

BRIT STYLE BRASS

by Deborah Everest-Hill

CONCERT GOERS WHO TAKE IN A PERFORMANCE of the Intrada Brass Orchestra for the first time are “dazzled,” according to Doug Field, general manager of the British-style brass band.

Now in its twelfth season, the Intrada Brass Orchestra is nothing like other brass bands, notes Field. “People tend to imagine out-of-tune parade music when they think of brass bands but once they hear the band, they’re astonished with its variety and virtuosity.”

Intrada Brass consists of 30 members including professionals on cornet, tuba and percussion. The remaining musicians come from a variety of professions but most have some degree of formal music training. These musicians range from 17 years of age to 70 and travel to Oakville from as far away as Fenelon Falls to rehearse once a month.

The obvious challenge with orchestra that meets only once each month is ensuring that the music is adequately rehearsed. Understand that ‘practice’ is what



an
once each
the music
“Our players
they do at home



Intrada Brass Orchestra’s mature, balanced sound astonishes audiences

and ‘rehearse’ is what they do with the band,” says Field. Because the music director and associate conductor spend little time correcting ‘wrong’ notes, members are required to sight-read music at high level.

Unlike some brass bands, Intrada Brass Orchestra performs a variety of music ranging from classics dating back to Elizabethan times to contemporary, jazz and pop. A significant portion of the band’s repertoire is Canadian and supporting the composition and arrangement of Canadian music for brass/percussion is an important priority. The commission of new Canadian music is also ongoing.

The origin of the band dates back to 1995 when founding music director Bram Gregson and a group of players from London and Toronto wanted to accomplish two things: provide a high quality performing opportunity for brass and percussion players and produce recordings. “At the time, there were few Canadian brass bands performing at an international standard,” notes Field. “We wanted to establish that standard and maintain it.”

To date, six recordings have been produced and a jazz/swing number featuring a famous Canadian soloist is in the planning stages. In addition to being broadcast extensively on CBC Radio, the band’s recordings have received air time in the United States, United Kingdom, Europe, Australia and the Netherlands.

After entertaining audiences for five years at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, the band recently moved its concerts to Glen Abbey United Church. Field is working on arrangements for the orchestra to perform a Christmas concert in November with the award winning Con Brio Children’s Chorus of Mississauga. Plans are also underway to unite Intrada Brass with the Northern Light Chorus, a barber-shop style group, with a dedicated following. While the two groups have performed together in the



Above: Intrada Brass’ Three Virtuosi. Bottom left: on stage at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts.

past, it would be a first for Oakville residents.

Inspiring young brass players and percussionists is another of the band’s missions. With the support of donors and sponsors, Intrada Brass Orchestra will hold its second bi-ennial Young Brass Players Competition this fall. Secondary school students from the golden horseshoe area who play brass or percussion instruments are invited to present a solo based on Royal Conservatory of Music standards. The winner earns a trophy, cash toward music lessons and an in-depth adjudication. The 2008 winner, a 17-year-old student from White Oaks Secondary School now plays third coronet in the band.

With the proliferation of high-tech gadgets like iPods, cell phones and computer games, Field says fewer young people are exploring instruments. Cuts to school music programs are also responsible for young people losing out on the many benefits playing an instrument can bring. “Politicians need to stop thinking of the arts as frivolous,” adds Field. “Learning to play an instrument goes beyond mastering the notes and rhythm of the music to teach young people about team work, discipline and self-reliance.”

For more information about Intrada Brass Orchestra and its 2009-2010 season, visit www.intradabrass.org or go to www.oakvillearts.com and visit our community calendar.

Glenburnie School

Enriched Education from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 8

Challenging Academic Curriculum featuring 21st Century Skills

Drama | Theatre
Fine Arts
Instrumental Music | Choirs
Varsity Sports

2035 Upper Middle Road East, Oakville
(905) 338-6236
www.glenburnieschool.com

Ask for Oakville Arts Package

Golf • Ski • Relax

on the golf course and ski slopes of Holiday Valley in Ellicottville

Luxury Condominium/Hotel Rentals
Falling Waters Spa
Year ‘round pool
John Harvard’s Brew House
Welcoming Village of Ellicottville

Only 2 hours from Oakville • Rt. 219 Ellicottville NY
www.holidayvalley.com • 716.699.7000