

DCB Weekly

Issue 13

Saturday 13th June 2020



Welcome to the thirteenth edition of the DCB newsletter. Don't forget that we have our Zoom chat this morning at 10am. Looking forward to seeing you there if you can manage.

Welcome from the Chair

Good morning everyone. I hope you have all had a good week and I'm looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible on our Zooming session this morning. Don't forget we also have our 2nd quiz next week, and I would like to say big thank you to Susan, Ruth and Alison for organising this and I hope you will join us for some more interesting and mind-blowing questions!

I was delighted to take delivery of my bassoon on Tuesday and it looks and sounds great, so I can't wait to get going and hopefully joining in some virtual playing.

We would still love to hear your thoughts from last week's suggestion about rehearsing on-line after the summer break, along with any other ideas you may have, so please get those in to the usual address.

Stay safe, stay well.



Robert's section follows overleaf...

Musical Director's update

Good morning again everyone,

Prize for old photographs definitely goes to Anneli; not just great pictures that show her musical journey but a trip that we can all relate to so well. I had never seen the Blues Brothers picture but yes, I do believe I recognised one of the trumpet players....feeling older now. Far right is Euan Drysdale who has played trumpet in the band, conducted and came to Gozo with his wife Heather in 2002!

Thank you to some band members who have responded positively regarding the online rehearsal/tutorials that Harriet and I would like to pilot in the near future. Please do let us know what you think?

Here is an exercise for you all to try. Flutes, I think that you could all do well with this one.

MAJOR SCALES!

Come on, it's good for you, you know it, I know it. What's not to like?

1. Try playing all major scales one octave only, ascending and descending.
2. It does not matter which note you wish to start on but work up in semitones from one scale to another.
3. i.e. C Major, Db Major, D Major etc. etc.

I was almost tempted to ask you all to play them in the shortest time possible. Opposite from our long note competition. Maybe start this week slowly and for those competitive among us (oboes!) you could challenge yourself and record all 12 scales and time yourself. For a greater challenge play them once slurred and repeat them all but tongued.

Good luck and let me know how you get on or drop the band a message on the DCB Facebook page.

Robert



Meet the band

This week, we hear from DCB honorary president **Glyn Bragg**, who shares with us some band memories.

A few band memories

Although my early musical experiences were choral in Northumberland, bands soon became an important part (for better or worse - largely better but sometimes worse) of my life. The brass teacher at school in York was the conductor of what was then the Rowntree Band, later taken over by Nestle, and now subsidised by a local building firm. He nearly persuaded me to give up the drums which I was learning at the time (that's another story), and take up music in the form of the trombone. Common sense did not prevail and I kept them both on. After joining the band on percussion, I gravitated to the G trombone (the one with handle and now sadly long-forgotten) and learned that its music was written not in the treble clef, as was normal in brass bands, but the bass. Later, at great expense, I was the very proud owner of a brand new Boosey and Hawkes Imperial Bb/F high pitch trombone (bands were high pitch in those days). It came with a coffin-type case, lined with plush red material possibly stolen from Le Moulin Rouge or Folies Bergeres in Paris.

Once, sometimes twice, a week I loaded it onto the front of my mother's bike and pedalled the couple of miles or so in all weathers for band practice. This took place in a ridiculously over-heated bandroom the size of a large cupboard. The approach was via a rickety iron staircase past leaking wooden barrels of concentrated green, yellow, red, black and orange crude oil destined for the firm's famous fruit gums. The smell of that, plus the aroma of raw cocoa for Kit-Kats and the chlorine from the nearby open-air baths, left an indelible impression, and whenever I experience any of the above I am immediately transported back to the York of the late 50's and early 60's.

