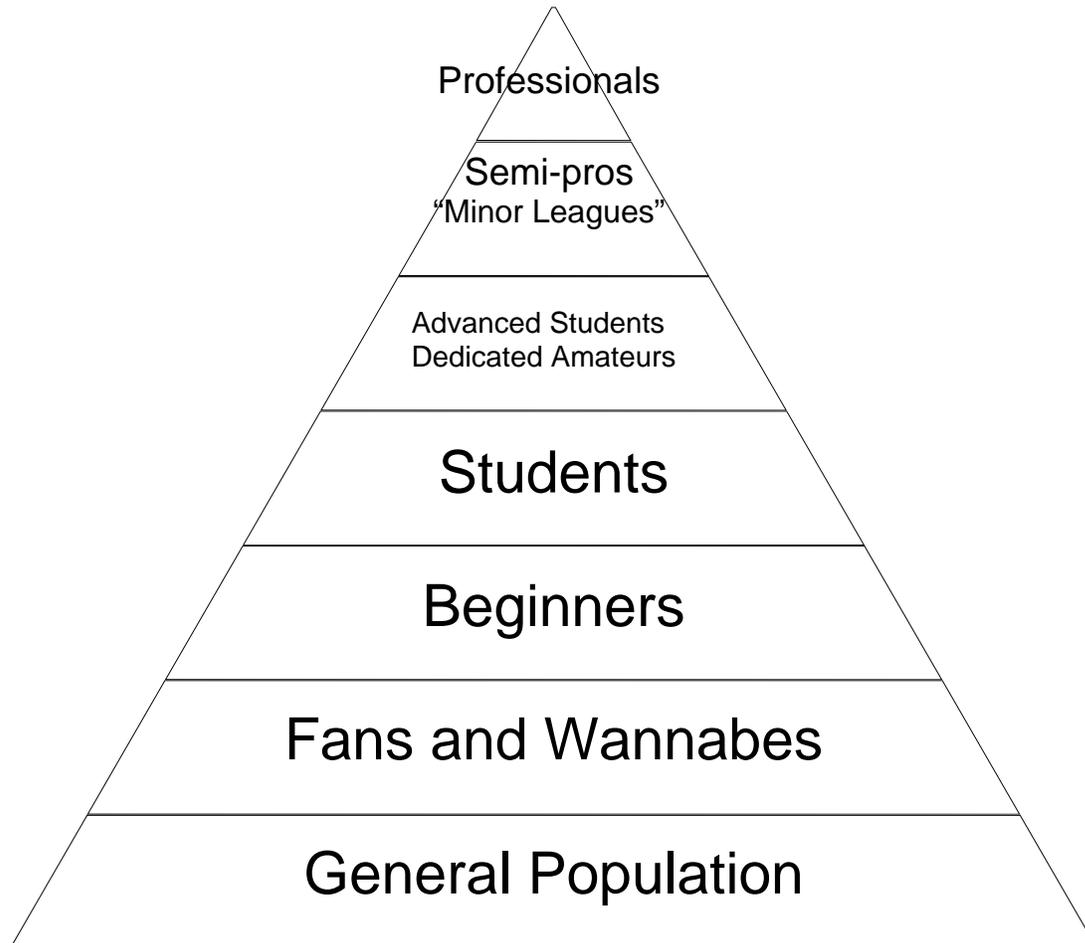


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How to Start a Brass Ensemble in Your Congregation

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Bill has been playing trumpet in his home congregation, Christ Ev. Lutheran Church of North St. Paul, since the eighth grade. He studied trumpet under Roger Ochs, the late Lester Gausmann, Steve Hoernemann and Clement Volpe of the Minnesota Orchestra. As an undergraduate, he was a four year member of both the University of Minnesota Marching Band (trumpet rank lieutenant -1976) and Concert Band program (soloist with the Gopher Symphonic Band – 1973), a board member of the Band Student Organization, and a student in Professor David Baldwin’s brass ensemble program. He helped organize the Mariah Sanford Nauer-Never Band (in-house band for his dormitory), the Christmas brass ensemble for the Gopher Symphonic Band, and a freshman brass quintet. He holds a lifetime membership in the University of Minnesota Band Alumni Society, and has served on its Board of Directors.

After years of trumpet playing in the Twin Cities area Reformation Festivals, he became one of the original members of Reformation Brass, a group formed by harpist, Elaine Stindt in 2000. www.reformationbrass.com

Since 1968, he has formed and re-formed brass ensembles at Christ – North St. Paul. The present group of students and dedicated amateurs represents the largest and most-instrumentally balanced of all previous editions of the brass ensemble – even with the baritone saxophone substituting for tuba.

At Christ – North St. Paul, his wife Paula regularly solos on flute. Together, they organize the congregation’s annual Christmas Eve band, and also provide flute and trumpet accompaniment for the Children’s Christmas Services.

He met Paula at a Lutheran Collegians* meeting on the U of M Twin Cities campus in 1976. They have two sons, Robert (mallet percussion -St. Croix LHS Class of 1999) and Johan (trumpet/Croixaliers - St. Croix LHS Class of 2000).

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* Lutheran Collegians – a predecessor to today’s WELS Campus Ministries - then, as now, a thinly veiled conspiracy concocted by synod administrators to virtually force WELS public college and university students to intermarry.

How to Start a Brass Ensemble in Your Congregation

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How to Start a Brass Ensemble in Your Congregation

William R. Baumeister

I. YOU CAN START A BRASS ENSEMBLE AT YOUR CHURCH. Look what happened in North St. Paul.

We began a brass ensemble at Christ – North St. Paul for Christmas in 1968. (I don't count the Pioneer – nursing home experience of the previous spring.¹) Our members were Bob Sullwold, Dave and Dan Daubenspeck, and me - two trumpets and two trombones – three eighth graders and a seventh grader, from three different public schools in two different school districts. How the four of us got together, I no longer remember. I'm sure our organist/choir director had something to do with it. She wanted some brass to play along with “Oh Come All Ye Faithful” and “Joy to the World” at the beginning and the end of either the Christmas Eve or Christmas Day services. Of course, our church did not own a brass arrangement of either hymn. She knew that some of the brass would need to transpose, but could not explain to me, in any effective way, how to accomplish the task.

I asked my junior high school band director for help. He explained that the Bb trumpet required me to raise the notes two half steps, and add two sharps or subtract two flats from the key signature. The trombones can play bass clef right out of the hymnal. After a trip to the dime store for a couple of spiral notebooks of music paper, I began transposing, note by note, measure by measure, a first and second trumpet part for the first hymn. Once I realized I'd be playing in 4 sharps – E, out came the fingering chart and some extra notations.

