

Musical score for a brass band, showing staves for various instruments including Sopranos, Cornets, Flugel, Horns, Baritone, Trombone, Euphonium, Bass, and Percussion. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *f*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs. The percussion section includes Bass Drum, Percussion 1, 2, and 3.

Scoring *and* Arranging *for* Brass Band

Andrew Duncan

Introduction

Welcome to Scoring & Arranging for Brass Band.

Since the 1970's there has been a worldwide explosion in the popularity of the British-style brass band. This has transformed what was once viewed by some as a parochial British working class institution into an internationally recognised brass ensemble.

As well as in the UK there are now British-style brass bands established in Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, the USA, as well as in other countries.

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The modern brass band has an immense and ever growing repertoire of music. Amongst this are excellent original works by Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan-Williams, John Ireland and by many more modern composers. Most of the repertoire however consists of arrangements of music not originally written for brass band.

This book is designed as a guide for someone who wishes to begin scoring and arranging for brass band for the first time. From arranging a four part hymn tune to arranging more complex orchestral music the book offers step by step advice to help with many of the problems encountered by a new arranger and gives advice on the copyright law and publishing.

My experience as both a player and conductor in brass bands and as a professional orchestral player introduced me to a great deal of wonderful music which has shaped my own ideas on scoring and arranging. Having worked professionally as a brass band arranger for several years I have put these ideas and thoughts into this book.

I hope that you enjoy this book and find its contents to be useful and informative, and I hope that you are encouraged to take your scoring and arranging for brass band further.



Andrew Duncan.

August 2005.

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A Brief History of the Brass Band

Pre-History

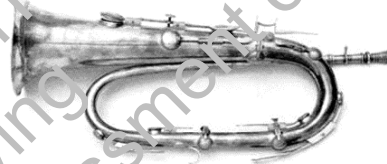
Before the invention of the valve brass instruments such as trumpets and French horns could only play a limited number of notes so extra lengths of tubing called crooks were used to change the pitch thus enabling more notes to be played. However compared to early string and woodwind instruments early brass instruments were still very limited in the number of notes that they could play and this was reflected in the music written at the time. As well as crooks, other solutions used to get extra notes were finger holes like a recorder, various systems of keys like a saxophone or sometimes a combination of both.



Natural French horn



Natural trumpet



An early keyed bugle

The Cornett



Three different shapes of cornett.

Although the cornett has a very similar name to the brass band cornet it is in fact a very different instrument. The cornett is an ancient treble wooden wind instrument. It was played with a mouthpiece and had finger holes. The cornett made a wonderful distinctive *woody* sound. Some cornetts were built curved and some were built straight.

The Sackbut

The sackbut is the forefather of the modern trombone and like the trombone it uses a slide to alter the pitch. Sackbuts often played together with cornetts and there was a great deal of music written for this combination. The sackbut had a smaller bell and a narrower bore than the modern trombone but otherwise the two instruments are clearly very similar.



An ancient sackbut



A modern tenor trombone

The Serpent and the Ophicleide

Perhaps what appears to us today to be the most bizarre of the pre-valve instruments were the serpent and the ophicleide. The serpent was so called because of its snake-like, coiled appearance. It was invented in the late 16th century and was a bass version of the wooden cornett. Like the cornett the serpent was also made of wood but it had a protective leather coating, and like the cornett it was played using finger holes, although some models of serpent had keys as well. It had a range of two and a half octaves (from the C below the bass clef) and was played with a mouthpiece at the end of a crook. It made a very unique crude, rustic sound and was commonly played in small groups such as village bands playing in church services, etc.



Serpent



Ophicleide

The dominance of the serpent came to an end with the invention of the ophicleide.

Ophicleide is a Greek word meaning *keyed serpent* and similarly to the serpent the ophicleide had a number of finger holes but these were played by padded keys, like a saxophone. There were some very skilled ophicleide players in the 19th century and the instrument proved very popular with composers such as Berlioz and Mendelssohn who wrote many parts for it including some solo passages. It was also used extensively in the military bands of the time.

As the 20th century approached the popularity of the ophicleide steadily gave way to the growing popularity of the tuba until by the early twentieth century the ophicleide had more or less disappeared altogether. The tuba has a much bigger register, a bigger dynamic range and much more secure tuning than the ophicleide and the tuba also proved to balance better with the other brass and wind instruments in terms of volume and timbre. Nowadays parts originally written for ophicleide in the orchestra are normally played by the tuba.

The Invention of the Valve and the Birth of the Brass Band

The invention of the valve in 1815 by Heinrich Stölzel led directly to the development and invention of a large number of new brass instruments. Amongst these was a new *family of Keyed and Valved Bugles* as they were described by their inventor Adolphe Sax, who was also the inventor of the saxophone.