Memories are now vague, but I do recall a left-handed cornet-player who was a butcher by trade (work that one out) and several occasions when the slide of the G trombone fell onto the floor because I failed to hold onto the handle. One rainy Summer Sunday we all got on the bus for a gig near Doncaster but the venue appeared to be a field with a couple of cows and the audience an old man and his dog. After half an hour, and ploughing through a lot of grass recycled by the cows, we packed up and drove back to York. The conductor was not a happy man that day. But the band was invaluable because of regular exposure to sight-reading and lots of light and classical music. Original piece were, sadly, in short supply. I also bought a sousaphone (with leaks) for a fiver which I took home in a wheelbarrow....it wouldn't go on my mother's bike. If I managed to stay upright long enough, I played it in the inevitable Holst Eb Suite in the school military band. I do not remember what happened to the sousaphone, wheelbarrow or bike. Before I left school I joined the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain as a timpanist/percussionist and the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain on the G trombone (they were desperate). I could only really play three notes...G and D and,

(continued overleaf)



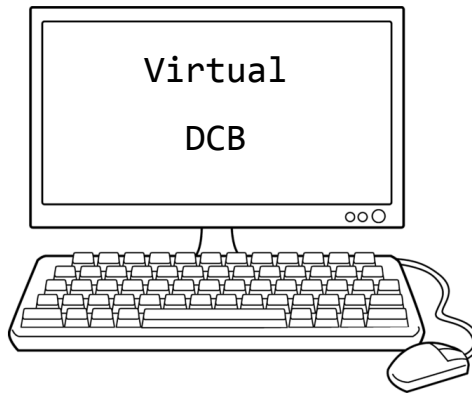
again, I forget what the third one was. Nevertheless, I'll never forget the magnificent sound the band produced in Truro Cathedral when we performed the ballet music from *Sylvia* by Delibes. It proved, once again, that a good arrangement is (allegedly) worth more than a poor original piece. (Discuss!)

In 1972, the year of the three-day week and Heath government, I had a short, but unsuccessful spell as conductor of what was then the Whitburn Band. In the Autumn of that year, we went down to the Belle Vue Contest in Manchester (another aromatic experience, - the zoo was next door), where, in a field of nineteen bands, we came twentieth. A really poor outfit from some, obscure village in Yorkshire (Grimethorpe) came first, conducted by a Mr. Howarth, named after a well-known English composer. This put me off contesting for good, although I am not convinced that the new-fangled uncontested contest (like the uncontested rugby scrum) is a particularly good substitute. (Discuss!)

Although I have largely become out of touch with the brass band world, I would have been sorry not to have had the experiences it offered. I have enjoyed a bit of success with an arrangement of Hamish MacCunn's overture, *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood*, and at the massed bands concert at the end of the 1970 National championships in the Royal Albert Hall (in London, not Stirling), my arrangement of Elgar's *Bavarian Dances* got a rare outing. The bands were Fairey, GUS, Munn and Felton, CWS Manchester and Fodens, sadly some of those long-gone. Twenty years later, as a BBC producer in Glasgow, I was responsible for Scotland's contributions to Radio 2's weekly *Listen to the Band* (also gone forever) and had the opportunity to work with icons of the brass band world like Harry Mortimer. I remember leaving for Bristol airport after an adjudication of Band of the Year (performances on tape to achieve anonymity, although the adjudication panel knew very well which band was which) on a very windy day. Harry was then very frail, but still very tall, and Bram Gay and I had to hold him down to prevent him from being blown into the river Avon.

My first experience of the wind band was at Cambridge in the mid-1960's, where I took over the university concert band. I recall repertoire included Schoenberg's *Theme and Variations*, a selection from *West Side Story*, Milhaud's *Suite Francaise* and Albert Ketelby's song, *Sanctuary of the Heart*, in which the soloist was Brian Kay, later of the King's Singers and BBC announcer fame. There was also a certain suite by Holst, with which you may be familiar. Less than a decade later, with the vision, help and enthusiasm of Geoffrey Haydock, came the DCB and the rest is history. I'd already flirted with the genre when I put on a couple of concerts in the Albert Hall (Stirling, not London) and old City Halls, Glasgow, and a broadcast on Radio 3 with the Scottish Concert Band. This was a wizard professional group formed of players from the Scottish orchestras and freelance pool. Finally, and for those of you still awake and interested in repertoire, the programmes included my arrangement for narrator and band of John Dankworth's *Tom Sawyer's Saturday* (published by OUP and donated to the DCB library), *Toccata Marziale* by Vaughan Williams, *Finlandia* by Sibelius, Buxton Orr's very fine *John Gay Suite* and American music by Copland and William Schumann. In retrospect, I could have devoted more time to bands in general, but I was constrained by the day job. But that's for another day.....or is it?

