

## **6a. CRITICAL REVIEW**

*The Distin Legacy*

*The Rise of the Brass Band in 19th-century Britain*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The portfolio presents seven, newly published works as being logically connected by the same hypothesis that the Distins invented the British brass band:

1. *The Distin Legacy. The Rise of the Brass Band in 19th-Century Britain*<sup>1</sup> by Ray Farr  
(Including the digital asset: “*Distin Diaries*”<sup>2</sup> by Ray Farr)
2. *The Hippodrome Galop* by J. H. White (1854)<sup>3</sup>
3. *Selection from La Figlia del Reggimento* by Donizetti (1855)<sup>4</sup>
4. *Coronation March* by Meyerbeer/J. Smyth (1862)<sup>5</sup>
5. *General Jacksons Schottische* by J. W. Tidswell (1862)<sup>6</sup>
6. *Selection- Robert le Diable* by G. Meyerbeer/J. Smyth (1862)<sup>7</sup>
7. *Volunteer Artillery & Rifle-Corps March* by E. Jackson (1862)<sup>8</sup>

The aim of the portfolio is to examine the beginning and subsequent development of brass bands in Britain which began around the year 1830. Drawing on previous research from historical researchers and authors and research of historical sources such as newspaper archives, images, published literature, music instrument collections and museums, it is clear that various synergies and individuals contributed to the growth of the brass band as a phenomenon. This portfolio examines the influence of the Distin family, through their work in brass performance, repertory, contests, publishing and musical instrument manufacturing, on this evolving brass band institution.

In the first book on brass bands, *Talks with Bandsmen*<sup>9</sup>, written in 1895, the author Algernon Rose stated that Adolphe Sax was “the inventor of the brass band” and at a casual glance it might seem that, with the family of saxhorns at its core, the brass band, as a formalised medium, (despite the additional non-Sax instruments: cornets, trombones, and percussion) Rose’s assertion is correct. Much credit has been given to this statement over the years and while this critical review

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<sup>1</sup> Farr, R. (2013). *The Distin Legacy*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars. ISBN-10: 9781443842402.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.rayfarr.com/?page\\_id=325](https://www.rayfarr.com/?page_id=325)

<sup>3</sup> Farr, R. (2021). *Scholarly Editions*. Oslo: Norsk Noteservice. ISMN 979-0-2617-2104-2

<sup>4</sup> Farr, R. (2021). *Scholarly Editions*. Oslo: Norsk Noteservice. ISMN 979-0-2617-2101-1

<sup>5</sup> Farr, R. (2021). *Scholarly Editions*. Oslo: Norsk Noteservice. ISMN 979-0-2617-2098-4

<sup>6</sup> Farr, R. (2010). *Scholarly Editions*. Oslo: Norsk Noteservice. ISMN 979-0-66102-958-8

<sup>7</sup> Farr, R. (2011). *Scholarly Editions*. Oslo: Norsk Noteservice. ISMN 979-0-2617-0249-2

<sup>8</sup> Farr, R. (2011). *Scholarly Editions*. Oslo: Norsk Noteservice. ISMN 979-0-2617-0232-4

<sup>9</sup> Rose, A. (1895). *Talks with Bandsmen*. London: Bingham.

does not aim to denigrate Sax's inventions, the hypothesis that frames this portfolio is that the Distins invented the British brass band.

My thesis argues not only that the Distins' distinctive contribution was to act as a catalyst for the development of the brass band movement from its early fragmented beginnings, but also – and most importantly – that without their contribution the brass band as a formalised and established medium in the form in which we know it today, together with its associated culture, would not have come into existence.

While the Distins were, to a large extent, motivated by financial gain, their standards of performance, and the quality of their work, particularly in the field of musical instrument manufacturing was exemplary, and led the way forward in the rise of the brass band. This statement is new (no one has made it before) and to many, will be a new revelation of the importance of the Distins. However, the thesis argument cannot prove definitively that the Distins were the sole cause for all that evolved, but it is to say that theirs was the most significant influence and when all the evidence is combined it gives a powerful argument to the thesis statement that Distins, not Sax, invented the brass band.

The published works included in this portfolio, present re-discovered scores with new knowledge of the beginnings of brass bands. They also provide new opportunities for study and performance of rare scores from brass band history. While the beginnings of brass bands and the various synergies have received some research by scholars, the music from the period has been generally ignored, therefore the published scores may be considered pioneering works revealing new insights into the use of early brass instruments through score analysis.

### Previous research and literature review

Brass bands have generally been categorized as popular music and Trevor Herbert has suggested that brass bands and their music have received little scholarly interest<sup>10</sup> until relatively recently because of this popular music label attached to them. Algernon Rose's book *Talks with Bandsmen*<sup>11</sup> and Enderby Jackson's *Origin and Promotion of Brass Band Contests* (1896) were

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<sup>10</sup> Herbert, T. (1991). 'Nineteenth-Century Bands: The Making of a Movement', in *Bands: The Brass Band Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press. P 7.

<sup>11</sup> Rose, A. (1895). *Talks with Bandsmen*. London: Bingham.

the first articles on brass bands but the first serious text on the subject only came in the 1930s when Russell and Elliot published *The Brass Band Movement*<sup>12</sup> (1936).

It was Arthur Taylor's book *Brass Bands*<sup>13</sup> (1979), and Jack Scott's pioneering but still unpublished PhD dissertation '*The Evolution of the Brass Band and its Repertoire in Northern England*'<sup>14</sup> (1970) which first drew attention to the general lack of serious research in this important area. Subsequently the development of the brass band movement in nineteenth-century Britain has been extensively researched and documented by several significant scholars in this field. Particularly important among these are Dave Russell<sup>15</sup> (1987), Trevor Herbert<sup>16</sup> (1988, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2004), Arnold Myers<sup>17</sup> (1991, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2011), Ian Jones<sup>18</sup> (1995), Roy Newsome<sup>19</sup> (1998, 2005, 2006), Lloyd Farrar and Robert Eliason<sup>20</sup> (2001), and Eugenia Mitroulia<sup>21</sup> (2011).

That the Distin Family had a role to play in the development of brass bands has been acknowledged, especially by Jack Scott (1970) who states that 'John Distin ... eventually became one of the most important personalities of the nineteenth century in brass music'<sup>22</sup>. Also, Lloyd Farrar and Arnold Myers state that the Distin Family 'indeed influenced greatly the world of instrument manufacture and the explosive growth of brass bands during their lifetime.'<sup>23</sup> Eliason and Farrar maintain<sup>24</sup> that it was the acquisition, by Distin, of the British agency for saxhorns that was the key factor in the development of the amateur brass band movement. However, there is general agreement amongst scholars that brass bands, and the Distins, deserve more attention from historians and musicologists. Myers and Mitroulia acknowledge that 'the Distin Family is today unknown to most people'.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Russell, J. and Elliot, J. (1936). *The Brass Band Movement*. London: Dent and Sons.

<sup>13</sup> Taylor, A. (1979). *Brass Bands*. St Albans, Herts: Granada Publishing Ltd.

<sup>14</sup> Scott, J. (1970). *The Evolution of the Brass Band & its Repertoire in Northern England*. Thesis submitted to University of Sheffield.

<sup>15</sup> Russell, D. (1987). *Popular Music in England 1840-1914 A social history*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. P.175.