Adolphe Sax

Adolphe Sax named his new brass instruments saxhorns and unveiled them at an exhibition in Paris in 1844. These original saxhorns are the direct descendants of the modern brass band valved instruments.

New developments in manufacturing technology in the mid nineteenth century meant that the new saxhorns could be made quickly, relatively cheaply and most importantly they could be mass produced. This together with the fact that the saxhorns were all three valved instruments meant that it was possible for a bandsman to swap between instruments without having to learn a new set of fingering. This is the main reason that

modern day brass band parts from the soprano cornet through to the Bb bass (with the exception of the bass trombone) are all written out in transposed treble clef.

As well as becoming popular in Britain bands with saxhorns were used in US military bands around the time of the American civil war. This photograph (below) taken in 1865 is of the **Band of 10th Veteran Reserve Corps** from Washington D.C. You can clearly see a full range of saxhorns in the band.



One phenomenon that grew out of the invention of the saxhorns was the rise in popularity of the cornet virtuoso. Most prominent amongst the early cornet virtuosos was Jean Baptiste Arban, the author of the great *Cornet Method* which was published in Paris in 1864. Other great cornet virtuosos over the years have included Herbert L. Clarke, Alexander Owen, Harry Morimer, James Shepherd, Phillip McCann and Roger Webster.



Jean Baptiste Arban



Herbert L Clarke

The expressive and lyrical qualities of the new saxhorns (and in particular the cornet) didn't go unnoticed by the great composers of nineteenth century orchestral music. Berlioz, Tchaikovsky, Bizet and Debussy all wrote parts for the cornet in their works, including some beautiful and lyrical solo passages.

Brass Bands in the UK

In Britain during the industrial revolution the shifts of the population from country to town coincided with the early development of the saxhorns. As the popularity of bands began to grow so too did the popularity of the saxhorns. Having a town band became essential for any self respecting borough and over the course of the nineteenth century hundreds of new bands sprung up all over the UK.

The factory and mill owners of the Victorian era thought that playing in a band was a very worthwhile diversion for their workers - certainly preferable to drinking, so many bands were set up which bore the names of the companies and organisations which sponsored them. However, it is worth pointing out that many of these early bands were wind bands and not purely brass bands.

As well as local boroughs and heavy industries such as engineering and mining, other organisations which founded and supported bands in the nineteenth century were police forces, fire services, various churches and organisations supporting the popular temperance movement.

Classical music was thought to have a very positive and a *civilizing* influence on the working classes and much of the music played by the early brass bands was transcriptions of overtures, popular arias and selections from operas or other works by the great composers. Although many of these arrangements seem very dated to us now, it is important to remember that this was often the only classical music ever heard by the mass of the British public. This was recognised as being a very important function of the emerging bands.



*A proud portrait of the **Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Loco Works Band** (complete with hats!) taken in 1905. One of a number of sponsored brass bands in Britain in the early twentieth Century.*

The Salvation Army

Any history of the brass band has to fully acknowledge the enormous debt owed to the Salvation Army for their long term support of brass bands, which still continues today. The Salvation Army has helped spread and promote the British-style brass band internationally and has had an immense influence on the modern brass band repertoire. Many of the finest composers for brass band such as Eric Ball and Peter Graham have come from the Salvation Army brass band tradition as have many outstanding players, a great number of whom have gone on to play professionally at the very highest level.

Competition and Improving Standards in brass bands

As well as giving concerts, brass bands began to compete with each other and this led to a standardised instrumentation. As competing (and winning) became a more serious activity for many brass bands, professional players from orchestras and the military were engaged as musical directors - as many still are today. Reports from early brass band contests such as Crystal Palace in London and Belle Vue in Manchester talk of the huge audiences attending these events.

Taking part in competitions undoubtedly improved the standard of playing as the challenge of learning specially written *test pieces* required concentrated rehearsals and extra efforts from the players and conductors.

Brass Bands Today

The appeal of competition has always been at the heart of the British brass band movement and it is fair to say that a bandsman from 1906 would most likely recognise many elements of the sound and the style of a brass band in 2006. However, there have been tremendous changes in the brass band over the last 100 years and this can clearly be seen in the way scoring for the brass band has changed.

Much early brass band music relied heavily on a group of four solo players from within the band, the principal cornet, the solo tenor horn, the solo trombone and the solo euphonium players. These soloists were known as the *corner men* of the band, and their parts most often carried any solo passages or cadenzas - this meant therefore that the remaining parts in the band were often scored in a fairly simple and mundane way. In contrast to this, every player in a top contesting brass band today is expected to be an accomplished player and this is reflected in modern brass band scoring. As well as the four corner men (or corner women), nowadays the principal Eb bass, the flugel horn, the soprano cornet and the 1st baritone players can expect to have taxing passages written for them.

