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Cavalry Trumpet and Kettledrum Practice from the Time of the Celts and Romans to the Renaissance

Music has been an integral part of military operations for centuries, and has had an important influence on folk and artistic culture throughout recorded history. Several ancient societies, including those of the Hebrews, Egyptians, Assyrians, Etruscans, Teutons, and Celts used the trumpet in battle as a form of communication and motivation, as well as in religious ceremonies. Others, like the Britons, began their military assaults by taunting the enemy with songs and deafening howls accompanied by the blowing of horns and trumpets.¹ While the Greeks used the trumpet-like *salpinx* in battle and in Olympic events, they also employed *aulos*² (twin-bodied reed instrument) players to calm their troops and to regulate marching. Romans sought to inspire their soldiers with several different styles of horns. Drums of different forms and functions, including military usage, were known in several ancient cultures stemming from the Neolithic era.³

Horses and other animals have played prominent roles in warfare since prehistoric times, and coupling them with military music has resulted in a tradition of horse-mounted military musicians, initially as

signalers and motivators (and enemy frighteners) and later in bands, a tradition that is represented over most of the globe. Within this tradition, it is the kettledrums and trumpets that have served as the basis of the tradition of mounted bands from the onset and which have remained with mounted musical units through the centuries.

While several sources discuss the use of trumpets and kettledrums in broad settings and terms, the present study focuses on the mounted aspect within courts and the military – functions that often intersected. Detailed accounts of the chronology of the history of trumpets and kettledrums, other than where it is necessary for understanding the mounted aspect, are outside the parameters of this work. Additionally, to keep this article to a manageable size, its scope has been limited to approximately from the first century B.C. to the first part of the sixteenth century because details of the further development of the tradition in the following five hundred years are considerable, and are best reserved for other studies. However, the present article concludes with a brief synopsis of these years.

¹ Henry George Farmer, *The Rise & Development of Military Music* (London: William Reeves, 1912), pp. 3-4, 29. Edward Tarr, *The Trumpet*, Translated from the German by S.E. Plank and Edward Tarr (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1988), 19-28.

² David Whitwell, *The Wind Band and Wind Ensemble before 1500*, Vol. 1 of *The History and Literature of the Wind Band and Wind Ensemble* (Northridge, California: Winds, 1982), pp. 20-21. Walter Blanco translates this instrument as 'fife' in his translation of *Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War*, (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), p. 222. Farmer translates this instrument as 'flute'. Whitwell maintains that 'long incorrectly translated as 'flute,' this instrument was actually a reed instrument...' Kathleen Schlesinger indicates a reed instrument: *The Greek Aulos; a Study of its Mechanism and of its Relation to the Modal System of Ancient Greek Music, followed by a Survey of the Greek Harmoniai in Survival or Rebirth in Folk-Music*, (London: Methuen & Co., 1939).

³ James Blades/Janet K. Page, 'Drum, Overview', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: MacMillan Publishers, Ltd., 2001). Don Michael Randel (ed.), *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed., (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), s.v. 'Drum', pp. 254-256.

PRE-CRUSADES

Some of the earliest records of battlefield horse-mounted trumpet use are from the Celts and Romans. Celtic evidence is apparent with the discovery of seventy-centimeter-long metal cones in Germany, which Renato Meucci maintains were connected with the cavalry,⁴ as well as with pre-Roman coins from southeastern Britain of the first century B.C. and first century A.D., which are engraved with horsemen brandishing *carnyces*, cylindrical pipes played vertically with boars' heads fixed to the tops. These coins, which reside in the British Museum, call attention to the adversary-frightening sight and sound of not only these early instruments, but of military music in general. As Derek Allen writes, 'While being blown from the back of a standing horse, the *carnyx* must have provided not only a deep and unearthly voice of command but, owing to its height, a recognizable rallying point'.⁵

Roman equestrian trumpets took several different formats, according to Renato Meucci, Michael Speidel and John Ziolkowski, who maintain that troops utilized the *cornu* (bronze curved wrap-around trumpet – shaped like a capital 'G'), tuba (conical straight trumpet), *lituus* (a tuba curved at the end – 'J' shaped) and *bucina* (curved trumpet with a flared bell) for signaling.⁶ An early extant image of a Roman cavalry musician appears in a relief in the Cemetery of Pisa depicting a battle scene showing a *tubicen* on horseback.⁷ The horse appears to be galloping or leaping and the helmeted horseman seems to be holding the tuba to his mouth with both hands due to the length of the instrument.