Sometime around Thanksgiving, we started practicing. We'd grab the pastor's office between services, and catch a time in the middle of the week, in the church kitchen, or any open room. The four of us set our own rehearsal times, and conducted our own rehearsals. We'd play the hymn, stop and talk about what we liked and didn't like, sometimes trying some different tempos, articulations and occasionally different dynamics. We'd crash and burn more often than not, find a mis-transposed note, a malcontented chord, or just some unexplained dissonance that would cure itself the next time or two through things. We invented our own warm-ups. “Play the first note of the first measure, hold it, and then move to the first note of the next measure.” We'd check our tuning, blend and balance – you know, all those boring things that your band director does during rehearsal, that suddenly take on new meaning when you realize it would be just the four of you, one on a part. After about a half hour, we usually had had enough of the two hymns, so we would end the rehearsal.

After a few weeks, our organist/choir director poked her head into a rehearsal to see how we were doing. Then, two weeks before Christmas, we began running through the hymns with her on the organ.

¹ In late spring 1968, as part of a service project, our illustrious Pioneer train leader put together a small variety show to take to the local nursing home. There was a boy choir, and a skit of some sort. The train leader had heard that a few of us played horns, and pulled together a single rehearsal. Bob Sullwold and I, seventh graders, on trombone and trumpet, one other eighth grade trombone player, who “forgot” his trombone at home, including the day of the performance. He unconvincingly expressed shock and absolute bewilderment at his empty case, which only moments before had held his trombone (before he removed it on the way out of his bedroom). I don't remember if we had another trumpet player. I do remember protesting to the train leader that a trumpet and a trombone cannot play together out of the hymnal – I needed trumpet music. “Just play, it'll be fine.” There was only so much protesting a kid could do, so Bob and I played a few hymns out of the hymnal. The “music” sounded vaguely like the hymns in church – except, to my untrained ears, we sounded a bit Chinese.

How did we do on Christmas 1968? I could not tell you, but someone must have judged it a success, because we played that Easter. Soon, we were playing for Reformation, and Thanksgiving, and adding to our collection of transposed hymns. By my high school sophomore year, a few pieces appeared in the Senior Choir and Junior Choir folders calling for trumpets or brass quartet. By the end of my sophomore year, I was asked to play at a wedding. Since Christmas 1968, Christ – North St. Paul has never been without a few brass musicians capable of handling a hymn, a choir piece or a call to worship. As a direct result of the brass group, Christ – North St. Paul has a flute choir, which when combined with brass, percussion and additional woodwinds, produces a 15 to 20 piece band – made up of all comers. This band does 20 minutes of pre-service music for two services on Christmas Eve. (When our pastor’s wife joins us on violin, we try to pass ourselves off as an orchestra.) An earlier version of the band supplied much of the music for an annual outdoor worship service, which, during the ‘90’s, led to a concert/jazz band for the annual church picnic.

Looking back, that first brass quartet was, at least on paper, doomed to failure. Two of the players dropped band before high school, and of course, stopped playing at church.² In 1968, the quartet’s ringleader was sitting in the bottom third of his eighth and ninth grade band’s trumpet section, and was having trouble filling out his weekly practice log with 30 minutes per day – six days per week. (After one particularly weak week of practice, his father signed his son’s practice record “H. E. Islazy” to which the junior high band director responded with a note “Sure is. Signed, Hugh Betcha.”)

Look, if it happened in North St. Paul, under these circumstances, it can happen anywhere. If four public school junior high students can do this, you can do this, too.

YOU can start a brass ensemble in your church.

II. What do you need for a successful brass ensemble? Goals, Standards and Basic Planning.

A. Let’s define “successful.” (Matt. 5:48 Be ye perfect, as your Father in Heaven is perfect.)

Who are all the various people we need in order to perform music in church?

What do all of these people have in common?

“For we sin daily with our eyes, ears, hands, body and soul, money and property, and everything that we have.” Martin Luther, from F. Samuel Janzow, *Luther’s Large Catechism*, p. 70 (Concordia Publishing House)

How do you like our chances of having the “perfect” brass ensemble?

² We found replacements. The replacements for the departing trumpet and trombone players did not play after high school. Eventually, college and jobs separated the remaining two original members. A new core of three trumpets developed, supplemented with an occasional trombone or French horn. And additional trumpets, and on and on....

“because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.” Hebrews 10:14

What is our purpose as church musicians?

Alternate goals/standards/definitions for “successful” in the context of music in Christian worship: “No one was excommunicated during or immediately following our participation in worship.” As long as we are giving our best efforts, why not such a standard for success?

Every time we raise our horns to our lips we are celebrating Jesus Christ, who is our perfection.

B. What are your needs?

1. Accompanying congregation singing of hymns and liturgy
2. Choir accompaniment – How big is the choir?
3. Pre-service, offertory, postludes
4. Brass choir or large brass ensemble
5. Brass quintet
6. Brass quartet
7. Brass trios
8. Same instrument groups – trumpet trio, horn quartet, tuba choir
9. Soloists on any given instrument

C. How much time will you require of your musicians?

1. A standing brass ensemble - meeting weekly, same membership, regular performances in worship
2. Short-term, task-oriented or “Episodic” brass ensemble
 - a. A task-oriented brass ensemble – oriented toward church holidays and festival services
 - b. A task-oriented, flexible instrumentation brass ensemble - Pastor wants some brass for pre-service on Christmas – or a choir piece needs three trumpets; or you’d like to play a lot of music for Easter, including some hymns with the congregation.

Episodic musical organizations: Some church choirs have been having trouble maintaining members. People are out of town for some of the holidays, there are evening work conflicts, and some express concerns about the time commitment to an entire year of choir. As a way to attract members, some of these choirs are moving towards an “episodic” or task-oriented schedule. The year may be divided into sections or “episodes” and if a member is available for Christmas, but not Easter, the member sings in choir for the Christmas section, including those services leading up to Christmas, but not for the rest of the year. The choir may be quite different in size and voicing from episode to episode.

III. Recruiting Brass Players for Your Church

A. Recruiting for Short-term Needs

Recruiting for short-term needs means recruiting to fill your particular brass ensemble or for the needs of your next church service. Recruiting involves three basic steps:

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1. Finding the people with the skills, talents, interests, desires and resources (time) that you need;
 2. Inviting their participation; and
 3. Having something meaningful for them to do when you call on them to participate.
1. Finding your brass musicians – building a “contacts list.”

Begin by making a list of the brass players you already know, or might know, in your church: Your classmate at your local Lutheran High School, the kids with the public school letter jackets with the “Band” patch on the sleeve, and any other potential candidates you can think of.

