

# SCM FRIENDS

QUARTERLY  
NEWSLETTER  
09 - 2021



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Birdcage Walk, London, SW1E 6HQ

Tickets £15

[www.cenotaphrequiem.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.cenotaphrequiem.eventbrite.co.uk)



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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second edition of 'SCM Friends'. This issue celebrates the return of live State Ceremonial music to our nation's capital and explores how music can transcend all barriers. We also hear from some of our newest members as we interview winners of the coveted 'Household Division Musician Of The Year'.

The concept of 'Global Britain' was at the heart of the 'Military Music Spectacular', which took place in Horse Guards in July, and to some extent I have used that same theme as a template for this newsletter. As restrictions ease this is a time to look outwards once more and interact with other cultures. As you shall see, in Musician Moon's article regarding the Countess of Wessex' String Orchestra's visit to Serbia in June, music is the perfect tool for doing just this.

I was especially excited to read Lance Corporal of Horse Taylor's article detailing the journey of Musician Julius Namugera who was amongst four Ugandan nationals to recently join our ranks. These four musicians were all discovered through the work of a fantastic charity called 'Brass for Africa'. I had the great privilege of seeing their amazing work first hand when I visited Uganda as part of a short-term training team. It thrills me to see how music has transformed the lives of children who have been raised in some of the most heartbreakingly deprived conditions I have ever witnessed. As they say in Uganda, "Topowa!"

## EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor: Lance Sergeant Andrew Skelton;  
Deputy Editor: Lance Corporal Rachael Kendall;  
Designer: Musician Joseph Yu





# THE SWORD AND THE CROWN A MILITARY MUSIC SPECTACULAR

By Lance Sergeant Andrew Skelton

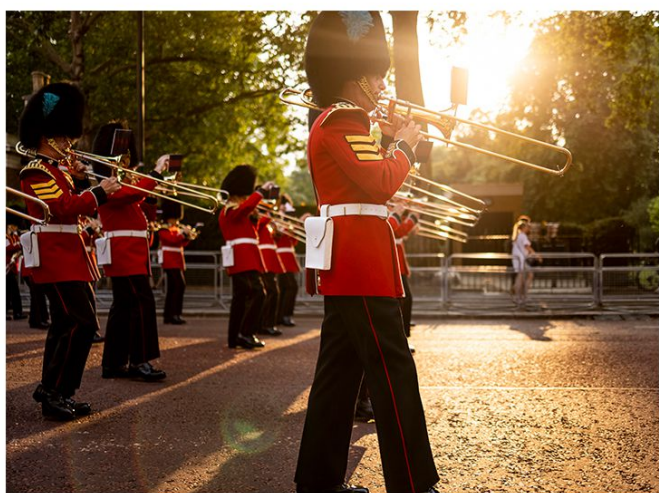


Military personnel are accustomed to adapting and overcoming obstacles. However, it would have been impossible eighteen months ago to foresee just how rapidly we would all have to make alterations to our daily lives, both at work and at home. During the long months of lockdown, we keenly missed interaction with others and the ability to communicate face to face. Communication is so integral to what makes us human and there is arguably no more powerful means of communication than music – the universal language.

Horse Guards Parade, the home of Trooping The Colour and so many other of our nation's great State Ceremonial occasions, laid eerily quiet during the lockdown months - bereft of the boom of a bass drum, the rousing melody of a march and the crunch of drill boots driving into the gravel. Therefore, it was with great resolve that HQ Londist, led by the Bde Major Lt Col Guy Stone LVO, began to plan what for so long had seemed almost unthinkable - the return of music and pageantry to Horse Guards and with the addition of the most vital element of all, a live audience.

The intent from the outset was to produce a spectacle that would not only highlight the significant United Kingdom narratives of our time, but also offer a glimmer of hope as the country emerged out of the pandemic. And so, the Military Music Spectacular, 'The Sword and the Crown' was born.

The Massed Bands were put through a rigorous and intensive rehearsal schedule, each move and step carefully planned and scrutinised by WO1 (RSM) David Wright – the Regimental Sergeant Major of Household Division Bands and the Assistant Senior Drum Major, WO2 Scott Fitzgerald. The opening sequence alone would see the Massed Bands perform not one but two spin-wheels, a challenging manoeuvre at the best of times.