The practice of using mounted kettledrummers in addition to wind musicians in battle can be traced to the Sassanian period in Iran (224-651 AD) when

kettledrummers were mounted on elephants. The Sassanians also used trumpets to signal the start of battle and to maintain morale and, according to medievalist David Nicolle, 'only a senior Sassanian *spâdbadh* commander of a frontier province was permitted to enter a military camp to the sound of such trumpets'.⁸

One of the earliest written records of mounted musicians appears within Iran's national epic, Firdausi's *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings), which was completed in 1010 A.D. Firdausi traces Iranian history from what he and his Iranian contemporaries considered the dawn of time and the arrival of the Persians, to that of the Arabs (641 A.D.) through the use of myth and fact, and mentions mounted musicians several times, including:

Upon the elephants the trumpets blared, the world
was like a sea
Of indigo, and when they bound the drums
Upon the elephants heaven kissed the earth.⁹

While it is difficult to distinguish between fact and myth in the *Shahnameh*, there are enough references to mounted musicians to suggest that this aspect was probably based on the author's knowledge of practices of the day.

Supporting Firdausi's poetic recollection, M. Canard cites another Arabic literary source referring to mounted musicians, this time in Egypt: Ibn at-'T'uwayr, who was writing in the early years of Saladin's reign as Sultan of Egypt (1171-1193). Describing drums in a late eleventh-/early twelfth-century mounted band during the annual New Year's processions of the Fatimids (the dynasty of caliphs that Saladin deposed in 1171), Ibn captures a scene that must have been an interesting sight:

⁴ Renato Meucci, 'Roman Military Instruments and the Lituus', *Galpin Society Journal* 42 (August 1989) p. 90.

⁵ Derek Allen, 'Belgic Coins as Illustrations of Life in the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age of Britain', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 24 (1958), pp. 43-63.

⁶ Renato Meucci, 'Roman Military Instruments and the Lituus', *Galpin Society Journal* 42 (August 1989), pp. 85-97. Michael Speidel, 'Eagle-Bearer and Trumpeter', *Bonner Jahrbücher des Rheinischen Landesmuseums in Bonn* 176 (1976), pp. 123-163. John Ziolkowski, 'The Roman Bucina: A Distinct Musical Instrument?' *Historic Brass Society Journal* 14 (2002), pp. 31-58. While an examination of the distinctions among Roman military instruments is outside the parameters of the present study, it may be helpful to the reader to understand that the differences between instruments are not always clear, nor are they universally agreed upon. See Speidel, pp. 147-148, Ziolkowski, p. 47 and Meucci, pp. 47, 51-54 for commentary on straight vs. curved for the *bucina*.

⁷ P.R. von Bienenkowski, *Die Darstellungen der Gallier in der Hellenistischen Kunst*, (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1908), plate in appending booklet, VII, b.

⁸ David Nicolle, *Medieval Warfare Source Book, Volume 2: Christian Europe and its Neighbors* (London: Brockhampton Press, 1998), p. 265.

⁹ Firdausi, *The Shâhnâma of Firdausi, done into English by Arthur George Warner, M. A., and Edmond Warner, B. A.*, vol. 2 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd., 1905-1925), p. 348.

There followed a number of drummers (naqqârât) with 20 mules, each mule carrying three of these instruments, which looked like kettledrums but were not kettledrums, and were called t'ubûl [a cylinder with skins on both ends]... These they play upon as they march two by two. These instruments make a fine sound and are a characteristic aspect of the Fatimids.¹⁰

Both Firdausi and Ibn at-'T'uwayr testify that mounted trumpeters and kettledrummers were employed in military and court-type environments during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

In addition to these early mounted kettledrums, the Saracens possessed several wind instruments, which would also have been used on horseback, including *zumar* (shawms), *anafir/al* or *nafir/añafil* (trumpets), and *buqat* (trumpets or horns). Another related Arabian word *buq*, which is probably derived from the Latin word *bucina* was also used to indicate a horn- or trumpet-like instrument.¹¹ By the time Europeans arrived in the Holy Land for the Crusades, animal-mounted Middle-Eastern cavalry musicians were common.¹² Similarly, in Turco-Mongol Central Asia, a senior *Khagan* or ruler had his own orchestra of eighty or so musicians playing cymbals, horns, drums, bells and other instruments; such musical units could be mounted in battle to help direct the movements of forces with experienced elderly warriors beating the largest drums to mark the start of an attack.¹³

