

THE BLACKSBURG
COMMUNITY BAND



The Score

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From the President

Hello BBCB!

Happy 2011! It's the beginning of a great new year. It struck me the other day as I typed [BBCB] that I might be typing one too many Bs. Take a second....think about it . . . what is that second B for? I'm a relative newcomer to the band so perhaps there is a great explanation for the abundance, but with roughly a third of the members having joined in the past couple of years I'm betting that if there is a history to the mysterious second B some others also are curious. So I asked Google...

Other BBCBs out there:

- bbcb the "...local Cornish Construction and Development company..." in the UK
- The Biostatistics, Bioinformatics and Computational Biology Core at Medical College of Georgia
- The techno artist bleepbleepclickbuzz on myspace
- Boston Book Club Blog
- Bob Barr Community Band, Columbus, GA

After reviewing this impressive list let me be the first to say that I no longer question the appropriateness of our acronym especially

after hearing the stylings of bleepbleepclickbuzz. And how about sharing letters with another community band? Bob Barr was a high school band director in Columbus, Georgia for almost 20 years between the mid-forties to early sixties. The band was formed in his honor in 1988, just about the same time as this band! Here's to the BBCBs of the world!

Acronyms aside I hope everyone enjoys their experience with the Blacksburg Community Band. I'm excited to be a part of it and am very grateful for the opportunity to take up the reins for short while. I owe many thanks to the board members and especially to Dixon for helping me along, and of course to the people of the band for electing me from among the extensive list of nominees! I love to make music, and enjoy community involvement through the band. Most importantly it's the people who make it great! I hope everyone has a great year as we continue to rock and roll!

Patrick



Spring concert—April 10

The Blacksburg Community Band spring concert will take place on April 10 at 4:00 p.m. in the Blacksburg High School (Price's Fork Road) Auditorium. The audience is invited to join the band after the concert for a reception, so, band members, start thinking about finger food to contribute!

Welcome new and returning members!



Flute

Jessica Mogren*

French Horn

Lee Howell

Trumpet

Eric Hula

Whitney Mullins*

Trombone

Keeley Hall

Tuba

Isaac Brinberg

*returning members

Graduating members

Several current members of the band are Blacksburg High School seniors who will graduate this spring. Most are still narrowing their choices of colleges, but all will be new college students next fall. From left to right below, these are:

Christy Trago (flute) who plans to major in chemistry/pre-pharmacy in college

Isaac Brinberg (tuba), who is planning to major in music at a major university

Jessica Mogren (flute), a future wild life science major

Kerlin Doss (flute and saxophone), a future physics major

Chelsea Craige (flute), looking forward to becoming a music major at Otterbein College in Ohio.



Photo by Vicki Scarratt



Behind the Music: *Jing, Jing but no Ka-Ching*

by John Howell

“Ja-Da (Ja Da, Jing, Jing, Jing!)” was a hit song from 1918 by Bob Carleton, a novelty song with nonsense lyrics, published to raise money for the U.S. Navy Relief Society Fund (1918 marking the end of World War I). The immortal lyrics are (after the opening title words): “That’s a funny little bit of melody; it’s so soothing and appealing to me,” then repeating the opening words. Against all odds it became a jazz standard, first recorded by The Original New Orleans Jazz Band and later covered by Frank Sinatra and Peggy Lee (1947), Al Hirt, Oscar Peterson, Louis Armstrong and Al Jarreau.

Skip to last Spring, when David Miller, director of a community band in Mississippi, started looking for arrangers for collections that, like the Salvation Army Christmas Carol books, could be played by any reasonable combination of 5 or more instruments. And in order to avoid copyright expenses, David wanted to use only songs in the public domain—that is, written in 1922 or earlier. And, of course, David was looking for arrangers willing to submit their work and wait to see whether any income ever came out of selling the collections. And John Howell got interested in the challenge and submitted an arrangement of “Bill Bailey, Won’t You Please Come Home” (1902), which he later expanded for the Blacksburg Community Band.

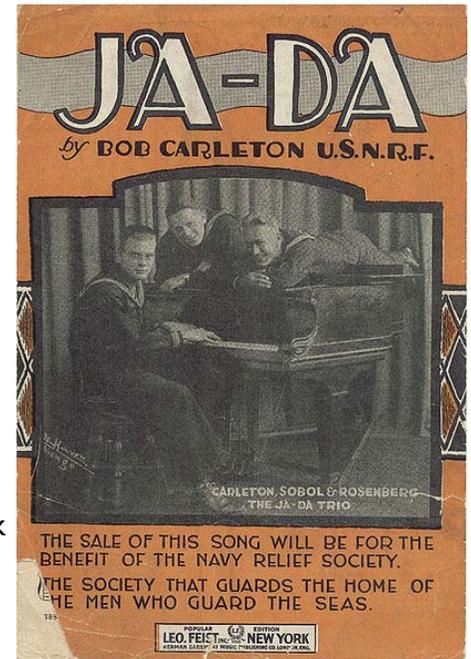
Well, another song on David’s list was “Ja-Da,” but instead of starting with the 5-part arrangement John started with a full band arrangement and wrote it to show off the capabilities of his own band. (And later cut it back to the 5-part, all-purpose arrangement David needed.)

