



Upbeat!

NEWS AND REVIEWS

July 2022

This edition of *Upbeat!* features a review of our last concert with guest trumpet soloist, Chris Avison. It is written by Russell Sheath, trumpeter in SCWB

A Symphonic Celebration

Saturday June 25th at Chandler's Ford Methodist Church



Solo performances from professional brass players always seem, to me, to be few and far between. There's no shortage of pianists, strings, and woodwind soloists but you don't tend to get as many brass players. When they do come along locally, their performances are not to be missed. Better still, when they come along to perform with the ensemble you play with and they play the brass instrument that you've been playing since you were a little boy, BINGO! Enter trumpeter Chris Avison, our guest soloist for our Spring Concert. And boy did we hit the jackpot with this guy.

Back in January when Calum revealed the three pieces Chris had chosen to play, I will admit, they weren't what I had expected. The first half feature, the Denis Wright Concerto, was something I had dabbled with at University, but the second half pieces I had hardly heard of!

It's always a challenge playing an accompaniment during rehearsals without hearing the solo line, particularly with unknown pieces. But after some tough Thursday evenings it all started to come together. Chris joined us on the Friday evening before the concert. These rehearsals are always filled with enthusiasm and excitement, along with a hint of trepidation; will the soloist be impressed with us, have we rehearsed at the correct speed, will the whole thing fall apart the night before the concert!



showed off the simple but beautiful side of the trumpet.

We kicked off the rehearsal with what would be the concert encore, 'Don't Doubt Him Now'; a slow, reflective Salvation Army song. After an introduction from the band we heard Chris for the first time with the lyrical solo line, and WOW! Suddenly this beautiful, warm, rich tone filled the room with such ease and control. I, along with the rest of the trumpet section, was in awe of the sound he was producing. Chris's encore didn't need to be fast and technical; this piece

The meat of Chris's performance on the Saturday was the Denis Wright 'Cornet Concerto'. In three movements, it's classical in form, although not a long concerto. My eyes were raised when he pulled a trumpet out of his bag rather than a cornet at the rehearsal, but as soon as I knew how he sounded I understood why. When you close your eyes and listen to his tone quality, you could easily

mistake it for a cornet, which is true testament to a great trumpeter. The concerto shows the instrument off in its full mastery and is not an easy blow; the solo line, at times, would look more at home in the woodwind section! Chris, again, made this sound effortless. He has a fabulous ability to sit back and play quietly when needed but still retain the precision in his playing. This was heard with the extremely difficult lip glissandos in the first movement, which he executed with ease. But when he needs to be there at the forefront, he's there and you know it! No more so than the technically challenging cadenza which took us up to the end of the first movement, culminating in an enthusiastic applause from the audience, and rightly so. The remainder of the concerto continued along the same lines and was a pleasure to play and listen to.



For me the highlight of the concert was Chris' performance of 'Excursions' by Bruce Broughton. This ever-changing, fast, syncopated and fragmented piece was extremely demanding. It exceeds the normal boundaries both musically and technically. Chris opened the piece with the recurring theme before it travelled throughout the band. The piece is pulled in all directions and

wandered through multiple time signatures during its six and half minutes. The trumpet line is tough, as is the accompaniment; technically stretching the players, relentless, with no room to hide. Most soloists would find it an achievement just to get to the end without stopping, but Chris accomplished this with technical excellence, keeping complete control of his tremendous tone quality.

I speak not only for myself, but the whole band, when I say we were so privileged to work with Chris. To listen to top performers is wonderful, but to play with them on stage and gain an insight into their work is truly fantastic. Having played with SCWB for best part of ten years I can say that what keeps me coming back is the drive and energy Calum and the members have to achieve great things. This band never takes its foot off the gas and will continue to perform to the highest level, with top soloists, to provide great and exciting music for our audiences.

Russell Sheath
Trumpet, SCWB

SCWB events to look forward to

Romsey Bandstand, War Memorial Park	August 7th	2:30pm
Chandler's Ford Methodist Church <i>Joined by the Band of the Hampshire Constabulary</i>	October 1st	7:30pm
The Chapel, Royal Victoria Country Park, Netley	December 11th	3:00pm

2023

Chandler's Ford Methodist Church <i>With guest soloist Peter Cigleris, clarinet</i>	March 25th	7:30pm
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