Byzantium also played a role in the tradition of

horse-mounted musicians. Writing in the second half of the eleventh century, John Skylitzes, a Constantinopolitan officer, gives an account of the city during the years 811–1057. In his *Madrid Skylitzes*, he depicts a mounted musician playing a shorter trumpet with a seemingly cylindrical section merged by a pommel with a conical bell.¹⁴

THE TIME OF THE CRUSADES

Although Roman cavalry used mounted *bucina* players, trumpet use in general seems to have diminished in much of Europe with the demise of the Roman Empire in the fifth century.¹⁵ Music was found in the courts and churches of Europe during the first half of the Middle Ages,¹⁶ but the Crusades may have had a hand in re-establishing and developing it on the battlefield. There are however, accounts of military trumpets and other horns being used in medieval Europe prior to the first Crusade of 1095, as well as at least one twelfth-century literary reference recounting battlefield kettledrums and cymbals several centuries earlier. A popular story about Charlemagne (742-814) tells of one of his jongleurs who guided him over Mt. Cenis in 773 and received as a reward all of the area over which his tuba could be heard when played from a particular hill.¹⁷ Writing in the eleventh century about the 778 battle of Roncesvalles, Pseudo-Turpin offers another military music tale about the sound of the Saracens' kettledrums being more than a little unsettling for Charlemagne's horses.¹⁸ War horns are mentioned in Beowulf, and Farmer notes that several trumpets

¹⁰ M. Canard, 'Lo Procession du Nouvel An chez les Fatimides', *Annales de l'Institut Orientales* 10 (1952) p. 373, trans. Jerry Tarman. David Nicolle writes (personal communication, 3 June 2003): 'Ib al-T'uwayr, like the other writers mentioned at the start of Canard's article, is believed to have been describing the Fatimid Caliphal processions as carried out in the late 11th or early 12th centuries, though he himself was writing early in Saladin's reign. This copying of, and interest in Fatimid sources was typical of Saladin's time, probably because Saladin was seeking to legitimize his possession and was therefore looking for aspects of ceremony to adopt for his own regime'.

¹¹ Tarr, *The Trumpet*, pp. 36-37.

¹² Caldwell Titcomb, 'The Kettledrums in Western Europe: Their History outside the Orchestra' (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1952), pp. 9-18. Edward Tarr, *The Trumpet*, p. 36.

¹³ Nicolle, *Medieval Warfare Source Book*, p. 266.

¹⁴ Skylitzes' chronicle was written in Greek, and Alfred Büchler maintains that the Madrid copy was probably an ad hoc production assembled in Sicily. Alfred Büchler, 'Horns and Trumpets in Byzantium: Images and Texts', *Historic Brass Society Journal* 42 (August 1989), pp. 23-59, Fig. 20.

¹⁵ Tarr, *The Trumpet*, p. 32. Tarr maintains that as early as the ninth century musical instruments and banners were among the most coveted spoils of war in the Middle East, *The Trumpet*, p. 38. Curt Sachs, *Handbuch der Musikinstrumentenkunde* (Leipzig, 1930, reprinted Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1967), pp. 282-284.

¹⁶ Whitwell, *The Wind Band and Wind Ensemble before 1500* provides excellent documentation of civic and court instrument use in Europe in the medieval period.

¹⁷ E.K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage* (London: Oxford University Press, 1903), I, p. 37, footnote 2, citing the *Chronicon Novaliciense*, iii, p.10.

¹⁸ Henry George Farmer, 'Crusading Martial Music', *Music & Letters* 30, no. 3 (July 1949), p. 243, citing Pseudo-Turpin, *Historia de vita Caroli Magni* (twelfth century); *Turpine's Story, A Middle English Translation of The Pseudo-*



Figure 1. *Cantigas de Santa Maria, Escorial T-I-1 (Códice Rico), Cant. CLXV.*
 Courtesy of Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid.

dating from the Danish conquest of England have been found – one of which is over five feet long.¹⁹

Whether there was a reintroduction into Europe of the battlefield trumpet or not,²⁰ crusading Europeans probably played a variety of instruments of the day—military as well as civic—on their way

to the Middle East. These likely consisted of several styles of labrosones including the *beme* (a straight trumpet), *busyn* (also a straight trumpet but larger than the *beme*) and *horn*.²¹ Upon their arrival in the Holy Land, they found a varied culture of military music: trumpets (*anafir*), horns (*buqat*), shawms

¹⁸ (continued) *Turpin Chronicle*, ed. Stephen A. Shepherd (The Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 2004), 30. Spuriously attributed to Pseudo-Turpin, the archbishop of Rheims, who in the *Chanson de Roland* dies in the Battle of Roncesvalles, this 'chronicle' was compiled some three centuries later.

