

American Brass Quintet

FORTY-SIXTH SEASON

Volume 15, Number 1
New York, November 2006

Newsletter

It's All in the Timing— New Works in the Works

By Raymond Mase



As we prepared for our 45th anniversary last season, I was relieved to see that things were falling into place so that our year would include several major new works. Sometimes the timing of new pieces can't be completely predicted, but thankfully our 45th anniversary year worked out perfectly. One stroke

of luck was that our 45th just happened to coincide with the Juilliard Centennial, and as part of that celebration, Juilliard had commissioned Joan Tower to write for us. As the old saying goes "timing is everything", and the new piece, *Copperwave*, was completed early in the spring and premiered on our anniversary concert on May 4th. Since then *Copperwave* has been performed at the International Trumpet Guild Annual Conference, the Aspen Music Festival, and on our fall touring programs around the country. Another fortunate bit of timing was the Aspen Music Festival's commissioning of a new piece for us from composer Adam Schoenberg. We had been talking with Asadour Santourian, the Festival's Artistic Administrator, about a commission and working with Adam, the piece came together even more quickly than expected just in time for the 45th. His quintet, *Reflecting Light*, was ready to go and was premiered July 29th on the Aspen celebration of the ABQ 45th Anniversary. The work is also being programmed for touring this year and will receive its New York premiere at Juilliard later this season. Rounding out the 45th anniversary's trio of premieres was *Cornocean Airs* by the recent Pulitzer Prize winning composer Paul Moravec and commissioned by The Gabe Weiner Foundation. Written for brass quintet and organ, *Cornocean Airs* received its first performance on Dec. 18, 2005, at the Central Synagogue in New York City with organist Colin Fowler.

Nothing demonstrates the ABQ's commitment to brass chamber music quite like our new works, and our 45th anniversary turned out to be a great success in no small measure through the presentation of these commissions. But

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Rojak on the Road - 2006

By John Rojak

Once again, the ABQ hit the road for another season of touring. This being the quintet's 45th anniversary, there was an air of great events anticipated, as well as some excitement about our new repertoire and recordings. Our fall season was book-ended by engagements within a few hours drive from home. It's nice to have some of the stress removed from travel—avoiding check-in, security, luggage that may or may not arrive at the same airport as us, and who knows what else. In between those venues, which were Wesleyan College in Middletown, Connecticut, and Gretna Concerts in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, we traveled to Minnesota, and spent a week in uptown New York City, recording our brass band cd, which you will read about elsewhere in this newsletter. Our new repertoire included *The Three Tenses* by Huang Ruo, a very unusual piece with some wild effects. Huang Ruo's Chinese background gave him cause to write in a way to simulate Tibetan throat singing, Chinese oboes, and Tibetan horns. In addition to that, his New York experience made him include an homage to classic New York traffic jams, with some clashing chords that drew chuckles and recognition from even our most rural audiences.

Our trip to Minnesota brought us back to St. Benedict's College in St. Joseph, where we had last performed about 15 years ago. It's in a serene setting, of course, as it is an educational training ground for the Benedictine Order of Monks. We visited their archives, saw pages from an illuminated Bible project that was amazing, checked microfilm of medieval music manuscripts, and bought a loaf of bread. Generally, we tried to live up to our moniker as the "high priests of brass." After those enlightening couple of days, we headed to Minneapolis for a mini-residency sponsored by our good friend John Weaver and his Aurora Brass Chamber Music Association. John is a bass trombonist who we met in Minneapolis in 1992 and have seen often since. He has mod-

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Cheer, Boys, Cheer

Volume two of the ABQ Brass Band's recordings of the music of the 26th North Carolina Regimental Band is now available from New World Records (NW80652-2). Volume one of the music of the 26th was the 2002 release called *A Storm in the Land* (NW80608-2).

Thanks to Nola Reed Knouse and Philip Dunigan of the Moravian Music Foundation for their tireless efforts with musical research and preparation, Judy Sherman and her assistant Jeanne Velonis for their excellent work at the recording sessions, and our ABQ Brass Band members for all joining us again for this second installment in the series. (Special thanks to Robert Sheldon, who in addition to his expertise as alto hornist, saved the day several times by repairing instruments during the sessions.)





