

CHANDOS**CHAN 6561**

Live Brass

- [1] **October Festival** Symphonic March⁽⁶⁾ (6:57)
E. Ball
- [2] **Toccata and Fugue in D minor**⁽²⁾ (9:02)
J.S. Bach arr. Catelinet
- [3] **Lincolnshire Poacher**⁽⁵⁾ (2:08)
Trad arr. G. Langford
- [4] **Alla Marcia from Serenade for Strings**⁽¹⁾ (4:23)
I.D. Wren arr. R. Froden
- [5] **Life Divine**⁽⁶⁾ (12:11)
C. Jenkins
- [6] **March: Carnival Day**⁽⁶⁾ (3:03)
G. Langford
- [7] **Finale from Concerto No.2 for Brass Band**⁽⁶⁾ (6:38)
D. Bourgeois
- [8] **Greensleeves**⁽⁶⁾ (4:30)
Trad arr. E. Howarth
- [9] **Pandora**⁽⁴⁾ (6:55)
Damare arr. J.G. Walker
- [10] **Overture: Le Corsaire**⁽³⁾ (7:47)
H. Berlioz arr. G. Brand
- [11] **Slavonic March**⁽⁶⁾ (8:15)
P.I. Tchaikovsky arr. Davies

ADD TT = 71:24**SOLNA BRASS**⁽¹⁾ · **BRIGHOUSE AND RASTRICK BAND**⁽²⁾**John Foster BLACK DYKE MILLS BAND**⁽³⁾**JAMES SHEPHERD VERSATILE BRASS**⁽⁴⁾**DON LUSHER AND HIS TROMBONE ENSEMBLE**⁽⁵⁾ · **MASSED BANDS**⁽⁶⁾

Recorded live at the National Brass Band Festival, Gala Concerts:

1977, 1978, 1979, Royal Albert Hall, London.

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Live Brass

Toccata and Fugue in D minor

Life Divine · October Festival March

Slavonic March · Le Corsaire



- [1] **October Festival Symphonic March** (6:57)
 Massed Bands of BESSES O'TH'BARN, CARLTON MAIN FRICKLEY, EVER READY (GB),
 GREAT UNIVERSAL
Conducted by ROBERT FARNON
- [2] **Toccata and Fugue in D minor** (9:02)
 BRIGHOUSE AND RASTRICK BAND
Conducted by GEOFFREY BRAND
- [3] **Lincolnshire Poacher** (2:08)
 DON LUSHER AND HIS TROMBONE ENSEMBLE
- [4] **Alla Marcia from Serenade for Strings** (4:28)
 SOLNA BRASS
Conducted by LARS-GUNNAR BJÖRKLUND
- [5] **Life Divine** (12:11)
 Massed Bands of GRIMETHORPE COLLIERY, WINGATES TEMPERANCE, STANSHAW (Bristol),
 YORKSHIRE IMPERIAL METALS
Conducted by HARRY MORTIMER, OBE
- [6] **March: Carnival Day** (3:03)
 Massed Bands of BESSES O'TH'BARN, HAMMONDS SAUCE WORKS, PARC AND DARE,
 SUN LIFE STANSHAW, WINGATES TEMPERANCE
Conducted by VILEM TAUSKY
- [7] **Finale from Concerto No.2 for Brass Band** (6:38)
 Massed Bands of GRIMETHORPE COLLIERY, WINGATES TEMPERANCE, STANSHAW (Bristol),
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Conducted by ELGAR HOWARTH

- [9] **Pandora** (6:55)
 JAMES SHEPHERD VERSATILE BRASS
Conducted by RAY WOODFIELD
James Shepherd cornet
- [10] **Overture: Le Corsaire** (7:47)
 John Foster BLACK DYKE MILLS BAND
Conducted by MAJOR PETER PARKES
- [11] **Slavonic March** (8:15)
 Massed Bands of BESSES O'TH'BARN, CARLTON MAIN FRICKLEY, EVER READY (GB),
 GREAT UNIVERSAL, John Foster BLACK DYKE MILLS BAND
Conducted by ROBERT FARNON

THE NATIONAL BRASS BAND FESTIVAL

Recorded Live at the Royal Albert Hall, London

Gala Concerts: 8th October 1977 (tracks 5, 7 & 8)
 7th October 1978 (tracks 1, 3, 4, 10 & 11)
 6th October 1979 (tracks 2, 6 & 9)

