BRITISH BRASS WORKS

A Historical Sound Document of the New York Brass Quintet

2019 – 2020 ITG

Artists: Trumpets Robert Nagel and Allan Dean
         Horn Paul Ingraham
         Trombone John Swallow
         Tuba Thompson Hanks

ITG CD 28

Album Tracks

Quintet No. 1, Op. 73 (1961)
  Malcolm Arnold (1921–2006)
  1 I. Allegro vivace  4:15
  2 II. Chaconne     4:18
  3 III. Con brio    3:05

Ritornelli 2, Op. 100/2 (1979)
  Alun Hoddinott (1929–2008)
  4 I. Moderato  2:25
  5 II. Allegro molto  2:06
  6 III. Andante  3:22
  7 IV. Adagio  2:19
  8 V. Allegro  2:39

Commedia IV (1973)
  Richard Rodney Bennett (1936–2012)
  9 13:17

Brass Quintet
  Jack Atherton (1909–1983)
  10 I. Moderato  3:20
  11 II. Adagietto, Tempo giusto  3:23
  12 III. Allegro assai  5:06

Variations for Brass Quintet (1966)
  Elgar Howarth (b. 1935)
  13 11:51

Quintet for Brass (1967)
  Edward Gregson (b. 1945)
  14 I. Andante sostenuto  5:17
  15 II. Allegro molto ritmico  4:19
Hello ITG members and fellow trumpet enthusiasts:

I am extremely excited to be able to provide this recording by the New York Brass Quintet, which gives us a historical snapshot of some of the finest brass playing from the 1970s and 1980s and features repertoire that I hope everyone finds enjoyable to listen to.

The most notable selection on this album is Malcolm Arnold’s Quintet, Op. 73. A staple in the brass quintet repertoire, this composition was written for the New York Brass Quintet.

Until now, there has been no recording of this piece by the group for which it was written. We are so pleased to be able to present this, along with other historically important material, to our membership.

I would like to thank the members of the ITG Recordings Committee—most notably Bruce Whisler, who made me aware of this recording and is a champion of the recordings and output of the New York Brass Quintet. Additionally, I am grateful to Jason Crafton for compiling the notes you have before you and to Ross Alhorn, Marc Reed, and Peyden Shelton for their tireless work on this mission. Special thanks is also due to Jan Conradi for designing the cover and being a joy to work with throughout this process.

Thanks to the members of the New York Brass Quintet and to Edward Nagel, son of Robert Nagel, for allowing us to have this recording and assisting in bringing this project to fruition. I would also like to specifically thank Allan Dean for his contribution to this project.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the ITG leadership for their vision, trust, and support in this process. Thank you, Grant Peters (president), Jason Bergman (vice president/president elect), Cathy Leach (past president), Elisa Koehler (secretary), Dixie Burress (treasurer), and the entire ITG Board of Directors. A special shout out goes to ITG Publications Editor Peter Wood for his endless work in making sure everything looks and reads the way it should.

Sincerely,  
Brian Walker  
Chair, ITG Recordings Committee
The British Brass Works album was originally intended as the next archival recording in a series that Robert Nagel was issuing as a retirement project. In cementing his legacy as “Mr. Brass Quintet” (as Harvey Phillips referred to him), Bob issued Bach and Before in 2006, Romantic Age Brass in 2007, and 20th Century Brass in 2013. Late in life, Bob turned over this final group of recordings to Toby Hanks, tubist of the group, and to myself. The project languished until Bruce Whisler, a friend of Bob’s and master of all these recordings, pushed to publish the CD. The remaining living members of the NYBQ—Paul Ingraham, Toby, and myself—have agreed to this ITG project.

The NYBQ did very little recording during its long career from 1954 to 1984, though there was an early vinyl in the 50s. I joined the group in 1966, and that year we recorded Baroque Brass for RCA. One other studio recording was made at Northwestern University during a Midwest tour in 1977. This recording included Vincent Persichetti’s Parable for Brass Quintet, Jan Bach’s Laudes, and Michel Leclerc’s Par Monts et Par Vaux and was issued by Crystal Records in 1978.