*Marching down Birdcage Walk*

The central narrative for The Sword and the Crown - 'Global Britain' – was conveyed through the opening presentation of 'Fanfare for a Great Occasion', 'The Soldiers of The Queen', 'When the Guards Are On Parade' and 'To Your Guard' – a magnificent sequence of precision drill and stirring martial music. The Massed Pipes and Drums of The London Scottish Regiment and the Aberdeen Universities

Officers Training Corps followed, with a swirl of kilts and the sweet drone of the pipes to 'The 79th's Farewell to Gibraltar'.

Horse Guards was set – stands in place, music selected and rehearsed - an air of anticipation emerged as each performance evening the crowds queued up patiently to take their seats. The distant strike-up of a band, as they made their way down Birdcage Walk from Wellington Barracks to Horse Guards, added to the sense of excitement.



*Arrival of Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal at Horse Guards*

Part of the mastery of WO1 Wright's plan was the slick sequencing of the elements of the performance – no sooner had the pipes retreated, before a combined band of Army Reserves, formed of both the Honourable Artillery Company and The Royal Yeomanry (Inns of Court and City Yeomanry), performed a sequence paying a poignant tribute to 100 years of The Royal British Legion.

The performance narrative then switched to the environment; the first battalion Irish Guards are deployed on Operation CORDED - working alongside members of the Zambian Military and Civil law enforcement agencies in the Kafue National Park. The training programme helps develop the skills to counter Illegal Wildlife Trade and to benefit nature, people, the economy, and support national and regional stability. A specially composed piece was prepared - 'Rangers Alert' – to pay tribute to the work of all those involved in Operation CORDED and salute those Zambia partners who are engaged on the front line of this battle. The sequence unfolded, led by the Massed Corps of Drums of the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards and the Honourable Artillery Company advancing onto the parade ground in arrowhead formation - the age-old sound of fifes and drums conveyed a sense of taking the battle directly to those who would threaten the survival of some of the world's most magnificent animals.

This year we bid a fond farewell to Kneller Hall, the home of army music for over 164 years. 'Legacy' provided a heart-warming reflection on Kneller Hall, a building that held so many memories for all the musicians on parade. It seemed only fitting that this piece's soloist should be one of the most recent musicians



*Musician Romana Hallstead performing*

to have passed out of Kneller Hall's hallowed grounds, Musician Romana Hallstead. A graduate of both the Junior Royal Northern College of Music and the highly respected Chetham's School of Music, she performed on trumpet for the very first time on Horse Guards after recently becoming joint winner of the 2021 Household Division Musician of the Year Competition.

As the Military Music Spectacular began to culminate, the Massed Bands performed a selection of James Bond themes, specially arranged for the Military Music Spectacular by Household Division Staff Arrangers Lance Sergeant Chris Shelton and Sergeant Adam Barras; in a humorous nod to 'Global Britain', the Massed Bands created a huge '007' formation and then finally slow marched into place to finish the sequence, spelling out 'UK' across Horse Guards. A heart-stopping explosion of fireworks added a final burst of excitement to the evening's proceedings.



*'UK' formation created by the Massed Bands*

*Major Paul Collis-Smith*

Finally, West End vocalist, Rodney Earl Clarke, swept the audience along on a wave of emotion with a superb rendition of 'I Vow To Thee, My Country', followed by a beautiful setting of 'Great is Thy Faithfulness', composed by Major Paul Collis-Smith, Director of Music of the Household Cavalry Band, featuring the unmistakable sound of the State Trumpeters.

The Military Music Spectacular was an emotional moment on so many levels; a return to Horse Guards Parade for the Massed Bands of the Household Division for the first time in a year and a half, and perhaps more importantly, it saw people from all over the United Kingdom come back together again to enjoy music in a live setting. Moreover, it was a demonstration of the confidence and resilience of the United Kingdom.





*The Mased Bands of the Household Division marching off Horse Guards*



*The Mased Pipes and Drums of the London Scottish Regiment and Scottish Universities Officers' Training Corps*



*Massed Corps of Drums of the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards  
and the Honourable Artillery Company*



*Live Painting at The Sword and The Crown, A Military Music Spectacular*

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**Cadogan Hall**

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# FROM UGANDA TO THE BAND OF THE HOUSEHOLD CAVALRY THE JOURNEY OF MUSICIAN JULIUS NAMUGERA

By Lance Corporal of Horse Rachel Taylor

Uganda: a country rich with diverse wildlife and beautiful landscapes. It is, however, ranked as one of the poorest countries in the world. Due to unplanned urbanisation and migration, together with a high birth rate, the lives of the country's children are spiralling into crisis. 50% of the population is under 14 years old, of which 70% have no access to welfare or education.