The American Brass Quintet
(clockwise from top left) John Rojak, Raymond Mase,
Michael Powell, Kevin Cobb, David Wakefield

It's all in the Timing . . .

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while the ABQ was showing off these new pieces to a welcoming audience, two major new grants were quietly coming together behind the scenes that will seriously impact our activities over the next several years. A significant grant from the New York State Music Fund has been awarded to the ABQ for a new work for brass quintet and piano to be written this year by the Grammy-winning composer/pianist Billy Childs. A second equally impressive grant awarded from The Jerome Foundation will bring us new works by emerging composers through the 2010-11 season. It probably goes without saying, but these two important grants, following right on the heels of our three new commissions, have added a special sort of "icing on the cake" for our 45th anniversary. More perfect timing.

But grants like this don't just fall from the sky. One part of our operation that goes largely unnoticed to the public has to do with our management firm—Stanton Management. Todd Stanton, president of the company, first began his association with the ABQ as a freelance grant writer back in the mid-1980s. After several remarkably successful years of fund raising for us, he launched his own management company. I still remember when Bob Biddlecome retired from playing with the ABQ in 1990, making a point of telling me that if there was one bit of advice he had to offer for ABQ's future, it was for us to sign on with Todd's company as soon as possible. As what always seems to be the case with Bob's advice, he was right on the mark and we signed on with Todd immediately. Over the years Todd has not only booked full touring seasons for us year after year, but has continued to succeed in securing the funding that is so essential for supporting new music, recordings and residencies. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Todd and his senior associate Douglas Hamilton, whose tireless efforts on behalf of the ABQ have contributed so much to our projects, and to the future of serious brass chamber music in

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Beating a Dead Horse?

by Kevin Cobb

This past summer, I happened upon an online discussion that piqued my interest. The title read: "Brass Quintet Concerts - any future?" This was posted by a friend and supporter of the ABQ, Scott Aplegren, whose basic question was, does the serious brass quintet have a future? And perhaps more specifically, can we really reach an audience outside of a limited brass circle and/or academia? He based his remarks upon experience with his own quintet as they played a benefit to raise money for the youth orchestra. "The first half of the concert we played traditional quintet literature including Ewald's first quintet, a Bach prelude and fugue and some music from the *American Brass Band Journal*," he wrote. The second half consisted of ragtime music, Dixieland, and jazz standards which the audience made known they clearly preferred. To which he asked, "Are we beating a dead horse trying to get the brass quintet accepted as a legitimate chamber ensemble?"

Granted, a benefit concert may not be comparable to a dedicated chamber music series because the music played is often selected to be lighter at benefits so that patrons may continue eating or holding a conversation - basically background music. But the question regarding the viability of the serious brass quintet is still legitimate. And as the discussion on this website grew over the weeks that followed, two very distinct schools of thought evolved. One side felt that trying to present the brass quintet as a serious chamber ensemble was a waste of time, that doing so had been shown to be a failure already, and that the academic side of the brass world served little, if any purpose. The other side held that there is a valid role for the serious quintet and more than that, the existence of such ensembles and the presentation of new brass music is absolutely necessary. The whole discussion was both surprising and illuminating and made me rethink, once again, what it means to be in a brass quintet today.

The reasons for not playing serious brass quintet literature lined up like this: The music is inaccessible to the audience, is too difficult to play and/or listen to, is not good enough, is seldom created by first rate composers or, if so, the



Mike explaining phrasing to a young trombonist
at a recent ABQ mini-residency

music itself is only second rate. Oh, and the only way to be a legitimate full time group is to play easy listening and entertaining music. If you think I'm exaggerating, here are some quotes from the discussion:

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The State of the Art

By David Wakefield

On Monday, April 17, 2006, the American Brass Quintet hosted a brass chamber music forum at the Juilliard School called "the State of the Art". Held in conjunction with the ABQ's 45th anniversary celebration, this event examined the past, present, and most importantly, the future of the brass chamber music field. Participants included Martin Hughes (Annapolis Brass Quintet), John Faieta and Louis Hanzlik (Atlantic Brass Quintet), Joe Burgstaller (Canadian Brass), Wayne duMaine and Michael Seltzer (Manhattan Brass), Ben Harrington (Meridian Arts Ensemble), Allan Dean (New York Brass Quintet, St. Louis Brass Quintet), Greg Evans (Chamber Music America and former member of the Manhattan Brass), Robert Biddlecome (executive director of the ABQ's not-for-profit corporation, the American Brass Chamber Music Association and former member of the American Brass Quintet), and Todd Stanton and Douglas Hamilton (Stanton Consulting and Management).

After short welcoming remarks, Ray Mase asked for comments from representatives of each brass quintet as to recent concertizing, recordings, and new works. Members also spoke of efforts to stabilize their group's activities, either by attempting to go full-time or by individuals finding suitable individual employment that allows them the flexibility to pursue their quintet's interests. Greg Evans gave insightful statistics on the current brass quintet members of Chamber Music America, with 70% of the groups touring and performing more than ten concerts a year, 50% having educational components, and 24% with professional management. But perhaps the most telling remarks of the day came from Todd Stanton, president of Stanton Consulting and Management, which are printed here in full.

Todd Stanton: *Ray Mase has asked me to provide some brief remarks on certain facets of the state of the art from my perspective as a manager and compare these to the state of the art five and ten years ago.*

One area that I believe it is critical to explore is the actual size and scope of the U.S. marketplace for brass chamber music. Please note that these remarks are reflective of serious, for lack of a better term, chamber music. I am puzzled and surprised that even well-known chamber ensembles often do not have a real working grasp of the size of their marketplace.

If you scan through the presenters or venues sections of Musical America or Music Opera and Dance in North America, you will find more than 2000 presenters and venues listed. If you trim that list to those that even occasionally present orchestral or

News Nuggets

- Joan Tower's *Copperwave*, commissioned for the ABQ by the Juilliard School in celebration of its Centennial, was premiered on our 45th Anniversary concert May 4th at Juilliard. The piece has already received a number of ABQ performances, including at the ITG conference in June, Aspen this summer, and on tour this fall.
- Editing of the ABQ's new recording *Jewels & Gems* is in progress and the cd should be ready for a spring release. Included are new works by Clint Needham, Steven Sacco, and David Sampson along with longtime ABQ favorites of Osvaldo Lacerda, William Lovelock, and Vittorio Rieti.
- The American Brass Quintet performed at two major conferences last season—the Midwest Clinic in Chicago on Dec. 14th 2005, and at the International Trumpet Guild Conference, June 8th at Rowan University in Glassboro NJ. On March 16, 2007, the ABQ will perform at the National Trumpet Competition in Maryland.
- West Chester University has commissioned composer Robert Maggio to write a new brass quintet for the ABQ in celebration of the University's newly completed School of Music and Performing Arts Center. The piece will be premiered April 14, 2007 in West Chester, PA.
- The ABQ was recently awarded a multi-year grant from The Jerome Foundation in support of new works from four emerging composers. Recipients of the first round of commissions will be announced this fall.
- A grant from the New York State Music Fund will support a new work for the ABQ by composer/pianist Billy Childs. The piece will be premiered next summer at the Aspen Music Festival where Mr. Childs will appear as guest artist with the ABQ.
- The ABQ's annual faculty recital at the Juilliard School is being rescheduled for later this season. The program will include the world premiere of Robert Dennis' *Il Ritorno*, and New York premieres of Adam Schoenberg's *Reflecting Light* and David Sampson's *Entrance*. Also included will be *Copperwave*, Joan Tower's recent ABQ commission, and editions of Venetian music from the ABQ's recording *In Gabrieli's Day*.

chamber music, you arrive at figure between 1300 to 1400 across all budget categories. When my office uses an even more targeted list, let's say venues that somewhat regularly present chamber music, you are dealing with 900 to 1000 total, again across all budget categories. Now, let's really put this into perspective. Let's trim our potential market by only dealing with venues that semi-regularly present chamber music and can pay a minimum fee of \$5000. We are now dealing with a potential mar-

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The State of the Art Forum participants: (top row: Greg Evans, Kevin Cobb, Ray Mase, Wayne duMaine, Dave Wakefield, Bob Biddlecome, Mike Powell, Martin Hughes, Doug Hamilton; (bottom row) Louis Hanzlik, John Faieta, John Rojak, Todd Stanton, Ben Harrington, Joe Burgstaller, Allan Dean, Mike Seltzer

Beating a Dead Horse?