It is good that this new collection of relatively unknown works will be heard, even if the performances are not perfect; they are in a style of writing for brass from the 1960s and 70s that has gone out of fashion in the present time. I think they are worth a hearing, and it is possible that one or more of these works may see the light of day in performance once again. The members of the quintet very much appreciate the ITG for releasing this recording.

Allan Dean
Trumpet, New York Brass Quintet
Professor Emeritus, Yale University
About the Notes

The program notes that follow were assembled from a multitude of sources (see works cited), including the first draft of Robert Nagel’s performance notes and extensive email correspondence with Allan Dean. Every effort has been made to use as much of this primary source material as possible in order to preserve Mr. Nagel’s original vision, in spite of the challenges posed by the passage of time. To quote Allan Dean, “It was only fifty years ago, so I can’t imagine why I don’t remember!” These hurdles notwithstanding, it has become clear that this recording and the accompanying documents will be of great interest to the ITG membership and to generations of performers and scholars to come.

Jason Crafton, April 2020

Program Notes

Great Britain has long been at the forefront of brass ensemble music. While British-style brass bands may be the most well-known example of this rich tradition, there is a long history of brass playing outside this arena as well. From the Distin family saxhorn ensembles of the mid-nineteenth century to the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble of the mid-twentieth century and modern-day groups such as Septura, the influence of British brass playing on our current musical landscape is undeniable.

Malcolm Arnold’s Quintet No. 1, Op. 73, is one of the most well-known and frequently performed works in the brass quintet repertoire. The piece was commissioned and premiered by the New York Brass Quintet (NYBQ) in the early 1960s, but it was not recorded by the group for nearly a decade—around the same time that the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble released the first commercial recording of the piece in 1970. Trumpeter Allan Dean remembers that the NYBQ recording of the Arnold was:

...[made] at the end of a session at the Rutgers Church on West 73rd Street in New York City around 1970. As I recall, we had done another piece or two, probably for CRI records, and had some extra time, so we decided to do a rundown of the Arnold. This quintet of course was written for the NYBQ, but the group had never recorded it... It is a good representation of how we played the piece, which we did dozens and dozens of times if not more.

The ability to hear an early performance by the commissioning ensemble of such an important work in the brass quintet repertoire is of great significance to performers and historians alike.

Ritornelli 2 by Welsh composer Alun Hoddinott is one of three similarly titled works written between 1974 and 1991. The first of these, Ritornelli, was recorded by NYBQ trombonist John Swallow on his 1985 album A Little Trombone Music. As implied by its title, the five movements in Ritornelli 2 are structured as ritornelli, with repetitions of the primary melodic material separated by episodes of often contrasting material. Hoddinott was a prolific composer of opera, as well as orchestral and chamber music. His output for brass includes concertos for trumpet, trombone, and euphonium; a concerto for trumpet, horn, and orchestra; and several works for brass band. The performance included on this album includes movements two through five and was recorded live at the Manhattan School of Music in March of 1982.

Sir Richard Rodney Bennett was an English composer and pianist, known most widely for his over forty film scores. He composed his four Commedias for mixed instrumental ensembles between 1972 and 1973. Commedia IV is the only
Jack Atherton was best known as the conductor of the Carlton Main Frickley Colliery Brass Band, leading them to the British Open title in 1958. While little, if any, information is available on Atherton’s compositions, Robert Nagel’s recounting of the NYBQ’s introduction to Atherton and his music makes for an entertaining read:

…[Atherton] came into Wigmore Hall in London, where the NYBQ was practicing in preparation for our first tour concert in England that evening. He handed us the manuscript, parts, and score to a brass quintet work that he had composed and said, “Play this.” It was a rather difficult work, but we sight-read quite well. Then he demanded, “Perform it on your concert tonight.” We declined, saying that the program could not

Correspondence between composer Malcolm Arnold and Robert Nagel regarding the creation of the Quintet Op. 73.

