

Jack STAMP

MUSIC FOR BRASS BAND
FROM CONCRETE TO COBBLESTONES
TWO CHRISTMAS SETTINGS
SIX HYMN TUNE SETTINGS
SAN LUIS SNAPSHOTS
FROM A DISTANT HILL
SCARBOROUGH FAIR
MILL CITY FLOURISH
CUBAN STINGERS
BARE-ASS FUNK

Lake Wobegon Brass Band
Michael Halstenson

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

MY MUSIC FOR BRASS BAND

by Jack Stamp

I am Director of Band Studies Emeritus at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where I taught for 25 years and was awarded the title of 'University Professor' for the 2008–9 academic year at IUP – the highest award IUP gives to a professor. My academic degrees are in music education (Bachelor of Science degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 1976), percussion performance (Master of Music degree from East Carolina University, 1978) and wind conducting (Doctor of Musical Arts from Michigan State University, where I studied with Eugene Corporon, 1988). Although I hold no academic degrees in composition, I have studied with some noted American composers, including Robert Washburn (1974–75), Fisher Tull (1982), Evan Copley (1983–84), Joan Tower (1992), David Diamond (1994) and Richard Danielpour (1998–2000).

As for my delving into the brass-band world, it was the discovery and love of British music which first made me aware of this historic genre. My path to brass bands was not a normal one, since I didn't grow up with them and I'm not a brass player. My introduction came when I was in grade school (about fifteen) and started playing music for wind band by British composers – Holst, Vaughan Williams, Gordon Jacob, people like that – and my love of British music made me look into their works. I found out that the transcribed version of the 'Moorside March' by Gordon Jacob that I had played in the wind band was from a brass-band suite. I had no idea. There was no internet at the time, and so finding the music was challenging but I managed to locate records and then later CDs. I remember searching for Vaughan Williams' *Variations for Brass Band* and also the *Severn Suite* by Elgar – all those pieces I knew about before I actually ever played in a brass band or conducted one simply because my love of British music encouraged me to investigate those composers.

However, my first brass-band experience didn't happen until 1988, when I was teaching in a small college in North Carolina. My academic role challenged my teaching skills, but I didn't find the musical and conducting aspects as fulfilling as I had hoped. When the conductor of the North Carolina Triangle British Brass Band left to work elsewhere, I auditioned for the position and was appointed conductor in February 1988. Little did I know about the impending championship of the North American Brass Band Association (NABBA), and I realised they had entered the Honors Division, the second division – and I had to prepare them for this national competition in only six weeks. The band comprised some pretty good musicians who were musically trained, but there were also lots of other people, as in British brass bands, from all walks of life. Many of them held out their approval of me until after the NABBA contest – where we won the Honors Division and then I was totally accepted.

Now that I had finally secured the position, I really had to do my homework and research brass-band music. I remember getting Geoffrey Brand's history of the brass band;¹ little did I know that in about five or six years I'd get to meet Geoffrey. I started to buy recordings, the first being of Edward Gregson's brass-band music and I remember my favourite – still my favourite – piece of brass-band music was on that album, his *Connotations*.²

The band started presenting a successful regular concert series and the following year, 1989, participated again in the NABBA Championship division. The Columbus Brass Band, having won a hat trick in previous years, were not allowed to compete and the Triangle Brass Band duly won, challenging themselves with, indeed, *Connotations*. We were back at the NABBA Championship in 1990, this time competing against Columbus, and taking second place.

Shortly after that competition, I started a new position at Indiana University of Pennsylvania as Director of Bands. The only brass band in Pennsylvania at that time was the River City Brass Band, run by Bob Bernat, a fellow academic. But it was not a traditional British-type brass band, since they used orchestral horns. My career thus

¹ Violet and Geoffrey Brand, *Brass Bands in the Twentieth Century*, Egon Publishers, Wakefield, 1979.

² Released on *The Music of Edward Gregson*, Master Brass Series, Volume 2, Triton Recordings TRMB 78102, 1987 (LP).

diverted me away from brass bands and I was not fully involved again for another 25 years. My only brush with brass, so to speak, in that time was a 1996 commission from the United States Army Brass Band, which resulted in my *From Concrete to Cobblestones*, recorded on this album.

