MUSIC FOR THE LOVE OF IT

AUGUST 1997

WARMING UP TO CONTINUO PLAYING

SIMPLE RULES FOR KEYBOARD PLAYERS IN BAROQUE SONATAS

by Nancy Garniez

The Baroque sonata is a duet for a "stand-up" instrument and bass; the trio sonata is a trio for two"stand-ups" and bass. The *basso continuo* part (*"continuo"* for short) is so important it originally required two players to do it justice. (In its modern counterpart, the jazz combo, it often uses three: piano, bass and drums.) One player typically produced a counter-melody in the bass register as an equal partner to the higher "solo" voice(s). The other player, usually at a harpsichord, doubled that bass line with the left hand while improvising a discreet right-hand part to support the principal lines without doubling or obscuring them.

With a pianoforte as the accompanying keyboard, one player can take the place of two. The pianist's left hand can provide a loud enough bass instrument to balance the ensemble, with the right hand filling in more lightly.

The *basso continuo* part was originally notated in "figured bass," which consists of ordinary notes for a bass line plus little numbers to indicate intervals consistent with the underlying harmony. Since most players could tell what these harmonies must be, the figures were necessary only for unusual effects. Many people who play keyboard these days, however, do not trust themselves to play by ear. For such players, modern editions of Baroque works normally contain a "realization" of the figured bass with a suggested right-hand part in standard notation. Often these realizations feature relentlessly predictable measures, sustained chords on every downbeat, and one harmonic resolution after another, stifling the player's imagination and eliminating much of the excitement from these richly engaging sonatas. With a little reworking of published realizations, however, we can do better.

I use four simple rules in my performance and teaching of baroque ensemble music that seem to help bring out the essence of the music and make keyboard *continuo* playing more fun: "No parking;" "Data, dit, deedle;" "Simon says;" "Central heating." I shall explain.

Rule 1. "No parking."

The pianist will face the challenge of producing a left-hand melody, though it takes practice, since most pianists are used to playing melodically only with the right hand, and treat everything below middle C as harmony. Harmony is vertical. Responding to vertical relationships is like stopping to admire the view — fine on the Skyline Drive, but instant death on the *autobahns* of Baroque music. Harmony is heavy; line is light.

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Alto Horn, a British Brass Band Instrument

BRASS BANDS

MUSIC FOR LOVE AND COMPETITION

by Mark Anderson

The articles on competition in the June, 1997 issue reminded me of a very distinct form of amateur music competitions. In recent years as a result of studies and articles, I have been drawn to the periphery of what is known as the "British Brass Band Movement." My first glimpse of this phenomenon of amateur music making came through some pamphlets about brass bands, "Starting a British Brass Band" (J. Perry Watson, Yamaha International, 1984) and "Care and Feeding of a Community Brass Band" (same author, Boosey & Hawkes, c. 1985).

A "British Brass Band" is different from a concert band in a several ways: the instrumentation is standardized at twenty-five brass instruments and percussion (no woodwinds); participation in regional, national and international contests is a frequent goal. "Contests are the lifeblood of the brass band world and rivalry has always been strong, cash prizes providing additional incentive." (Brass Band Bridge, December 1996.) In

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THE IN BOX

BABA YAGA STRIKES AGAIN
Editor:
After Andy Ungar's great article in the June issue. I'm sure you're going to get lots of Baba Yaga stories. Here's mine:

I had not been playing the oboe very long when I was asked to participate in a semi-staged production of an opera. The singers were amateurs and semi-pros and they staged their own simple productions as a way of learning the literature. The first oboe was a fellow I'd played with before and he was the epitome of the neurotic oboe player. He swabbed his instrument obsessively and always seemed to have a burble or glitch requiring his attention instead of the music.

Because of space, the small orchestra was on stage with the performers. We were only 6 feet from the singers. The first oboe played well but soon began his obsessive fussing. At every appropriate rest, he'd swab his instrument. Pretty soon the cigarette paper came out as he needed to blot keys which had water in them. Crackle, crackle, crackle went the paper and I could see that the singers were beginning to be annoyed. I knew disaster was imminent.