Robert Nagel, Esq.,
123 Dietz Street,
Hempstead, New York,
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Nagel,

Thank you very much for your letter. As soon as I write a piece for your combination I will send it to you. I would be very interested to hear your recordings.

Yours sincerely,

MALCOLM ARNOLD
be changed. He angrily stormed out, leaving the music with us. We performed it in the U.S. only once or twice, although we consider it one of the best works on this recording.

This performance of Atherton’s Brass Quintet was recorded live at the Annual Symposium of Contemporary Music for Brass at Georgia State University in February of 1970. This symposium was presented by Georgia State, along with Southeastern Composer’s League, in the 1960s and 1970s; during the thirteen years the symposium was held, over 400 new works for brass were performed. The New York Brass Quintet performed several Sunday afternoon concerts at this event that included newer pieces—such as those by Atherton, Hoddinott, and Howarth—that they rarely performed elsewhere.

Most devotees of brass music know Elgar Howarth for his work with the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble as a performer, composer, and arranger. However, Howarth is best known for his career as a conductor, where he worked frequently with composers Györgi Ligeti and Harrison Birtwistle. Howarth continued to compose and arrange for brass ensembles, often under the pen name W. Hogarth Lear, producing concertos for both trumpet and trombone, as well as several works
Edward Gregson composed his Quintet for Brass in 1967 while still a student at the Royal Academy of Music, dedicating the work to the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble. Jones, who was in the audience for the premiere, gave the work its first professional performances with his quintet. The piece was one of Gregson’s first published works in a career that has since yielded dozens of published compositions for brass. Written in two movements, “Andante sostenuto” and “Allegro molto ritmico,” Gregson’s Quintet is heard here performed by the NYBQ on a concert at the Manhattan School of Music in February of 1983.
Robert E. Nagel Jr. (1924 – 2016) had an illustrious career as a trumpet player, teacher, composer, conductor, and arranger. He was a pioneer of brass chamber music.

He attended The Juilliard School of Music for one year before entering the US Army, where he played in the West Point band for three years. After returning to Juilliard, he studied composition with Peter Mennin and Vincent Persichetti. For several summers, he was a student at Tanglewood, where he studied trumpet with Georges Mager and composition with Aaron Copland.

Upon completing his studies at Juilliard, Nagel was appointed first trumpet of the Little Orchestra Society in New York City. This appointment launched a freelance career that lasted over twenty years. During this time, he played with conductors Leopold Stokowski, Leonard Bernstein, Pablo Casals, and Igor Stravinsky. Nagel recorded extensively with CBS, RCA Victor, NBC, and MGM. Among these are many iconic recordings, including the 1961 recording of L’Histoire du Soldat, conducted by Igor Stravinsky, and the second Brandenburg Concerto, by J. S. Bach, conducted by Pablo Casals. Nagel performed with the Bach aria group, the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico, Yale at Norfolk, and the Aspen Music Festival.

Perhaps his most enduring contribution to music was in the area of brass chamber music. Nagel was the founder and director of the New York Brass Quintet, which performed across the United States and Europe for over thirty years. He commissioned numerous works for brass quintet and was a founder of the International Trumpet Guild and recipient of the prestigious ITG Honorary Award. As a composer, he wrote orchestral and chamber works, trumpet method books, and solo and ensemble arrangements. To promote brass chamber music, he launched his own publishing company, Mentor Music, in 1959.

Nagel served as a faculty member of the Yale School of Music, the New England Conservatory, The Juilliard School, the Manhattan School of Music, the Hartt School of Music, North Carolina School of the Arts, and Rutgers University.

