

## FIND OUT MORE... focused listening activities

Your school has a special day in July when it is going to be visited by a Brass Band. We think you'll love it! British Brass Bands are traditional, musical ensembles that include a wide variety of brass instruments and percussion. The music that they play is really varied, from operatic overtures to pop music.

### CHRISTOPHER BOND

Christopher is a professional composer, conductor and musical director, who came from Cornwall but now lives in Cardiff. Since 2015, he has been 'Composer in Residence' to the Cory Band. His music has been performed all over the world and in the United Kingdom, his work has been broadcast on BBC Radio 2, 3, 4 & Classic FM.

Most of Christopher's music is written for brass bands and he is heavily involved in the activities surrounding brass bands, such as adjudicating at their performance competitions, composing competitions and the musical education of young musicians.

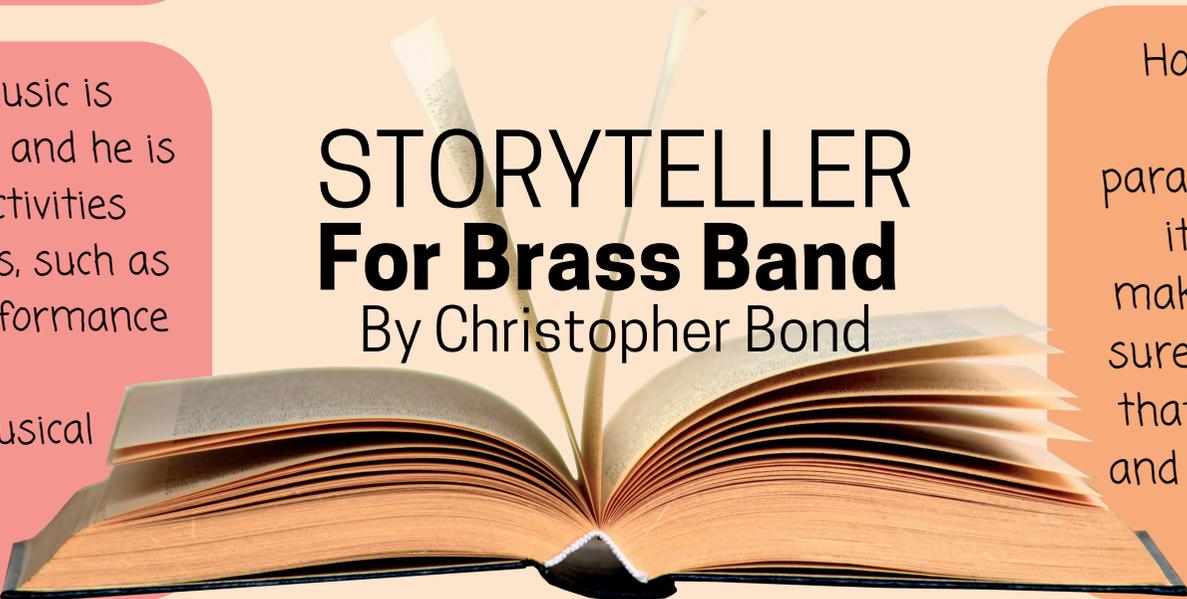
You can listen to the music on this link:  
<https://soundcloud.com/christopherbond/music/storyteller-brighthouse-rastrick-band>.

Do you recognise some parts of the music?  
Might you have heard some snippets of this music before?

### STORYTELLER

This music was written for a music competition where brass bands are not just judged on their ability to play the music, but also on their ability to entertain an audience. This music was played by the Brighthouse and Rastrick Band from Yorkshire in 2016.

How does this music make you feel? Write a short paragraph that tells us what it is about the music that makes you feel that way. Be sure to use lots of adjectives that describe your emotions and the effect that it has on you. Enjoy!



## STORYTELLER For Brass Band

By Christopher Bond

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Gavin Higgins is one of the most exciting and gifted composers in Britain today. He was born in Gloucestershire (1983) and studied french horn and composition at some esteemed, British music establishments. Gavin's family can trace their musical heritage back to 1895 as working-class brass band musicians and his passion for this heritage has resulted in him writing a number of larger scale pieces of music for brass bands. Gavin also writes for orchestra and for solo instruments, and he writes music for choir and for opera. In 2022,

Gavin wrote the innovative 'Concerto Grosso for Brass Band and Orchestra' which was performed at the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall. He won the Royal Philharmonic Society Award in the Large-Scale Composition category in March 2023 for this piece that was premiered at the BBC Proms in 2022 with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and Tredegar Town Band, conducted by Ryan Bancroft. It got great reviews.

