



BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS

Dear Educator,

We of the Brass Band of Columbus believe it is our duty as musicians to support the work being done by educators throughout Central Ohio.

As part of our performance for students we make various educational points, including:

- music as a lifetime skill and activity
- information about the instruments themselves, how they operate, how they produce sounds, and how they sound
- concert etiquette

I hope you find it illustrative, interesting, thought-provoking, and useful. You can feel free to cut and paste any of the content for use in your classroom. More information about the band is also available on our website: [www.brassbandofcolumbus.org](http://www.brassbandofcolumbus.org).

Best regards,

Brian Stevens, Director  
Brass Band of Columbus  
[director@brassbandofcolumbus.org](mailto:director@brassbandofcolumbus.org)

# BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS

## EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE

Founded in 1984, the Brass Band of Columbus has been at the forefront of the resurgence of the brass band movement for twenty-five years. The band's instrumentation is brass and percussion only, following the tradition of British brass bands. Membership of this 45-piece volunteer ensemble includes over thirty active or retired music educators and a wide range of other professions. The BBC was founded by Dr. Paul Droste, Emeritus Professor of Music at The Ohio State University and former director of the OSU Marching Band.

### APPEARANCES

The Brass Band of Columbus averages over twenty appearances per year at indoor and outdoor venues, community events, and church services. Major appearances include The Mid-West Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, The Great American Brass Band Festival in Danville, Kentucky, the Ohio Music Educators Association Conference, and state, national, and international conferences of musical organizations. In 2000, the BBC performed as a part of the British Open Brass Band competition in Birmingham, England.

### COMPETITION

The Brass Band of Columbus is a member of the North American Brass Band Association (NABBA), an organization devoted to promoting brass bands and brass banding in North America. Each year NABBA hosts a competition for its member bands. At these contests, a highly-esteemed panel of international judges critiques bands in five different performance divisions, called sections. The BBC competes in the top division, the Championship Section, and has been awarded First Place ten times, most recently in April 2006. No other North American brass band approaches this record of excellence. The BBC hosted the contest in 1987, 1992, and 1996. In the spring of 2009 the band travelled to Toronto, Canada for the Hannaford Festival of Brass, returning having won the Hannaford Cup.

### RECORDINGS

The BBC's first commercial recording, *Lead On!*, was released in 1994. Its second recording is called *The Champions* and was released in 1998. *American's We* was released in 2000 in conjunction with the band's trip to England. *Brass Band Christmas* was released in 2001. *Gifted Leadership – An Anthology of March Masterpieces*, dedicated to the band's founder Dr. Paul Droste, was released in 2006. The band's newest recording entitled *Strike Up the Brass Band* was released in June 2008.

### GUEST ARTISTS

The BBC has been joined over the years by guest performers and conductors of local, national and international acclaim. Guest performers include Øystein Baadsvik (tuba), Mark Baker (vocal), William Boughton (trombone), Nicholas Childs (euphonium), Robert Childs (euphonium), John Harner (trumpet), Chris Jaudes (trumpet), Lars-Otto Ljungholm (cornet), Katrina Marzella (baritone), Cabot Rea (vocal), Robert Richardson (Baritone), Phil Smith (trumpet, cornet), John Stark (Euphonium), Helen Tyler (Baritone), and Aaron VanderWeele (euphonium). Guest conductors include Geoffrey Brand, Nick Childs, Steven Cobb, James Curnow, Jack Evans, William Himes, Ron Holz, Craig Kirchoff, Donald McGinnis, Philip Sparke, Ron Waiksnoris, and Jon Woods.



# BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS

## EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE

### MEMBERS

The members of the BBC have one thing in common---they are talented musicians who strive for excellence. However, they are not all musicians by profession. A little over half of the band's members are either current or retired music educators who teach or taught at various educational levels: elementary school, middle school, high school, and college. The rest of the band includes computer scientists, a doctor, stay-at-home moms, business professionals, a communications specialist, a building contractor, a tour director, a dentist, an engineer, a musical instrument repairman/designer, a science teacher, and a medical technology specialist. The members of the BBC range in ages from 21 to 81!

We believe that this diversity points out two things:

- 1) A person can perform at a high musical level regardless of their chosen profession, so long as they continue to work hard and be dedicated.
- 2) Music is a lifetime skill.