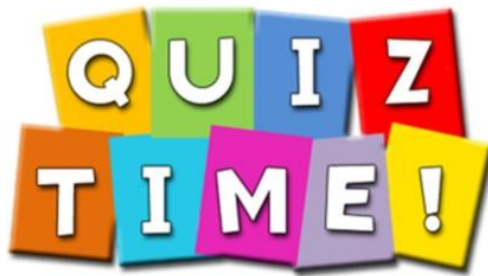
Thank you, Glyn, for contributing such a fascinating article. It was lovely to hear more about your many musical experiences over the years.



Don't forget that we have our fortnightly Zoom meeting this morning at 10am. If you haven't joined us before, why not come along and have a chat? We split into smaller groups of four or five so that we don't all talk over each other. We aim to finish around 11am, although you're free to leave at any time. Here's the link to the meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82355189452?pwd=QVJ6ZE9JaTVDM3ExdXJwYVVVSZUt5UT09>

Saxophonist Jess Gillam recently created her second virtual scratch orchestra, and it features our very own oboist **Alison**! Over 900 musicians and singers performed *Let It Be* by The Beatles, with participants recording their parts in their homes around the world during isolation. Here's a [link](#) to the performance. Can you spot Alison?



We're planning to run another **virtual quiz** either on Thursday 18th or Saturday 20th June, starting at 7pm. A poll has been set up to find the most suitable date. If you are interested in attending the quiz but haven't completed the poll, it can be found in the link below.

<https://xoyondo.com/dp/ATKxsITiUpfGHZf>

No prior knowledge is required, and we split everyone into teams, so there's plenty of opportunity to discuss the answers!

Odd one out

Here's a question from Alan Cooper - which one of the following instruments is the odd one out?

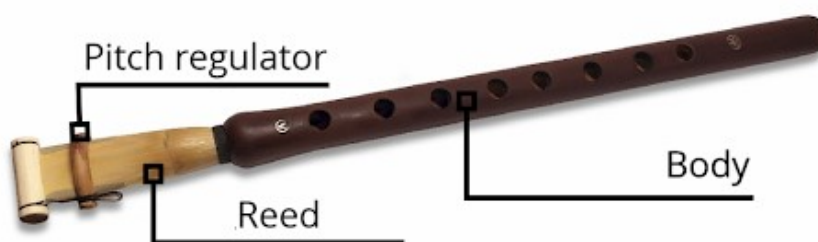
- A. Oboe
- B. Clarinet
- C. Bassoon
- D. Duduk
- E. Bagpipes



The answer is, of course, the clarinet, as all of the others are double reed instruments.

You'll all be familiar with four of the instruments above, but have you heard of a **duduk**? The duduk (pronounced doo-dook) is an ancient Armenian double reed woodwind instrument made of apricot wood. Variations of the Armenian duduk are found in other regions of the Caucasus and the Middle East, including Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, Turkey and Iran. Duduks are commonly played in pairs - the first player plays the melody, while the second player plays a steady drone. The sound of the two instruments together creates a richer, more haunting sound.

The unflattened reed and cylindrical body of the duduk produce a sound closer to the cor anglais than to the more commonly known double reed instruments. Unlike other double reed instruments such as the oboe, the duduk has a very large reed proportional to its size.



The duduk can be heard in many film soundtracks, including *Avatar*, *Gladiator* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. You may also have heard the duduk featuring in theme song of the Dothraki clan in the TV adaptation *Game of Thrones*.

If you'd like to learn more about the duduk and hear it being played, have a listen [here](#).





As well as their Friday Night Club, the **RSNO** also runs **Sunday Sounds**. Sundays are designed for relaxing and what better way to relax than by listening to beautiful music? Every Sunday at 3pm, an RSNO musician welcomes you to an online performance recorded from their home. The performances (including previous performances) can be viewed directly from the RSNO's [website](#), or via their Facebook page or YouTube channel.