The composer has an artistic relationship with the Tredegar Town Band. You can watch a video here about Gavin and the Band. In the video, Gavin also talks briefly about his diagnosis with Tourettes and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and how music helped him,

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-62334839>

Gavin says of his Concerto Grosso for Brass Band and Orchestra,

"...-this music is close to my heart. Concerto Grosso for Brass Band and Orchestra is a love letter to that music and to those communities."

You can look at the 'score' of this music at this link to see what the music looks like.

[https://issuu.com/gavinhiggins/docs/50pggavin\\_higgins\\_-\\_concerto\\_grosso\\_for\\_brass\\_band](https://issuu.com/gavinhiggins/docs/50pggavin_higgins_-_concerto_grosso_for_brass_band)

## Gavin Higgins

### Some brass pieces by Gavin Higgins

Destroy, Trample as Swiftly as She (2011)

Prophecies (2017)

So Spoke Albion (2019)

Sadly Now the Throstle Sings

Toccata (2013)

Ar Lan Y Môr (2022)

"I think it's the occasion when the poor old critic has to reach for the sharpest word in their lexicon, which in my case is, 'wow! It was a spectacular piece, it was magnificent in this hall... just an astonishing jamboree of sound."

Fiona Maddocks, the Observer

Musicians of the Tredegar Town Band from Wales."



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You are going to listen to a piece of music by Gavin Higgins called "Ivory Ghosts". This is an expressive piece of music that encourages us to feel emotion about the plight of wild elephants in Africa who are hunted for their ivory. You are going to be asked questions about how it achieves its expression by using the interrelate elements of music. Go to the music using the link below:

<https://soundcloud.com/gavin-higgins-music/ivory-ghosts>

Below is a list of instruments that are playing the music. Underline that ones that you can hear and recognise.

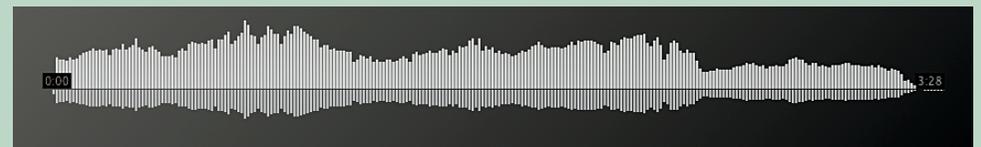


Soprano Cornet  
Cornet  
Flugel Horn  
Tenor Horn  
Baritone Horn  
Euphonium  
Trombone

Bass Trombone  
Tubas  
Vibraphone  
Marimba  
Cymbal  
Bass Drum  
Tubular Bells



1. You'll hear the music above many times in the music. It's not always on the same notes and not always the exact shape as this, but knowing what you know about the music, what do you think it represents? \_\_\_\_\_
2. The motif above can be heard at 1: 48. What two instruments play in duet with each other for about 14 seconds? Use the list to the left to help you. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Look at the sound wave shape of the whole piece of music from Soundcloud, below, What do the vertical white lines represent? Why are some lines taller and denser than others?



3. Using the musical terms p, mp, mf, f, ff  and  indicate the music's dynamic journey in the white space above, following the clues from the sound wave.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D991a4-Z74I&t=17s>

## WICKED

## LUCY PANKHURST

## COMPOSER

### Lucy Pankhurst

Lucy Pankhurst is a composer from the northwest of England. She studied tenor horn and composition when she was at University. In 2020 she was also awarded a PhD for her work focussing on contemporary applications of the traditional brass band. She was the first female composer to win a "British Composer Award" (now the Ivors) in 2020. Her piece for Brass Band, "In Pitch Black" was also the first brass band piece to win an Ivor (Brass/Wind category)

### Wicked

This piece of music was composed for a brass band competition in 2014. It features the EUPHONIUM in the introduction., playing in an unusual way. Later in the music, you can hear solos from other instruments, including the cornet, tuba, trombone, and tenor horn.

Place these instruments in order of pitch (lowest first)

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_



### The Euphonium

The euphonium is a member of the brass family and is a kind of tuba. The word comes from the greek language meaning "sweet sound". They have either three or four valves and have been in use since 1874 in British brass bands, military bands and occasionally, orchestras. Some famous euphonium players include Prof David Thornton, Trevor Groom, Prof David Childs, Lyndon Baglin.

### Questions

1. How many tubas can you see being played?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What technique does the euphonium use in the introduction?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What percussion effect can you hear (and see) at 1:30  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What instruments are being played behind the tubas? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What instrument is being played by the person sat down on the left at the front?  
\_\_\_\_\_