

Institution: University of Salford
Unit of Assessment: D35 Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts
Title of case study: Brass Band Research at the University of Salford
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The brass band sector embodies a unique cultural, community and industrial history, and the sector continues to thrive. University of Salford researchers have informed this development, demonstrating the following impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the development of brass band cultures internationally, from the UK to the US, from Scandinavia to Australia, developing opportunities for amateur musicians to participate in professional standard and creatively challenging music-making; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promoting inclusion and personal and community aspiration: • Enhancing the repertoire of brass bands by bringing contemporary “concert hall” techniques to amateur music making, setting competition standards to which brass bands aspire, and: • Supporting practitioners to assume world leading roles in the field and integrate new research methods into their creative practice; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bringing associated economic benefit to the industries which support the movement and the communities which practice.
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The key researchers and positions they held at the institution at the time of the research are as follows: Professor Peter Graham, Professor of Composition (from 2007, and from 1993, Lecturer and Senior Lecturer), Dr Roy Newsome, Research Fellow (from 1989 until his death in 2011) Dr Robin Dewhurst, Reader in Music (from 1993) Dr Howard Evans, Senior Lecturer (from 2009), School of Arts and Media.</p> <p>1994 onwards: The Salford Music Research Centre (SMRC) has successfully integrated brass band research and practice, enhancing its professionalisation and increasing participation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating brass band research within the SMRC as a practice-based research activity, establishing the development of a theoretical focus on brass band practice and performance. • Offering leading brass practitioners the opportunity to engage in innovative research with the establishment, in 1999 of PhD and DMA programmes for practitioners in the field, the first programme of its kind. <p>The impact described in this case study is underpinned by the following research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMRC researchers have developed innovative and popular fusions between brass band music and other musical genres beyond the classical. Incorporating modernist techniques into a genre which had traditionally avoided them, whilst maintaining what Philip Wilby called the “<i>consensus between the composer, players and audience</i>,” Graham, Dewhurst and Evans have sought to evolve that consensus, but within limits: “The composer can provide the audience with increasing demands without repelling them” (Wilby): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Graham’s <i>Montage</i> (1994) used generative motives derived from Lutoslawski’s Concerto for Orchestra, as well as techniques borrowed from Messiaen, such as the Modes of Limited Transposition. Historical techniques such as chaconne feature alongside more contemporary, jazz tinged textures. These techniques make great demands on performance practice in the Brass Band communities, pushing the boundaries of what was accepted by players and audiences alike. ○ Graham’s <i>Harrison’s Dream</i> (2002) commissioned by the United States Air Force Band, which won the prestigious ABA/Ostwald Award for Original Composition for Symphonic Winds in 2002, explored structural ideas such as mathematical proportions in music in ways that had been established in orchestral music, expanding the technical demands on the instrumentalists beyond what had previously been regarded as the technical limits of what was still an amateur movement. ○ Graham’s arrangement of Ronan Hardiman’s music of Riverdance, <i>Cry of the Celts</i> (2008), spawned a generation of “Irish” influenced pieces, including work by Richard Rock, and the “Irish Music series” from Belgian music publishers Bernaerts.

- **Dewhurst's** *Vistas Latinas* (2007), commissioned by Lt Col. Chris Davis, Principal Director of Music, Her Majesty's Royal Marines as the finale for the 2007 Mountbatten Festival of Music, premiered at the Royal Albert Hall. It explores the boundaries of the symphonic wind band both through the demands it places on improvising soloists, its uses of extended instrumentation and the stylistic challenges placed on the collected forces. It is the first concert band suite to demand solo improvisation alongside authentically-scored Latin percussion.
- **Evans'** recording of *Sanctuary* (2008) with the Boscombe Band, demonstrates a form of composition unique to the Salvation Army (SA) but drawn from a major area of the SA's reflective music in a form known as the Meditation. The recording renewed a sense of intellectual and musical centre within church music through the medium of the brass band literature. *Sanctuary* gave significant new insights into the performance of existing repertoire, having had its own historicity of performance practice.

