has increased."

"Walter Emerson has just finished a most brilliant and beautiful concert polka, which he has dedicated to his friend the Hon. C. G. Conn and named the 'Conn-quero'."

"I will supply any band in the United States or Canada a complete set of my Wonder Equa Valve Band Instruments upon payment of 20% upon delivery. Members of the band must bind themselves to pay me ten per cent of the remaining amount each month. No interest money will be charged. The band shall give to me a bond signed by Three responsible persons. Upon consideration of these conditions it will be seen that bands can supply themselves with instruments such as those used by all great artists and they will no longer have to use the old and discordant man-killing instruments many of them are now using. A complete set of fourteen band instruments cost only $55.00 C. G. Conn"

"I purchased a silver plated gold lined Ultimatum cornet from you about one year ago, and was well satisfied with it, but have got a Wonder of you since and like that much better. I am well pleased with my Wonder, it blows easy and has a sweet mellow tone. I can play brass band music for many hours without making my lips sore, or injuring the lungs. F. W. Kingsley."

"The last Wonder Bb Comet I bought of you is a dandy, it can not be beat. Everyone says what a fine tone it has. It can be heard above all the other horns in the band. It blows so easy I advise all band men to buy the Corn comet. F. W. Handy."

"The ladies cornet band of Richmond, Mich. arrived in town on the Saturday evening train and were welcomed at the station by the Kincardine fire brigade band and an immense crowd of citizens. There were escorted to the Royal hotel and serenaded for an hour. The ladies showed their appreciation of the courtesy by responding with several musical selections for which they received enthusiastic applause. A band composed principally of ladies is a new feature here and proved very attractive. And right here we might state that the ladies are handsome looking—some of them pretty. Their costumes were neat fitting and in good taste.

Please see "1888" on page 7
OPERA UNDER THE STARS
BY MART RHOADES

What's it like to watch opera in a football stadium? I found out this summer when I traveled to Verona, Italy, July 19-29, on a trip sponsored by Radford University. Dr. Eugene Fellin, Head of the Music Department at Radford, organized the trip, and his wife, Maria, who is from a village near Verona, accompanied us. The object of our travel was to take in five opera performances at the Arena in Verona, a stone coliseum built in 100 A.D. by the Romans. (Yes, they used to throw Christians to the lions in there long ago.) It is the largest coliseum in Italy outside of Rome, and holds about 20,000 people.

The opera season in Verona is big business, with busloads of tourists coming in every night, many from Germany and Austria, both of which are only two or three hours away. The gates open at about 7 pm, while it is still light outside. Once inside you see that the size of the Arena is similar to a football stadium. One end has been converted to a stage, with an orchestra pit in front that holds about 100 musicians. The rows of stone seats going up behind the stage are unaltered, and that area is used for scenery, as well as for entrances by actors. Because of the size of the arena, the sets can be designed three or four stories high. In fact, the most striking thing about watching a performance in the arena is the large scale of everything. One time we counted over 200 people on the stage!

The ground in the center of the Arena has plush red velvet seats; these first class seats cost a great deal and are held by regular patrons, and are, of course, reserved. Metal chairs with backs have been built over the lower rows of stone seats. These are also expensive, and reserved. The upper levels of the arena, for which we had tickets ($20/performance), are open seating, so most people go at 7 or 7:30 to scout out a good seat, although the opera doesn't begin until 9 pm. The performances last until 1:30 to 2:30 in the morning, which means 5 or more hours of sitting on hard stone bleachers. So savvy people bring some type of cushion with them. Most of our crew brought inflatable swimming cushions. However, there are nice red cushions that you can rent when you arrive, for about $3.00 for the whole evening.

Because you have to arrive so early, and stay so long, you usually bring food and drink with you, to eat at your leisure. However, in case you forgot, vendors go up and down the aisles selling beer, soft drinks, pizza, sandwiches, and popsicles before the curtain goes up and at each intermission. They have a difficult time getting around because it gets very crowded, and the stone bleachers are very uneven, 1.6m in width and height. Just like at a football game, people pass the money, the food, and the change to each other. Programs and CD's are also sold.

The crowd is an interesting mix of people from different countries and of all ages, although not too many very young children come. The majority of tourists are from Germany. In fact, 40% of the tourist income in Verona is generated by Germans. Some of them speak English, but many don't. One night I sat next to an interesting man from the Netherlands who was with the
NATO force in Bosnia, and who spoke quite good English. That was one of the few times I could converse with someone sitting near me, in something other than my broken Italian or fractured German, but body language and gestures make universal communication possible.

When the stars come out the opera begins. It is announced by three separate ringings of a gong, done about 5 or 10 minutes apart by a man who is dressed for a part in that night’s opera. With the last sound of the gong, the crowd settles down in anticipation.