I could see Baba Yaga enter this fellow's body as we were approaching the climax of an aria. As the soloist began a difficult passage, Baba Yaga lifted the oboe to his/her mouth and prepared to blow the water out of the sticking hole. I knew what was coming. As the singer took a great breath for the last note, Baba Yaga blew into the offending key with force of a hurricane. You could hear it outside the hall. The singer missed the note, the audience began to laugh, and Baba Yaga turned to me with a satisfied smile. Then she left the body of the oboist in search of her next victim.

Katie Frohmberg
Berkeley, California

ENSEMBLE ETHIC ALIVE AND WELL
Editor:
Thanks for forwarding the February '97 Summer Workshops issue of your newsletter. I have already contacted some folks here in the northeast concerning participation in one of the programs listed. As a clarinetist, I find too few opportunities to play in strictly wind ensemble chamber groups, which is my preference. I was pleased to see that your publication included a few workshops dedicated to winds.

There are, of course, many fine classical works for mixed instruments, including strings and clarinet, but in most instances, the clarinet part was inspired by a virtuoso player friend of the composer. Perhaps you will agree that however well one may play, not all of us prefer "starring roles" as a chamber music player. I have found that in works written for wind chamber ensembles, even the most demanding pieces, the workload and technical challenges are generally shared equally. Somehow among amateurs, that kind of equality creates a better social climate in the group.

Your June '97 sample newsletter was a delight to read. Thanks for including it. My husband (who plays double bass) and I really enjoyed it. Good information, good writing, fun. Your magic (or was it the Baba Yaga's?) worked! We want to subscribe. Not only is our check enclosed, we're even thinking about moving to California.

Best wishes to you and your associate editor, Janet Telford. We look forward to your next issue.

Lila & Al Finck
Melrose Park, PA

COMPOSER OFFERS THREE SCORES
Composer Rick Sowash of Cincinnati, OH, offers to send, for the cost of the photocopying and postage, any or all of the works described below.

1) *Piano Trio #1: Four Seasons in Belleville,* for violin, cello and piano. Evokes the seasons passing in an Ohio village; 24 minutes long; Cost: $10.23. A CD recording of this work, Gasparo Records GSCD-254 "Rick Sowash: The 4 Piano Trios" played by The Mirecourt Trio, is available through record stores or from the composer.

2) *Anecdotes & Reflections: A Portrait of America,* for Bb clarinet, violin, cello and piano. The six movements refer to Eastern European ancestors, Gershwin, film scores, nature, Benny Goodman and a pie-in-the-face award for John Philip Sousa; 41 minutes long altogether. Cost: $22.04. A CD recording of this work. Gasparo Records GSCD-285, "Chamber Music with Clarinet by Rick Sowash" played by The Mirecourt Trio and clarinetist Craig Olzenak, is available from dealers or the composer.

3) *Appalachian Trail Suite,* for French horn, violin, cello and piano. Scenes along the Appalachian Trail; 29 minutes long; Cost: $19.39.

The sheet music is computer-notated. Parts are photocopied 2-sided on stiff paper and spiral-bound for easy page-turns. The music requires good musicians, but not virtuosos. Sowash describes his own music as "derriere garde — good tunes over tonal harmonies. Key signatures. Not a lot of meter changes." To order, contact Mr. Sowash at 1607 Birchwood Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45224-2001. He will mail the music on approval; pay if you decide to keep it. There is more information about the composer on his web site at

www2.primax.com/users/~ricks/default.

Sowash explains his motivations in offering the music at cost: "I write music in hopes of making friends, not money. (Luckily, I earn enough as an author.) The friends I most want to make are serious musicians who will enjoy my scores and want to explore more."

VIOLA DREAM QUARTETS
Australian composer Maxine Komlosl has published a set of string quartets called the *Viola Dream String Quartets* in which the viola always gets a melody. The other voices, she claims, are also interesting. The pieces range from easy to challenging. Their titles are: *Softly Awakes My Heart, Saint-Saens; In the Depths of the Temple, Bizet; Pathetique, Beethoven; Song to the Moon, Dvorak; Canzona, Handoshkin; Cake-Walk, Debussy; Celeste Aida, Verdi.* Price including air mail is US$26 for a set of 4 parts; $10 for a score. To order, write Maxine at 270 Sportsmans Drive, West Lakws, South Australia, 5021, fax 011 61 8 83569694. Her web page with information on other pieces is ching.apana.org.au/~oliri/.