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"Often people get so serious that the musicians forget that our #1 responsibility is to entertain the crowd."

"We need to be more picky about the music that we present and not so concerned with being serious all the time."

"If you want to be in demand...you need a "gimmick".

"GONE are the days of sitting down and simply playing a concert. The really great quintets realized this a long time ago and incorporated [shtik] into their programs...that draws an audience regardless of what's being played."

"If we want an audience we need to [perform] music that will appeal to the audiences we are trying to attract - if this means playing a couple of rags or "popular" works, then so be it."

"The fact that the Canadian Brass [toured the world] and played "popular" arrangements with a brass quintet...helped create an audience for groups like ABQ."

"Personally, I don't think [brass quintet] will EVER be as well regarded as a [serious chamber music group] like a string quartet."

Besides some obvious errors in these statements, two main assumptions are apparent: First, to be successful, one must gain popular recognition and thereby achieve financial reward.

And the corollary to that which is, in order to achieve this success, one must play to the needs of the general public. The debate about popularity and serious art is nothing new. Classical music has long struggled with this dilemma and there have been countless efforts to "popularize" it. But an unanswered question always remains: Does classical music really need to achieve mass appeal? Of course, popularity can do wonders for monetary worry, even making a project economically viable, but it is foolish to imply that without popular acceptance the artistic endeavor is illegitimate. Equating success only with financial reward is a common fallacy that has, like a virus, also infected the arts. But is the product more legitimate, or even better, because it is more popular? Forget about music, try to carry that over into daily life - is your life more or less significant depending upon the degree of your popularity? Our teachers in elementary school would urge us to think otherwise. My Aspen colleague, and former ABQ trumpeter, Lou Ranger, reminded me that if we only equate popularity with good quality then we would all have to agree that McDonald's is the greatest restaurant in the entire world! Now there's some food for thought.

But why should we worry about playing new, modern music, especially if it's difficult or not audience friendly? Here are some additional comments from the web log.

"The biggest problem that we have as brass players is that the music that is written for us is not very good."

"If the general consensus is that the future of the brass quintet is dependent on new (modern) compositions, then we might as well pack it up. I personally find most all "modern" music distasteful,

as does the general concert-going public. They don't want to build an understanding of it. Music that is not pleasant to listen to will not be patronized."

Whether the music is "good enough" is very subjective, of course. There are countless works of art now held in high esteem that were derided at the time of their creation. I personally think if you haven't found a "good" brass quintet yet, you haven't looked hard enough. In the past few decades, so many notable and credible composers have written for the quintet that it is irresponsible to say that the music isn't good enough, or that we don't have any great composers to play, or that what we have is second rate. Besides, our musical future simply doesn't exist without a dedication to new music. Presenters have certainly found that simply feeding their audience the same diet of rehashed string quartet music holds a limited audience. I won't argue that all modern pieces are worth promoting just as many historic pieces aren't either. But if we were to compare the new works written today for chamber music, what is currently being composed for the brass quintet is every bit as good as for any other ensemble. And the ABQ can also say with assuredness that with proper programming, audiences of all kinds are usually very accepting of innovative material.

