

## Programme note

'King Kong on Rue Igor-Stravinsky' takes inspiration from the legendary events that took place on December 4th, 1971, at the Montreux Casino on Lake Geneva in Switzerland. In the middle of Don Preston's synthesizer solo on 'King Kong' the place suddenly caught fire. Somebody in the audience had a bottle rocket or a roman candle and fired it into the ceiling, at which point the rattan covering started to burn (other versions of the story claim the blaze was the result of faulty wiring. There were between twenty-five hundred and three thousand people packed into the room - well over capacity.

Since more people were trying to get into the auditorium, the organizers had cleverly chained shut the exit doors! When the fire began, the audience was left with two ways out: through the front window, which was pretty small, or through a plate-glass window off to the side of the stage. As the room filled with smoke, one of the roadies took an equipment case and smashed the big window. The crew then began helping people to escape through it into some kind of garden below - the band escaped through an underground tunnel that led from behind stage through the parking garage. A few minutes later the heating system in the building exploded, throwing some people through the window. Nobody was killed, but the entire building (around thirteen million dollars worth) burned to the ground, and the band lost all of their equipment

## Notes on Performance

All muted dynamics throughout the piece should be balanced equally with 'open dynamics'.

There are very few performance directions throughout the piece. It is my aim that the conductor and players have freedom to add their own voices to the music.

The piece aims to use the multitude of textures available to the modern day brass band. Exploring not only muted textures but also maximising various approaches to 'open' sonorities - requiring aggressive tones, non vibrato playing as well as traditional sonorous playing. Indeed, the piece aims to juxtapose these elements to create momentum in the music - shifting from calm to madness in the blink of an eye!

Solos throughout the piece should always be played in the style of a rock band instrumentalist/vocalist - throughout the piece I have tried to take inspiration from my favourite 'Mothers of Invention' from throughout the Zappa years - including, Napoleon Murphy-Brock, George Duke, Ruth Underwood, Don Preston, Jean Luc-Ponty, and of course, Frank Zappa (to name a few).

As well as playing conventionally, there are moments throughout the piece where digital delay, reverb and various 'effects pedal' passages are aimed at being captured within the music.



'King Kong on Rue Igor Stravinsky' was commissioned to be used as an own-choice test-piece at the 2018 Swiss National Brass Band Championships, held at the Stravinsky Hall in Montreux, Switzerland.

'King Kong on Rue Igor Stravinsky' is dedicated to the memory of Frank Zappa, whose life and music have been a constant inspiration since discovering his music in Music College.

The music takes its inspiration from the ill-fated Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention concert on December 4th 1971, at the Montreux Casino. Part way through Don Preston's solo in 'King Kong' a flare was let off and caught fire in the ceiling, leading to the auditorium being evacuated onto Rue Igor-Stravinsky before the fire spread further.

Paul McGhee