



The Score

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From the President

Hello Band,

Welcome to Spring! I think Spring may have gotten up in the middle of the night and hit the snooze button when the alarm clock went off. Hopefully the cold weather and snow flurries will give way to tree buds, spring flowers, and the start of warmer weather soon.

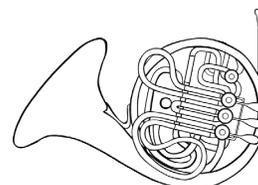
Change...as borrowed from Webster's online dictionary is to make different, to become different, or to replace with another. Depending on what is changing or being changed, it can elicit feelings of fear, excitement, happiness, or sadness; and potentially several of those at the same time. It can be large, small, known in advance, or a surprise, but in any form we know that change will always happen.

Ed Schwartz has been the band's cornerstone since it was founded in 1989. He was the band's founder, its conductor for 24 years, as well as a friend, teacher, and mentor to many in the band and the local community. Ed worked tirelessly to ensure everything ran effortlessly and he will be greatly missed. Ed's announcement that he would be moving to the University of Georgia to take a new position was a surprise and the start of a large change for the band. It will be impossible to replace Ed and all that he did for the band. Leslie Palacios, as one of the band's past presidents and long time librarian, has always done so much in the background to help the band run smoothly. Her warm and fun personality and hard work will also be greatly missed by the band. We are sad that Ed and Leslie have moved but wish them luck and happiness in their new adventure.

I want to thank Steve Brown and Jay Durner for serving as interim Co-Conductors during the transition. Their help ensures the band can continue to function as the search for a new director is underway. It is good to know that with the support and dedication of all the members that the band will continue for many years to come. The band can serve as a lasting legacy for Ed's vision of local musicians coming together to play regardless of age or experience. I would also like to thank the Search Committee as they work to help find the bands new conductor. Everyone has such busy schedules; I am so appreciative of the committee taking on this important task and extra time commitment to help the band continue to move forward. As always, I want to recognize the board for all that they do to help run the organization.

Warm regards,

Jennifer



WHAT BROUGHT DANNY BOY TO THE NEW WORLD?

(or, ye seem to've missed a turn back there around Iceland, me boyo!)

by John Howell

Or perhaps more broadly, where do an arranger's ideas come from—especially the weird ones I seem to specialize in?! And the answer is, from anywhere and everywhere. I've been writing arrangements for about 50 years, starting with an arrangement of "The Marine's Hymn" for ocarina trio—my first foray into show biz, in junior high school. And the ideas can—and do—come from any place at all.

In the case of "Danny Boy," it started when I stumbled across a rerun of the wonderful movie *Brassed Off*, and I was especially impressed by the beautiful arrangement of "Danny Boy" that the band played standing outside the hospital. I decided right then that I wanted to write something similar for our band, but a little research turned up the fact that it was probably the setting of "Irish Tune from County Derry" by Percy Grainger, and it didn't make sense to duplicate what he had already done so beautifully.

And here's a little insight into how an arranger's mind works: I consider arranging to be composing using pre-existing music, so anything goes. In fact when I worked for Disney my boss, Bob Jani, tried to get people thinking creatively by telling us to try to see something in a brand new way while we were driving to work every morning, and that made a lot of sense because that's already how my mind seemed to work. And as I listened to various recordings of Grainger's and other versions of "Danny Boy" I kept hearing in my head a particular piece of music sneaking into it. It turned out to be quotations from the Largo movement (the "Going Home" theme) of Antonin Dvorák's "New World Symphony." So in a very real sense, I feel as if the music itself pushed me toward combining the two very different musical ideas because that's what it wanted me to do!! (And more often than not that's what it feels like when something suddenly starts writing itself!)

And a little more research into "Danny Boy" itself turned up some unexpected facts. The tune itself was first published in the 1850s in a collection of Irish tunes, but without words. The words were first added to the tune known as the "Londonderry Air" by an Englishman, Frederic Weatherly, not an Irishman, in 1913, and actually don't say anything at all about Ireland!