*Brass for Africa in action*



*Musician Namugera*

What possible bearing could any of this have on State Ceremonial Music, you might ask? Well, there are now four Ugandan nationals in the Royal Corps of Army Music, two of which have recently been assigned to The Band of The Household Cavalry. These passionate and determined musicians learnt about British Army Music through a charity called 'Brass for Africa'. This organisation was the brainchild of Jim Trott, who had spent most of his life as a commercial pilot. In 2009 Jim, alongside a number of colleagues, found himself in possession of a collection of discarded, pre-used brass instruments. Determined to give these sadly neglected instruments a worthwhile purpose the concept of Brass for Africa was born. The charity's aim was to teach music and life skills to disadvantaged African children, as a way of giving them hope.

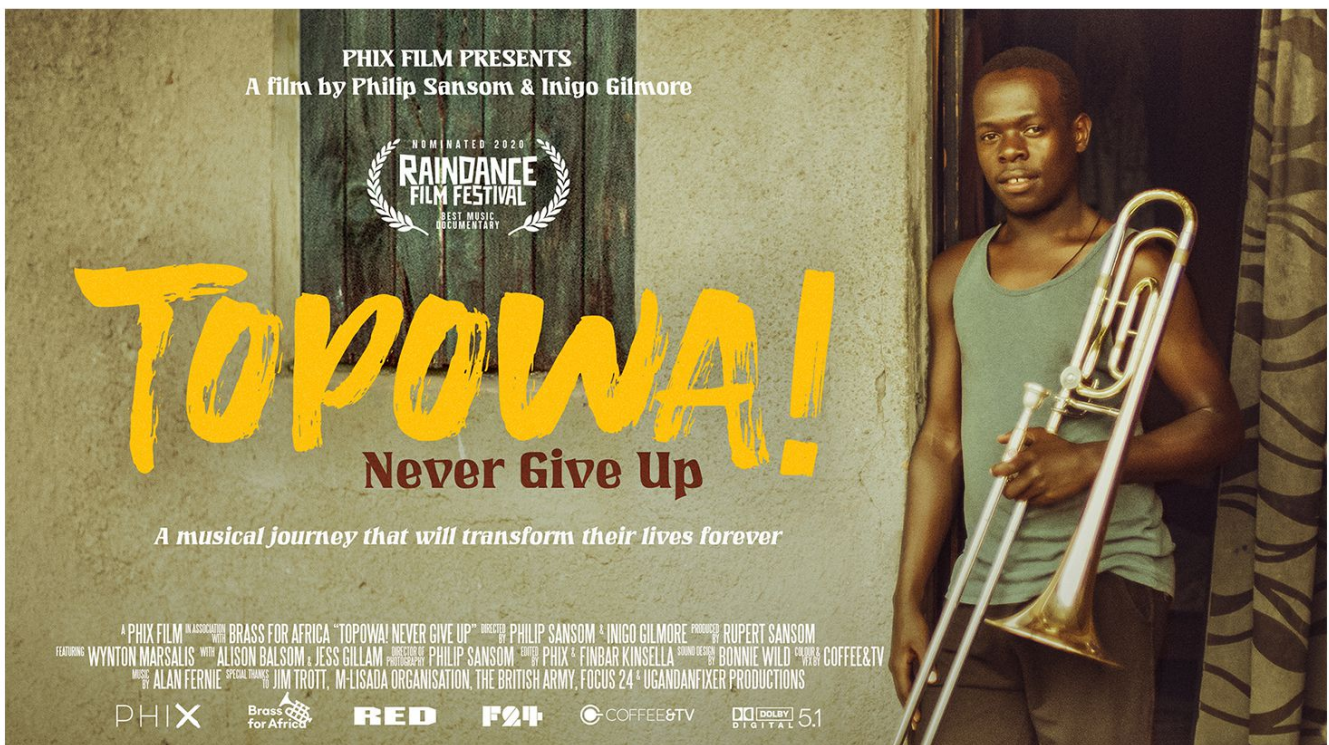
Having now been established for over a decade many of the original children enrolled in the program have now gone on to teach music themselves to younger generations. The charity continues to develop its teachers too, enabling them to give something back to their communities. Brass for Africa continues to support and encourage talent across 25 different outreaches, 6 days a week, in Uganda, Liberia and Rwanda.