MORE WEB SITES FOR MUSICIANS
The World of Wind Ensembles and Symphonic Bands is at www.uwm.edu:80/people/mcmahan/winds/, providing musicians interested in the wind ensemble and symphonic band with current information pertinent to the field. It includes a forum on which to discuss issues with others in the field, a resource guide for repertoire, submitted programs from around the world, and user-submitted job listings.

Scrape Magazine is mainly for bassoonists, but may warrant a visit from other woodwind players to browse the excellent reviews of woodwind ensemble literature — it currently features a review of the delightful, little-known Briccialdi Quintet. It also covers bassoon-oriented news, repair advice, supplies, job listings and classifieds. Bryan Young is the editor. *Scrape's* address is www.peabody.jhu.edu/~bryan/private/index.

INTERNET SOURCE OF DIGITAL MUSIC FILES
Digital music files can be used with a personal computer to generate both conventional printed scores and audible music. Sunhawk Corporation offers digital music files for sale over the Internet, making it a pioneer in electronic music publishing. Used with Sunhawk's *Solero* music processing software (for Pentium PC computers and compatibles), the files can be transformed into engraving-quality sheet music and scores, and also to play the music on a MIDI instrument. It is possible to "turn off" one's own part in the playback and play or sing along with the *Solero* performance, so as to practice playing with the other voices of the ensemble, like the old *Music-Minus-One* records. Sunhawk's catalog is at www.sunhawk.com, or contact Judy McOstrich/Sunhawk Corporation, 7720 39th Ave. N.E., Seattle, WA 98115, (206)528-0876/(206)528-0942 (fax) 1-888-SUNHAWK.

CRUISE
A professionally coached cruise/workshop is being planned by Dick Sheftel for Nov. 12-22, 1997, on the *Vista Fjord* from Lisbon to the Canary Islands. He has room for a few more violinists and violists. Contact Mr. Sheftel at Zenith Travel, 16 East 34 St., New York, NY 10016, 800/684-1414, extension 647.

CAMMAC CANCELS WEEK I, 1997
The first week (June 22-29) of CAMMAC's Lake MacDonald 1997 Summer Workshops was cancelled due to insufficient pre-registration. The remaining weeks of the summer program are being held as scheduled; their August sessions feature chamber andchoral music programs (the Schubert Mass in Eb and the Brahms Requiem) plusvocal and instrumental courses. Current information on CAMMAC's summr workshops is available on their website at www.cammac.ca, or call 514/932-8755.

EXTREMELY EARLY MUSIC
As reported here in June, 1996, an ancient bone flute segment, estimated at 43,000 to 82,000 years old, was found at a Neanderthal campsite in western Slovenia by Dr. Ivan Turk and others. It is the first flute ever to be associated with Neanderthals and the oldest known musical instrument. Musicologist Bob Fink of Saskatoon, SK, Canada, has analyzed measurements of the tone-hole spacing in the fragment and concluded that the original instrument must have been built to play in a diatonic scale. He believes it was probably built to produce at least four notes of a minor scale, including the flatted third and sixth. Fink's interpretation, if true, would lend weight to the position that tonality is a fundamental property of music. Copies of Fink's essay on his flute analysis are available for $5.00 from Greenwich, 516 Ave K South, Saskatoon, SK, Canada S7M 2E2.

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FROM THE HEART *by Helen Spielman*

TONGUE DEPRESSED

Not long ago my dentist found an abnormal growth on the underside of my tongue, a body part I use for three of my favorite activities: talking, eating, and playing the flute. Not an organ on which most flutists would want to have surgery! But surgery I did have, and while it was not pleasant, I was surprised to learn a lot about being a musician. I couldn't play my flute for two weeks after the procedure. When I finally picked up my instrument and played some tentative notes, all I could manage were a few long tones for five minutes. The second day, I played long tones and slow, slurred scales for a quarter of an hour. My tone was terrible. A week passed before I could even look at a piece of legato music.

Over the next weeks, although I increased my practice time a little each day, my embouchure had lost muscle strength, and I didn't have the subtle inner control to which I'd been accustomed. I didn't hear improvement and became discouraged, but I kept practicing. When I went to my scheduled flute lesson, the flute was not taken out of its case. I taught my students, embarrassed by the sounds I made, and I kept practicing.

