

Horn enthusiasts invite all for a special Christmas concert

By Michaela Kennedy

Tubas of all sizes, baritone and euphoniums are only a few of a wide array of horns that will play on Saturday, Dec. 9, at the third annual Christmas Tubaphonia Concert in North Kingstown. The concert begins at 7:30 p.m. in the high school auditorium on Fairway Drive in North Kingstown.

Musicians will travel from all over New England to take part in the evening. Novice players and veterans alike meet early, practice a bit, enjoy dinner together, and then are ready to pump up the music for an energized audience. The ensemble will also include ophecleids, cimbassos, helicons, and sousaphones. The evening provides a unique opportunity to experience the mellow, sweet sounds of the low-range, cylindrical brass.

"That encompasses all lower conical brass horns, but does not include trumpet, trombone, or French horn," Jamestown Martin Hellewell explains. A cone-shaped bore, or space inside the instrument where the air travels, gradually gets wider from the mouthpiece to the bell, or enlarged opening.

Hellewell and Ray Vallee of North Kingstown organize the concert. Vallee, who is a tuba musician himself, does some of the conducting and some of the arranging for the evening.



Martin Hellewell

The music is typically arranged in four parts, euphonium one and two, and tuba one and two, Hellewell notes.

The Tubaphonia is held twice a year, once at Christmastime and once in the spring.

The renowned Christmas Tubaphonia is in its third year, and the concert this weekend will mark its sixth performance. "We produce a button for each performance. This will be our sixth button," Hellewell also notes.

The organizers never are sure how many people will show up, but last year 52 players attended the brass event. "You're talking big horns with great acoustics. It sounds great," he adds.

Horn players from Connecticut to New Hampshire

will show up about 4 p.m., practice for a while, and then eat a catered meal. "We have enough food for an army," chuckles Hellewell. Players, middle school age to octogenarians, join in the musical fun with all in casual attire and many in Santa hats. "The best thing about the event is playing the horn. Making music is exciting. I love it," Hellewell says.

The program varies each year, and a sing-along is planned for the upcoming concert. Gary Buttery, a nationally renowned tubist and currently on staff in the music department at the University of Rhode Island, will conduct the brass band. Ed Greenan will act as master of ceremonies for the evening

Hellewell plays in the Jamestown Community Band, and looks forward to a good turnout from the island. He has played for years in the Lafayette Band. He is proud to have inherited from the band a double-bell euphonium, which can be played to sound like a euphonium or a trombone. The rare brass horn was made in Indiana in 1928, "and has been in continuous service in the Lafayette Band." Hellewell explains that the horn, the last of its kind to be produced in 1953, was used at a time when many bands could not afford both instruments. Hellewell points out with a grin that the definition of a euphonium "is a baritone played well."

The Saturday evening concert is free to the public, and all low, conical brass horns are welcome to participate. The concert is sponsored by the North Kingstown Arts Council, the Rhode Island Council of the Arts and Centreville Bank in Wickford. For more information, call Vallee at 295-1607 or Hellewell at 423-1285.



Help osprey get new homes this holiday season

Jamestown's native ospreys need a summer home, and the Conanicut Island Raptor Project needs help to ensure that returning ospreys will continue to nest on Conanicut Island.

The CIRP is seeking suitable sites for three new osprey poles to serve as nesting platforms for migratory osprey. Private landowners and community organizations are invited to apply. First, a site visit will be scheduled to determine suitability. Once a site is approved, the CIRP will obtain necessary state Coastal Resources Management Council and Department of Environmental Management permits, build a sturdy, pole-mounted platform, and erect it at the chosen site this spring.

A donation of \$1,000 is requested to cover the cost of building and installing the pole. Any remaining funds will support the CIRP's educational and environmental programs in Jamestown. Donations are fully tax deductible and should be made payable to Jamestown Education Foundation, with "CIRP Osprey Project" on the memo line. For more information, contact Betsy Gooding at 423-1137.

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