3. References to the research

Key outputs

1. Graham, P 1994, '*Montage for Brass Band*', Rosehill Publishing AccNo. mu9521273
2. Newsome, R. 1998, '*Brass roots: a hundred years of brass bands and their music (1836-1936)*' (Aldershot: Ashgate) ISBN 1859281680
3. Graham, P 2003, '*Harrison's Dream*', Warner Bros Publications Location: Miami, Florida: Warner Bros. Publications Volume No: Pagination: iii + 75 Year: 2003 [URL](#)
4. Graham, P 2003, '*Call of the Cossacks: The Music of Peter Graham Vol. II*', Recording with the Black Dyke Band (Conductor Nicholas Childs). [URL](#)
5. Newsome, R 2006, '*The modern brass band from the 1930s to the new millennium*', Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Aldershot, UK ISBN 0754607178
6. Dewhurst, R 2007, '*Vistas Latinas (For Soloists, Latin Percussion and Symphonic Wind Band)*', Full Score, Blue Band, Portsmouth, UK [URL](#)
7. Evans, H 2008 '*Sanctuary*' Recording, World of Brass, Wellingborough, UK
8. Newsome, R. 2010 '*The Best of Brass*' (Brighouse: Kirklees) ISBN 9780956728203

4. Details of the impact

The University of Salford has pioneered practice-based research work in the field of Brass Band studies as a key area of research in performance and composition, extending significantly beyond the University, with the introduction of the practice-led and brass-specialist PhD and DMA programmes, and the subsequent integration of brass band research into University of Salford SMRC research programmes. It has achieved this through:

- Enabling practitioners to develop professional standards, and assume world leading roles in the field through the integration of new research methods into their practice. SMRC research has been followed closely by many composers directly supervised by Graham, which has since made a measurable impact on the brass band community through being set as competition test pieces, often for the bands in lower sections (leagues, as in football). The fusion of several genres, cutting across the conventional art/popular division, continues to be a prominent feature of these works.
- With the development of a dedicated research focus on brass bands, Salford has awarded research degrees to many key figures in the brass band movement, including Nicholas Childs (conductor of Black Dyke Band), Robert Childs (conductor of Cory Band), Stephen Cobb (Director, International Staff Band of the Salvation Army), Kenneth Downie (composer of 19 test pieces), Martin Ellerby (composer of 10 test pieces), Luc Vertommen (conductor of leading Belgian band Brassband Buizingen), Rodney Newton (composer), Nigel Clarke (composer, former Associate Composer of Black Dyke Band), James Gourlay (General Director, River City Brass, Pennsylvania, and former Head of Brass at the Royal Scottish Academy for Music and Drama), Goff Richards (composer/arranger), Sachi Uchida

(Japanese composer of brass band music), Roger Webster (leading cornet player) and Peter Meechan (composer and chair of the British Association for Brass and Wind Ensembles). These 'agenda-setting' musicians have an impact on the music performed beyond the scope of their research projects: for example, in the case of Belgian conductor Luc Vertommen, they go on to have an impact internationally by importing British composers, and in particular, the music of fellow Salford researchers into the rapidly growing Belgian banding scene. Vertommen has contributed arrangements of several works by British composers John Rutter, Peter Graham and Salford graduate Paul Lovatt-Cooper, which have been widely performed in Belgium and elsewhere in Europe, and conducted the 2010 premiere of ['Earthrise'](#) by Salford DMA Nigel Clarke. Salford Brass Band researchers continue to attract leading players and composers as research students. Current students include: Brett Baker (trombone soloist, Black Dyke Band) and David Thornton (Euphonium soloist, Black Dyke).

- **Evans'** recording of the brass version of Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* (2007) with proceeds going to Brass Band Aid, pushed the boundaries of the brass band genre through its integration with orchestral performance disciplines: "*I first heard this on the BBC as the lead in to the 2 mins silence 11/11, I was really moved and congratulate the producer on their choice.*" Reviewer, Amazon (2009) <http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Armed-Man-Mass-Peace/dp/B0011FI294>

Brass band research impact develops opportunities for amateur musicians to participate in professional standard and creatively challenging music-making, promoting inclusion and personal and community aspiration, and increasing participation. It develops opportunities for communities to engage, collaborate and achieve to a standard in musical expression, raising skills and aspirations and promoting community regeneration as many bands have thrived in areas of multiple exclusion:

- SMRC brass band research programmes focus on the interaction between composer and performer, and it is this collaborative approach that has informed the technical innovations created, particularly in the area of test pieces. The brass band movement in the UK and worldwide is organised around the principle of competition in a number of different sections, equivalent to the league structure in sport. Competitions generally feature between 10 and 20 bands playing a single set piece, with the adjudication carried out by an expert jury who cannot see the band playing to ensure that only musical-technical criteria are used to make the assessment. Enhancing, exponentially the repertoire of brass bands by bringing contemporary "concert hall" concepts and techniques to amateur music making, setting competition standards to which brass bands aspire:
- Within this framework, the composition of a 'set-piece' literally sets the technical and musical demands for the musicians competing at that level, and also defines the level towards which bands in lower sections aspire. Set pieces are often repeated for several competitions, meaning that many hundreds of musicians over a period will rehearse one set piece over a period of a decade or more, and it may serve as a benchmark for the standards required by promotion to a particular section. In addition, a test piece appropriate to the particular section can be chosen by an individual band as an 'own choice' in some competitions.
- The influence of Salford composers over this unique form of technical benchmarking for music can be established, leading the development of brass band cultures internationally, from the UK to the US, from Scandinavia to Australia:
 - **Graham's** 1994 *Montage* has been used as a set test piece at [Championship](#) level on 13 separate occasions, and has been chosen as an 'own choice' on 48 occasions. Featuring in 1995 in the Norwegian National Championships; the European Championships (ten times), the British and Scottish Opens (seven times), in smaller competitions such as the Fife Charities Band Association Contest and in April 2013, in the North American Championships. A total of 197 bands have rehearsed and performed *Montage*, totalling just less than 5000 musicians. Graham's 2002 *Harrison's Dream* featured as a Contest Test Piece in the New South Wales State Championships and in 2009, in the World Music Contest.

- **2012:** The University of Salford hosted the North West regional auditions for the country's leading youth brass bands, with fifty of the nation's most accomplished brass players between the ages of eight and 18 hoping to be chosen to join the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain (NYBBGB) and National Children's Brass Band of Great Britain (NCBBGB). SMRC has developed strong links with the NYBBGB in particular, over many years. The band was directed and run for 17 years from 1984 by the late Dr Roy Newsome, a former member of University staff, and a number of current staff are also involved with the organisation. Many NYBBGB members move on to Salford to study music, with the University enjoying a reputation as one of the leading institutions for brass band scholarship in the UK. The University's Head of Classical Performance, Dr Howard Evans, said: "*We're extremely proud to host the auditions for both bands every year. They offer the finest young brass players in the country a fabulous musical experience in their chosen field and many members go on to pursue accomplished careers as professional musicians.*" Young musicians on the day have the chance to learn from the audition panel experts, who will give a brass master class, and a number of successful players will be chosen to join the youth or children's bands.
- Through the development of a research environment and staff expertise to guide this integration, a focus on the rich cultural history of the brass band sector through the University's brass band archive, and close links with ensembles internationally, SMRC research has informed the ways in which the brass sector operates and thrives.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- a) Representative of the Opera National De Paris/Paris Brass Band, in support of impact of the University of Salford's brass band research on society.
- b) Conductor Barrhead Burgh Band, Scotland in support of impact of the University of Salford's brass band research on society.
- c) The following external sources provide corroboration of specific claims made in the case study: Herbert, T. (ed.) *The British Brass Band: a Social and Musical History*, p.275 for Salford's contribution. (pdf available)
- d) Kennedy, M. and Joyce Bourne (ed.) *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* (Oxford: OUP): 1996. Entry on "Newsome, Roy".
- e) "*Peter Graham is one of the most important contributors to the brass band repertoire over the past two or three decades*", Kenneth Crookston, *British Bandsman*: <http://www.worldofbrass.com/reviews.php?id=21419>
- f) Brass Band Results is building a comprehensive set of world-wide brass band contest results. It provides links between the various bands where they share conductors, test pieces etc., so it can easily be seen when a piece has been used and which band it was played by. The site shows a range of examples of Salford researchers' compositions being used as competition test pieces. <http://brassbandresults.co.uk/>