When I retired from IUP in 2015, I moved to the Minneapolis area: I had married six years earlier, and my wife lived near the twin cities in Minneapolis whereas I was living in Pennsylvania – we spent six years 900 miles apart. A friend of mine, a former colleague and teacher, invited me to join the Lake Wobegon Brass Band, which was about to embark on a tour of England. This involvement fitted my musical retirement plans since I wanted to return to playing percussion. I began writing for the Lake Wobegon Band and also delved into the British brass-band scene, serving as International Composer in Association to the world-famous Grimethorpe Colliery Band from 2019 to 2023.

The original version of *Mill City Flourish* [1] was written in 2019 for the Uptown Brass, the brass quintet of the Minnesota Orchestra. The brass-band version was completed in 2021. ‘Mill City’ refers to Minneapolis in its early days, when a large variety of mills occupied the downtown shoreline of the Mississippi River. Today those warehouses have been replaced by up-market apartments and restaurants as well as the iconic Guthrie Theatre. The music begins with a unison statement in all instruments, followed by a fugato based on a motif from the opening. The tempo slows and a new theme is introduced in *stretto* entrances by each section of the band, culminating in a fully harmonised statement. A brief development section follows, based upon the opening material, which is interrupted by an even grander statement of the middle theme.

From Concrete to Cobblestones was my first composition for brass band and was based on impressions from my first extended trip to England, in 1996. It was commissioned by the United States Army Brass Band in that same year, but only three movements of the five were premiered by the Air Force Brass Band. The work did not receive a complete performance until 2016, by the Lake Wobegon Brass Band, largely because of my obscurity as a brass-band composer. ‘Fanfare for the Rock’ [2] was written to honour the outdoor bandstand at the Royal Military School of Music in Twickenham (a south-western suburb of London), affectionately known as ‘The Rock’. It was

demolished to make way for a new bandstand, and this fanfare was written to mark its historical importance. The county of Dorset, in the south-west of England, has many scenic areas, from coastal beauty to castle ruins; the movement to which I gave that name [3] is based upon the folk-tune ‘The Water is Wide’. When I finally ventured to London, with all its history and beauty, what struck me most was the ‘Tube’, the massive underground subway system that can get you almost anywhere in London – and, what’s more, its fascinating colour-coded routes make it easy to navigate. At some stops, written on the platform between the train and the boarders and announced over a tannoy, one sees and hears the phrase ‘Mind the Gap’. The third movement [4] is my attempt to depict both the complexity and massiveness of this marvel of transport, with the opening percussion sounds reminiscent of the wheels and tracks. The ‘Hymn to Dunblane’ [5] is my elegy to the victims of the horrific mass shooting in Dunblane, Scotland, on 13 March 1996, when a lone gunman killed sixteen pupils and a teacher at Dunblane Primary School – the deadliest mass shooting in British history. The tune is original and was written to express grief and tragedy. On a brighter note, one of my fondest visual memories of England was when Stan Kitchen, owner of the brass-band publishing company Studio Music, drove me across Westminster Bridge in the evening when it seemed that all of London was lit with radiant beauty. ‘The City’ [6] presents my impressions of London, both the hustle and bustle as well as the serene beauty. The work is cast like a typical British march with a robust main theme and a trio which is folk-like and in which the style marking is ‘à la Holst’.

The original version of *San Luis Snapshots* [7], scored for solo horn and chamber wind ensemble, was composed in 2016 for Angela Winter and the Adams State University Winds and was premiered at the 2017 Colorado Music Educators Conference with Dr Winter as soloist and me conducting. The subsequent brass-band version was transcribed in 2020 and is dedicated to Helen Varley (solo horn of the Grimethorpe Colliery Band) and Steve Eckland (solo horn of the Lake Wobegon Brass Band). The premiere was given by the Lake Wobegon Brass Band in the autumn of 2023.