<sup>16</sup> Herbert, T. (1991). 'Nineteenth-Century Bands: The Making of a Movement', in *Bands: The Brass Band Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

<sup>17</sup> Mitroulia E. and Myers, A. (2011). *The Distin Family as Instrument Makers and Dealers 1845-1874*. Scottish Music Review.

<sup>18</sup> Jones, I. (1995). *Brass Bands in York 1833-1944*. York: University of York.

<sup>19</sup> Newsome, R. (1998). *Brass Roots. A hundred years of brass bands and their music*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

<sup>20</sup> Eliason, R. and Farrar, L. P. *Distin*. Grove Music Online (accessed 27<sup>th</sup> March 2008).

<sup>21</sup> Mitroulia, E. and Myers, A. (2011). *The Distin Family as Instrument Makers and Dealers 1845-1874*. Scottish Music Review.

<sup>22</sup> Scott, J. (1970). *The Evolution of the Brass Band & its Repertoire in Northern England*. Thesis submitted to University of Sheffield.

<sup>23</sup> Farrar, L. P. and Myers, A. (2003). *Henry John Distin*. Paper given at the Galpin Society Conference on Musical Instruments, Oxford, London and Edinburgh.

<sup>24</sup> Eliason, R. and Farrar, L. P. *Distin*. Grove Music Online (accessed 27<sup>th</sup> March 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Mitroulia E. and Myers, A. (2011). *The Distin Family as Instrument Makers and Dealers 1845-1874*. Scottish Music Review.

This portfolio acknowledges the research from the authors mentioned above and, with the accompanying published scores, explores newly discovered empirical aspects of the beginnings and early brass band development and in particular, the role played by the Distins.

## **2. A SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH**

The justification for this historical investigation into the importance of the Distin Family, is that it helps us know the past, understand the present and inform future developments<sup>26</sup>. Taking an overview, a summary may be made that there were five main attributing factors to early brass band development in Britain:

Brass performance practice

Repertory

Brass band contests

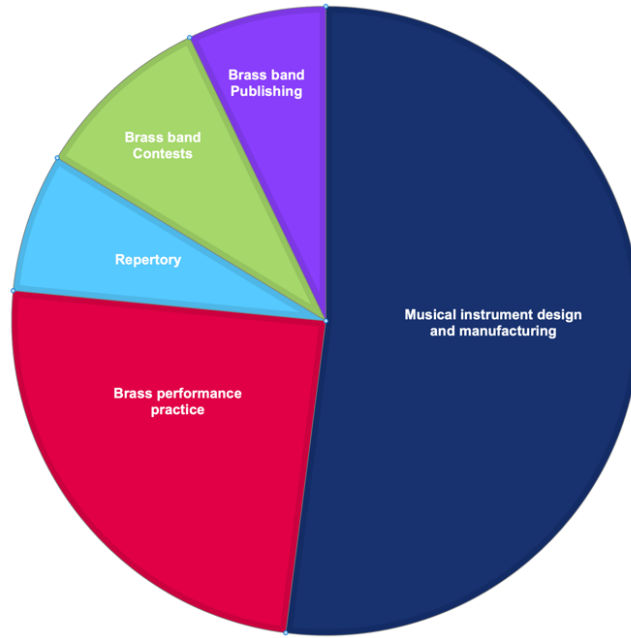
Brass band publishing

Musical instrument design and manufacturing

While individuals, such as Jules Levy and Enderby Jackson, bands such as Cyfarthfa and Mossley, and companies such as Besson and R. Smith were seen to be major contributors to the scenario, none had the breadth of influence that the Distins had in all five aspects. Combined with breadth of influence, was their success due to their renowned standards of excellence in their various enterprises, making them the leaders in the field. The graph below gives an estimate of the proportions of the Distins impact.

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<sup>26</sup> Adapted from the words of Dr. Carl Sagan (1980).



*A circular graph indicating the proportions to the various Distin enterprises.*

Each of the five factors provide a different impact.

### Brass performance practice

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brass musical instruments in Britain and Europe were in the early stages of development. Most brass instruments could play only a limited number of notes based on the harmonic series. Despite these limitations, John Distin, the father in the Distin Family brass ensemble, learnt to play the bugle and later the natural trumpet and ‘achieved much fame upon his improved bugle’<sup>27</sup> eventually becoming a distinguished soloist<sup>28</sup>. Later, as a trumpet player John Distin was considered “utterly without rival in his mastery over the trumpet”<sup>29</sup>.

John Distin taught his four sons, George, Henry, William, and Theodore to play brass instruments and together they formed a brass ensemble which was later described as “the most remarkable brass band in England”<sup>30</sup>. By the 1850s the Distin Family brass ensemble had already given over 10,000 concerts<sup>31</sup>; an extraordinary achievement which became a model for other brass groups to emulate.

<sup>27</sup> Distin, H. (1889). *Our Portrait Gallery, Mr Henry Distin*. British Bandsman.

<sup>28</sup> Horwood, W. (1992). *Adolphe Sax 1814-1894 His life and Legacy*. Hertford: Egon Publishers.

<sup>29</sup> *The Derby Mercury*, April 13<sup>th</sup> 1842.

<sup>30</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, March 25<sup>th</sup> 1867.

<sup>31</sup> Newsome, R. (1998). *Brass Roots*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

The standards set by the Distin Family in brass performance was, according to most sources, the highest and something to be emulated. With comments like Meyerbeer's "Never have I heard wind instruments played with so much splendour, purity, and precision... nothing equals the grandeur of their style" the family of musicians became legendary. As a freelance, full-time performing brass group they were unique in the history of British music making<sup>32</sup>.

The records of a few bands and brass groups which followed, historically, might challenge this statement, such as, *St. Hilda's Band*, *Fodens Band*, *Besses o'th'Barn Band*, *Philip Jones Brass Ensemble* but none of these groups can compare with the number of performances given by the Distins over such a long period of time.

There were individual brass performers during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in Britain such as Jules Levy (cornet) (1838-1903) and Sam Hughes (ophicleide) (1823-1898) who inspired a burgeoning generation, but it was John Distin, with his slide trumpet, that was called to perform at the coronation of Queen Victoria (1838) and it was the Distin Family who performed for royalty and upper-class businessmen, stimulating them to give financial support to a growing brass band movement.

### Repertory

Music-making in Britain at the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century entered the Romantic era (1800-1890c) established by the music of Beethoven, Schubert and other composers, whose music introduced a more dramatic, expressive style to that which had previously existed. Art music became, for the first time, accessible to the ordinary person and music-making was no longer an exclusive pastime for the upper classes. Furthermore music-making became popular amongst the masses, and amateur community bands emerged all over Britain. The professionally organised groups and virtuoso performers, like the Distins, led the musical direction and an amateur band movement enthusiastically followed.

The musical style of the Distin group clearly reflected John's accumulated experience, knowledge, and expertise. The group played mostly arrangements of vocal music; well-known songs and operatic arias throughout their career, but occasionally they included arrangements of light music, as reflected in the list of published works.

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<sup>32</sup> A statement made for the first time.



Examining the repertory of 19<sup>th</sup>-century bands there is a clear link with the repertory of the Distins. The best example is the music of Meyerbeer and his opera (written in 1831) *Robert le Diable*; the Distins frequently performed a selection from the opera which was expressly made for them by the composer in 1844. The *Cyfarthfa Band* also had a selection (with a duration of 25 minutes) from the opera in their repertory, and a further selection from the opera was made by James Smyth as the test piece for the *Crystal Palace* band contest in September 1862.

