

SFZ 136

Maestro

Bramwell Tovey

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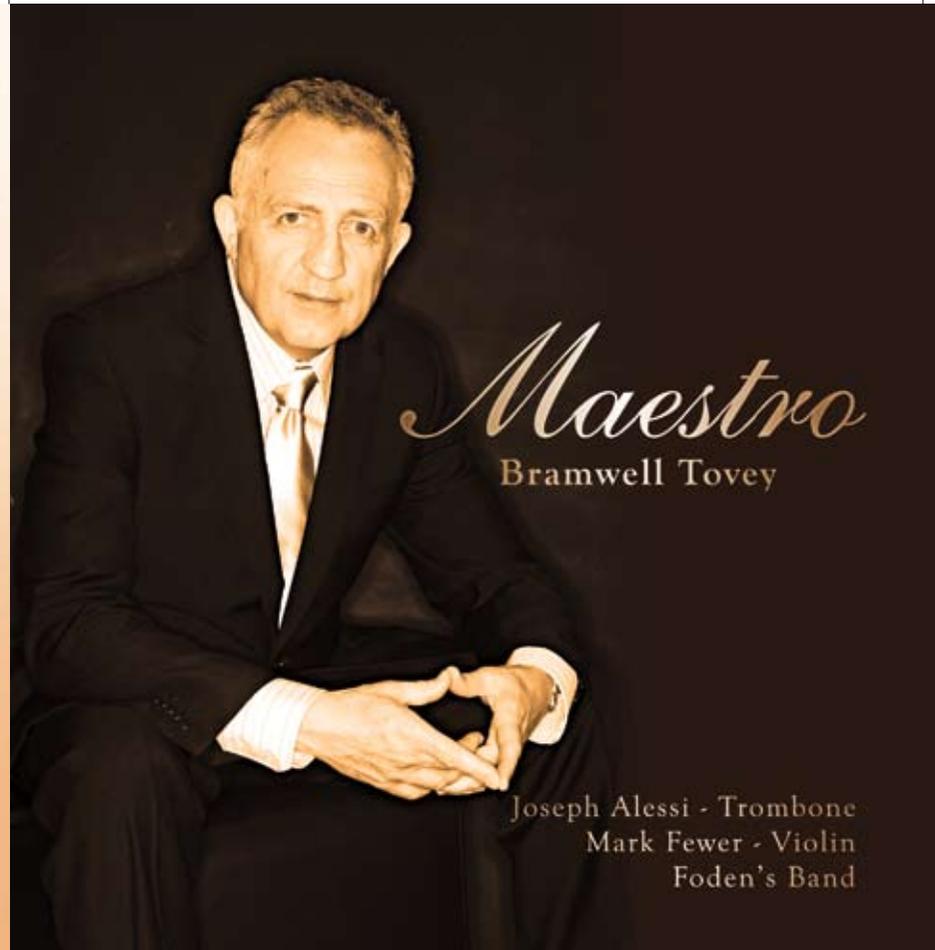
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Maestro

Bramwell Tovey

Joseph Alessi - Trombone
Mark Fewer - Violin
Foden's Band



In March 2006, Foden's became the North West Area Champions and in July of that year made history by becoming the inaugural English National Champions.

2007 included victories at the North West Area Championship for a record breaking 14th time, being crowned the International Masters Champions and victory at the Tameside Whit Friday March Contests for a sixth consecutive year. Foden's were runners up at the National Finals, at Brass in Concert, held at the Sage, Gateshead, as well as receiving 3rd prize at the British Open.

2008 proved another successful year with victories at the North West Area Contest, Tameside Whit Friday March Contest, the British Open Championship and runners up at the National Finals at the Royal Albert Hall, London.



Foden's Band

The origins of the band go back to 1900 when the village of Elworth, near Sandbach in Cheshire, formed its own band having been let down by its attempt to secure the services of the nearby town band to feature in the celebrations marking the relief of Mafeking in the Boer War.

After a couple of years the village band was wound up, but from that base local industrialist Edwin Foden formed the Foden's Motor Works Band.

For a few years the new band had modest ambitions, but in 1908 a fundamental reorganization took place and, by the following year, it had achieved Championship Section status, a prestigious position that has been maintained ever since.