The area in which Adams State University is sited, in Alamosa, Colorado, is known as San Luis. The landscape offers stark contrasts: you can admire the mountains while

standing on a flat, almost desert-like terrain. *San Luis Snapshots* therefore also presents contrasting material: a quirky four-note motif and a pastoral lyrical melody. In the middle of the work, all activity stops, and the horn section is featured in a brief hymn-like chorale.

In 2022, during the most recent visit of the Lake Wobegon Brass Band to England, my wife and I ventured off on a free day with two dear British friends, Paul and Janet Murrell, and planned an excursion to the seaside town of Scarborough in Yorkshire. Little did we know that there was a festival taking place; when we arrived, there were no parking places anywhere, and so we had to drive around the town and catch some of its 'seaside charm' in that way. I have always loved the folksong 'Scarborough Fair', not least in the recordings by Simon and Garfunkel and Sergio Mendes and Brazil '66. Upon our return from the UK, I wrote this arrangement of the folksong [8], which features our terrific percussion section.

I first met Geoffrey Brand in 1994 at a conference of the British Association of Symphonic Bands and Wind Ensembles (BASBWE) in Huddersfield, also in Yorkshire. I was fortunate to have been sent by my publisher, Neil Kjos Music, to guest-conduct my *Chorale and Toccata* with one of the performing ensembles (Richard Jones and the band of Richmond School in North Yorkshire). The event concluded with a traditional Yorkshire meal complete with roast beef, Brussels sprouts and Yorkshire pudding. I had the pleasure of sitting next to Geoffrey at this banquet and was immediately taken with his charm, wit and warmth. On subsequent trips to the UK, I would visit Geoffrey and Violet at their beautiful home north of London. Geoffrey was a terrific storyteller and his tales about Sir Thomas Beecham were legendary. I brought him to IUP in October 2001, where he conducted his outstanding (and severely overlooked) transcription of Holst's *Dances from 'The Morning of the Year'*.³ We would annually get together at the Midwest Conference in Chicago until Geoffrey was unable to make the trip. I would occasionally check-in with Michael, his son, about Geoffrey's well-being. Upon hearing of his passing in February 2023, I began composing *From a Distant Hill* [9] in his memory. With both Geoffrey and my association with the Grimethorpe Colliery Band, I had my musical

³ G&M Brand Publications, Brighton, 1996.

motif: (G)eoffrey (B)rand – (G)rimethorpe (C)olliery (B)and. The work is entirely based upon the juxtaposing of these five notes at various pitches and harmonic textures. I wrote the work in memory of an outstanding musician, an incredible arranger/transcriber, a brass-band innovator and historian – and my dear friend.

Before anyone is offended by the title *Bare-Ass Funk* [10], I should explain that it is a play on words. In May 2024, I was reunited with a former high-school band student whom I taught over 40 years ago. He runs an adult big band in Elkin, North Carolina, and invited me to come and play a vibraphone solo with the band. I decided to write them a piece. My former student's name is Michael Beres and the title is a pun on his last name. Concurrently, I wrote it for brass band. The work is dominated by the alternation of a short note followed by a long note in a syncopated rhythm.

I am a fanatic about baseball – such a fanatic that for ten years I attended the Minnesota Twins Fantasy Camp, getting to enjoy baseball with some of my boyhood heroes. One team I played on was coached by National Baseball Hall of Fame member Tony Oliva, a native Cuban, and Lee Stange, whose nickname was 'Stinger'; our team's name was 'The Cuban Stingers'. Upon my return home from that camp in 2017, I wrote *Cuban Stingers* [11], a samba in a fast $\frac{7}{4}$ metre.

I have long thought that the best melodies in all music come from folksongs and hymn-tunes. Therefore, throughout my compositional career, I have had an affinity for setting hymn-tunes in various forms for both wind band and brass band. Though the six settings heard here were composed over the past nine years, they are presented as a set on this recording.