## Contests

While the Distin Family brass ensemble never took part in a band competition, they were often seen in positions of influence. In 1851, *Henry Distin's Manufacturing Company* supplied a set of nine instruments with upright bells to the *Mossley Temperance Band*, on which they achieved their historic win at the first *Belle Vue* contest. This success inspired other bands to begin the process of conversion<sup>33</sup> and contributed significantly to the spread of the all-brass band<sup>34, 35</sup>.

In July 1860 the first *National Brass Band Championships* was held at the *Crystal Palace*, London and Henry Distin presented the winning band, *Black Dyke Mills*, with a “splendid champion contre-bass in E ♭, a most noble circular instrument, beautifully made, electro-plated and gilt”<sup>36</sup>. Henry Distin worked closely with Enderby Jackson who was the organiser and conductor of this historic event<sup>37</sup>.

Contests are seen by some to be crucially important to brass band development, and while the connection between the Distins and brass band contests is relatively weak, compared to their manufacturing for example, there were some aspects of their involvement in competitions which were important such as, Distin instruments being used by competing bands<sup>38</sup>, Distin prizes to winning bands of new instruments<sup>39</sup>, and the collaboration between Distin and the contest organiser, Enderby Jackson<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Russell, D. (1997). *Popular Music in Britain 1840-1914*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

<sup>34</sup> Taylor, A. (1979). *Brass Bands*. Hertford: Granada Pub. Ltd.

<sup>35</sup> Newsome, R. (1998). *Brass Roots*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

<sup>36</sup> *The Era*, July 15<sup>th</sup> 1860.

<sup>37</sup> *The Era*, September 7<sup>th</sup> 1862.

<sup>38</sup> Jackson, E. (1896). *A Memorable Day at Burton Constable*. Musical Opinion and Music Trade Review.

<sup>39</sup> *The Era*, July 15<sup>th</sup> 1860.

<sup>40</sup> *The Era*, September 7<sup>th</sup> 1862.

## Publishing

The *Distin Brass Band Scores* of 1854 & 1855<sup>41</sup> represent an important stage in the history of bands in Britain. In 1800 instrumentalists played mostly from memory or improvised, but as amateur musicians became more educated and with a desire to organise their music-making, music literacy became more wide-spread. Music publishing had been around for many years but as demands for band music grew and copyrights and performing rights became more formalized, several publishing firms specializing in band music surfaced. However, while brass instrument manufacturing was on the rise, the brass band, as a medium, had not yet established a fixed combination of instruments. The first publishers of music specifically for brass bands, such as the Cocks, Smith and Distin, led the way towards a settled instrumentation and formalisation of the brass band.

## Manufacturing

From the circular graph above we see that musical instrument design and manufacturing had the biggest portion of the Distin impact. While there were other, well respected instrument manufacturing companies in England at that time such as: Köhler & Son, Besson, Boosey, Pace, Brown, Rudall, Rose and Carte, and Higham (Manchester) none were bigger or carried more influence than that of the Distin company. The introduction of the valve, in 1814 by Heinrich Stölzel<sup>42</sup>, the cornet, in 1834 by Étienne François Périnet,<sup>43</sup> and saxhorns, in 1844 by Antoine-Joseph "Adolphe" Sax, were the most significant technological advancements in brass instruments during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Distins, particularly Henry, were at the forefront of their application into brass bands. It was in 1849, on their return from America, when Henry Distin took control of the family music business<sup>44</sup>. At first, he imported instruments to be sold but soon started a brass manufacturing company which eventually, “became one of the most flourishing wind-instrument making businesses in Britain”<sup>45</sup>.

The Distins’ influence on a developing brass band movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century came about by a remarkable blend of entrepreneurial skills with several extraordinary innovations made

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<sup>41</sup> Scott, J. (1970). *The Evolution of the Brass Band & its Repertoire in Northern England*. Thesis submitted to University of Sheffield.

<sup>42</sup> Herbert, T. and Wallace, J. (1997). *Brass Instruments*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>43</sup> Dumoulin, G. (2006). *The Cornet and Other Brass Instruments in French Patents of the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*. The Galpin Society Journal.

<sup>44</sup> *The Times*, October 15<sup>th</sup> 1849, p.3.

<sup>45</sup> Mitroulia, E. (2011). Thesis: *Adolphe Sax's Brasswind Production with a Focus on Saxhorns and Related Instruments*. University of Edinburgh.

by them at a time of rapid change in British history. Several authors acknowledge the importance of the Distins in their separate strands of activity, but this research combines all these components and leads to my thesis statement that the Distins invented the brass band. This is a connection not previously made, but no matter who invented the brass band the subject does provide a starting point for an historical research and analysis into the roots of brass bands.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

Primarily, this portfolio is an historical musicological study of the Distin Family, and as the title suggests, their influence on the beginning and rise of the brass band in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Britain. The methodological approach relies on the accessibility of early brass band scores, which are extremely rare. The resulting published works have both quantitative and qualitative research methods which support the thesis statement, the Distins invented the brass band, in a variety of ways. The later Enderby Jackson scores, give only partial support to the thesis, however, the *Distin's Brass Band Scores* prove a direct cutting-edge involvement with the thesis statement.

The type of evidence provided is an empirical, statistical and logical mixture, but there are some gaps in the evidence which call for conjecture.

#### Searching and researching

For this portfolio the first task was to read every article written about the Distins. Following this, several years of fact-finding and research has revealed lost information and empirical knowledge about the Distins in their various strands of enterprise. The research has involved a considerable amount of archival work with deductive reasoning, and this new knowledge is presented in the accompanying published works in both micro and macro perspectives.

The *Distin Diaries* is a new empirical resource, and the published works reveal lost manuscripts, hidden aspects of instrumentation, arranging and performing which provide opportunities for study and performance in a modern setting.

Material has been discovered in the *British Library*, the *National Library of Scotland*, the *Glasgow University Library*, the on-line resource *The British Newspaper Archive* and the *Brass Band Archive*, and many other archives. The approach has ranged from visiting libraries and

museums, and searching through newspaper reports, to on-line data-base searches. Building and analysing the collection of thousands of reports connected with the Distins has revealed a clear picture and value of their various ventures.

### Arranging

Creating published, scholarly scores requires several essential skills. Having gathered valuable historic brass band scores, the author must first decide on a concept and a target audience. My concept is to recreate the old scores in a modern setting. Arranging skills, the knowledge of brass and percussion, how to write for the instruments, and the ability to analyse scores are vital. Arranging, sometimes known as orchestration, is an acquired skill and considered by some as an art, and this art of arranging is greater than simple transcription, and approaches composition.

My experience as a professional arranger has given insights into the most effective methods of orchestrating for brass instruments, this experience has informed my approach when approaching the editing process applied to the scholarly editions presented here. While most of the work undertaken in my editions is simple editing: correcting wrong notes, adding missing dynamics etc, there is an element of original, artistic creation. In certain aspects of editing, decisions of an imaginative nature need to be made, and the very first consideration was given to concept.

As mentioned earlier, an edition of the original scores with the original forces and the same specified instruments could have been made, however, I decided that the concept would be more worthwhile if it had the potential to receive more performances, had greater accessibility, and also appealed to a larger audience, using a modern brass band, therefore my scholarly scores are recreations.

### Digitalisation and publishing

An important aspect of the methodology for this project were the skills needed to digitally notate the music and transcribe the original scores into a modern format. As shown in the scholarly scores the scans of the originals were often difficult to decipher, but Finale music notation software, with its facility for playback etc, made the task easier. Errors in the original scores were relatively easy to detect, although there were occasions where an investigation into

differing source editions had to be made and the question whether to be faithful to the arranger or composer sometime arose.