Musician Julius Namugera, a trombonist, is one of the musicians recently assigned to The Band of The Household Cavalry and is one of the charity's many success stories. Growing up in Katwe, the slum area of Kampala, his childhood was certainly not easy. His family's only access to water, like thousands of others, was from filthy streams. As a result, with limited access to medication, many became sick. Julius' father left when he was young, leaving his mother struggling to care for him and his two younger siblings. Life during this period of Julius' life was hard and he eventually found himself in a local children's home, feeling let down and full of hate. Many of his friends went on to join criminal gangs simply to survive, and some were even killed as a result.



*Brass for Africa*

Thankfully Julius found a different path through Brass for Africa. When discovering the trombone, Julius fell in love with the instrument. He even kept it hidden in his bed so that no one else could play it! With dedicated practice he went on to spend much of his teenage years playing with his best friends, who he considered to be his new family. He claims that music saved him and gave him the best feeling when playing with his band. When progressing onto teaching, he stressed the significance of inspiring the children, and giving them hope. Brass for Africa's motto is "Topowa" which translates to "Never Give Up", and indeed Julius had a big dream – to join the best bands in the world as a jazz player.



### *Topowa - Never Give Up*

In 2019, the charity planned to undertake a UK tour, which included performances at both Ronnie Scott's, and Cheltenham Music Festival. Not only would this be his first time leaving Uganda, but for Julius it would also mean meeting and performing with his all-time idol, Wynton Marsalis. However, the build-up to the tour was far from straightforward. Having never had the opportunity to leave Uganda, none of the musicians held passports, and so the tour organisers had the huge task of assisting the musicians in their passport applications. With many of the students having no parents or birth certificates, and therefore being subject to prejudice due to their backgrounds, this made gaining a passport a long and arduous task.

In the months leading up to the tour, the decision was made by four of the musicians to apply for the British Army, having heard that Commonwealth citizens were welcome to apply. Their audition would be held at the Royal Military School of Music during their visit to the UK. This in turn meant many hours of practice in-between teaching and the hours of queuing at the passport office. The charity's Director of Music Education, Lizzie Burrows, praised the applicants for their passion, talent, and hard work. She was responsible in preparing them for their auditions, which included conducting mock auditions, and practicing that all important first impression. Julius knew that another requirement to join the Army was that his fitness would need to be of a suitable standard, and so committed himself to running, playing football, and doing press ups every day. A bit of friendly competition with the other three applicants also helped!

Finally, the time came for the musicians to board their first ever plane. Filled with great anticipation and growing excitement their arrival in London was a surreal experience. It was simply impossible to compare the smart historic buildings and sky-scrapers to their home in Uganda. It felt like a dream come true to be performing with their best friends there. When working in collaboration with the Cheltenham Youth Concert Band for the Cheltenham Music Festival their passion and infectious energy translated across to the concert band's musicians. Julius claimed that the day of the performance, which also featured Wynton Marsalis, was quite simply the happiest of his life.

Whilst in Cheltenham preparing for the evening's performance, the four musicians who had auditioned for The Royal Corps of Army Music received the incredible news that they had passed their audition, having highly impressed the audition panel. Unsurprisingly, they were absolutely elated, with thoughts of a fresh start, countless exciting opportunities and many new friendships on the horizon.



*Musician Namugera*

Before arriving at their dream job in a British Army band, the four musicians were to embark on fourteen weeks of Basic Training. Having endured such a challenging childhood they had all built up a strong robustness which saw them endure every trial and tribulation thrown at them during this element of training. However, what Ugandan life did not prepare them for were the sub-freezing temperatures of a typical British Winter! Nevertheless, the four young men were determined to succeed, and so went on to phase two training at the Royal Military School of Music. It was here that they received immense support from the training team, despite the difficulties that were presented by the Covid-19 pandemic and were able to develop musically at a staggering pace.