After tapping your memory, the simplest way to add brass musicians to your list is to look through your church’s time and talents survey. If your church does not regularly conduct such a survey, it should. Christ – North St. Paul will conduct such a survey every few years as part of its stewardship program. The survey asks for the members’ names, telephone numbers, street and e-mail addresses, and then asks about their skills, talents, interests, and desires that may be of use to the church and its members. People list their occupations: carpenter, brick mason, clerical worker, nurse, professional tuba player, and the like; any hobbies or other interests they may have such as portrait painting, story telling, old radio collecting, target shooting, fishing, jazz improvisation.... It then asks whether the person is interested in participating in different groups in the congregation: Youth ministries, Ladies’ Guild, Church Council, any of the choirs. Then appears a single question: “Do you play a musical instrument? Yes. ___ I play _____ No ___.”

Sometimes the surveys are filled out one per family, sometimes by individuals over a certain age. For my purposes, I like the “family” method better. Parents may be more likely to put on the form that their son or daughter plays an instrument, than the son or daughter would. On the other hand, the parents may underestimate their kids’ talents, abilities, interests and desires.

Admittedly, it’s not a lot of information, but it is a start. I would prefer more information: The survey could ask if anyone in the family has ever played a musical instrument, whether they still own a musical instrument, in addition to asking if they play an instrument.

Even with the limited information, you can add to your contacts list. If your church is like my church, you will have a very small contacts list. If your time and talents survey reveals the name of one trumpet player, and you are looking for at least a quartet, go through the survey again. A good number of brass musicians don’t believe that they are talented enough to play in church. They will not put their instruments on the survey form. You can still find them. Chances are that if a son or daughter plays any instrument, one or both of the parents played an instrument. The son or daughter also knows other kids in band. The flute player knows the brass player that missed “Survey Sunday.” (And according to Keith Wordell, Director of Bands – West Lutheran High school, she may be destined to marry a tuba player.)

If your church does not conduct a survey, you are left with good, old fashioned networking. In other words, you need to talk to people: pastors, Lutheran elementary school teachers, your church’s choir director, organists, youth ministries leaders, Girl and Boy Pioneer leaders, etc. There is probably a choir member or two that once played an instrument. Again, the former flute player may remember who the former brass players are. (In fact, she may be married to the former tuba player.)

In my experience, the least effective way to find brass players is through announcements in your church bulletin, newsletter or web site. People rarely respond. Why? Apparently, some people will not blow their own horn about the fact that they blow their own horn. Those people who don't believe they are "good enough" to play in a church brass group will not contact you. If you recruit solely through your church bulletin, newsletter and/or web site, expect disappointment.

Still, you need to write and submit the announcements, anyway. First, you just might find a new player. (Some day this might happen – just don't hold your breath – unless that's part of some breathing exercise...) Second, the announcements place your music ministry in front of your congregation. This sets the stage for your long-term recruiting, and could eventually lead to a line item in your congregation's annual budget: "Brass ensemble music and supplies...\$XXX.XX." Third, once your group has participated in a church service or two, the announcements have a way of letting the "regulars" know that something is in the works – the next service is coming. Just do not rely on these announcements to recruit your brass ensemble.

2. Inviting Participation

Having collected a list of potential contacts, and having already spoken to a number of your prospective musicians, you have already started the invitation process. As you made your initial contacts, you now have some idea of your instrumentation. Your hopes for a 10-piece brass choir were a bit ambitious, but you have the makings of a brass quartet, and may even double a few of the parts. It is time to invite your participants – to ask for and get a commitment to the group.

We all have received invitations in the mail. "You're invited!" It's right there in alternating multi-colored dancing letters on the front of the card. No, I am not suggesting written, mailed invitations to your prospects list. You do, however, need to fill in all the blanks of your typical invitation card before inviting participation:

What: We would like to accompany two hymns, and maybe a selection for pre-service for the Easter services.

Where: We will play by the organist, except for the pre-service piece – I'd like to do that one at the front of the church.

When: Well, we need to rehearse - Wednesdays after choir for a half hour until Easter - or Sunday between services. Easter is April/March_____, this year.

Time: We'll practice for about half an hour. (or until our chops are shot, whichever occurs first.) And the Easter services start at

B. Y. O. B. I.³ Still have your instrument, don't you? I asked Pastor to select the hymns for Easter, and have transposed the trumpet parts. (Or, here are the hymn numbers – transpose both the melody and tenor part for your instrument.) I have a piece selected for pre-service, but I'm not sure it will work for us. If you have anything you think might work for Easter and a brass quartet, bring it along. Or, here's the music I'd like to try, and a handout with the rehearsal schedule and performance details.

You can invite your participants by telephone, e-mail, or snail mail. My preferred method is face to face contact before or after church. Armed with my list of prospects, I arrive early for early service,

³ Bring Your Own Brass Instrument.

and talk to those I find. Coffee hour/Bible class means more contacts, and then I hang around to see who is in late service.

If you are recruiting young players – anyone not driving, yet – talk to their parents, also. This is a good way to find out, early in your planning that, although your young baritone player is interested in playing, the family will be out of town this Easter. Expect to answer the invitation questions, and to assure the parents that, yes, their son or daughter can actually do this.

3. Something Meaningful To Do

For your church's brass musicians, the "something meaningful to do" is almost a given: It's the Music, but it is also the type, timing, purpose and amount of music. It is finding a balance between too little to do and too much to do; too easy and too hard; too prominent and virtually hidden. It is calling a rehearsal and actually having the sheet music on hand at the practice. It is rehearsals beginning on time, accomplishing something, and ending at a reasonable hour. (Exception: Reformation Brass) It may even be about "fun."

Because we are performing music to enhance worship, we may believe that any amount, or any type of music we do, at any time in the service is "something meaningful" from our musicians' perspectives. This might not be the case. Would you really ask your players to drag their horns to church, warm up, tune, play only the "Gospel Acclamation," pack up and go home? Would you have your group rehearse and perform five minutes of pre-service music, beginning fifteen minutes before the service – when the members of your particular congregation do not file in until seconds before the bell? Would you have your group prepare any music at all for a special 12:30 PM service on the Sunday when the Vikings are playing the Packers? (O.K., so that would have been a blessing, but what about *next season*?)

If I am asked to assemble the brass for one thing in an upcoming church service, I always ask if there is another hymn for us to accompany. (I might not ask this if the one thing is a challenging, or lengthy work.) Occasionally, I will ask to drop something if it looks like more than we can or should handle.