32 times the band has been a prize winner at the coveted British Open Championships, winning nine times outright - including a hat trick in 1926, '27 and '28. The band has also been a prize winner 37 times at the National Championships of Great Britain, 12 times as winner, including an unparalleled double hat trick in 1932, '33 and '34 and 1936, '37 and '38.

Under its former title, the band was ordered to play by Royal Command on three occasions: in 1913 for King George V and Queen Mary, in 1938 at Windsor Castle for King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, and most recently in 1983 where the band had the honour of playing for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace.

In wartime, the band toured Europe for ENSA and in peacetime it toured Canada, South Africa and Israel.

In July 1986 the band accepted sponsorship from the Britannia Building Society. The band maintained its position as one of the country's leading bands, becoming BBC Band of the Year in 1990 and 1992, and European Champions in 1992.

Becoming All England Masters Champions in 1990, 1991, 1994 and 1995, the band emerged as the most consistent band in this field, and in 1993 it became the first British band to win the Swiss Open Championships.

Programme Notes

Coventry Variations (1986)

First performance December 1986, Derngate Theatre, Northampton, GUS Band conducted by the composer

Coventry Variations pays homage to the eponymous city, much of it destroyed during a terrifying Luftwaffe raid on 14 November 1940. Based upon the medieval Coventry Carol, the original work did not include Variations 5, 6 or 7. Although conceived at the same time, these movements were only added upon publication and were omitted in early recordings of the piece.

The theme is sparsely harmonized for solo cornet, flugel horn and bass trombone. A clash of major/minor tonalities launches the variations, each based upon a fragment of the theme. There is some representation of the hustle and bustle of manufacturing industry (the primary target of the air raid) and some depiction of church bell-ringing, in recognition of the old cathedral of St. Michael, whose ruins still stand as a memorial to that fateful night. Variation 7, sub-titled *For the Children*, is a personal response to the irony contained in the words of the original carol.

*Herod the King, in his raging
Charged he hath this day,
His men of might, in his own sight,
All children young to slay.*

In Variation 8, the listener might imagine the last quiet moments of the medieval cathedral. A solo euphonium is the final, almost pastoral voice as the bombers approach. At the climax of the finale the ancient carol returns in triumph, as the magnificent new cathedral rises from the devastation.

Pictures in the Smoke (2006) for piano, brass band and percussion (original version)

First performance Royal Northern College of Music Festival of Brass, January 2007, Foden's Band, with the composer conducting from the piano

*Oh, gallant was the first love, and glittering and fine;
The second love was water, in a clear white cup;
The third love was his, and the fourth was mine;
And after that, I always get them all mixed up.*

Dorothy Parker's hilarious poem of the same name was the starting point for this work. Dealing with the issues of dating and falling in love, it seemed a perfect basis for a set of contrasting episodes that centered on the piano as the only constant factor. The interval of a falling minor 3rd, which later becomes more of a collapsing 5th, provides the main musical ingredient, whether it's used in ostinati, melodic fragments or underlying harmonies; it's pretty clear that some of Ms Parker's experiences were less than epic.

A central melancholic section juxtaposes the solo piano with a tedious and ultimately futile relationship with solo euphonium. This introduces a tension that's only relieved when the soprano cornet glides past in sympathy... The backdrop for all of this is the city that never sleeps - New York, perhaps covered in snow...

A new arrangement for piano, orchestral brass and percussion was premiered in January 2008 and an orchestral version is planned for 2010.

Toccata from The Bardfield Ayre (1978)

First performance Toronto 1995, Hannaford Band, conducted by the composer

Toccata, the oldest work on the present recording, is one of a set of variations on an original theme, *Bardfield Ayre*. Although I recorded the entire piece with the Hannaford Street Silver Band in the 1990s I subsequently withdrew the work for revision. *Toccata* is based around two tunes, shamelessly appropriated from close friends. The soprano cornet shows how they used to whistle for their dogs. This was known as the 'Bow Whistle' and was particularly used by Cornish families like my friends who have moved to London. In a central fugato passage, each section of the band introduces the second theme which my friends sang on Christmas night, 1977:

*May God bless all those here,
A very merry Christmas and a happy new year*

Mark Fewer - Violin



Mark Fewer enjoys one of the most varied musical lives of his generation. Known for his relaxed style and honest interpretations, he switches easily between roles as soloist, chamber musician, orchestral leader, jazz musician, artistic programmer and, most recently, teacher.