I have used Finale for many years and have produced more than one hundred editions at professional, publishing standards. However, the electronic sounds produced can give a false impression of how the original 19<sup>th</sup> - century brass-band scores sounded in terms of tone quality and balance. In some ways, the production of my scholarly editions was straight forward and for those familiar with music notation programmes, the transposition of a horn part in D ♭ to a horn in E ♭ can be achieved quite quickly. However, in many other respects the questions arose as to just what the composer/arranger was imagining when he set down the music, how did it actually sound, and how best to recreate the scores in a modern context.

In preparing the scores for publishing, there are certain conventions to be adopted and publishers often have their own in-house style. The book, *Manual of Style*<sup>46</sup> has been most helpful. *Norse Noteservice* is a music publishing company based in Oslo, Norway and close to where I now live. The company sells published music to bands at all levels around the world. They have honoured me by publishing my own collection of arrangements and compositions called, *Ray Farr Edition* and the published scores are a feature within that collection called *Ray Farr Scholarly Editions*.

The methodology for the scholarly editions also included graphic editing. The old, and often indecipherable, brass band scores needed restoration and cleaning. For this task I used a graphic manipulation software programme called *Gimp* which gave me the facility to restore and enhance the original scores.

### Auralisation

The task of recreating the old scores was not only a practical skill but an intellectual and artistic one which required an auralisation<sup>47</sup> of the original scores. The question arose, how did the original creator of the work imagine it would sound, and how best to recreate the works using modern instruments. I could have taken the decision to simply transcribe the works for the original instruments, and there are groups around such as the *Wallace Collection*, led by John Wallace, the *Queen Victoria's Consort* and the *Prince Regent's Band* who are exploring the repertory of 19<sup>th</sup>-

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<sup>46</sup> *Manual of Style*. (n. d.). University of Chicago. BN Publishing.

<sup>47</sup> RF note: An auralisation is a mental imagining of the sound, just as visualisation is a mental imagining of an image.

century bands. However, I chose, for my target audience, modern brass band musicians and their audience believing that these new editions would not only help to gain a greater understanding of their roots but also to give those involved an opportunity to be involved with the recreation of early band music.

The scores I produced are therefore not exactly how they would have sounded when they were created. While the number of instruments, the combination, and the type of instruments in my editions are similar, modern performances of the scores will sound different mainly because of the development of the individual instruments themselves. The instrumentation and set-up of a brass band became established quite soon after these scores were written and so comparisons may be made with modern brass bands, but the sound world is different. To start, there is the question of pitch and the adoption of A440 Hz by modern bands and orchestras is a long way from the pitch use in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Britain which averaged 452 hz. The study of historic pitch is ongoing and has geographical complications which show differences which vary by a full tone or even more.

Improvements in design, metal composition, tools, etc. have made the manufacture of brass musical instruments highly sophisticated and the results from scientific experiments and application have produced a range of highly efficient equipment. The top of the range brass instrument produced today can be very expensive but much easier to play. The intonation, acoustic resonance, tone quality, ease of note production, high register, valve action, etc. are very different from their 19<sup>th</sup> – century originals.

#### **4. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION**

With all the evidence that has been collected, a clear picture emerges of the high quality and importance of the Distins' endeavours in the history of brass music during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and happened as a result of those various enterprises. Following a comparative analysis, an evaluation of these consequences may be made, and a conclusion can be drawn that the Distins invented the brass band.

A thorough and detailed account of performance practice, repertory, contesting, and manufacturing is provided in *The Distin Legacy* while the accompanying scholarly scores, in this portfolio, are presented to the general public as modern recreations of early brass band scores with respect and appreciation for their historic importance. Their value is not so much an artistic

revelation but an opportunity to understand and appreciate the music as the prime inspiration and motivating force to embryonic groups of brass musicians which grew into a large, international brass band movement. A performance of these works must be listened to with an appreciation for the context of their original setting.

Performed by competent players using modern instruments, the musical oeuvre is not so far removed from some of today's repertory. The musical idioms of galops, selections and marches, played by brass bands through the period 1854 – 1862, are still popular today. The six pieces I have chosen from my collection of early band scores, come from a large volume of band music from the period, much of which is lost or waiting to be rediscovered.

An analysis accompanying each of the scholarly scores is provided with detail and in overview, but to make an evaluation of the editions in this portfolio we should consider and imagine the original sound world they come from, and to do that we need to compare the individual instruments and to examine how these original instruments were used and how they have developed. There are experts today, such as Arnold Myers, who are researching the organology of early brass instruments and while this study lies largely outside the boundaries of my research, some aspects of the acoustics properties of brass instruments have been considered in the realisation of these early brass band scores in order to gain a convincing performance. What constitutes a convincing performance, however, is, of course, a matter of opinion, but it is possible to take an informed view based on the qualities of surviving instruments from the period.

The major differences between the sound of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century brass band and a modern one are the tone quality and intonation of the individual instruments, and the combined resonance. A modern brass band will sound much louder and thicker<sup>48</sup> than a 19<sup>th</sup>-century band and so dynamics in some of the editions have been reduced in consideration of the enormous volume that the modern brass band is capable of.

While the differences between a 19<sup>th</sup>-century brass band and 21<sup>st</sup>-century brass band are interesting to analyse, the similarities are also relevant. Both are built on a pyramid of homogenic brass instrumental sound (a concept which seems to be widely accepted<sup>49</sup>) and within that tower of sound there are smaller pyramids of instrumental families. When the full complement of

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<sup>48</sup> Myers, A. (1991). *Instruments and Instrumentation in Brass Bands- in Bands. The Brass Band Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. OUP.

<sup>49</sup> Herbert, T. (2000). *The British Brass Band: A Musical and Social History*. Oxford University Press.

instruments is employed, each group should be as harmonically complete as possible, ensuring a satisfactory balance of parts <sup>50</sup>.

### Instrumentations of the published works

<b><i>The Hippodrome Galop 1854</i></b>	<b><i>Selection from Figlia di Regimento 1855</i></b>
Clarinet in E ♭	Clarinet in E ♭
Piccolo Soprano Cornet in E ♭	Piccolo Soprano Cornet in E ♭
Cornet 1 <sup>mo</sup> or Clarinet in B ♭	Cornet I <sup>mo</sup> or Clarinet in B ♭
Cornet 2 <sup>do</sup> or Clarinet in B ♭	Cornet II <sup>do</sup> or Clarinet in B ♭
Cornet 3 <sup>zo</sup> or Clarinet In B ♭	Cornet III <sup>zo</sup> or Clarinet In B ♭
Alto Tuba 1 <sup>mo</sup> in B ♭	Alto Tuba I <sup>mo</sup> in B ♭
Alto Tuba 2 <sup>do</sup> in B ♭	Alto Tuba II <sup>do</sup> in B ♭
Tenor Tuba 1 <sup>mo</sup> in E ♭	Tenor Tuba I <sup>mo</sup> in E ♭
Tenor Tuba 2 <sup>do</sup> in E ♭	Tenor Tuba II <sup>do</sup> in E ♭
Bariton (Tuba) in B ♭	Bariton Tuba in B ♭
Trumpet 1 <sup>mo</sup> in E ♭	Trumpet I <sup>mo</sup> in E ♭
Trumpet 2 <sup>do</sup> in E ♭	Trumpet II <sup>do</sup> in E ♭
Tenor Trombone 1 <sup>mo</sup>	Tenor Trombone I <sup>mo</sup>
Tenor Trombone 2 <sup>do</sup>	Tenor Trombone II <sup>do</sup>
Bass Trombone	Bass Trombone
Bassoon 1 <sup>mo</sup>	Bassoon I <sup>mo</sup>
Bassoon 2 <sup>do</sup>	Bassoon II <sup>do</sup>
Bombardone in B ♭	Bombardone in B ♭
Contra Bass in E ♭	Contra Bass in E ♭
Side Drum	Side Drum
Bass Drum	Bass Drum

<sup>50</sup> Steadman-Allen, R. (1980). *Colour and Texture in the Brass Band Score*. London. S.P. & S.