B. Long-term Recruiting – the "development pyramid."

Over the years, the single most common recruiting mistake I make, over and over again, is that, once I have filled the needs of the brass ensemble *du jour*, I stop recruiting. The hymn transpositions for Christmas are four-part. I have the parts covered. Why look for more players? Every Easter service at Christ – North St. Paul ends with Walter Pelz's arrangement of "Crown Him with Many Crowns." I need three trumpets for that piece. I have three trumpets. Why look for more? Then, Reformation rolls around, and suddenly, I no longer have that quartet. And "Crown Him..." – Why am I playing alone, this year? What happened?

As soon as I get comfortable with the group I have, things happen. Kids stop playing, or they graduate high school and go away to college. People get married, and get busy with other things. Trombone players go on maternity leave. Families move. Couples divorce. They take job transfers or they change churches. Someone is out of town for Thanksgiving. Suddenly, that brass quartet I thought I had is a trombone and trumpet duo. I need to do a better job of long-term recruiting.

Long-term recruiting means recruiting for next year's needs and beyond next year's needs. It means looking at the big picture.

The title page of this paper has a version of the “big picture” I call the development pyramid. To better understand it, read it from the bottom to the top.

I do not claim any ownership or invention of the “development pyramid” concept. I do not recall when or where or how I first learned of this concept. If you are paying attention, it does not take long before you see it in operation in almost any and every field of skilled human endeavor: Carpentry, medicine, law, computer science, auto mechanics, symphony orchestras, professional football (American and “association football” or what we Americans call soccer), baseball, professional golf, the development of Olympic athletes, theologians, actors, authors, composers, conductors, and... brass musicians.

The development pyramid for brass musicians in the Wisconsin Synod has at its base or “general population” the synod membership – about 400,000 people. Anything that expands synod membership is good for the WELS brass development pyramid. (And hopefully, WELS brass development is good for expanding the synod membership.)

The fans and wannabes come from that membership base. The fans are those members that like brass music in worship, or music in worship, or just music in general. They are the parents, relatives and friends of current and past musicians, the current and past musicians, themselves, and just plain members. These are people who see value in what we do – our support comes from these people – spiritual, financial and practical support. The wannabes are mostly the Lutheran Elementary School kids and the WELS kids in the public schools who some day may want to play a brass instrument. The group also includes those few older students and adults who are interested in starting on an instrument, or returning to an instrument they once played.

The beginners are the wannabes who took the plunge into, or were pushed into, beginning brass musicianship. They receive their instruction through their local Lutheran Elementary Schools, through the public schools, or in private instruction through the local music stores or private teachers.

Middle school and high school brass musicians occupy the student level of our brass pyramid. The advanced students and dedicated amateurs are our college students playing brass instruments and/or studying on their instruments at Martin Luther College, Wisconsin Lutheran College or other private and public universities. This level also includes those who keep playing after high school and college, and any advanced high school brass musicians.

Semi-professionals are serious brass musicians with day jobs. When I was a student at the University of Minnesota, two of the top trumpet players in the top concert band pursued engineering degrees. Both are active trumpet players today, with one of them a serious semi-professional. Both have day jobs in engineering. I suspect we have a few serious semi-pro brass musicians in the WELS – I just have not personally met any, yet.

The professionals are trying to make a living with their instruments. To my knowledge, we have at least five professional brass musicians in the WELS: Larry Zimmerman, trombonist with the Grammy Award winning Chestnut Brass Company; Tom Otto, a graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran College with a bachelor’s degree in trombone performance, and a member of the Bala Brass, a contemporary brass quintet; Dave Sewall, a trombonist in the Green Bay area, performs in a number of big bands and musical shows; Dr. Patricia Backhaus, a graduate of the University of Minnesota with a doctorate in trumpet

performance, and Timothy Moke, also a Minnesota graduate⁴. There may be others – these are the five that I know about.

The brass development pyramid for the WELS is made up of the brass pyramids of the individual congregations. These smaller pyramids are never complete – some levels are completely missing or underrepresented. Still, wherever we are, if we want a brass ensemble in our church for more than just this year, we need to move people up the pyramid.

Long-term recruiting means finding and encouraging people to move up the development pyramid. How do we do this?

First, we need to develop the attitude that we are always engaging in long-term recruiting. This leaves us open to the opportunities placed before us to recruit. This does not mean we are perpetually “signing people up for the brass group.” Rather, it means we are always looking for ways to encourage people at all levels of the pyramid.

We should look for opportunities. You finish a church service, and a pre-schooler is looking at you and your horn. “Are you going to play trumpet when you get older?” (General population to fans and wannabes and on to beginners.)

Someone stops you to say “Nice job! Wow, I wish I would have kept playing?” What did she play? Does she still have the trombone? Does she want to give it a try, again? You can then encourage a slow and steady return to brass playing by incorporating the returnee into some of the group’s playing. Or, do your kids play? Did your husband play an instrument? Or, do you think your kids will play? (Fans and wannabes to beginners and/or (returning) students.)

We just finished our annual “all-comers” Christmas Eve Band. Our Lutheran Elementary School music teachers and LHS band directors of our participating beginners and students will receive a letter, call or e-mail from me after the first of the year. “Dear Mr. K, Just finished our annual Christmas Eve Band at Christ – North St. Paul. John Gaichas, Dan and Jim Hatzung joined us. They not only performed well, but I also greatly appreciated how they worked with and encouraged our younger musicians.” If any of my beginners crash and burn, the music teacher will learn this from the beginner, not from me, unless the crashing and burning was so devastating to the beginner that some additional encouragement and attention is needed. (Such a severe crash has yet to happen.)

Second, no matter where we are in the brass pyramid, we are still “fans and wannabes” (with the emphasis on “fans”). Good fans encourage their team. Our team is the entire WELS brass pyramid. Bala Brass is playing in the new Chapel at St. Croix LHS. Tom Otto plays trombone in that group. Let’s go to the concert. (Encouraging and supporting our professionals.)

As I enter the chapel, I see a couple from my church with their two girls. I know the parents do not play brass instruments. Aha! The girls must be playing something. I ask. The youngest, Becca, says she plays trumpet. How long? It’s her second year on the instrument. How about your sister? “Just piano.” Becca says. I invite Becca to join our Christmas Eve band.

Paul Kassulke is at the concert. “Becca, have you ever met Mr. Kassulke? He and Mr. Pufahl direct the bands at St. Croix.” At intermission, I make introductions. “Mr. Kassulke, this is Becca. She

⁴ For all I know, some of these four may have day jobs, and would thus be semi-professionals – but don’t shatter my dreams, just yet.

plays trumpet at Christ – North St. Paul.” Paul is doing his own long-term recruiting. “I hear there are four fine young trumpet players at Christ Lutheran School.” (Encouraging beginners.)

After Mr. K. leaves, panic sets in. Am I slipping in my recruiting efforts? Failing memory? “Becca, who are the other three trumpet players?” Whew! I knew about Matt and Elicia. Ellenelle? Well, let’s get her involved.