Allan Dean, Professor Emeritus at the Yale School of Music, retired from the school in 2019 after 31 years on the faculty. He is still actively performing with the Berkshire Bach Society in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

In the early music field, Dean was a founding member of Calliope: A Renaissance Band and the New York Cornet and Sacbut Ensemble. Dean was a member of the New York Brass Quintet for eighteen years and freelanced in the New York City concert and recording field for over twenty years before joining the faculty of Indiana University in 1982. In
1988, he moved back to the Northeast to join the Yale faculty. Prior to his appointment with the New York Brass Quintet, he was a member of the American Brass Quintet for two years. Upon retirement from the New York Brass Quintet in 1984 after eighteen years, Dean joined the St. Louis Brass Quintet - a position he held for thirty-five years retiring this spring 2020.

Dean performs and teaches each summer at the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival in Norfolk, Connecticut. He is a frequent soloist with Keith Brion’s New Sousa Band. Dean has also appeared at the Spoleto and Casals Festivals, the Banff Centre (Canada), the Orford Arts Centre (Canada), Musiki Blekinge (Sweden), the Curitiba Music Festival (Brazil), and the Morella Festival (Spain). He can be heard playing both modern trumpet and early brass on over eighty recordings on most major labels including RCA, Columbia, Nonesuch, Summit, and others. On early instruments, he has recorded with Calliope, The New York Cornet and Sacbut Ensemble, The Waverly Consort, The Ensemble for Early Music, and The Smithsonian Chamber Players. Dean previously served on the faculties of Indiana University, the Manhattan School of Music, the Hartt School, the Eastman School, and the Rafael Mendez Brass Institute.

Paul Ingraham

Paul Ingraham enjoyed a long and distinguished career as a professional horn player and teacher. He was active in a variety of musical activities, including studio recordings, orchestral and chamber music, and solo appearances. He joined the New York Brass Quintet in 1963 and the New York City Ballet Orchestra as solo horn in 1965. Around the same time, he joined the faculty of the Yale School of Music, where he taught for 35 years. Prior to this, he performed with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and the Minneapolis Symphony (now the Minnesota Orchestra), the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, and the Casals Festival Orchestra under the direction of the legendary Pablo Casals. A longtime member of the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, Ingraham performed many premieres of new compositions, including the American premiere of Ian Hamilton’s Voyage for solo horn and orchestra.

Thompson Hanks

Thompson Hanks studied at the Eastman School of Music and the Tanglewood Berkshire Music Center. He was principal tuba with the Minneapolis Symphony (as it was called then), as well as the San Antonio and Puerto Rico Symphonies. He left the Minneapolis Symphony in 1967 to join the New York Brass Quintet and the New York City Ballet Orchestra. He founded the New York Tuba Quartet, with which he recorded an album (Tubby’s Revenge—CD 221), in addition to a solo album (Sampler—CD 395) for Crystal Records. Hanks attended Lamar University, where he studied with Richard Burkart, and the Eastman School of Music, studying with Donald Knaub. Hanks also engaged in extensive additional study with Arnold Jacobs and served on the faculties of the Yale School of Music, the New England Conservatory, the Peabody Conservatory, the University of Maryland School of Music, and the Manhattan School of Music, where he served as chair of the brass department.
John Swallow was born in 1924, the youngest of five siblings, in Oneida, New York. During World War II, he served in the US Army Band in Washington, DC, where he played trombone for Franklin D. Roosevelt’s funeral and Dwight D. Eisenhower’s return home. Swallow studied at The Julliard School of Music in New York City. A member of the acclaimed New York Brass Quintet for more than 25 years, he was considered one of the most important trombone performers and teachers in the United States. He enjoyed performance associations with the Utah Symphony, under the direction of Maurice Abravanel, and the Chicago Symphony, under the direction of Fritz Reiner.

Swallow was principal trombonist with the New York City Ballet Orchestra for over forty years and was a member of such groups as Gunther Schuller’s Twentieth Century Innovations and Arthur Weisberg’s Contemporary Chamber Ensemble. Swallow was a professor of music at the Yale School of Music, where he served as head of the brass department for many years; the New England Conservatory of Music; the Hartt School of Music; and the Manhattan School of Music.