Mr. Fewer was Concertmaster of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra from 2004 to 2008, during which time he gave Canadian premieres of concerto works by John Adams (*The Dharma At Big Sur for six-string electric violin and orchestra*) and Ludwig van Beethoven (*Unfinished Violin Concerto WoO5*), as well as the Vancouver premiere of Felix Mendelssohn's *Concerto for Violin, Piano and Orchestra*. He also led the orchestra in traditional *kappelmeister* style (without conductor) on several occasions in baroque and classical repertoire. In recognition of his work with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, the Vancouver Sun newspaper hailed him as one of the music industry's top 'Movers and Shakers' for 2006.

With an expanding profile as a jazz violinist, he recently appeared at the Detroit Symphony's '8 Days in June' festival, and premiered his new arrangement of Miles Davis-inspired works for solo violin and string orchestra with Thirteen Strings in Ottawa, Canada. Other recent appearances include Soloist/Director with the Laval Symphony Orchestra and the McGill Baroque Orchestra.

As a chamber musician, Mr. Fewer is a member of the Duke Piano Trio and Canada's SuperNova String Quartet. Both groups have gained critical acclaim for their performances of the standard repertoire in their respective areas as well as commissioning innovative new works.

He is Artistic Director of the Scotia Festival of Music in Halifax, and the SweetWater Music Festival in Owen Sound, Ontario. His most recent appointment is to McGill University where he teaches violin, chamber music and string improvisation.

Joseph Alessi - Trombone

Joseph Alessi was appointed Principal Trombone of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra in 1985. A graduate of the Curtis Institute, he was previously Second Trombone of the Philadelphia Orchestra and Principal Trombone of L'Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal.

In April 1990, he made his solo debut with the New York Philharmonic performing Creston's *Fantasy for Trombone*, and in 1992 premiered Christopher Rouse's Pulitzer Prize winning *Trombone Concerto* with the Philharmonic. His most recent appearance with the Philharmonic as soloist was in performances of Melinda Wagner's *Trombone Concerto* in 2007. Other solo engagements have included the New Japan Philharmonic, Nagoya Philharmonic, Orchestra of Teatro Bellini, Mannheim National Theater Orchestra, Hague Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, and the Colorado, Alabama, Hartford, Santa Barbara, Syracuse, and Puerto Rico symphony orchestras.

Joseph Alessi was the recipient of the 2002 International Trombone Association Award. Currently on the faculty of the Juilliard School, his students now occupy posts with many major symphony orchestras throughout the world. As a clinician for the Edwards Instrument Co., he has also given masterclasses worldwide and has toured Europe extensively as a master teacher and recitalist.

Mr. Alessi has also performed with major concert bands, including the U.S. Marine Band, the U.S. Army Band (Pershing's Own), the U.S. Navy Band, and the U.S. Military Band at West Point. In addition, he has performed with the Maria Schneider Orchestra, the Village Vanguard Orchestra, and has recorded with JJ. Johnson and Steve Turre.

Mr. Alessi can be heard on recordings on the New York Philharmonic Special Editions, D>Note, CALA, Summit, Sony Classical and Philips labels. Further information about Mr. Alessi can be found on his own website, www.slidearea.com



The Lincoln Tunnel Cabaret (2006)

First performance Yeovil, April 2006, Joseph Alessi, trombone, National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain conducted by the composer

This work (originally called *Urban Cabaret*) was written for Joseph Alessi's appearance as guest soloist with the NYBBGB in 2006. His virtuosity and wonderful personality endeared him enormously to the young musicians.

The listener might imagine that Joe, who commutes daily from New Jersey to Manhattan in his stylish open-top sports car, gets stuck in traffic at the mouth of the Lincoln Tunnel and decides to get out his 'horn' (as he calls it) and entertain the disgruntled crowd. In New York, anything can happen...