I shared my process with my flutist friends around the world on the Internet FLUTE list. Many of them wrote that I would recover and would become a better musician because of what I was going through. I didn't believe them.

People said that I was an inspiration to them, but I felt impatience with the slowness of the process. One woman wrote, "How do you do it? It's so hard to keep at it when you don't enjoy the sounds you're making." I answered:

"Two things motivate me to practice: "One, I have two performances coming up. There is *nothing* like a performance to make me practice. I'm an amateur level player, so my tone is never what I *really* want, but I'm satisfied when I sound the best that *I* can sound, and I'm definitely not there. I'm practicing to get back to that point in time for the performances.

Two, the way I see it, either I want to get my tone back, or I won't. Even if I practice, my tone may not come back, but chances are that it will; there is hope. If I don't practice, I have a guarantee that it won't. The only thing I can do is practice. It's no fun, and discouraging, but it's the path to get where I want to go. I hold my nose (not literally!) and keep playing even though I can't stand what I hear. I just keep going."

I knew the exact moment when I declared myself officially recovered. At a lesson, I played an etude that I'd been working on. I thought my tone had improved, but I still didn't think it was good. My teacher's comment at the conclusion of the etude was, "Helen, I have never heard your tone sound better. That was just terrific. Your playing has reached a new level since your surgery." I went home and sheepishly wrote to my friends on the 'Net that they had been right after all.

As I write this, I still cannot tackle double- or triple-tonguing, because it hurts to do so. With patience and the passage of time, my tongue will heal more and those skills will return. This process has been a test of my patience. I always have endless patience with my students and others, but not with myself.

I've learned that when I share my fear and discouragement with fellow musicians, they understand at a deep level what I'm going through, and they support me. A man I'd never met sent me a flute CD, saying that there are many ways to become a better flutist without playing on the instrument. My pianist friend offered to take time off from work to take care of me. A woman in Scotland sent me a handwritten card.

One of my twelve-year-old students telephoned one morning the week after surgery. She wanted to know how I was doing and told me she missed me. After I thanked her from my heart, I asked to speak to her mother. She told me her mother wasn't at home. This child had called me unprompted. One man across the country wrote saying that because I was such a beautiful person, I could not help but make beautiful sounds again. Wow!

I can relate better, now, to my students who stop playing for a while, and then pick up their music-making again. I generated many ways to take a productive music lesson even though I couldn't play my instrument. For example, I spent one lesson listening to five recordings of the same piece and analyzing them with my teacher.

I was profoundly reminded about how precious it is to play and teach music. Because I do it every day, sometimes I take it for granted. The ability to make music and live a musical life is a gift from God, a privilege that few have, and the result of years of preparation. Such a blessing deserves my conscious awareness and deep gratitude every day.

I wouldn't recommend surgery on your tongue if you play a wind instrument. But if that becomes a necessity, look for the gifts. There are many.

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Flutist Helen Spielman lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. She is a regular columnist for Music for the Love of It.

AMATEURS DOMINATE CLIBURN COMPETITION AND INSTITUTE

by Michael Winter

Amateurs were the headliners at the 10th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, held in Fort Worth, May 23 through June 8, 1997. Fifteen enthusiastic, non-professional pianists from around the world attended the TCU/Cliburn Institute's Amateurs Program, and an amateur musician became the first American to win the Gold Medal at the Competition since 1981. Jon Nakamatsu, a 28 year-old high school teacher from Sunnyvale, California, with a bachelor's degree in German Studies and a master's in education, both from Stanford University, won the Cliburn Gold Medal and more than $200,000 in combined engagement fees, prize money and CD recordings.

Jon Nakamatsu is not a typical amateur. In addition to his talent, he is exceptionally disciplined and focused, and relentless in his quest to become a concert pianist, even while earning two degrees in non-related subjects and developing an alternative career. He is single, and practiced every available hour. Rejected in the early rounds of the 1993 event, he returned to win.

The more typical amateur attended the TCU/Cliburn Institute's Amateurs Program rather than the Cliburn Foundation's International Competition. Here was a rare and wonderful chance to get away from the housework, family, job and other obligations, and to immerse oneself for a week in a festival of top-class music making, friend-making, teaching, and discussion, not to mention your own "performance" for the rest of the group.