*Training at The Royal Military School of Music*

On receiving his posting to The Band of The Household Cavalry, Julius was extremely pleased to be posted to one of his top choices and was intrigued by the unique nature of being a member of a mounted band. In mid-September Julius

and Musician Disan Ssegawa will be embarking on the Household Cavalry's 16-week mounted dutyman's course, a somewhat surreal challenge which both are a little apprehensive but also excited about. However, for Julius, having been working with the band for a few weeks now, he already has the feeling that he has come to the right place. Guided and inspired by many of the talented and experienced musicians within the band he looks forward to fulfilling his dream of performing to Her Majesty The Queen for many years to come.

Julius's story exemplifies the qualities and attributes we all strive for as State Ceremonial musicians. His relentless determination to be the very best he can be in his chosen field is an example to us all. ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION PRESENTS

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# 9<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

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- Mr Roy Humphrey ([roy.humphrey49@gmail.com](mailto:roy.humphrey49@gmail.com))



# UP CLOSE WITH THE HOUSEHOLD DIVISION MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR WINNERS

By Lance Corporal Rachael Kendall

One of the highlights of the Household Division calendar is its 'Musician of the Year' Competition, which is hosted annually in the Guards Chapel. This platform allows musicians who have recently been welcomed into the Division to show their soloistic ability in an internal, friendly competition. This year saw 11 musicians enter and was undoubtedly one of the fiercest competitions the Division has hosted, resulting in five commendations being awarded. We had the pleasure to speak to the joint winners of 2021, saxophonist **Musician Ania Kucharczak** (The Band of the Grenadier Guards) and trumpeter **Musician Romana Hallstead** (The Band of the Irish Guards) to talk about their experiences as military musicians, tackling those pre-competition nerves, and much more.

## ***1. What was your musical background prior to joining the British Army?***

**Ania:** I started playing piano as a child, and after some time started to play saxophone, gaining a Licentiate of the Royal School of Music in Performance. I joined the British Army in July 2018 and had the privilege of being assigned to the Band of the Grenadier Guards in September 2019.

**Romana:** I began playing the trumpet in primary school and soon joined my local brass band. After realising how much I enjoyed playing, I started lessons at the Junior Royal Northern College of Music, at the same time as joining the Leyland Brass Band where I had the opportunity to perform at the British Open, National Finals, Brass in Concert and the European Championships in some of the most high profile concert halls in Europe. I was also a member of the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, the National Youth Brass Band of Scotland and the National Jugend Brass Band. At 16, I studied at Chetham's School of Music where I became Principal



*Musician Romana Hallstead*

Trumpet of the Chetham's Symphony Orchestra. I was then fortunate to study at the Royal Academy of Music with Mark David, Will O'Sullivan, Paul Beniston and John Hutchins.

## ***2. How do you prepare for a competition or a high-profile performance?***



*Musician Ania Kucharczak*

**Ania:** Firstly, I listen to different recordings of the piece and research to learn about the background of both the piece and composer. I then start practicing slowly, at a speed where I can remain relaxed and focused on all the details, before gradually increasing the speed until I reach the correct tempo. I will then rehearse in front of others to imitate the competition environment.

**Romana:** The day before a high-profile performance, I usually focus on a long, relaxed warm up and avoid practicing too strenuously to make sure I am fresh for the next day. On the day of the performance, I'll start with another long warm up and then listen to uplifting music so that I am in a positive, calm frame of mind.

## ***3. Do you have any top tips of advice to combat nerves?***

**Ania:** The best advice I can give is be prepared. The best way to calm nerves is to know your piece which will give you confidence. I also always make sure I am warmed up, both physically and mentally. Finally, do not focus on the elements that could go wrong. Think positively which will inevitably be reflected in your performance and remember that the audience want you to do well!

**Romana:** Having the correct mentality helps me to cope with nerves. If you start a performance worrying about how others perceive you, it will translate into your playing. Starting the performance telling yourself "I am going to do the best that I can do" helps me to concentrate on just myself and my own capabilities.

#### ***4. Do you have a warm-up routine to prepare before a performance?***

**Ania:** I usually start by playing long tones, practicing my dynamic range, as well as articulation exercises to check how the reed is responding in the performance room on that day. I also isolate some of the difficult passages of my piece.

**Romana:** My warm-up is part of my daily routine. I begin with five minutes of free blowing down my lead pipe which gently wakes up the muscles in the lips and allows me to focus on a relaxed air flow needed to play trumpet. I'll move onto 15 minutes of economy exercises concentrating on control in the quieter dynamic range, followed by 15 minutes of flexibility exercises to improve my strength and conditioning of the lip muscles. Finally, I finish my warm-up/morning routine with articulation exercises to wake up my tongue ready for the day.