And since a full chorus of “Ja-Da” runs all of 30 seconds, it was a natural for a set of variations, and that’s how it ended up. Starting with a sort of Ragtime introduction to recall the 1910s (when Ragtime took America by storm), the First Variation wrote itself as a trio among 2 piccolos and contrabass clarinet, not just harmonizing (scary enough) but playing independent parts (truly frightening!). A march in the style of Sousa (leader of a U.S. Navy Band during the War) suggested itself for the Second Variation, and a sort of Viennese Waltz in the style of Strauss (whose music was still wildly popular) for the Third. And what could be more fitting than an English-style grand march for the Fourth (George V had been crowned in 1910).

Which left the big finish to work out, and originally it was to go back and repeat the First Variation, but once John took the melody apart and started working with individual motives it quickly wrote itself as a sort of mixed up march/waltz/whatever in 5/4 time, leading finally to what is hopefully a surprise ending and, *of course*, a final Barnum & Bailey circus chord (and they merged with Ringling Brothers in 1919!).

I hope my fellow band members enjoy playing this arrangement, and seeing what can be done with a tune that never had a thing to recommend it except a really bouncy, happy feeling!

John



From the podium

We are starting the 23rd year of the Blacksburg Community Band, and we have come a long way from our first rehearsal back in 1989. We still have several of those 18 original people playing with the group and it underscores a big reason why we have been so successful. Like anything else in our world, it is those faithful members with consistent attendance that make our group successful. We have a number of very talented folks, but great musicianship isn't the only thing that makes the band what it is. It is the collaborative efforts of everyone that is necessary to make good music, and to make it fun to make music. I like to equate this to a personality, and every band or musical ensemble has a personality that is every bit as important as the quality of the music to make it successful. That personality comes, in large part, from the natural leaders in the group and our band regulars.

This personality is manifested in many ways and, as conductor, I can only work with what each of you bring to rehearsals each week. Fortunately, the band regularly comes to rehearsals with enthusiasm that projects energy and excitement in the music that we perform. This energy and excitement is contagious when it is present and can overpower many of the musical flaws that the band may be experiencing, especially to audiences.

Think about what makes you feel good about playing music. I know that I enjoy practicing when I have a chance, but it is the interaction with others and the sound of an ensemble that really excites me. Sometimes it doesn't have to sound great to be fun and fulfilling. For me, if everyone is working hard and enjoying the music, I feel good. I do know that it is unreasonable for everyone to play perfectly all the time, but coming to band and playing music should feel good, and if you feel good, you will more than likely sound good. As long as everyone is playing from their hearts, I am happy. I love becoming part of the band's personality and plugging into the energy from the collective forces of everyone present.

It is clear that in my opinion, it is critical to the band's personality for everyone to become actively involved in the rehearsal or performance. You might think that just by being part of the band is enough, but it isn't. I have been in musical ensembles that have had some wonderful musicians, but some were unwilling to become part of the ensemble's personality. Maybe they felt too good for the group or not good enough. Maybe they didn't like the conductor or the interpretation of a particular work. In any case, when you have even a few

folks that aren't totally committed, it can be felt and ultimately it will be heard. The overall musicality of the group can very good, but without everyone playing together, it won't be exciting. For me personally, it isn't fun when there isn't a focused personality or positive energy evident from everyone in the group.

If you look at some of the top classical music organizations, Chicago Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and so on, they not great only because their level of musicianship is exceptional, but it is also because they are full of energy and focus that energy into their music! They can send chills up your spine and make you feel the power of their music. By power I don't mean volume, I mean how much the music moves the performers and the listeners. The musicians playing the soft lyrical passages from their hearts, the light fun passages with a playful smile on their faces, and yes, the loud sections that come from deep down in every musician and rattles fixtures and rips the paint off the walls. These are the things that make music special.

I would challenge each of you to think about the music and the ensemble and let yourself get caught up in the music in a way that is meaningful to you and can be shared. You should all feel good about the music, but with the realization that this organization isn't about you, it isn't about me, it is about creating those special moments with music that move yourself and our audience. Each of us should be enjoying our part in playing music with the ensemble and sharing that enjoyment with our audience. The focus being the ensemble. Listening, blending and sharing.

I have enjoyed the personality of our band over the years and I am often amazed at how much better we sound when we play as an ensemble and share our energy with each other and the audience. We may never play anything perfectly, but we can, and have played music that move ourselves and our audiences. I look forward to continue working with each of you as we work up the music for our spring concert and promise that I will do my part to make this a special concert. I hope that all of you will continue to do yours. It is each of you and what you bring to the ensemble that makes it all worthwhile for me and I wouldn't trade my time with this band for anything.

I thank each of you for what you bring to this ensemble!

- Ed -

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