Executive Producer
Trevor Caffull
Producer
Keith Farrington
Engineer
Richard Scott
Digital Editing
R. E. Editing
Programme Notes
Kenneth Crookston
Project Manager
Kevin J Coates MBE
Photography
Gerard Klaucke
John Stirzacker
Steve Jack
Artwork & Cover Design
GK Graphic Design

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DOY CD234

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EUROPEAN BRASS BAND CHAMPIONSHIPS 2007

2007 EUROPEAN BRASS BAND CHAMPIONSHIPS 2007

Live from Symphony Hall, Birmingham, England

MASTER DOYEN SERIES

EUROPEAN BRASS BAND ASSOCIATION

The 2007 European Brass Band Championships, held in the sumptuous surroundings of Birmingham's Symphony Hall, were historic in a number of respects, not least that it was the 30th occasion that the champion bands of Europe had gathered to decide which of them could claim the bragging rights as the Continent's finest for the next 12 months.

The competition was first held in London in 1978, at a time when British bands were entirely dominant, but the progress of the Continental bands in the years since has been such that, prior to 2007, the European title itself had crossed the North Sea four times and is no longer seen as the sole property of the north of England 'giants'.

This year's event also represented a turning point in the history of its organiser, the European Brass Band Association (EBBA), with the retirement of Markus Bach, the organisation's

CD 2

1.	**Malaguena** ©*Warner Bros.*	Ernesto Lecuona arr. Freeh	2.28
	Gala Concert, European Youth Brass Band, Conductor Ian Porthouse		
2-4.	**Contest Music** ©*Boosey & Hawkes*	Wilfred Heaton	13.47
	Own Choice Test Piece, Foden's Richardson Band, Conductor Garry Cutt		
	2. Movement I 4.08		
	3. Movement II 4.49		
	4. Movement III 4.50		
5.	**Horizons** ©*Prima Vista Musikk*	Paul Lovatt-Cooper	4.58
	Gala Concert, Brass Band Willebroek, Conductor Frans Violet		
6.	**Concerto in F Minor** *M/s*	Oskar Böhme	6.28
	Farewell Concert, Brass Band Oberösterreich, Conductor Hannes Buchegger		
	Cornet Soloist Hans Gansch		
7.	**Helios** ©*De Haske Music*	Jan Van der Roost	4.01
	Gala Concert, Brass Band Willebroek, Conductor Frans Violet		
8.	**Beyond the Horizon** *M/s*	Paul H. Kelly	22.27
	Own Choice Test Piece, Brass Band Treize Etoiles, Conductor Geo-Pierre Moren		
9.	**You'll Never Walk Alone** ©*Rakeway Music*	Rodgers & Hammerstein arr. Snell	4.34
	Gala Concert, Brass Band Willebroek, Conductor Frans Violet		
10.	**Czardas** ©*Rakeway Music*	Johann Strauss arr. Snell	2.14
	Farewell Concert, Brass Band Oberösterreich Conducted by Hannes Buchegger		
11.	**Finale from Organ Symphony** ©*Kirklees Music*	Camille Saint Säens arr. Wilby	5.25
	Gala Concert, Brass Band Willebroek, Conductor Frans Violet		
		Total Playing Time CD 2	**67.22**
		Total Playing Time of Double CD 2hr 09.02	

CD 1

1.	**Festmusik der Stadt Wien** *©Obrasso-Verlag AG*	Richard Strauss	2.21
	Farewell Concert, Brass Band Oberösterreich, Conductor Hannes Buchegger		
2.	**Elgar Variations** *©Studio Music*	Martin Ellerby	14.44
	Winners of Set Test Piece, Championship Section		
	Cory Band, Conductor Dr. Robert Childs		
3.	**Alloway Tales** *©Gramercy Music*	Peter Graham	5.10
	Gala Concert, European Youth Brass Band, Conductor Ian Porthouse		
4.	**Variations on a Tyrolean Song** *©Crabtree Music*	Jean Baptiste Arban arr. Freeh	6.25
	Gala Concert, Brass Band Willebroek, Conductor Frans Violet, Cornet Soloist Raf Van Looveren		
5.	**Folk Festival** *©Rakeway Music*	Dmitri Shostakovich arr. Snell	2.38
	Gala Concert, European Youth Brass Band, Conductor Major Peter Parkes		
6.	**The Drop** *©Faber Music*	Simon Dobson	6.17
	Winners of B-section Set Test Piece		
	Brass Band Frener-Reifer Pfeffersberg, Conductor Bernhard Reifer		
7.	**Lionheart** *©Wright & Round*	Philip Harper	3.59
	Gala Concert, European Youth Brass Band, Conductor Ian Porthouse		
8.	**Funky Brass** *M/s*	Otto M. Schwarz	4.16
	Farewell Concert, Brass Band Oberösterreich, Conductor Hannes Buchegger		
9.	**Caravan** *©Warner Bros.*	Duke Ellington arr. Sykes	3.53
	European Youth Brass Band, Conductor Ian Porthouse		
10.	**Music of the Spheres** *©Anglo Music*	Philip Sparke	17.08
	Winners of Own Choice Test Piece, Championship Section		
	Brass Band Willebroek, Conductor Frans Violet		
		Total Playing Time CD 1	**67.45**

President since its foundation in 1995. One of his greatest achievements has been the expansion of what was previously a single-day event into the week-long festival, with competitions for soloists, conductors and composers, the 'B' Section for emerging nations, the European Youth Brass Band (EYBB) and masterclasses and discussion forums, all of which contribute greatly to what is now viewed as the greatest brass band festival on the international calendar.