Another fundamental change in brass band scoring has been the increase in the size and the increase in importance of the brass band percussion section. In many test pieces written before the late 1970's it was quite common to find the percussion part written on only one staff, often along with a note for the conductor explaining that the percussion was optional! This take-it-or-leave-it situation with percussion continued until around the 1970's when the standard percussion set up of bass drum, cymbal, triangle & side drum was gradually expanded. Today more or less any percussion instrument can be asked for in a brass band score.

There are a number of excellent composers writing for brass band today including Peter Graham, Edward Gregson, Philip Wilby, Philip Sparke, Rodney Newton and Martin Ellerby. Although the brass band has a standard instrumentation these composers bring out the colour and timbre of the brass band by scoring in their own individual ways.

Amongst arrangers for brass band, Elgar Howarth and Howard Snell have undoubtedly been the most influential in terms of modernising brass band scoring. Both men were also excellent professional trumpet players and conductors, and they brought their insight and first hand knowledge of orchestral scoring and colour across into their many superb arrangements for brass band.

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The Tenor Horns



There are three tenor horns in a brass band, most often referred to simply as the horns. The type of tenor horn used is the 3 piston-valve tenor horn.

The Horn section is made up of the solo horn (the principal horn) the 1st horn, and the 2nd horn.

Generally speaking the solo horn plays the upper notes and any solo passages with the 1st horn playing the middle notes and the 2nd horn playing the lower notes.

The tenor horn is a member of the saxhorn family and is therefore closely related to the baritone and cornet which are also saxhorns.

Outside the brass band the Tenor Horn is also known as the *E♭ Alto Horn* or the *Althorn*.

The solo horn player is expected to be an accomplished player who can play solo passages within band pieces and also play one of the many solo pieces for solo tenor horn and band. The 1st horn player should be regarded as the next most able player and the 2nd horn player as the least able. However, 2nd horn players specialise in playing the lower notes in the tenor horn register so will normally use a larger mouthpiece than the other two tenor horns. Playing in the upper register therefore becomes more impractical for the 2nd horn than it is for the other tenor horns.

The tenor horn has always been popular as a solo instrument and there are a number of excellent pieces for solo tenor horn and band dating back to the Victorian era. The repertoire for the tenor horn has increased in recent years and virtuosi tenor horn players such as Sandy Smith, Sheona White and Lesley Howie have premiered new works written for their instrument.

Transposition and register

The tenor horns read from three separate parts written in transposed treble clef.

The tenor horn parts are written in E♭ and therefore sound a major 6th lower than written.



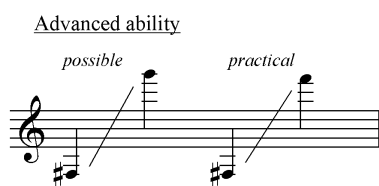
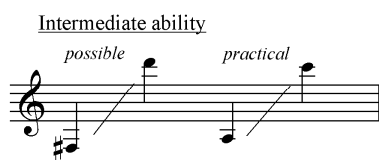
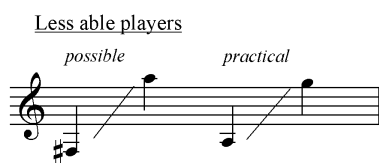
Register chart for the tenor horns

The possible register is the likely full range of a player and the practical register is the likely comfortable range of a player. Generally speaking you should always keep within the practical register.

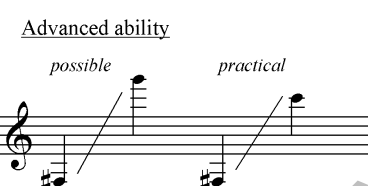
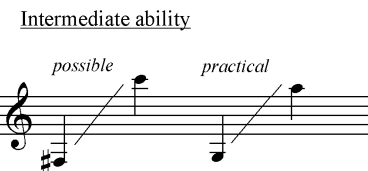
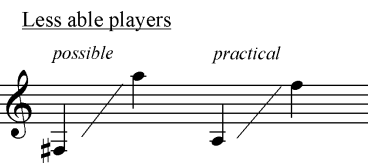
In this chart a full chromatic register is playable between the two given notes.

This register chart should only be used as a guide. Whenever possible always consult with the players you are writing for with regard to specific register and range.