A private school in Indianapolis, Indiana hands a hand-written thank you note to each concert attendee as they leave the auditorium. The students in the band and orchestra write, in their own words, a generic (in the sense it is not addressed to any particular individual) thank you: “Thank you for attending our concert. We worked particularly hard preparing the Mozart number, and I appreciate you showing your support for our efforts by attending this evening. Sincerely,…” While not directly applicable to church brass ensembles (our focus is enhancing worship, and worship is not a concert), these students demonstrate uncommon common courtesy and the members of the important fan base know they are appreciated.

Long-term recruiting means recruiting people who may end up elsewhere – not in your group. However, if we all engage in long-term recruiting...

Upon graduating law school, I took a job with a law firm in Austin, Minnesota. We joined Faith Lutheran – now known as Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church. Culture shock! Christ – North St. Paul was a congregation of 1100 souls. Faith – Austin had 125 members meeting in an old one room schoolhouse (with no indoor plumbing) on the southeast edge of town. As they do today, Beautiful Savior shares a pastor with Trinity - Dexter, Minnesota, about 10 miles east of town, with about 200 members. The two congregations also shared organists, choir and Bible study.

When I left Christ – North St. Paul, we were struggling to do any brass quartet music at all. Trumpets we had, but no low brass at that time. Yet, in Austin, between the two churches, we assembled a brass quartet – two trumpets, trombone and baritone, three adults and one high school student (again, all are or were public school students). We played the hymns for the first outdoor service at the eventual building site for Beautiful Savior. But, before the first bit of site work occurred on the property, the group split up. Both trumpet players took jobs in the Twin Cities. Then, the Hormel strike in the early eighties caused a number of families to leave Austin (and thus, the congregation) for job opportunities elsewhere. Hopefully, wherever the members of the old Faith brass quartet landed, they are still playing.

Before I left North St. Paul, jobs and college had already separated the remaining original members of that first brass quartet at Christ-North St. Paul. Bob Sullwold, trombone, took a job in the Milwaukee area, and continued playing his horn in his new church. Eventually, he took a job back in the Twin Cities, and joined Good Shepherd – Burnsville. He continued playing, and is now a member of Reformation Brass.

So, let’s all agree: I will do long-term recruiting for you, and you will do long-term recruiting for me. Then, we will all have a larger pool (pyramid) of players who will participate in brass music and worship enhancement with us. Who knows? There is always the possibility that the very brass players that you encourage and develop will stay with your congregation.

C. The Care and Feeding of Brass Musicians – Doing Nothing v. Doing Everything

“As you know, you go to war with the army you have, not the army you might want or wish to have at a later time.” - Donald Rumsfeld, Former U. S. Secretary of Defense.

“Just do it.” - Nike ad slogan

If, after completing all of your recruiting efforts, and after exhausting all available contacts, it is just you, or you and one other, or the skill levels are not quite what you had hoped for, or any other excuse you can think of for not doing this, do something. Maybe your group (or the two of you, or just you) can not handle the five-part brass accompaniment to the choir’s Easter cantata. Reevaluate and start with something else. A transposed hymn or two is a fine way to start off your group. (If it’s just you – transpose the melody for your instrument.) The key is **starting**. If you wait until you are the WELS version of the Canadian Brass, you will never start. Doing something shows that it can be done in your congregation. Doing something starts your group on the road to improvement. Doing something may encourage the fence-sitters to join in next time. Doing nothing does not help the long-term development of your brass group.

Doing everything presents its own set of problems, especially if the adults are doing everything for the younger brass musicians. In sports, this is referred to as “over-coaching.” Over-coaching and its companion, a reduction of unsupervised playing of any given sport, has now led to a number of problems and deficiencies in American athletes later in their development. In the past, an American kid would leave the house after breakfast with a bat, ball and glove, play sandlot baseball all day, returning home for lunch and dinner. Pond hockey or pick-up basketball games fit the bill for other seasons. A kid spent more time just playing sports with their friends than they did as part of any organized league.

Now, with expensive indoor ice time, and community investments in gymnasiums and “official ball fields,” the balance of time has shifted towards supervised practices and games. As a result, the beginners and students learn what they are taught, and nothing more. Basketball and hockey players can run the set offensive schemes and the defenses. But other skills – leadership, conflict resolution, negotiating – learned in unsupervised play, are missing. Creativity and improvisation – formerly the hallmarks of the American athlete – are now rare traits.

To develop the next generation of brass musician/leaders, we need to find a balance between doing nothing (or very little) and doing everything. We need to give beginners and students opportunities to grow on their own. Now, I doubt we will ever see the day when young brass musicians will grab their horns and music stands, head to the park where they will meet up with their friends and choose up sides for a game of “Gabrieli.” We could, however, let a beginners brass group run a few rehearsals on their own, have students transpose their own parts, choose their own music, etc. If we do everything, will they be able to do anything when we are not around?

IV. Music

While I have included some of my favorite sources for brass music in Appendix C, there are other people better equipped to discuss all of the music available for brass ensembles, where to find music and how to select music suitable for your group. Here, we will look at a few ideas that may help you get more out of the music and hymnals that you already own.

A. Play the Text with the Hymn Tunes

The most important work your church brass ensemble will do is accompanying the hymns. Your purpose is enhancing the congregation’s hymn-singing experience. You do this by playing the notes, but also by playing the text. Playing the text means matching your playing to the thoughts, concepts and moods conveyed by the particular hymn, and, more importantly, by each hymn verse.

Richard Gaichas, organist at Christ – North St. Paul from the early- to mid-seventies until his death in 1999, played the text as well as the notes. Rarely would he play two consecutive verses of a hymn using the same organ registrations. He would change dynamics, articulation, phrasing, etc., from one verse to the next. In some instances, he would play the melody with an entirely different chord structure beneath it, with just the hymnal in front of him.

All of his changes related to the text of the hymn. If the verse was one of praise to God – a more glorious interpretation; if about our sin and transgressions - more subdued; a prayer – reflective. We can, and should do the same as brass players.

How much playing of the text can you do with a simple hymn transposition? Plenty! Start by reading the hymn. The messages in some verses are more suitable for brass accompaniment than others. Play those, don't play the others, and you are on your way to playing the text.

Even if you think you know the text and have done the hymn for many years with your brass group, read the text, and think about what you are doing. Consider "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." It is a four verse hymn, and brass groups always accompany verse 1 and 4. Some will play verse 2, others verse 3. Very few groups play all four verses. And being that grand hymn of the Reformation, we all charge at it with full volume and gusto. But, is that playing the text? Look at the first two verses:

A mighty fortress is our God, A trusty shield and weapon;
He helps us free from ev'ry need That has us now o'ertaken.
The old evil foe Now means deadly woe;
Deep guile and great might Are his dread arms in fight
On earth is not his equal.

