

– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

Free concert by the Cottonwood Brass, Saturday, April 13, 2 p.m. at Elgin County Heritage Centre

The MUSIC MAN returns to St. Thomas on April 13th!

An encore concert by the Cottonwood Brass will signal the finale of *Brass Bands & Base Ball*, the unique exhibition of musical instruments currently on display at the Elgin County Heritage Centre. This well-known southern Ontario brass ensemble, often appearing in 19th-century costumes, specializes in historically informed performances of period music played on authentic antique instruments. As in *The Music Man*, Meredith Willson's Broadway musical, trombones, cornets, and double-belled euphoniums will be highlighted, of course, but so will rare and obsolete band instruments, such as keyed bugles, ophicleides, serpents, valveless horns and trumpets, cornopeans, mellophones, bombardons, helicons, plus bell upright and bell over-the-shoulder saxhorns.

Directed by David Pearson, and featuring Dr. Henry Meredith as soloist, the Cottonwood Brass opened the exhibit last September. They are back by popular demand to offer another free concert at the museum on April 13th at 2 p.m. Their program will be similar to what small town bands in rural Ontario would have played in the last half of the 19th century and the early 20th century for their regular concerts in the park on Sunday afternoons, as well as for holiday celebrations, parades, fairs, picnics, various private and civic functions, and noteworthy community events.

Those in attendance last fall heard the world premiere of a 130-year-old composition called "The Base Ball Waltz" as transcribed and arranged by Dr. Meredith for brass band from the piano sheet music, which was published in London, Ontario in 1888. Often, band directors created arrangements of quicksteps, dances, and marches specifically for their own bands. Those band pieces were, in turn, published as piano versions to be enjoyed again in the home. Conversely, piano pieces and popular songs, as well as orchestral and opera scores, served as inspirations for bands to repeat the melodies in arrangements for their own instrumentation.

The Elgin County Heritage Centre "Brass Bands & Base Ball" exhibit, closes on Thursday April 18th. Co-curated by Michael Baker and Henry Meredith, the exhibit is comprised of selections of band instruments, plus accessories, music, uniforms, instruction books, and other related items, from Henry Meredith's enormous collection, perhaps the largest private musical instrument collection in North America. Numerous photos of Ontario brass bands are on display, some of which have been enlarged and surrounded by instruments seen in the photos. Dr. Meredith is also the director of London's Plumbing Factory Brass Band, specializing in music from the same Golden Age of Brass Bands, and dedicating many compositions during their 2018-19 concert season to this "Brass Bands & Base Ball" exhibition.

Call 519-631-1460, ext. 193, for further information.

Elgin County Heritage Centre, 460 Sunset Drive – Park behind the County Building next door