¹⁹ Farmer, *Rise & Development*, p. 7.

²⁰ Various well-equipped scholars have debated trumpet development issues, investigating the idea of trumpet use moving from east to west or vice versa. This aspect of music history remains outside the intention of the present work, but the reader may refer to Don L. Smithers, *The Music and History of the Baroque Trumpet before 1721*, (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988), pp. 35-36, 332-333.

²¹ Henry Holland Carter, *A Dictionary of Middle English Musical Terms* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961, reprinted New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1968), pp. 36, 58, 206.

(*zumur*), kettledrums (*kusat*, *nakers*²²), drums (*tubul*) and cymbals (*kasat*).²³

Encountering these equestrian-military uses of wind and percussion instruments, and recognising their psychological impact in sight and sound, crusading European nobility and military leaders were impressed on several occasions. Evidence of this west meeting east was recorded by the French Medieval chronicler, Jean Sire De Joinville, who accompanied King Louis IX of France (canonized as Saint Louis in 1297) on the Seventh Crusade (directed against Egypt) when he reported that when the French arrived at Damiette in June 1249:

...we found there all the forces of the Sultan on the sea-shore, folk very fair to look upon; for the Sultan beareth arms... and where the sun struck the gold it made the arms to glitter. The noise that they made with drums and Saracen horns was horrible to hear.²⁴

Joinville was taken with the Saracen practice of sounding drums with great force during battle and at fixed times in camp, including daybreak when the Sultan arose, and in the evening. He also reports that the sound was such that those nearby were not able to hear one another and that he and his colleagues were amazed with this instrument's effectiveness in war music, which at this time still had the main goal of frightening the adversary.²⁵ Various horns and other wind instruments, including shawms and other double-reed instruments were also used on horse-, donkey-, and camel-back in the Middle East

during this era in various combinations. What must have been a truly ominous sight and sound occurred on 16 May 1291, when Muslim forces rushed forward in the attack of Saint-Jean d'Acre (present-day Akko, Israel) being led into battle by 300 kettledrummers on the backs of camels.²⁶ A vivid image of mounted kettledrums of the period is depicted in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, an illustrated compilation of songs of the Virgin Mary by Alfonso X, King of Castille. Song 165, which tells of how Mary of Tartus (Tortosa) in Syria defended the city in 1270-1271 from Baybars al-Bunduqdari, Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, is accompanied by six miniatures, one of which depicts mounted cavalymen, including trumpeters and kettledrummers (Figure 1).²⁷

Military bands performing in the midst of battle was another idea introduced by the Saracens, when trumpeters and drummers were joined by other musicians around their units' colours and command headquarters, and played continually through a battle. The cessation of this music indicated to soldiers that the colours were lost or were furled in retreat and at this point the battle was over.²⁸ This custom spread to Europe, where records are found even in the popular literature of the day: 'In two hundred places you could see them fighting, and you heard horns, trumpets, and oliphants sounding and making very loud signals, and you heard the pagans shouting and screaming'.²⁹ The expression 'machen schal', or 'to make noise during the battle', by the time of the Middle Ages became known as 'classicum' which was a term to indicate instruments

²² Various forms of the word 'naker' appear throughout Arabic and European texts. 'The Saracen origin of the new kettledrum is borne out in the names given it by the Europeans. Difficulties of transliteration, the lack of systematized orthography in the Middle Ages, and the carelessness of copyists resulted in a plethora of forms, but they all clearly betray a common root', Titcomb, *The Kettledrums in Western Europe*, p. 8.

²³ Farmer, 'Crusading Martial Music', p. 243.

²⁴ Jean Sire de Joinville Seneschal of Champagne, *The History of St. Louis*, French text ed. Natalis de Wailly, English trans. Joan Evans, Hon. Fellow of St. Hugh's College (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 44.

²⁵ Joinville, 84-85.

²⁶ Titcomb, 'The Kettledrums in Western Europe', p. 17, citing Taki-Eddin-Ahmed, *Histoire des sultans mamlouks de l'Egypte*, translated with notes from Arabic to French by Quatrèmere. (Paris, 1837-42), 2:125; Clement Huart, *Histoire des Arabes*. (Paris, 1912-13), 2:49; Gustave Schlumberger, *Prise de Saint-Jean-d'Zcre en l'an 1291...* (Paris, 1914), p. 41. Titcomb's exhaustive work is indispensable for the study of mounted music in general and for kettledrum history in particular.