But it seems that Irish immigrants to North America in the late 19th century had adopted the song as a poignant reminder of the auld sod, so it became more popular in the U.S. and Canada than in Ireland! (And besides, Irish tenors just LOVE to hold out the high note near the end, fueled by several pints of good ale!!) So putting it together with music that a Czech visitor had been inspired to compose after spending several years in the U.S. started to sound a lot more reasonable.

So there are (at least) two different ways to think of this arrangement: as a song adopted by immigrants to the New World, put within a framework composed by a temporary visitor; or as a recasting of Dvorák's Largo (complete with English horn lead!) with "Danny Boy" replacing his "Going Home" theme. Or maybe even as seeing something that already exists in a brand new way, while driving to Disneyland every morning!



You may know John Howell as a tuba player and musical arranger extraordinaire, but did you know that he has performed on all 5 continents, in all 50 states, and appeared on the major TV variety shows of the 1960s?



From the 1962 album: "John Howell organized the group of four young men a dozen years ago. These same four men are still together: The Four Saints. Howell himself plays 16 instruments, is the group's baritone, and contributes most of the writing and arranging for the foursome. Even though he's still in his early twenties, John has spent a collective 31 years taking music lessons on his various instruments."

DAYS OF SAIL - A LONG JOURNEY by Steven E. Brown



Do you ever wonder how Steve knows so much music trivia?

He's the Music Director and Classical Music Announcer on WVTF Public Radio. He's also put his mastery of trivia of all kinds to good use, appearing on Jeopardy! three times!

When Steve isn't conducting the band, you can hear him in the percussion section, usually on timpani.

He's also a prolific composer, actor, and B-movie connoisseur (more trivia!)



Steve's love of the sea took a dark turn last summer as the evil Captain Hook in the Summer Musical Enterprise's staging of *Peter Pan* complete with singing, dancing, and sword play. Arrrrgh!

It had been in the dusty recesses of my mind to write a piece on sea chanteys for a long time. I got the idea back when I actually went to sea in the early 70s, standing on deck and just wondering what it was like on a sailing vessel, at the mercy of the wind and currents, where everything hard had to be done by hand (or all hands), from raising the anchor to furling the sails. Chanteys were work songs, and the work was hard.

Almost immediately, I knew two things: it would end with A-ROVIN', and there would not be one single quote about what shall we do with a drunken sailor. For the first, A-ROVIN' had been a favorite since I heard it used in *MOBY DICK* in the 50s, and for the second, that poor besotten swabby had been through enough.

After thinking about it for a while, I also knew something else: as a composer, I wasn't ready to do full justice to what I wanted. So I put it in my mental attic and let it gather dust.

About three years ago the idea came back to the forefront, and I actively started looking for other sea songs. I had read a series of books about a British Naval Officer in the Napoleonic era, *Richard Bolitho* by Alexander Kent, and also the wonderful *Hornblower* novels by C. S. Forrester. They always mentioned a tune, *HEART OF OAK*, that was heard, and sung, heading into battle. One of Kent's novels takes its title from the song's lyric, *TO GLORY WE STEER*. A little research on the good ol' internet brought it up, and I thought it would make a fine start. So I had two rousers, and needed a softer interlude for the middle---three songs would be quite enough.

A couple of summers ago my wife, son, and I vacationed by driving to Canada. On the way back, we stopped in Connecticut at Mystic, where I had lived while stationed in nearby Groton at the Submarine Base. We took in Mystic Seaport, and in the gift shop I was leafing through a book of chanteys when my eye stopped at one called *AWAY, RIO*. It looked lovely. I probably scared a few people, standing there in a corner singing softly to myself. But I knew I'd found the middle of the piece I now felt ready to write.