<b><i>Coronation March 1861</i></b>	<b><i>General Jacksons Schottische 1861</i></b>
D ♭ Sop	D ♭ Sop
A ♭ Cornet	A ♭ Primo
A ♭ 2nd	A ♭ Second
E ♭ Alts	E ♭ Alt
D ♭ Corni	D ♭ Alts
B ♭ Bary (treble clef)	B ♭ Bary (treble clef)
Tenor Trombone (bass clef)	Tenor trombones (bass clef)
Bass Trombone (bass clef)	Bass Trombone (bass clef)
Solo Bass (bass clef)	Solo Bass (bass clef)
Bass (bass clef)	Basso (bass clef)
Tymp	Drum

<b><i>Selection- Robert le Diable 1862</i></b>	<b><i>Volunteer Artillery &amp; Rifle-Corps March 1862</i></b>
E ♭ Sop	E ♭ Sop
B ♭ Cornet	B ♭ Cornet
B♭Second	B ♭ 2 <sup>nds</sup>
E ♭ Solo	E ♭ Solo
E ♭ Alt	E ♭ Alts
E ♭ Corni	B ♭ Baryt.
B ♭ Bary	Trombone 1
Alt Trombone	Trombone 2
Tenor Trombone	Solo Bass
Bass Trombone	Bass
Solo	
Bassi	

The instrumental line-up of a brass band became settled around 1875<sup>51</sup> and we can see some of the developments from the tables above. The biggest change during this period was the gradual exclusion of reed and keyed instruments, but an appraisal of each of the instruments and the way they were employed in early brass band scores, tells us more.

### ***Tubas***

The biggest difference between a 19<sup>th</sup>-century brass band and 21<sup>st</sup>-century brass band, starts at the bottom of the band with the lower brass instruments which have an increased bore size resulting in bigger and more resonant tone quality. The bass part in *Distin's Brass Band Scores* is written for Contra Bass in E ♭ and the scores of 1860-2 the instrument is simply called "Bass". Arnold Myers adds: "Although some Austrian and German instruments were imported into Britain, it was not until the tuba was remodelled by Adolphe Sax as a member of his family of saxhorn in 1843, and subsequently promoted in Britain by the Distin family, that they were widely adopted by brass bands".<sup>52</sup>

A modern brass band (usually) contains two large B ♭ Basses and two smaller E ♭ Basses (also known as tubas) and contribute to the pyramid structure of the brass instrumental groups which characterizes the nature of a brass band.

With the modern, wide bore tuba extremely low notes are a regular part of the accepted register and my editions incorporate this feature. The resulting effect, on the full band sound, is even more resonance and breadth than its 19<sup>th</sup>-century forerunner.

### ***Euphoniums***

Today, there are still conflicting views regarding the history of the euphonium. However, whether the instrument originated as a Sommerophone, and produced by Distin<sup>53</sup> or the Bass Saxhorn, saxhorns were used and promoted by the Distin Family, the instrument's role in the brass band changed dramatically from supporting the bass line in a piece of music, to that of a soloistic character. The role of the euphonium in the symphony orchestra and in the wind band followed a different path.

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<sup>51</sup> Myers, A. (1991). *Instruments and Instrumentation in Brass Bands-* in *Bands. The Brass Band Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. OUP.

<sup>52</sup> Myers, A. (1991). *Instruments and Instrumentation in Brass Bands-* in *Bands. The Brass Band Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. OUP.

<sup>53</sup> Distin and Co. (1857). *Complete Catalogue of Military Musical Instruments Manufactured by Henry Distin*. London. H. Distin.

The *Distin Brass Band Scores* of 1854 include a Bariton Tuba in B ♭ (treble clef) and a Bombardone (in bass clef) in the same register. The Baritone Tuba part is clearly the bottom of a pyramid of so-called “tubas” (alto, tenor and bass); all mostly involved in rhythmic after-beats; and so, for the published scores the modern baritone has been allocated the same position i.e., with the horns. The Bombardone, advertised as a bass instrument in the Distin catalogue 1857 and included with both the Bass Euphonium and the Sommerophone, re-enforces the bass line. It is, therefore, my conclusion that the instrument most appropriate for this part is the modern euphonium.

Beside the two *Distin Brass Band Scores* of 1854, in this portfolio, there are four scores which come from a different period- Enderby Jackson’s *Crystal Palace* events 1860-1863 and these scores contain a similar issue: For a modern edition, which part should be allocated to the modern euphonium, the Bary B ♭ (treble clef) or the “Solo Bass” (bass clef)? Professor Arnold Myers maintains<sup>54</sup> that the Solo part was intended for an ophicleide, however, Roy Newsome states that instrument intended was a bass saxhorn- the forerunner of the euphonium<sup>55</sup>. No matter which instrument was intended the parts are in no way “soloistic”. The Bary part has the more important function.

The role of the euphonium changed dramatically after 1863 as ophicleide and euphonium players developed technical and musical skills to virtuosi levels. Personalities such as Sam Hughes (1823- 1898) and Alfred James Phasey (1834 - 1888) were notable examples of the capabilities of the instruments, and motivated composers and arrangers to write for the instruments in a more soloistic way and to change the role played by the instruments in the brass band from one of doubling bass parts to real solo instrumental parts.

The test piece for the 1866 *Belle Vue Championships* was *Grand Selection L’Africaine* by Meyerbeer arranged by F. W. Gosse, former clarinet soloist with the Halle Orchestra in Manchester, has a 1<sup>st</sup> Euphonium part with several solos and cadenzas.

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<sup>54</sup> Email January 2009.

<sup>55</sup> Newsome, R. (1998). *Brass Roots: A Hundred Years of Brass Bands and Their Music, 1836-1936*. Aldershot: Ashgate.



*From the original 1<sup>st</sup> Euphonium part of L'Africaine from the Walter Ainscough Brass Band Archive.*

Because of this new role, the published scores from 1860-1863 (contained in this portfolio) use the euphonium in quite a different capacity to the earlier scores from 1855.

### ***Trombones***

Trombones have changed enormously in their construction and tone quality since the middle of the 19th century when many trombones functioned with valves, not a slide, but it is the difference in bore size which is the most dramatic, giving the modern trombone the capacity for enormous volume and power. A section of three became the norm following the tradition of sackbut playing in the renaissance period with alto, tenor and bass instruments, and the example of Mozart's *Requiem* (1791) and Beethoven's *5th Symphony* (1808).