With such a wide range of works to address these apparent challenges, the bigger problem seems to be an awareness of the literature. This deficit can be partially remedied by visiting the database (listing over 1,500 works) on the ABQ website. With some creativity and a willingness to buck the trend of copycat quintets, you will find some very rewarding, programmatic and noteworthy music. Now I fully understand that the ABQ may be unique in its ability to program and successfully present more serious quintet material. And I do not diminish the good intention of other brass chamber groups who, for whatever reason, have elected to emphasize a different genre of music. However, I maintain that there needs to be a balance and that all groups should find a way to present some original quintet music rather than just another arrangement --especially if such arrangements are done to show technical prowess and not for improved musicality. Every time the quintet is presented strictly as entertainment, the less likely the audience is to take it seriously the next time. We all cater

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American Brass Quintet

Raymond Mase & Kevin Cobb, trumpets

David Wakefield, horn

Michael Powell, trombone

John D. Rojak, bass trombone

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Rojak on the Road

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eled the Aurora Brass on our ABQ, and as part of their educational mission had us for a concert and some classes. Before the residency began, the Aurora Brass had a fundraiser at the Dakota, the foremost jazz club in the Twin Cities. We were honored guests, and it was great fun, as well as quite interesting to see some wonderful marketing for classical music. The silent auction included "Rojak's Recommended Reds with Recipes," which was a box of wines that I had picked out on a very fun trip to the wine store with John. I made some recipes to go with each bottle, and am pleased to say it was the second most profitable item at the auction. (The first must have been a Bentley or something.) The residency events went well despite a request at the trombone class for



me to demonstrate my low register by playing "Master of the House" from Les Miserables. I thought I had left those 16 years behind me, and proved myself right when I had trouble remembering it! The concert in St. Mark's Cathedral ended powerfully with a performance of Gabrieli's music with the combined forces of two ABQs.

Skipping the fates of winter travel, we resumed touring in March with a long awaited trip to Aspen for a concert on their Harris Hall Winter Series. Getting to the Rockies while they were snow covered was a spectacular sight. Our accommodations in Aspen Meadows were most plush, with huge windows looking toward the beautiful mountains (photo above), and each day was invigorating as we visited the area schools for master classes. From Aspen, we took a quick trip

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Allan Dean discussing the "state of the art" of brass chamber music while Joe Burgstaller listens.



Metamorphosen - Fellowship Quintet 2006

Matt Brown-trumpet, Louis-Pierre Bergeron-horn, Philippe Brunet-trumpet, Courtney Wile, trombone; Seth Cook, tuba

The ABQ/Aspen Music Festival brass quintet fellowship group for 2006 was the Montreal-based ensemble *Metamorphosen*. In addition to their own recitals in Aspen, this virtuoso ensemble appeared with the ABQ at our annual Salida/Aspen concert and the ABQ brass special in Harris Concert Hall. Applications for next summer's brass quintet fellowships should be submitted before Feb. 1, 2007.

State of the Art

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ket of less than 500 venues, probably even less than 400.

Now, how many of those will present brass chamber music? Let's eliminate those venues that call having a brass quintet once every ten years presenting brass chamber music. I wish I could give you an exact figure but I cannot. I do not think at this point you are dealing with any more than 300 venues at the budget level mentioned.

How does all of this compare to 5 and 10 years ago? When I got into the management end of this industry 20 some years ago, what then passed for a database, this an age when Word Processors had become all the rage at a cost of \$500 for the cheap models, would have had around 1300 to 1400 venues in it - the same as today. In adjusted dollars, the average venue had a better budget than it has today, the average venue was very likely to present more chamber music than today and the average venue was likely to present more performances, of all types, than it does today.

The basic industry has consolidated in all types of ways. A venue that once presented a dance series, a drama series, and a music series now typically has one much smaller series covering all performing arts. A venue of this type that once booked 6 or 8 music events a season now books 2 or 3. And, believe me, fees have generally not kept pace with inflation. Ten years ago this type of consolidation was continuing apace. Five years ago I personally thought the consolidation, I am trying to avoid using the term wholesale collapse, was near an end. Unfortunately, I was wrong.

There is, however, a brass lining in this seemingly ominous cloud. It is my firm belief that brass chamber music enjoys much wider acceptance today than it did 10 years ago and most certainly a wider acceptance than 20 years ago. This change for the better is largely due to the pioneering efforts of some brass quintets represented here today such as the New York, Annapolis and American brass quintets. If these efforts did not have a long-

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Beating a Dead Horse?

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to the audience in one way or another. The question is where do you draw the line?

