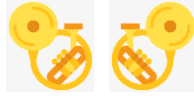


Here is a new essay:



Bernd Rohrmann

March Music Essay

05-10-24

You may wonder – why do I bring this issue up? Because it's mighty, complex, and certainly stunning!



Did I have a link to marching music? Yes. In the last paragraph I'll talk about this.

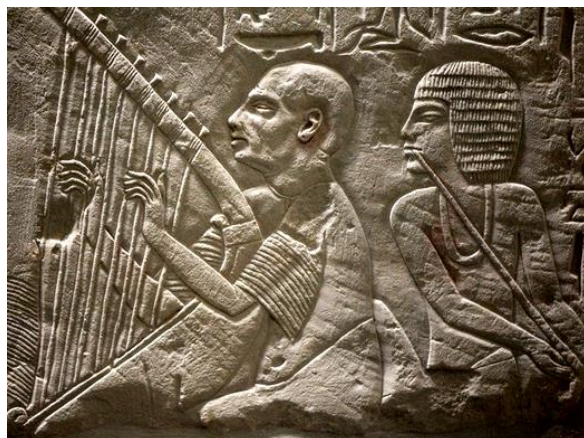


The first-ever marching bands

Historians say some countries in Mesopotamia had various music instruments as early as in 2500 B.C., and that they were also used for commanding armies!



The same was true for the old Egypt Empire since about 2000 B.C., including the harp.



In both areas the 'music culture' was highly developed.



Marching bands in the Roman army

The first armies in which music tools were used in grand style were the armies of the Roman Empire. Main instruments were the "cornu" and the "tuba".



Each Roman army had its own sets of instruments, and an official "music master".



Ottoman Empire marching bands

During the medieval period, it was the Ottoman Empire, centred in Constantinople (now named Istanbul), which established a full-scale marching band in the 13th century. This lasted until 1920.



Fire-brigade's marching bands



Perhaps surprisingly, fire-brigades all over the world had a marching band in addition to the fire-fighting teams. These bands performed during special events, and also marched through the town. The musicians did usually wear the same uniform as the fire-fighters. Here are 5 impressive examples.



Many fire-brigade bands actually included woman! This was a brave and certainly praiseworthy decision!



By the way, quite a few fire-brigade bands even have an formal icon!



The role of marching bands in jazz

The music later named “jazz” was created from 1900 onwards in the city New Orleans. It had two main roots – marching bands which were very common anywhere in the USA, and lots of music features which came from Africa, the cultural home of many jazz musicians.



Marching bands in Australia

There are many, since at least 100 years – many, but not all, are based on military background.

Here is the oldest photo, showing the “Malvern Tram Marching Band” in 1924.





And here is my right now favourite band, the “City Marching Band” from Warrnambool!



By far the largest, supposedly best, and widely performing, even in concert halls, is the “Air Force Band Australia”.





My own experience with marching bands

Yes, it is significant indeed. In 1957 my family lived in Bad Oeynhausen, a small city in western Germany.



And Bad Oeynhausen had its own Fire-Brigade (“Freiwillige Feuerwehr”) for a long time.



In 1957 I decided to become a musician - gosh. I bought myself a high-quality clarinet, and hired a music teacher. Unfortunately he found out pretty soon that I wasn't really gifted. Yet fortunately he was the leader of the orchestra of the Fire-Brigade – and he made me a member of that band! Given my ‘slim’ competence, I was asked not to play the clarinet notes, rather “trumpet-2”. Two years later I bought a soprano-saxophone, which had a stronger sound.



This picture of the B.O. Fire-Brigade team contains both firefighters and musicians.



The little orchestra performed in Oeynhausen and also at festivities of nearby villages. And we had to wear (even liked to wear) the dark-blue uniform of the Fire-Brigade.

Each year in Christmas time, on December 24, we faced a special task: To play in front of the city's mayor and at various social institutions. Do do this, we were placed on the back of a special old truck. Usually it was so cold, we played with special gloves!



Finally, here is a historic photo of the complete orchestra of Oeynhausen's Fire-Brigade - and I believe, just believe, that the young guy with a clarinet (marked) is, is, is - - me!



I was a member of this, for me, wonderful band from 1958 to 1962 -- and I certainly enjoyed it !!!