²⁷ Alfonso X. *Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, The Wise, A Translation of the Cantigas de Santa Maria*, trans. Kathleen Kulp-Hill, with an introduction by Connie L. Scarborough. (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000); Matilde Lopez Serrano, *Cantigas de Santa Maria de Alfonso X el Sabio, Rey de Castilla, Estudio Preliminar por Matilde Lopez Serrano*, (Madrid: Editorial Patrimonio Nacional, 1974), plate CLXV.

²⁸ Farmer, 'Turkish Influence in Military Music', *Handel's Kettledrums and Other Papers on Military Music*, (London: Hinrichsen Edition Ltd., Printed by Brunce Ltd., 1950), p. 41; Farmer, *Military Music* (New York: Chanticleer Press, 1950), p. 10.

²⁹ From 'Aliscans' from *Chanson de Geste* [Song of Deeds], lines 5617-22, Translated by Tarr, *The Trumpet*, p. 40.

playing in unison in battle,³⁰ as well as in camp as a call to assemble and at ceremonial occasions.³¹

THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES

In these encounters the returning Crusaders introduced kettledrums into Europe, together with the practice of using them at court and in the military – including on horseback. Along with payment for the services of Janino la Chevretter (bagpiper) and Roger the Trumpeter, the 1310 public expenditures during the reign of Edward II also included an entry for Janino le Nakerer (kettledrummer; *naker* from the Arabic *naqqara*), all of whom were part of the King's Minstrels.³² These nakers were small and often shallow and, while size varied, Montagu suggests that drums of each pair were the same size and varied 'from something like four inches in diameter (ten cm) to something over a foot (thirty cm)', with the latter being exceptional.³³ Small kettledrums were known to be used especially in Germany, which had become a centre for kettledrum-playing as early as 1384, when Duke Philip of Burgundy had sent one of his drummers to Germany to learn the art of playing.³⁴ While it is not evident whether they were mounted on horseback, by Chaucer's time (he was writing in 1386) kettledrums were known in England in military circles and are mentioned in his *Knight's Tale* along with pipes, horns and trumpets:

Pypes, trompes, nakers, clariounes,
That in the bataille blowen bloody sounes³⁵

Jeremy Montagu, in his *Timpani and Percussion*, addresses the tonal elements of these early kettledrums, and maintains that while they were

indeed played in pairs, they may not have necessarily been pitched as 'high' and 'low', but rather were distinguished as producing dull or clear sounds. The theoretical tonal concepts of tonic and dominant harmony were not yet part of musicians' and learners' palettes, thus: "perfect cadences", a chord on the dominant or fifth leading to a final chord on the tonic or keynote, had yet to be invented, and thus there was no reason for one drum to be tuned higher or lower than the other.³⁶

There are several records of mounted trumpeters during this period. Representing various craft guilds, town waits rode in the procession that would become known as the Lord Mayor's Show after its inception in 1215, and up until 1422 when the parade moved to the river Thames.³⁷ Records of the Goldsmiths and other companies of this period refer to payment to musicians (which included shawms and bagpipes as well as trumpets and clarions) for riding in the Lord Mayor's Day processions, as well as on company days for their expenses, drink and clothes.³⁸ In Perugia, the contract that governed the civic band, 'Trombadore del Commune de Peroscia', in 1342 stated that players were to always be at the service of the city, that their silver trumpets belonged to the city and must be returned when requested, and that they were to have horses only at their own risk and danger.³⁹ A fourteenth-century reference to an *ommegang*⁴⁰ performance in Mons indicates that the trumpet and shawm players rode horses in the procession.⁴¹ A Bologna statute of 1405 concerns the hiring of trumpeters for ceremonies celebrating students completing doctoral degrees, and states that along with trumpeters needing to be ready for the ceremonies, they were to be paid more

³⁰ Tarr, *The Trumpet*, p. 40.

³¹ Michael Speidel, 'Eagle-Bearer and Trumpeter', *Bonner Jahrbücher des Rheinischen Landesmuseums in Bonn* 176 (1976), p. 154.

³² Farmer, *Rise & Development*, p. 9.

³³ Jeremy Montagu, *Timpani and Percussion* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 26.

³⁴ Curt Sachs, *The History of Musical Instruments* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1940), p. 329.

³⁵ Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Knight's Tale', in *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. Walter W. Skeat (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1900) (Original, 1386), Lines 2511 and 2512, p. 72.

³⁶ Montagu, *Timpani and Percussion*, p. 27.