Of course there is a personal element in all of this. What does one enjoy playing? I have had the fortunate opportunity to play all sorts of music with many different brass ensembles, and I've enjoyed all of them. Each of us must decide for ourselves what musical experiences that we want to share with our audiences. Some might say the ABQ is in a unique position and can afford to play this music since we are associated with The Juilliard School. That makes it sound like ABQ found this pot of gold - this gimmick, if you will - from the Juilliard residency. The truth is that the ABQ programming has remained consistent since 1960. Twenty years later, Juilliard recognized the artistic merit in ABQ's efforts and brought the group on board, which no doubt lends credibility to our mission. But it would be a mistake to think that the mis-



Adam Schoenberg's new work *Reflecting Light* commissioned by the Aspen Music Festival received its premiere on July 29, 2006 in Aspen.

sion of the group, or even the audiences themselves changed once the group became associated with Juilliard.

What the future of the brass quintet holds is unknown but the dearth of serious repertoire being offered by most brass quintets is, to me, simply unacceptable. The popular, entertainment oriented groups will continue to thrive, but making a musical offering to the public today, using this ensemble as a vehicle, and not making some attempt to broaden the musical spectrum of your listener is a sabotage of our musical future. Yes, it takes some homework, but it's time we stop ignoring the musical consciousness of what is going on and make an effort to shape a better future. Considering popularity as the only benchmark for success is clearly shortsighted.

Ray Mase, ABQ member since 1973, has often warned that if you let others decide how you define success, you'll forever be playing to the constantly shifting winds of mass appeal, letting your desire for popular acceptance, and therefore the opinion of others determine what is successful for you. For me, it is a true pleasure to play with a group dedicated to advancing the art form and it is a delight to bring new music to the public. The ABQ provides an opportunity for audiences to experience those creative works and who knows what will be popular 100 years from now. But one thing is for certain, the world will be much worse off if some groups like ours did not make the effort. ■

Photo credits: Page 2, ABQ: Richard Frank, Powell: Russell Widener, page 3, page 5 bottom left, and page 6: Hiroyuki Ito, page 5 top left: John Rojak

State of the Art

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term impact on the marketplace, we would not see members of ensembles such as the Extension Ensemble here today.

I also perceive a shift in the marketplace's general acceptance of brass chamber music. Some of this is forced economic reality. Chamber music series, at least those without an endowment or Rockefeller-style patron, that continue to present only string quartets and, horrors, the occasional piano trio will wither and die. This has been and continues to be proven on an annual basis. If these series do not expand their horizons, they will die.

All is not doom and gloom. The madness of building 3000 seat stadiums masquerading as concert halls where there was no legitimate reason to build one has abated to a degree. In general, chamber music cannot financially function in a 3000 seat facility. While such monstrosities do continue to be built, the wisdom of having a smaller 300 to 700 seat hall in such a complex has taken root. This has been good for chamber music in general.

Also, there are numerous examples of well-run chamber music series in nearly all parts of the US that are financially healthy and enjoy capacity audiences. I am not speaking of main-stage series in places like Boston, New York or Minneapolis/Saint Paul. As examples I would cite Des Moines, Iowa; Joplin, Missouri, and even a certain pub in Boise, Idaho where one can enjoy a local micro-brew to the soothing strains of Gunther Schuller's Brass Quintet No. 2. Those not believing the latter please speak with John Rojak later. I heard there were two mutes and one pint at John's feet during that performance and that things got very interesting when he attempted to put the pint in his bell. I identify four things that make such series successful: first-rate individuals operating these series; they will not and do not present half-baked performances; their programming is highly diverse in terms of different types of ensembles; and lastly and most importantly, they present brass chamber music.