Under a cocktail of jazz and minimalism, motives from the opening of the work provide the main musical material. The soloist is put through many virtuosic hoops until a final cadenza brings the piece full circle. Like all traffic jams, this one seems to disperse quickly for no apparent reason.

St. Norbert Chorale (1997)

First performance November 1997 Toronto Symphony New Music Festival, Toronto, Canada, Hannaford Street Silver Band conducted by the composer

While living in Winnipeg, Canada, I discovered the impressive ruins of the church and monastery of St. Norbert. The monks had abandoned the site as the encroaching city disturbed their devotions. Astonishingly, the ruins look like something surviving from Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries. It is rare to see such a thing in North America. The *St. Norbert Chorale* has a quotation from Variation 8 of *Coventry Variations* where I had fancifully imagined Gregorian chant in the old church. This short piece became a seed that germinated a year later as the *Requiem for a Charred Skull for choir, brass and percussion*. In the latter work, *St. Norbert Chorale* becomes the basis of the *Dies Irae*.

Nine Daies Wonder (2007) for violin, brass band and percussion

First performance Toronto, April 2007, Mark Fewer, violin and narrator, Hannaford Street, Silver Band, conducted by the composer. Text selected from the works of William Shakespeare

Growing up in Ilford, then in Essex but now swallowed up by London, I had always been amused by the story of Will Kemp, a friend and colleague of William Shakespeare, who had acted in many of the Bard's plays and also been a fellow shareholder of the Globe Theatre. In 1599, for reasons best known to himself, Kemp decided to dance from London to Norwich. He kept an Elizabethan blog, which is to say, he wrote a pamphlet, entitled *Nine Daies Wonder*.

As a young band member at Ilford Salvation Army, every Sunday I would march along a stretch of the same Roman road down which Kemp had once danced - except that Kemp probably paused at the Angel Tavern, whereas I only ever marched past, en route to the citadel around the corner.

In 2007 Ray Tizzard asked me to write a piece for violin virtuoso Mark Fewer and the Hannaford Band. Although primarily known as one of the finest violinists Canada has produced, Mark is also a formidable jazz musician, a thespian, a master raconteur and much else besides. Here was the chance to write something about Kemp who, like Mark, was blessed with a host of unique talents. Interestingly, some scholars believe that the dulcet Newfoundland accent, which is Mark's natural dialect, may be how spoken English sounded in the 17th century.

Kemp sets off from London in front of a noisy and intemperate crowd and dances his way along the old Roman road through what is now the East End, sometimes seducing, always entertaining the spectators, always having something to say - and of course, actors always use lines from their most recent plays to get through everyday life. In this re-telling of the tale it may be observed that not every play Kemp quotes from was written by 1599. It is recommended that the listener is not troubled by this otherwise intractable problem. As Kemp crosses from Essex to Suffolk we hear *Farewell to the Essex Girls*, the band vocally endorsing the sentiments.

Kemp arrives in Norwich to a hero's welcome and eternal notoriety as the bells ring out in the city of churches.

the opening of Luxembourg's new Philharmonic Hall, Tovey conducted the Luxembourg Philharmonic Orchestra and the Europa Academic Choir in the world premiere of Penderecki's *8th Symphony*, composed especially for the occasion.

With a profound commitment to new music, Tovey has established himself as a formidable composer and is the first artist to win a Juno Award in both conducting and composing. He has been commissioned by Calgary Opera to compose the company's third original full-length opera. Written with librettist John Murrell, this work is based on the extraordinary life of Alexander 'Sandy' Keith, a notorious 19th century con artist and criminal from Halifax, Nova Scotia. An immense undertaking, the piece will premiere in Calgary in January 2011. Tovey's other accomplishments as a composer include receiving the Best Canadian Classical Composition 2003 Juno Award for his *Requiem for a Charred Skull*, performed and recorded by the Amadeus Choir and the Hannaford Street Silver Band in Toronto.

Tovey has also built a strong reputation as an accomplished jazz pianist with two recordings to his name and has made memorable appearances on television, including two documentaries with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and a 1996 CBC TV broadcast of Victor Davies' *Revelation*, a full-length oratorio based on the book of Revelation, with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

Despite all the acclaim for his orchestral and classical work, Tovey continues to be heavily involved in the brass band scene. From his student days conducting Hanwell Band, he has built significant partnerships with Rigid Containers Band (now GUS), Foden's Band and through his current tenure as Artistic Director of the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain.