Psalm 150 [12] was originally composed for Brad Genevro (the producer of much of this recording) in 2012 for organ and wind band to celebrate the installation of a new pipe organ at Messiah University in Grantham, Pennsylvania. The brass-band version was written for the LWBB in 2018 and this recording features a local organist, Bill Chouinard. The work alternates between an original pandiatonic motif and the hymn-tune 'Nun Danket Alle Gott' ('Now Thank We All Our God').

The title of *Fast Falls the Eventide* [13] comes from the second line of the hymn 'Abide with Me'. This setting was a surprise gift to Michael Halstenson, the conductor of the

Lake Wobegon Brass Band, and was performed at his final concert with the band in March 2024. Michael, a fine composer in his own right,⁴ served as conductor of the LBWW for the past 26 years, and his conducting of this album was his final act as our music director.

The original spur for the setting of the hymn-tune *For the Beauty of the Earth* [14] was a 2020 commission from Jeffrey Scott Doeblér and Quincy Ford, the conductor and assistant conductor of the Michigan City Municipal Band in Indiana, in celebration of Richard D’Arcangelis, its conductor emeritus. The brass-band version was written in 2021 for the University of North Texas Brass Band and their conductors, David Childs and Raquel Samayoa. The setting explores my affinity for the time-signature ⁷/₈ and demonstrates how effortlessly the hymn-tune fits into that new, rhythmic structure.

The 75th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor was commemorated in 2016. To honour those who both served and perished, I decided to set our Navy hymn, ‘Eternal Father Strong to Save’ [15]. *Infamy*, the title of the setting, comes from Franklin D. Roosevelt’s inspired speech condemning the attack. It should be noted that the word ‘infamy’ was not in the original speech: upon reading the typed draft, Roosevelt inserted the line ‘will live in infamy’.

While serving as the International Composer in Association to the Grimethorpe Colliery Band (2019–23), I travelled to England to attend the British Open Brass Band Championships in Birmingham. The day after my arrival, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II passed away, at the age of 96. The entire country was in mourning, with Her Majesty the focus of everyone’s thought. While there, I had flashbacks of 1963 and the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the deep mourning that our country experienced. Upon my return, I penned this setting, *Memories on Crimond* [16], in her memory. Crimond is a village in the north-east of Scotland, and also the name of a hymn-tune written in 1871 by Jessie Seymour Irvine.⁵ ‘Crimond’ was directly associated with Queen Elizabeth: it was sung at her wedding in 1947 and at her state funeral in 2022. The soprano cornet

⁴ His *Winter’s Moon* (2022) can be heard on *Postcards from Grimethorpe*, Toccata Next TOCN 0030.

⁵ Irvine (1836–87) was the daughter of a Church of Scotland minister who was serving in Crimond at the time his daughter wrote the hymn-tune, intended as a harmonisation of Psalm 23, ‘The Lord’s my Shepherd’.



*Conductor and composer: Michael Halstenson and Jack Stamp
after their final LWBB concert together*

descant on *Memories on Crimond* was composed by Liz Lane. As the French Prime Minister, Emmanuel Macron, said: ‘To us, she was *the Queen*.’

Grace and Glory [17], a setting of the hymn-tune ‘Rhondda’, was written in 2009 as a gift to celebrate the 85th birthday of John Kincaid, founder of the Western Brass Band of Gunnison, Colorado. John had a unique distinction in US military music: in World War II, he was a Marine musician and performed the bugle call ‘Taps’ at Iwo Jima after the battle that preceded that famous raising of the flag, an iconic remembrance for the United States Marine Corps.

Like many brass bands throughout the world, the Lake Wobegon Brass Band has been playing a series of Christmas concerts on the first weekend in December for over a quarter of a century. We attract a returning audience year after year who have their favourites as we attempt to add new holiday repertoire to our performances. Both settings heard here were written specifically for them. *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* (2022) [18] is a mediaeval Polish carol (‘W Żłobie Leży’), translated into English in 1920;⁶ the text tells of the birth of Christ in a stable. My setting uses a variety of compositional techniques, including melodic clusters and a canon based upon the third phrase of the carol. *Bring a Torch* (2017) [19] is based upon the seventeenth-century French carol ‘Un flambeau, Jeanette, Isabella’. It was first published in 1688, and was not originally meant to be a festive dance in $\frac{3}{8}$ rather than a tune for the Christmas holidays. Once again, my affinity for mixed metre is on display: this setting is in $\frac{7}{8}$, filled with counterpoint and a fugue.

