

## Fervent expression of joy at Friday Bandstand Charlie Brighton reports

The second in the Friday Bandstand series at Regent Hall Corps recently saw London Central Fellowship Band take centre stage. The programme opened with one of Eric Ball's most recognisable marches, *Torchbearers*, taken at a sensible tempo considering the size of the band and the lively acoustic of the venue, with good clean lines throughout. In perfect contrast, *Shine on us* showed the lyrical quality of the horns in the opening melody. This was to remain a very early highlight in the programme for this reviewer.

The first featured soloist of the evening was David Thomas, of Stotfold Corps, in Ray Bowes' *Rhapsody for Cornet and Band*. Written for Terry Camsey, this was a performance with great contrasts, lively and brisk, slow and peaceful, particularly when *Once I heard a Baby Cry* appeared. Bandmaster Julian Bright saw that the difficult accompaniment was taken care of, allowing the soloist much freedom of expression. The prolonged applause at the finish was fully justified!

The informative concert programme had the bold heading of 'A fervent expression of joy... Paeon... a song of praise', taken from the title of his brother Dudley's composition. After a contemplative start to *I will sing your praises*, the percussion-driven faster section showed great energy. The fugue section allowed all sections of the band a chance to contribute in turn, before the resounding closing bars.

William Himes' *Soli Deo Gloria* has become a popular choice on many band programmes, combining *Jesu*, *Joy of Man's Desiring* with

*Jesus, Name Above All Names*, as if they were made for each other. Of particular note was the trombone choir in the middle section of the piece, the Bandmaster ensuring that the music flowed constantly save for the final bars.

Julian then led a light-hearted audience participation game of clapping along with the band as it featured *Gallop* from *William Tell*, ensuring plenty of applause was left at the end of course! To calm us (and the band) down again, we heard Steven Ponsford's arrangement of *Now I belong to Jesus*, with the subtle, lingering harmonies.

David Daws asked Martin Cordner to compose the upbeat *The Call of the Gospel* when he was Bandmaster of LCFB, and what a fine composition it is! Caroline Seredynski, a graduate of the Trinity College of Music in London, then swapped from cornet to piano to perform a work by Franz List, beautiful in both its serenity and performance from this talented young lady.

Bringing us up to the interval was Eric Ball's *The Kingdom Triumphant*. This is powerful music, with its crescendo drum roll and fanfare introducing *The Blast of the Trumpet*, in a reminder of The Last Judgement. The piece then moves into a time of reflection on the First Advent with the poignant prayer *O Come, O Come Immanuel* (the playing of this section was a particular highlight for me), before returning to the fanfare motif which introduced the vision of the Second Advent. Mention should be made of the fine bass section in the fugue section in the final movement.

Eiliv Herikstad's bright march *Shoeburness*, composed for Clarence Adoo, opened the second half of the programme prior to David Daws taking the solo stand to play *The Better World*, composed for Derick Kane in 1978. All the great qualities he possessed on cornet have magically transformed to the euphonium in an amazingly short time. The sound is a little lighter, which does make for more clarity, particularly in the extreme high notes (that were not a problem) and the performance, from memory, was dazzling!

No one understood the method of scoring for brass band better than Roy Newsome. His arrangement of *There is a Green Hill* will stand the test of time. Some fine flugel horn playing opened what was to be a very profound reading from Julian Bright, as were his words and thoughts that followed. Indeed his compèring throughout the concert was compelling and it looks like the new partnership of band and Bandmaster will bear much fruit in the future.

*Procession to Covenant* (William Himes) was originally written for his own wedding and features the hymn tune *St. Margaret*, to which we associate the words 'O love that wilt not let me go'. The performance was well judged and controlled, particularly considering the larger forces available and the sizeable audience (on what turned out to be a very wet night). We were sent on our way with Frank Renton's fresh arrangement of Fucik's 1906 *Florentine March*. Organiser Stephen Maw is to be congratulated on starting what will surely be a fine series of Friday Bandstand concerts.

## 90th birthday celebration for Solent stalwart Derek Dunn reports

As a first in Solent Fellowship Band's history, an ensemble of 16 or so recently played at a birthday party at the Methodist Church in Waltham Chase, to celebrate the 90th birthday of one of the band's back row cornet players, Don Franklin.

The band played *South Coast*, *Mid All the Traffic*, *Light up the Sunshine* and *Fill the World with Music*, and the hymn tunes *Annie Laurie*, *Amazing Grace* and *What a Friend*. Family and guests, many from the world of brass, gathered to enjoy happy fellowship and pay their respects to a much-loved father,

grandfather and great-grandfather, and to express gratitude for his lifetime in brass. Don's remarkable career involved teaching youngsters at over 28 schools in the private and public sectors and organising, directing and conducting bands at all levels, for far in excess of 60 years.

The centre-piece of the afternoon was 'This is your Life, Don Franklin!', with music. There were guitar and vocal contributions from Don's grandsons, interspersed with music from the band in the form of *All in the April Evening* and *Radetsky March*. One particular

highlight was when Don was given the chance to conduct the all-time favourite *Star Lake*. Early in Don's life he was conscripted into the military, and we heard how the strength of his faith carried him through many dangerous life-threatening World War II events, from a glider crash, when a tow rope was unexpectedly severed, to being pinned down under deadly sniper fire when many around him were killed. As tea was served, the band played *Flow Gently Sweet Afton*, *Praise Party*, *The Old Rugged Cross* and *Finlandia*, with Don conducting a couple of pieces to round off the afternoon. Happy Birthday Don!