He cites his work with the National Youth Brass Band as hugely rewarding and stimulating. In his own words Bramwell remarks, 'Some kids come from really difficult backgrounds but they come in, do the work and become a member. By the end of a course you realise what incredible people they are. I find myself treating them as I would my professional musicians - that is, with great courtesy but also with great musical demands - and they respond so well to that. I always say to the staff that I get much more out of it than I put in. When you can throw your energy at kids in this way and hear them respond... I get enormous satisfaction and stimulation from that.'

His enduring partnership with Foden's has proved fruitful in every way. Concerts, appearances at major music festivals, competitions and recordings have all received critical and award winning acclaim and reinforce this idyllic and exciting marriage between a wonderful band and the maestro, Bramwell Tovey.

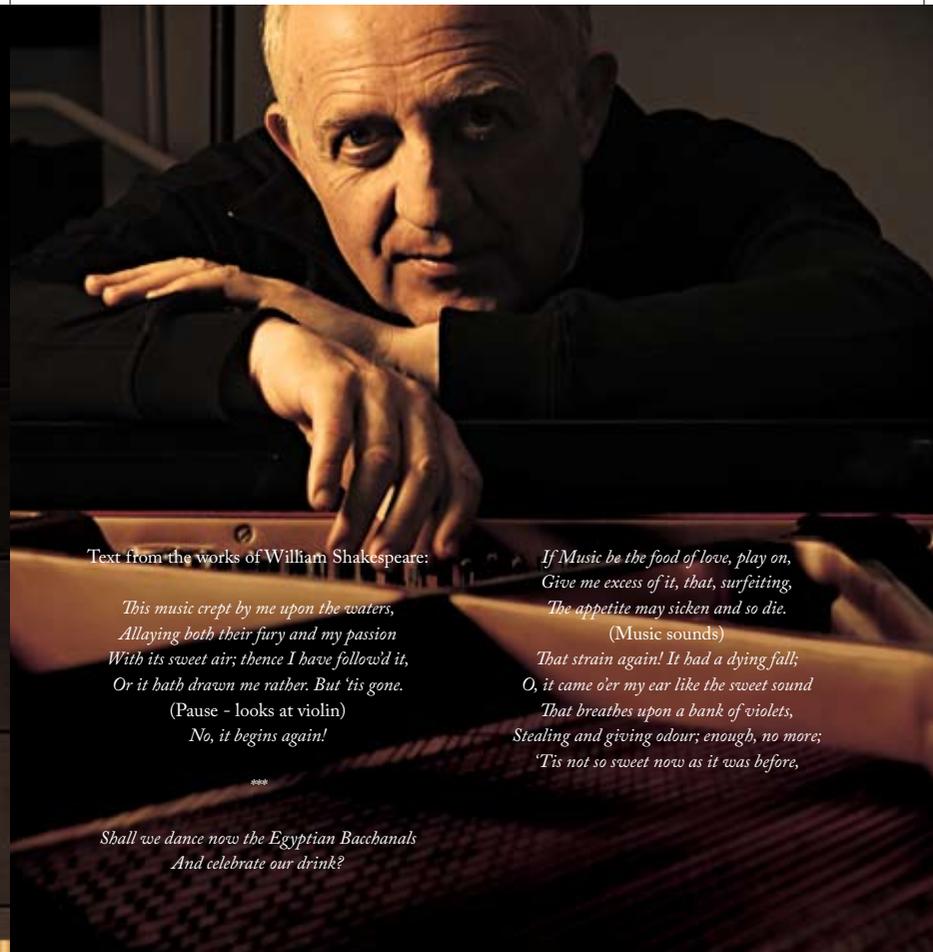
Alongside this fertile musical ground, he studied at Ilford County High School, the Royal Academy of Music and the University of London. His formal music education was as a pianist and conductor. Whilst a student at the Royal Academy of Music, he was also privileged to study with the great tuba virtuoso, John Fletcher.