As ever, the week was packed full of drama, excitement, great performances and hope for a positive future in the shape of the finest EYBB since its inception in 2000, coincidentally the last time the competition took place in Birmingham.

This double CD collection delivers highlights from the weekend, which saw the culmination of months of preparation from the literally hundreds of performers that had made their way to the English Midlands from all over the length and breadth of Europe.

CD 1 opens with the Austrian representative, Brass Band Oberösterreich, and the highly apposite

Festmusik der Stadt Wien by Richard Strauss, in a performance from the Sunday morning Farewell Concert given by this sensational newcomer to the European stage.

Dr. Martin Ellerby's ***Elgar Variations*** is performed with some aplomb by the Welsh Champion, Cory Band, which took first place in Friday evening's test-piece section with this fine tribute to the great English composer on the 150th anniversary of his birth.

The listener is treated to liberal helpings of the EYBB in this collection, and why not? Rarely has a youth band of any description played with such maturity and the listener gets the rare opportunity to hear Peter Graham's colourful ***Alloway Tales***, a short suite based on music associated with the Scottish bard, Robert Burns, under the fine leadership of Ian Porthouse.

Czardas by Johan Strauss II is the final contribution from Brass Band Oberösterreich, again allowing the Austrians the chance to display their remarkable technique, before the collection ends in appropriate style with a stimulating performance of the ***Finale*** of Saint Säens' *Organ Symphony* from the European Champion under its inspiring conductor, Frans Violet.

The European Championships have come along way in 30 years and there can be no better demonstration of this than the quality of performance contained on these two discs. Such musicianship and versatility would have been almost unimaginable for those gathered at the Royal Albert Hall in 1978, but no-one would have imagined that a band from Belgium, which was in its infancy at that time, would go on to dominate what was to become the biggest and most highly-prized championships in banding.

Kenneth Crookston

As well as being phenomenally successful on the contest platform, Brass Band Willebroek sets the same high standards in its concert performances and on this disc we hear the Belgians play Paul Lovatt-Cooper's ***Horizons***, in which the fine blend of sound in the band's cornet section comes to the fore. Jan Van der Roost's fine march, ***Helios***, and the Rogers and Hammerstein classic, ***You'll Never Walk Alone***, are other contributions from Willebroek, interspersed by some of the finest cornet solo playing you are likely to hear in the first movement of Oskar Böhme's ***Concerto in F Minor***, performed by the peerless Hans Gansch, and a work by Paul H. Kelly that is simply breathtaking. Lasting 22 minutes and testing each section of the band to the full, ***Beyond the Horizon*** is given a virtuoso performance by Brass Band Treize Etoiles from Switzerland, which, somewhat surprisingly, failed to make a lasting impression with the adjudicators.

The Belgian cornet virtuoso, Raf Van Looveren, has acquired an outstanding reputation as one of the prized possessions of the Defending European Champion, Brass Band Willebroek, but it is a little known fact that he can yodel a bit too. His performance of Jean Baptiste Arban's ***Variations on a Tyrolean Song***, which was one of the undoubted highlights of the Saturday evening Gala Concert, not only showcases his outstanding artistry and technical wizardry, but also gives him time to exercise his vocal chords and give the audience a bit of a surprise along the way.

Shostakovich's ***Folk Festival*** is the next contribution from the EYBB, in which the band was conducted by Major Peter Parkes, an eight-time winner of the European Championships with Black Dyke Mills and Williams Fairey bands, and a giant in the history of the brass band movement itself. Rarely will the young members of the EYBB have had such a thrill and their enthusiasm is obvious to all in this rousing rendition of music from the film, *The Gadfly*.

Young English composer, Simon Dobson, was chosen to write this year's B-section test-piece and what a sensational one it turned out to be.

The Drop is performed by the winning band, Brass Band Frener-Reifer Pfefferberg and its conductor, Bernhard Reifer, which was the combination that found the true 'Drum and Bass' feeling within the score where all others were left searching. Stand back from the speakers and enjoy a thrillingly energetic display from this emerging force from Italy.

Philip Harper's ***Lionheart*** is yet another work that allows the youthful exuberance of the EYBB to come to the fore, whilst, although slightly less youthful, in personnel terms at least, Brass Band Oberösterreich and conductor, Hannes Buchegger, show that the Austrians can be just as vigorous in Otto M. Schwarz's ***Funky Brass***, which has become something of a party piece for this versatile band.

Following a brisk run through Duke Ellington's ***Caravan*** by the EYBB, the listener is treated to another highlight in the short history of Brass Band Willebroek, its winning performance in the Own-choice Section of ***Music of the Spheres*** by Philip Sparke. Having finished hard-on-the-heels of Cory Band in the Test-piece Section, this performance was enough to give Willebroek its second successive title and third since 1993.

Can the Belgians achieve a hat-trick of victories in Stavanger in 2008? Well, it would take a brave man to bet against them.

CD 2 begins with the popular ***Malaguena*** in Mark Freeh's arrangement, again performed by the EYBB, before the English representative in the Championships, Foden's Richardson Band, performs the work with which it won the British Open Championships in the same venue in 2004, Wilfred Heaton's masterful ***Contest Music***.