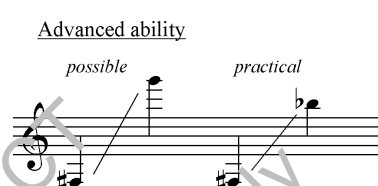
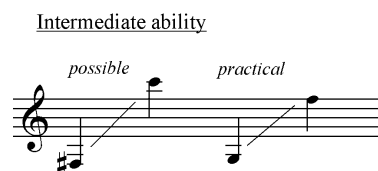
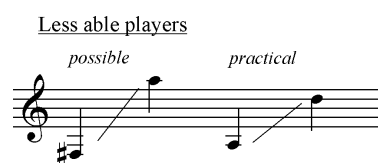
Solo Horn (Eb pitch)



1st Horn (Eb pitch)

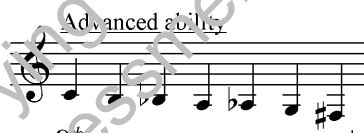
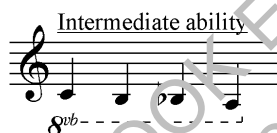


2nd Horn (Eb pitch)



In addition to the above register chart the tenor horns can play the following lower pedal notes. However, these are very rarely written and many tenor horn players find them difficult to play.

All these pedal notes are written in Eb pitch.



Scoring for the Tenor Horns

The tenor horns are the only true alto instrument in the brass band which on the face of it means that the brass band appears to be very musically unbalanced. However, as the baritones and flugel horn between them overlap the tenor horn's register and have a similar sound, the overall balance in terms of weight and timbre is achieved.

In modern brass band scoring the solo horn and flugel horn parts are very closely linked. Nowadays the two instruments usually sit together and often double the same line.

Similarly, the two baritone parts often double the two lower tenor horn parts.

Voicing within the tenor horn section

The solo horn normally plays the highest notes, the 1st Horn the middle notes and the 2nd Horn the lowest notes, although a certain amount of overlapping is sometimes necessary and should not present any problems.

Here are two examples of this type of simple voicing for the tenor horns. This first example is from my march *Tewkesbury* and is typical of the offbeat accompaniment parts often played by the tenor horn section.

This second example is from my composition *A Manchester Tale* and shows a similar voicing for the tenor horns in a more sustained passage.

Unison passages for the tenor horns

The tenor horn section playing in unison is a very effective sound but in a fully scored passage the three tenor horns will struggle to balance up to the rest of the band. If the range permits adding the flugel horn and baritones will considerably *beef up* the alto sound and will provide a better balance to the rest of the band while still keeping close to the sound of the tenor horns. Adding the trombones or euphoniums to the tenor horns parts will also boost the strength of the alto line, but will create a different colour.

I like to think of the flugel horn, the tenor horns and the baritones as forming a large alto group in the brass band.

In terms of voicing this means that a simple three part chord can be doubled with the 2nd baritone and 2nd horn playing the lowest note, the 1st baritone and 1st horn playing the middle note and the solo horn and the flugel horn playing the highest note.

Scoring for the tenor horns and the baritones

See *Scoring for the baritones and tenor horns* in Chapter 5

Scoring for the tenor horns and the flugel horn

In modern brass band scoring a musical partnership has evolved between the flugel horn and the solo tenor horn. This is quite different to the scoring in early brass band pieces when the flugel horn and repiano cornet were closely linked together.

Nowadays the flugel horn often sits next to the solo horn as they play many lines together and sometimes work together as a duet. In passages such as in thinly scored accompaniments for soloists etc, it is often only the solo tenor horn and flugel horn that play, with the 1st and 2nd horn resting. These two examples show how the flugel horn can be integrated with the tenor horns.

In this first example from my arrangement *Gathering of the Clan*, the flugel horn plays an eight bar phrase in unison with the tenor horns providing a strong unified voice in the alto register.

This second example is from my composition *Reflections of Freedom*.

In the first four bars there are three pairs of instruments playing three different lines in unison. The flugel horn and solo horn, the 1st baritone and 1st horn and the 2nd horn and 2nd baritone.

In the fifth and sixth bars the voicing changes. The instruments playing the upper two lines (no. the 2nd horn and 2nd baritone line) become more independent of each other. In the seventh bar a concert C major chord (which is also played by the full band) has the flugel horn and solo horn separating and playing different parts of the chord. This example is typical of the way the flugel Horn will often play as part of the tenor horn section but also play its own separate lines.

Mutes for the tenor horns

To indicate that a passage is to be played muted write *muted* or *con sord.*

To indicate that a muted passage is over write *open* or *senza sord.*

Although there are a range of mutes available for the tenor horn including cup mutes and practice mutes (and some bass and tenor trombone mutes can be used by the tenor horn) the mute most often used by tenor horn players is the straight mute. Most often this will be a fibre straight mute.

If you are writing for a band other than a Championship/1st Section band check first to see if the band has tenor horn mutes as it is possible that they won't. As a general rule it is better to avoid writing muted parts for the tenor horns in lower section bands.

Tenor horn players need time to make a mute change. It is therefore important that your scoring takes this into account and that you always include time for a mute change to be made. As a guide, around 4-5 seconds should be allowed for a tenor horn player to make a mute change.