

BRASSROOTS

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The Brassroots INSIDER

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"South Western Ontario's Favourite Brass Ensemble"



London Arts Council



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

From our music director Bram Gregson



OUR EIGHT-CITY TOUR OF CHINA is now a cherished memory. What a remarkable country it is! Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find some recollections and photos of a challenging two weeks when temperatures dipped below 40 degrees Celsius on only two or three days. From a cancelled flight in Shanghai on the second day to the sights of Beijing on the final day, it was full of surprises. Concrete jungles to beautiful scenery, friendly people contrasting with street lined mendicants, iconic stores to knock-off markets, ancient temples to stunning modern architecture, traditional Chinese restaurants to American fast food eateries, ever changing plans, issues with Chinese customs and airlines and not least, wonderful audiences who appreciated our music.

So now back to reality! What does Brassroots have in store for the 2013-14 season?

In **CONCERT #1** we will reminisce about China with music, words and photos. The first half will feature music that was not performed on the tour but will be redolent of the large buildings, train stations, hectic streetscapes and the beautiful countryside. It was a new world for us so we will play the Largo from Dvorak's *New World Symphony*. The second half will feature charts that were such a hit in China as well as a short slide show. Meet with our musicians after the concert to find out more about China!

CONCERT #2 will showcase Stephen Holowitz at the organ with St. James Westminster Anglican Choir in choral classics, carol singing and Brassroots' special arrangements of Christmas songs: "Ding Dong Merrily," "Greensleeves," "We Three Kings," "Chestnuts Roasting," "Christmas Pudding" and more. This is a family event with Christmas treats after the concert. So bring the kids along! We will ask three to conduct "Jingle Bells." This, incidentally was one of the most exciting moments in our concerts in China when kids were asked to conduct the band. We've never seen so many cameras!

CONCERT #3 will feature Ffourtissimo. This brilliant clarinet quartet will perform dances from around the world—from the Terrace to the Tavern with stops in Argentina, Spain, Italy, Israel and Zimbabwe. You will hear delightful music from Brassroots in extracts from Prokofiev's Ballet *Romeo and Juliet* and from Kurt Weill's *Little Threepenny Opera*, including a tango, a lovely ballad and other energetic and exciting moments. A virtuoso solo will be "Don Giovannis Hollenfahrt." In this collage from Mozart's well-known opera, *Don Giovanni*, the infamous seducer is represented by the tuba of Michael Medeiros.

CONCERT #4 will feature Vocal Fusion under the leadership of Mark Payne, another brilliant London musician. Vocal Fusion enjoys a stellar reputation for its contributions to "Jeans and Classics." We promise you a thrilling evening of pops and jazz.

The Board of Directors and our musicians thank those generous donors whose contributions were so helpful in our tour of China. The financial support we receive from our audiences is so important in keeping our books in the black. Fundraising and sponsorships for our small organization are extremely challenging.

We are retaining our ticket prices from the past few seasons. Some say that we should be charging twice as much for what they consider to be some of the best musical entertainment in London. However, we want to maintain an admission price that enables as many as possible to enjoy our eclectic programming. For this, we thank our musicians who perform for the sheer joy of making music! At this time, we have no sponsors and we certainly have no lines of credit!

Bram

A memorable concert tour in a remarkable country

China



The tour started in Shanghai on July 31. In the next fifteen days we travelled nearly 10,000km with stops in Nanchang, Hangzhou, Liuzhou, Kunming, Xuzhou, Dalian and Beijing. All these cities had populations in excess of 4 million.

It is interesting to note that while Canada is territorially the second largest country in the world (behind Russia), China is smaller by only 100,000 square kilometers. The total population of China is about 1.35 billion. Population density in China is about 145 persons per square kilometre; Canada's is only 4.5. The population density of Shanghai is about 3,630 persons per square kilometre—nearly fifty times the population density of London, Ontario!

China is developing at a rapid pace. On our way back to the airport in Dalian (our final concert venue) we counted seventy apartment buildings under construction. They build and wait for the people to come; and they do!