The Georgia Aquarium has some live webcams where you can watch animals such as jelly fish and underwater puffins. Why not start with the [beluga whale webcam](#)?

Or why not take a virtual wander round some beautiful gardens? Here's a [link](#) to virtual garden tours featuring gardens from both the UK and abroad, including Kew Gardens, Monet's garden at Giverny, and the United States Botanic Garden.

If you're in the mood for some opera, The Metropolitan Opera provides daily free streamings from its Live in HD series. Each performance is available for a period of 23 hours, from 12.30am to 11.30pm GMT. The schedule will include outstanding complete performances from the past 14 years of cinema transmissions, starring all of opera's greatest singers. The streaming is free, but you have the option to donate towards helping to keep the Met running. For more details and to see what's available this week, visit the Met's website [here](#).



Recipe corner

Michele Newall has shared another delicious French recipe for us to try. This week, it's something sweet - Far Breton, a traditional cake or dessert from the Brittany region in France. Its base is similar in composition to a clafoutis batter: a flan-style eggs-and-milk custard with flour added. Prunes or raisins are common additions. Why not have a go and let us know what you think of the result?

Far Breton

Ingredients

2 cups whole milk	3/4 cup all purpose flour
3 large eggs	1 cup small or medium-size pitted prunes (about 6 ounces)
1/2 cup sugar	1/2 cup water
5 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, cooled	1/3 cup raisins
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract	1/4 cup Armagnac or other brandy
1/8 teaspoon salt	Powdered (icing) sugar



Method

1. Combine milk, eggs, 1/2 cup sugar, butter, vanilla, and salt in blender jar. Blend for 1 minute. Add flour and pulse just until blended, scraping down sides of jar. Cover and chill in jar for at least 3 hours and up to 1 day.
2. Combine prunes, 1/2 cup water, and raisins in heavy small saucepan. Cook over medium heat until fruit is softened and water is almost evaporated, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes. Turn off heat. Pour brandy over fruit. Using long match, ignite brandy. Let flames burn off, shaking pan occasionally. Transfer fruit to small bowl. Cool completely. **Do ahead** - can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and let stand at room temperature.
3. Position rack in centre of oven and preheat to 375°F. Butter 8-inch-diameter cake pan with 2-inch-high sides. Line bottom with parchment or waxed paper. Butter paper. Dust pan with flour, shaking out excess; place on baking sheet.
4. Re-blend batter until smooth, about 5 seconds. Pour into prepared cake pan. Drop prunes and raisins into batter, distributing evenly. Bake cake on baking sheet until sides are puffed and brown and knife inserted into centre comes out clean, about 1 hour. Cool cake completely in pan on rack.
5. Place piece of parchment or waxed paper on flat plate. Sift powdered sugar onto paper. Run knife around cake in pan to loosen. Invert pan onto paper, releasing cake. Remove pan; peel off paper. Place serving plate over cake and invert. Dust top of cake with additional powdered sugar.



Keeping in touch

As well as our online message board, remember that we now have a Facebook page for band members as another way of keeping in touch. This is separate from the existing public page for the band, and is a private page for current members only. The aim is to use it to post videos or audio of any music you've been recording with any groups (or solo), photos old and new, links to articles you'd like to share, details of other concerts you're playing in (when we get back to playing in concerts!) etc.

If you're already on Facebook and a friend of one of the admins, you should have received a request to join the page. Someone who is already a member of the page can invite other band members to join. These requests will be approved by the admins. If you don't have a Facebook account, you'll need to set one up if you'd like to access the page.

If you already have a Facebook account and haven't received a request to join the page, please let us know by emailing dunbartonshireconcertband@gmail.com

And if you're not keen on Facebook, we still have our online message board where you can post comments. Why not have a look and post a message for your fellow band members? Just click the link below.

<https://xoyondo.com/mb/6myg33qLg1QpWlb>

And finally...

Please feel free to contact us via the usual email address at any time:

dunbartonshireconcertband@gmail.com

Keep practising!

Tempo Police

Clocked you at 145 in a
126 metronome marking...