#### ***5. What has been your career highlight to date?***

**Ania:** There are so many to choose from and many more in the pipeline, however, the 100th Anniversary of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey was a poignant event to be part of. One of the joys of being a military musician is the diversity our work presents, I really enjoyed performing as a competitor for the Household Division Competition as well as working as part of the Covid-19 Mobile Testing Unit.

**Romana:** My career highlight to date was performing a solo composed by Colonel Haw entitled 'Legacy' with the Household Division Massed Bands on Horse Guards Parade as part of the 2021 Military Musical Spectacular, The Sword and The Crown.

#### ***6. What inspired you to join the British Army as a musician?***

**Ania:** I was inspired by watching Trooping the Colour on television and visiting Buckingham Palace to see Changing of the Guard.

**Romana:** I started my application to join the British Army whilst studying in my final year at the Royal Academy of Music. I wanted a career that offered a stable income, with lots of travel and performance opportunities which is exactly what the Royal Corps of Army Music has provided for me.

**7. The past year has presented a multitude of challenges for everyone. How have you remained motivated during this time?**

**Ania:** I didn't really have to motivate myself to play as I enjoy it so much. However, I know many musicians struggled during this time. I find a good method to stay motivated is to set a realistic goal, whether this is preparing for an exam or working towards a piece you have always wanted to play. Other ideas include taking virtual masterclasses or listening to your favourite instrumentalists.

**Romana:** I have been able to stay motivated during the last year by challenging myself to learn new, challenging repertoire as well as pushing myself to accept any opportunities that have presented themselves.

Lieutenant Colonel Haw, Commanding Officer Household Division Bands, would like to once again congratulate all the Musicians who participated in this year's competition; particularly first place winners Musicians Ania Kucharczak and Romana Hallstead, second place Musician Paul Lamstaes, and joint third Musicians Caitlyn Hawkins and Shane Lyttle. We look forward to hosting the Household Division Musician of the Year Competition 2022 and hope that the doors to the Guards Chapel will once again be open to the faithful supporters of military music. ■ ■ ■ ■ ■



*Musician Lamstaes*



*Musician Hawkins*



*Musician Lyttle*



*Competitors of the Household Division Musician of the Year 2021, held at The Royal Military Chapel (The Guards Chapel)*



*Adjudicators congratuated the winners of the competition*



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**ARMY**  
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# THE COUNTESS OF WESSEX'S STRING ORCHESTRA IN SERBIA

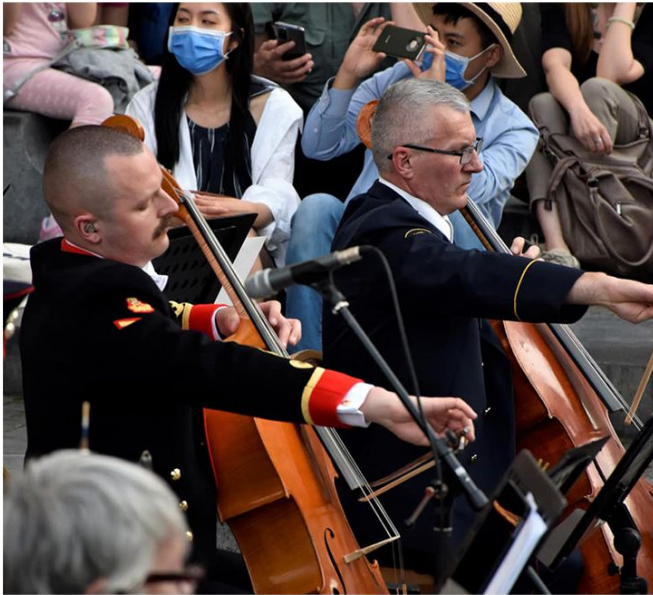
By Musician Grace Moon

Throughout much of the latter part of the 20th Century Serbia, a former member of the federation of Yugoslavia, saw a great deal of turmoil and conflict. As this multinational, multi-ethnic federation crumbled and Croatia and Slovenia declared independence it was only a matter of time before war inevitably broke out. During this era UK armed forces played a significant role in a number of UN peace-keeping operations in the region.