EXTRACTS from some of our daily journals

Shanghai'd

by Peter Collins



SHANGHAI SUNRISE
PHOTO: PETER COLLINS

Our second full day on tour was spent in Shanghai at the old market followed by a bus ride to catch an evening flight to Nanchang. The trip to the airport was spent in heavy traffic (no surprise) but with the weather becoming increasingly threatening. Eventually there was torrential rain accompanied by significant thunder and lightning. Upon arrival at the impressive airport our soon-to-be usual routine ensued with passports turned in, boarding passes received and luggage checked. We then discovered that the flight had been cancelled as a result of the storm and AFTER our entire luggage had been checked in.

Then the adventure began! A variety of plans were concocted as a result of restrictions imposed by the airline, bus company, and time: luggage would have to stay on the plane overnight; luggage can't stay on the plane; wait for it all to come off; sorry, we will not allow ground staff to empty the plane during the storm. We had to eat at a famous fast food restaurant that we had hoped so much to avoid! After several hours it was decided we should return to Shanghai. Luckily our hotel was still able to accept us. Our relief was temporarily thwarted when it was realized that our bus was waiting at the other Shanghai airport! When the bus finally arrived the luggage compartment was just too small to hold everything so it was loaded in the passenger section with barely enough room left for passengers.

We were literally Shanghai'd in Shanghai, no less! With all the waiting around and changes of plans, thankfully everyone remained in good humour.

Finally we got to our hotel at 10:30pm with instructions to wake up at 5:00am to be sure to take a bus BACK to the airport and catch an 8:10 am flight to Nanchang. When I woke up there was a stunning sunrise over Shanghai which I was able to capture from the hotel balcony, I wouldn't have been there to capture the sunrise had it not been for being Shanghai'd in Shanghai!

Cordiality

by Tony Snyder

On the morning of our concert in Xuzhou, John, Susan and I walked along the lakefront to see the concert venue (one of the most stunning I have seen).

On the way we encountered a group of musicians performing beautiful music in the shade of willow trees as others were going through their Tai Chi movements.

Many gathered around to welcome us, although none could speak English.

After the music, two young gentlemen walked with Susan and I to offer their umbrellas for relief from the sun until we reached the concert hall while John followed to take pictures. Although we were made to feel welcome



OUR GUYS ARE SHELTERED FROM THE SEARING SUN
BY LOCALS THEY HAD JUST MET
PHOTO: JOHN MONKHOUSE

everywhere we went, this was a particularly warm and authentic reception by the people of China.

Moving through China *by Susan Follows*

Left our Nanchang hotel early to catch a train to Hangzhou. It was too early for the hotel restaurant to open so we were given a “bagged” breakfast: a sweet roll, a small piece of corn on the cob and a hard-boiled egg. We were in for rough day! As we waited in line in the old train station we quickly learned that you don’t leave any gaps between us. A space is quickly occupied by several Chinese travelers—just like the way they drive! Coping with stairs and escalators with our luggage and with hundreds converging on them is chaotic and frightening. Luckily none of our group was injured and we set off on our five-hour train ride to Hangzhou. It was a long journey but as usual we had fun, even performing O Canada to the delight of Chinese passengers who crowded around with their cameras!

Pedestrians, bicyclists, cars, buses, trucks all move like schools of fish. The traffic flows; no one seems to get angry; they just keep moving and honking!

There is an art to driving in China. I am not sure if they actually have to learn to drive to get a license. Impressive amount of German cars; there’s definitely money in China!

