

I'm not a bot





The Eric Ball masterpiece has always been a highlight in my musical journey. It's not just any piece - it's a tour de force that showcases the composer's genius. I've had the privilege of performing this piece several times, but my first experience at the 2019 Rochdale Contest was life-changing. Not only did I develop a deep appreciation for the music, but it also brought me closer to my partner through our friendly competition on stage. The piece has become an integral part of my musical identity and a reminder of the power of music to bring people together. Commissioned by the BBC in 1991, "Hymn for the Imperfect" has been a staple in the brass band community ever since. Its challenging passages and solos make it a true test of skill, particularly for principal players. The piece is based on Niccolò Paganini's 24th Caprice and features dramatic moments, warm chordal sections, and tender melodic lines that tug at the heartstrings. I've had the privilege of performing this piece multiple times, and each experience has left me in awe. The ending is particularly breathtaking, leaving me emotionally drained but grateful for the opportunity to share such a masterpiece with others. I highly recommend it to anyone who hasn't had the chance to perform it yet - it's truly phenomenal. In my next post, I'll be sharing more about my musical journey and how certain pieces have played a significant role in shaping my career. The piece is indeed an electrifying experience for both listeners and soloists alike. From its haunting introduction to the Latin-infused climaxes that follow, it's a thrilling ride full of opportunities for a soloist to put their own stamp on it. Both the soloist and the ensemble accompaniment create an exhilarating experience for the listener's ears. If they were to remake Brassed Off, this would be the new 'Orange Juice'! For more insights into brass band defining moments, check out Part 2 of our series. This classic arrangement by Alan Catherall is a fan favourite among both brass band enthusiasts and listeners. It features multiple players in a superb display around the stand. It's both sublime and driving - an absolute masterpiece that's fantastic to play as well as listen to. With its iconic status, it's one of the most successful arrangements ever created. Goff Richards' version of 'I'll Walk with God' is another stunning piece that showcases his exceptional skills as a composer and arranger. This beautiful arrangement, based on the original song from the 1954 musical film The Student Prince, has been transformed into something truly breathtaking. For those interested in exploring more, I highly recommend listening to Mario Lanza's original recording - it's nothing short of spectacular. In terms of concert programming, this piece often takes centre stage as the 'hymn' element due to its poignant subject matter. It's a testament to Goff Richards' mastery that he could take such an iconic song and turn it into something so extraordinary for brass bands. I'm thrilled to share another story about one of my closest friends, Matt (affectionately known as Daffodil), who is part of the exclusive Three Banding Musketeers. Not only is he an incredibly talented musician, but he's also an accomplished conductor and composer. Having had the pleasure of performing many of his arrangements, including 'Fight or Flight' which I loved so much that I used it as the title track for my YouTube videos, his arrangement of 'Abide with Me' is undoubtedly one of the best pieces I've ever had the privilege to play during my time as a brass band musician. It's a stunning arrangement dedicated to Peter Styles, Natalie's grandfather and one of the writer's best buddies. The piece features subtle yet emotive moments from soloists and warm, chordal moments that suit the brass band well. As a huge Queen fan and enthusiast of Adam Taylor's writing, this piece is perfect, with A Day at the Races being my favorite album and featuring the song Somebody to Love - which is both a karaoke favorite and lesser known. Queen's music is complex, with every track built from layers of sound. I love how Adam takes elements of the music and reworks them for brass band, capturing its musicality and spirit perfectly. It's exhilarating to perform this piece in full, thunderous ebullience during the hard rock section, which is an experience I can relate to. Concierto D'Aranjuez, composed by Joaquin Rodrigo, is a sublime piece of music originally written for classical guitar. The arrangement, lovingly known as 'Orange Juice', has become iconic in our community thanks to its feature in the film, 'Brassed Off'. This piece evokes raw emotion and passion, making it perfect incidental music that embodies the anguish, turmoil, and anger depicted in the film. I've had the pleasure of performing a wide range of music throughout my nearly 20-year career in banding, and it's difficult to create an exhaustive list - it would be longer than my TikTok For You Page, which I'm proud to say I have, proving I'm still in touch with the younger generation. If you're interested in seeing me make a fool of myself, feel free to follow our blog's TikTok page. As a bander, I'm fortunate that this list of soul-stirring music will continue to grow, thanks to the memories I've made while playing these pieces, the significant moments in my life they've helped me through, and the friends I've had the privilege of performing with - our community's music is truly unique. You can explore some of my favorite works, such as Edward Gregson's "The World Rejoicing" or Paul Hughes' compositions, and discover more about our vibrant musical community through online resources like the SA Music Index and Discogs.

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