With might of ours can naught be done; Soon were our loss effected.
But for us fights the valiant one whom God Himself elected.
You ask "Who is this?" Jesus Christ it is,
The almighty Lord, And there's no other God;
He holds the field forever.

As we prepared for one Reformation Sunday, Richard asked that we do this hymn a little differently. "Play the first two lines of the hymn, then sit out the rest of verse 1. Then, come in after the question mark in verse 2, for all you are worth." Why? Well, (paraphrasing Luther) he thought there was something just plain wrong with giving Satan all our best brass playing.

B. Play with your Music

Music notation from the Renaissance Era (and before) consisted of note symbols and marking we would find totally foreign, today. The Renaissance music in print today is the result of educated guesses by music historians.

Music historians believe the printed Renaissance and Baroque music, especially for the trumpet family of instruments (Cornetti, clarini, natural trumpets, *Jagertrompetten* and the like) were intended as guidelines or a mere framework to the performers. Trumpeters would add ornaments to their performances: Lip trills (Hey, look, Mom, no valves!), double- and triple-tonguing, grace notes, back flips and various other musical gymnastics. An example of this concept: If you had a copy of the Robert King transcription of Samuel Scheidt's *Canzone* for four trumpets in front of you, and listened to a recording of the same piece by Gerard Schwarz's New York Trumpet Ensemble, you would soon realize that there are more notes in the recording than there are on the printed page.

The early jazz tradition did not involve any printed music. Entire jazz orchestras would play on little more than the announced title of a familiar tune. Not only were the solos improvised, but also the accompaniment, the shout choruses, the bridges, the actual order of the solos – all within a “framework” rehearsed and handed off from one musician to the next. No two performances of the same tune, even by the same band, were ever alike.

All of these traditions required musicians to play with their music – that is, invent, experiment, test, revise and rethink their approach to a given selection.

Then there’s our hymnal, *Christian Worship*. All the notes are there, in black and white. After a while, we all know, within a few beats per minute, what tempo our organist will select for a given hymn. And, chances are, if our congregation thinks it is too fast or too slow, by the end of the hymn, they will have their way. All we need do is transpose parts: trumpets on the soprano and alto lines, French horns on alto and tenor, low brass tenor and bass. Well, maybe not. Is there room to play with this music?

Look at the small print at the bottom of each hymn. Each one gives the source or composer of each tune, if known. There is the name of the hymn tune, again, if known. There are dates. Some mention cultures, and places. One is a Finnish folk tune, another, a 15th Century plainsong. There are hymn tunes from the Renaissance and Baroque Eras, and there are African-American spirituals. All are waiting to be played, and waiting for someone to play with this music.

What is missing from the hymns? Tempo markings, dynamics, crescendos, decrescendos, tempo changes...*rit.*, *accel.* *Allargandos*. Mutes in or out? Anyone for playing the hymn tune antiphonally by phrase? What are the possibilities?

Antiphonal hymns? The obvious – CW 157 Jesus Christ Is Risen Today.

CW 496 “Glorious in Majesty” – a Jewish folk melody. Why not start the first verse at a very slow, deliberate tempo, gradually accelerating to a near frenzied pace, only to put on the brakes in the last three measures, back it down to the original slow tempo – and repeating the process for the remaining two verses?

CW 57 “Go Tell It on the Mountain” an African-American spiritual. How close can you get to the early jazz tradition of improvising everything?

What is the proper way to play “Joy to the World” – A majestic 4/4 (The Lutheran Hymnal), or perhaps a spirited 2/4 (Christian Worship). Next Christmas, do it the other way – whatever that is in your congregation.

Young musicians understand this. Our pre-service Christmas Eve band plays about twenty minutes of music before both of the Christmas Eve services. Our mainstay is a collection of 12 English carols. We do all kinds of things with these carols – repeats, tempos, instrumentation - Then there is everyone’s favorite – No. 11. The tune comes to us from back in 1582, and our hymnal gives the tune name as “*Tempus Adest Floridum*.” It is CW 56 “Gentle Mary Laid Her Child” and the rest of the world knows the tune as “Good King Wenceslas.”⁵ It is written in 4/4, so that’s the first time through. Second verse – we pretend it is written in 6/8 – anything written on beats 2 and 4 are now the eighth notes on

⁵ What we do with this tune is not consistent with “Gentle Mary...” and playing “Good King Wenceslas” – questionable. So we list it as “*Tempus Adest Floridum*” in the bulletin, and let people draw their own conclusions. We also play it earlier rather than near the start of worship.

beats 3 and 6– and we take it in a swaying 2 beats per measure. Third time – cut time as fast as the group can cleanly handle it. Our beginners think it is neat that they can play something differently from the way it appears on the page.

V. Legal Stuff

An attorney gives a presentation on anything, and you thought you would not hear legal stuff. What were you thinking? In any event, the following is not an exhaustive treatment of the law, and is not intended as legal advice for any specific circumstance. Laws are constantly subject to change and interpretation, and apply differently to specific fact situations. Seek legal advice for any individual problems and circumstances.

A. Asking permission

The constitution and bylaws of your congregation may require that the church council grant permission before anyone forms a new organization within the church. A typical provision might read as follows:

“No group or society may be organized within the congregation without the approval of the church council. The council shall be assured that the aims of such a group are in complete harmony with the congregation’s objectives before it grants its approval (II Corinthians 6:14-15; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 1:10; 12:25).”

Why have such a rule? Your church council should concern itself with liability issues, in particular, contractual liability. Brass groups need music, music stands, instruments, and other items, virtually all of which are obtained by contracts of one form or another. If an organization forms without church council consent or control, will the congregation be liable for the contracts entered into by that organization? Have the individuals in that new organization incurred individual liability for a debt they expected was the congregation’s responsibility? Personal liability, hurt feelings and loss of, or discouragement of, valuable members and volunteers may result.

When are you required to ask for permission? If you are looking for a line item in the church budget for brass ensemble music and supplies, you must ask for recognition for your group, if your congregation’s constitution and bylaws require it. (A line item in the budget suggests purchasing – purchasing means contracts.) Otherwise, it will depend on the traditions and practices of your congregation. Some will require council approval before announcements may be placed in the bulletin, newsletter or web site. Some will require council approval if the group will use the church for meetings (rehearsals).

At Christ – North St. Paul, we are not our own organization. Oh sure, we call our own rehearsals, put announcements in the bulletin, and use the church for rehearsals. However, we work through the Music Coordinator for music purchases, and the Senior Choir has purchased a number of music stands for us. We do not have a line item in our church budget for brass ensemble/band music and supplies.