Since then the British government has worked hard to establish good relations with this culturally rich nation and, as the UK forges its own path away from the European Union, it has never been more important to further cement these. In June of this year The Countess of Wessex's String Orchestra were sent to Serbia in an effort to exhibit our musical heritage and culture. It would also present an excellent opportunity for the members of the orchestra to learn more about Serbian culture.



*The orchestra performed alongside Serbian counterparts  
at a number of outdoor events*



*Lance Corporal Daniel Edwards playing alongside a Serbian musician*

unusual time signatures but regardless of how complex it was everyone, whether young or old, musician or non-musician, knew all the lyrics to every song. It was evident that music played a vital part in their culture.

The highlight of the tour had to be the outdoor concert at a plaza in the city centre of Belgrade. After having only performed to TV cameras and in recording studios for so long it was a real thrill for the orchestra to perform to a live audience once more. As the orchestra played the audience grew and grew, staying until the very end of the concert. The majority of the orchestra are all fortunate to have been involved in a number of exciting productions and projects over the past 18 months. However, to engage with and enjoy the appreciation of a real live audience once again was a truly memorable moment for all involved.

The repertoire performed was a mixture of British and Serbian music, with the Serbian orchestra taking the lead on much of their more traditional music. At another evening concert The Countess of Wessex's String Orchestra was presented with a selection of Serbian folk music to sight-read. This proved to be quite a challenge as the piece incorporated some quite interesting time changes, idiosyncratic of traditional Serbian music. With guidance from their Serbian counterparts the orchestra really enjoyed learning this new repertoire and was well received by the guests, which included the Serbian Prime Minister.

On the occasion of Her Majesty The Queen's birthday the orchestra performed at the British Embassy in Belgrade. This celebration brought together Embassy workers from various nations and allowed them to perhaps feel just that little bit closer to home for a short while.

On the final day, The Countess of Wessex's String Orchestra did a workshop/concert with Serbian musicians ranging from 10-18 years old. Rehearsing and performing 'Nimrod' by Elgar these children were given an insight into what it is like to be in not only play in an an orchestra but also what it is to be a State Ceremonial musician. To be able to sit down and play music alongside a new generation of young musicians was incredibly gratifying as they were all so keen to learn and full of life and hope for the future. On one particular occasion, guided by the British Defence Attaché through a Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery, the orchestra learnt more about Serbia's troubled past. This really emphasised the importance of the orchestra's role in helping to maintain good diplomatic relations between our two nations.



*The orchestra at the British Embassy in Belgrade*

Throughout their time in Serbia, despite the language barrier, the orchestra were able to communicate through music: a universal language that has the ability to convey so much more than words. For a member of the orchestra, Lance Corporal Moisenko, it was her first experience of a foreign tour: "I joined the Army so I could travel and perform. To have met new people, learnt about their culture through music, is an opportunity I'm so grateful to have had". ■ ■ ■ ■ ■



*The orchestra playing on the occsaion of Her Majesty The Queen's birthday*

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS



**9 OCT**

Countess of Wessex's String Orchestra Concert  
Christ Church Bexleyheath

**1 NOV**

Orchestra of the Household Division: Cenotaph Requiem  
The Royal Military Chapel (The Guards Chapel)

**4 NOV**

Countess of Wessex's String Orchestra Concert  
Norden Farm Centre for the Arts

**13 NOV**

Orchestra of the Household Division Orchestra  
Festival of Remembrance at The Royal Albert Hall

**14 NOV**

The Massed Bands of the Household Division  
National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph

**24 NOV**

The Massed Bands of the Household Division  
Scarlet and Gold Concert Series at Cadogan Hall

**25 NOV**



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**THE STATE CEREMONIAL MUSICIANS PRESENT**

# **GUARDS CHAPEL RECITAL SERIES 2021**

**ADMISSION FREE**

Time: 1:10 - 2pm, first three Wednesdays of each month

Venue: The Royal Military Chapel (The Guards' Chapel),  
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**6 OCTOBER**

**3 NOVEMBER**

**13 OCTOBER**

**10 NOVEMBER**

**20 OCTOBER**

**17 NOVEMBER**

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*The Household Division Charity aims to secure all possible financial support for the broadest and finest professional development of its serving personnel, their education, their welfare and their commemoration.*

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Enquiries about this publication can be made to:

The Editorial Team,  
Friends of State Ceremonial Musicians  
[scmfriends@householddivision.org.uk](mailto:scmfriends@householddivision.org.uk)

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