Most of the original brass band scores attached to this portfolio, call for trombones in different sizes and considering and comparing the bore size of the 19<sup>th</sup> century tenor trombone with

its modern equivalent, a typical 19<sup>th</sup> century tenor trombone had a bore size of approximately 11.0 mm and a modern tenor trombone has around 14.0 mm<sup>56</sup>

The writing for trombone has changed little, and its primary function as an accompanying instrument re-enforcing climaxes and with occasional solo work, has changed very little.

### ***Horns and Baritones***

The middle register instruments of a brass band, which are descendants of saxhorns, have changed very little since their creation in 1844. I have personally, played an early 19th-century saxhorn in a modern brass band and found that my tone, range, volume, intonation, and facility, matched the modern equivalents well.

The number of saxhorns, how unfortunate that the name has been dropped, in a band has varied over the years and the titles given to them, Solo, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, still cause confusion.

### ***Flugelhorns***

The history of the flugelhorn includes a boastful announcement by Henry Distin in August 1854:

*Mr Distin's newly-invented instrument the Flugel Horn- This invention is an important step in the progress of Instrumental music.* <sup>57</sup>

Contradicting the above, the flugelhorn had been around for several years before this announcement appeared. As the popularity of the keyed bugle in bands waned from around 1840 it was superseded by the flugelhorn with valves<sup>58</sup> and the contralto saxhorn, which was introduced to Britain by the Distins around 1844.

Considering the popularity of the keyed bugle, as played by John Distin in *King George IV's Household Band* (1832), and the success of the *Flugelhorn Union* led by Henry Distin (1854), the adoption of the valved-bugle or flugelhorn into the line-up of the brass band was slow to materialise. The remarkable *Cyfarthfa Band* of Merthyr Tydfil was still using keyed bugles in

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<sup>56</sup> Myers, A. (1991). *Instruments and Instrumentation in Brass Bands-* in *Bands. The Brass Band Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. OUP.

<sup>57</sup> *John Bull Newspaper*, August 5<sup>th</sup> 1854.

<sup>58</sup> Myers, A. (1991). *Instruments and Instrumentation in Brass Bands-* in *Bands. The Brass Band Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. OUP.

1855c. until a flugelhorn, with four valves, was supplied to them by Henry Distin<sup>59</sup>. This must have been before Distin sold his company to Boosey in 1868.

The *Distin Brass Band Scores* included in this portfolio, exclude the flugelhorn, although they do include its upright cousin the Alto Tuba, and the scores from the *Crystal Palace Massed Band Concerts* 1860 also exclude the flugelhorn. However, the surviving entry forms for bands in the 1862 *Crystal Palace Contest* show that half of the bands were using flugel horns<sup>60</sup> and the test piece for the 1866 *Belle Vue Championships*, mentioned earlier, *Grand Selection L'Africaine* is written for two prominent flugelhorns in B ♭ :



From the original 1<sup>st</sup> Piston or Flugelhorn part to *L'Africaine* from the Walter Ainscough Brass Band Archive.

<sup>59</sup> Herbert, T. and Meyers, A. (1988). *Instruments of the Cyfarthfa Band*. The Galpin Society Journal.

<sup>60</sup> Myers, A. (1991). *Instruments and Instrumentation in Brass Bands- in Bands. The Brass Band Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. OUP

Considering that the flugelhorn went from being excluded in brass band to being a part of a “repieno” group and then to a fully respected solo instrument in modern times, the use of the flugelhorn, during the period 1850 – 1860, warrants further research. My editions take the possibly controversial method of employing the flugelhorn in a modern role.

### ***Cornets***

Adapting the upper brass parts of the early brass band scores was relatively straight forward always bearing in mind that a modern cornet, played with a modern mouthpiece is, as one might expect, more sophisticated in many ways, and has a resonance and brassiness which approaches the tone of a trumpet<sup>61</sup>. The upper register brass instruments, in the original brass band scores, are predominantly cornets which, since 1850, have changed very little in external design. The pioneering work by the Distins in establishing cornets and saxhorns into the brass band was reported in *The Era* (July 1863):

Mr. Distin as a performer, or as well as more recently a manufacturer of brass instruments, had enjoyed a well-won reputation in the musical world; and to his skill and ingenuity much of the popularity and excellence of the modern cornet and sax-horn must be considered due. <sup>62</sup>

A modern brass band, though, has more cornets than a 19<sup>th</sup> - century brass band which had on average only five or six, and some of the early scores have only 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> parts, plus a soprano cornet part, consequently consideration has been given to balance and the distribution of parts in the new editions. The instinct to employ the extra players in the modern editions by using extra chord notes was resisted.

While the exterior design of a 19<sup>th</sup> - century cornet may look similar to a modern cornet the acoustic properties and enhanced performance ability is remarkably improved thanks to pioneering work of instrument designers such as Dr. Richard Smith. Smith was, for many years the chief instrument designer for *Boosey & Hawkes*, the direct descendant company of *Henry Distin Manufacturing Company*.

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<sup>61</sup> Myers, A. (2012). *How Different are Cornets and Trumpets?* Historical Brass Society Journal.

<sup>62</sup> *The Era*, July 12<sup>th</sup> 1863.



A B♭ cornet made by Henry Distin in 1867 (belonging to Ray Farr).



A modern B♭ cornet made by Richard Smith (belonging to Ray Farr)

### *Percussion*

Modern percussion instruments are, as might be expected, more sophisticated following many years of evolution. Where percussion is included in the scholarly editions, little has been added or changed but clarification has been made that cymbals are to be played in unison with the bass drum<sup>63</sup>. In the *Volunteer Artillery & Rifle-Corps March*, for reasons unknown, Enderby Jackson did not include percussion, and in the *Selection- Robert le Diable*, where James Smyth wrote for a competition where percussion was not allowed, percussion parts have been added.

The most significant, and possibly controversial addition to the percussion parts in the attached published scores, is the addition of timpani in *Robert le Diable*. The use of timpani in the brass band is a subject requiring more research, but we know that as early as 1845c. Wessel & Co.'s *Journal for Brass Band*, written William Childe, included parts for Kettle Drums.

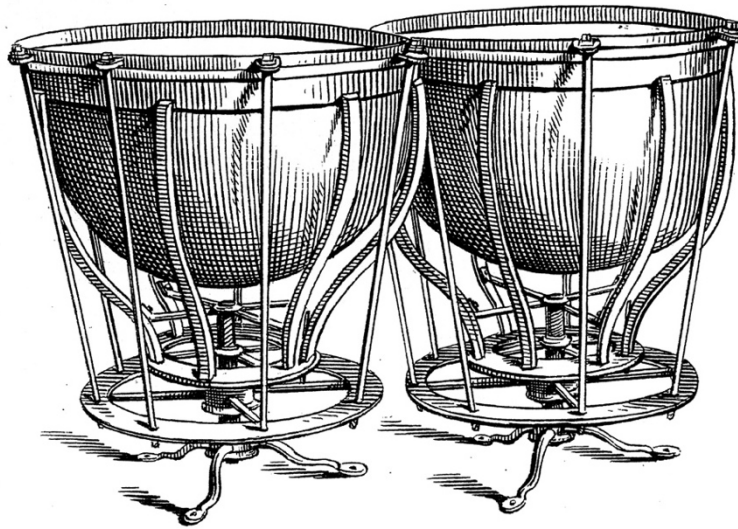
Henry Distin's musical instrument factory, established in 1849, soon developed from just brass instruments to include percussion and was at the forefront of supplying military and brass bands with percussion instruments<sup>64</sup>. On 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1856 Distin registered<sup>65</sup> a patent (number 2310) "for means of regulating the tone (pitch)" of kettle drums.