### WHAT IS A BRASS BAND?

Most of the time when someone refers to a "band", they are referring to the type which exist in most high schools, colleges and even military groups (Army, Marines, etc). These bands are called "wind bands" or "concert bands" and are made up of a combination of woodwinds (flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and saxophones), brass (trumpets, French horns, trombones, euphoniums/baritones and tubas), and percussion. The Brass Band of Columbus is rooted in the tradition of the British brass band. This tradition calls for a specific combination of brass instruments along with a percussion section. Unlike wind bands which use trumpets and French horns, the brass band makes use of cornets and E-flat alto horns for these voices. The design of all the instruments in the brass band can be simplified to say that they are all different sizes of essentially the same conical-bore instrument...with the obvious exception of the trombone. This homogeneity allows for a rich and balanced sound that cannot be duplicated in other ensembles. Interestingly, part of the tradition calls for all the parts for brass band music to be written in the treble clef...from soprano cornet all the way down to tuba. The only exception is the bass trombone, which is written in the bass clef.

### MUSIC

Many times when someone hears "brass band" they think "marching band" and that the music will be a limited to marches, fight songs, and "oom-pah". The Brass Band of Columbus plays an amazingly wide variety of music. Our musical repertoire consists of music written especially for brass band and music adapted from other sources, such as classical, pop, ethnic music, jazz, shows and movies, and many others. Of course, we play marches, too!



# BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS

## EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE

### BRASS BAND INSTRUMENTATION

#### UPPER VOICES

- *E-flat soprano cornets*, which provide the highest voice in the band.
- *B-flat cornets*: Solo, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and repiano parts. Cornets produce a more lyrical and focused sound than that of trumpets. However, in the hands of a skilled player, the cornet is also capable of all the brilliance and dynamics of the trumpet, making the instrument extraordinarily flexible.

#### MIDDLE VOICES

- *B-flat flugelhorns* play in the same range as the cornet but have a darker sound. The flugelhorn voice can be combined with the cornets, the alto horns, or can be a solo voice.
- *E-flat alto horns* (called tenor horns in British bands): Solo, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> parts. Alto horns are upright, three-valved instruments, with a sound more focused and somewhat more brilliant than that of a French horn.
- *B-flat baritone horns* are unique to the brass band. Instruments in American wind bands that are referred to as baritones are usually euphoniums. The baritone horn has a bit more edge and bite than that of the euphonium. The baritone horns serve as a lower voice in the middle choir of the band.
- *B-flat euphoniums* are often so low voices and also function as part of the middle voice choir or as reinforcement for the bass voices.
- *B-flat tenor trombones*, the only cylindrical bore instruments in the band (others are conical bore), add their characteristic brilliance and prodigious dynamic output to the overall sound of the band.

#### LOWER VOICES

- *Bass trombone* provides both the lowest voice of the trombone ensemble and additional weight and edge to the bass line.
- *E-flat tubas* are somewhat smaller and have agility and lyricism not usually associated with the tuba. They also integrate well with the voices just above (euphonium) and below (B-flat tuba).
- *B-flat tubas* provide the harmonic footing for the band. The robust B-flat tuba sound furnishes the richness and fullness of foundation that is characteristic of a brass band.

#### PERCUSSION

- The percussion section covers an astonishing array of instruments. Timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, drum set, mallet instruments, and all the associated percussion instruments are typical in brass band compositions.



# BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS

## EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE

### OTHER TOPICS

#### GEOMETRY

##### Cones and cylinders

1. Brass instruments are all made from tubes. These tubes can be either *conical*, with a gradual increase in diameter of the tube from the mouthpiece to the bell, or *cylindrical*, with the diameter staying the same from the mouthpiece to the bell.
2. The sound of conical instruments is generally darker (mellower, smoother) and that of cylindrical instruments is brighter (more brassy, more brilliant).
3. All the instruments in the BBC are conical except the trombone, which is cylindrical. Another common cylindrical brass instrument (not used in the BBC) is the trumpet.

#### LANGUAGE ARTS

##### Creative writing:

1. Write a musical story starring yourself as either the performer or the instrument.
2. Which instrument are you most like? Why?

##### Vocabulary:

1. What are some words used to describe sounds? What do they mean to you? What word would you use for the antonym? (Many descriptive words in the text of this document can be used as discussion starters.)
2. What are some words used to describe music? What do they mean to you? What word would you use for the antonym?