[ADD] TT = 71:24

- Recording Producer: Brian Couzens
- Sound Engineer: Ralph Couzens
- Digitally Remastered by Peter Reynolds
- Front Cover Illustration: Jason Liu
- Art Direction: Mark Thirsk
- Art & Design Consultancy: Colchester Institute

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To many of those who travel from all over Great Britain and indeed, overseas, the National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain are the most prestigious series of band contests in the world. To reach the finals, held each year in London, the bands have had to qualify for their various sections through a series of regional 'heats'. The competition is intense, no more so than at the Royal Albert Hall where the Championship section is held. Here *the* top bands in the country battle it out for the supreme title of 'Champion Band of Great Britain'.

The Gala Concerts which take place on the evening of the Championships have been a traditional end to the festival weekend. Featuring some of the top bands and artists, it has over the years provided some outstanding performances whether they be from the massed bands or solo performers who have appeared on the Albert Hall stage.

This CD features all the elements that have gone into the concerts and are taken from three that are still regarded as some of the best.

To celebrate the festival weekends, that most prolific of composers Eric Ball was commissioned to write a piece to open one of the concerts and his march 'October Festival' was the result. In it, he tried to convey the joy and excitement that goes into the championship weekend and this he aptly achieved.

Bach's 'Toccata and Fugue in D Minor' needs little introduction. It has been used in many film and TV programmes and is probably best known as the music that opened Walt Disney's animated classic 'Fantasia'. Originally composed for the organ, it has been transcribed for full orchestra and even rock group. The brass band version is a more natural transcription since the sound of the brass band has often been compared with that of the organ.

The brass ensemble has always been a popular feature of the concerts and here we feature the ever popular Don Lusher and his trombone ensemble. Their 1978 performance included this jaunty version of the 'Lincolnshire Poacher' arranged specially for them by master arranger Gordon Langford.

The name Dag Wren may not be that well known but the 'Alla Marcia' from his Serenade for Strings certainly is as it was used for the theme tune to the BBC TV program 'Monitor'. Wren wanted this march to give his strings fun at the expense of the wind section and this is certainly evident in the band arrangement by Rune Fröden who was once supervisor of Salvation Army music in Sweden. It is interesting to note that this performance by Solna Brass was the first occasion that a band from outside of the UK had appeared at the gala concerts.

Written for the National Championship of 1921, then held at the Crystal Palace, 'Life Divine' holds a special place in the banding world. Originally called 'Comedy of Errors' the title was changed by the publisher who felt that it would be too pointed a title especially in the early stages of rehearsal. Even now it still provides a stern test for the very best of today's bands. For many years it has been associated with Harry Mortimer and it was with this in mind that Harry was asked to conduct this performance as a 'birthday' present during his 75th year.

Not only is Gordon Langford an accomplished arranger but also a prolific composer. His 'Carnival Day' was written in 1978 for that year's European Broadcasting Union march competition. It's surprising to learn that it only finished as runner up.

The gala concerts have always tried to include music that is new, innovative and challenging to both listener and player alike. The 'Finale' from the 2nd brass band concerto by Derek Bourgeois is a fine example of this. Written for the Norwich Triennial Festival of 1976, it is in the form of a march and comes from the much longer 30 minute, 3 movement concerto.

Contrasting sharply with this is 'Greensleeves' in this haunting yet beautiful arrangement by Elgar Howarth. Although it is 'Officially' classified as a traditional 16th century air, it is said that no less a person than King Henry VIII was the composer.

A gala concert is not complete without a top soloist and James Shepherd is without question one of the best. Here, the former Black Dyke cornet player performs with his own versatile brass in a solo he has virtually made his own, Damares' 'Pandora'.

Berlioz wrote his overture 'Le Corsaire' in 1831 and was inspired by Fenimore Coopers novel 'The Red Rover'. Berlioz, however, was not happy with it until he revised it over twenty years later. The Black Dyke Mills Band performed this sparkling Geoffrey Brand transcription in a televised concert under the baton of André Previn in 1975. However, this recording made three years later was described at the time as some of 'the finest playing heard' over that particular weekend.

And so to the finale where the 'Dyke' joined the massed bands and what better than Tchaikovsky. His 'Slavonic March' contains the old Czarist National Anthem which is also heard in his famous '1812 Overture' and provides a spectacular conclusion to this or any other brass band festival.

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