³⁷ Whitwell, *The Wind Band and Wind Ensemble before 1500*, p. 109.

³⁸ Maurice Byrne, 'Instruments for the Goldsmiths Company', *Galpin Society Journal* 24 (July 1971), pp. 63-68. Jeremy Montagu, 'Mediaeval Woodwind Instruments of Silver', *Galpin Society Journal* 60 (April 2007), pp. 224-228.

³⁹ Whitwell, *The Wind Band and Wind Ensemble before 1500*, p. 102.

⁴⁰ Flemish for 'walk-about', the *ommegang* is a procession that originated in the fourteenth century as a religious event to celebrate the safe arrival of a statue of the Virgin Mary from Antwerp to Brussels.

⁴¹ Whitwell, *The Wind Band and Wind Ensemble before 1500*, p. 116.

if on horseback.⁴²

In addition to written records, two images of the time depict horse-mounted trumpeters in European ceremonial processions. A manuscript produced by the Benedictine monk Matthew Paris at St. Albans in about 1250 shows the Anglo-Saxon King Offa escorted by two mounted trumpeters playing ‘pommel trumpets’.⁴³ In contrast to this, two mounted trumpeters appearing in the *Triumph of Joseph* in the fourteenth-century Bulgarian Tomic Psalter, still carry the traditional Byzantine straight trumpets.⁴⁴

FIFTEENTH- TO MID-SIXTEENTH CENTURY

It is likely that mounted kettledrums gained a permanent place in Western armies and courts through Austrian and Hungarian encounters with the Ottomans who used larger drums in battle. With this custom spreading westwards, the next record of kettledrums in Europe, as well as the probable advent of the larger instruments in Western Europe, is dated as 1457. In this year a pair of ‘tabourins like great kettles’ were described by the Archbishop of Cologne as quite a novelty in an embassy from Ladislaus of Hungary to France to seek the hand of Madeleine, daughter of King Charles VII.⁴⁵ This is how Western Europe came to know large kettledrums. They quickly found favor in Germany and then throughout the rest of Europe, while makers were gradually abandoned, and disappeared completely in the early sixteenth century.⁴⁶

Illustrations of the period are clear about the size of mounted kettledrums. One example is Diebold Schilling’s *Spiezer Chronik* (c. 1485), which contains an illustration depicting Rudolf von Hapsburg with his mounted trumpeters and kettledrummer playing

the larger kettledrums. Another is the *Triumphzug*, a series of 137 woodcuts by Hans Burgkmair, Albrecht Dürer, and others commissioned by Maximilian I, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire to represent graphically his ‘glories’; this depicts groups of marchers, horsemen and chariots, including several mounted musicians. Maximilian himself dictated the subject matter of the woodcuts to his secretary, Treitzsaurwein, including: ‘after them [a group of people carrying statues] shall come on horseback a goodly number of trumpeters and drummers with the Imperial flags on their trumpets, and wearing laurel wreaths’.⁴⁷ By this point, kettledrums, which had been made of various combinations of wood, leather and metal, were made of copper or brass, setting the stage for the next six centuries.⁴⁸

Through the Ottoman quest for territory in the west, further connections between east and west brought continued exposure to, and use of, mounted musicians. Kettledrums and trumpets were used by the Ottomans in their defeat of Hungarian forces in the battle of Mohacs (1526) in which they established their dominance in Hungary. Stone bas-reliefs on the tomb of Count Niklas Salm (1459-1530) in Vienna’s *Votivkirche* depict a mounted kettledrummer in the Ottoman’s unsuccessful siege of Vienna in 1529. These links from the Middle East to Eastern Europe and then to Western Europe are further evidenced by an early record of an order for mounted kettledrums in England, when in 1542 Henry VIII sent to Vienna for ‘taborynes on horsbak after the Hungaryons facion’.⁴⁹ The tradition had arrived in the Scandinavian countries at least by 1527 when four mounted trumpeters participated in the wedding of Christina Gyllenstierna and Johan Turesson Tre Rosor, who was a member of King Gustav Vasa’s council.⁵⁰

⁴² Nan Cooke Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1958), pp. 35-37.

⁴³ *King Offa*. Dublin, Trinity College Library Ms.177 (Matthew Paris, *Vie de Seint Aubain*), fol. 55v (c. 1250), Büchler, Figure 22.

⁴⁴ *The Triumph of Joseph*. Moscow, State Historical Museum, Codex 2752 (Tomic Psalter), fol. 170r. Büchler, Fig. 24.