Chinese Beerfest *by Susan Follows*

After our concert in Xuzhou, our host asked us to journey to a village about an hour away to perform a few pieces at a beer festival. After an uneventful long ride we arrived at an event that was alive with laser lights, full rock festival stage and deafening music. What a riotous couple of hours we had! We felt like rock stars! Since there were no music stands the members of one of their Chinese folk dance groups held our music. Not sure they appreciated our charts but it was great fun. We were surrounded by flashing cameras. John Monkhouse took the microphone and walked down the runway to show the audience how to do the Chicken Dance. As Brassroots played the crowd got



TAKING UP THE CHALLENGE AT A BEER FESTIVAL
PHOTO: BRAM GREGSPN

up and danced along. The beer flowed, the Oktoberfest beer cheers erupted and the locals challenged us to a beer guzzling contest. They won! Only 2% alcohol in their beer so no problem! This was simply a wonderfully friendly, crazy time with our hosts! The bus back to the hotel late that night was filled with the most laughter yet!

Can you believe it? *by Bram Gregson*

At a chaotically busy intersection in Kunming, a guy actually stopped his motorbike in the middle of the intersection and lit a cigarette while traffic sped around him!

In each concert we asked three children to conduct Brassroots in “Jingle Bells”. One was a dapper six year old, photographed here. When I asked the interpreter to ask him how old he was, he shouted “My name is Sebastien; I am six!”

After the concert he told me he played piano, no doubt one of the hundreds of thousands who hope to be concert pianists!



A YOUNG MAESTRO: “I AM SIX!”
PHOTO: DAVID MOODY



Riley Stevenson was a big hit in our concerts—conducted by his dad.



We are delighted that Eric Devooght is joining our percussion section. Eric is seen here at the Great Wall with Helen, one of our tour guides.

More about Eric in our next newsletter.

Brassroots’ tour of China was organized by John Crozman of Culture Path. Jane Case was Culture Path’s manager for the tour. Our Chinese tour guides were Felicia, Helen and Burton. We are grateful to them for the outstanding arrangements made on our behalf.

Get your diary out!

OUR 2013-14 SEASON

BRASSROOTS

The Silk Road REVISITED

OUR SENSATIONAL CONCERT TOUR OF CHINA

Great charts popular with Chinese audiences

Slideshow



Saturday, October 19, 2013 | 7:30 pm

St. James Westminster Anglican Church | 115 Askin St, London

Adults \$20 | Students/Seniors \$15 | Children under 12 free with an adult

FROM Centennial Hall Box Office | Tuckey Home Hardware (136 Wortley Rd) | online www.onstagedirect.com/brassroots



Concert #1 ▶

Concert #2 CHRISTMAS AT WESTMINSTER

Stephen Holowitz (organist) with the Choir of St. James Westminster Anglican Church. Choral classics, carol singing and Brassroots' special seasonal arrangements.

Sunday December 15, 2013, 2:30 pm

St. James Westminster Anglican (115 Askin St, London)

Concert #3 DANCE AROUND THE WORLD

With Ffourissimo—London's brilliant clarinet quartet—Robert Riseling, Amanda Palmer, Gary McCumber and Marie Johnson.

Saturday February 15, 2014, 7:30 pm

St. James Westminster Anglican



Concert #4 FUSION!

Brassroots is joined by London's Mark Payne and Vocal Fusion in a sensational evening of pops and jazz.

Saturday April 26, 2014

Please note the venue for this concert:

The Church of the Ascension (2060 Dundas St E, London)

TICKETS for all Brassroots concerts*

Adults \$20 | Students & Seniors \$15 |

Children under 12 free with an adult.

*Christmas at Westminster (December 15) is FREE! (Freewill donations gladly accepted)

Tickets for Brassroots concerts are available from

- ▶ Centennial Hall Box Office
- ▶ Tuckey Home Hardware (156 Wortley Rd)
- ▶ online at www.onstagedirect.com/brassroots

SEASON TICKETS (for concerts 1, 3 and 4) are available (\$55 each for Adults, \$40 each for Seniors/Students).

Mail your cheque (payable to "Brassroots Tickets") to

Brassroots Concert Tickets

#199-600 Hyde Park Rd, London, ON N6H 5W8

Alternatively, email icdcappa@srh.ca or call 519.471.3574.

Tickets will be mailed out in time for the first concert, or may be picked up at the door at the first concert. Tickets ordered by e-mail can be picked up (with cheque) at the door at the first concert.