His career as an esteemed conductor blossomed and developed working with orchestras in Europe and the UK, including the London Philharmonic, London Symphony, Frankfurt Radio Orchestra as well as the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Tovey has also performed with the Ulster and Helsingborg Orchestras and Opera North. He made his Australian debut in 2008 with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and guest artist Christian Tetzlaff. In North America, along with his work with the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, Tovey has made guest appearances with the orchestras of Baltimore, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Seattle, Montreal as well as ongoing performances with Toronto.

Recently branded '...the hottest hot-weather conductor in America right now...' by The Baltimore Sun, Tovey continues both his second season as Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, and his sixth season as founding host and conductor of the New York Philharmonic's Summertime Classics series at Avery Fisher Hall in summer 2009. The orchestras recently co-commissioned him to write a piece, the well-received *Urban Runway*, which received its Canadian premiere in Vancouver in September 2008.

As music director of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, they won a Grammy in 2008 with violinist James Ehnes for Best Instrumental Recording with Orchestra and he led them on tour of Korea and China in the autumn of 2008, the first by a Canadian orchestra in 30 years. Prior to his music directorship in Vancouver, Tovey spent 12 years as music director of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, where he founded its highly regarded *New Music Festival*. A significant milestone in the ensemble's exploration of new music, the festival premiered more than 250 works by diverse international and Canadian composers under Tovey's leadership, with every performance broadcast on Canada's CBC Radio.

During his four years as the music director of the Luxembourg Philharmonic, from 2002 to 2006, Tovey led three successful tours in Europe, the Far East and the eastern United States, travelling to China, Korea, Germany, Austria, Italy, Czech Republic, Estonia, Holland and Belgium. In 2004, Tovey and the orchestra were awarded the *Orphée d'Or* of the Academie Lyrique Francaise, for their critically praised recording of Jean Cras' opera, *Polyphème*. The following year, in celebration of



Text from the works of William Shakespeare:

*This music crept by me upon the waters,
Allaying both their fury and my passion
With its sweet air; thence I have follow'd it,
Or it hath drawn me rather. But 'tis gone.
(Pause - looks at violin)
No, it begins again!*

*Shall we dance now the Egyptian Bacchanals
And celebrate our drink?*

*If Music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken and so die.
(Music sounds)
That strain again! It had a dying fall;
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour; enough, no more;
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before,*

Farewell to the Essex Girls

*Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never.
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny;
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny.*

*Sing no more ditties, sing no more
Of dumps so dull and heavy;
The fraud of men was ever so,
Since summer first was leavy,
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny;
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny.*

Finale - Kemp's Entry into the City of Norwich

*If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding than a dream.*

*Gentles, do not reprehend.
If you pardon, we will mend.
And, as I'm an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call,
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.*

My sincere and personal thanks to Trevor, Julian, Wych, Brian, Nicki, Adam, Joe, Mark and each and every member of Foden's Band, whose support and encouragement made this project a somewhat belated reality. 'Fortune brings in some boats that are not steered...' Thank you for being my good fortune.

Biography of Bramwell Tovey

by Julian Bright and courtesy of JMG Artists

A musician of striking versatility, Bramwell Tovey is acknowledged around the world for his artistic depth and his warm, charismatic personality on the podium. Tovey's career as a conductor is uniquely enhanced by his work as a composer and pianist, lending him a remarkable musical perspective. His tenures as music director with the Vancouver Symphony, Luxembourg Philharmonic and Winnipeg Symphony Orchestras have been characterized by his expertise in operatic, choral, British and contemporary repertoire.

However, Bramwell's roots were in The Salvation Army at Ilford in London. His father was a euphonium player with The International Staff Band and also band secretary of Ilford Citadel Band. He is proud to be a fifth generation Salvationist, whose family tree contains preachers, instrumentalists and vocalists, who were all extremely active within the movement's musical ranks. He acknowledges the influence of these relatives and the opportunity to listen to many fantastic musicians and bands within The Salvation Army. The opportunity to play and sing in junior bands and at music camps, meeting Army music personalities and like-minded young people, enjoying and experiencing a variety of musical styles, was almost as important as his formal music education.