⁴⁵ Farmer, ‘Turkish Influence’, p. 42. Montagu, *Timpani and Percussion*, p. 43.

⁴⁶ Titcomb, ‘The Kettledrums in Western Europe’, pp. 151, 153. Jeremy Montagu, *Timpani and Percussion*, p. 26.

⁴⁷ Stanley Appelbaum (ed.), *The Triumph of Maximilian I, 137 Woodcuts by Hans Burgkmair and Others*, with a translation of descriptive text, introduction and notes by Stanley Appelbaum (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1964), p. 15.

⁴⁸ Montagu, *Timpani and Percussion*, p. 43.

⁴⁹ Montagu, *Timpani and Percussion*, p. 45, citing *State Papers Published Under the Authority of Her Majesty’s Commission* (London: Commission for Publishing State Papers, 1849), part V—continued, vol. IX, p. 138, DCCLXVII. Bowles agrees with Montagu that while Henry VIII ordered these kettledrums, there are no records indicating that he received them, Edmund A. Bowles, *The Timpani, A History in Pictures and Documents* (Pendragon Press, 2002), p. 361. By this date of 1542, most of Hungary had been absorbed by the Ottoman Empire. Vienna, however, never fell.

⁵⁰ Riksarkivet, Stockholm, *Räntekammarböcker*, Vol 1, p. 196.

By this time, the difficulties of holding long trumpets while playing them at court, on the march and on horseback had been reduced substantially because shortly before 1400, instrument makers had learned to take advantage of the various melting points of different metals, and had learned to bend tubing effectively. This innovation in brass-instrument making revolutionized the appearance of trumpets, as well as their maneuverability. It enabled trumpets to be made in an 'S' or the folded shape still known today, whereby the length of a two-meter instrument could be reduced by about two thirds (see Figure 2, right, and in the colour section).⁵¹

In this way, the uncomfortably long *añafil* developed into the folded trumpet, which could easily be transported on military campaigns or to ceremonial events, without the danger of damage that accompanies long instruments.⁵³

At this time, court trumpeters and kettle-drummers became vital employees of royal households as heralds. They played to announce births, deaths, marriages, and other formal occasions, as well as the arrival of nobility on entrance to villages and cities—as friends or foes. The *Harvard Dictionary of Music* states that King Francois I of France (r. 1515-1547) employed a band of trumpets and drums when he re-conquered Milan from the Swiss and Venetians in the Battle of Marignano on 13 September 1515, and when he was defeated and captured by the Spanish troops of King Carlos I (Emperor Karl V) at the battle of Pavia. Francois' enemies employed them as well, according to Titcomb.⁵⁴

Along with court use, trumpets were used as military signaling instruments. At about the time of Henry VII (r. 1485-1509), the custom of incorporating fife and drum bands as signalers within infantry units, a practice that originated



Figure 2. A tournament hosted by Henry VIII in 1511 to celebrate the birth of his son Henry. Further detail may be found in the caption in the colour section. The black musician is 'John Blanke, the black trumpeter'.⁵² Courtesy of College of Arms, London.

with Swiss mercenaries serving in Italy and France, reached as far west as Britain, resulting in music distinctions between infantry and cavalry. As court trumpeters served on horseback, trumpet music became connected with the cavalry, whereas infantry units employed sidedrummers, fifers, and bagpipers.⁵⁵ Until this time the trumpet served in both infantry and cavalry units,⁵⁶ but from this point European martial music confined trumpets and kettledrums to cavalry units, and drums and fifes to infantry units. This continued until the introduction of the *hautbois* (shawm-like instrument – the predecessor of the modern oboe) in the seventeenth century and the reintroduction of 'Turkish Music' in the early eighteenth century, which led to the idea of actual military bands.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Folded trumpets were also part of Turkish cavalry culture by this point. For an image of a Turkish mounted wedding procession including trumpeters, see Metin And, *Istanbul in the 16th Century, The City, The Palace, Daily Life* (Istanbul: Arbank Culture and Art Publication: 59, 1994), pp. 212-213; images from a 1574 picture album executed by Lambert de Vos, Bremen, Germany, Der Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek, Bremen Ms. or. 9.

⁵² Sydney Anglo, *The Great Tournament Roll of Westminster, A Collotype of the Manuscript* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968), Vol. I, 85, 98, 137, Vol. II, Plates III, XVIII.

⁵³ Tarr, *The Trumpet*, 53. Don L. Smithers, *The Music and History of the Baroque Trumpet before 1721* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press), pp. 35-36.