When in doubt, ask for permission to start a brass ensemble. ALWAYS ask permission before doing any kind of fund raiser for your brass group’s music, supplies and instruments.

B. Copyrights and copying

There is a development pyramid for religious brass music publishers, composers and arrangers. Copyright laws are designed to protect the livelihood of these professionals and semi-professionals. As users of brass music, all brass musicians are at the vitally important “fans and wannabes” level of that pyramid.⁶ When music is borrowed and copied, and those copies become part of the borrower’s “permanent collection,” the professionals lose out. When this happens repeatedly, these professionals lose their livelihood, seek other work, and the supply of new church brass music suffers. In the long run, copying harms the fans and wannabes, as people realize that “you just can’t make a living writing church brass music.” As people decide to pursue more lucrative careers, the pool of wannabes shrinks, affecting all levels of the pyramid above them. In addition, the penalties for violating copyrights are severe.

Is transposing music from the hymnal a copyright violation? Yes and maybe not. If the particular publisher has, for example, a version of the hymnal for Bb instruments, transposing your own hymns for Bb instruments would clearly violate the copyright. If you are transposing the hymnal, and plan to sell your work to others, that would also clearly violate the copyright.

In the absence of a transposed product, or a profit motive, transposing is still copying. However, if your church has a hymnal for everyone, or you own the hymnal yourself, transposing for your own use does not deprive the publisher of a sale, and most publishers would not view this as a violation. Just don’t get any grand ideas about publishing your own transposed hymnal.

Copying is allowed when you have permission of the publisher. The Hymnal Companion series from Concordia Publishing House is copyrighted music, with permission to copy granted right on the music, itself. If your congregation has the spiral bound book, you may make as many copies as you need for the size of your ensemble. Just don’t copy the book for your sister congregation in the next town, and do not let your musicians make copies for use with other groups.

Other publishers grant permission to copy, again granted right on the music. Read each of these grants carefully. Some may allow only so many copies for each original purchased. For example, one publisher of men’s chorus music does not ship multiple sets. Rather, the purchaser may make 10 copies of their music for each master copy or license purchased. Publishers that supply sheet music directly from a web site have restrictions on the number of copies a user may make from a single purchased download.

In the absence of a grant of permission to copy on the music, itself, publishers may grant special permission to copy, under special circumstances. If a work is out of print, on back order, or if additional copies are needed for a special occasion like, for example, a large international brass festival, publishers will often grant permission to copy. Ask (usually in writing), and then follow all of the publisher’s restrictions, if any, on the number of, use of and post-use destruction of the copies.

⁶ Some brass musicians are also composers and arrangers at various levels of this pyramid, but to the extent that they are users of brass music, they are also part of the “fans and wannabes” level.

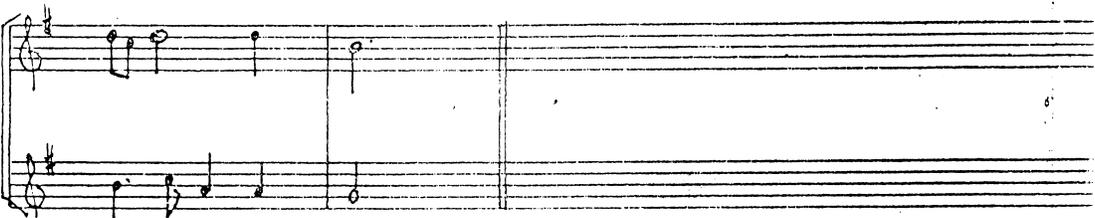
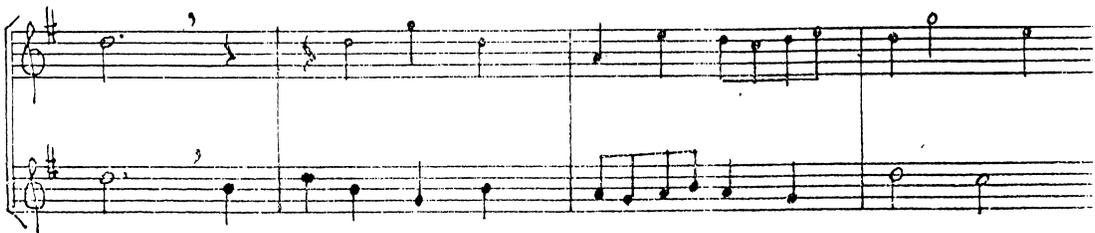
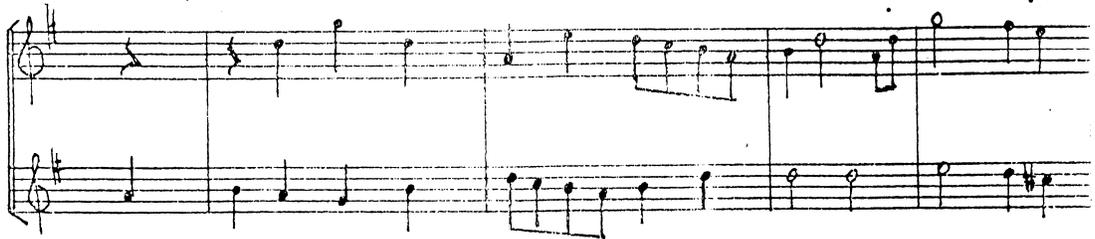
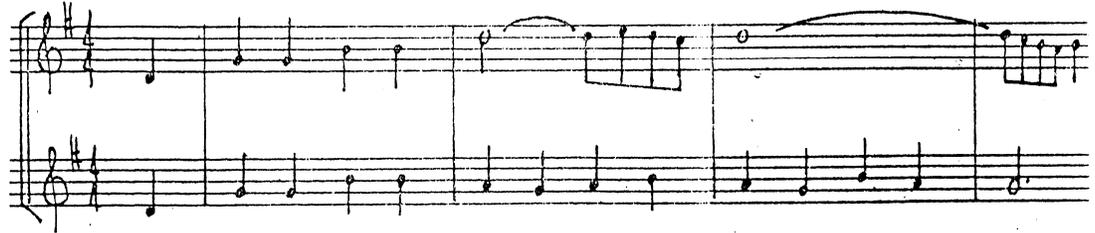
Appendix A: How to Start a Brass Ensemble in Your Congregation
 By Christmas Eve – December 24, 2008
 A Checklist