The Texas Christian University/Cliburn Piano Institute is a cooperative educational venture between TCU and the Van Cliburn Foundation. The institute was founded in 1981 by Dr. Tamas Ungar, a member of the Piano Faculty at TCU, and now the Institute's Executive Director. Originally held in conjunction with the quadrennial Cliburn Piano Competition, the institute has evolved into an annual event that presents three different programs of three to seven days in length, usually concurrently, for performers, teachers, and amateurs.

The stated mission of the institute is "to provide a high level, international educational experience for serious piano students, teachers, and amateurs through interaction with recognized performing artists and other music professionals."

"The amateurs are really a joy to work with," said Dr. Ungar. "Their intense love of music is obvious in everything they do, whereas with the performer-student, that sometimes gets lost in the focus on mechanics and in the pressure of competition.

"They also often work in occupations where there isn't a lot of opportunity for creativity. Nowhere else in their lives will they find an environment more nurturing of that creativity than here. My own teaching focuses on their psyche, and what they can bring to each piece."

The Institute program is designed for "non-professional pianists who love music passionately while maintaining their livelihood through other professions, and for piano teachers who rarely have the opportunity to perform. The program includes two private lessons and two chances to play in group sessions in a supportive and encouraging atmosphere conducive to learning."

Notice the word "perform" is avoided. That's going to change, according to Ungar. "To my surprise, this group really wanted to perform, in every sense of the word." One fellow even rented a tuxedo for the occasion.

But playing wasn't everything. There was a day of one-hour lecture-discussions by members of the competition jury and other distinguished artists and scholars, such as Claude Frank on Beethoven Sonatas, Ian Hobson on Brahms' shorter pieces, Warren Jones on the art of accompanying, David Dubal on "In the Parlor on the Piano" and others focusing on works of Schubert and Chopin and on the teaching of improvisation.

There were very practical topics from the teachers, such as "How to practice, and keep your technique up, when all you've got is a half-hour."

"I would call it a musical working vacation" said Helen Ng, a financier on Wall Street in her 30's. "I enjoyed the sharing the most — our experiences, our knowledge, our problems, our music.'' She and others enjoyed the experience so much they are not content to wait until next year, which they hope will be expanded to a full week. "We even discussed forming our own amateurs group in New York."

Thanks to TCU's contributions and the Institute's own fund raising efforts, travel, accommodation and tuition costs are kept minimal. For information contact:

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TCU/Cliburn Piano Institute
TCU Box 297026
Fort Worth, Texas 76129
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Michael Winter is a pianist and a music critic for the Idaho Statesman in Boise. He attended the 1997 Cliburn Piano Competition.

THEORY HELPS *by Darcy Reynolds, M.A.*

I remember how I felt about theory when I was a piano performance major in college — something that you had to do. Sort of like brushing your teeth and going to the dentist. You knew it was good for you, even if you didn't enjoy it. And besides, what did theory have to do with being a really good pianist?

Well, here we are years later, and I have to laugh at myself when I think about how I used to feel about studying theory. The old saying, "when the student is ready, the teacher will come" is fairly apt in my case.

I have had several teachers over the years:

When I started studying composition, my view of theory suddenly changed. I found that a solid understanding of theory is very helpful, both for analyzing other composer's works to see how they created their music and for crafting my own work. I have found that composing music provides an entirely different kind of satisfaction than performance. It's such a deep satisfaction that I have been willing to embrace all of the hours of theory and analysis that are necessary to pursue the craft of composition.

Studying composition one-on-one with Charles Shere at Mills College was a very fruitful experience. One of the great things he had me do was to actually copy out other composer's music — note by note, with all of the tempo, articulation and dynamic markings. This is what all of the composers did in days gone by (in the pre-xerox-age) and you sure do learn a lot. Most of this music was atonal — either free or 12 tone — so there was a particular emphasis on timbre, rhythmic motives and disjunct melodic lines. This was my crash course in 20th-century atonal composition.

I had the good fortune to be studying keyboard improvisation with Terry Riley at the same. With Terry I was immersed in Indian ragas and talas (modes and rhythmic cycles). We would study these and then build long improvisational piano works based on the modal and rhythmic material from the North Indian musical tradition (of course the tuning of the piano limited which modes we could use!).