<sup>63</sup> Bugg D. D. (2003). *The role of Turkish percussion in the history and development of the orchestral percussion section*. Louisiana State University.

<sup>64</sup> See various reviews in *Distin Military Musical Instrument Catalogue* of 1857.

<sup>65</sup> Shown in the Blackwell Database.





*Tuneable timpani from the Distin Military Musical Instrument Catalogue of 1857.*

Mostly because percussion instruments were not included in brass band contests, composers and arrangers generally did not write for them. However, Roy Newsome has discovered an unpublished arrangement from 1884 by Alexander Owen in the Besses Band library of a piece called *Heroic*, which includes timpani. The earliest published piece which includes timpani, that I can find, is *Pageantry* written in 1934 by Herbert Howells.

For reasons unknown, several Enderby Jackson's scores of 1860 - 1863 include a staff at the bottom of each system marked *Tymp.* but the staff is empty.



*An extract from an Enderby Jackson brass band score from around 1860.  
From the Walter Ainscough archives now at Edinburgh University.*

## Issues and Challenges

The challenge in making the associated publications, beyond the technical and aesthetic, is to engage the performer and listener, and to further stimulate their interest and appreciation for the brass-band movement, not just the re-creation of the pieces themselves. Being a critical review of the published works in this portfolio, the boundaries of the scholarly performing editions should, perhaps, be explained. Firstly, I have found from my experience that the most important aspect to a musical creation (or recreation), is the concept. What are the aims and what is actually, being created?

Each of the published works begins with a short description of the aims and rationale:

The purpose of this scholarly edition is to produce a performing version, clearing ambiguities and errors, that can be enjoyed by today's performers and listeners, bearing in mind the original function and context. At the same time the edition is an analytical, musicological study of one of the rare treasures of the brass band repertory.

All the published works start with a concept which is, as described above, to produce a scholarly- performing edition suitable for contemporary brass band concerts with their traditions and audiences. The concept attempts to interest, entertain, and educate the conductors, performing musicians, the audience and, also observers not directly involved with the event. However, only the passing of time will show whether the concept has been successful.

Much of the music lacks artistic worth, some might say, but the pieces chosen, contain other qualities including the historical background. My concept in producing combined scholarly and performing editions is a new contribution to brass band repertory and therefore makes these published works more valuable and accessible.

There are four types of listening according to the Florida State College at Jacksonville<sup>66</sup>: Appreciative, empathic, comprehensive, and critical. All four types may be applied when listening to performances of these editions which may add to their appeal. In producing these editions my quest was to support the original authors, not to impose my own creative ideas, and to produce a conduit through which the works and everything associated with them could take centre-stage.

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<sup>66</sup> CC LICENSED CONTENT, ORIGINAL. Provided by: Florida State College at Jacksonville.

The earliest publications in this portfolio come from the series of *Distin's Brass Band Scores* (1854/1855) which I first read about in the thesis by Jack Scott<sup>67</sup>. He stated that these were located in *Glasgow University Library*. The library kindly provided copies of these historically valuable scores. By chance, I discovered, at the back of an 1857 Distin Instrument catalogue, an advertisement for this series of brass band scores:

DISTIN'S BRASS BAND SCORES.			
Being a Collection of Marches, Quick-steps, Operatic Selections, Dance Music, &c., so arranged that they may be performed by Brass or Reed Bands of any number, of, from ten performers, upwards to twenty-four.			
FIRST SERIES.			
1. March from Stradella - - -	Flotow	6. Selection from Figlia del Reg- gimento	Donizetti
" God save the Queen - - -		7. Opera March - - - -	A. Owen
" Rule Britannia - - - -	Dr. Arne	8. Our Polka - - - -	Beresford
2. Black Swan Polka - - - -	T. Distin	9. Recollection of Vienna March -	F. W. Swoboda
3. March - - - -	Manns	10. Magyar Ember Induló March -	F. W. Swoboda
" Partant Pour la Syrie - - -	French	11. Dead March in Saul - - -	Handel
4. Cadogan Polka - - - -	Kalozdy	" "The Girl I left behind me" -	
5. Hippodrome Galop - - - -	White	12. Selection from Lucia	Donizetti
6. Selection from Stradella - - -	Flotow	Price each Number 3s., or the 12 Numbers £1 10s.	
7. Cuckoo Galop - - - -	Gungl	THIRD SERIES.	
8. Air from Lucrezia - - - -	Donizetti	1. Selection from Freischütz -	C. M. von Weber
9. Apollo March - - - -	T. Browne	2. The Lady Bird Polka - - -	T. Browne
10. Air from Il Trovatore - - -	G. Verdi	3. Farewell to the Crimea March -	W. Guernsey
" St. Patrick's Day - - - -	Irish	4. Air Original - - - -	Mang
11. Salon Quadrille - - - -	Kalozdy	5. The Light Division Polka - -	W. Guernsey
12. Quartette from Rigoletto - -	G. Verdi	6. March - - - -	C. Band
Price each Number 3s., or the 12 Numbers £1 10s.		7. The Majestic Polka - - - -	T. Distin
SECOND SERIES.		8. The Bay of Dublin Quadrilles -	W. Guernsey
1. Selection from I Puritani - -	V. Bellini	9. The Rhine Polka - - - -	T. Browne
2. Quick March - - - -	T. Browne	10. Swiss March - - - -	Huber
3. Sturm March Galop - - - -	Bilse	11. Fantaisie on Scotch Airs - -	H. Distin
4. Sardinian National Air - - -	Gabetti	12. Hallelujah, from the Messiah -	Handel
5. The Essex Rifles Polka - - -	T. Distin	Price each Number 3s., or the 12 Numbers £1 10s.	

*From the Distin Military Musical Instrument Catalogue of 1857.*

Number 5 in the First Series is *The Hippodrome Galop* by J. H. White and number 6 in the Second Series is *Selection from Figlia di Regimento* by Donizetti. Finding and obtaining these scores was an exciting revelation to me; an emotion not often connected with the clinical approach to research, and I am very aware that motivation for research can be elusive. The challenge to sustain a focused approach to academic work is an issue rarely rewarded with such discoveries, and generally requires a disciplined workmanlike application.

<sup>67</sup> Scott, J. (1970). *The Evolution of the Brass Band & its Repertoire in Northern England*. Thesis submitted to University of Sheffield.

Under the heading “Distin’s Brass Band Scores” is a statement describing the contents as playable by a band as small as 10 performers, and both Scott<sup>68</sup> and Newsome<sup>69</sup> concur, but having worked on the scores, I found that any performance omitting any of the parts would be incomplete and unsatisfactory. By suggesting that a flexible combination of instruments was possible, Distin was clearly aiming for maximum sales of his publication. However, with parts missing a satisfactory performance would be impossible. Distin was leading bands towards a full complement of players in a standardised combination and reveals a vision for how a brass band could sound and how they could operate as a musically satisfactory medium.

An important aspect of these scores was the inclusion of a family of instruments that only Distin manufactured. The gradual standardisation of a brass-band line-up came not only from the dictates of arrangers and composers but also from the entrepreneurialism of manufacturers.

The other scores in the portfolio come from the *Ainscough Collection*, which is now in the *Edinburgh University Museum*. The curator, Professor Arnold Myers, kindly made high resolution copies for me.

The challenges for creating this portfolio come in a wide range of issues spanning from determined, committed searching to sheer luck, with various skills involved in the process. The cost in time, effort and money should also be included in the calculation.

