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The Spokane Falls Brass Band

Larry Jess & Christopher Cook, trumpets / Verne Windham & Roger Logan, horns / Andrew S. Owens, trombone

Ann B. Fennessy

soprano



PHOTO BY DOUG CRABTREE

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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SIDE ONE

Overture to WILLIAM TELL (1829) - Gioachino Rossini
(arranged by the Spokane Falls Brass Band)

BEAUTIFUL DREAMER (1862) - Stephen Foster
Ann Fennessy, soprano - (arr. SFBB)

STARS IN A VELVETY SKY (1909) - Herbert L. Clarke
Larry Jess, trumpet - (arr. SFBB)

**Can-Can Dance from ORPHEUS IN THE UNDER-
WORLD (1858) - Jacques Offenbach - (arr. SFBB)**

ON THE BANKS OF THE WABASH, FAR AWAY (1897)
-Paul Dresser- Ann Fennessy, soprano-(arr. by Roger Logan)

WASHINGTON POST, MARCH (1889)-John P. Sousa
(arr. by Larry Jess)

SIDE TWO

HAM TROMBONE (1929) - Henry Fillmore
Andrew S. Owens, trombone-(arr. by Andrew S. Owens)

**I'M JUST WILD ABOUT HARRY (1921) - Eubie Blake -
Noble Sissie.** Ann Fennessy - (arr. by Andrew S. Owens)

**PINEAPPLE RAG SONG (1908-1910) - Scott Joplin -
Joe Snyder.** Ann Fennessy - (arr. by Verne Windham)

JOGO BLUES (1913) - W. C. Handy
**I'D GIVE A DOLLAR FOR A DIME (1940) - Eubie Blake -
Andy Razaf.** Ann Fennessy - (arr. by Verne Windham)

THAT'S A PLENTY (1914) - Lew Pollack - Ray Gilbert
Ann Fennessy - (arr. by Andrew S. Owens)

CREDITS

The Spokane Falls Brass Band
Larry Jess and Christopher Cook, trumpets
Verne Windham and Roger Logan, horns
Andrew S. Owens, trombone
Ann B. Fennessy, soprano

producer: David A. Jasen
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December 5-9, 1983

support for this recording was provided by Mr. & Mrs. Gene Border

this recording is dedicated to the memory of Dennis Elton Lillie
(1943-1984), founding member of the Spokane Falls Brass Band

cover photograph by Doug Crabtree

the Spokane Falls Brass Band is affiliated with:
Spokane Musical Arts, W. 418½ Sprague, Spokane, WA 99204 and
The Spokane Symphony Society
W. 621 Mallon
Spokane, WA 99201

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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THE BAND

In 1981 the small, western city of Spokane, Washington, celebrated its 100th birthday. Among the events of the centennial celebration was a Washington Commission for the Humanities project called "From Miner's Tent to Opera House, Spokane's Musical and Cultural Heritage." While researching this project, trumpeter and historian Dennis Lillie discovered that the first musical group in the settlement of Spokan Falls, Washington Territory, was the Spokan Falls Brass Band.

Dennis and other members of an existing brass ensemble connected with the Spokane Symphony Orchestra decided to revive that original Spokan Falls Brass Band. They created the group which, after some personnel changes, is heard here.

The appearance of the group is unique. They wear turn-of-the-century band uniforms and conduct themselves with Victorian decorum. The sound of the Band is also unique because of the instrumentation of two trumpets, two French horns, and a trombone player who doubles on double bell euphonium.

That's not the whole story, though. The sixth member of the Brass Band is a singer. How did a singer get into a brass band? Well, quite naturally. Sousa's band always featured a lovely soprano soloist singing the favorite operatic arias of the day. Further, the mellow sound of the Spokane Falls Brass Band, with its two French horns, provides a cushion of

sound which a soprano can float on, rather than compete with. Finally, the Spokane Falls Brass Band comes from a vocal tradition. The material the band started playing in 1981 was sentimental songs from those song books which were in every school and on every parlor piano fifty years ago. (The real reason is that during a concert with five men staring at music stands and at each other, there is nothing like a singer like Ann Fennessy communicating directly with the audience.)

The combination of these factors has made the Spokane Falls Brass Band increasingly popular in the Northwest and, more recently, the nation. In the fall of 1982 the Band turned a lot of its attention toward ragtime. The traditional construction of ragtime--a melody harmonized in thirds over a bass line with afterbeats--proved ideal for the instrumentation of the Spokane Falls Brass Band. The ragtime era (1897-1917) was a logical way to extend the repertoire of the golden age of the brass band in America (1840-1890). Finally, ragtime--which had just experienced a rebirth--was a good way to tie the past to the present, assuring that the Spokane Falls Brass Band would not be just a museum piece.

Armed with these ideas, the Band began a project to commission new rags from leading composers. The Ragtime Project started with William Bolcom and has extended to Arthur Frackenpohl, Max Morath, Donald Ashwander, William Albright, Peter Schickele, Gunther Schuller, Andrew S. Owens, and Dick Hyman.

It was from the artistic importance of this Ragtime Project that the

Band received its first national attention during the summer of 1983. The Band opened the Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival in Sedalia, played at the Nineteenth National Ragtime and Traditional Jazz Festival in St. Louis, and appeared on the radio program "A Prairie Home Companion." In addition to repeat performances of these engagements, the Spokane Falls Brass Band is adding other festivals and continuing to play for Community Concert Association.