Then, years later I decided to get more exposure to the jazz and pop idiom by studying with a local songwriter (who doesn't read a note!). What he has developed, though, is a great system of applied theory. Rather than just writing triads, seventh chords, chord extensions, inversions, and chord progressions, you play all of these things on the keyboard in a very systematic fashion using the circle of fifths. There is nothing like getting all of this material under your fingers!

This story could never be complete without including Beethoven, one of my most inspiring teachers. His works exemplify an extraordinary use of form. In Beethoven, techniques such as counterpoint or variation transcend mere technique and serve his musical ideas in a natural yet extraordinary way. Looking at any of the late piano sonatas or string quartets can leave no doubt that his music goes beyond the techniques that he employs to create an almost other-worldly music.

Needless to say, I expose all of my students to these various tidbits during their lessons. The written theory is supported by the applied theory on their instrument (my theory students may be vocalists, string or woodwind players). Analysis of pieces that they are working on helps tie it all together. Sight reading becomes so much easier when you can instantly identify the chords as they fly by! Understanding keys, chord progressions and structure demystifies new pieces, and helps to develop a deeper level of musicianship and interpretation.

While most of my students are adults studying theory and composition, there are also several children who study piano with me. No one is spared my enthusiasm for theory, analysis and sight reading, including first graders! What is amazing is that at the end of their first year, they can go through pieces and provide harmonic and structural analysis of their pieces. Of course we're starting with A-B-A form and I, IV and V chords, but it's a way of perceiving music that carries over to all of their musical experiences, both as listeners and as performers.

While it was my desire to compose that ultimately led me to pursue a more rigorous study of theory, what I now realize is that my knowledge of theory and composition has had a tremendous impact on my piano performance. It has improved my sight reading by leaps and bounds and enhanced my interpretative abilities. Being able to analyze a piece, from its motives to its overall structure, adds new dimensions to my portrayal of repertoire. I'd encourage any performer to embark upon the study of theory, and perhaps a bit of composition as well. It can do wonders for your playing!

Composer Darcy Reynolds teaches privately in San Francisco, California, and is co-director of the Bay Area Chapter of the American Composers Forum. She offers courses in Harmony and Musicianship, Fundamentals of Composition, 20th-Century Compositional Techniques, Form in Composition, Orchestration, and Composing Chamber Music (with readings by top notch Bay Area performers) .

For a course brochure or information on the ACF, contact Darcy Reynolds, M.A., POB 591107, San Francisco, CA 94159-1107,415-386-9190<metta4@sirius.com>.

BRASS BANDS **continued from page 1**

Great Britain the band of mixed woodwinds and brasses is often called a "military band." In the U.S. these mixed ensembles are usually called concert bands. In the U.S. military they are usually called service bands. Concert bands are only distant cousins of the brass bands.

The history of brass bands is fascinating. In the United States, as in Europe, they evolved during the early nineteenth century. The industrial revolution made possible the development of brass wind instruments with valves for a reliable change of tube lengths that permitted chromatic playing. By the middle of that century, the all-brass bands had become more common than the older ensembles of mixed winds including "natural" (valveless) horns, familiar to us from the Haydn divertimenti, the Mozart serenades and the Beethoven and Schubert octets.

The traditions on opposite sides of the Atlantic began to diverge in the late nineteenth century when the most influential American bandsmen, Patrick Gilmore and, later, John Philip Sousa, fielded highly professional bands of mixed winds. In England, the all-brass bands have continued to this day, whereas in the United States they all but disappeared by the end of the First World War. The exception has been the continuation of the Salvation Army bands, but that is altogether another topic.

In England, brass band contests date from the 1850's and have always been an important element in brass banding there. A strict requirement is that all of the members of these bands must be amateurs who play strictly for the love of it and never for pay. According to Mr. Watson, amateur status is considered a key element in the continuing success of brass bands in England. World class professional soloists are often featured with the bands for concerts and festivals, but never in contests. The Salvation Army Bands are not permitted to participate in contests and it has only been during recent years that they have allowed their music to be played by other brass bands.

The standardization of kinds and numbers of instruments vastly simplifies the work of composers and arrangers for these ensembles. Although there is a superb catalog of music written for these bands during the last 150 years, many of the bands are keenly interested in contemporary works, and there is a constantly evolving body of new works with commissions awarded to excellent modern composers.

