

HENRY MEREDITH'S INSTRUMENT COLLECTION ATTRACTS HOLLYWOOD

INTERNATIONALLY recognized trumpeter, musicologist, conductor, and award-winning professor at Western University, Dr. Henry Meredith has amassed a personal collection of over 6000 musical instruments, one of the largest in North America. He started his collection in 1974 as a doctoral student in Colorado, when he stumbled across discarded instruments at a repair shop. He left with 20 instruments for \$100—and a lifelong passion. Among many noteworthy instruments in his collection is a 1717 hunting horn (which was likely played in the premiere of Handel's *Water Music*), plus several 19th-century valveless trumpets, keyed bugles, ophicleides, corneopans, over-the-shoulder saxhorns, and a rare soprano Schreiberhorn. Portions of Meredith's renowned collection have been exhibited in Canada and the United States, including the well-attended "Bands of Time: Two Centuries of Instrumental Music in Canada" at Museum London in 1999-2000.

Not surprisingly, news of the collection reached Hollywood when, in 2002, Disney's producers were remaking their original movie of the 1957 Broadway musical, *The Music Man*. Meredith was not only hired as the



Dr. Hank with a few of his instruments used on Disney's movie remake of *The Music Man*.

Photos: Dr. Henry Meredith

film's historical instrument consultant, but he provided all of the instruments—from the 1912 era, of course, in which the story is set.

Affectionately known as 'Dr. Hank' by many of his students and colleagues, Meredith puts his instruments to good use in his teaching and performing. He supplies horns to members of his Plumbing Factory Brass Band, a prize-winning community ensemble which he founded in 1995. With their motto of "bringing the past to life," the PFBB regularly performs on historic instruments, including a 2017 concert celebrating Canada's Sesquicentennial, featuring

period music played on 150-year-old instruments.

The band's name comes from a nickname for Meredith's collection, which, with its brass instruments hanging from the rafters, looks very much like

factory tubing. 'Dr. Hank' is currently searching for a benefactor to showcase his instruments (and *many* other related collectables) in a proper museum. He estimates that a mere 200,000 square feet should do it!



Top: Dr. Hank demonstrates the serpent from a wall of horns at his "Bands of Time" exhibition, Museum London. Bottom: Dr. Hank plays the keyed bugle and leads the Plumbing Factory Brass Band on period instruments for a Canada 150 concert (only 12 of 30 members visible).

Photos: Dr. Henry Meredith