THE BAND MEMBERS

Larry Jess, Trumpet. Principal trumpet of the Spokane Symphony, Larry is known for the range of his ability and experience. He played in a rock band while in college at Eastern Washington University, does a lot of jazz, and often appears as a soloist--either playing baroque works on piccolo trumpet or playing cornet solos with bands and orchestras.

Christopher Cook, Trumpet. Chris first became involved with historical brass music while studying in Boston at the New England Conservatory. He studied there with Charles Lewis of the Empire Brass Quintet and with Robert Nagel. Chris is a member of the Spokane Symphony and has studied with the renowned trumpeter Gerald B. Webster.

Verne Windham, Horn. Verne studied at the Eastman School of Music with Verne Reynolds and with A. Robert Johnson of the New York Philharmonic. He has performed and recorded with the Eastman Wind Ensemble and has been a founding member of many chamber music groups, including the Solstice Quintet and RSVP. He writes and conducts children's programs for the Spokane Symphony, of which he is principal horn.

Roger Logan, Horn. Roger abandoned a career as a rock guitarist to become a classical horn player. This versatile musician has played all the horn positions in the Spokane Symphony and has specialized in 18th century natural horn playing. He has studied with Barry Tuckwell.

Andrew S. Owens, Trombone, Euphonium and Arranger. Andy, along with Roger, attended the University of Idaho where he studied with Robert Spevacek. Following study with Dennis Wick in London he returned to Spokane and joined the Spokane Falls Brass Band and the Spokane Symphony. He is one of the Band's chief arrangers, and has composed an original rag for the group.

Ann B. Fennessy, Soprano. A native of California, Ann studied at the University of Colorado with the renowned lieder singer, Achsel Schotz. After touring the South and West in opera and musical theatre, she moved to Spokane where she quickly established herself as a leading singer of a wide range of music from Bach to jazz. In addition to being an integral member of the Spokane Falls Brass Band, she sings ragtime songs with pianist Dick Zimmerman as the duo FENNESSY AND ZIMMERMAN.

THE MUSIC

The WILLIAM TELL OVERTURE was a hit even before the Lone Ranger was born in 1933. The Spokane Falls Brass Band has found it impossible to begin a concert with anything else, so the Overture begins this recording, which is in the format of one of the Band's concerts.

Ms. Fennessy makes her first appearance of the concert in Stephen Foster's classic BEAUTIFUL DREAMER. When this song was first published in 1861 it was advertised as the "last song ever written" by Foster. While this may not have been true, it was a statement consistent with Foster's penchant for songs expressing a longing for things past.

Stephen Foster may have been "America's Schubert" but America was still depending heavily on the European Schuberts for much of its music. No nineteenth-century band concert was complete unless represented by European art music. What was popular music in Europe became art music by the time it crossed the Atlantic. This was certainly the case with Offenbach's most

famous opera, Orpheus in the Underworld. The "hit tune" of Orpheus was the CAN-CAN DANCE, probably France's greatest export of 1858.

A man born in Washington, D.C. in 1856 got his musical start touring America with Offenbach's orchestra. By 1880 John Philip Sousa had become leader of the U.S. Marine Band, a position he held until 1892. During his time with that organization he gave a newspaper in Washington its greatest claim to fame, the WASHINGTON POST MARCH.

Sousa was not only an excellent showman, conductor and composer, but was in a position to gather together all the best players in the land. His solo cornetist, Herbert L. Clarke, was not only a brilliant player, but a noted pedagogue and composer. His solo STARS IN A VELVETY SKY has become standard repertoire for every trumpet and cornet player.

At the same time as Sousa's early successes new musical currents were rising in America. The business establishment known as Tin Pan Alley was ushered in on the skirts of the sentimental song of the 1890's. A leading song of the era was written by Paul Dresser, brother of the author of "The American Tragedy" Theodore Dreiser. That song, ON THE BANKS OF THE WABASH, FAR AWAY, romanticized, sentimentalized and immortalized rural Indiana.

The 19th century ended with Sousa and Tin Pan Alley in full swing, and a new art form being born. Ragtime, which had its meteoric rise between 1897 and 1899, continued unabated for twenty years until it died as abruptly. Even though it disappeared as a pure form with World War I, it had a huge influence on other music. In the Twenties, bandleader Henry Fillmore celebrated ragtime at the same time he parodied bad trombone playing with his rag HAM TROMBONE. It was one of a group of fifteen such pieces (Lassus Trombone, Sally Trombone, etc.) written on the same idea.

Scott Joplin was, of course, the dominant figure of classical ragtime. Even though ragtime was properly the domain of the piano, spill-over into song was inevitable; as in the words put to the PINEAPPLE RAG by Joe Snyder two years after the song was written in 1908.

Another cornet player-turned-bandleader was W.C. Handy, who created much of the early written-down jazz with his early hits "Memphis Blues" and "St. Louis Blues". Like many blues tunes, JOGO BLUES is more memorable for its familiar tunes than its name.

The late Eubie Blake represents both the original and the modern periods of ragtime--as well as most American music in between. Although it was Truman's campaign of 1948 which re-introduced WILD ABOUT HARRY to the world, the song was a hit when it first came out in the musical "Shuffle Along" in 1921. Here it is played in both the original waltz version and the final one-step form. Eubie was also known for his sentimental ballads, of which I'D GIVE A DOLLAR FOR A DIME from "Tan Manhattan" is a superb example.

THAT'S A PLENTY is played, and overplayed, as a Dixieland instrumental. As with Pineapple Rag, it had words added after the original tune was written. It is that rare vocal version which closes this concert by Ann Pennessy and the Spokane Falls Brass Band.

Note by David A. Jasen

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