Another key to the success of these bands has been sponsorship. The enduring and successful bands have had industrial sponsors, much like our American amateur and semi-professional athletic teams. A recent British film, "Brassed Off," recounts the human impact of the closure of a coal mine in a Yorkshire town by following the members of the local brass band and its driven conductor. The band has the potential for going to the national finals and winning the British championship at the same time that they are losing their jobs, property and families. The stunning music for the soundtrack is provided by an authentic British brass band. (A Miramax film, directed by Mark Herman, starring Pete Postlethwaite, Tara Fitzgerald, Ewan McGregor, Jim Carter and Stephen Tompkinson.)

It is easy to find recordings of British brass bands once you know how to distinguish them from concert bands. There are even a few on-line sources that specialize in this kind of music, including TAP Music Sales, http://tapmusic.com; Bernel music, www.inc.com/users/bwiley.html; Simply Brass, ralvarez@hookup.net. To get a good idea of a brass band sound, you might try a CD entitled The Hannaford Street Silver Band, produced by Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, SMCD 5103. Examples of the finest of the British tradition are recordings of the Black Dyke Mills Brass Band and the Bessies O'The Barn Brass Band. For an idea of the magnificent sound in the parallel Salvation Army Bands, listen to recordings of their International Staff Band and New York Staff Band.

A revival of British-style brass bands in the United States has been enhanced by the activity of the North American Brass Band Association for more than a dozen years. They sponsor a yearly competition. Contact Bert Wiley, the membership chair: PO Box 2438, Cullowhee, NC 28723; telephone, (704) 293-7469; email, bernel@wcu.campus.mci.net. The number of bands and the number of contests seem to be increasing each year, and it can be a thrilling venue for amateur brass players, especially if they enjoy competition as well as music! The 1998 championships will be held in Lexington Kentucky.

An entirely different brass band movement currently exists within the U.S. These are bands made up of both professional and amateur players who comprise what might be considered a sub-group of the original instruments movement. The original instruments groups use the nineteenth-century instruments and play the music of the period in as authentic a manner as possible. Compared with the British brass bands, these brass bands tend to be much smaller and the number of instruments is not standardized. Typical band sizes are from nine to twenty-four players, often dictated by the music that is being played. Sometimes these groups are associated with the reenactment of Civil War military engagements, sometimes they are part of historical parks and villages, and sometimes they are stand-alone groups.

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The sound of the original-instruments bands is quite different from the modern brass bands. The dynamic range and quality of intonation of modern instruments is superb. The original instruments stand at the beginning of this development: neither the dynamic levels nor the intonation were as good as they have become. It is a tribute to the players to hear how good the music can sound on these instruments. One of the earliest recordings using original instruments was: The Yankee Brass Band, produced for the recorded anthology of American Music published by New World Records (NW 312), in 1981. I recommend this recording not only for the fine playing, but also for the exceptional quality of the program notes.

In about a week or so from the time I am writing this article (July, 1997), I will be going on a brief tour of Vermont and New Hampshire with one of the original instruments groups. It will be a challenge to be given an unfamiliar instrument and mouthpiece on which to play unfamiliar music among musicians with whom I have never played before. It causes some apprehension. However, the apprehension does not compare to my experience as a teenager waiting to audition for a seat in our all-city orchestra. Perhaps as adults we learn to cope better with the stress of competition, and to appreciate its benefits.

Brass player Mark Anderson is a frequent contributor to Music for the Love of It.

CONTINUO **continued from page 1**

After years of struggle dealing with chords it is just plain hard to get interested in line on the piano. I recommend starting with the cello or left hand part, and stand-up instrument alone —leave the harmony out for now. Sustaining the first bass note of each measure through the entire bar, listen for consonance and dissonance as the treble line moves (Example 1a).

Handel, *Sonata in G Minor*, ed. Lasocki & Bergman, Faber Music, Ltd.

Then reverse roles, having the stand-up instrument do the sustaining while the bass moves (Example 1b).