In summary, the state of the art is that it is facing a great number of continued long-term challenges. Anyone that tells you otherwise is not being honest. However, those performing first-rate music at a first-rate level can be successful. I think it would be interesting for some of my colleagues here today to address what currently constitutes success in brass chamber music. Thank you. ■



John Rojak and Todd Stanton at "State of the Art" Forum

Rojak on the Road

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to New Orleans. Some federal funding had been granted for the arts after the Katrina disaster, and we were fortunate to be asked to perform there. It was a brief visit, but we tried to make the most of it. Our drive to the University of New Orleans took us through some of the devastated areas, and it was awesome in the worst sense of that word. Seeing homes totally wrecked on one side of a street, and only minor damage on the other side due to strong winds was humbling and disturbing. Yet, playing a concert felt so good, and we seemed so welcome that it was a most worthwhile experience. Having so little time in this legendary city, we had to make some choices. We went to the French Quarter after the concert and eventually chose the famous beignets at Cafe du Monde over gumbo and beer. It was the right decision, except we all had to bring our tuxes to the cleaners to get the powdered sugar off them.

With a few days off before our next event, the rest of the guys went back to New York. Seizing an opportunity to get back to pristine beauty, I returned to Aspen for some snowshoeing and wine drinking before we regrouped in South Dakota. We had to stay in Sioux Falls rather than our destination of Brookings because an all-state wrestling tournament had booked all the local hotel rooms that weekend. And we weren't going to fight that! From there we whisked off to Cleveland for a three-day residency which included classes at the Cleveland Institute of Music and at Cleveland State University. We returned to NY for four days, setting the stage for our last trip of the season—one that had kept me up for hours and hours figuring out the travel.

How does one get from Joplin, Missouri, to Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin? First, one has to figure out how to get to Joplin. We flew into Bentonville, Arkansas—a major airport due to Wal-Mart headquarters that we had been unaware of previously. We easily found Joplin from there, and had a wonderful time. We were a little concerned when we heard we would be staying at a woman's home rather than a hotel, but when we got to our host Cynthia Schwab's house our fears vanished. We were pampered and looked after completely, and few hotels have back yards like hers. We were also amused to discover she was an avid New York Rangers fan, so we had to dust off our hockey knowledge. We had to bid Cynthia a sentimental farewell after 4 nights, and headed back to Bentonville. We flew into Dubuque, Iowa, as Prairie du Chien is in Wisconsin near the borders of Minnesota and Iowa. I considered about 6 different airports before choosing that one and the drive turned out to be a very pretty one. Our biggest issue came the following day. The concert should have been the easiest commute of the year, being in Danbury, Connecticut, a mere 70 miles from our homes. Instead, we awoke at the crack of dawn in Wisconsin, drove 2 hours to the airport for our 8am flight, nearly missed our connecting flight only to find when we got to LaGuardia that our bags didn't make it. We waited for the following flight to arrive, and, with luggage, made it to Danbury 45 minutes before our concert. Our hearts pounded a little more slowly by concert time, and afterwards, we were able to enjoy our short drives home from this very unexpectedly tricky destination.

We do have our share of travel surprises, but our residencies the past few seasons working with hundreds of

students across the country and performing for wonderful audiences have given us the perspective to put up with just about anything. See you on the road. ■

The ABQ's seventh recording with Summit Records, *In Gabrieli's Day* (Summit DCD 429) takes a fresh look at the music of Venice from around 1600.



It's All in the Timing

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general.

The next several years would have been busy ones even without these new grants. But what could be more exhilarating for a group like ours than this? Already we have over a dozen applicants to review for the first round of the emerging composer grants that will be awarded soon. Billy Child's new work is moving ahead for its premiere next summer in Aspen, and is on the books for a good number of performances for next season and the season after. Of course these are just the things our public will see—the fruits of our collective labors. Privately we'll be busy planning for the future and tapping every resource we can to support our next projects. Could a 50th anniversary recording of ABQ commissions be right around the corner? It's all in the timing. ■



Composer/Pianist Billy Childs, who is composing a new work for the ABQ funded by the New York State Music Fund

Please remember the American Brass Chamber Music Association in your year-end giving!

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The Three Latest ABQ Recordings



Cheer, Boys, Cheer!

Volume 2 of Music of the 26 N.C. Regimental Band, CSA (New World 80652-2)

_____ No. of CDs @ \$16



In Gabrieli's Day

"The ABQ captures the essence of the Renaissance with an elegant vocal approach filled with spirit, intensity, and character." Brian Shook, International Trumpet Guild (Summit DCD 429)

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