⁵⁴ Willi Apel (ed.), *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Harvard University Press, 1944), s.v. 'Military Band,' p. 446. Titcomb, *Kettledrums in Western Europe*, p. 298.

⁵⁵ Farmer, *Rise and Development*, p. 17. This practice remained the custom through the nineteenth century and up into World War II throughout Western armies.

⁵⁶ Henry George Farmer, *Military Music* (New York: Chanticleer Press, 1950), p. 11. Farmer, 'Turkish Influence,' p. 43.

⁵⁷ Curt Sachs, *The History of Musical Instruments*, pp. 436-437. While it is difficult to imagine a military or any other wind band without drums, the idea has not always been so obvious. As Farmer states, 'Here and there the regimental

CONCLUSION

In the late Renaissance, cavalry music was just coming into its own and was poised for further development. During the Baroque and Classical periods, the tradition of horse-mounted field musicians and bands developed further in terms of signaling and pageantry respectively over several centuries; it spread across Europe and, by the nineteenth century, to North and South America.⁵⁸ While Western cavalries continued to employ field trumpeters and kettledrummers, by the turn of the nineteenth century, kettledrum use on the battlefield had nearly disappeared and field trumpeters were being distinguished from trumpeters and other musicians in regimental bands. Gradually, woodwinds were added to infantry and cavalry bands, although the latter employed primarily brass instruments through most of the nineteenth century.

While the custom of employing signalers in battle as a part of horse-mounted cavalries continued in some Western armies up into World War II,⁵⁹

the use of cavalry bands in battle had mostly been suspended by the nineteenth century, although they appeared in battle several times in the U.S. during the Civil and Plains Indian Wars.⁶⁰ By the close of the nineteenth century, the custom of horse-mounted military bands had spread back east to Australia through British connections.

At the time of writing, several European and African countries maintain ceremonial cavalry units comprised of mounted bands or trumpet corps, including Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, Senegal, Spain, Italy, and Portugal. South American countries, including Brazil, Argentina and Chile share the tradition. Interestingly, in recent decades the cavalry music tradition (albeit with western band instruments and bagpipes) has made its way back to military, police and guard units near the tradition's origins in Asian and Arabian countries including Thailand⁶¹ and the Sultanate of Oman⁶² where the units are led in the centuries-old Middle-East tradition by kettledrummers.

⁵⁷ (continued) drums...were called upon to accompany the band so as to emphasize the measured cadence in the march. Yet the drums, which were only side drums in these days, were not always at hand... and the march past and other disciplines were often performed by the band of music or the hoboyes alone, whilst the drummers marched with, or were stationed by, their respective companies.' 'Turkish Influence', 44. It was not until the Turkish Sultan gave Augustus II (d. 1733) a gift of an entire band of music, which included treble and tenor hautbois and fifes along with 'Turkish Music' (kettledrums, bass drum, cymbals, and triangles) that bands of winds and percussion became popular within European military structures.

⁵⁸ Mounted bands were common in U.S. Army and National Guard units up until World War II. See Bruce P. Gleason, 'A Chronicle of the Pre-World War II Cavalry Bands of the U.S. National Guard—with Recollections of Those Who Rode', *Journal of the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles* 13 (2006), pp. 17-30. Also for several pre-World War I Canadian military and national police units, see Bruce P. Gleason, 'Pipe band of the 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles', *Military Collector & Historian, Journal of the Company of Military Historians* 56, no.2 (Winter 2004), pp. 279-283, and Bruce P. Gleason, 'The Mounted Bands of the North-West Mounted Police', *Band International, Journal of the International Military Music Society* 27, no. 3 (December 2005), pp. 99-103, 120.

⁵⁹ The Polish army continued to support cavalry units into the war. In September 1939 in the battle for the Polish Corridor, over an issue that served as the pretext that precipitated World War II, the tanks of General Heinz Guderian's 19th Panzer Corps were counterattacked by the Pomorska Brigade of cavalry, complete with signaling buglers; William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: MJF Books, 1990), p. 625.

⁶⁰ Bruce P. Gleason, 'U.S. Mounted Bands and Cavalry Field Musicians in the Union Army during the Civil War—Background, Duties, and Training', *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 27, no. 2 (2006), pp. 102-119.

⁶¹ Frank Tyler, 'The Birthday Parade of HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej', *Band International, The Journal of the International Military Music Society* 24 (2002), pp. 28-30.

⁶² Ian Kendrick, 'Military Music in the Sultanate of Oman,' *Journal of the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles* 3 (1996), pp. 66-74.