⁶ The translation was the work of the British musician and playwright Edith Margaret Gellibrand Reed (1885–1933), who attended St Leonard’s School in St Andrews and studied at the Guildhall School of Music in London before going on to a career in music education. She edited *Panpipes*, a periodical for children, *Music and Youth* and *The Musical Student*. Her *Story Lives of the Great Composers* appeared in 1925. One of her two plays was *Christmastide: A Nativity Play* (1932); the other, *With Jockey to the Fair: A May-Day Play*, was published in 1936, three years after her death.

Steve Ecklund has played with the Lake Wobegon Brass Band since 2001. He is also a member of the Metro Brass and the Metro Brass Quintet and was formerly Principal Horn of the Civic Orchestra of Minneapolis. He also plays the Swiss alphorn and can occasionally be seen at ethnic festivals and beer gardens around the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St Paul wearing his alpine hat and lederhosen. He is retired from a career with Honeywell's Aerospace Division, where he was involved in ring-laser gyroscope design, production and testing for 39 years.



Bill Chouinard is Organist and Music Coordinator at St Andrew's Lutheran Church in Mahtomedi, Minnesota, a position he has held since 1988. His past organ teachers include Edward Berryman, Dean Billmeyer and Kim Kasling. He serves as organist for religious conventions, is frequently a workshop presenter on service-playing and improvisation techniques, and has played for numerous hymn festivals, most recently for the annual conference of The Hymn Society in The United States and Canada. He has appeared several times on live national radio broadcasts on the St Paul Fitzgerald's Wurlitzer theatre organ and has performed on the public radio programme 'Pipedreams'. His credits also include performing with the Minnesota Orchestra, playing on recordings on both organ and harpsichord, and touring as a guest organ soloist with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. In addition to keyboard duties, he is a freelance bassist in the Twin Cities, performing both live and in studio with many album credits for both electric and upright bass.



A native of North Dakota, **Michael Halstenson** studied music performance and composition at the University of North Dakota, Webster College in St Louis and the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis with the composers Dominick Argento, William Boehle, Paul Fetler, Leigh Gardine, Alex Lubet and Eric Stokes. His works have been performed by the St Paul Chamber Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, University of Minnesota Opera Theater, St Olaf Band, Luther College Concert Band, Appleton Symphony, Minnesota All-State Band, Lake Wobegon Brass Band, Northern Symphony Orchestra and others, and have had performances in Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Lincoln Center and the Tampere Hall in Finland.



Photograph: Darrell Owens

In addition to his post with the LWBB, he was the Director of Orchestras at Anoka High School from 1996 to 2018 and has served as guest conductor of the Buffalo Symphony in Minnesota, St Cloud Symphony, Sheldon Theater Brass Band, Anoka-Hennepin Honors Orchestra and North Suburban Band and Chorale.

His brass-band compositions are published by C. Alan Music.

The **Lake Wobegon Brass Band** was founded in the winter of 1992 when Gordy Nilsen, Dave Peterson and Ric Perkins met at the Anoka Coffee Shop in Minnesota to transform their dream of a British brass band in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul into reality. Charles Olson was invited to conduct, players were invited to join, permission to use the name was granted, and the music began.

Now, over three decades later, the LWBB has performed over 275 concerts including two state and two national music-educator conventions, eight international festivals, three live Minnesota Public Radio broadcasts and one live national radio broadcast. Michael Halstenson succeeded Charles Olson as Music Director in 2002. The band made 'pilgrimage' tours to Great Britain in 2001, 2005, 2015 and 2022, performing both on its own and with other brass bands. The 2015 concert tour featured a performance with the world-famous Black Dyke Band, performing at Ripon Cathedral, headlining



Photograph: Doug Bakkum

the Gala Concert at the Brighthouse Festival and participating in the Brighthouse March and Hymn Tune Contest. The 2022 tour covered both Cornwall and Yorkshire and included participating in the West of England Bandsmen's Festival in the village of Bugle, concerts at the windmill home of the composer Philip Wilby and a return engagement at Ripon Cathedral, and shared concerts with the Grimethorpe Colliery Band and the Black Dyke Band.