What operas did we see? The first was Aida, and Dr. Fellin warned us to go early because it was a very popular production and would be crowded. The scenery and costumes are exotic for Aida which contributes to its attraction. Although the stage is very large, no elephants were used. The performance was good, but as you can imagine, in such a large place, it is sometimes difficult to hear everyone’s part. No microphones are used by the musicians or the singers! That night we chose to sit about halfway up and very near the stage and scenery area. Dr. Fellin told us to try different areas for each show because each had its advantages, and we found that night that we couldn’t see the action in the very middle of the stage when the actors were singing back amongst the props.

Next we saw Rigaletto, and we all agreed this was the best performance of any; due to the magnificent talents of the male and female leads that night. We could hear every word, and we had the privilege of witnessing an encore done immediately after the grand applause for the first main duet between Rigaletto and his daughter. Dr. Fellin said that in all his years of attending performances in the Arena he had never before seen that happen.

Cavalleria Rusticana and I Pagliacci were done on the same night because both are short operas. You can’t beat the music from Cavalleria Rusticana, and although the scenery was minimal for it, and rather dark (kind of gray on gray), the procession from the village up to the hills was beautifully staged, with a variety of flags and a great deal of red which stood out against the grays. I Pagliacci was very dramatic, of course, but what I thought was interesting was that the clown costumes were done in black and white rather than bright colors.

Carmen was an event, to say the least, because Franco Zeffirelli was the stage director. Although we were looking forward to the big production, we found there was a bit too much action on stage, so it was hard to concentrate on the main characters. The last intermission was 30 minutes long (to allow for a complete change of scenery). Many people left after that fact was announced because it was already very late at night. I believe we got home about 2:30 in the morning.

Our opera tour ended with Turandot, which also has exotic scenery. It began well, but at the end of the first act rain began. We had been warned to bring a poncho in case of rain, because the policy at the Arena is that once a performance is 10 minutes or more along, there are no refunds. Announcements came that the rain would be short lived, so we sat with our ponchos on and waited, and waited, and waited. We heard a couple of other announcements (all of which are made in four languages, including English), but we couldn’t understand what was being said. We saw many people leaving, and because it was already very late, and we were wet, and we had to get up at 5:30 am the next morning for our return trip to the U.S., we left also. We found out the next day that the performance finally did resume, and went through the second act, but eventually was called off because the rain began again.

With the opera performances in the evening, we were free during the day to make sightseeing trips to various towns. Our day adventures are another whole story, so I’ll just mention that we visited Trento, Lago di Garda (largest lake in Italy), Venice, Padua, Milan, and Vicenza, and despite record setting heat in northern Italy this summer, A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!

If you are interested in information on this opera tour, which goes each summer to Verona, call Dr. Fellin (540/231-831-5177) (E-mail: Efellin@runet.edu). The cost for next year will be about $2000, and includes everything except your lunches and dinners, and transportation costs for day trips. If you are an opera buff and just want more information in general, you may get on the list serve for opera by sending a message to: listserv@unrvml.cuny.edu; leaving the subject empty, and on the FIRST line of the message writing (sub opera -1 First Lastname).
PERSONAL PROFILE
TOSHIYA AND CHEIKO HATTORI
By Cheiko Hattori

Thank you very much for your kindness. We moved from Japan to the U.S. A. this
August and plan to stay in Blacksburg for 2 years. We are glad that we can belong to
Blacksburg Community Band.

My husband, Yoshiya has played the trumpet since he entered the high school. He
belonged to the band of the school, and had belonged to the company's band.

In Japan, the school students practice playing the musical instruments as a club
activity after school. Every summer there are band contest in each region as the preliminaries
of the national band convention which is held in Tokyo, the capital city of Japan. So the school
students who belong to the brass bands practice very hard even during summer vacation.
Sometimes they hold some concerts. The school bands that can take part in the national band
convention have high levels. Some of the junior high school students play the musical instru-
cments better than the adults. Their coaches work very hard too. Mainly they play the
western-style music. For example the marches of Sousa and Alford, the tunes by Alfred Ford
and B. Williams, the arranged classical music, etc. We Japanese are familiar with the Ameri-
can melodies. The school students play not only in wind orchestra style but also in marching
style.

In the Japanese universities, even the students who don't major in music belong to the
brass bands. Yoshiya and I belonged to the same band, when we were in university.
Though our majors were not music, we practiced playing hard and enjoyed holding the
regular concerts.

After we graduate from universities, it is very difficult for most of us to belong to the
band from Monday to Friday. Because it takes more than one hour for most of the workers to
commute. Fortunately, the company for which Yoshiya works has a brass band in the same
place where he worked. This band holds a few concerts by itself and participates in the large
concert, which some other companies bands and chorus groups play the performances too.