Where there are displaced strong beats (as in Example 2, below) the resulting dissonances will sound truly awful, but the temporary discomfort will yield useful insight into linear tuning. Line is produced by tones moving independent of harmony — pulling against harmony, so to speak. Finesse in tuning dissonance makes the bass — whether cello or piano — melodic, dramatic, powerful: in short, more fun.

Gradually add the changes as written: first, every two beats; then on every beat, and so on, until the music is fleshed out, always listening for the interval between the bottom and top voices. Above all, don't try to work on tuning and rhythm at the same time.

Rule 2. "Data, dit, deedle."

Unlike music of the Classical period, most Baroque textures rely on only three levels of note value, each played with contrasting articulation. Take a good look at the movement to determine the predominating note value. In most *andantes* it will be the eighth-note; in quicker movements, it may be the quarter. Assign to this value the syllable "dit" (staccato).

Every value longer than the "dit" becomes a "dah," sustained for its entire duration, and not connected to any other note, unless slurred (by the composer!). When two "dits" are slurred, as in an *affettuoso,* for example, they become a "data" that slides from one pitch to another, rather than two distinctly articulated pitches. A dotted quarter followed by an eighth would become "dah dih."

Every value shorter than the "dit" is grouped, either in pairs to become "deedle, deedle" or in groups of three to become "dee-dle-y." A common way of grouping four running notes is one short, three running: "dih-dee-dle-y" or "dee-dle-y-dih."

Practice "dah-dit-deedling" in unison. Speak the rhythms of the stand-up instrument, without accents other than those yielded by these simple articulations. (Avoid the universal tendency to emphasize downbeats, because it turns highly inventive rhythms into arithmetic problems. Most people lose interest in counting to four by the time they are five.) Do the same with the rhythms of the bass line. After first speaking the rhythms of both parts together, try it on the instruments, still using just the left hand line on the piano, relishing the lack of togetherness. (Example 2)

Telemann, *Sonata inB-flat*, recorder and continuo, from *Der Getreue Musikmeister* (Hortus Musicus #6, Bärenreiter)

When at last the right hand enters it will want to come down heavy on down beats This leads to the next rule.

Rule 3. "Simon says."

Remember that the composer planned the "stand-up" part and the bass line to be in constant dramatic tension, so keep the right hand out of the action. I go so far as to say that the right hand shouldn't move unless the bass line (Simon) says "move." If the bass line has a rest, do not disturb! If there is a whole note, wait four beats before changing. If you absolutely must change, sneak in the new note without calling attention to it. In other words, don't make a strong harmonic move unless there is a bass note value to support it. Similarly, if the bass note repeats, touch the right hand chord lightly along with the bass notes, or break the chord in that same value. Pencil in changes until you are comfortable reading "between the notes." (Examples 3a-3c)

Telemann, *Sonata inB-flat*

Handel, *Sonata in G Minor*, Op. 1, No. 10, violin and continuo (Bärenreiter)

This rule keeps progressions from resolving; it keeps measures light; it keeps both lines moving forward. It is equally important for all participants, and, in this music, the pianist counts as two participants: a right hand and a left hand. Move as your part moves, not as your partner does — "Simon says!" Probably most important, try laughing when it turns out to be more complicated than it looks. That leads to the last rule.

Rule 4: "Central heating."

There wasn't any in the 18th century. Chamber music, the principal indoor winter sport, required the presence of several bodies together in one room to solve challenging mental and physical problems in music that evoked every mood from sublime tragedy to slapstick comedy. Any opera by Handel will give a taste of the emotional range of 18th-century musical theatre. Chamber music, the home entertainment of the Baroque era, was intended to arouse a similar wealth of emotion, to get the players into the action, and get the blood circulating — certainly not to leave one cold!

People in the 18th century were hardly musical primitives. They enjoyed situations in which musical lines pulled against each other, rather than moving along in tidy agreement. From Bach's *Peasant Cantata* we can see how much they must have enjoyed risk: making the sort of sounds that set music teachers' fingers wagging would have had them — and can have us — howling with delight.

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Nancy Garniez is pianist with the Alaria Chamber Ensemble and director of the Alaria Chamber Ensemble Workshops at Mannes College of Music in New York City. Her essay on achieving good ensemble among dissimilar instruments, "Team Resonance," appeared in the October, 1996 issue. She recently premiered her "Tonal Refraction, a visualization of the intersection between linear and harmonic hearing."

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