The 2023–24 season was Michael Halstenon's final season before his retirement. The band was the featured ensemble at the Luther College Brass Symposium where they highlighted their performance with guest soloist Marissa Benedict (cornet) and recorded their ninth and tenth albums – a new Christmas recording and this recording of Jack Stamp's music, respectively. The LWBB regularly performs new original works and arrangements, an increasing number of which have come from band members and through band members' connections. The LWBB has twice commissioned the English composer Philip Wilby – *Beyond Far Horizons* (2012) and *The True and Tender North* (2017) – and hosted him for twelve-day residencies of the occasion of each premiere.

Lake Wobegon Brass Band Performing Personnel

E flat Soprano Cornet

Dave Rickheim

Michael Serber 5 6 12 15

Solo/1st Cornets

Chris Ravndal, Chris Westermeyer,

Mike Rickman, Brett Krohn, Jeff Scholl

Repiano Cornet

Len Klun

2nd Cornets

Wade Schroeder, Lori Towner

3rd Cornets

Todd Burkholder, Heather Monthony

Flugelhorn

Dick Miller

Solo Horn

Steve Ecklund

1st Horn

Jen Greupner

2nd Horn

Cami Madison

1st Baritone

Mike Moeller

2nd Baritone

Charlie Preis, Larry Carlson

1st Trombone

Mark Springer

2nd Trombone

John Olson

Bass Trombone

John Froelich

Euphoniums

Eric Anderson, Lee Dummer

E flat Tubas

Gary Bird, Roger Gomoll

B flat Tubas

Eric Peterson, Jerry Van Cleave

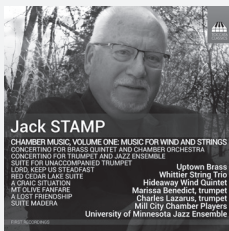
Percussion

Donna Philippot, Dennis Svendsen, Bob
Smithson, Jack Stamp



More Jack Stamp on Toccata Classics and Toccata Next

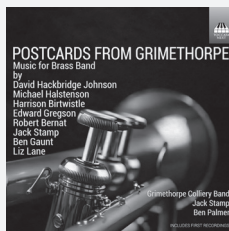
TOCC 0087



TOCC 0725



TOCN 0030



‘His music is approachable and when the half-enchanted listener approaches it welcomes. The notes step effortlessly from Sondheim/Tunick sassy, to grave and epigrammatic along the lines of Nino Rota, to Copland-style open skies, bluffs and mesas – a touch of *The Outdoor Overture* and *The Tender Land*. The music is put across to the listener in utterly superb sound. [...] These are all first recordings of music that will hold your attention.’

—Rob Barnett, MusicWeb International



Recorded on 23–25 March 2018 in Abbott Concert Hall, University of Wisconsin–River Falls, River Falls, Wisconsin ('Hymn to Dunblane', 'The City', *Psalm 150* and *Infamy*) and on 19–21 April 2024 at the Edina High School, Edina, Minnesota

Recording engineers: Benjamin Blasko, John Scherf (*Grace and Glory*, *Infant Holy*, *Infant Lowly*, *Bring a Torch*) and Bruce Leek ('Hymn to Dunblane', 'The City', *Psalm 150* and *Infamy*)

Recording producer: Bradley Genevro

Assistant to the producer: Doug Bakkum

Editing: Benjamin Blasko, Jack Stamp, John Scherf (*Grace and Glory*, *Infant Holy*, *Infant Lowly*, *Bring a Torch*) and Bruce Leek ('Hymn to Dunblane', 'The City', *Psalm 150* and *Infamy*)

Mastering: Benjamin Blasko

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