



THE NEW AND BOLD

Five School of Music undergrads combine their musical styles to create a new, exciting brass group.

BY EMILY MCINTYRE | PHOTOS BY EVAN LEONARD

Inside a classroom on the fifth floor of Glidden Hall, scattered music notes, resembling the sound of a tugboat, erupt from a tuba. A trumpet joins in to warm up, followed by a trombone, French horn and another trumpet. Though the instruments have their own individual sounds, together they produce an unexpectedly smooth blend of music.

The quintet, known as Brick City Brass, is made up of five undergraduate students in the Ohio University School of Music. Although it's only been about a year since its formation and one semester since they attached the name Brick City Brass, the group has already captivated a wide audience through recitals and concerts.

Prior to the founding of Brick City Brass, its members became friends through music classes and organizations.

Assistant professor of trombone Lucas Regos Borges was approached by Brick City Brass to be its coach shortly after he was hired last fall. Borges, who grew up in Brazil, started playing trombone when he was about 12 years old. Since receiving a bachelor's degree from Universidade de Brasília, a master's degree from Indiana University and a doctoral degree from the University of North Texas, he has taught and performed at several interna-

tional music festivals and conventions.

The quintet plays mostly classical music, along with occasional jazz or pop routines, though its style often varies with its audience. Borges — who has specialized in chamber music throughout his career — says this variety is not only acceptable, but also expected for a brass quintet.

"For a lot of our more lighthearted gigs, we'll pick out little pop tunes, like we do 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow.' At one point, I think we did a Beatles medley," says Zack Spivey, a sophomore horn player triple majoring in music education, music composition and music performance.

The quintet plays at formal recitals, ensembles in the School of Music, and occasionally at private and public gigs. On average, they perform about three or four times each semester, though the members do not have a set schedule for what they will do every semester.

Elise Armstrong, a junior trumpet player majoring in music performance, says Brick City Brass holds practice about twice a week for three hours total, but each member also practices individually. Members recognize that there are some major differences between playing in a large ensemble

and playing in a quintet.

"It's different when you're playing by yourself, like if you're doing a solo rather than being in a group, then you kind of have the safety net of your peers," says junior Dylan Chase, a music education and music performance major who plays trombone. Having an ear for what's right, alone or together, is crucial for a productive session.

Borges believes music education is based on several simple, significant concepts, such as critical listening and paying attention to detail.

"When you study music very seriously, you learn discipline and responsibility; at the same time, you're working on creativity," he says.

The members of Brick City Brass collectively agree that the difference in levels of experience between them has never been a challenge. Instead, it has made them realize their own strengths as musicians.

"Zack is better at listening for pitch than I am, but maybe I'm better at something than Zack is," explains Joan Engel, a junior music performance major who plays tuba.

All five members of Brick City Brass are also heavily involved in other instrumental and vocal ensembles both within and outside of the School of Music. For the quintet, rehearsals don't leave much time for socializing because their schedules are so

cramped that they usually just sit down and play, Chase says.

Borges grew up in Brazil, a country he describes as "very free." While playing in a brass quintet as a kid, he and the other members switched between rehearsing and hanging out. In the United States, people respect a person's time much more.

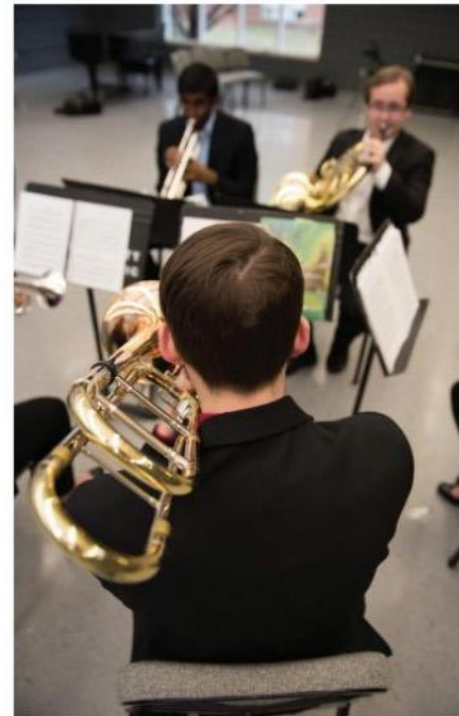
"When you're practicing, people won't knock as much on your door and interrupt you, and in Brazil that [happened] very often. Rehearsals here start on time. They don't in Brazil, ever," he says. "So when I came here, I wanted those things."

When it comes to being in the quintet, Brick City Brass loves the small, close-knit feel.

"It's a different experience playing with just four other people, rather than, like, 40. It's so much more fun, and I don't know why, but I love the quintet way more than group ensemble," Engel says.

Despite how the quintet members incessantly laugh and joke together, they are able to strike a balance between work and play. Borges has noticed that and couldn't be more proud of the group's drive to be successful in a humble, non-egotistical way, something he claims can be an issue in music. In Borges' eyes, Brick City Brass is going to go very far.

"It didn't matter if I was there or not — I love that. I think that if they stick with it, they can make something very special," Borges says. **B**



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LUCAS REGOS BORGES, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF TROMBONE

