

Gothenburg dominates Swedish Festival

THIS year's Swedish Brass Band Festival showed, once again, that the western city of Gothenburg (Göteborg) is the Swedish centre of banding. Not surprising perhaps, being close to both Britain and Norway, a large number of performers residing in the latter. Gothenburg Brass Band took the premier title followed closely by newcomer Windcorp. Betlebenskyrkan (BTK) came third, pushing the other two larger city bands, Solna and Malmö, into the lower half.

The organisation is making changes that are progressive, making the event one of class and quality. Over the last few years, the standard has improved in all three competitive sections and, when hearing the playing of the younger generations, it is obvious that the movement is moving in the right direction. This can be seen in the progression of some of the younger bands, such as Torsby Brass, led by Berit Palmqvist, who won the B class contest with a fine performance.

The change in format in the championship, bringing in a set test-piece as part of a 30-minute

programme, proved not only to be advantageous, but also a tool used in training brass teachers as part of a workshop, comparing the top section bands' performance of Royal Parks.

The bands' approach to using the remaining time at their disposal varied greatly. Gothenburg chose to fill the programme with a winning performance of St. Magnus, repeating its recent success in New Zealand. Windcorp, the newly created 'project band', chose a more varied and perhaps more entertaining program, as did Malmö and BTK, while Solna went for a more traditional march and hymn-like combination. These five performances gave the enthusiastic audience an entertaining afternoon, covering the full spectrum of the brass band repertoire. The Swedish Brassband Festival has slowly been taking steps to create a more professional combination of contest and festival, which will attract and promote the best of brass playing in the country. The introduction of a more demanding test-piece is one of the steps taken

as a means for relative comparison of the bands. However, placing this between such a contrasting mix of programmes chosen by the bands minimises the possibility of doing what the introduction of the test-piece was intended to do. It may be more advantageous to have separate test-piece and programme events, which should not present too many problems when there are only five or six competing in the top section. Likeness in format would assist in creating a fairer ground for judgement, as would rules on the length of programmes (one band played for over 40 minutes!). Although making moves in the right direction, for the competitive element to be taken seriously, there are areas for improvement and refinement which could lift the event to even higher levels.

A final note from the weekend must be the impression made by the Minibrass massed band playing alongside Canadian Brass. This in itself will, hopefully, inspire a continued growth of the brass music across all generations in Sweden.

Graham Crookston

Class A

1. Götheborg Brass Band 91;
2. Windkorp Brassband 89;
3. BTK Göteborg 86; 4. Solna Brass 84; 5. Malmö Brass Band 82.

Adjudicators: Jappie Dijkstra, Mogens Andresen and Alan Morrison

Class B

1. Torsby Brass 92;
2. Ryttagårdsskyrkans 92
3. Gnosjö Brass Band 88
4. Åsenhoga Brassband 87
5. Missionskyrkan Värenarna 86
6. Bankeryds Brassband 85
7. Halmstads Brassband 84
8. LDK Veteraners 83; 9. Borås Brassband 81; 10. Wenern Brass 80.

Adjudicators: Torgny Hanson and Bert Langeler

Class C

1. Hillerstorps Musikkår 87
2. Bors Brassband 85
3. Wennerus Ungdomsbrass 83
4. Göteborgs Juniorbrass (82)

Adjudicators: Jappie Dijkstra and Alan Morrison

Minibrass

1. Åsenhogan Minibrass.
 2. Bors Minibrass,
 3. Borås Minibrass, I Bara Mässingen, Gislaved, VM-Minibrass, Vaxjö
- Adjudicators: Sissel Larsen and Tom Brevik