It still perked in my mind for a year or so, but one day something called down (like the crow's nest down to the fantail) that it was time to start to work. A small session at the piano to work out a few details, and some three or so weeks at the computer, and there it was: *DAYS OF SAIL*.

Twenty years ago I couldn't have written it, but thanks to the Band for letting me write and grow, I think it came out very close to what I wanted, and I consider it one of my best. I hope you're having as much fun playing it as I am conducting!





The shiny new band trailer - ready to see action for our Summer 2013 concerts!



The Blacksburg Community Band at the Holiday Pops Concert with the Blacksburg Community Strings, Blacksburg Children's Chorale, members of the Blacksburg Master Chorale, Summer Musical Enterprise, Celebration Chorus and featured singers, Cindy and Clay Blevins. This was in the Commonwealth Ballroom in Squires Student Center at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg Virginia on Sunday, December 16, 2012.



A rogue's gallery of trombone players!
Photo courtesy Armie Tatpong Tulyananda

Check out our Facebook page at BlacksburgCommunityBand for more photos and videos of the band



Why do we fundraise?

The band budget is over \$10,000 per year. That includes concert expenses, new music, insurance, storage spaces, equipment, website hosting, and other operating and administrative expenses. Kroger cards are our largest single fundraiser, averaging about \$300 per month. We also receive funding from the Town of Blacksburg, but that has been reduced in recent years, increasing our reliance on personal donations from members, friends, and supporters of the band.

How can you help?

Purchase a Kroger Card from the band and use it to purchase groceries, gift cards, and gas at any Kroger store.

Play 50-50 for as little as \$1 each week! Half of all profits go to the band - the other half goes to the winner.

Make a monetary donation in any amount and at any time of year. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit so all donations are tax deductible.

Ask friends, neighbors, and local businesses if they can support the band either monetarily or with an in-kind donation.

Send donations to:
David Kibler, Treasurer
Blacksburg Community Band
3627 Laurel Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Thank you for your support!

The New Band Trailer by Alan McDaniel

When we rehearse and perform at local schools, the percussion section can use the instruments in their band rooms. But, what about when we play away from the schools? In addition to the music boxes and band-owned stands, we typically need four tympani, bass drum, snare drum(s), crash and suspended cymbals, chimes, concert bells, xylophone, and sometimes a gong. Then there are the bongos, temple blocks, wind chimes, the several instrument stands, and a box of smaller percussive instruments. Oh yes, then we have the separate drum set as well.

In the past we have depended on Ed's van and at least one truck to get everything to the performance sites, a cumbersome process that was also hard on the instruments. The band board placed a priority on purchasing a cargo trailer to haul our equipment, including designating funds in the budget. Last fall, assisted by a grant from the Community Foundation of the New River Valley, the trailer became a reality! A committee researched trailers and purchased one at the end of December.

The trailer is 6' W x 10' L with a V-nose for easier pulling, wood floor and interior sides, and side brackets to secure the instruments. It has a side door and full-size rear ramp for easier loading and unloading. It is one foot taller than usual, which will allow us to roll in the chimes intact rather than disassembling the frame, head, and 18 tubes!

The trailer's inaugural concert will be at Warm Hearth this month. Between concerts we have a designated parking space provided by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department. (They are now planning improvements to that parking area to make it even easier for us.) We are working on plans for metal interior instrument racks with assistance from teachers at Blacksburg and Christiansburg High Schools. The only thing missing is our band logo on the sides. Magnetic signs won't work on the aluminum skin. Any volunteer painters out there?

CONCERT SCHEDULE

Sunday, April 14, 4pm
Spring Concert, Blacksburg High School

Wednesday, April 24, 7pm
Warm Hearth Village Center

Monday, May 27, 10:45am
Memorial Day at Warm Hearth Gazebo

Thursday, July 4
2pm: Independence Day Parade, Blacksburg
6pm: Concert Caboose Park, Blacksburg

Tuesday, July 23, 7pm
Bissett Park, Radford

More concert dates to come!