NEW MEMBERS

The band has again grown rapidly over the past few months. Here are our latest new
members:

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<tr>
<td>Ann Marie Conner</td>
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<td>Anne Coleman</td>
<td>HORN</td>
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<td>CLARINET</td>
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<td>Betty Chernault</td>
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<td>TRUMPET</td>
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<td>Adam Buccolo</td>
<td>Dave Sisson</td>
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<td>Yoshiya Hattori</td>
<td>William Plummer</td>
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<td>Tim Kilgore</td>
<td>PERCUSSION</td>
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<td>Angie Meller</td>
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<td>Terry Papillon</td>
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<td>Mike Reid</td>
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<td>Faith Plummer</td>
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The Blacksburg Community Band
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                           Cheiko Hattori
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                           Terry Papillon

Distribution - 300
THE STORK ARRIVES

Congratulations to Mom Diane (clarinet of course), Dad Pat (tuba), and Elizabeth Ann Flaherty. The stork delivered the 5 lb, 2 oz., 19" long, "real cute" bundle of joy at 8:15 on 11-28-95.

ATTENTION CARPOOLERS

Mary Rhoades has offered to help coordinate carpooling to any of our concerts. If you are interested, please call Mary at 552-6508 or drop her a note at <mrhoades@vt.edu>.

"BRASS" continued from page 3

(optional); and percussion (bass, snare, triangle, cymbals, tambourine).

Thus the original 19 parts would have been 1 flute, 1 piccolo, 1 Eb clarinet, 4 clarinets, and 1 bassoon for the reeds, and 4 cornets, 2 F horns, 1 trombone, 1 bass trombone, 1 euphonium, and 2 tubas for the brass. Not quite the Marching Virginians!!

There's another interesting thing about Holst's "Suite in F." The Finale is the same as his "St. Paul Suite" for strings, written in 1913, even though the band suite was written two years earlier. However, since the band suites weren't played until the early 1920s, the "St. Paul" was heard first. When Holst was revising the "Suite in F" for its long-delayed premier he both rewrote the first movement and incorporated ideas from the finale of "St. Paul" into the finale of the "Suite in F." (We recycle!)

"1888" continued from page 3

Their presence here was a decided attraction to the demonstration, and we congratulate our fire brigade on securing their services. On Sunday morning the band attended the Princess Street Methodist Church and in the evening they were all present at Knox church.

"Yesterday morning as the Knights of the Golden Eagle, headed by the Repasz band, were parading up Pine street a white horse attached to a street car became frightened and endeavored to get away. Women jumped from the car and market baskets were promiscuously scattered about. The band stopped their music, the horse ceased its antics, and the parade moved on."

"WANTED—To exchange bicycle, good as new, for a good cornet; Conn of Besson preferred."

"WANTED—Two clarinet players who are cigar makers, must be good musicians and workmen. Good wages paid."

"WANTED—A good tailor who plays Eb cornet. Must be a good workman and musician."

"WANTED—A good baritone player would like to locate in a live town in the west or south where he can get a position in some office; best of references furnished."

"WANTED, BAD—A clarinet player to locate in Dewitt, Neb., and engaged in jewelry business. No competition, town 800 population, fine room, best part of town, rent cheap, fine country, and band handling grade four and five music successfully."

"WANTED—Three good musicians to complete band. Double bass, clarinet and 1st violin; all must be double in brass; must have own instruments, and play at sight. Sobriety and pleasant gentlemanly conduct absolutely necessary. Young men preferred."

"WANTED—Tuba and alto players, who are carriage painters, trimmers and wood workers. None but good sober men need apply."

Seems like some things never change. Every band would like to find a "good sober" Tuba player!

Jim Marchman

Note: All incorrect spelling and punctuation taken directly from the original publication.
The Blacksburg Community Band Newsletter

Upcoming Schedule At-A-Glance

Full Band Schedule
1. December 9, Saturday, 1:00 pm - New River Valley Mall - Sing-Along
   (This will be in coordination with area choirs)
2. December 13, Wednesday, 7:00 pm - New River Valley Mall
   (We will be on our own at this concert)
3. December 14, Thursday, 7:00 pm - Warm Hearth Retirement Village, Blacksburg
   (In the Karr Activity Center as in the past.)

Small Ensemble Schedule
1. December 10, 1995, 1:00 to 2:00 pm, Fine Arts Center, Floyd
2. December 17, 1995, 2:00 to 3:00 pm, Heritage Hall Nursing Home, Blacksburg
3. December 20, 1995, 7:00 to 8:00 pm, English Meadows Nursing Home, Christiansburg
4. December 21, 1995, 2:45 to 3:45 pm, Floyd Nursing Home

Disclaimer

The Blacksburg Community Band Newsletter is an occasional communication organ of the Blacksburg Community Band (sort of).

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily anyone’s in particular, so they are not necessarily the views of the Blacksburg Community Band, the Town of Blacksburg, the Commonwealth of Virginia or the United States of America. Believe what you wish to believe, forget the rest.

If you have a problem with anything in this rag, contact our lawyers in Boston, the law firm of Dewey, Cheatham & Howe (firm on retainer by Click & Clack).

If you decide to litigate one of our writers, let us know so we can run the slanderous louse out of town.

The Blacksburg Community Band
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