##### Spelling:

cornet	baritone	cymbal
trumpet	bass	xylophone
French horn	trombone	marimba
soprano	euphonium	vibraphone
alto	tuba	ensemble
tenor	percussion	bonus: repertoire

#### SOCIAL STUDIES

1. What do you think of when you think of someone from various countries?
2. Have you ever met someone from another country? If not, how did you form your opinion or image? (TV, movies, books, pictures) How accurate do you think you are?
3. How would you feel if someone formed their opinion about you if they had never met you?
4. What are some of the characteristics of music you know from these countries?
5. How does the sound of a country's music help us understand what the culture is like?



# BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS

## EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE

### SCIENCE

Sound production/vibration

1. Every sound comes from vibrations. What vibrates to produce the sound in various instruments?
2. Pick some random everyday sounds: what is vibrating to produce them?
3. What is the relationship between size and frequency (pitch, relative highness/lowness of sound)? How do various instruments vary their size to produce different pitches?

### GEOGRAPHY

1. Study a map of the area(s) of the world the music is from and find the countries it originates in.
2. Plot points for each country and then draw lines between them indicating the route one would fly to make the trip in the order above.
3. About how many miles would the whole trip be? How many kilometers?

### CONCERT ETIQUETTE

- Always be respectful---both for the performers on stage (they have worked very hard to prepare) and for those in the audience around you. This means sitting quietly during the performance and while someone on stage is talking. Talking and moving around can be distracting to both the performers and other audience members.
- No doubt, you will like some of the pieces played better than others. What is interesting is that what you like least could be someone else's favorite piece of all time! Even if something being performed is not your "cup of tea", be sure to let those who are enjoying it do so without distraction or noise.
- Although there will be a variety of music played, the audience should behave as if this is a *classical* music performance, as opposed to pop or jazz. Generally there is only applause after a musical selection, not during. Some classical pieces have multiple sections within the piece which are separated by a brief silence. A piece of this type is said to have multiple *movements*. It is correct to not applaud after a movement, instead to wait until the entire piece is completed. When there is a printed program you are able to tell when a piece has multiple movements. If you cannot, you can always wait until the conductor lowers his or her hands and either acknowledges the musicians or turns to acknowledge the audience.
- It is appropriate to greet the conductor when he or she comes onto the stage with your applause. The same would apply to special soloists who are not a part of the ensemble, although there will be no such soloists in this concert.
- Overall, be enthusiastic, but always polite. The musicians will welcome your enthusiasm and appreciation for their talent and hard work. Let them know---they draw energy from the audience. The more energetic the audience is, the better the performance will be.



# BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS

## EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE



Trumpet (about 4 feet 9 inches stretched out)



Bb Cornet (about 4 feet 9 inches stretched out)



Eb Soprano Cornet (about 3 feet 9 inches stretched out)



Bb Flugelhorn (about 4 feet 9 inches stretched out)



# BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS

## EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE



French Horn  
(about 7 feet stretched out)



Eb Alto (tenor) horn  
(about 7 feet 3 inches stretched out)

# BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS

## EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE



Bb Baritone  
(about 9 feet 6 inches stretched out)



Bb Euphonium  
(about 9 feet 6 inches stretched out)

# BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS

## EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE



Tenor trombone (about 9 feet 6 inches stretched out)



Tenor Trombone (w/F attachment) (about 9 feet 6 inches stretched out)



Bass trombone (about 9 feet 6 inches stretched out)

# BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS

## EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE



Eb tuba (about 14 feet 4 inches stretched out)

**BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS**  
**EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE**



BBb tuba (about 19 feet stretched out)



# BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE



Snare drum



Bass drum



Concert toms



Tympani



BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS  
EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE



Cymbals



Gong



Drum set/drum kit



# BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS

## EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE



Chimes/tubular bells



Glockenspiel/orchestra bells (metal bars, no resonator tubes)

# BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS

## EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE



Marimba (thin, wide wooden/synthetic bars; long resonator tubes)



Xylophone (thick, narrow wooden/synthetic bars; short resonator tubes)

# BRASS BAND OF COLUMBUS EDUCATORS PRE-CONCERT GUIDE



Vibraphone/vibes (metal bars, foot pedal [works like the pedal on a piano to either dampen the bars or let them ring], medium to long resonator tubes)