DONE	Dates	Item
_____	Fri, 8/1/08 thru 8/5/08	Recover from Worship Conference, get back into your normal routine, decide that starting a brass ensemble is something you can do, and put checklist dates on your calendar.
_____	Mon, 9/14/08 thru 10/5/08	Start building a contacts list – from memory, who do you already know?
_____	Sun, 10/5/08	Ask permission. Talk to pastor(s) and music director about your plan to start a brass ensemble and accompany a hymn or two at Christmas, etc.
_____	Sun, 10/5/08 thru 10/19/08	Continue building contacts list. Contact pastors, teachers, choir directors for more names. Review your church's time and talents survey. Bulletin.
_____	Sun, 10/19/08 thru 11/1/08	Contact prospective players on your contacts list. Ask for a commitment to the task. Pay attention to your instrumentation and skill levels.
_____	11/1/08	Assessment Day – Who's in? What is our instrumentation? What is our estimated skill level? What music do we need? (Has Pastor selected hymns for Christmas? Can he commit to at least two of them, now?)
_____	11/2/08 - 11/15/08	Find music. Transpose hymns.
_____	11/2/08 - 11/15/08	Set rehearsal dates and times. Contact musicians.
_____	No later wk of 11/16/08 - 11/22/08	Begin and continue rehearsals. Note rehearsals in Bulletin.
_____	December 24 & 25, 2008	Christmas Eve/Day, – Play _____ Service(s)
_____	Sometime before December 31, 2008	E-mail a report to wrbaumeister1@juno.com stating who played, what you played, when you played, and how you played – what worked, what did not work, and what are your plans for next time...

Appendix B – Play with your music – a demonstration

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TLH 339. CORONATION



“Coronation” descant from an unknown, anonymous Martin Luther College source, circa late 1970s or early 1980s.

Appendix C – Brass Music Resources

Music Sources:

Northwestern Publishing House: <http://online.nph.net>

Like you needed me to tell you that! Valerie Floeter's and Dr. Patricia Backhaus's trumpet arrangements available here, and also at <http://www.adagioconcepts.com/inhispub.htm>. Val's & Pat's music works with CW, because it was written to work with CW.

David E. Smith Publications, LLC: <http://www.despub.com/> or www.churchinstrumentalmusic.com or www.churchmusic.biz

Huge selection of sacred instrumental music for ensembles of varying sizes, skills & instrumentation (brass, woodwinds, strings, guitars, etc...). When you call, David E. Smith actually answers the phone!

Concordia Publishing House: <http://www.cph.org>

The series "Hymnal Companion for Woodwinds, Brass and Percussion" by Richard R. Rose. Own a book, you may make as many copies as you need for your congregation's musicians for use as a group.

Sibelius Music: <http://www.sibeliusmusic.com>

As of July 9, 2008, this site had 2239 brass quartet/quintet pieces available for download, with 650 available for free, and over 1,800 available for \$5 or less. First time visitors to the site will need to download the Sibelius "Scorch" plug in to view, hear and print out music. If you plan to use any of the free arrangements, e-mail the composers/arrangers to determine what they require for use of the music in a worship setting. Some of the arrangements are great, some so-so, some not worth the effort to print, but you may preview the entire arrangement before printing/buying. Site also contains arrangements for duets, trios, quartets, etc. If a piece is in the "wrong" key, Scorch allows limited transposing. Enjoy!

Robert King Music Sales: <http://www.rkingmusic.com/search.asp>

The grandfather of brass music sources. All brass, all the time, in every combination imaginable.

Hickey's Music Online: <http://www.hickeys.com/pages/>

Their online catalog often offers more information on a given piece – difficulty rating, style, etc.

J. W. Pepper: <http://www.jwpepper.com/catalog/welcome.jsp>

Again, their online catalog often offers more information on a given piece. I will often check both Pepper & Hickey before deciding between arrangements.

Triplo Press: <http://www.triplo.com/index.php>

This is the only publishing house dealing exclusively in music for trumpet ensemble. Has arrangements for three to 36 trumpets. Why 36? Because no one has written a piece for 37, yet. The site has many arrangements with sample pictures of the score, and many with .mp3 files recorded by the Cincinnati Herald Trumpet Ensemble.

Finale Showcase: <http://www.finalemusic.com/showcase/>

I have only recently tried this site, and have yet to find anything useful on it – the search engine and site map does not organize itself for brass ensembles short of a full brass band. Anything smaller is lumped

How to Start a Brass Ensemble in Your Congregation

into the “Wind Ensembles” category. I include it as the companion to the Finale NotePad free download, below.

Music Tools:

Finale NotePad: www.finalemusic.com/notepad

Free music transcription software. Not the full-blown Finale program. To download, you must create an account. Note in your account that you do not want them sharing your information with others. Hint: If you are a School Educator, Private Teacher, or A Musician at a Religious Institution, you will receive a substantial discount if you later choose to purchase the complete Finale program.

If you have Finale NotePad on your computer, you can receive, view and print files sent to you by others created in NotePad or any other Finale product. You can also create basic scores, transpose parts, play back the music you created and print your own sheet music. While NotePad does not have all of the “bells & whistles” of the full-blown Finale programs, it is amazing what you can accomplish with the program.

I was doing all right: http://www.iwasdoingallright.com/ear_training/

This blog, written by an Atlanta jazz trumpet player named Rick G, contains a free online ear training program. You set up the key and type of intervals you want. The program plays a two or more note phrase, and you play it on your instrument. Possibilities are endless. Also, on the same page, a simple song randomizer. Pick the category of songs, click “Next Song and Starting Note,” and up pops, for example, “Mary Had a Little Lamb – G#.” Starting on G#, play as much of the tune as you can. Click the button again, and up pops the next tune with a different starting note. Rick makes a compelling case for ear training for all musicians.

Brass Players We Know and Love

A collection of sites to visit, just for inspiration and fun...

Canadian Brass: <http://canbrass.com/frontpage.html>

Chestnut Brass Company: <http://www.chestnutbrass.com> Larry Zimmerman’s group – their concerts are living brass history lessons – played on authentic, restored or replica instruments.

Bala Brass: <http://www.balabrass.org/> Tom Otto’s group. The site contains photos of the group (on the home page and some elsewhere on the site) taken at the Chapel at Saint Croix Lutheran High School.

Alison Balsom plays Paganini’s Caprice No. 24

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6W7bGzi9G2k> I am having a hard time convincing my wife that I like Alison Balsom only because she is a great trumpet player.

Bones Apart – Trombone quartet playing trio to “Stars and Stripes Forever” WOW!!!!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHw8P8NnUvI&feature=related>

And for more of that WELS connection...

Timothy Moke – trumpet <http://www.jeannedennis.com/moke/biography.html>

Reformation Brass – Twin Cities area WELS brass group. <http://www.reformationbrass.com/>

Soli Deo Gloria Institute for The Arts, Inc. <http://www.solideogloriainstitute.org/> includes SDG Brass Ensemble pages.