### The Distin Legacy - The Rise of the Brass Band in 19th-Century Britain

Following extensive research, I wrote the book *The Distin Legacy. The Rise of the Brass Band in 19th-Century Britain*<sup>70</sup> which was subsequently published by *Cambridge Scholars Publishing* in 2013. The subject was dear to me and something I could easily relate to, having followed a similar career in brass performance, repertory, contesting, publishing, and musical instrument design. The importance of the Distins was a revelation to me and, because the Distins are still relatively unknown by the general public and even most brass enthusiasts, I have often taken the opportunity to spread the message.

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<sup>68</sup> Scott, J. (1970). *The Evolution of the Brass Band & its Repertoire in Northern England*. Thesis submitted to University of Sheffield.

<sup>69</sup> Newsome, R. (1998). *Brass Roots*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

<sup>70</sup> Farr, R. (2013). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars.

Feedback comments on the publication included:

“Many congratulations on the publication of your most excellent book”- Lorna Cowan (A Distin family member).

“I enjoyed it very much”- Jeffrey Nussbaum (President and Founder of *Historic Brass Society*).

“I loved it!”- Professor Stephen Allen (*Rider University*).

“(An) excellent and highly detailed book and a great addition to the literature. (David Hirst-conductor and former player with *Black Dyke Band*)

“The depth and detail of the research is impressive... Extensive quotations impart a distinctive period flavour... Behind the documentation a fascinating story of skill, scandal, opportunism and showmanship that could provide rich pickings for the narrative biographer... The Distin Legacy is well illustrated, and a significant documentation of a pioneering period of brass band history.”- Paul Hindmarsh (*British Bandsman Magazine*. September 2013)

“Ray Farr has gathered material from many contemporary sources to bring the picture into focus in fascinating detail. He has combed through newspaper reports, tracked down images and scoured the published literature to piece together a very readable account of the Distin family’s activities as musicians, entrepreneurs and manufacturers... The author has used this account to argue that many characteristics of today’s brass band derive from the Distin legacy.” – Dr. Arnold Myers.

### *Distin Diaries* - a digital asset<sup>71</sup>

What started as a gathering of information on Distin activities escalated into a full-scale, chronological, and digitally available diary of events, which now stands at 338 pages and is being regularly updated. YUMPU is the free software which makes the ebook generally available to everyone. The entries are mostly without editorial comment and are simple transcriptions of newspaper reports. The time-period covers the whole of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with hundreds of entries which help to build a mental image of the timeline of events connected to the Distins.

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<sup>71</sup> [https://www.rayfarr.com/?page\\_id=325](https://www.rayfarr.com/?page_id=325)

Most of the entries are newspaper reports of the Distin Family's performances which were obtained, at first, from microfilm accessed at various libraries around the UK and in Germany. Fortunately, the laborious system of trolling through page after page of newspaper microfilm has been modernised and now on-line searches are possible via digital archives such as *The British Newspaper Archive*.

There are some entries in the *Distin Diaries* which are only loosely connected to the Distins such as reports on Adolphe Sax and other important brass personalities and events.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

My research into the beginning and subsequent development of brass bands in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Britain has revealed a large number of facts. Appreciating the context of these facts is what results in a deeper understanding of present-day banding and helps us to connect with banding's rich heritage. We are able, through this deeper understanding, to present informed, convincing performances of band music from the era, as well as contemporary works. To borrow the words of Gunther Schuller regarding the philosophy of music performance, "we must show respect for the works of the past in order to understand, and present, those of the present".<sup>72</sup>

From the experience of editing scholarly performing scores, I am confident that my own approach to conducting has matured and my abilities to examine a score in both fine detail and in overview, has developed. I'm sure that others who embark on similar research ventures will benefit in the same way.

My contribution to new knowledge on the subject of the rise of brass bands in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Britain embraces all that has previously been researched and reveals new empirical knowledge gleaned from early scores, newspaper reports etc., which paints a picture in overview, and specific detail, of the period. The published scores may be seen, as mentioned earlier, as innovative and set a template for further research by others.

### Opportunities for further research

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<sup>72</sup> Schuller, G. (1997). *The Compleat Conductor*. New York: Oxford University Press.

While much research into 19<sup>th</sup>-century brass bands has been made, opportunities for further research still exist. Knowledge on factual histories of the beginnings of individual bands and musicians, musical events such as concerts and contests, innovation in instrument design and music scores can help shed light on the early days of the brass band movement and should receive attention by future scholars. Examples of questions remaining unanswered are:

- \* Why was the sound of a brass band preferred to the sound of a wind band in Britain?
- \* The Distins played forward facing saxhorns in 1844, but the upright versions became more popular - why was that?
- \* Why did the soprano saxhorn fade into obscurity when the rest of the saxhorn family flourished?
- \* Henry Distin's Manufacturing Company had its own brass band called *Distin Employees Band*, which took part in the *National Brass Band Contest* of 1861<sup>73</sup>. The employee's band probably included several former professional musicians and had the advantages that other works bands had, namely, rehearsal time. Why were they not successful in contests?
- \*How did Henry Distin lose his fortune from the sale of his company in 1868? There are hints about a personal loan which is perhaps irrelevant to brass band history, but there were entrepreneurial ventures involving concerts which failed. What happened?
- \*Besides the intriguing questions into the personal lives of each of the Distin Family members, there are brass band pieces that emerge from this era which, when examined will probably reveal all sorts of questions and hopefully some answers. Of particular interest are the contest pieces such as:

<i>Orynthia</i> by Melling (this is discussed in the accompanying book <i>The Distin Legacy</i> ).	<i>Belle Vue Contest</i> test piece for 1855. The first original piece written specifically for the contest.
<i>L'Africaine</i> by Meyerbeer arranged by F. W. Grosse. I have the original parts.	<i>Belle Vue Contest</i> test piece for 1866

\*The search for more of the *Distin's Brass Band Scores* from all three Series should continue.

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<sup>73</sup> *The Era*, October 13<sup>th</sup>1861.

\* There is a gap in this portfolio between the *Distin's Brass Band Scores* 1854/55 and the E. Jackson scores of 1860/61/62/63. This presents an opportunity for further research.

\* Number 6 in the *Distin Brass Band Scores*, First Series (mentioned earlier) is *Stradella* by Flotow. This piece was also the test piece at Belle Vue 1856. Was it the same arrangement/edition?

\* Number 1 in the *Distin Brass Band Scores*, Third Series (also mentioned earlier) is *Selection from Freischutz* by Weber. The same piece was used at *Belle Vue* in 1868. Was it the same arrangement/edition?

\* Scores from the Walter Ainscough archive still to receive scholarly editions are:

<i>Hallelujah Chorus</i> (from Messiah) by Handel arranged J. Smyth.
<i>Grand Waltz, Das Musikfest</i> Composed and Arranged by Enderby Jackson.
<i>Wedding March</i> (from A Midsummer Night's Dream) by Mendelssohn arranged Enderby Jackson.
<i>God Save the Queen</i> arranged by Enderby Jackson.
<i>Grand Selection from La Forza Del Destino</i> by Verdi arranged J. Smyth
<i>Rule Britannia</i> by Arne arranged Enderby Jackson.
<i>The Heavens Are Telling</i> by Haydn arranged Tidswell.
<i>Grand Prize Quadrille</i> by Enderby Jackson.
<i>Selection from Le Prophete</i> by Meyerbeer arranged J. Smyth.