

Dalmellington Band



Sunday 24th September 2006 - Harrogate International Centre

Test Piece - Ballet from the Perfect Fool (Holst arr, Peter Parkes)

Adjudicators - Malcolm Brownbill and David Horsfield

For the first time since 1993, the Band competed in the 1st Section National Finals Competition.

We qualified for this Contest by winning the Scottish Championships in March – the Contest we nearly never got to because of the snow – so we took our place amongst all the Regional winners and runners up. A fine line up of Bands indeed.

Our confidence coming into this Contest was high, as you would expect considering the year we have had, but every Contest is different and we're experienced enough to know that the past results count for nothing if you don't deliver a performance of quality when it counts on the day.

The lead up to the Finals was overshadowed somewhat by the number of mistakes the test-piece contained. The set piece - Gustav Holst's "Ballet from the Perfect Fool", arranged by Peter Parkes was not a new arrangement (it first appeared on a Black Dyke Mills Band recording in 1984) but was being used as a competition piece for the first time. Right from the first rehearsal we realised there were problems. Sandy McAughtrie, who took the first rehearsal on the piece after our summer break, found the score to be un-workable as there were bars missing on almost every right hand page. The publishers must have recognised this as they then issued the competing Bands with a new score, but as we found out in the rehearsals that followed, the Band parts were also littered with errors.

In the end, Archie – who had done vast research on the piece with the original Orchestral score and various recordings of the work - counted at least 85 mistakes!

For this Contest, the Band put in a colossal amount of work to bring the piece to a standard we felt would feature in the prizes. As a piece of music it is a tremendous composition, telling the tale of a wizard who develops a potion that when given to the lady he is in love with, makes her fall instantly in love with him. It is divided into three sections : The Dance of the Spirits of Earth, The Dance of the Spirits of Water and The Dance of the Spirits of Fire.

Our Section was held in The Harrogate International Conference Centre on Sunday 24th September. We travelled down to Yorkshire the day before, staying at an hotel in Bradford approx. 20 miles away.

On the day of the Contest, we passed the other Scottish Band in our Section, Broxburn & Livingston, who had the misfortune of their bus breaking down. With memories of the Scottish Championships swirling in our heads when we shared our bus with Dunaskin Doon Band, once our driver Chris dropped us off at the Conference Centre, he went back to rescue our stranded fellow Scots.

At the allotted hour, Bert was dispatched to the draw and he returned with the news (good as far as we were concerned) that we would be playing No. 13 out of 17.

Our performance we felt was quite good although not without its errors, but it was such a piece that no Band was going to get through it without something going wrong somewhere.

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In the end we were awarded 4th Place which, as it is a National Finals Competition and the quality of the Bands taking part is the best you will get for this level, we should be pretty pleased with. However the truth was somewhat different, the Band were quite disappointed. This clearly shows one thing: we will not be happy until we are seriously contending for 1st Place in any Contest we are playing and will do all we can to achieve this goal.

FULL RESULTS:

| PLACE | BAND | CONDUCTOR | DRAW | POINTS | REGION |
|----------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | Kibworth | John Berryman | 8 | 193 | Midlands |
| 2 | Wire Brass | Paul Andrews | 16 | 192 | North West |
| 3 | United Co-op Band (Crewe) | Jef Sparkes | 12 | 191 | North West |
| 4 | Dalmellington | Archie Hutchison | 13 | 190 | Scotland |
| 5 | Lydbrook | Steve Sykes | 17 | 189 | West of England |
| 6 | Foss Dyke | Gary Wyatt | 9 | 188 | Midlands |
| 7 | Helston Town | John Hitchens | 4 | 187 | West of England |
| 8 | Penclawdd Brass | Tony Small | 7 | 186 | Wales |
| 9 | Marsden Silver | Glyn Williams | 3 | 184 | Yorkshire |
| 10 | Northop Silver | Thomas Wyss | 2 | 183 | Wales |
| 11 | Drighlington | Kevin Belcher | 10 | 181 | Yorkshire |
| 12 | KM Medway | Graham Wilson | 1 | 180 | London and Southern Counties |
| 13 | Haverhill | Mark Ager | 15 | 179 | London and Southern Counties |
| 14 | Riddings | Graham O'Connor | 1 | 178 | Midlands |
| 15 | RMT Easington Colliery | David Hirst | 6 | 177 | North of England |
| 16 | Broxburn & Livingston | Kevin Price | 5 | 175 | Scotland |
| 17 | Felling | Graeme Tindall | 14 | 174 | North of England |